

*For all those, past and present, who have worshipped  
and made the Church of the Ascension the warm and  
welcoming sanctuary that it is.*

# Introduction



*The Right Reverend Peter R. Coffin  
Eighth Bishop of Ottawa*

Congratulations on the publishing of this history of the Church of the Ascension, which actually spent its first four decades as Holy Trinity on Canal Road in the village of Archville. The Rector at the time of the name change was Robert Jefferson, who later became the third Bishop of Ottawa.

So many things have changed since that time. With the building of the Pretoria Bridge, the parish no longer needed its row-boat to ferry parishioners across the Canal. What a pilgrim image! And now the Church of the Ascension is very much an inner city congregation and has adapted to that reality in so many ways.

I have a sense that this is a deeply loyal and supportive community, well concerned about and engaged in those things required by God: “to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with God” (Micah 6:8). This parish has seen much of the history of this city, and has lived through the tumult of the last century. In the midst of this, it is a witness, and may it continue to be so. In the quest for the Kingdom of God, there are often difficult times and always a need for a generous and gentle people to establish God’s rule.

Blessings.

In the peace and grace of Jesus.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'P. Coffin'.

The Right Reverend Peter R. Coffin,  
Bishop of Ottawa.

# Foreward



*"Memory is the secret of redemption."*

*The Ba'al Shem Tov*

Like the soil in which a tree is rooted, the past grounds us and gives us a place to grow. It situates and shapes us for both good and ill. If remembered well, it can nourish us and provide wisdom as we seek to live faithfully in the present and to discern the future into which God is leading us. In a word, history matters. Recalling it and learning from it are important practices in our journey of faith. As the founder of Hasidism, The Ba'al Shem Tov, noted, "memory is the secret of redemption."

And it is in this respect that what Janet Lunn has written in the following pages is a precious gift to the people of the church whose history she tells so well. It is also a gift to the wider church, to the neighbourhood of Ottawa East, and to anyone interested in local history. Through a carefully researched and engagingly written narrative, Janet offers us the gift of memory and keeps the past from becoming a forgotten country. By tracing the life of a particular community from its beginnings in 1878 to the ways in which it seeks to embody its call at the beginning of the twenty first century, Janet provides a vignette of what God and God's people have been doing in and from Ottawa East.

On behalf of the people of the Church of the Ascension, past and present, I want to express our profound gratitude to Janet for what she has written. That she is an accomplished storyteller and historian is evident in what follows. I'm deeply appreciative also of the excellent work Annie MacTavish has done in tracking down archival photographs and laying out these pages so beautifully.

In addition, I want to offer heartfelt thanks to Linda Hauch for plying her keen editorial eye, to Karen James for her photographs, and to Mike O'Hearn for his professional advice and help in publishing.

The Reverend Doctor Gary Hauch

# Acknowledgements

Glenn Lockwood, Jack Francis and Fred Neal at the Diocesan Archives; Gary and Linda Hauch, Beatrice Rockburn, Robert Tyrrell, Lydia Allison, Karla Benoit, Jean Humphries, Priscilla Copeland, Judith Cray, William and Elizabeth Service, Karen James, Rick Wallace, Capt. (Ret'd) Herbert Sills and Michael O'Hearn.

Cover photographs by Karen James

Published by the Church of the Ascension  
253 Echo Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 1N3  
phone (613) 236-3958  
email [churchoftheascension@rogers.com](mailto:churchoftheascension@rogers.com)  
December, 2006

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written prior permission of the Church of the Ascension.

Created in Adobe® InDesign®  
Typefaces used are Oceana and Jenson

# Table of Contents

The History of a Family (Preface) .....	1
Beginnings.....	3
The New Parish.....	8
The Church of the Ascension.....	13
Depression Years .....	19
Second World War .....	22
Within our Memory .....	26
Changing Times .....	31
One Hundred Years .....	36
Present Day .....	42
Appendices	
Milestones.....	50
Timeline of Parish and Diocesan Clergy .....	51
Roll of Honour, The Great War.....	52
Roll of Honour, WWII .....	53
Bibliography .....	54

28 Millman Street,  
London, W.C.,  
July 22nd, 1878

Dear —  
Let me ask your attention to the following statement, and the accompanying endorsement by my Diocesan.

Trinity Church, Acthville (a poor suburb of Ottawa, the capital of Canada) was opened for Divine Service by His Lordship, the Bishop of Ontario on the 2nd of September, 1877, having cost — £160 0 0

For site	
" Building (Brick on stone pavement)	462 10 0
" Seating, etc.	127 10 0
Total	750 0 0

Of this amount, £110 was subscribed by personal friends of mine in Canada, and £145 has been raised by the congregation since its formation in January, 1877; leaving a debt of £495; which amount

I recommend this appeal to the liberality of Churchmen.

July 20th, 1878.

J. T. ONTARIO.

P.S. All communications may be addressed to —  
Rev. T. D. PHILLIPPS, M.A.  
Canada Buildings,  
31, Queen Victoria Street,  
London, E.C.

The necessity of the Building to pay off Contractors.

An Offertory (a little over a £ a Sunday) applied to liquidation of debt. The designed giving his services gratuitously. Divine Service is held Morning and Evening on Sundays with four Celebrations in the month, and Sunday School between the services (50 children). There being no other religious services in the village, members of other denominations attend Trinity Church, and at their children to the Sunday School; and at the first Confirmation (in April last) three denominations were represented among the candidates. These are now active lay helpers in the Church's work.

I have come to England to make an earnest appeal on behalf of this poor but promising mission. I shall be glad to supply any further information which you may desire.

Yours truly,  
THOS. D. PHILLIPPS,  
Curate, Trinity Church.

# The History of a Family

A church's history is the history of a place of worship. It is also, in a lot of ways, like a family's history, not only a chronicle of dates and events but also a collection of stories that holds its members together and gives it a collective memory. One of the difficulties in putting together this (and probably any other) church history is that it is hard to find the people and their stories behind the dry old account books and minutes of vestry meetings. It isn't any easier to discern the spiritual direction any one priest or generation of parishioners has taken. Only every once in a while is there a brief anecdote, a wry comment, a spurt of anger, of humour or joy, a sign of approval or an unexpected prayer to bring, for a moment, a person or a group sharply into focus.

However, two constants shine through the years of Ascension's records of financial ups and downs and differences of opinion about how the church should be run – from how much to pay for coal to whether or not to continue the service of evensong.

The first is that, from the beginning, our church has welcomed all comers. In a letter asking churchmen in Britain to donate money to the fledgling mission church in 1877, Thomas Phillipps, wrote, "There being no other religious service in the village, members of other denominations attend Trinity church, and send their children to the Sunday School." Mr. Phillipps, the church's first priest, had begun an outreach program long before that word had entered the English language. Throughout these one-hundred-and-twenty-five years, our church has always welcomed everyone, from Thomas Phillipps's shepherding to Gary Hauch's.

The second is really only part two of the first. When Robert Jefferson came to be priest at the church in 1916, he said that one of his chief aims was to see that the people in his congregation should know and care for one another. Arthur Caulfield said much the same thing seventeen years later, and it has been the unspoken wish of almost every priest who has served at Ascension. It is certainly true today. One of our parishioners said recently that Ascension is the first church in which he has felt he belonged, where he felt truly at home. "When I turn towards the congregation after taking communion," he said, "I see people I know, people I think of as friends."

The history of our church is a history of a collection of such friends, of a family.

## A Promising Mission

"The Offertory (a little over a £ a Sunday) is applied to liquidation of debt, the undersigned giving his services gratuitously. Divine Service is held Morning and Evening on Sunday with four Celebrations in the month, and Sunday School between the Services (50 children). There being no other religious services in the village, members of other denominations attend Trinity Church, and send their children to the Sunday School; and at the first Confirmation (in April last) three denominations were represented among the candidates. These are now active lay helpers in the Church's work.

I have come to England to make an earnest appeal on behalf of this poor but promising mission. I shall be glad to supply any further information which you may desire."

– From a letter written by Reverend Thomas Phillipps in 1878, appealing to friends in England for funds to start a church which would, in time, become the Church of the Ascension.

*Facing page: a reproduction of the historic letter written by Rev. Thomas Phillipps.*





The Ottawa River, as shown in this engraving, is the most beautiful and fertile valley in the world. The river is the lifeblood of the city, and the city is the lifeblood of the river. The river is the most beautiful and fertile valley in the world. The river is the lifeblood of the city, and the city is the lifeblood of the river.

OTTAWA





# Beginnings

## Beginnings

*Below left – Mrs. Margaret Harvey’s cows, Harvey Street at Main Street, Ottawa East*

*Below right – Hockey on the Rideau Canal, Christmas Day 1901*

*Facing page – The Silicate Brick Company, circa 1903. Sand for the bricks was brought by barge from the “Uplands Sand Pits.” The Church of the Ascension will be built just to the left of the white house in the background.*

*Overleaf – Ottawa 1908  
by J.L. Wiseman “Engraved  
according to an Act of Parliament”*

The Church of the Ascension is not the same church in the year 2006 as the church that was “opened for divine service by His Lordship, the Bishop of Ontario, on the first of September, 1877.” Not only was divine service infinitely more formal 125 years ago than it is at Ascension today, the church building was different; it was in a different location, and it had a different name.

This first church was called The Church of the Holy Trinity. It was a mission church of the diocese of Ontario built on the corner of Main Street and Echo Drive (then called Canal Drive) in the village of Archville. Before this, before there could be a church, a group of Anglican men in the community, including John Lowe (the deputy minister of Agriculture for Canada), James Webster and Dr. James Fletcher formed a committee and sent Messrs. Lowe and Bethune to the synod in Kingston to apply to have a church. They were granted permission.

With John Lowe acting as treasurer, they raised the money and bought the site for \$875.00 from Archibald Stewart after whom the village of Archville had been named. The church, the little red brick building still standing on the corner of Echo and Main, cost \$3,088.51 including furnishings – a lot of money considering that you could buy a pretty decent house in Ottawa in 1877 for about \$1000, and the collection plate yielded only between seven and eight dollars every Sunday. The congregation, which had formed itself that January, raised some of the money; some was borrowed from the bank. Thomas Phillipps, the priest of the new church, collected the rest from his friends.

*James Ballantyne /Library and Archives Canada*





Mr. Phillipps must have been a truly dedicated man because, as well as soliciting his own friends, he donated his services to the church for its first three years, and in the summer of 1878, he went to England to plead for money from churchmen there for his “poor but promising mission.” Two years later, he was earning the munificent annual stipend of \$206.26. He kept body and soul together as “a mathematical master” at the Ottawa Collegiate Institute (later Lisgar Collegiate) and by tutoring students privately. Mr. Phillipps was a popular and surely an energetic man because, in addition to his dedication to his church and his teaching, he was apparently a fine cricket player. (He was still playing cricket in his eighties).

For a few years, Holy Trinity was the only church in the village. In the letter he wrote in England to the British churchmen asking for money, Thomas Phillipps told his hoped-for supporters that he conducted divine service both morning and evening four times a month with Sunday School for fifty children in the afternoons. They were not all Anglicans.

The church served people on both sides of the canal. During its first years, the nearest bridge was at Nicholas Street. (There was a buggy and footbridge across the canal by 1910; the Pretoria Bridge was not built until 1917.) So the church kept a row-boat and hired someone to row it (at the cost of fifteen cents “ferriage”) so that the west-side members of the congregation (the larger number) could get to church during the summer months.

## Town of Archville

Although Thomas Phillipps, in his letter to the English churchmen, described it as “a poor suburb of Ottawa,” Archville was a busy, small working-class, rural railway town in 1877. It was prosperous enough to refuse to be annexed to Ottawa in 1888 when many of the surrounding communities were. That year it became the village of Ottawa East; it wasn’t annexed to Ottawa until 1907.

Ottawa East had a waterworks, sidewalks along its streets, two brickyards and maintenance shops for the Canada-Atlantic Railway (and likely a small railway station because, in those days, the train tracks into Ottawa ran along the east side of the canal and over a swing bridge to the west-side tracks and into the Canada-Atlantic station on Elgin Street). It boasted a town hall, two schools and Holy Trinity Church. Years later, an old man, reminiscing about his childhood in those early days, remembered skiing and skating (with broomsticks for hockey sticks) on the canal, in winter and swimming in a swimming hole near the end of Springhurst Avenue in summer.



## Roberta Tilton

In 1885, Mrs. Roberta Tilton and six other Ottawa women presented themselves to the Board of the Missionary Society to ask to become an official auxiliary. The board was, no doubt, delighted to grant the request, and The Women's Auxiliary was formed that year as "an Auxiliary to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society." A few years later, the W.A. became an auxiliary to the whole church. Ethel Scanlon remembered meeting Mrs. Tilton as a teenager. She remembered her as impressive – and as having a beautiful hat. Mrs. Tilton (and her beautiful hat) spoke at Holy Trinity's annual meeting of the W.A. in 1895.

Ethel Scanlon, stalwart member of the Ascension congregation, was also Ottawa WA Diocesan President in the early 1950s, later secretary of the Dominion Board and then chairwoman of the missionary personnel of the WA. In 1969, the Guild and the W.A. merged to form the Anglican Church Women.

*Facing page: Ottawa's first bishop, the Rt. Rev. Charles Hamilton*

*Above left:  
Mrs. Roberta Tilton*

*Above right:  
Reverend Thomas Phillipps,  
first Curate of Holy Trinity*



*William Topley/Library and Archives Canada*

Imagine those churchgoers from across the canal. The men would be in their Sunday suits and high, stiff collars, the women in their starched, bustled dresses, hatted and gloved, sitting upright in the boat, doing their best to keep the children from falling – or diving – overboard. Were they solemn as one always imagines nineteenth-century churchgoers to have been? Or did they view the boating exercise as a lark?

It would most certainly have been hot and uncomfortable in the little church, and more than one person would, no doubt, have prayed for Mr. Phillipps to preach a brief sermon. Conscientious man that he clearly was, he would likely have given it all he had, but he might have kept it brief as he had to preach a whole new sermon that evening before he could settle down to prepare his school lessons for the next day.

In winter, the over-the-canal parishioners could walk – or skate – to church, but the church was probably as cold then as it was hot in summer. And it was smoky. Ted Gunderson was nine years old when the church was built. He grew up in it, was married in it and later served as both peoples' warden and treasurer at Ascension. He wrote a memoir for the church's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary booklet. In it, he described the long, pot-bellied stove in Holy Trinity's early years. It stood just inside the front door, and its stovepipe right angled near the ceiling and, held in place by wire, crossed the church, presumably to vent somewhere in the sanctuary wall. As the wood was "often times green," Mr. Gunderson wrote, "it caused dense smoke, and we choked, coughed and had red eyes, and sat in smelly clothes."

Heat and cold were the least of the difficulties people had to deal with. The 1870s and '80s were hard times, in some ways, even for the rich. Diseases, for which cures have since been found, regularly carried away more than one child in a family, and old graveyards give evidence of whole families dying in a single week. No matter how smoky the church was, those winter prayers must have been fervent. And the Christmas services, when all were well, must have been joyful – and wonderful for the children. There would be the pageant and the ever-new wonder of the Christ child's birth. Then, for some, there might be the magical midnight skate over the canal.

Between 1882, when Thomas Phillipps left to settle in the United States, and 1885, when Holy Trinity became attached to St. John's on Mackenzie Avenue in Ottawa, the church was in such financial trouble and the stipend for the priest was so little, there was a succession of four priests (although the first one was only a six-months fill-in until Thomas Phillipps' successor could be appointed). All the same, Holy Trinity was a lively church with an organist, William Carter, who led a choir that Henry Pollard, the priest from St. John's, called "the best and most efficient in the county of Carleton." The church also had a branch of The Brotherhood of St. Andrew, an entertainment committee, a Working Club, and, by 1884, an active Ladies' Guild. Ten years later, it had one of the first branches of The Women's Auxiliary to the Missionary Society.

The church must have seemed as promising as Thomas Phillipps had told those British churchmen twelve years earlier because, in 1889, Mr. Pollard and thirty members of the Holy Trinity congregation met to discuss forming a parish. The result was that Holy Trinity became the parish of Archville that year with George Taylor as its priest. Still, when the annual vestry meeting was held on a rainy April evening, the vestry secretary wrote ironically in the minutes that it was held, "to the usual small attendance of six people" – one of whom was the priest (still Henry Pollard). He went on to describe a cozy scene of the six sitting around the box stove in the church basement engaged in "social converse" and "oral combat."

## A new diocese

Victoria was on the throne of Great Britain, the Earl of Dufferin was Canada's governor general, Alexander Mackenzie was our prime minister, Confederation was only ten years old, and the original parliament buildings were not fully completed when Holy Trinity first opened its doors. Ottawa, a city of 24,000, was still pretty rough. Even Sparks Street, the city's main thoroughfare, was not paved; it had wooden sidewalks, and pigs and cows still roamed freely along the street.

The diocese of Ottawa hadn't yet been formed. That happened in 1896 when it was split off from the diocese of Ontario. Dr. Charles Hamilton was transferred from Niagara to become our first bishop, and Christ Church on Sparks Street became our cathedral.



*William Topley / Library and Archives Canada*



The New Parish

# The New Parish

The new parish did not prosper at first. The congregation was so small in the 1880s that most of its organizations had dwindled and died. Within a year of taking the church, Mr. Taylor was gone, and Holy Trinity came under the care of St. Barnabas in Ottawa. Its priest, Thomas Bailey, took charge with the help of four Holy Trinity lay readers, one of whom, James Fletcher (of the original committee), was also the superintendent of the Sunday school and teacher of the Bible class.

In 1896 (the year the diocese of Ottawa was formed), Holy Trinity was independent again, and Frederick Squires became its rector.

In the nineteenth and through at least the first half of the twentieth century, churches were not only spiritual but social centres in the lives of their parishioners. They encompassed ladies' guilds, altar guilds, sewing societies and their junior "helpers," the Young Peoples' Associations, the men's clubs, the branches of the Women's Auxiliary and of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. And there were drama societies and entertainment committees to see to the lighter side of life in the church family.

Mr. Squires wanted this kind of vitality for his church. A man then in his middle years, he appears to have had plenty of energy and determination. But, by 1899, Holy Trinity's financial situation was not good. In the September minutes of that year's annual vestry meeting, Mr. Squires pointed out that "the church is in a precarious position and could be closed at any time." He offered to "take the debt of the church upon his own shoulders." He advised the "re-opening" of the Ladies Guild, the Sewing Society and other organizations – all of which had fallen away.

"With strenuous effort we would soon have our little church one of the finest little churches around," he told his parishioners and said that he hoped "to leave the church in a better state than when I found it." (All this when his own stipend was in arrears).

Things were still so bad (or worse) a year later that the parish considered asking Mr. Squires to leave. They would put the church, once more, under the care of a more prosperous parish. (The missions of Hawthorne and Leitrim, attached to the parish in 1899, were given up in 1904.)

## The Priest's Stipend

The recurring problem of the priest's stipend was not peculiar to this church. In David M. Farr's essay, "The Daughter Church in Anglicanism in the Ottawa Valley," he says about churches in the late 19th century, "Church people would finance their places of worship and their parish halls for meetings and social occasions. They would acquire their burying-grounds. But they did not feel a responsibility to pay their clergyman's stipend." That attitude plagued relationships between priest and parish well into modern times.

*Facing page: Holy Trinity's choir, "the best and most efficient in the county of Carleton." Young Theodore (Ted) Gunderson is in the front row centre; Rev. Frederick Squires is in the back row centre. Photo courtesy Anglican Diocese of Ottawa Archives.*



*Below – Preparing to raise Canadian Atlantic Railway Engine No. 33. The engine was crossing the swing bridge when it ran out of track, on account of the bridge being open at the time. The Bytown Railway Society records that the “frantic whistling of the tug Minnie Bell brought the driver to his senses,” but too late. Ascension’s church bell was probably salvaged from this wreck. The Queensway now stands at the site of the old swing bridge.*

*Facing page, top – Holy Trinity Anglican church, circa 1890. It is the oldest church in Ottawa East, and is still standing.*

Mr. Squires did not leave. He was Holy Trinity’s priest for nineteen years, and under his direction, finances were stabilized and the parish grew. The mortgage on the church was soon reduced to \$1,030, and the “reopened” Sewing Society (membership fee: seventy-five cents) made it its goal to reduce it further. (With the church’s weekly intake of between seven and eight dollars, those women really had to sew!) Fifty-four dollars was collected towards the installation of electric lights. As well, the parish women furnished the church with a new altar (since the old had been given to St. Columba in Manor Park). There was enough money now to send bales (bundles of clothing) to mission churches in the west and to support a blind boy in India.

The teen-age girls formed a junior sewing society, called The Cheerful Workers. Those girls must have taken up the challenge and thrown themselves into their work with missionary zeal because by the end of 1904, the amount of the debt was only \$376.96. (All the same, the church took out a new mortgage in 1905). That same year, the Altar Guild presented to the church three brass vases, complete with artificial flowers for the altar, paid for with money from the Guild’s bazaar. And the pennies the sixty-five Sunday school children had been saving for three years added up to enough to pay for The Good Shepherd window that is now the west window of Ascension. And the church acquired a bell.

So far, no amount of research can make the several stories (or the dates) concerning the acquisition of this bell come together. What’s certain is that the bell was a bit of serendipity that resulted from a railway accident. In his memoir, Ted Gunderson wrote that it came from a train engine that fell into the water in 1904 from the canal bridge. (The railway bridge spanned the canal



*James Ballantyne Library and Archives Canada*



just north of the footbridge). The keepers of railway lore have a record of just such an accident in 1891 and of an accident in 1907, in which the engine did not quite fall into the canal but was suspended precariously over it for several hours. Nothing in 1904.

Whichever accident it was, Joseph Leslie, one of Holy Trinity's wardens, negotiated with the Canada Atlantic Railway for the bell. He got it, and the bell was ceremoniously hoisted up into the steeple of the church, where its cheerful clang summoned the faithful every Sunday until 1967, when it was given to the church of St. Augustine in Newington.

A much more disastrous railway accident was the occasion of one of the stained-glass windows now on the west wall of Ascension. Alfred Parks, a long-time active member of the congregation, was an engine driver for the Grand Trunk Railway. When a passenger train he was driving struck a broken rail on the track between the spa at Carlsbad Springs and Hawthorne, five miles outside Ottawa, the engine capsized and the cars were derailed. Six of the twenty-two passengers were injured (among them Rural Dean George Taylor). Both the fireman and engineer Parks were scalded to death by the steam. Alfred Parks was forty-two years old. His widow and children gave the church the window in his memory.

That same year, James Fletcher died, and Captain Charles Winter took over the job of Sunday school superintendent. Dr. Fletcher was so well liked that the congregation bought the brass lectern in his memory. As well as being a founding member of Holy Trinity, he was lay reader, superintendent of Sunday

## Sunday School

In the early 1900s, the teaching of children in the church appears to have been a hit-or-miss arrangement throughout the diocese. Bishop Hamilton, in his charge in 1900 said, "Church schools are the weakest department in our churches' operations." He called for devout teachers and "text books on the Catechism and a Prayer Book suited to the ages of children." A few years later, the diocese hired three teachers from St. Christopher's Training College in England to train teachers here, but it wasn't until the 1920s that this diocese had a Sunday-school program that it was pleased with. This parish was probably blessed, as many of its members said, with Sunday school superintendents like James Fletcher and Charles Winter.



karen james

*The Good Shepherd window (detail), a gift of Holy Trinity's Sunday school students in 1905*



**Dr. James Fletcher**

On July 1st, 1887, James Fletcher was appointed the first Dominion entomologist and botanist at the brand-new Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa. He established the National Herbarium at the Farm and started a collection of insects, which grew into the now prestigious Canadian National Collection of Insects.

These are remarkable achievements for a man who had come to Canada from Britain only thirteen years earlier as a clerk for the Bank of British North America. Fletcher had soon discovered that he was not cut out to be a banker and had gone to work as an assistant at the Library of Parliament. There, he taught himself as much as there then was to learn about entomology and biology.

Dr. Fletcher (honorary doctorate from Queen's University in 1896) went on to publish many papers, co-write (with George H. Clark) the still-in-print *Farm Weeds of Canada*, and had seventeen species of butterflies and a wildlife sanctuary named after him.

What he was best noted for among his friends and colleagues, however, was his skill as a speaker and his fine sense of humour. He died in 1908 at age 56.

school and Bible-class teacher. The authors of the 1956 church history wrote about Dr. Fletcher: "Any person who came under his guidance was privileged indeed."

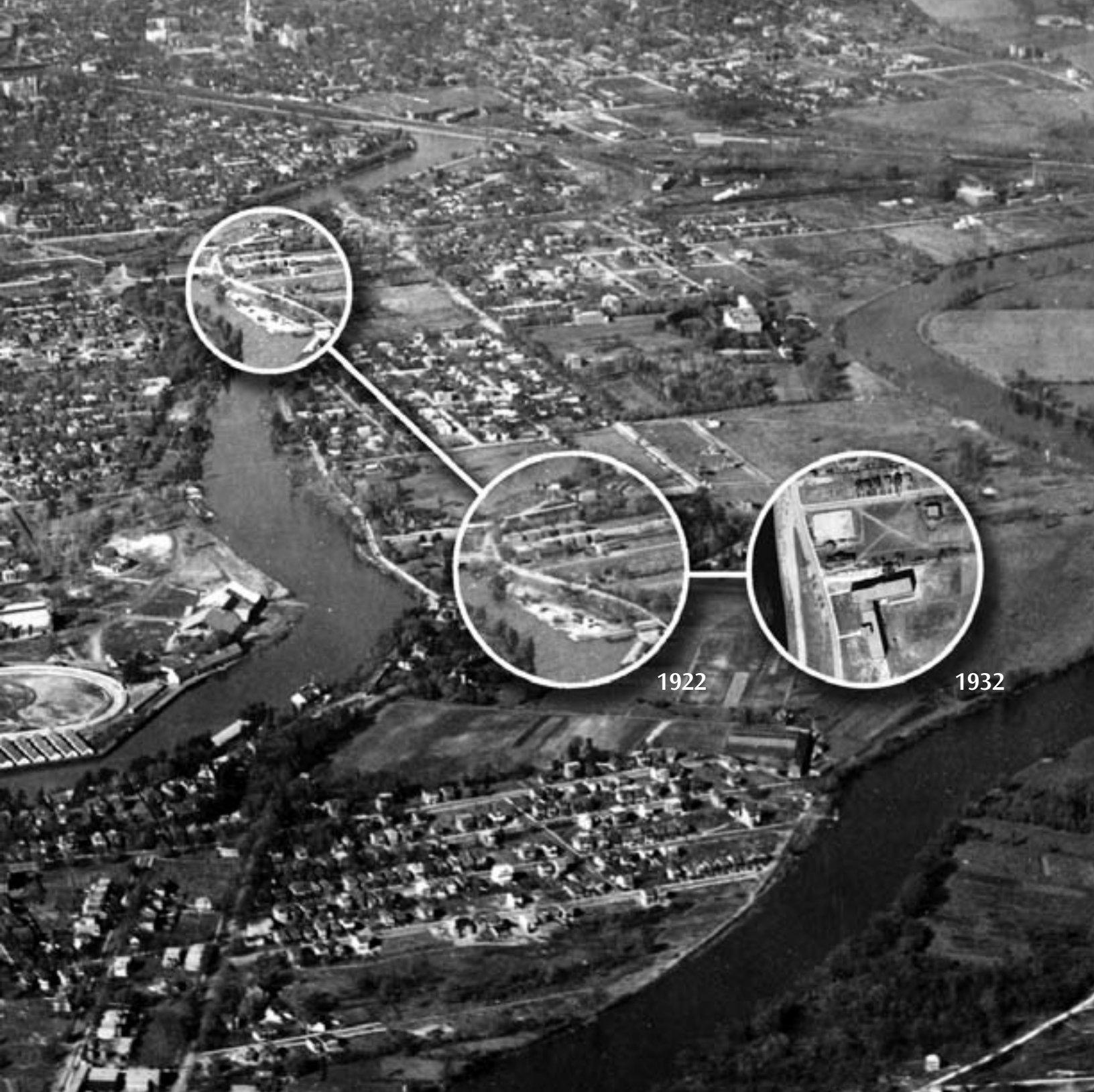
Although the church itself still wasn't very comfortable – Ted Gunderson remembered Mr. Squires delivering his sermons with his eyes closed because of the stinging smoke – the parish was better off. It now had, in addition to its other organizations, a boys club, called The Boys Brigade (complimented in one set of vestry minutes for "the improvement of the boys' conduct and bearing"), an elaborate Christmas Festival and an annual summer sports day.

Mr. Squires saw the congregation through the worry of the South African War – in which one member of the congregation, Robert Bradley, was killed; the window now on the east wall of Ascension is a memorial to him. And Mr. Squires was still Holy Trinity's priest when the First World War began in August of 1914.

But Frederick Squires' relations with his parishioners had become strained – possibly because he so often engaged in acrimonious discussions with them about his stipend. In 1915, Mr. Squires and his wife moved to an apartment on Elgin street, but by now, there was so little money that his stipend was cut from \$800 to \$600 and then to \$400. He left Ascension. In fact, the bishop (the newly elected John Charles Roper) retired him, and he left Canada to return to England to take a parish somewhere in Norfolk.

Mark Malbert, who followed him, stayed only a year, after which the bishop appointed him as full-time priest to the Ottawa Hebrew Mission. (The Anglican Hebrew Mission, begun in England, was started in Ottawa in 1906.) Mr. Malbert was a converted Jew and was eager to work among the Jewish people in Lowertown. He opened a mission house at the corner of Slater and Bank streets and worked there until 1924. But, although the mission work was continued until the early 1930s, it never had any noticeable success.





1922

1932

# Church of the Ascension

# Church of the Ascension

## The Brotherhood of St. Andrew

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew, formed in 1883 in the United States, was an international Anglican evangelizing organization. Its object was “the spread of Christ’s kingdom among men, especially young men.” Its missionary focus, in this diocese, was young men who were not churchgoers. Its members got together regularly for communion; they assisted the priest with his pastoral visiting and helped him in any way he needed. The organization is still active in many parts of the Anglican world.

The Babies Branch was established by the W.A. in 1912 to “train the child in knowledge of the church.” It became The Little Helpers in 1921.



*Previous page: An aerial photograph taken in 1922 from an R.C.A.F. flying boat shows the future site of Ascension. The inset on the left shows the church and rectory in 1935, with the newly-built Collegiate to the south, and Reverend Jefferson's tennis courts to the north.*

In 1916, Bishop Roper appointed Robert Jefferson to take over from Mark Malbert. Mr. Jefferson came to Holy Trinity from Franktown and Montague and was inducted on December 24th of that year. The bishop described him as a “young, energetic Irishman” and Wilfred Bradley (in his book *The Life and Times of John Charles Roper*) called him, “a canny, warmhearted Ulsterman” with “the mind of a Scot and the heart of an Irishman.” His coming, after the dithering of an aging, querulous Frederick Squires, was welcomed with enthusiasm. He conducted three Sunday services: 8:00 a.m. communion, 11:00 a.m. morning prayer and 7:00 p.m. evening prayer with church school, and young men’s and young women’s Bible classes in the afternoon. He led a weekly Bible study on Wednesday evenings. Baptisms were held on the first Sunday of the month and by appointment.

Robert Jefferson had a lot of innovative ideas, and he brought about what one admirer called “remarkable growth” in the parish. Clubs and organizations proliferated under his guidance. While he continually despaired of the choir (in the 1920s he was still complaining about the fact that Ascension was the “only church in the city” without a choirmaster), Sunday school flourished, the Babies Branch of the Women’s Auxiliary regularly had between twenty and thirty members (at a yearly fee of seventy-five cents). There was again a branch of The Brotherhood of St. Andrew, and the members of the Mens Club played billiards and carpet ball in tournaments with men’s clubs from other churches. Mr. Jefferson, because he wanted his parishioners to feel like a family, promoted frequent picnics and, because he was a great proponent of outdoor sports, saw to it that there was a church tennis club. After the move to the new church, he oversaw the building of a tennis court next to the church.

Patriotism was running high in these war years. After Canadian soldiers in France had captured Vimy Ridge and Courcellette from the Germans in 1917, Robert Borden’s Conservatives won the federal election on a vote for conscription. Patriotic songs were sung everywhere. War-bond drives increased in number and fervour. In churches, there were more and longer prayer vigils. Bishop Roper declared diocesan-wide days of prayer. When the department of health closed all public buildings during the





1918-19 influenza epidemic that killed so many people, the bishop was reluctant to decree that the churches were to comply, but, finally, he had to.

Despite the continuing worry about the war and the flu epidemic, there was a feeling of buoyancy at Holy Trinity. The congregation had been steadily growing, the financial situation had improved and the parish decided it needed a bigger church. A building committee was struck, planning was underway and Captain Andrew Acres, the parish treasurer, began organizing campaigns to raise money. Campaigners canvassed the parishioners and all their friends and relations. The Men's Club had dinners, the choir and the Dramatic Society put on plays, the Ladies' Guild had suppers, bazaars and rummage sales. For several years, that guild operated a booth at the Exhibition where they sold cakes, bread, jams, pickles and crafts.

*A view of the Church of the Ascension from across the canal, circa 1932 – 38. The old rectory, then just built, is to the left. Photo courtesy Anglican Diocese of Ottawa Archives.*

## Women's War Work

From the moment war was declared, posters in store fronts, banks, on posts and in railway stations were screaming that, "The Empire Needs Men," and men were answering the call. So were women: 2,800 in the Army Medical Corps, over 2,000 nursing sisters. And more and more, women were filling jobs on the home front.

As well as their work for the Red Cross and The War Council of Women, women went to work as bus and streetcar drivers, office and bank clerks, on farms, in shipyards, building submarines, in factories building airplanes and in munitions factories.

This new independence led to some surprising changes. Women began cutting off both their long hair and their long skirts – although the unending sorrow over so many soldiers and sailors being killed or wounded led most women to wear subdued colours.

More important, independence led directly to women's suffrage. Parliament passed the Wartime Elections Act in 1917, giving the vote to women serving overseas and mothers, sisters, daughters and wives of overseas soldiers. Then, on May 24th, 1918, Parliament passed into law the Canada Elections Act, that gave all women who were Canadian citizens over twenty-one the right to vote.

The war was over in November of 1918. The church was open for prayers of thanksgiving on that day. The armistice was signed on November 11th at 11:00 o'clock – and that day, Armistice Day, (now called Remembrance Day) was declared a national holiday for all the years to come. The Winter family gave the church the pulpit in thanks for the safe return of their son and daughter. The Guy family contributed to the purchase of the prayer desks in thanks for their son's safe return; the Boscall family contributed to the prayer desks in memory of a husband and father who were killed.

By the following summer, the Holy Trinity congregation had amassed enough money to buy "three lots south of the Ottawa East bridge" (at a cost of \$4,000). Amid the relief and the prayers of thankfulness, Archdeacon Arthur Mackay turned the first sod for the new church in June of 1919. (Mr. Mackay had been Holy Trinity's priest back when it had been under the care of St. John's.)

Then, on Saturday, the 27th of September, the bishop, the rector, the wardens, visiting clergy and the congregation formed behind a "colourful" banner anchored between two "ornate staves"







and solemnly processed to the new site. Bishop Roper gave a speech in what Ted Gunderson described as his “pure, deep baritone voice” and laid the cornerstone for the new church. Mr. Gunderson never forgot it (one reason being that it was his 21st birthday).

According to Charles Winter (by then Colonel Winter) who wrote the church’s 1944 commemorative pamphlet, the old church was “advantageously disposed of by sale.” (There are records and letters to say that attempts were made to sell it in 1925, but there doesn’t seem to be a record of an actual sale until 1977 when it was sold to the Portugese Community Association, which still owns it.)

The new church, to be called The Church of the Ascension, was dedicated on the feast of the Annunciation, Maundy Thursday, March 25th, 1920. The name change was at Bishop Roper’s recommendation. The diocese of Ottawa already had Trinity Church on Bank Street in Ottawa South, which was older than Holy Trinity (by a year), and he wanted to avoid confusion. The total cost of the new church, according to Colonel Winter, was \$23,000. Insurance for it was so hard to get that quite a few members of the Advisory Board (later the parish council) took out one- thousand-dollar life-insurance policies, naming the church as beneficiary.

*Above left: Rt. Rev. John Charles Roper; Above right: Rt. Rev. Robert Jefferson, priest of Ascension from 1916 to 1927.*

*Facing page: Members of the Womens’s Canadian Club prepare comforts for troops overseas.*

**From the *Church of the Ascension Parish Magazine*,  
April, 1925**

"The finance committee decided to ask the Congregation for a generous Easter offering for the Coal Fund this year. We owe \$236 on this season's coal, and we believe this can be met. Already two members have offered \$10 each toward it. We are sure there will be many more generous givers."

But, on the same page of the magazine there is a little fictional exchange between "The Church Warden and Mr. Touchy" that goes like this:

Mr. Touchy to the church warden:  
"..you are surely not so hard up that you need to waste a two-cent stamp asking for a mere dollar."

Church Warden to Mr. Touchy:  
"Let me ask you a straight question. Do you want to have a church or not? I fear, Mr. Touchy you are like a lot more people; you want the Church, but you never think seriously how it is to be kept up."

In the scene that followed, the church warden managed to persuade Mr. Touchy to pay.

There is no record to show whether or not everyone in the congregation gave \$10 to the Coal Fund.



The church bell (the old train-engine bell) was moved from the old to the new building, as were the organ, the lectern, the pews, other minor furnishings and the memorial windows. While much of the church's interior was still rough, Mr. Jefferson and his congregation began at once to worship in it.

In 1923, the parish council decided to buy the two lots next to the church for a rectory and a new parish hall and, for the time being, took out a three-year lease on 223 Echo Drive (at the corner of Hawthorne and Echo), the rector's then residence. In the meanwhile, work on the existing parish hall and the church interior was being completed. The Men's Club, under the direction of their president G. C. Armstrong, did the actual work and paid for the materials with the proceeds from a play it was putting on. The hall and the sanctuary floor were both finished by Christmas.

In Ascension's first year, the parish started a monthly magazine called "The Church of the Ascension Parish Magazine," founded by the Young People's Association and published by the Men's Club. It was an ambitious project, professionally printed and paid for with ads and subscriptions at one dollar a year. It contained a regular rector's letter, plus reports of organization meetings and synopses of vestry meetings.

Not long afterwards, Henry Humphries, active Men's Club member, started a scout troop (the 29th Troop), which was active all through the 1920s. It lapsed in the early '30s, was re-activated in the forties (by Ted Dane, Jack Hayes and Arthur (Art) Humphries), but it didn't really flourish again until the 1970s and '80s.

In May of 1927, when Robert Jefferson left to become the priest at St. Matthew's in the Glebe, there were 235 families in the parish (about 900 people) with 250 children in the Sunday school. The parish had its 50th anniversary that year.



Depression Years





*Above: the congregation poses for a group photo outside the church. Reverend Francis Wimberly, Ascension's priest from 1927 – 1935, is at the far right side of the back row, wearing a hat and collar.*

## Depression Years

The New York Stock Exchange crash that started the Great Depression happened in the fall of 1929. The “bad times,” when so many people were out of work and so many had to rely on soup kitchens for their only sustenance, lasted for ten years. The plea for money, for parishioners to support their church, a running theme through the church’s whole history, has never been more poignant than in these Depression years. There was never a “fixed charge for sitting” in Ascension’s pews but, as Francis Wimberly said at one annual vestry meeting, “donations are hoped for.” Wistful words. Mr. Wimberly, who succeeded Robert Jefferson as priest, donated part of his \$200-per-year stipend to the church in 1932, and, at some point in the mid 1930s, Ted Gunderson, then parish treasurer, had to go to the bank to borrow money to pay the arrears owed to the coal company and to Mr. Wimberly. The bank manager was reluctant to lend the church the \$1,000 without collateral. In his memoir, Mr. Gunderson wrote, “I explained our people were faithful and the property was actually backed by the diocese of Ottawa. I also advised them I had a new automobile and I would put this up as collateral.” He got the loan. The coal dealer and the reverend both got their money.

Straightaway, Mr. Gunderson suggested to the Advisory Board that “in order to offset further embarrassment” every household have a box, to be called “the fuel box,” in which to put a penny every day. Coal cost between seven and eight dollars a ton per year so, “With the hope of \$3.65 from every box at the end of the year,” there would be “ample” to pay for the coal. (He did not mention how the priest’s stipend was to be paid.) The first year brought in \$400, so the penny-a-day system was followed until both the church and the rectory were converted to oil. (What poor Mr. Wimberley – or Adrian Bender who succeeded him in 1935 – lived on is anybody’s guess.)

Impoverished though so many of them were, Ascension’s people supported one another through those rough times, and they created times of fellowship. The prayer circle, the Dramatic Society, the Men’s Club, The Brotherhood of St. Andrew, the Women’s Auxiliary were all active, and Mr. Jefferson’s tennis club was still going strong. (As late as 1940, at the annual vestry meeting, there was a heated discussion about the morality – or the propriety – of tennis being played “on the Sabbath.”) The Babies Branch, now called Little Helpers, was active (At one annual party, there were twenty-two mothers, thirty-eight children, nine W.A. members and four visitors. The two cakes cost forty-five cents, the cookies, thirty- six cents). The Sunday school was thriving, as was the Young People’s Association; there were active Boy Scout and Cub Scout troops, and, the Depression notwithstanding, a rectory was built in 1932 on the land that had been bought nine years earlier. It cost \$5,000, money raised over twelve years by the Ladies’ Guild. There was money enough to keep up Ascension’s portion of the diocesan’s mission fund and to send bales to the mission churches in the west and to the Arctic. (The prairie drought is described in one vestry account as, “the western difficulty.”)

Francis Wimberley (an Englishman who had, early on, been in mission churches in western Canada and came to Ascension from North Gower) was a strong leader and a kind man about whom one of his parishioners said, “that the parish survived [the Depression] and the activities continued was in no small way due to his leadership.” Mr. Wimberley left in 1935, and Adrian Bender came from Pakenham to succeed him. Mr. Bender saw the parish through the last years of the Depression, the Second World War and the church’s 90th anniversary.

## Charles Francis Winter

Charles Winter was born in Montreal. He grew up in Prescott. He went to England when he was seventeen and joined the 1st Battalion, 7th Royal Fusiliers. He was a soldier for the rest of his working life. He came back to Canada in 1883, joined the Governor General’s Foot Guards in Ottawa, served as colour-sergeant with the Guards Company of Sharpshooters during the Northwest Rebellion in 1885 and was wounded at the battle of Cut Knife Hill.

Winter fought in the South African War with the Royal Canadian Regiment, was later transferred to the Canadian Permanent Staff in Ottawa and, still later, appointed Military Secretary, Headquarters. He retired in 1921 with the rank of Brigadier-General. In 1931, General Winter published *The Hon. Sir Sam Hughes: Canadian War Minister, 1911–1916*, a biography of an old South African fellow soldier and one of Canada’s most colourful characters.

Charles Winter died in 1946 at the age of eighty-three.



William Topley / Library and Archives Canada



Second World War





## Second World War

The Second World War began in September 1939 and lasted until August 1945. Adrian Bender wrote in the 1944 commemorative booklet for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the laying of Ascension's cornerstone that, "about one hundred young men and women from Ascension are either in training or overseas. Some are prisoners of war, some have laid down their lives in the cause of humanity."

Mr. Bender seems to have been a kind man and a hard working one. He was also keen on the war effort. He had been a soldier in the First World War and, almost from the start of this war, served as a military chaplain in Ottawa. At Ascension, he oversaw the Christmas boxes and the regular parcels of candy, food, paper and cigarettes that went to the service men and women in Europe and the Far East. An appeal from the Red Cross had the girls and women of the church knitting and sewing again for those in the armed forces and for people in "distressed areas" in Europe and Asia. In the 1944 booklet, Mr. Bender referred to this work when he wrote, "The Church of the Ascension, like most churches, owes more than is generally realized to the loyal and untiring efforts of

*Above: group portrait of Sunday school teachers*

*Front row – Mr. Gunderson, Mrs. E. Scanlon, Betty Chatterton, Kay Scanlon*

*Second Row – Mr. Burton, Brenda Plett, Rev. Bender, Edith Lawrence, Mr. Plett*

*Back Row – Winnie Roach, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Plett, Mrs. Gunderson, Mrs. Patterson, and Irma Hogan*

*Facing Page:*

*Just married – Jean and Arthur Humphries come down the aisle at Ascension in 1945. Photo courtesy Mrs. Jean Humphries.*





*Above: The 29th Scout Troop on Church Parade, February, 1943. Photo courtesy Ted Dale.*

*Above right: Choristers on the church steps sometime during the war years. Rev. Bender is in the back row, but who is the mysterious man plunging through the choir at the top left?*



its women members." The church family prayed for peace and, once again, sang fervently "Eternal Father Strong to Save" and "Oh God Our Help in Ages Past."

In the meanwhile, the every-day life of the church went on. Mr. Bender left to become the priest at Trinity in Ottawa South, and Arthur Caulfield came to Ascension.

September 27th, 1944 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the laying of Ascension's cornerstone. To celebrate, on the day of the anniversary, there was a service of commemoration; Charles Winter (now Brigadier General Winter) wrote a brief history for the memorial booklet; and the parish established a "Jubilee Fund" to raise \$52,500 to retire the mortgage. (General Winter died in 1946. He had been, according to Bishop Jefferson, "a tower of strength" throughout his many years, first at Holy Trinity and then at Ascension as Sunday-school superintendent and rector's warden. He was remembered with great affection by everyone in the parish.)

Peace was declared in Europe on May 8th, 1945. There was a special service of thanksgiving at Ascension that day, and the church was open all day for those “wishing to offer private devotions” over the souls of the seven servicemen killed in the war or of thanksgiving for those who would soon be coming home. The Emerson family gave the church the silver ciborium in memory of their son Harry. One Sunday, soon afterwards, Mr. George Bebbe put a fifty-dollar war bond on the collection plate with a note that read, “to the glory of God and in thankfulness of peace.”

The war ended in the Far East in August. That fall, there was a joyful reception for the returning veterans and, not long afterwards, a tea for their war brides. In October, there was a day of national thanksgiving. At Ascension, people were talking about a memorial to the war dead, a plaque with their names and an honour roll with the names of all who had taken up military service.

Foreign missionary work had been more or less suspended during the war. However, now, while the work was gradually being resumed, a lot of that missionary energy was going towards getting food and clothing to the orphaned and the destitute in Europe, to the refugees pouring into Canada and to local people in desperate need.

## Missions and Schools

Through the work of the Board of Domestic and Foreign Missions, the Canadian Church took over the financial support of the “Indian and Eskimo schools” from the British church; the Anglican Forward Movement, largely a fund raiser, was formed as a result. Money from Ascension went to church work in Africa, the West Indies and the Diocese of the Arctic. In 1902, the B.D.F.M. became The Missionary Society of the Canadian Church which, in 1979, joined with societies in other commonwealth countries to become the International Church Society.

*Left: Church of the Ascension’s own Hockey team, wearing their COTA jerseys. The team was organized by Herbert (Herb) Sills in 1948.*

*Front row: Brian Kilrea (future coach of the Ottawa 67’s), John Robertson, Bruce and Garry Hamilton, Billy Ogilvie  
Back row: Don Poulin, Dave Wilkinsin, Herb Sills (coach), David Drew*



*Photo courtesy Capt. (Ret'd) Herbert Sills*



Within Our Memory

# Within Our Memory

There are people in our church now who were here when Arthur Caulfield was priest. (He married Jean and Arthur Humphries in 1945). They remember him as a quiet, somewhat straight-laced, but good man. Mr. Caulfield was in his thirties when he came, a man still full of energy who had been assistant priest at the Cathedral for four years before coming to Ascension. He had good organizational abilities, and, as well, he felt keenly the need for “the growth in the things of the spirit.” Like Robert Jefferson, he considered it essential for “all the people in the parish to know each other.”

For this reason, he initiated the Ascension branch of The Church Year Fellowship in 1946 (a movement established in the Diocese of Toronto) and introduced a system of “sacrificial giving” to try to do away with having to raise money with bazaars, bake sales and the like. Reminiscent of the fuel boxes of a few years earlier, each member of the Fellowship was to put aside one cent a day over and above his/her regular giving. The priest took the special envelope to the fellowship member every week and, in this way, not only ensured the giving, but also kept in close touch with his parishioners. The Fellowship met once a month, and every year there was a Festival of Light service on the eve of the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the temple (then still called the Purification of St. Mary the Virgin).

In his time, the vestry agreed to buy the two lots north of the church for \$3500.00, (and after repeated requests, agreed to fix the rectory’s garage doors so that Mr. Caulfield could get his car into the garage).

Earlier, when he’d been at St. Peter’s Mission on Merivale Road, Mr. Caulfield had helped set up the Anglican Young Peoples’ Association there. Later, he became president of the Diocesan Sunday School Association, and he always involved himself in work with young people. (This was a good thing because his introduction to the parish had been to deal with church-hall windows that “the boys from St. Patrick’s next door had broken, a problem that regularly plagued his years at Ascension). Mr. Caulfield left Ascension in 1950 to be the priest at St. James in Perth.

*Facing page: The church choir, about 1946. Among them are Margaret Rowles, Chrissie Tucker, Mr. and Mrs. Holland, Ralph Dale, Grace Welsh, Marion Rollinson, Kathleen Scanlon and Rev. Arthur Caulfield.*

*Below: Reverend Richard Crossley, taken outside the church. Photo courtesy Herbert Sills.*





## The Anglican Young People's Association

The Anglican Young People's Association, begun in 1902, was intended to help keep young adults in the fold by encouraging people from eighteen to twenty-four to be active in their churches. It was founded on four principles: work, worship, edification and recreation, and gatherings in early years had such things as lantern-slide shows, mock-parliament sessions, amateur dramas and snow-shoe tramps. After the beginning of WWII, with so many young people overseas, the AYPAs age was lowered; it became a teen organization, and in 1940, the Chi Rho Fellowship was started for the twenty-to-thirty-year olds.



*Above: A.Y.P.A. night in the parish hall, about 1941. Herb Sills recalls that "the teenagers and Bill Cairney would set up his phonograph system. Someone would roll out the indoor lawn bowling carpet and our Saturday night would begin – no food or drinks. Later, several would walk down Echo Drive to the Scanlon's for a coke. Mr. Scanlon was a cigar smoker, and we loved the smell in their house."*

Richard Crossley was quite different from Arthur Caulfield. Mr. Crossley was an Englishman who had been camp chaplain at Petawawa, as well as priest in Matawa and Chalk River. Both he and his wife Elva are still remembered as being kind and friendly by those in the present congregation who were children when he was here. Those who were adults remember, too, that he was very understanding, a man to whom one could take troubles and be guaranteed a real listener. He was also gifted with a great sense of humour and would startle his congregation with swift, sharp remarks when he found them dozing during his sermons. While there were those in the congregation who felt that he was sometimes not sufficiently aware of the dignity his position demanded, most enjoyed his wit. (One newspaper reporter called one of Mr. Crossley's sermons "pungently expressive.")

Mr. Crossley led the church through the difficult post-second-world-war years. The Depression was over, but Canada was suffering from a staggering war debt, and few people were well off. Ascension's parishioners still sent bales to people inside the country (the diocese still sends bales to the north) and every Christmas sent a Christmas box to a priest and his family in England where rationing was still very strict.

In 1950, one of the Crossleys' three children, their teen-aged daughter Patricia, became very ill, and her Ottawa doctor wanted to send her to Boston for treatment. It was going to be very expensive. The congregation collected enough money for both the trip and the treatment. Patricia recovered, and the grateful Crossleys gave the church the small window on the north side of the chancel as a thanks offering.

In 1952, the year King George the sixth died, the parish finally decided on a memorial to the two world wars. The memorial was a splendid electric organ, a Wurlitzer with a chimes attachment that could be played through the old bell tower under the memorial spire. (This was when the old railway-engine bell was given to St. Augustine's in Newington).

Three years later, after the candlelight service on Christmas Eve, the church mortgage was finally retired in a joyful ceremony in the church hall. The congregation gathered around Ted Gunderson who held a large plate. The paid-up mortgage agreement was put on the plate. Mrs. Teague (the organist) lit a match and set fire to it – to much applause.



There was a much more solemn ceremony the next spring when the church was consecrated by Bishop Ernest Reed. This took place on the evening of May 9th. The petition for consecration was presented to the bishop at the church door by Mr. Crossley and wardens D.A. Edgar and W. Boland. The bishop accepted it with the words, "Brethren, if this be your desire, and the desire of the parishioners, we will now proceed to the act of consecration." The wardens, rector and bishop, followed by the rest of the congregation, proceeded from there into the church and up the aisle to the chancel as they said the twenty-fourth psalm, "The Earth is the Lord's and all that is therein."

Then the bishop proceeded with the service of consecration, saying these words just before the final blessing:

"Blessed be Thy Name, O Lord God, for that it pleaseth thee to have thy habitation among the sons of men, and to dwell in the midst of the assembly of the saints upon earth. Bless, we beseech thee, the religious service of this day, and grant that, in this place now set apart to thy service, thy holy name may be worshipped in truth and purity to all generations. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Mr. Crossley served in this church for another six years. (N.B., he finally got Arthur Caulfield's new garage.) Alfred Anderson replaced him in 1961 but died after only four and a half months. Edwin Allsopp, who replaced Mr. Anderson, was here for ten years. All anyone seems to remember about him now is that he was very proper, not much fun and a rather fussy, "little old man."



*Above left: scene from "The Shooting of Dan McGrew," a fundraiser put on in the parish hall. Herb Sills and Jack Slater are playing cards; Arthur Humphries, in his wife's dress, is "the lady that's known as Lou."*

*Above right: Reverend Crossley is the piano player at the "Malamute saloon." Photos courtesy Capt. (Ret'd) Herbert Sills.*



## Changing Times



# Changing Times

The western world was changing rapidly. The threat of nuclear war was ever present, but, at the same time, there was exciting new technology. There were new goods – lots of them – and there was a feeling in Canada that the possibilities for prosperity were endless. God no longer seemed relevant to the lives of a great many people. Books like Pierre Berton's *The Comfortable Pew*, saying that the church had become more ritual than substance, were very popular. Furthermore, church was no longer at the centre of social life, nor was belonging to a church necessary for social status, as it had once been. And, as Bernard Barrett points out (in his article "The Future: Celebration, Repentance and Vision in Anglicanism in the Ottawa Valley"), the church wasn't sure how to respond to the sexual, political and social changes that were taking place in Canadian society and, too often, simply did not respond. Church attendance was falling off across the country.

But, as more than one critic has pointed out, Anglicans are very cautious. While, gradually, women were being ordained, and there was a new prayer book in the '70s, most parishes were doing their best to keep the faithful within the fold by responding only in small ways to the changing times. Very slowly, priestly authority was giving way to more lay involvement – lay people were chairing annual vestry and advisory board (now called the parish council) meetings – and parish councils were including women.

Clubs and associations were being encouraged. At Ascension, there was a branch of Chi Rho; the Bible Society branch was still active and so was The Church Year Fellowship with its Advent Service of Light. There was a senior citizens' club, in conjunction with The Church of the Canadian Martyrs and the Wesley United Church, called the Wednesday Club. John and Priscilla Copeland and William Brook were leading active Boy Scout troops and wolf cub packs at Ascension. There was a Married Couples Club whose members made gifts to the church (among which were dishes for parish suppers) and had evenings of religious films and card parties.

Social events included swimming at the Chateau Laurier pool and a Valentine Dance in the church hall at which 29 people showed up for ballroom and square dancing and a smorgasbord (served by Elizabeth [Betty] Service).

## The Comfortable Pew

In the summer of 1963, the Anglican Church of Canada asked Pierre Berton (at that time a crusading young journalist) to write "a critical look at christianity and the religious establishment."

By 1965, *The Comfortable Pew* was in print, though hardly universally acclaimed. In chapters like "Was God Really on Our Side," "The Casting Out of the Outcasts" and "Pretensions to Absolute Rightness," Burton measured the norms and mores of contemporary ecclesiastical institutions against the original values of Christianity – though he did acknowledge that the social activism described in the gospels would raise eyebrows in the twenty-first century:

"What would be the general attitude, for instance, to a man who drove the modern userers from their temples on Bay or King or Yonge Streets in Toronto? Suppose a man of the cloth stormed into the posh offices of one of the several loan companies, whose rates on second mortgages or automobiles have gone higher than thirty per cent, smashed their furniture and drove them from the premises with a whip? ...How would society treat such men? How would their congregations view them? What would the law do? And how many parishioners would visit their pastor if they had to meet him in the local jail or the local mental home?"

## Women in the diocese

In both 1958 and 1959, the Annual Diocesan meeting of the Women's Association requested the Synod of Ottawa to admit women. They were turned down both times. A few days after the 1959 Synod on Trinity Sunday, Ottawa mayor, Charlotte Whitton (a devout Anglican), gave a speech. "Nine flourishing dioceses in Canada admit women to Synod, in full voting equality" she boomed, "But Ottawa continues quaint. How quaint! Her Majesty the Queen may be anointed as the deputy governor on earth of the Anglican Church, but she couldn't enter or vote on putting a levy on Ottawa parishes to lift the debt..." The Diocese of Ottawa did not admit women to its synod until 1967.



*Above: Charlotte Whitton*

The church hall was renovated in 1966. Then, in 1967, the parish celebrated Canada's 100th birthday and its own 90th. Ascensiontide, 1967 brought forth a commemorative booklet, a week of social evenings and special Eucharist and Evensong services preached by visiting priests, two of whom, Robert Jefferson and Arthur Caulfield, had served at Ascension. On the evening of May 4th, the Feast of the Ascension, Bishop Reed celebrated confirmation and dedicated the "light-weight, pre-fabricated spire with cupola," which the parish had bought to mark the anniversary. The dinner afterwards was held in Canadian Martyrs' parish hall.

There were 115 families and 84 individuals and 60 Sunday school students enrolled in the parish that year, but, by 1970, the rolls were way down. (However, the congregation was active enough in 1969, when the city planned to take down the Pretoria Bridge and create wider roadways, that, with Canadian Martyrs, it sent a letter of opprobrium.) Evensong was discontinued because of poor attendance, and a year later, church membership was so low that the vestry was actually talking about possibly uniting with Wesley United. In fact, church attendance was so poor throughout the diocese that in 1971, for the first time in its history, the diocese had a budget deficit.

At a vestry meeting that year, Mr. Robert Phillips (a hospitable man who always opened his summer home in the Gatineau for church picnics) suggested that, since other churches were doing it, a "half an hour get-together over a cup of coffee [after the Sunday morning service] will have far-reaching benefits." Vestry considered it "a splendid idea," the experiment was successful, and coffee hour at Ascension became, for a brief time, an accepted practice.

Church attendance continued to decline. Coffee hour was abandoned. There were only five children left in Sunday school, so Ascension children joined with Wesley United Church's children for their weekly teaching. The guild room was rented to Carleton University for French classes twice a week at a fee of eighty dollars a month, and some of the church's parking space was rented out. At the annual vestry meeting, Mr. Allsopp exhorted his parishioners to "search your hearts to see how you can help the church."



On Ascension Day in May 1971, the Church Year Fellowship celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, and Bishop Robinson celebrated a Eucharist of thanksgiving. Later that year, the church chimney was struck by lightening (for which nobody was thankful). In spite of the poor church membership, money was found to repair the chimney, to contribute to church work in Africa, India and the Diocese of the Arctic and to share the \$750 cost of landscaping between the church and Carleton University. (Carleton was then where Immaculata high school is now.)

Edwin Allsopp retired in September of 1972. His replacement, Gerald Shaw, presided briefly over a not only declining, but aging congregation. A chartered accountant before his ordination, Mr. Shaw had been secretary-treasurer for the diocese of Calgary and parish priest in Winnipeg. He was a good manager, fiscally prudent and, by all reports, a good priest, a man with strong spiritual direction.

He tried to steer his congregation towards a greater spirituality. In one sermon, he echoed the criticism so many outside the church were leveling at it: "We are constantly confusing commitment to Christ and his Church with what we think is loyalty to tradition..." He wanted to add an outdoor Eucharist to the annual picnic, and he wanted every third Sunday (at least) to be a celebration of the Eucharist, instead of the once-a-month celebration which was conventional in Anglican churches at that time.

*Above left: Douglas (Doug) Edgar and Arthur (Art) Crook at a church picnic.*

*Douglas Edgar was the Church's lay reader for 37 years and conducted the morning service when the rector was away. Despite being one of only two coal mine inspectors for the National Coal Board, he faithfully attended all services, morning and evening. He died in 1990, just one year after his wife Elsie. Photo courtesy William Service.*

*Above right: Anglican Youth Camp. The diocese closed Camp Pontiac in 1968. The site is now owned by Tim Hortons' Children's Foundation.*



*Previous page: Sunday worship at Ascension in the seventies.*

*Above: Church of the Ascension in the early 1960s. The church stopped keeping flags after the fire in 1989. Photo courtesy Anglican Diocese of Ottawa Archives.*

Mr. Shaw's private life was not as well regulated or as spiritual as his public one, however. There was a scandal, then a divorce and, after only two years, the bishop decided that Gerald Shaw had to go.

During the brief Shaw sojourn, there were a significant number of accomplishments: the rectory was renovated; a new roof was put on the church; the vestry phone was installed; the ambry light was donated; the parish bought the new red hymn books (although fifty old prayer books and hymnals were kept, "just in case..."); there was a daycare in the hall during the week; and there were no more "special" envelopes. Mr. Shaw did not want his parishioners to allocate their money for specific purposes; he felt that, if the church was important to them, then all of its work should be equally important.

Their priest was very well liked at Ascension, and the parish was loath to give him up, but the bishop was adamant. Ascension's congregation had dwindled to twenty or thirty souls, and the few children in Sunday school were still with the children at Wesley United. Before he left, Mr. Shaw advised his parishioners to consider where they were, "in their spiritual walk,"



and, because there were so few of them and so many were already past middle age, to think hard about what sort of a man they were looking for in their next priest.

(After leaving Ascension, Mr. Shaw took a four-year leave of absence, then had a parish in Gaspé and later served in an Episcopalian church in Florida.)

In 1974, Bruce Olsen was appointed priest, possibly to oversee the closing down of the church. An American, Mr. Olsen had started his ministry as a Baptist and worked in New York among street people. He had come to Ottawa to study theology at St. Paul's University, and he was still a deacon when he came to the church. (He was priested at the Cathedral during his incumbency). He was both a triumph and a disaster for Ascension. He was a splendid – if long-winded – preacher. He performed exorcisms, encouraged glossolalia and, according to one parishioner, “kept the church in such an uproar that the noise from the singing and shouting could be heard across the canal.” He held two services every Sunday morning, a special charismatic service on Sunday evenings and a Friday night Bible study. He established a permanent “office of evangelism” with Geoffrey Blake, the rector’s warden, as chair and invited missionaries to the church to “evangelize” (with not everyone in the parish in agreement).

Parishioners who disliked the charismatic services left the church. Others, who had left the church earlier, came back. And people came from all over the city for the charismatic fellowship. The pews were not long enough to hold them all, and chairs had to be set up in the aisles. Church attendance in the mid-1970s was regularly around 200 people, and there were usually between 100 and 150 people at the Sunday-evening services.

During Mr. Olsen’s eight years at Ascension, the public address system was installed; the heating system was changed from oil to gas; the red hymn books were sold and the 1938 Book of Common Praise installed; and, in 1975, a small organ, to be used downstairs, was bought from St. Aidan’s for \$300. The big, memorial organ in the church sanctuary ceased to function and was replaced in 1980.

*Below: Reverend Bruce Olson.*

*According to Reverend Gary Hauch, “That some truly wonderful things happened under Bruce’s ministry is a given; people came to know Jesus in life transforming ways, others were healed physically, and in some cases, marriages were saved.”*





One Hundred Years

# One Hundred Years

In 1977 the church celebrated one hundred years of service. The centennial committee, headed by Arthur Humphries (son of the Henry Humphries who had been a key member of the church from its first days), organized six months of celebrations during which, once a month, former rectors preached at Ascension. (Unfortunately, Richard Crossley died that January and Edwin Allsopp was too ill to preach.) The celebrations culminated in the week-long “Ascensiontide” festivities from May 15th to the 22nd with a special service on the 19th, Ascension Day.

There was a new reredos behind the high altar and the memorial plaque in the narthex of the church. There were commemorative pens and silver spoons and a booklet was published that included a message from Bishop Robinson, Charles Winter’s brief history of the church and Ted Gunderson’s memoir. There was plenty of newspaper coverage of the events.

Bruce Olsen took the service; Bishop Robinson preached the sermon; the “gentlemen and boys of St. Matthews choir” sang a choral Eucharist and the anthem “Thy Church, O God” (after which they, their choirmaster and Alan Crabtree, the Ascension organist, were supplied supper by the Hitman caterers in the Wesley United Church hall – turkey a-la-king plus tea and coffee). The dinner for the congregation and guests, afterwards, on “a first-come-first-serve basis,” cost \$5.00 a person.

Bruce Olsen was at Ascension for five more years. He left abruptly in 1982 (for reasons unknown, Olsen had his license to preach in the Anglican church revoked, but he continued a charismatic ministry under another rubric). With him went all but twelve of his congregation.

For several months after he left, there were fill-in priests trying to give heart to the tiny, bewildered congregation. Finally three of Ascension’s stalwart parishioners, Lydia Allison, Richard (Dick) Goodwin and Maisie Stevenson went to Bishop Robinson to insist that he find them a full-time priest.

“What kind of a priest do you want?” the bishop asked, but, as one of the delegates said later, “he already had a man in mind.”

That man was Arthur Brewer, a chaplain at the hospital in Smith’s Falls. Mr. Brewer was everything Mr. Olsen was not. He

## Diocese celebrates 75 year anniversary

In 1971, the Diocese of Ottawa celebrated 75 years and the Anglican Church Women wrote a poem notable for such verses as:

“When Grandma went to Sunday  
worship/Seventy-five years ago,  
She likely used a horse and rig  
to take her to and fro.

To church on Sunday all would go,  
The whole family all in a row  
With pew reserved from friend  
or foe./It was the thing to do.”



*Above: Lydia Allison, long-time church warden, pours at the rectory tea.*

*Facing page: Parishioners release balloons to commemorate the centennial, Ascensiontide, 1977.*



*Above left: Reverend Brewer with his mother, welcoming guests to a centennial "Tea at the Rectory."*



*Above right: Arthur Crook and Arthur Humphries, wielding spatulas.*

was punctilious, traditional (away went the BAS, back came the BCP) and considered by some to be completely humourless. Others were devoted to him. While he was apparently not inclined to the high church, he was very particular about his priestly robes and he liked to be addressed as Father Brewer. He was not married; his mother lived with him, kept house for him and had definite ideas about how things should be done (She told the rector's warden when she came not to let her son choose the hymns). He was a first-rate administrator, and, although, like many priests in the 1980s, he wasn't keen to pay the diocese its apportionment (the assessment for nine months was over \$30,00.00), he did pay the \$10,000.00 owing that Mr. Olsen had refused to pay.

Most of the parishioners who had left Ascension during its charismatic days came back. Among them were Arthur and Jean Humphries who had been and were again strong supporters of the church. (Arthur became the lay reader, Jean returned to the Altar Guild and to sing in the choir). John and Priscilla Copeland returned to continue their work with the Beavers (who met regularly in the church hall), Cubs and Boy Scouts. (In 1980, Priscilla was honoured by Scouts Canada for "distinguished service to Scouting" and again in 1991 for "especially distinguished service").

William (Bill) and Elizabeth (Betty) Service had never left. Lydia Allison, who had never left, spent the next twenty years as the Rector's Warden. Maisie Stevenson and her daughter Karla,



neither of whom had left, continued to serve, Maisie as head of the Altar Guild. (Those who remember Mrs. Stevenson say of her that she worked devotedly and always “for the glory of God.”) As a mark of the times, it was in these years that women’s given names began to appear in accounts of vestry and parish council meetings – Judith Tyrell, Jean Humphries, Gertie Mackett, Maisie Stevenson, Karla Stevenson, Priscilla Copeland, Muriel Hogan – all had their contributions faithfully recorded under their own given names. (Until this time, women in the church were always referred to as Mrs. followed by their husbands’ names.)

By the mid-1980s, the old rectory was badly in need of repair, and it was standing on what was now a large and valuable piece of property. The parish agreed to sell the property for \$190,000 to Charlesfort Developments. They were to build town-house condominiums on the land and sell the church one of them for its rectory. Barry J. Hobin was one of six award-winning architects in 1985 for his design for the seven town houses and Ascension’s rectory.



*Above: Priscilla Copeland, known for her unflagging devotion to the scouting movement and her faithful work for the Diocese of Ottawa.*

*Below left: Betty Service at the griddle; Hazel Crook (middle) and Hazel Goodwin (right) queue for flapjacks.*

*Below right: Jean Humphries and her daughter in the kitchen.*





*Above: Beatrix Finta, Ascension organist for many years, with Arthur Humphries*

*Top right: Karla Benoit (née Stevenson), Minnie Lusk, Joan Christenson and Maisie Stevenson at an Ascension Bazaar with a selection of home-baked dainties*



The church, too, was to be improved. At the January 1989 Vestry meeting, the parish decided to have a chair lift for those who were no longer able to come to church because of physical disabilities. Money was raised by renting the hall to a ballet school and a day care, renting parking space and renting the church every other Sunday to the Romanian Orthodox Church. The lift was bought that same year from a company called Portamatic Inc. and built at the back of the church.

Then, at four o'clock on Saturday morning, August 29th of that same year, Arthur Brewer woke up to the shrieking of sirens and the clanging of fire-engine bells in front of the rectory. The church was on fire. Mr. Brewer was recovering from the heart attack he had suffered three weeks earlier and didn't dare rush to the scene. He phoned one of the wardens and Archdeacon Allen Box who was filling in for him as priest.

By the time Mr. Box arrived, firemen were already shooting water into the church office, the basement and the kitchen. The fire was all but out. It had started in the office and actual fire damage was confined to the office, the basement and the kitchen. The chair lift was undamaged, the fire doors saved the church itself, but the organ was ruined by the smoke, and so were the prayer books and hymnals. The altar hangings and communion vessels

all had to be sent out to be cleaned. Office equipment (including the computer; Mr. Brewer was very up to date) was entirely destroyed. In all, there was \$490,000 damage. Police investigation discovered that someone had forced the office window open and deliberately set the fire, but no one ever discovered who – or why.

The church hall, the office and the kitchen were completely renovated. The stage where the children had always performed their pageants disappeared; the ramp was constructed; the kitchen was enlarged, and the small rooms behind the hall were reorganized.

The neighbourliness that has kept this community strong from the beginning was immediately in evidence. While the church's insurance bought the new electronic organ, the prayer and hymn books and the cleaning of the building and furnishings, the Church of The Canadian Martyrs offered Ascension's one hundred homeless parishioners space for divine service and the Wesley United Church took in the children.

*Bottom left: fire damage in the church basement.*

*Bottom right: demolition of the old rectory.*



*Photos courtesy William Service*



*Karen James photo*

# Present Days



## Present Days

In 1990, Arthur Brewer left Ascension. (He then spent two years at St. Barnabas, after which he retired.) Gary Hauch came from St. Thomas the Apostle on Alta Vista Drive where he had been the assistant curate.

Gary was born in Germany, immigrated to the United States as a child. He came to Canada in 1977 to study at Regent College (an international graduate school of Christian studies) in Vancouver, British Columbia. In 1979, he and his wife Linda moved to Ottawa where Linda began her doctoral studies in English. It was at this time that Gary and Linda were drawn to the Anglican Church. Two years later, they moved to Princeton, New Jersey, where Gary studied for his doctoral degree. When the Hauchs returned to Ottawa with their two sons in 1985, Gary took a position at St. Thomas of the Apostle while Linda continued her studies and taught at Ottawa University. Gary came to Ascension in August and was inducted as priest on November 30th, St. Andrew's Day.

When he came to Ascension, Gary Hauch said he hoped, "to help build a community of people who would make a difference in the world," who would, as serious Christians, "work to break down the prejudice against people of different races, colours, cultures and sexual orientations, would understand themselves to be environmental stewards, and would explore the social implications of the gospels."

Soon this vision began to take shape. Ascension has been actively involved with refugees and new Canadians since 1991. In the early '90s, this included sending funds to a refugee camp in Tanzania where an Ascension associate was working, and supporting communities from El Salvador and Guatemala. More recently, Gary encouraged the parish to sponsor refugees "from countries at war or where repressive regimes threaten lives." Since

### House of the Good Shepherd

The House of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori-based program in which children from ages three to five meet on Sunday in a room carefully prepared for them – a simple but beautiful place, a place of quiet and peacefulness, which encourages contemplation. Jennifer Camfield brought the program to Ascension in 2003. Everyone now involved works to create an atmosphere of retreat, one in which not only are the children taught, but their understanding of God is listened to and respected.

In the last 16 years, Ascension has been blessed with many dedicated Sunday School teachers who have given years of faithful service, some for five or more years. These include Jeffrey Cavill, Shawn de Raaf, James Dykstra, Judith Fraser, Deborah (Debbie) Grisdale, Linda Hauch, Rosaline Hill, Anneke Jansen van Doorn, Janet Lunn, Haig McCarrell, Michael O'Hearn, Alexander (Sandy) and Cheryl Thomson, Lorna Unger, Dennis Van Staalduin and Sonia Williams.

*Facing page: Christopher (Chris) Lyon (playing guitar) leads the House of the Good Shepherd in song.*



*Above left: Yvonne Ellis, Linda Hauch and Diana Partridge share a moment at coffee hour.*

*Above right: Haig McCarrell stirs the pot at the Community Kitchen.*

then, Ascension has sponsored refugee families from Burundi and, in conjunction with Trinity and All Saints, Sandy Hill, refugee families from Sudan.

In the spring of 1993, Wesley (Wes) Maultsaid, Judith (Judy) Cray, and six people from two other churches in the diocese (St. George's and All Saints, Westboro) went to Guatemala for two weeks. Judy said, "We went there to learn about the Mayan people, their culture and what it was like living under an oppressive regime." Each person paid his/her own way but had support with prayer and some financial assistance from their home churches. On their return, those who had made the trip reported to their home churches and, as well, spoke to interested people elsewhere.

Later that same year, Ascension sponsored parishioner Colin Rowatt to travel in Mexico and Guatemala on "Project Accompaniment." From September until the following April, Colin was among those who accompanied a group of Guatemalan refugees home from the refugee camp in Mexico where they had been living for some years under the protection of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

In 1997, Joan Bishop accompanied Ascension parishioners Roberto and Yolanda Miranda to Guatemala to visit their families. Although peace agreements had been signed in that country, Roberto and Yolanda, who had been refugees, felt they would be more secure in the company of a Canadian citizen.

In 1999, Tricia Wind and Dwayne Hodgson left for Tanzania to work with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee on community projects and justice education, an organization dedicated to improving conditions in parts of the world where

there is considerable poverty and injustice or where disaster has struck. "We worked with farmers to increase their incomes and with widows to help them keep their lands and possessions after their husbands died," Tricia reported. Dwayne and Tricia returned in October, 2002 to settle back into life in Ottawa in time for Tricia to give birth to their first child.

In October 2003, William (Bill) Baldwin, Ascension parishioner and retired priest, went for two weeks to Palestine and Jerusalem as an observer with a contingent from Christian churches as part of a multi-national, inter-denominational Christian Peacemaker's Team. He has since returned twice to Palestine and Jerusalem with the CPT.

Closer to home, Ascension has long been involved with the Ottawa East neighbourhood of churches but, in our time, Haig McCarrell has started weekly "Coffee and Conversation" evenings to welcome and interact with refugees and new Canadians. Those evenings still happen every Wednesday evening, now at 88 Main Street. (The neighbourhood community-kitchen group that meets twice a month in our church kitchen to share cooking is an offshoot of these evenings.)

Like Robert Jefferson and Arthur Caulfield before him, Gary Hauch wanted this parish to be a family. Together with Haig McCarrell, Dwayne Hodgson, and others, he explored having house groups at Ascension. House groups would be made up of a small number of people with particular aims and interests.

The house group idea wasn't new, but it had not been tried at Ascension so, at first, it was a short-term project, The Epiphany Project, so named because the first house-group meetings were to take place in the week following the 1996 Epiphany Night celebration at the church. The celebration that year included a performance of *Julian*, a one-woman play about Julian of Norwich, performed in the church sanctuary by Kathleen McLaughlin, an Ottawa Roman Catholic nun. It was followed by a potluck supper in the hall.

The house-group idea caught on. Some of the original groups are still meeting, some have fallen by the wayside, and others have started up. In 1997 Gerald (Gerry) Green started a men's

## Bill Baldwin

Reverend Bill Baldwin, an honorary associate priest at Ascension, has always worked for peace and justice. Most recently, he has served with the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) as a reservist, accompanying CPT delegations to Palestine and Israel in 2003, 2005 and 2006. Photo courtesy the *Anglican Journal*.



## Muriel Hogan

Muriel Hogan, the oldest member of the Ascension church family. Muriel first came to Ascension in the 1930s when she was still in her teens.

Over the years Muriel has seen Ascension's congregation grow, shrink and grow again. The changes she says she has noticed the most are in the hymns, that there are no longer two church services on a Sunday morning and no longer the service of morning prayer. She enjoys the children and is very happy that Ascension has an elevator.

Karen James photo



club who meet once a week for breakfast and, afterwards, took care of church maintenance. A Bible study group was formed in 2000 and, since 2004, a parents' and tots group has been meeting on Wednesday mornings for mutual support, conversation and lunch.

Over the last twelve years, the parish has held one-day retreats in the church and at Gracefield and Temple Pastures in Québec. As well, The Parish Council has gone on weekend retreats at Temple Pastures and many in the parish have shared weekend retreats at Camp IAWAH, the non-denominational Christian camp on Wolfe Lake near Westport. For those wishing to experience monastic life, Wesley Maultsaid has arranged week-long retreats at Weston Priory in Vermont.

These retreats have become important to the life of the parish. Not only do they encourage the sense of family that is so important to us, serious decisions have been made on retreat. During a retreat "discernment process" in 1996, members of the parish prayed and discussed what outreach Ascension should focus on. To everyone's surprise, the response, loud and clear, was children. As a result, we changed our liturgy to make children more a part of it, and have made every effort to welcome children to our church. There is now a children's story at the beginning of every service. Linda Hauch, with the help of Anneke Jansen van Doorn, headed the effort to enlarge the Sunday school and re-shape the curriculum with the special House of the Good Shepherd program for the nursery-school age. And Ascension is now a church full of children, ranging in age from a few weeks to adolescence.

A new newsletter ("An Occasional Newsletter from the Church of the Ascension") was started by Dwayne Hodgson in December of 1990. It fell by the wayside but was started up again briefly in 2002. Gary has invited artists in the parish to make use of the hall for book launches or art exhibits – Alison Gresik launched her first book of short stories, *Brick and Mortar* at the church in 2000.

In the mid-nineties, Gary encouraged the young adults in the parish to organize a series of coffee-house evenings to celebrate causes like social justice, peace and care for the environment (in 2001, Ascension, with All Saints, Westboro And St. John's,





Elgin Street, won the first Green Church Award) or simply as get-togethers for the deanery young people. For these evenings, the hall was transformed into a colourfully decorated 1960's style coffee house with coffee, espresso, tea, or juice to drink plus all manner of home-made baked goods. A stage was set up from which people read poetry, performed on musical instruments or sang. And it was in the context of a coffee house-like celebration that Ascension embarked on raising money for an elevator. The chair lift, which everyone in the congregation had hoped would be so wonderful, had turned out to be unworkable. A wheel-chair-bound person had to get out of his/her chair and navigate a couple of steps in order to get in or out of the lift and, sometimes, the lift would tip. In the end, only the kids used it (and it beeped loudly and constantly while they did). Maintenance fees still had to be paid, even though the lift wasn't being used and the parish council decided to abandon it.

A family is not a family when some of its members cannot get into the house, so plans were soon being discussed for an elevator. This project turned out to be monumentally expensive. The first architectural drawings, alone, cost \$5,000. A committee, made up of Shirley and Reginald (Reg) Callard, Gerry Green and Alfred (Alf) Perinbam explored all possibilities. Their explorations yielded the information that the elevator would cost more than the parish could possibly afford. The parish council discussed asking for money from the Trillium foundation, but that money

### Wes Maultsaid

Reverend Wes Maultsaid came to Ascension in 1995 as the church's honorary assistant priest. He brings with him a wealth of experience in social justice and development, having worked with CUSO in both Nicaragua and British Columbia, the diocese of Belize, and the Carribbean Council of Churches Development Agency. He has also worked with the Diocese of New Westminster in British Columbia and the Diocese of Ottawa.

*Above left:*  
*Reverend Gary Hauch, 1990.*

*Above right:*  
*Reverend Wes Maultsaid in*  
*Nicaragua, 1988.*

## Social Justice

In the 19th century and through more than half of the twentieth, social service was a minor part of Anglican church work. Mary K. Hugessen says in her essay, "The Business of the Great King in Anglicanism in the Ottawa Valley" that Anglicans, Canadian Anglicans, in particular, "were slow to develop a social consciousness and a social ethic." The Church of England Benevolent Society did its best for "the sick, needy, destitute and other deserving poor who were members of the Church of England in Ottawa." However, the mandate was narrow and the thrust of too many of the charitable acts was more mission than charity.

After the First World War, Bishop Roper headed a committee of the National Church to help returning soldiers or their widows and orphans. The result of this work led him to understand the needs of a great many others, and he worked to the end of his life for greater involvement of the church in all social issues. At Ascension, in the parish magazine (April, 1923), Robert Jefferson, the then priest, exhorted his parishioners to, "give some assistance to one or more of the social organizations in the city who are carrying on Christ's social work." He wrote about it again that November, but there is nothing in Ascension's records to show that following Mr. Jefferson's exhortations was of paramount importance in the parish. To the contrary, Ascension's finance committee report in the parish magazine (December, 1925) said, "The attitude taken by the Anglican church is that it will assist its genuine members. It should be remembered however that final responsibility rests on the city."

comes from the provincial lottery and vestry voted not to take it.

That's when the miracle happened. Marian Rollinson, a long-time Ascension parishioner died and left the church over \$140,000. At first, the parish council thought the bequest would buy us the elevator, but when it was discovered that only the interest could be spent, the members of council decided to go ahead and spend parish funds. The church would get its elevator. Work started. The old coal cellar-cum-junk-room (always called "the glory hole") below the stairs leading into the church disappeared, a wall was moved, the side entrance to the church was closed, a new downstairs door with a ramp and a small courtyard appeared in front. The elevator was built and, at last, people who couldn't manage the stairs could get to church. The elevator was up and running by Easter, 1999. For those who could manage the stairs, the old, worn wooden ones gave way to new, more reliable cement ones.

If the parishioners who marched in procession from the old Holy Trinity to lay the cornerstone for their new Church of the Ascension back in September of 1919 could be around today, they would see many other differences in their church. The choir stalls are gone and the sanctuary/worship space has now more room and two communion stations. In the mid nineties, after much discussion and some experimenting with worship space, vestry decided to have the Eucharist celebrated closer to the congregation than the high altar. So a small temporary altar was set up near the chancel steps, now a handsome, round oak table.

The glass windows which separated the narthex from the nave of the church have gone. There is a more open feeling to the whole church, and there are no military flags. The large baptismal font stands, as it always has, in the narthex, but baptisms are now celebrated in the chancel, and the font is a small, hand-made font that William and Elizabeth Service gave to the church when the old Anglican Church in Sherbrooke Corners (part of the parish of St. Paul's, Westport) was dismantled. (The Sherbrooke Corners' church was Elizabeth Service's childhood church and was where the Service children were baptized.)

No one in Gary Hauch's church has ever thought of calling him Father or even Mr. Hauch – first names for priest and



parishioner alike in this 21st century. There is no choir, except at Easter and Christmas. Instead, we have an organist, Beatrix Finta, and the music group that sings and plays various instruments (including bongo drums). There is no traditional altar guild; volunteers do the work the altar guild once did. And there is no licensed lay reader. When Arthur Humphries died in 1998, he left the position of lay reader open. Now a group of parishioners share in the reading of the lessons, the psalm, the gospel and the prayers of the people.

We gather often, as a church family, for potluck lunches and suppers. Every year, as well as the traditional Pancake Supper (now organic) in the hall on Shrove Tuesday, Ascension has a Seder Supper on Maundy Thursday. There, as Sonia Williams guides us through the *Haggadah*, we eat *Kharoset* and bitter herbs to remind us of our Old- Testament roots and of the Passover supper Jesus shared with his disciples.

In the spring of 1990, the year he came to Ascension, Gary wrote in the newsletter that the parish of Ascension is “a remarkably diverse community that is serious about living its faith in the world... a grateful response to God’s gift in Christ.” His words surely express what so many of Ascension’s priests and congregations have felt over all these years.

May we continue to be so blessed.

The Depression went a long way to change these attitudes. “Church people and social workers were shocked and swamped by the mass misery that they had to deal with” and determined “that every parish in the diocese pitch in to help out.” The Church began, “to consider how to apply Christian principles to the social structures of the day,” and to lobby governments to enact legislation that would alleviate the distress of the unemployed, immigrants, farmers and other disadvantaged people.

After the Second World War, Hugessen says, “it was truly a revolution.” Clergy and social workers were not only consulting but sharing responsibility. Hospital and university chaplaincies were established. While the Church had always done some work with refugees, the 1970s and ‘80s brought concerted effort, particularly on the part of the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (The PWRDF was founded in 1959 to formalize the response to the mine disaster in Springhill, Nova Scotia in ‘58). The church’s understanding of its social responsibility has been growing ever since.

*Above: The annual children’s Christmas pageant, 2002*

# Milestones

## 1877

On September 1st, the Church of the Holy Trinity opens its door at the corner of Main Street and Echo Drive in the village of Archville.

## 1889

Holy Trinity becomes the parish of Archville.

## 1896

The diocese of Ottawa is formed.

## 1907

Archville, now Ottawa East, becomes part of the city of Ottawa.

## 1920

On March 25th, the Church of the Ascension is dedicated and the congregation worships in the its new building.

## 1944

Ascension celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the laying of its cornerstone with a service of commemoration and a brief history of the church.

## 1956

On May 9th, Ascension's mortgage is retired and Bishop Ernest Reed consecrates the church.

## 1966

The church hall is renovated.



## 1985

The old rectory is sold; town houses, including the new rectory, are built north of the church.

## 1989

In the spring, the church adds a chair lift.

On August 29th, there is a fire in the church office, hall and kitchen with smoke damage to the church proper.

## 1999

The side door is sealed, the elevator is installed, the front courtyard is put in place and the old wood steps are replaced by new concrete ones.

## 2006

Ascension celebrates 129 years with a new history.



## 1919

The congregation of Holy Trinity buys three new lots on Echo Drive; Archdeacon Arthur Mackay turns the first sod for the new church.

On September 27th, Bishop John Charles Roper leads the parade to lay the cornerstone for the new church to be called the Church of the Ascension.



## 1967

Ascension celebrates Canada's centennial and its own 90th birthday with the purchase of the new cupola, with a commemorative booklet and a week of "Ascensiontide" events.



# Timeline of Parish and Diocesan Clergy

## Clergy 1877-2002

### Holy Trinity

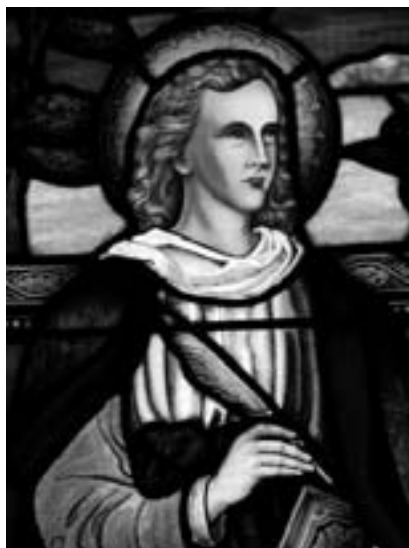
1877 – Thomas D. Phillipps  
1882 – Edward Beaven  
(C.V. Forster Bliss filled in  
for six months between  
Phillipps and Beaven)  
1884 – Samuel McMorine  
Arthur Jones  
1885 – Attached to St. John's:  
Canon Henry Pollard,  
Alfred Mackay  
1889 – George Taylor  
1890 – Attached to St. Barnabas:  
Thomas Bailey  
1896 – Frederick Squires  
1915 – Mark Malbert  
1916 – Robert Jefferson

### Church of the Ascension

1920 – Robert Jefferson  
1927 – Francis Wimberley  
1935 – Adrian Bender  
1944 – Arthur Caulfield  
1950 – Richard Crossley  
1961 – Arthur Anderson  
1962 – J. Edwin Allsopp  
1972 – Gerald Shaw  
1973 – Bruce Olsen  
1982 – Arthur Brewer  
1990 – Gary Hauch

## Bishops in the Diocese of Ottawa

- I Rt. Rev. Charles Hamilton  
(1896 - 1914)
- II Rt. Rev. John Charles Roper  
(1915 - 1939)
- III Rt. Rev. Robert Jefferson  
(1939-1954)
- IV Rt. Rev. Ernest Samuel Reed  
(1954 - 1970 )
- V Rt. Rev. William J. Robinson  
(1970 - 1981)
- VI Rt. Rev. Edwin Lackey  
(1981 - 1993)
- VII Rt. Rev. John Baycroft  
(1993 - 1999)
- VIII Rt. Rev. Peter Robert Coffin  
(1999 - present)



*Left: Detail window given by the Crossley family as a thanks offering.*

*Far left: Detail from the Alfred Parks memorial window, commissioned by his widow and children.*

# Roll of Honour, The Great War

Karen James photo



## APPENDICES



# Bibliography

1. Winter, Charles F. (1925) "Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Laying of the Cornerstone" (Parish History 1919-1944).
2. May 9th, 1956 "Consecration Service Booklet."
3. W.A. Allen, Jr. (1956) "Church of the Ascension Church History" (Parish History 1877-1956).
4. Mockett, B. & Mockett, D. & Gunderson, T.E. (1967) "Commemorative Booklet" (Parish History 1877-1967).
5. Mockett, Mockett and Gunderson, T.E. (1977) "Centennial Booklet" (Parish History 1877-1977).
6. *The History of the Ottawa Collegiate Institute, 1848-1903.*
7. Elliot, Bruce (1991) *The City Beyond, the City of Nepean.*
8. Gwyn, Sandra (1984) *The Private Capital*, Harper & Collins.
9. Undated news clippings in Ascension's files.
10. Jefferson, Robert (1957) *Faith of Our Fathers*, the Anglican Book Society.
11. Helfterty, Dorothy (1986) "Going to Church by Rowboat," *Mainstreeter*, p. 7.
12. Peake, Frank A. (ed.) (1997) *Anglicanism in the Ottawa Valley*, Carleton University Press.
13. Bradley, Wilfred H. *The Life and Times of John Charles Roper*, Anglican Diocese of Ottawa.
14. The Diocesan archives at Christ Church Cathedral, Ottawa
15. Berton, Pierre (1965) *The Comfortable Pew*, McClelland and Stewart Limited.
16. Wallace, Rick (2004) "A History of Ottawa East" CD-ROM