

Centenary

ETONIA

UNITED CHURCH

1862

-

1962



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FOREWORD

100 years ago, in 1862, our forefathers built Etonia Church — as an expression of their faith in God. "Etonia United" is a house of prayer, where the folk of this community meet together in Christian brotherhood and fellowship — to worship their Creator, and to learn what His sovereign will for them may be. Today, we rejoice that the pioneers of the Etonia community were also folk of God; and have handed down to us, through the years, a goodly Christian heritage.

Faith of our fathers, living still,
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword;
O how our hearts beat high with joy,
Whene'er we hear that glorious word:
Faith of our fathers! Holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death.

—F. W. Faber.

In 1962 Etonia is a vastly different place from the Etonia of 1862.

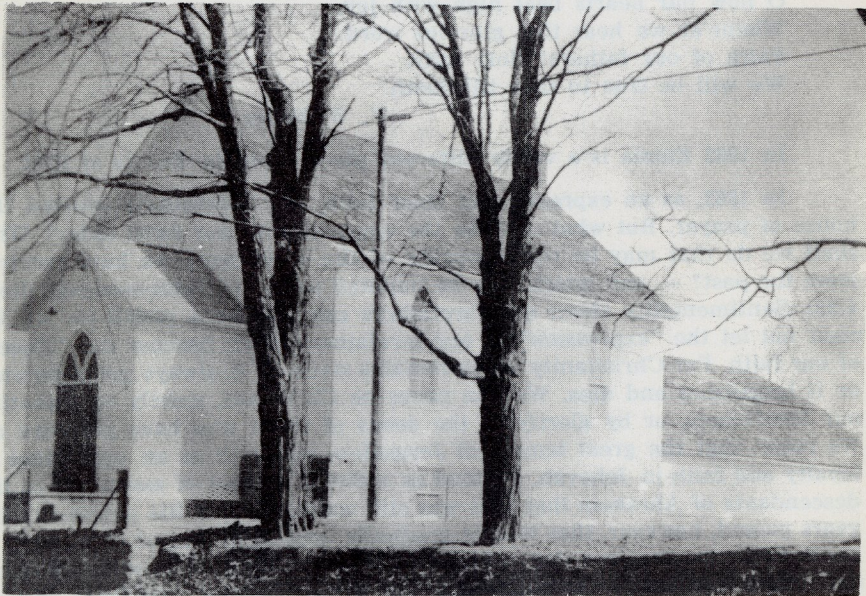
In 1862, as an expression of their faith, our forefathers erected this house of prayer. But what shall be the expression of our faith today? What shall we do that may be really worthy of the inheritance we have received from the past? — and which may be imputed to us for righteousness? (Rom. 4:22). Sentimentality about our forefathers can become a pitfall for us. We must not let the "expression" of our forefathers' faith become the "object" of our faith. For Christianity never remains static. It is always going forward or it languishes and dies. We can never be Christians, merely by imitating our forefathers, or by glorifying the deeds of those who have preceded us. We recall that the great temple at Jerusalem was built as an expression of loyalty and faith in Jehovah. It stood as a divine symbol of assurance to the descendants of Abraham that God was still watching over His people. As the years passed, however, that temple gradually became an object of worship in itself. So it was that one day Jesus came to its courts, and in scathing terms denounced the temple worship, and the whole Hebrew sacrificial system. "It is written 'My house shall be called the house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.'"

We remember, with gratitude, that abiding Christian faith and sacrificial good-will of our forefathers; but let us not make the sad mistake of worshipping them or of glorifying them. Rather, with keen perception, let us look back beyond the days of our forefathers, to an old rugged cross upon a lonely hill. For, in the death and resurrection of our Saviour, alone, may be found the inspiration, we require, to give expression to a living faith in our times.

REV. ERIC V. WARREN, B.A.,

Etonia United Church Minister.

THE ETONIA UNITED CHURCH



1862 - 1962



INTRODUCTION

In compiling this booklet marking the centennial year of Etonia United Church, we pay tribute to the devoted men and women of pioneer days in this district, who saw the need of building a place of worship.

Honour goes also to the faithful members through succeeding generations, who through their generosity and self-denying effort, have kept the torch of faith still burning.

Because a great number of records are not available, we regret no attempt can be made to itemize all the many projects and activities undertaken through the years, or to name those who served so faithfully on the necessary committees.



HISTORY OF ETONIA UNITED CHURCH



Although the history of the present Etonia United Church goes back one hundred years, it is known it was preceded by the Governor's Road Church situated a mile or so further west. It is not known of what material it was constructed, but the stones of the old foundation provided a good playing site for boys of a later generation.

Nathaniel Wood who lived on the Third Concession of Burford, told stories to his grandchildren of walking through thick bushland every Sunday to attend this church.

After the church ceased to exist, prayer meetings were occasionally held in the Etonia School. Those wishing to attend church services journeyed to Paris by foot or horse and wagon.

By the year 1862 a decision had been reached by a number of people, that a church was needed and should be built.

The timber was framed by a Mr. White of Hamilton and then teamed from Hamilton to the present location, the land having been donated by Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Eton.

The first trustees were John Barker, Nathaniel Wood, Jacob Hess and William Sibbick.

These were the men who organized and led the various "bees" in the neighborhood, resulting in a new, modest size, roughcast building being erected, with an actual cash cost of only one hundred dollars.

The church was opened by Rev. Dr. W. S. Griffin, pastor at Paris, and it remained on the Paris circuit until 1868 when it was connected with Princeton. The minister appointed was Rev. Alexander Campbell.

The church records have revealed the surprising fact that it was not

known by the name Etonia Methodist Church until 1870.

Apparently the name "Governor's Road Church," was retained for a few years. It was still listed as such in the minutes of all the Quarterly Official Board meetings up to and including August 1870. At the next Board meeting held on November 7, 1870, the minutes for the first time have reference to the congregation at Etonia Methodist Church.

It is presumed that because of gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Eton for the gift of land, many had felt recognition of this fact should be established, hence the change of name to Etonia during that year.

We are indebted to Rev. Arthur G. Reynolds, M.A., D.D., archivist and historian for the United Church of Canada, for the following records:

"The church appears to have been first known as Etonia Methodist Church in the year 1870. It was called Governor's Road Church and was part of the Princeton circuit just prior to that, with only the two churches on the circuit.

First reference to the Governor's Road Church is in the missionary report for the year 1862-1863 when the congregation was a part of the Paris circuit along with Paris, Ayr, Paris Plains, Richwood and Princeton. The missionary report lists the names of the Misses Wood and Kelly. Later on by the year 1870-71 the following names appear as contributors to the missionary funds: William Lewis, James Hess, A. Wood, Jacob Hess, Missie Tansley and Letitia Martin."

In the Christian Guardian of May 14, 1862, there is the following notice:

CHURCH OPENING

The new church at Governor's Road appointment on the Paris circuit, will (D.V.) be dedicated to the service of God on the Sabbath, June 1st. Sermons at 11:00 o'clock a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Tea meeting the following day at 3:00 p.m. in aid of Trust Fund.
Paris, May 6, 1862

W. S. Griffin

The social gathering referred to was held on the grounds opposite the church, then owned by Mr. Kelly. Four tables were laid, the wife of each trustee supplying the provisions for one table.

An organization in every Methodist Church of this period was the class meeting, which followed the Sunday service. There were originally three class leaders, William Lewis, Jacob Hess and Nathaniel Wood, who was succeeded by John Elmes.

By the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the church, the original roughcast building had been sided in and painted white. The congregation decided to raise the church and have a basement for holding Sunday School and social functions. The upstairs was renovated, new seats were bought for the congregation and folding chairs for the choir. The platform and seating arrangement was also changed.

A small pipe organ, pumped by bellows was installed, replacing the first little organ.

Dr. Griffin, who had been the minister at the opening of the church, preached the anniversary services, and being a few minutes late, remarked that he was never late fifty years previous when he walked each Sunday from Paris.

At the time of the seventy-fifth anniversary in July, 1937, the minister was Rev. J. S. Bonham. Guest speakers were Rev. Wray Davidson and Rev. George Barker. Assisting the choir as guest soloists were Miss Edleen Tincknell of Paris and Mrs. A. J. Pellow of Princeton.

A platform was erected in the covered shed to accommodate the crowd. Monday evening a garden party was held there also, with the Happy Cousins of Elmira and the Overholt Orchestra of Eastwood as entertainers.

MINISTERS 1862 - 1962

Rev. Wm. S. Griffin	1862-1863
Rev. H. Bartlett	assistant
Rev. James Spencer	1863-1864
Rev. Wm. F. Morrison	assistant
Rev. John G. Laird	1864-1867
Rev. George H. Bridgeman	assistant
Rev. John Mills	1867-1868
Rev. Alexander Campbell	1868-1870
Rev. Edward Morrow	1870-1873
Rev. John H. Keppel	1873-1876
Rev. James Mason	1876-1878
Rev. Colman Bristol	1878-1879
Rev. John C. Stevenson	1879-1882
Rev. Hugh McLean	1882-1884
Rev. Jas. Gardiner	1884-1886
Rev. T. Albert Moore	1886-1889
Rev. J. H. McArtney	1889-1892
Rev. A. A. Bowers	1892-1895
Rev. Albert Kennedy	1895-1897
Rev. George Carpenter	1897-1900

Rev. D. Ecker	1900-1901
Rev. J. H. McArthur	1901-1904
Rev. A. I. Snyder	1904-1908
Rev. George Honey	1908-1911
Rev. David H. Taylor	1911-1913
Rev. W. A. Vollick	1913-1917
Rev. H. Monsinger	1917-1921
Rev. John Neil	1921-1924
Rev. E. S. Hiscocks	1924-1926
Rev. Harold Willans	1926-1930
Rev. W. G. Rose	1930-1936
Rev. J. S. Bonham	1936-1941
Rev. J. B. Townend	1941-1947
Rev. L. D. Griffith	1947-1947
Rev. H. A. Boyd	1948-1953
Rev. B. F. Green	1953-1956
Rev. Keith Tudor	1956-1959
Rev. Eric Warren, present minister since 1959.	

During the period 1897-98 Etonia became part of a double circuit which included for a few years Princeton, Drumbo, Richwood, Etonia, Woodbury and Cathcart. Assistant ministers serving at various times were Rev. Voaden, Rev. R. Railton, Rev. Bell and Rev. Cole.

FULL TIME SERVICE

Three native sons of Etonia who devoted their lives to the full-time work of the Christian Church have been Rev. Dr. Charles McIrvine and Rev. George Barker, both deceased, and Rev. Wray Davidson, recently retired.

A resident of Etonia for a few years, Frank Hannah died on his summer mission field, following his second year at college. His wife, Marjorie Hannah, entered the United Church Training School and is now a deaconess at Estevan, Sask.

LEST WE FORGET

We pay tribute to the boys who answered the call "For King and Country" in two world wars. Leaving homes and families, some to never return, they enlisted in a cause for which they believed; freedom and justice for all mankind.

At this time we remember them.

CHURCH PROPERTY

When church union took place in Canada in 1925, the Etonia Methodist Church became a part of the United Church of Canada.

Since then Highway No. 2 was built, which necessitated the changing of the front of the church property; a stone wall topped with a guard fence was erected to support the embankment. The front steps and platform were rebuilt. The original open sheds were torn down and a large covered shed was built with a door opening into the basement. Hydro was installed in 1929-30.

The old coal and wood furnace was replaced with an oil heating system. Canvassers for this project were Harry Collett, John Anderson Sr., Elwood Stuart and Emory Cain. The walls of the basement had been panelled with plywood.

"Free gratis" help by the men included replacing the old wooden floor in the basement with a cement floor, painting and shingling of the buildings and the extending of the choir platform to the east wall.

In 1960 a major project, also done by volunteer labour, was the laying of the new tile floor in the church, which required the removal and replacement of all the seats. New oak doors for the front entrance of the church were also bought.

In 1960 in answer to a special appeal, donations were received which paid for a two manual Lowry Electric Organ, replacing pianos which had been used for church services for nearly forty years.

In 1957 an extra five foot strip of ground on the west side of the church was given by Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Hyatt, to improve the western boundary of the church property.

GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

A sum of money bequeathed by the late Mrs. Thos. Davidson, was used to purchase the present pulpit and chairs as a memorial to her.

The Communion table was presented in memory of Mrs. Wm. Knill by her family.

In memory of Mrs. John Elmes two Biblical pictures were donated by her family.

A gold cross for the Communion table in memory of Frank Hannah, was presented by his wife, Marjorie Hannah.

Offering plates in memory of Mrs. Fred Reading were given by her family.

A wall cross was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Reading.

A Baptismal font commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Woman's Missionary Society. Other gifts include a pulpit Bible, pulpit drape and hymnaries.

CHOIR AND ORGANISTS

Through the years singing has played an important part in any worship service. Where there have been choirs they contributed leadership. Some generations have furnished outstanding voices, and years ago it was considered quite an honor to be invited into the choir.

Congregational singing at Etonia in the early days was led by Jacob Hess with a tuning fork.

There is no record of the purchase date of the first organ, but it is known Mrs. Esther (Barker) Disher was one of the earliest organists. She often rode horseback to get to the church from her home up the second concession of Burford.

A small pipe organ was purchased fifty years ago, requiring some manual labour to pump the bellows, this power was supplied by the young men of the congregation.

When this organ ceased to be used, a lift was built to convey the Sunday School piano to the upstairs, so it could do double duty for church services.

After years of service the lift became worn and required some extra weight which was eagerly furnished by two or three boys sitting on top of the piano. Needless to say, it gained speed as it descended stopping with a resounding bang. It was this same piano that was transported to some

garden parties. When being returned to the church one day in a nice "springy" democrat it took to the air as a particularly deep pothole in the road was encountered; when picked from the ditch the lid appeared to be the only casualty! Some years later another piano was purchased for church services which is now used in the Sunday School. A second piano was obtained for use in the church when necessary.

After nearly forty years an organ is again being used for church services, and the choir have gowns; a gift from the Woman's Association.

Mrs. George Marshall served as choir leader for many years, she was succeeded by Percy Nicol; other names are not available.

Besides Mrs. Disher, other organists and pianists have been: Jerry Monette, Mrs. Wm. Knill, Mrs. John Elmes, Mrs. Walter Parnall, Mrs. Olive (Fawcett) Simons, Mrs. Grace (McAllister) Pellow, Mrs. Beatrice (Showers) Peart, Mrs. Hazel (Grover) Hewitt, Mrs. Ruby Anderson, Mrs. Eileen Grover, and Mrs. Arthur Bond, the present organist and choir leader.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School dates back to the beginning of the church. For years the Sunday School has followed the church service, meeting at 2:45 p.m. for the greater part of the year. During the summer it reverts to a morning session.

The envelope system of giving was adopted a few years ago in the classes. Films are occasionally used. The S.S. picnic is an annual event. Etonia was for many years noted for its outstanding Christmas program, presented by the pupils of the S.S. and day schools of Sunnyside and Etonia under the direction of their teachers.

In recent years the class teachers supervise a short program, with the Christmas tree still eagerly looked forward to by the children. A white gift service is observed annually as well as Mother's Day and Rally Day services.

Superintendents have been: Jacob Hess, who held that position for many years; Thos. Elmes; Darius Lewis; Will Elmes; John Elmes; Earle Sibbick; Ellis Stuart; Percy Nicol; Robert Pottruff and Ivan Grover, the present superintendent.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S UNION

No record of a church would be complete without mention of the young people. For the young people of today are the church of tomorrow.

Many of the present congregation can no doubt recall their associations with one of the young people's groups at Etonia.

In the days of the Methodist Church, it was known as the Epworth League. It was organized by Mrs. Frank Cain (Clara Rice) seventy years ago, the first president being George Barker.

Records are missing of other early presidents and the activities carried on during that period. It can be presumed however, that the Etonia League was no different from others of that time. The league provided a good training ground for the young people in the preparation of their debates and topics. Skating parties, sleighrides and social evenings with neighboring societies, could be credited to the young people of those far off "horse and buggy days."

In later years the young peoples' groups continued to follow the four-fold program set for them.

Interesting plays presented by the young people provided some of the finances to carry on their work.

Credit goes to the young people for installing the hydro in the church, during the period when Mrs. Wm. Bailey (Ruby Rush) was president. The church shed was flooded for a couple winters, providing a local skating rink. With the demands of higher education and the young people seeking employment elsewhere, the organization was finally discontinued.

ETONIA MESSENGERS

This is the new name given to the former Mission Band. A change of policy by the United Church of Canada, has placed this junior group under the Christian Education Department, whereas it formerly was a child of the Woman's Missionary Society.

The Mission Band was organized many years ago by Miss Clara Harris, who later became Mrs. Artley Elmes, and eventually moved to California.

Meeting monthly, young children were taught to help other children in far off lands by means of saving their pennies for their mite boxes.

Years ago an autograph quilt was made. The children gathered the names at 10 cents each, with the mothers putting it together and doing the quilting. This quilt is still in possession of one of the members, for whom it was bought.

A mission study book is used by the leader, and the children receive World Friends, a little periodical. Through the years it has met in the homes, in the day schools after four o'clock, and now meets in the S.S. room during the hour of service the first Sunday of each month.

The last superintendent of the Mission Band was Mrs. Vernon Eaton, Jr., the first superintendent of the Messengers is Mrs. Alfred Beamer.

WOMAN'S ASSOCIATION

The women in rural churches, such as Etonia, have always played a prominent part in the life of the church, spiritually and financially.

During the early years of the church at Etonia, there was no organized group of women, it was the wives of the officials who always planned the "tea meetings."

It was during the year 1924-25 that the Ladies' Aid was organized by Mrs. E. S. Hiscocks, wife of the minister. In the minutes of Feb. 1937, there is the report of change of name to the Woman's Association, to conform with the name used since church union.

The first president was Mrs. Wm. Wheeler. Others have been Mrs. Lyman McAllister, Mrs. W. B. Parnall, Mrs. Arthur Knill, Mrs. Earle Sibbick, Mrs. Percy Nicol, Mrs. Lloyd Phillipo, Mrs. Ralph Reading and Mrs. Arthur Bond.

Through the years money has been raised by sponsoring garden parties, plays, bake sales, social evenings, chicken, turkey and pot luck suppers, quiltings, yearly contributory projects, smorgasbords, catering at weddings and in 1961 catered for the 91st birthday reception for John Elmes, the oldest life long member of Etonia Church.

The care and upkeep of the church has always been of prime importance. Some of the major expenditures have included: An electric stove; purchasing of dishes, cutlery and linen; new tables; remodelling of the kitchen; re-finishing of basement floor; a contribution towards the oil furnace; purchased the carpet for the church and the new tile floor; paid for the re-decorating of the sanctuary and refinishing of the seats; purchased a vacuum cleaner; two pianos; contribution toward electric organ, music and gowns for the choir; cards and flowers for the sick; overseas bale expenses and of course, assisting with maintaining a comfortable manse for the minister and his family.

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The Etonia Auxiliary of the W.M.S. dates back fifty-seven years. It was the year 1905 that it was organized by Mrs. Woolsey, the widow of a missionary, who was making her home with her daughter, Mrs. Edward Elmes.

The first president was Mrs. Jacob Wallace and the first meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Arthur Cain.

A highlight was the observance of the 50th anniversary of the Etonia Auxiliary on June 1st, 1955.

President at the time was Mrs. Harry Collett. The anniversary committee was Mrs. Robert Pottruff, Mrs. Walter Parnall, Mrs. Percy Nicol, the president, and the secretary, Mrs. Arthur Bond.

Guest speaker was Miss Marie Staples of Brantford, returned missionary from Japan; also speaking briefly was Mrs. Marjorie Hannah, a student at the United Church Training School.

Presiding for the service was Mrs. Robert Pottruff, assisted by Mrs. Melvin Hunt and Mrs. B. F. Green. Vocal duets were given by Mrs. Albert Pellow and Mrs. F. Wilker of Princeton. Guest book was in charge of Mrs. John Anderson, Sr. Pouring tea at the reception later were the two charter members, Mrs. Arthur Cain and Mrs. John Rowe; also Mrs. Wm. Deer of Norwich and Mrs. Arthur Parnall of Princeton, two former members.

Presidents of which there are records include: Mrs. Jacob Wallace, Mrs. John Elmes, Mrs. George Knill, Mrs. Lyman McAllister, Mrs. Brill Hess, Mrs. Arthur Cain, Mrs. Robert Pottruff, Mrs. Arthur Bond, Mrs. Ellis Stuart, Mrs. Harry Collett, Mrs. Melvin Hunt, Mrs. John Anderson, Sr., and Mrs. Ivan Grover.

Through the years bales have been sent to the home mission fields, and since the last war, to the Overseas Relief Depot at Toronto.

There have always been special thankoffering meetings at Easter and thanksgiving meetings, usually with a guest speaker.

In the minutes of Jan. 5th, 1922, there is recorded the first noon-time dinner, which was to become quite an established event through succeeding years. This first dinner was held at the home of Mrs. Arthur Parnall, with the ladies meeting at ten o'clock to sew for the mission bale. During the four winter months these dinners continued to be held in the homes for many years, until by Jan. 1948, increased attendance required holding them in the church basement.

School children from the two schools are invited to attend, with a minimum fee being charged. The annual missionary allocation has been exceeded for a number of years.

During 1961 the Etonia Auxiliary was host to the last northeast sectional rally of the Oxford Presbytery. Guest speaker was Miss Aileen Ratz, the United Church port worker, at the Immigration Centre in Halifax.

THE UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

At the end of 1961 the Woman's Missionary Society and the Woman's

Association of the United Church of Canada ceased to exist.

In January, 1962, a new organization known as the United Church Women came into office.

The transition at Etonia created no particular change, for the membership lists in the two former organizations were almost identical.

The constitution calls for uniting all the women of the congregation for the total mission of the church. This will include support for mission work through allocations and continued concern for the welfare of the local church and manse.

The president of the Etonia United Church Women is Mrs. Lloyd Phillipo. The first large undertaking for the ladies has been preparations for the centennial.

ETONIA UNITED CHURCH OFFICERS — 1962

Session — John Elmes (honorary), John Anderson Sr., Arthur Bond, Percy Nicol, Murray Nicol, Earle Sibbick, H. J. Vallentyne.

Committee of Stewards — Harold Bond, John Anderson Jr., Emory Cain, Vernon Eaton Jr., Lorne Knill, Elwood Stuart, Ivan Grover and Mrs. Emory Cain.

Church Treasurer — Ivan Grover.

Congregational Secretary — Elwood Stuart.

Sunday School Superintendent — Ivan Grover.

President, United Church Women — Mrs. Lloyd Phillipo.

Supt., Etonia Messengers — Mrs. Alfred Beamer.

Organist and Choir Leader — Mrs. Arthur Bond.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEES

Invitations — Mr. and Mrs. Earle Sibbick; Mr. and Mrs. John Anderson Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Percy Nicol, Mr. and Mrs. Emory Cain.

Pictures and Mementos—

Mr. and Mrs. Perry Sibbick, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Reading.

Historical Booklet—

Mrs. Arthur Bond, Ivan Grover, Elwood Stuart.

Centennial Anniversary Celebrations are being held Sunday and Monday, July 1st and 2nd, 1962.

Church services: 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Guest speakers:

Rev. E. Crossley Hunter, B.A., D.D., Toronto.

Rev. Keith Tudor, Caledon East.

Guest artists will assist the choir.

Monday night will feature a chicken barbecue supper.

A hundred years ago Etonia Church was surrounded by quiet farm lands and a country road.

The years have changed that road into a busy, modern highway that passes many new homes, service stations, motels, restaurants, tobacco kilns and greenhouses.

In these fast changing times, we do not know what the future has in store for "the little white church by the side of the road"; but this we do know, that so long as there is a congregation at Etonia, the tradition of being a friendly church will continue to be upheld.