

*of from St. John's directory anniversary Edition (1840-1965) Research by MRS. RALPH CURTIS*

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HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

One-half an acre of land was purchased on July 13, 1836 from Charles Hibbard by Rev. John Anderson (first rector), and Henry Teal and Adolphus Meyer (first wardens) for the sum of £25.

The original Church was built in 1840 under the direction of Rev. John Anderson and the first wardens.

A second half acre of land was purchased on August 15, 1874 from Joseph Ehisler and wife, William Lowell and John A. Orchard by Henry E. Miller and George Graham (wardens) for the sum of \$40.00.

Around 1910 the addition consisting of chancel and vestry rooms was added, the work being done by two brothers of the parish, Ben & Will Miller, costing about \$500.00.

East part of Lot 9 was purchased on November 2, 1925 from Albert Shisler and wife by James E. Laur and Thomas E. Lee (Cemetery Trustees) and John L. Curtis and George Durham (wardens) for cemetery purposes for the sum of \$800.00.

West part of Lot 9 was purchased on June 29, 1953 from Allen Morningstar and wife by John L. Curtis and John R. Gilmour (wardens) for cemetery purposes for the sum of \$500.00.

On September 29, 1957 the ground was broken for a Church Hall. The architect for this building was Donald Chapman and the contractor was Henry Allender, costing \$35,000.00. \$22,000.00 was borrowed from Syned at that time.

During the spring and summer of 1964 extensive repairs to the Church were completed - foundations repaired, interior plastered, floors sanded and varnished, pews and wainscoting refinished, exterior painted, new rug laid and new gas furnace installed.

HISTORY - (Continued)RECTORS

Rev. John Anderson - building of Church to 1849	
Rev. Elliott Grasett, M.A.	1849 - 1859
Rev. Henry Holland, M.A.	1859 - 1864
Rev. Henry Greenham	1864 - 1870
Rev. Canon Robert Arnold	1870 - 1888
Rev. Percy W. Smith	1888 - 1905
Rev. A. Cameron MacIntosh	1905 - 1917
Rev. Canon D. Russell Smith	1917 - 1926
Archdeacon William Burt	1926 - 1949
Rev. W. B. Irwin	1949 - 1954
Rev. John Gerard	1954 - 1961
Rev. C. T. Stanger	1962 -

WARDENS

As many records have been lost or destroyed, the only wardens' names available are:

First Wardens: Henry Teal & Adolphus Meyer

People's Warden: John L. Curtis 1921 - 1956  
 Charles Spear Jr. 1956 - 1964  
 Ralph Rehm 1965 -

Rector's Warden: George Durham - 1932  
 Charles Spear Sr. 1932 - 1948 (Aug.)  
 Ben Spear Aug. 1948 - 1949  
 Fred Miller 1950 - 1950 (Aug.)  
 John Gilmour Aug. 1950 - 1964  
 Charles Spear Jr. 1965 -

Cemetery Trustees: Previous to 1932 Cemetery Trustees took care of cemetery, accounts, etc. James E. Laur and Thomas Lee are the only names to be found in existing records as Trustees. In 1933 the cemetery became the responsibility of the minister's warden, then Charles Spear Sr. In 1965 this again reverted back to a Trustee taking the load from the minister's warden when Tom Towell was appointed Cemetery Trustee.

Treasurer: The office of Treasurer was introduced at St. John's in 1960 when Bruce Miller accepted this position, thus taking the financial burden from the People's Warden.

Lay Delegates: Fred Miller 1934 (beginning of records) - 1948  
 John Gilmour 1948 - 1958  
 Bruce Miller 1959 - 1963  
 Bert Taylor 1964 -

Vestry Clerk: Fred Miller 1934 (beginning of records) - 1948  
 George Kinnear 19 8 -

HISTORY - (Continued)

<u>Church Sextons</u>	(Records incomplete)	<u>Church Organists</u>	
Fred Rehm		William Miller	Hilda Gilmour
Ben Spear		Mrs. . Huffman	Virginia Gilmour
John L. Curtis		Mrs. B. Johnson	Ruth MacFarlane
Bert Taylor		Clara Laur	
<u>Envelope Secretary:</u>	Mrs. Wm. Burt	- 1944	
	Miss B. Gilmour	1945 - 1953	
	Miss H. Gilmour	1954 -	

Advisory Board: On January 18, 1950 an Advisory Board was formed consisting of the minister (Rev. Irwin); two wardens, J.L. Curtis and Fred Miller; Vestry Clerk, George Kinnear; Charles Spear Jr., Ralph Curtis, Bruce Miller, Ralph Rehm, and Ernie Benner. Today three men are appointed to this board by the minister and three are elected by vestry.

Church Services had always been held at 3 p.m. with Evensong being observed. On September 17, 1953 10 a.m. services with Morning Prayer were introduced. Holy Communion is now celebrated the first and third Sundays, and Morning Prayer the second and fourth Sundays.

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

Sunday School: The only evidence that could be found concerning an early Sunday School was one in 1912 and 1913 with W. F. Miller as Superintendent; Fred Rehm - Secretary; Fred Miller - Treasurer; Violet Chudley - Organist. A very active Sunday School is in existence today.

Guild: In 1910 a Women's Guild was formed by Rev. O. Cameron MacIntosh at the home of Mrs. Henry Miller. The ladies of St. John's have continued to faithfully work for their Church to the present day.

Choir: St. John's Choir started with a group of faithful volunteers, who served until a gowned choir was organized in 1958.

Altar Guild: Before the forming of the Altar Guild in 1955 by Rev. John Gerard the altar vessels and linens were cared for by volunteer ladies of the Parish. Mrs. William Laur walked to Church carrying the necessary items. Mrs. Jim Laur carried on after her, followed by Mrs. Charles Spear Sr. who took over when Archdeacon Burt was Rector. Gwen Curtis was first Convenor of the Altar Guild.

Men's Club: This organization, which was started by Rev. John Gerard in 1955, is no longer active.

A.Y.P.A.: An A.Y.P.A. was formed in 1955 with All Saints. This has been replaced by a Parish Youth Council.

Friendship Group: A group of young people of the Church and community formed in 1948 under the direction of Archdeacon Burt. This group was very active, producing yearly plays, barn dances, etc. In 1955 it became a community group with no Church affiliations, and still meets occasionally.

Chi Rho Fellowship: Was organized in 1955, and is still in operation as a mixed group who enjoy a spirit of informal fellowship.

HISTORY - (Continued)

NOTES OF INTEREST

In 1913-1919 the sexton and organist were paid .25¢ a Sunday. When the lawn was cut, .50¢ was the wage.

In 1934 Rev. Burke took a voluntary cut in salary.

In 1950 the wood burning stoves were replaced with gas space heaters.

In 1952 the seats were renovated for \$1.75 each. Orval Sherk did the work.

When St. Paul's rectory was completely remodelled at a cost of \$2,967.96, St. John's paid \$400.00 as their share.

In 1954 St. John's and All Saints Ridgeway became one parish under Rev. John Gerard. Up until that time St. John's had been connected with St. Paul's at Fort Erie.

In 1958 an old locomotive bell was donated by the C.N.R. and was installed in the belfry to call the people to worship. *Miss*

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These are only a few of the items of interest gathered by Mrs. Ralph Curtis concerning the History of St. John's.

In order to make the pictures and other historical data available for inspection, there will be a display in the Parish Hall immediately following the Dedication of the Church at 11:00 a.m. on September 26, 1965. This will include some of the old bills (compare prices!) a list of the first confirmation class in 1840, and pictures of all the Rectors of St. John's Church to the present time.

If anyone has information, photographs or any other helpful facts which could assist Mrs. Curtis in this work it would be greatly appreciated, as the records are far from complete, and it is hoped that more can be added as time goes on.

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