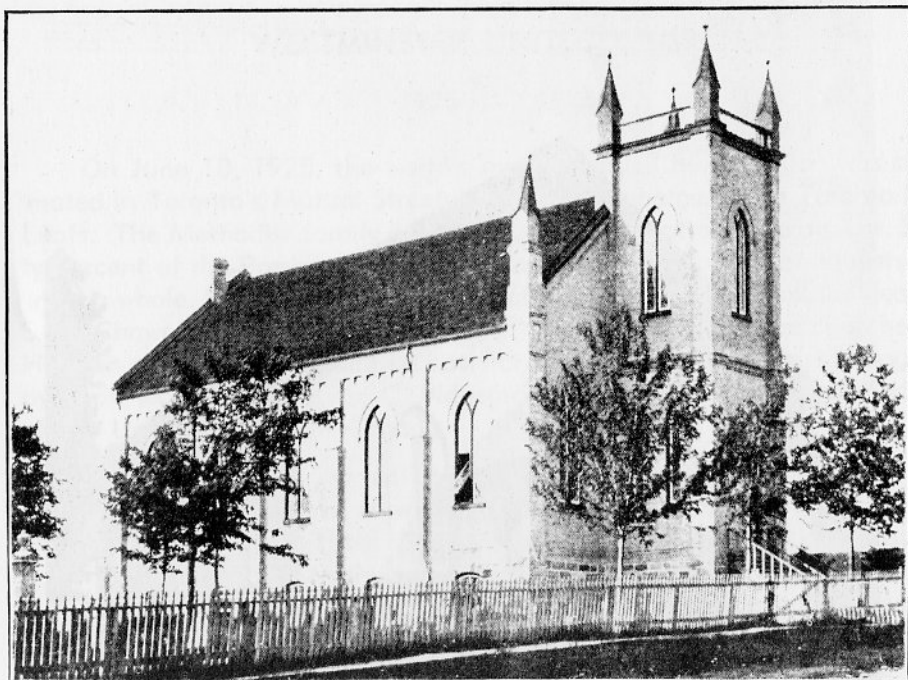


Westminster United Church

Thamesford, Ontario

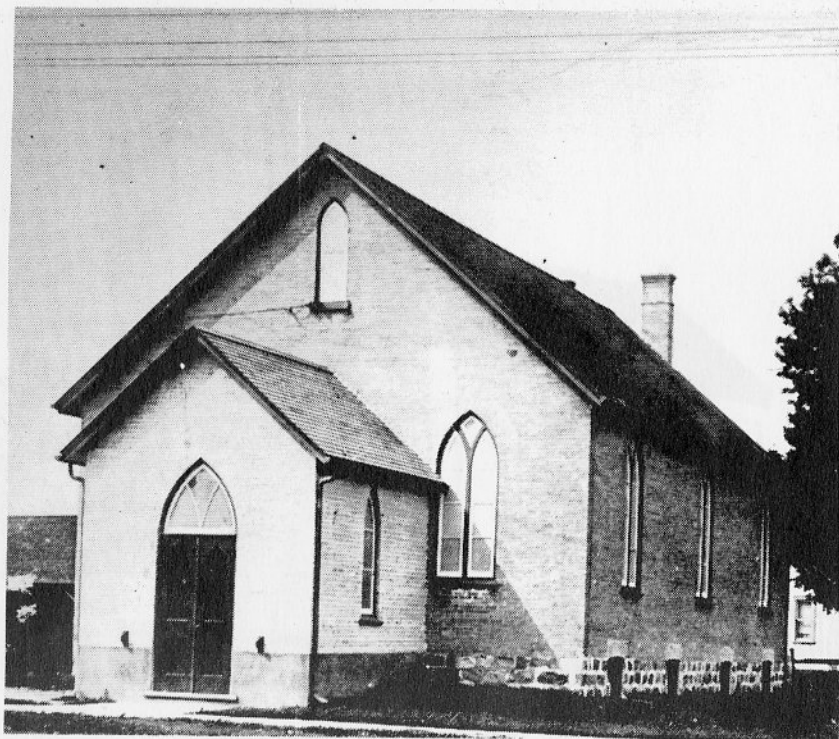


1925 - 1975

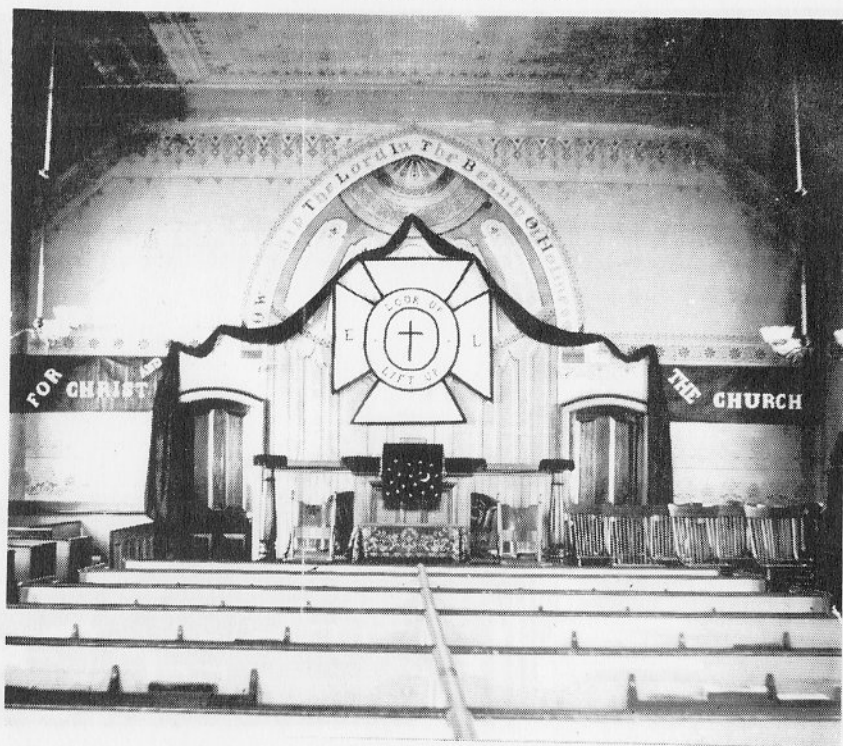


St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
Thamesford, Ontario.





Methodist Church
Thamesford, Ontario.



WESTMINSTER UNITED CHURCH

1925 - 1975

On June 10, 1925, the world's most famous Church Union was consummated in Toronto's Mutual Street Arena, former home of the Toronto Maple Leafs. The Methodist family came into union without a single dissent. Seventy percent of the Presbyterian Church came and the Congregationalists came in as a whole. Nearly ten thousand people received communion and heard Dr. S. D. Chown, veteran leader of the Methodists, pronounce the churches one. He then moved that a ballot be cast for the election of an outstanding Presbyterian leader, Dr. George C. Pidgeon, and he was elected first Moderator of the United Church of Canada.

The Crest of the United Church is a reminder of our heritage in the Church Universal. It links us with the early Church. Its oval form is the form of a fish, the secret symbol used by the early Christian as identification in the days of persecution. The initials of the words, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour", spelt the Greek word for fish. The "X" at the centre is the Greek word, "Chi, the first letter in the Greek word for Christ. Three of the symbols, in the four quarters of the Cross, are particularly associated with the three Communion which united to form the United Church of Canada. The 'Open Bible' represents the Congregational Church whose



emphasis was upon God's truth that makes men free. The 'Dove' is emblematic of the Holy Spirit whose transforming powder has been a distinctive part of Methodism. The 'Burning Bush' is a symbol of Presbyterianism. It refers to the bush that was burned but not consumed, and symbolizes the indestructibility of the Church. The symbols, 'Alpha' and 'Omega' in the lower quarter are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. They symbolize the Eternal, Living God - the first and the last; the beginning and the end. Around the rim of the Crest are the names, "The United Church of Canada," and the Latin words, "ut omnes unum sint" which mean, "That they may all be one." Taken from the prayer of our Lord in John 17: 21, they remind us that we are to be a 'Uniting' as well as a 'United' Church.

It would be impossible to do justice to the beginnings of these three Churches in a few words. The first Methodist Church minister ordained in Canada, Rev. Laughlin Coughlin, was ordained by the Bishop of London at John Wesley's request. John Wesley had hoped that the religious movement started by him would remain part of the Church of England. Soon a definite parish system was adopted and the Methodists had an aggressively evangelistic approach. Presbyterianism was characterized by a settled parish

ministry. Correct doctrine was taught and the sacraments properly administered. Methodists and Presbyterians became friendly rivals in the older parts of Canada and found much common ground in Sunday School, Missionary Education and Temperance work as well as in Social Reform. It was when Western Canada opened up for development that the Churches felt a mutual concern and began to co-operate. This broader gospel and social movement played an important part in laying the foundations for the formation of the United Church. Congregationalism had the distinction of being the first of the traditions to appear on the Canadian scene. When Halifax was formed in 1749, a Congregational Church was founded. It eventually became a Presbyterian congregation and is the oldest in the United Church of Canada. For some time Congregationalism dominated the religious scene in Nova Scotia but, throughout Canada, they constantly lost members to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches. Each Church was a law unto itself and they lacked effective doctrinal control over ministers and congregations.

The new Church was launched with a great wave of enthusiasm and missionary outreach. There was great optimism. Many believed that, with Church Union, the Kingdom of God might now be built in Canada. It was hoped by all that the best features of the former Churches would be retained and welded together. The fathers of union built their hopes on Methodist organization and the theological awareness of the Presbyterians to shape and guide the new Church.

After Church Union was established, June 10, 1925, there was little change at Thamesford. Rev. James Anthony and Rev. R. C. Copeland, carried on their pastorates at St. Andrews and Wesley respectively for two years. Wesley Church was part of a Circuit which included Thamesford, Kintore and Zion Methodist Churches. On July 1, Chalmers Presbyterian and Kintore Methodist Churches united to form Chalmers United Church. Zion remains attached to Westminster Church. St. Andrews and Wesley Churches united to form "Westminster United Church". By 1927, the Congregations had become accustomed to the fact of union and the consensus of opinion pointed to the necessity of having one united congregation with one Pastor. Both Mr. Anthony and Mr. Copeland resigned and a call was extended to Rev. Hugh G. Crozier, who became the first pastor of the United Church in Thamesford.

Mr. Crozier faced a great challenge. There were many problems to be ironed out. Two of the most important ones were to get the members of both congregations to work harmoniously and to decide on the place for worship. Wesley Church was central but not large enough. St. Andrews Church was large enough but it stood "up on the hill" very convenient for those who lived on the east side but, for those in the village and west side, for those on foot - a hard climb. A compromise was reached. During the summer months, morning services were held at St. Andrews and during the winter months at Wesley. Evening and mid-week services were held mostly at Wesley.

It is well to remember that these were the years of the great depression, late twenties and thirties. However, the winds of change that had brought the fulfillment of Union were still blowing. Everyone agreed that a permanent place of worship was a priority. It is also noted at this point that St. Andrews Church was in need of a great deal of repairs and a new heating system. On February 9, 1938 the Official Board of the Church appointed a Building Committee to explore the possibility of a site in the village and to proceed with building arrangements. Rev. Mr. Langdon and Messrs. J. M. McKay, H. Conway, W. E. Carrothers and Dr. T. M. Weir were appointed.

The Orange Lodge Hall was an ideal site for the new church. It had seen Thamesford grow up around it and had served the community so well for so many years that its timbers had begun to sag. It required extensive and expensive repairs. The Building Committee approached the Lodge with a view of purchasing it. To make a long story short, the following agreement was reached - an exchange of Wesley Church for the Lodge property. The Committee agreed to give the Lodge thirty feet of land to the north and a strip ten feet wide to the west. It was further agreed that the stage, curtains and three doors and all seats and furnishings in each building be retained by the present owners; that the Orange Lodge be paid \$75.00 and that the Hall be wrecked after May 1, 1938. The Orange Lodge was to use the basement of Wesley Church only until the new Church was built.

While negotiations were going on, the members of Wesley Church were greatly concerned. When the result was made known, it must have spelt "Tragedy" to a goodly number. It was not so much, as far as the Lodge Meetings were concerned, but the thought of the social activities that had been a part of the Hall was heart breaking. Card playing and dancing in what had been God's House was sacrilegious. "Often for each other flows the sympathizing tear" had a real meaning. As far as memory goes, neither of these events took place during the short-lived occupancy of the Orange Lodge. It was a relief and comfort when the Lodge sold the property to the Baptist Church and once again God's Word was heard within its walls. Dr. T. M. Weir donated a portion of his property to enlarge the site as it is at present. The Orange Hall was sold to a wrecker for \$140.00.

It was also decided to dismantle St. Andrews Church to rise again in the new site, using as much material as possible. The plan for the new Church was to correspond with St. Andrews, which was 40' x 60'. An extra 10' was added for chancel. For a tender of \$13,881.00, Mr. R. W. McKenzie of Clinton was engaged to draw up plans and specifications. The minutes of the "Building Committee" record, April 28, 1938, "Started wrecking St. Andrews Church." It was a day of sadness for many. Let us pause for a moment of silence and try to recapture the emotions of many of the congregation who had been received into the Church by the sacrament of baptism

had been nurtured in the Faith at Church and in Sunday School; had become members by profession of faith; and found their life partners within the Church. The late Mr. Raderick Young sat at his window, looking out over St. Andrews, and had wept as a child. St. Andrews Church had ministered from one generation to another and had given devoted service from 1845 to 1938.

The first sod was turned on May 4, 1938 and on May 10 cement for the foundation was poured. Mr. Alexander Young removed the old papers and contents from the corner stone of St. Andrews, Mr. Roderick Young had been present when it was laid on June 1, 1875, by Rev. Lachlan Cameron. One of the speakers was Sir Oliver Mowat, Premier of Ontario. He had been Member of Parliament for North Oxford for many years. The stone was resurfaced. The name chosen for the new Church was "Westminster" and "Westminster, May 27, 1938" replaced the former name and date. On May 27, Rev. Watson Langdon officiated at an impressive Service for the laying of the Corner Stone. Ministers taking part in the Service were Mr. Roy Connor, Mr. H. G. Crozier, Mr. J. W. Hedley, Mr. Gilmour and Mr. A. S. Rennie M.P. for Oxford, laid the stone. Mr. Roderick Young also spoke and placed the papers, old coins and the history of the two Churches in a glass jar, which put in a wooden box, sealed and deposited beneath the stone. The Woman's Association served a hot beef dinner to over three hundred people at Wesley Church.

The white bricks from St. Andrews was used as lining for the double brick walls. The facing red bricks, 40,000 in number were purchased in Hamilton at \$24.00 per thousand. The rafters, trusses, re-leaded stain glass windows, gallery rail, front doors, from St. Andrews are now a part of Westminster. Seats for the new Church were bought from First St. Andrews Church, London for \$432.00. It is interesting that they "threw in" some light fixtures one an enormous Chandelier, so large that it wouldn't go through the front door. It was "parked" in a barn nearby and no one has any idea what became of it. The beautiful windows in the chancel are a memorial gift. The centre window was given in memory of John Urquart by his parents. The matching side pair were given by Miss Anne Lawrence in memory of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. David Lawrence. The Communion Table was a gift of Mr. A. S. Rennie, who had laid the corner stone. Furniture and equipment from both Wesley and St. Andrews were placed in appropriate places. The pulpit and three chairs from St. Andrews were replaced on March 30, 1947 by Messrs Paul and Harold Newton and the present pulpit and bench by Mrs. Ed Ellis, Buffalo, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. John Newton who had served Wesley Church for fifty years before their deaths in 1946. The former pulpit and chairs from St. Andrews were given to the Thamesford Baptist Congregation, after their Church, the former Wesley Methodist Church, was burned on Mar. 3, 1950.

The Church was officially opened on October 9, 1938, Rev. W. Langdon preaching. It was dedicated the following Sunday by Dr. R. Davidson, Principal of Emmanuel College - Toronto. There were overflow congregation on both occasions. Thus came into being Westminster United Church, Thamesford. The total cost was \$15,113.25. A sum of \$511.00 came from the sale of seats and this left a balance of \$14,602.25 to be paid. The price of the lot was \$400.00 By the end of 1939 only \$2025.00 was left to be paid. By 1943 the total debt had been wiped out.

After some years, the Orange Lodge sold the property of the former Wesley Methodist Church to the Baptist Church. On Sunday, March 3, 1950 at 10.00 a.m. the Church was destroyed by fire. Later, the site was purchased by Westminster Church and the Men's Club made it into a "Tennis Court" for summer and a "Skating Rink" for winter. It served a useful purpose for the young people. The rubble remaining after dismantling St. Andrews Church was buried in the basement and seeded down and has become a beautiful lawn. In 1959 a Cairn was erected where the steps led into the Church. Arthur Young, George D. MacKay, Ernest Patterson and George McKay undertook the project. Clifford Sutherland did the masonry. Mrs. Arthur Young's brother carved a fine picture in a marble plaque which is set in the front of the Cairn. On September 8, 1858, it was dedicated, in the presence of a large gathering. The late Dr. R. G. MacKay and Rev. A. W. Meacham jointly officiated. The late Mr. George MacKay had expressed a desire to have the four corners of St. Andrews marked by trees. His daughter, Miss Alice MacKay, fulfilled her father's wishes in the summer of 1959, having four trees set out.

There are some interesting details not yet recorded. The pews in Wesley Church were taken apart, packed and shipped to a new Church in Strathmore Alberta. A sum of \$200.00 was realized from the sale. The contractor was allowed to have the side pews from St. Andrews. Some of the centre pews are in Westminster Committee room, and in the Sunday School rooms. Several members purchased others as souvenirs, and some were used to make shelves for the library. Others are still in use at Dorchester and Thamesford bowling greens. The settee that was in the vestry at St. Andrews was in the narthex of Westminster until a few years ago when it was replaced by a chesterfield. Two emergencies during Church Services indicated the need of having a convenient place to care for such incidents. A member of the congregation is now the owner of a rare piece of Canadiana, the antique settee.

Dr. T. M. Weir left a sum of money to the Church in memory of his wife Fern McLeod. Other memorial gifts were added to it and chimes were purchased, installed and dedicated in 1961. The clock in the auditorium was presented to Wesley Church by Mr. Asa Cogswell, a lay preacher, in 1890. The Communion-table chair is a gift from the family of the late James Young

in memory of their uncle, Mr. Alexander Young. The Cross on the communion table is in memory of Rev. R. W. Langdon, presented by Mrs. Langdon. It is a fitting memorial for the one who had done so much to bring Westminster Church into being. A gift to Rev. R. G. Brawn to get "Something" for the Church was used to purchase the four Antependia which appear on the pulpit at appropriate seasons. The pulpit Bible was given by the family in memory of Mr. and Mrs. William J. MacKay.

Miss Tena McMurray gave wall racks for hymn numbers and after many years, these were replaced by the present racks, handmade and donated by Mr. Pat Patterson. The Kneeling Stool, used at Confirmation Services, has an interesting story. It was made by a Roman Catholic priest and given to Rev. R. G. Brawn. Miss Anne Lawrence donated the four brass collection plates. Four large scrolls used during the Christmas Season were made and donated by Mrs. Harvey Beaty. Mrs. Dickenson of London gave the fern stands. The Honour Rolls, on the north and south walls of the auditorium, pay tribute to those who served in World Wars, 1 and 2.

Becoming United Churches naturally brought in many changes in local congregations, but many of the changes were largely that of terminology. It was never the policy of the new church to force uniformity arbitrarily. Time has been a great factor in the solution of these problems. Here are a few examples. The highest court in the Methodist Church, the General Conference, met every four years; the highest court in the United Church, the General Council, meets every two years. The Methodist Church also had an Annual Conference when the Districts met and every Congregation sent delegates. This has been continued in the United Church. In the Presbyterian Church, on the other hand, the duties of Conference, Ordination of ministers, etc., was performed by the Presbyteries and the General Assembly which corresponded with the Methodist Conference and met annually. The Methodist "District Meetings" corresponded with the Presbyterian Presbyteries but were named after Places rather than Counties. The "Stewards" of the Methodist Church were "Managers" in the Presbyterian. The nearest approach to "Elders" in the Methodist Church were called "District Visitors". The Presbyterians had "Manse", the Anglicans, "Rectories" and the Methodists, "Parsonages," as dwellings for the clergy. The Methodists had a "Stationing Committee" to place their ministers and were under no obligation to honour calls. All moving was at the same time, July 1. There was also a limited term of pastorate. The Presbyterians relied on the "Call" system and their pastoral term was unlimited. On one occasion, just before Church Union, a Presbyterian minister remarked to a Methodist minister, "I hope that, when Union comes we can stay longer. I used to always plant a peach tree and never stayed long enough to enjoy the fruit". "You were lucky," retorted the Methodist, "I was afraid to set a hen!" The United Church depends chiefly on the "Call" system but have a "Settlement Committee" who honour the system but act in situations where no call has been issued

In the United Church, there is a blending of these customs and regulations and the old terminology is being forgotten. Members of the Official Board are elected by the congregations; directly, as elders, stewards or trustees, and indirectly, by virtue of their office, as in United Church Women and other groups. About 1972, a new plan was tried and later adopted by Westminster Church, with the work of the Session and Stewards combined under a "Unified Board". It has been proved very satisfactory and has resulted in more members taking part in discussions and accepting responsibilities in leadership.

MEMBERS OF SESSION

1929 - John Newton, W. G. Patterson, L. McLeod, A. B. Young, W. J. McKay Geo. Dowswell, H. Sandick, G. P. Hogg, J. G. McKay and W. W. Banbury

1975 - LIFE MEMBERS - J. Baigent, F. Clark, Rev. J. P. Cook, C. Day, Rev. A. G. Gay, Calvert Hogg, Rev. S. R. Johnston, C. Manzer, A. P. McKessock, Miss Grace Patterson, J. F. McMurray, Chas. Waring and Rev. H. W. Watts. Mrs. E. Alderson, J. C. Forbes, H. Patience, K. Payne, Alex Woods, Mrs. H. Lovegrove, Mrs. A. Armour, Alan Baigent, Mrs. J. W. Oliver, H. Sims, Chas. Ward, M. Rutledge, Dr. F. McLellan, B. Leslie, J. Hutchison, Ed Baigent, Ken Day, Wm. Henderson, Kaye Ricker, C. Rutledge, H. Baigent, Mac Young G. Calder, Barry Tait, R. Nancekivell.

It was written of the early church that numbers were added to it daily. In much the same manner Westminster prospered and numbers were added "yearly". This was especially true of the young folk. The Sunday School rooms became overcrowded and the necessity for expansion was urgent. Rev. S. R. Johnston and Mr. George Matheson were the enthusiastic proponents for another building project. It is rarely the custom for such to get under way overnight. There were different schools of thought, some this way and some that way. In 1956 Mr. A. W. Meacham took up where Mr. Johnston had left off. The following year it was decided to proceed with the present Christian Education wing. Before coming to Thamesford, Mr. Meacham had succeeded by the "Do It Yourself" method in building a new Church in Wawa in Northern Ontario. There was plenty of man-power with the "know-how" to do the same in Thamesford. Members of session and stewards attended counselling meetings, led by Mr. Meacham, regarding the approach to canvass the congregation for funds to be given over a period of three years. The group met at the church, received names of those to be canvassed and, after prayer, set forth in their mission. They returned to the church to report their findings. The results were most encouraging.

Mr. George Matheson, Chairman of the Building Committee, was perhaps the busiest man until the project was completed. There was a tremendous amount of voluntary work during the summer. Mr. Meacham donned

jeans and sweat-shirt and was "one of the boys" throughout the operation. He planned and carried out the re-modelling of the former Sunday School rooms, reserving the area for a new kitchen. Mrs. Merritt Hogg, Mrs. Wm. Carrothers, Mrs. Donald McKay, Mrs. Jas. Peden and Mrs. Walter Hutchison were a committee to plan the kitchen. They visited several Church kitchens and came up with what we think was a master-piece. Mr. John Reith carried out the plans. When completed, the ladies (like Dickens' "Tiny Tim" and the big turkey could only say, "And what a kitchen!" Ample floor space, double three-sink washing up area, with cupboards below the accompanying counter, on three sides wonderful counters with shelves and cupboards above and below a hot case and hot water tank. It was a joy to arrange the equipment necessary for serving turkey dinners, banquets, wedding receptions, anniversary parties, socials and teas. The sliding doors in the Sunday School side make serving most convenient. In that area Mr. Reith fashioned an attractive cabinet cupboard in which to preserve an early Communion Set of silver pitcher and cups, - another delightful piece of Canadiana.

The wing is now called "Westminster Hall" and is a Community Centre of activity seven days a week. The Dedication Service was held on Sunday afternoon, June 16, 1957 and in three years it was completely paid for.

There are some items of special mention in the Hall. The piano belonging to Dr. & Mrs. Howard Atkinson was donated in memory of their daughter Jean who was killed in a plane crash in Western Canada while on military service. The beautiful "Shepard" picture on the east wall given by Mr. and Mrs. George Woods in memory of their son, Raymond, an exceptionally promising young life brought to a close by a tragic drowning in the Thames River on June 10, 1955. The Cross is in memory of Mr. and Mrs. James Patterson pillars of St. Andrews Church for a life-time, given by their niece, Miss Grace C. Patterson, and also in memory of Mr. W. G. Patterson by his daughters, Mrs. Elsie Sandick and Mrs. Earl Valentine (Anna).

WESTMINSTER UNITED CHURCH CHOIR

The Choir has always played an important part in the life of Westminster Church under the direction of well-trained Organists and capable Choir Directors. Since Church Union the Choir has always been directed by the following leaders, Rev. H. G. Crozier, Mrs. J. W. Hedley, Mr. Luther Jackson Mr. Ed Byerman, Mr. George Andrews, Mrs. Alice McKenzie, Mrs. Merritt Hogg, and Miss Anne Baskerville. The organists included Mrs. G. G. Hogg, Mrs. Edith Corbett, Mrs. S. R. Johnston, Mrs. Robert Weir, Mr. Lorne Groves Mrs. Don Stewart, Mrs. Gordon Calder and Mrs. Howard Ferguson. Many of these have come and gone but their loyalty, faithfulness and sacrifice, like the number who have sung in the Choir through the years, can never be fully

measured. Several of the choir members were soloists while others took part in duets, quartette, as well as regular anthems. Mrs Vera Connor, a sincere admirer of the choir, gave the gift of covers for the anthem music which added dignity to the worship.

The choir has always been self supporting by presenting concerts such as the "Schneider Men's Choir of Kitchener," the "Earl Terry Singers of London," the "C.N.I.B. Choir" of Brantford, the "Choralaires" of Woodstock and Mr. Ed Fergusson's "Waterloo - Oxford Glee Club". When Dr. H. B. Atkinson died in 1964, he left a \$1000.00 legacy, the interest to be used for choir music.

More than once, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. McMurray generously banquetted the choir, with the U.C.W. catering for these delicious Christmas Dinners. Mr. Arthur Dempsey, a valued Choir member, also was host for a banquet and has donated a beautiful Biblical picture and pretty red broadloom for the choir room. Mr. John Reith, a former faithful member built a large filing cupboard for the music, a real necessity.

Evening services were held until about 1950, then only morning worship was conducted. The third pipe organ now graces Westminster Church which was opened in 1939 with a month of special services when the choir rendered appropriate music each Sunday under the capable direction of Mr. Luther Jackson. In the early years, Mrs. Hedley trained the choir in the presentation of many pageants and concerts which were well received. Later, impressive Easter Cantatas were presented under the direction of Mrs. Allen Hogg, who always had in mind the preparation for Easter with its hope of the Resurrection. On two occasions, Rev. H. G. Crozier directed the choir for entries into the "Oxford Musical Festival" held in Trinity United Church, Ingersoll.

The hard work of the practices was not devoid of its moments of humour as well. Once, when a bat got into the church, there was screaming confusion. On another occasion there was no end of laughter when one of the older members let his dentures fly out of his mouth when he sneezed. Another member when practicing that great Easter hymn, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?", got his words mixed and his rendition was, "Were you there when they nailed Him to the tomb?"

In more recent years, cantatas under the direction of Miss Anne Baskerville graced the Christmas season reminding many listeners of the real meaning of Christmas, with its message of peace and good will to all men. When Miss Baskerville resigned, Mrs. Merritt Hogg again took up the torch. It is also the second or third term of office for Mrs. H. Ferguson as organist. Special music is in preparation for the various phases of this **FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY YEAR - 1975.**

Henry Van Dyke's lines sum up the necessity of music in Worship Services -

"Mortals, join the mighty chorus
Which the morning stars began.
Father love is reigning o'er us,
Brother love binds man to man.
Ever singing, march we onward -
Victors in the midst of strife.
Joyful music leads us onward
In the triumph song of life."

They talk about a women's sphere
As though it had a limit;
There's not a place in earth or heaven,
There's not a task to mankind given,
There's not a blessing or a woe,
There's not a whispered "Yes" or "No,"
There's not a life, there's not a birth,
There's not a feather's-weight of worth -
Without a woman in it.

- Author unknown

The splendid philosophical insight contained in the above little poem is amply illustrated in the following sketch of "Fifty Years" achievement in a village church.

WOMENS' GROUPS SINCE UNION

The minutes of these groups record the tremendous amount of work, both missionary and local, carried on by the ladies of the church. The list of the presidents is included but it would be impossible to mention the names of all the consecrated workers over such an extended period of time. They appear so often in the minute books which form a large part of the archives of Westminster Church.

WOMENS' MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The largest group was the W.M.S. which lasted from 1927 to 1962. After local union, when the groups from Wesley and St. Andrews joined, Mrs. Crozier, wife of the first union minister, was chosen president. Since she belonged to neither group she was a fitting leader for their first five years of working together. Some meetings were held in the homes of the members but they relied mainly on Wesley Church, with an occasional Thank Offering at St. Andrews. The beginning of the meetings in Westminster Church was the Thank Offering on October 14, 1938.

The main emphasis, of course, was on learning about and working for the missionary activities of the church. As a rule, two papers were given at each meeting, one on some phase of missionary work and one on some inspirational topic. They frequently had outside speakers - a returned missionary or someone connected with the larger church organization, to inspire and inform them. They also kept up-to-date by sending delegates to Sectional Meetings and Presbyterials, and, in later years to Alma College and Western. The Society had a special interest in India through the work of our own missionary, Miss Grace Patterson, who was on furlough in 1923-24; 31-32; 39-40; and 47-49, before retiring in 1954. From 1948 on, some one missionary was picked for special prayer and friendly correspondence.

To add interest to the meetings, musical numbers were provided by the members and their friends and the "Roll Call" was responded to by Bible Verses on a particular topic, and other ways. Details of programme planning social activities and meeting places varied in the "Thirties" as they experimented and took to heart one rule from, "Advice to Auxiliaries," "Don't Get in a Rut!" By the "Nineteen Forties" they had settled on the group method of planning, met in Westminster Church and had lunch only on special occasions such as yearly joint meetings with St. Columba, Zion and Kintore. During the "Fifties" many of these meetings stressed temperance in addition to the missionary programme. Up until reorganization, members could get the "Missionary Monthly" and, in 1961, there were 45 subscriptions. Many members regret its discontinuance and feel that its lack is a great loss to the church. Books were also provided for circulation in the 40's and 50's and the highest reported number read in any one year was 250 in 1955.

There were many program highlights over the years. In 1934, a Jubilee Tea was held at the home of Mrs. Gordon T. Hogg, to celebrate the "Fiftieth Anniversary" of the beginning of St. Andrews W.M.S. Mrs. Bella Day, who had been present at the organization meeting in 1884, and had been treasurer for 25 years gave the history up to union in 1925. Mrs. John Newton gave the account of the former Methodist W.M.S. She said that records of it were very meagre but it began about 1914 with Mrs. David Lawrence as its first president. In 1938, Mrs. G. T. Hogg was presented with a "Life Membership" in recognition of her years of service in W.M.S., Sunday School and Church. During the "Forties" the Society observed their Easter Thank offering by taking charge of six evening and one morning church services. Four of the evening ones were dramas and cantatas, under the capable direction of Mrs. Allan Hogg, and had two special speakers.

The ladies were always aware of the needs of others in the church and sponsored several groups for young people. The Mission Band was re-organized in December 1928 and the Baby Band was formed about the same time. In the same year, Mrs. Gordon T. Hogg organized the Mission Circle and

became its first superintendent. The ladies continued to give leadership until it ended in 1954. The C.G.I.T. was formed in 1952, also under W.M.S. sponsorship, and continued the work of the girls of the congregation. Several times during the "thirties" one of the three junior groups assisted with the programme at the meetings. Later, the ladies provided entertainment once a year for them, usually a picnic for the younger ones and a party for those older. In 1952 they sponsored the first "Family Night" an evening including the W.M.S., Mission Circle, C.G.I.T., and Mission Band. In 1959, Mrs. Allan Hogg and Miss Grace Patterson were instrumental in beginning an evening auxiliary for young married women who were unable to attend afternoon meetings.

In the community they co-operated with other groups, and with the Anglican ladies the joint annual day of prayer. For the Canadian and World Needs for those less fortunate than ourselves, they provided a great deal of practical help and their work in this area reflects the changing pattern of the times. In one depression year in the early "thirties", the society failed to reach its allocation but this did not affect their work of assistance. All day quiltings were held to prepare quilts for the bale which was packed each year. In the late "thirties" aid was sent to drought-stricken areas in Saskatchewan. During World War II bales were usually sent to the Canadian West, but afterward, they were sent further afield. In 1947 and 1948 they went for Chinese Relief. Beginning in 1948, there were bales for Europe and food packages for Britain. This continued until 1953 when Korea, Angola and India all received aid. In 1954, sixteen bales (which also included blankets) were sent, as well as 7-10 pound "Care" parcels and 55 ploughs for Korea. "Care" parcels were sent till 1961, when they were discontinued in favour of adopting a child. Beginning in 1958 donations of fruit, jams and pickles were sent to Five Oaks yearly. Old woollens were collected to exchange for new and new and used blankets were sent to refugee camps, old nylons were collected for Korea and layettes and bales continued to meet Canadian needs.

ST. COLUMBA AUXILIARY

In January 1924, Mrs. J. M. McKay succeeded in having a country auxiliary formed for those living east of Thamesford. The organization meeting was held in her home under the direction of Mrs. W. S. Galbraith, the district president. It took the name suggested by Mr. Galbraith - St. Columba - for the Irish monk who came to the Isle of Iona to Christianize Scotland. Fourteen members enrolled at this meeting. In the beginning, members of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Ingersoll as well as at St. Andrews in Thamesford belonged. After Union, the continuing Presbyterians dropped out.

The Auxiliary developed some unique characteristics. It has always met in the homes of the members on the third Tuesday of each month, and pre-school children were welcome since baby-sitters in the country were

non-existent. From 1947 until 1972 one of the summer meetings took the form of a picnic, when the children provided the programme and were treated to sports and lunch. At various times the teen-age daughters of the members contributed to the programme. "World Friends" was sent to families with pre-school children. In the early "thirties" Thankoffering Meetings were held in the evenings with the men invited, and a recorded attendance of from 60 to 78.

Their early method of raising money for the contingent fund reminds us of the big change in poultry production since 1924. Then every farm had a flock of hens, so the price of eggs gathered on May 1, when production was at its peak, was donated by each member. In 1930 the Auxiliary was divided into four groups so all members would have some part in the meetings. In fact, it became traditional that all officers were rotated so each member had a chance to develop her talents. For the first twenty-five years, musical numbers were a feature of each meeting but, by 1955, the talented ones had moved away and now they have special music only occasionally. They marked the end of the first twenty-five years by a special anniversary tea held at the home of Mrs. George MacKay, one of the original members. For their fiftieth anniversary they held a special meeting in Westminster Hall to which all former members were invited. The history of the organization was reviewed and all enjoyed a social hour at its close.

Their programmes, community friendship work, packing of bales and raising of money, followed the general pattern. However, as Unit 2 in 1966, they came up with an innovation - making Christmas puddings and mince meat for the fall bazaar.

WOMENS' ASSOCIATION

After Union, the former "Ladies Aid" was renamed, the "Womens' Association", but continued the work of the former organization. Some of their minute books are not available but those from 1936 to 1943 and from 1951 to 1956 indicate clearly that the church was blessed with great numbers of energetic, dedicated women. Before 1938 meetings were held alternately at Wesley Church and in the homes of members. Unless there was too much business, they had interesting programmes of devotions, music, reading and talks on timely subjects. In October, 1938, Mrs. John Newton was specially mentioned for her inspirational contributions.

They carried on the usual work of raising money to keep manse and church furnishings up-to-date, to provide social activities for members, and to assist the Board of Stewards with larger Church projects - in short, to give help wherever needed. During 1936 to 1943 when Westminster Church was being built, and equipped, a month seldom went by without some fund-raising

activity. Cooking sales, teas, bazaars, oyster and fowl suppers, catering for banquets, socials, plays and quiltings are all mentioned. The first wedding was in September, 1938, just after the church was opened, for Frances Kerr and Harry Ellery. Three unusual events were - the picnic at Hedley's cottage at Grand Bend on August 13, 1936; - the "Coronation Supper", May 12, 1937 and the "Hot Supper" provided after laying of the corner stone of the new church on May 27, 1938. The menu was hot roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, turnips, pies, salads, bread, butter and tea biscuits and the price was 35 cents a person. The money that raised was used in providing a wardrobe for the choir gowns, drapes and chairs for the basement, a fern stand and flags, hymnbooks, carpeting for the auditorium, kitchen requirements and ornamental trees.

Over the years, community friendship was a big part of their responsibility. Calls were made on the sick and shut-ins, cards were sent. At Christmas time flowers were sent in the early days and later, baskets of fruit. The bereaved and special anniversaries received flowers. When disaster, such as a fire struck any family, the W.A. gave help. During the war, food parcels were sent to local boys serving overseas. In the period 1951 to 1961, when church work was expanding and Westminster Hall was built, there was also tremendous W.A. activity. Over \$30,000.00 was raised in the decade. By this time the society was large enough to be divided into four and later into six groups. The society as a whole had a Thanksgiving Supper and Bazaar each year and catered to weddings and banquets. In addition, each group raised money in many ways. New ideas were introduced such as auction sales demonstrations, flower shows and selling calendars and church commemorative plates. One of the most outstanding efforts was the 40 quilts finished in 1958. All the usual W.A. work was continued. However, three big projects requiring funds in these years were; the church auditorium decoration and floor sanding in 1950; equipping the kitchen in 1956 and 1957 and decoration again in 1961 when pews were also refinished and new carpet purchased. They also donated money toward the building of the Hall; provided floor covering for it and the kitchen; drapes for the windows and about 20 dozen chairs for the Sunday School. They also helped in the purchase of the electric organ bought in 1951 and the piano for the Church auditorium in 1953. Five dozen hymn books were bought and gowns for the choir. For the auditorium, they provided a Christian Flag, a collection plate, ferns and a glass top for the Communion Table. The cloth covering the Communion Table and the linen runner were donated by Miss Grace Patterson and Mrs. Annes. They supplied weekly calendars, flowers, a telephone and vacation school supplies. In addition to money, painting bees and work bees for special cleaning and preparation were held whenever necessary. They also gave donations to Five Oaks, the Chapel in United Church House, Toronto, the Fred Victor Mission and the organ at Westminster College in London.

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN, AFTER RE-ORGANIZATION

In 1962, the W.M.S. and W.A. became one organization, the United Church Women, with one general association and four individual units. The large evening auxiliary was divided into Unit 1, meeting on Monday evenings and Unit 4 on Thursday evening. St. Columba became Unit 2 and the original Westminster auxiliary became Unit 3, both continuing to meet in the afternoon. They continued sponsoring the Baby Band, the Mission Band, now called Messengers, and the C.G.I.T. They also provide leadership for the Junior Congregation and the Nursery. Now they have set up a Nursery programme for the interest group.

The friendship theme of the organization has been carried out by frequent joint meetings of the units. They continued the W.A. programme of calls, cards and Christmas cheer, and provided a picnic each year for the Messengers and a party for the Baby Band. They also continued their money raising activities both in the groups and in the general association. In recent years, the annual fall bazaar has been the outstanding project and people come from a distance, as well as from the community, to secure the articles offered for sale. Some less usual methods such as selling Easter eggs and sponsoring demonstrations ranging from pottery and antique to hair and hat shows have been tried. In 1970 a walkathon was held for Bibles for Biafra. With the funds they continued the work of the upkeep of the church, kitchen and manse; they beautified the church surroundings; helped with Sunday School expenses, Vacation School and other things. They continued the W.A. contributions to outside projects and added the London Rescue Mission, Alma College Bursary Fund, Westminster College, St. Monica House, the John Milton Society and the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Foundation to their list. Making layettes and hospital gowns and sending bales wherever needed was continued. Unit 3 supports a foster child. So far they have helped two boys from Korea and now have one in Ecuador.

The programmes at the meetings changed somewhat during the "sixties" both in method and content. There were more discussions, more dramatizations in plays and skits, and more use was made of audio-visual material such as films, film strips, slides and tapes. Besides keeping in touch with mission needs at home and abroad, present day social problems concerning family, youth, senior citizens, education, mental health and emotionally disturbed children received attention. They are building up a library of pertinent reference material; and book reviews, special speakers and delegates sent to Regional and Presbyterial meetings keep them informed. In addition to the regular study books, the members who attend Alma College and Westminster Leadership Training Courses each year share their experiences. They have obtained first hand information by such things as a tour of the Ontario Hospital in London, a bus trip to Moravianton in 1969, a Presbyterial bus trip to United Church Publishing House and other points of Church interest in Tor-

onto, and a visit to Blossom Park School for the retarded. They also enjoyed a visit to Five Oaks. Units 1 and 3 always have musical numbers at their meetings but the other two units are favoured only on special occasions.

All the ladies play an important part in the association, but two are singled out in the minutes for special mention: Mrs. Allan Hogg, when she moved to London in 1970, for the contributions she made over the years and Mrs. R. Spicer in 1973 for her years of oversight of the kitchen. Most interesting, during the early "sixties" both for the church and the U.C.W. was the association with James Koga and his wife, Margaret. He was a young married teacher from Kenya; father of two children and was taking General Arts at the University of Western Ontario, from 1962 to 1966. He shared a wealth of information about his homeland with us. His wife joined him during his last year and was present at some of the U.C.W. meetings, where her charming personality as well as her information made a lasting impression.

The highlight of Centennial Year in 1967 was a well-organized reception and tea to honour Miss Grace Patterson who was commissioned fifty years before as a missionary to India. The evening took the form of a "This is your Life" programme which included her teaching career at Bain's School, her missionary years, and her life as a neighbour and member of the church and community since her retirement. It stressed her thirty years of teaching in Kharua, as principal of a school in a rural area. She was honoured for her work in education and agriculture by being presented with the Viceroy's "Kaiser i Hind" medal. To help her in her work, the girls of her Sunday School class at Adam's School began the "Grace Country Club", which eventually included most girls in the congregation and later became the "Grace Patterson Women's Institute". The W.I. has, as its prime commitment the support and education of a child in India. Representatives from each phase of her life took part in the programme and among them were five missionaries from the area where she had served in India. There were letters of congratulations from various W.A. Officials and groups in Ontario and from pupils and former colleagues in India. At the end of the programme she was presented with a gift.

- PRESIDENTS -

W. M. S.

1927 - Mrs. H. G. Crozier	1946 - Mrs. C. E. Taylor
1932 - Mrs. J. M. McKay	1948 - Mrs. Gordon T. Hogg
1934 - Mrs. Gordon T. Hogg	1949 - Mrs. Jack Shewan
1936 - Mrs. A. A. McMillen	1952 - Mrs. S. R. Johnston
1937 - Mrs. W. J. McKay	1954 - Mrs. Colbert Day
1940 - Mrs. J. M. McKay	1956 - Miss Jean McGee
1941 - Mrs. D. Hossack	1959 - Mrs. D. A. Hossack
1942 - Mrs. Dennison	1961 - Mrs. W. Hutchison
1944 - Mrs. A. P. McKessock	

- PRESIDENTS -

W. A.

- 1927 - 1932 No record
- 1933 - Mrs. J. Clark
- 1935 - Mrs. Dennison
- 1937 - Mrs. W. H. McGee
- 1939 - Mrs. J. Leslie
- 1940 - Mrs. A. McMillen
- 1944 - Mrs. G. T. Hogg
- 1945 - Mrs. G. T. Hogg
- Mrs. C. Dann
- 1946 - Mrs. O. Smith
- Mrs. J. McKay
- Mrs. E. Byerman
- Mrs. G. G. Hogg
- 1947 - Mrs. G. G. Hogg
- 1949 - Mrs. J. McKay
- 1951 - Mrs. J. Thurlow
- 1953 - Mrs. W. Hutchison
- 1955 - Mrs. Donald McKay
- 1957 - Mrs. Merritt Hogg
- 1959 - Mrs. O. C. Powers
- 1961 - Mrs. R. Spicer

ST. COLUMBA

- 1924 - Mrs. W. M. McKay
- 1925 - Mrs. J. M. McKay
- 1928 - Mrs. J. Matheson
- 1930 - Mrs. John Reith
- 1932 - Mrs. R. J. Kerr
- 1934 - Mrs. Erwood Kerr
- 1936 - Mrs. Jas McCaul
- 1938 - Mrs. Walter Hutchison
- 1940 - Mrs. D. S. McKay
- 1942 - Mrs. W. Patience
- 1944 - Mrs. O. Smith
- 1946 - Mrs. J. McBeth
- 1948 - Mrs. A. Hutchison
- 1950 - Mrs. Wilfrid Hutchison
- 1952 - Mrs. Alex Woods
- 1954 - Mrs. George Kerr
- 1956 - Mrs. Emin Hossack
- 1958 - Mrs. George Woods
- 1960 - Mrs. Alex Hossack

- UNITED CHURCH WOMEN -

- 1962 - Mrs. Duncan Hossack
- 1964 - Mrs. Harvey Beaty
- 1966 - Mrs. Archie Armour
- 1968 - Mrs. Frank Dyer
- 1970 - Mrs. H. Lovegrove
- 1974 - Mrs. Merritt Hogg

UNIT 1

- Mrs. Harvey Beaty
- Mrs. Wm. Baigent
- Mrs. Ronald Hogg
- Mrs. H. Lovegrove
- Mrs. H. Ferguson
- Mrs. Howard Sims

UNIT 2

- Mrs. Archie Armour
- Mrs. A. Hutchison
- Mrs. H. Patience
- Mrs. Mary Calder

UNIT 3

- Mrs. Merritt Hogg
- Mrs. T. S. Caldwell
- Mrs. Colbert Day
- Mrs. O. C. Powers
- Mrs. Merritt Hogg
- Mrs. Slater

UNIT 4

- Mrs. Lorne Groves
- Mrs. Mel. Day
- Mrs. Gerald Richmond
- Mrs. Barbara Dyer
- Mrs. C. Dalton
- Mrs. Gerald Richmond
- Mrs. Rhoda Wright
- Mrs. Evelyn McLellan

- LIFE MEMBERS - U.C.W. THAMESFORD

Mrs. Gordon T. Hogg,	D. 1966	Mrs. A. P. McKessock	
Mrs. Merritt Hogg		Mrs. Archie Armour	
Miss Anne Lawrence,	D. 1968	Mrs. Mabel Hogg	
Mrs. Lovegrove, Sr.,	D. 1962	Mrs. Edith Shier	
Mrs. George MacKay,	D. 1962	Rev. S. R. Johnston	
Mrs. J. M. McKay		Mrs. D. A. Hossack	
Miss Grace McKay,	D. 1974	Mrs. Harvey Beaty	
Mrs. J. F. McMurray		Mrs. Frank Dyer	
Miss Grace Patterson		Mrs. Harry Lovegrove	
Mrs. O. C. Powers		Mrs. A. R. Stacey	
Mrs. C. W. Thompson		Mrs. Robt. Spicer	
Mrs. Varnum,	D. 1972	Mrs. Gladys Johnston,	D. 1969
Mrs. H. W. Watts		Mrs. Andrew Lane,	D. 1968
Mrs. George Weir			

ST. COLUMBA

Mrs. Bella Day
Mrs. S. R. Johnston
Mrs. Ronald Hutchison

W. M. S. OFFICERS - 1927

President - Mrs. H. G. Crozier, First Vice-President, Mrs. Al. Young, Second Vice-President, Mrs. Arnold Hogg. Recording Secretary, Mrs. Bruce Patterson. Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. W. J. McKay. Treasurer, Mrs. Dennison.

U. C. W. OFFICERS - 1975

Past President, Mrs. Merritt Hogg. President, Mrs. H. Patience. First Vice-President, Mrs. F. Slater. Secretary, Mrs. E. Hodder. Assistant Secretary, Mrs. H. Ferguson. Treasurer, Mrs. C. Rutledge. Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Alex. Woods.

MISSION CIRCLE

This group provided some experience of missionary projects for the girls of the church from 1928 till 1954. It was begun by Mrs. G. T. Hogg, who was its first superintendent. The second year, Mrs. Howard Hogg and Miss Jean McGee took charge and remained its leaders for seven years. For the next four years, Mrs. Langdon was leader with various assistants. In the remaining time, the circle was headed by a number of people, none of whom remained in office for more than two years.

No minute books have been found, but according to W.M.S. reports the Mission Circle was a very active group for the twenty-five years of its existence. They used a Study Book, packed bales, made layettes, and Christ-

mas gifts and their allocation was \$115.00 in 1951. They raised money in various ways. In 1939, a cooking sale, a candy sale, selling Christmas cards, a copper contest and a croquinoie party were reported. In that year there were thirty-nine on the roll with an average attendance of twenty-seven. On several occasions the girls took charge of the Sunday evening Service.

MISSION BAND

The Mission Band was an active group in the church from 1928 till 1961. Until 1940, Mrs. D. Hossack was leader. From 1941 till 1946, Miss Vining, Margaret Matheson, Mrs. H. Alderson, Mrs. George Weir and Mrs. Bolton took over. For the next sixteen years Mrs. T. R. Nancekivell was in charge with various helpers. Each year they studied some area of missionary activity and learned something of the customs of its people, through pictures, other illustrative material and by doing craft projects. In the "thirties" they had mite boxes and one year sent a \$11.00 bale. During the "fifties" much more money was raised. In the year 1961, there were 75 members on the roll with an average attendance of 60. They sent \$90.00 to Presbyterial, \$10.00 for CARE parcel, \$10.00 to Miss Patterson for India and had \$7.50 for craft materials. Each summer there was a Mission Band picnic, planned for them by the women's group.

BABY BAND

Until recent years, the Baby Band was an integral part of the church organizations. Its first leader after union was Mrs. Wm. H. McGee, Mrs. Banbury, Mrs. E. Sims, and Mrs. C. Day all looked after it for five years or more. Mrs. Walter Hutchison and Miss Anne Lawrence were in charge for more than ten years. They visited all new babies in the congregation and called annually until the child was old enough to attend Sunday School. Every fall, they had a party, with a short programme and the graduating children were presented to the group. In 1961, there were 127 on the roll; 16 graduated and \$59.00 was donated from the mite boxes.

EXPLORERS

The Explorer group is for girls ages 9 - 12 years meeting every other Saturday from 10.00 to 11.30 a.m. Mrs. Roy Embury started the group in Thamesford in September, 1963, with her daughter, Karen, as helper. When the United Church created Tyro for boys, Explorers became the programme for junior girls. The purpose emerged - "To help the junior explore God's world for the purpose of and filling her place in it - after the pattern of Jesus who as a junior, grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom and the favour of God was upon him."

In September, 1965, Mrs. A. Armour took over with Louise Matheson as assistant. At that time, Mrs. Embury presented a table cloth, embroidered with the Explorer Emblem, and it was used on special occasions. From 1968 to 1969 Sharon and Nancy Armour were also assistants. In the fall of 1969 Mrs. M. Rutledge took over and her assistants were Mrs. M. McKay, Mrs. Hutton and Cathy Rutledge. During 1970 and 1971, Mrs. D. McConkey replaced Mrs. Hutton. Since 1972, Cathy and Jane Rutledge have been Mrs. M. Rutledge's assistants.

Each meeting is opened with the Purpose and the Motto which is, "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only." The hymn, "This is my Father's World" is also sung. The programme includes study and worship periods and games. Crafts are made and donated to the nursery at Salvation Army Children's Village in London, - enabling the girls to do missionary work right at home. There is also a "Live Love" annual project and the money saved is presented to the "Guest Speaker" at the "Mother and Daughter Banquet." This money is used for the mission study of the year.

The girls have also enjoyed taking tours to places of interest. Included were visits to the bank, "London Free Press," 'Eldon House and the University.

CANADIAN GIRLS IN TRAINING

The C.G.I.T. was organized in 1953, under the leadership of Mrs. S. R. Johnston and Mrs. Duncan Hossack. It began with a group of eighteen girls and the numbers had increased to thirty-two by 1961. The meetings were held in the Church School Rooms and occasionally, in the homes of leaders.

Their activities included crafts, weiner roasts, picnics, trips to places of interest, such as "The United Church Publishing House" and "The Home for Homeless Men" in Toronto. They had special speakers, as Miss Grace C. Patterson, entertained other groups, made crib quilts, sang Christmas Carols for shut-ins and made favours for them, had "Mother and Daughter" Banquets, Candle-lighting Services, canvassed for C.N.I.B., carried on Health and Bible projects, sold Church calendars, collected stamps for the Leprosy Mission, sponsored a Fashion Show by Woolco and a most important one - adopted a "Foster Child".

Through the years many mothers of the community assisted them as leaders. These include, Mary Calder, Geraldine Meacham, Shawn O'Neil, Marion Lovegrove, Jean Wilson, Betty Brown, Bern Cummings, Elsie Rendle, Brenda Rendle, Nona Kerr, Betty Murray, Grace Sims, Kennilyn Bell and Barbara Dyer.

The C.G.I.T. has now been disbanded but leave a fine record of worthwhile achievements.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

In his poem "On His Blindness" Milton has these lines
Thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.

With this in mind, any attempt to prepare an honour roll of those who have served in our United Church Sunday School here during the forty-eight years since 1927 would have to include not only superintendents, teachers, pianists etc. but as well every scholar who by his or her presence in the different classes has made an individual contribution to the work.

Even in Scripture however certain names stand out - the Children of Israel looked back to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the New Testament we have Jesus, John his forerunner and the parents of both, the names of the twelve apostles, of Paul and other Christian evangelists, even though we do not know any of the three thousand who were added to the fellowship after Pentecost.

Likewise in the history of our Sunday School here, in the first recorded meeting of the new United group on July 6th, 1927, as recorded by Mr. Paul Newton as secretary, we have names of those from both St. Andrews and Wesley under the leadership of Rev. Mr. Crozier. When Mr. John Newton was nominated as superintendent he asked to have his name withdrawn, having served in that capacity for some twenty-one years in Wesley. On motion of Miss McMurray and Mr. H. Sandick and carried, that honour and responsibility was given to Mr. H. S. Conway, a worthy choice for some years with Mr. Allan G. Hogg as his assistant during most of that period. During the balance of that year a number of names appear - Pianist: Miss Eva Hogg; Assistants: Miss Grace McKay & Miss Moir; Teachers: Mr. George Dowswell Mrs. Freeland, Mr. J. G. McKay, Mrs. Gordon Hogg, Mrs. Duncan Hossack, Sr.; Mr. Wallace Freeland, Miss Alice MacKay, Mr. W. J. McKay, Mrs. Lackie, Mrs. Dennison, Miss Margaret Hogg, Mrs. Leslie; for the Home Department Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Noad; Cradle Roll: Mrs. W. J. Golding and Mrs. J. F. McMurray; Missionary Department: Mrs. John Leslie and Mrs. Newton; Temperance: Mr. Roderick Young and Mr. John Newton; Others mentioned: Mr. J. F. McMurray, Miss Wallace and Miss Pearl Dunn.

Plans were made for the Christmas Tree and Concert on December 22nd with each class to contribute ten minutes of the programme and Mr. W. Patterson asked to act as Santa Claus.

For some years accommodation was a problem, especially in the winter in Wesley Church, with four adult classes - Men's, Ladies', Young Men's and

Young Ladies' and total attendance from all classes in the one hundred and sixties.

Many of those mentioned above have passed on to their reward - to us from failing hands they have thrown the torch; Be ours to hold it high. To those who are still with us - our sincere thanks for long years of service.

Highlights since 1927:

- 1928 - Plans made for a joint picnic with the Anglican Sunday School at Springbank.
Mac Young and Gordon Griffin appointed to distribute Hymn Books.
- 1930 - White Gift Service planned.
- 1931 - Thanks extended to teachers of C.G.I.T. and Trail Ranger Groups:
Miss Georgia Hogg and Mr. Paul Newton.
- 1932 - Memory Course planned, also a Young Worshipers' League under the direction of Mrs. Conway.
- 1934 - Junior Congregation leaders: Mrs. Allan Hogg and Mrs. Conway.
22 had written and passed their temperance examinations.
- 1935 - Average attendance - 131 - high 168 - low 86.
- 1938 - Westminster United Church built to replace St. Andrews and Wesley.
Rev. Watson Langdon, Pastor.
- 1940 - 1958 - Miss Mabel Oliver, treasurer, assisted in part and followed by
Miss Jean McGee who also served ably and willingly as pianist for
over twenty years with the Cradle Roll Department.
- 1941 - Rally Day programme used.
Name of Mrs. D. Hossack appeared in committee for Junior Congregation, continuing for over twenty years, with Mrs. Alex Woods associated for quite a few years of this.
- 1944 - Alan McKessock, Superintendent, J. F. McMurray, Associate.
Vote of thanks to Mr. James McMillan for operating lantern.
- 1946 - Mrs. McKessock given permission to use one Sunday a month for
Mission Band. This same privilege continued in 1948 for Mrs.
Nancekivell and Mrs. Merritt Hogg.
- 1948 - Mac Young, Associate Superintendent; Wesley Nairn, Secretary.
Arrangements made for a Teacher Training Course - Rev. S. R.
Johnston, Pastor.
Camp Convenors named - Girls: Lorna Young. Boys: Harold Hogg.
- 1950 - Robert Raikes diplomas and pins introduced.
- 1951 - Miss Helen Young, Superintendent.

- 1954 - Sunday School in charge of the Church service on September 19th. Return of Miss Grace Patterson after thirty-seven years of Missionary service in India. Adult Class - President: Mrs. Wesley Nairn; Secretary: Mrs. Stanley Weir; Treasurer: Miss Anne Baskerville; Teacher: Mrs. McLellan. While Miss Patterson was in India and since a special offering has been taken to help educate a person or persons in India.
- 1956 - Building of Westminster Hall which with the basement of the church now provides ample accommodation for three groups - Senior and Junior at 10.00 a.m. and the Pre-School at 11.00 a.m., as well as mid-week activities, this taking place during the pastorate of Rev. August Meacham. Superintendents - Senior: Mac Young, Junior: Mrs. Whetstone.
- 1959 - 115 children under six years enrolled in the Baby Band, with parties arranged for these and their mothers. Superintendents - From St. Columba: Mrs. A. Matheson and Mrs. A. Hossack, and from Westminster Mrs. Walter Hutchison and Miss Anne Lawrence. Miss Patterson associated with Mrs. Whetstone in Junior Dept.
- 1961 - Two representatives to Five Oaks: Carol Hogg and Ken Woods and to Toc Alpha: Gary Valentine and Ron Wilson.
- 1963 - A banner year. Enrolment 345. Average attendance 232. Under Mrs. Mac Young as secretary 140 received recognition for attendance under the Robert Raikes plan. Offerings for the year \$1,338.38 - Mrs. James Pedan: treasurer.
- 1965 - Frank Dyer in charge of the Senior Department, Mac Young Junior, Mrs. Arthur Young the Pre-Schoolers.
- 1969 - Under the leadership of Mrs. Austin Gay the Christian Education Committee took over the direction of the Sunday School and mid-week activities.
- 1972 - Responsibility for Christian Education came under the Congregational Life and Work Committee of the Unified Board.
- 1974 - Offerings dropped to \$521.25 and attendance accordingly, this in spite of dedicated leadership by Mac Young, Frank Dyer, Mrs. David Elliott and Mrs. Julia Broadfoot and their teaching staff. What a challenge to each of us to reverse this trend or we will fail not only those who have laboured over the years but our Saviour Jesus Christ who established his church nearly twenty centuries ago.

Space does not permit us to mention but a few of those whose influence carries on - leaders of song like Miss Anne Baskerville, Mrs. Merritt Hogg, Mrs. Howard Ferguson, Miss Susan Clemens, teachers like Mrs. George Weir.

and those who found teachers for us like Mrs. John Oliver. For encouragement in the memorization of Scripture we think of Mrs. O. C. Powers.

And last but not least, a word of appreciation to the ministers who have served here, for their interest and inspiration and for their work in leading so many of our pupils through the confirmation classes into full membership in Westminster United Church.

WESTMINSTER SIGMA-C BOY'S GROUP

The Sigma C Boy's group for 12 to 14 year-olds was organized in the fall of 1963 by the Rev. Robert Brawn and some of the men of the church. It was through the encouragement of the AOTS Men's Club that the Club was started and each year they endeavour to provide an outing for the boys. Over the years since then a group of from 10 to 20 boys of varying church connections or none at all, has participated each season on a weekly basis. Usually the minister has been one of the leaders.

The group has followed the plan of "Sigma-C", a church oriented boy's group programme which was quite popular in the "fifties" and "sixties". Because very few groups now exist, support is no longer given by the national church. Weekly programmes include recreation, - usually ring hockey in Westminster Hall, and discussion of topics in four areas of a boys life, namely Sports, Church, Relations to Others and Personal Life.

In recent years, because a generous benefactor made a considerable donation of money for work with boys, the club has subsidized boys from the group who attend Camp Bimini. This has meant that between five and eight boys from Sigma-C have attended Camp each year. Unfortunately, the bank balance is virtually depleted, so it may be possible that the boys will not be assisted in this way in subsequent years.

The group has now completed twelve years. There is a continuing need for work among this group of boys in our community. Conscientious, devoted leaders are always required. The success of the group depends a great deal on the quality of the leadership.

YOUNG PEOPLE

At a meeting held in Wesley Church on September 20, 1927, plans were made to organize a mid-week Young People's Meeting. A nominating committee was drawn up to plan a programme and present a slate of officers. On October 6, the following list was submitted to be the first Executive for the United Church Young People's Society in Thamesford. They were - President - Mr. Allan Hogg, Secretary - Miss Alice MacKay, Treasurer - Mr. Wallace Freel. Convenors were named for the following committees: (1)

Citizenship, (2) Literary, (3) Musical, (4) Missionary, (5) Devotional, (6) Social, (7) Recreation. The "United Church Guild" was the name chosen for the Society.

The weekly meetings, generally held in Wesley Church basement, were well attended by adults as well as young people. The devotional period taken as a rule by the Minister or a senior member was most inspiring. Many are still remembered after fifty years.

Geography and spelling matches, musical numbers, book reviews, readings, plays and debates all contributed to the programmes. According to the min. one meeting began with "silent music"! In summer, meetings were often held at the homes. There were picnics, ball games, weiner and corn roasts with bonfires and community singing. Delegates were sent to conventions and Alma College Summer School. Thamesford won the shield at Alma once.

A membership fee of ten cents was charged. Members divided into two groups and the roll was called each meeting for attendance. The losing group had to put on a banquet in the spring. During the depression years the young people arranged and served the Banquet, then proceeded to put on the programme. Once, a ten cent admission was charged. That was the time the tea and coffee running short a helpful lady proceeded to pour them together! At a later banquet for which the ladies catered a charge of forty cents per plate was charged - thirty- five cents going to the ladies - the balance to the young people. Over the years the banquets continued to be one of the highlights of the season, many clever themes being worked out through decorations, menus and programmes. Local talent contributed with outstanding speakers as specials.

Visits to neighboring societies, Banner, Beachville, Burgesville, Embro, Ingersoll, Harrington, Kintore, Salford and Woodstock were made. One regular was the yearly exchange with Crumlin Society.

Plays were organized and presented at the home society then taken to the other groups. Many good laughs and lots of fun went into the preparation and presentation of the plays. Some of the directors were - Miss Grace Hedley, Mrs. Howard Hogg and Mrs. Merritt Hogg. During 1932 and 1933 a series of Inter - County debates were held. Some of those taking part were; Miss Jean McGee, Mr. John Baigent, Mr. Frank Hogg, Mr. Allan Hogg, Mr. Bill Crumback and Mr. Bill Hogg. Miss Jean McGee and Mr. Bill Hogg won the London Conference Silver Cup for Thamesford in 1933.

In 1937, the Young People competed in the Musical Festival sponsored by Oxford Presbytery. A duet, quartette and group chorus of twelve voices were entered, going to Mt. Elgin, Woodstock and London. Mrs. Naismith was

trainer and leader and Mrs. Corbett pianist. The quartette - Miss Jean McGee Miss Anabel MacKay, Mr. Gordon Hogg and Mr. Gordon Griffin came second in the finals in London.

In the "forties" and "fifties" Westminster and Zion Young Peoples Groups joined, the Executive being made up of members from each. Meetings were held every two weeks, often at the homes, with ball games, weiner roasts and other outdoor activities as well as regular programmes. Visits to outside groups were continued. One interesting event was a visit to the Observatory at Western University. In the "sixties" - Mr. Kaye Ricker of Westminster and Mr. Ron Calhoun of St. John's Anglican Church were leaders of small groups in their respective churches. They conferred and agreed to propose joining the two groups. This was put before the appropriate church bodies and an exploratory meeting was scheduled for all young people from fourteen to nineteen in Thamesford and the immediate area.

The young people were enthusiastic and T.Y.P.A. (Thamesford Young People's Association) was formed and flourished for several years. Some of the highlights were -

- (1) Participation in a Radio Programme by CKOX Woodstock, when the President, George Lindsay, explained to Oxford County Societies the concept of T.Y.P.A. and how successfully it was working;
- (2) Christmas carolling in Thamesford, during the season;
- (3) Padding the kneelers in St. John's Church;
- (4) Adoption and complete maintenance of an orphan in Columbia for several years;
- (5) Contributions to both church missionary budgets.

There were also visits to other groups; holding a Church Service during the year; hosting guest speakers on special topics; organizing visits to Ice Capades and to local Industry. For raising funds they had car washes, served breakfasts to guests; painted I.G.A. windows at Christmas and a "Twenty-four hour" Fast-a-thon for overseas relief. One of the most important by-products of the adventure was the stewardship accepted by these young people in their community. They became indeed a responsible and self-disciplined group.

As the tides rise and fall, so it seems that groups of young people gather, work and play together then suddenly comes the ebb tide, the time for broader horizons. Some go on to universities and other fields of learning, some to work, others marry and build a home. There is a closing of the old and an opening for the new, leaving a gap to be filled by another generation of youth.

In 1972, in response to a request by the Board to organize a Young Peoples

again at Westminster Church, Mr. Frank Dyer and Mrs. Lorna Ferguson assumed leadership of the "teenage" group - the nucleus being Mr. Dyer's Sunday School Class. They call themselves, "The Serendipities" (Discovery by accident). The Group with an average attendance of eighteen meet every Sunday night for discussion, games and activities, such as - roller skating, bowling and tobogganing. Every spring, a weekend is spent camping and another in the fall at Happy Hills with members and often parents. They write letters to a sponsored child in Viet Nam. Both members and leaders feel that this organization has been helpful in terms of meaningful interaction in group and outreach in the community.

Two of our former young people have responded to the call of C.U.S.O. (Canadian University Students Overseas). Gerald Oliver spent a term in Jamaica and later in Ivujivik, Northern Quebec, under the Ontario Government for whom he is still teaching Eskimos and Indians and is now principal of the school at Great Whale, under the Department of National Affairs. Brenda Patience, R.N., went to Zambia, Africa, as a nurse. She is now in her second term of service. Mr. and Mrs. Ken Hossack served for two terms in Kenya, Africa, in educational work. Mrs. Hossack, the former Shirley Thornton, was for a time Secretary of the Young People's.

Over the past fifty years many dedicated young people have taken their place in the Young People's Societies. It is impossible to mention all by name but a debt of gratitude goes out to all who have helped in any way. During the early years of Union many of the teachers in the Public and Continuation Schools gave valued assistance and leadership. A special tribute must be given to all ministers, their wives and their families, who gave so generously of time and talent to help make a success of the Church Groups.

WESTMINSTER AOTS MEN'S CLUB

The forerunner of the present Westminster AOTS Men's Club was a community group that was organized on October 15, 1958. Their purpose was to enjoy good fellowship and to undertake projects for the benefit of people of all ages in the community. Their first project was the making of a tennis court on the lot south of the old fire hall. In the course of several years they paved the lot, built a fence around it, installed lights and purchased equipment for both tennis and basketball. They also bought equipment for the Bantam Baseball Team. One winter the Club transported boys to Belmont for weekly hockey practices and for several seasons they made a local rink. Each year the Club gave much assistance to the annual twenty-fourth of May Parade. One of its most worthwhile projects was the adoption of Mr. John Spittal, a sixty-eight year old veteran at Westminster Hospital. For several years until his death the members visited him in the hospital, took him for rides, and on his birthday and other anniversaries sent him cards and presents.

Originally the Club was organized for men of all denominations but eventually it was found to consist of United Church men. So, on September 28, 1962, it was decided to affiliate with the "National Association of United Church AOTS Men's Clubs". (AOTS means "As One That Serves"). The charter hangs on the wall of Westminster Hall next to the kitchen. That would seem a logical place for it, for, according to the minutes, no meeting has ever been held without a delicious lunch. The Charter Members are as follows:

Rev. S. R. Johnston,	Hon, President	Alex Fraser
Howard Ferguson,	President	Walter Hutchison
D.L.G. Davies,	Vice-President	Robert Manzer
John Wright,	Secretary	Dr. Fred McLellan
William E. Carrothers,	Treasurer	Robert Richter
Rev. Robert Brawn,	Minister	Murray Rutledge
Harvey Beaty		Calvin Weir
Roy Emery		Wayne Ellis
Charles Manzer		Bernel Hedburg
Calvert Hogg		William Manzer
Allan P. McKessock		George Kerr
Howard Patience		Ted Nancekivell
Alex Weir		Kaye Ricker
Frank Dyer		Gilbert Smith
Doug Roddick		Allen Wood

Under its new name, the activities of the Club changed very little. A new one was the adoption of a Foster Child. The first one was King Wing of Hong Kong. For three and a half years the Club gave him such assistance as to keep him in school, but eventually circumstances forced him to quit school to support his family. Since that time, in a similar manner the Club has helped Gerardo Tolentino, who lives in the Phillipines. He belongs to a family of ten brothers and sisters. His mother is a widow and unable to provide for his schooling. He is now in High School and is doing well in a variety of subjects including English. He is a Roman Catholic and tells of good relations between Roman Catholics and Protestants and how they hold joint Services in his Church

Regular monthly meetings of the Club are held from October to May. They include devotions, business, speakers, films and discussions. Through the years they have provided good fellowship and have been interesting, informing challenging and inspiring. Among the speakers have been the following, - William Blacklock, Dr. Kosmal, Earl Shelley, Mike Davis, Ward Cornell, Dr. Fred McLellan, Ken Green, Mr. and Mrs. David Slater, Allan Slater, Howard Patience, Frank Dyer, Rev. S. R. Johnston, Douglas Kennedy and J. C. Herbert. Subjects covered included - Sunday Sports, Smoking, Alcoholism, The John

Howard Society, Rabies, The Cuban Revolution, Zambia, Australia, New Zealand, The Northland, Germany, The British Isles, Japan, The Cemeteries of Germany, Holland, Great Britain, where Canada's War Heroes lie buried, Capital Punishment, Banking, Finance, Currency, the Race Question and the American Revolution.

It was through the encouragement of the Men's Club that the "Sigma C Club" was organized and each year the AOTS members endeavour to provide an outing of the boys of the Sigma C. Other annual events of the Club are the Pancake Supper and the June Barbeque at Frank Dyers for the veterans of Westminster Hospital.

Over the years the Westminster AOTS Men's Club has enjoyed a multitude of interests and activities and a few have been chosen to show their importance and diversity, so that we may encourage the men of the Church, in larger numbers, to join us in this worthwhile fellowship and work.

"DOUBLE - or - NOTHING COUPLES CLUB"

1949 - 1965

When the first Couples Club was formed in November 9, 1949, at the manse, it aimed at creating a closer, friendlier atmosphere among the Young Married Couples of our Church. At first, committees were appointed to visit prospective members, to invite them into fellowship. Age was no barrier.

Harold and Isabel Hogg were the first presidents, Jessie and Jim Peden the first Vice-Presidents and Ruth and Frank Valentine were Secretary-treasurer.

In April 1950, it was agreed to call themselves the "Double-or Nothing Couples Club". As the name implies, both partners in the couple were encouraged to attend, exceptions being sickness or if the couple held an office in the organization.

The first picnic with their families was held July 20, 1950, in Memorial Park, Ingersoll, with 39 in attendance.

A weiner roast was held by the river on the "Blind Tenth" on Wednesday, August 16, 1950. Thirty-two attended.

Tours were popular, usually in April of the year. Listed are some of the educational places visited: Kellogg's, Robinson Plastics, C.F.P.L., and the Observatory at the University of Western Ontario.

At first there was no meeting in December, but later on the Christmas potluck supper and programme by the children of the members became a real highlight of the year.

One Hallowe'en party, complete with masquerade, culminated in an appropriate lunch of pumpkin pie and coffee

Bowling was popular with the group and the first Friday night of each month saw a goodly number striking and sparing-- and otherwise-- at the Ingersoll bowling lanes.

With all this fun activity the Couples Club was a staunch supporter of church activities. Their worship services at their meetings were thoughtful, and meaningful. Many of the subjects chosen for speakers and discussions pertained to spiritual things.

One summer at least, the Club arranged the whole church service, from choir, organist, ushers to pulpit supply from among their own group. The minutes record, "The service, indeed, was a spiritual highlight of the year, with almost all active members participating.

Members of the Club organized and supervised the Children in the 11 o'clock Nursery. It was their finances which bought the toys and cookies.

They donated the clock to the Senior Sunday School, had the lectern made and donated it. One of their number made the Hymn Boards which are in use now in the Sanctuary. They sponsored the Schneider's Male Chorus of Kitchener in a concert for the cultural enrichment of the community.

When James Koga came from Africa to study at Western University, proceeds from a car wash helped to raise the \$100.00 they gave to him. He was a guest in one couple's home for a time while he earned part of his tuition in Thamesford. The Club made other sizeable donations over the years, i.e. to the Fred Victor Mission in Toronto and the Rescue Mission in London. They entertained other clubs over the years and their hospitality was often reciprocated.

Having the Couple's Club in the Church's midst, raised the Spiritual thermometer of the "young marrieds", and, in turn, they responded to the challenge of raising a Christian family.

When the Couple's Club, as such, decided to dissolve in December, 1965, \$22.95 was given to the Sunday School, the amount on their books at that time.

At the present time there are two groups flourishing in our church community. Each of them meets in homes. One has spiritual programmes alternating

with a fun night. The other group is very active in leadership in our church and have a Fun Night together occasionally. Swimming, bowling and curling are some of the activities, meeting in alternate homes for refreshments.

SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB

The Thamesford Senior Citizens Club was organized on October 5, 1965. For some years the Citizenship Committee of the United Church Women had been laying the foundations. The Convenors were Mrs. Lorna Ferguson, Mrs. Kay Patience and later, Mrs. D. A. Hossack. The "Highlight" of the first meeting was the Woodstock Senior's Rhythm Band. For over fifteen years similar Clubs had been springing up, under various names and auspices and now the movement has become international. Their slogan is - "If you cannot add years to your life, you can add life to your years". The Clubs endeavour to help meet the three fundamental needs of older people, viz., "Somewhere to live; Something to do; Someone who cares". The Government, at all levels, is showing increasing interest in providing suitable homes, comforts and necessities for all but local Clubs can do much to provide interests and fellowship

Many older people who are well fed, clothed and provided for are very lonely. Having no active responsibilities in the Church or Community, they feel frustrated.

Many younger folk fail to realize that many older people have as much capacity for fun, fellowship, appreciation of music and religion as they ever had and more time to participate. There is not a group in the community who enjoy life more than the Senior citizens.

Thamesford Club meets twice monthly and have intervening Wednesdays for games and recreation. There are over ninety members and about a third are men. The average attendance is forty-five. There have been seven retired ministers and their wives and one missionary. The Devotions play an important part. In most organizations, the reading of the minutes can be a pretty dry affair. But, the first secretary, Mrs. Chas. Thompson made them so humorous and entertaining that the custom has continued. Our local poet, expressed it this way: -

"And who can write a good report
With humour, and ne'er once come short,
And never once the truth distort?
Why, Harry Sharp!
I'll say he well deserves a prize;
I'd laud his talent to the skies;
This ready scribe I'd eulogize,
With well - tuned harp."

There have been four presidents, Rev. S. R. Johnston, Arthur B. Dempsey, Mrs. Chas. Waring and A. P. McKessock. "Mrs. Stacey's Commentary" has been a pleasing contribution and is being ably continued by J. V. Findly. We have had many outside speakers, many of them showing pictures, but many of our best programmes have been original and given by our own members. Examples of this are - Mrs. Young's "Millinery Shop", Mr. Lane's "Grocery Store", Rev. J. A. Robb's original "Christmas Skit", "Public School", Spelling Matches and Contests. There have been several worth while Panel Discussions on timely subjects and a recent debate, comparing old and modern times. Several times we have been entertained by the Public School Choir, under the leadership of Douglas Kennedy. The Music Club came several times and the Club has enjoyed visiting and entertaining other clubs. The lunch is a most important part; also, the occasional "Pot Luck" dinner which ranks next to the Christmas Dinner, in popularity. Christmas dinners have been made possible by the contributions and help of the ladies of the churches and the generous gifts of the "Interest Group". The contributions of Mr. Hugh McDonald, well over ninety, on his mouth organ, will long be remembered. There are five members over ninety-one - ninety nine. They have been given suitable plaques.

The Club has twice won first prize for its float at the Dominion Day Calithumpian Parade. Bus tours are very popular and trips have been taken to Niagara Falls, Miner's Bird Sanctuary, the Safari, Goderich Museum and the autumn leaves up north. The Club has annually conducted a Church Service with retired ministers as speakers. Also, there is a Male Quartette - Rev. J. P. Cooke, Rev. H. W. Watts, Rev. S. R. Johnston and Mr. A. B. Dempsey, Their combined ages are 333. Miss Jean McGee is the very capable pianist and advisor.

Thamesford belongs to Zone 1, U.S.C.O., along with eighteen other Clubs, and is always well represented at the Spring Rallies, Zone Picnics in Stratford and the Fall Rallies. Some attend "Senior Adult Days" at Five Oaks and the Provincial Conventions at Waterloo, Toronto and Kingston.

Several generous donations have been made to the new U.S.C.O. Head Office in Toronto. \$50.00 was given toward a new plaque for the men who served in World War I. They contributed \$100.00 toward the Library extension and make annual contributions to the Church in which we meet. They also keep in mind older folk in Hospitals, Nursing Homes or confined to their homes. The ladies continue to sew and knit, making squares for afghans, afghans, baby clothes, pull-overs, socks and mitts and work at quilting.

In closing we have these lines from the pen of one of our most esteemed members, Rev. J. A. Robb:

"In these ten years of friendship's bliss,
We must not fail to mention this -
The loss of those today we miss.
Some twenty-four.
Who've finished out the earthly race,
Who've met their Maker face to face
And taken now a higher place
On yonder shore.

We're moving on, we must confess,
Our years down here are getting less,
But faith in Christ removes distress
And shadows flee.
For we with Christian hope are blest,
Our faith, through years, has stood the test;
And we are sure that still the BEST
IS YET TO BE!"

INTEREST GROUP

In 1970 it was felt that with so many new people moving into the Village there was a need for an International Group to help these people get acquainted. With the co-operation of the United Church Women of Westmister United Church the "Interest Group" was formed. At first it was for mothers with pre-school children but has been expanded to include all ladies, regardless of age.

The Meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m., with baby sitting provided. Coffee and cookies are available. A donation is asked for these. A variety of crafts have been taught knitting, crocheting, petit point, liquid embroidery, quilting, rug hooking, basic sewing, crewel, weaving and cake decorating. Other programmes have included a demonstration by Ontario Hydro, using small appliances; bread making, flower arranging, a meat inspector explaining good and economical cuts of meat and a short talk on restructuring in Oxford County.

The main project of this group is making and donating Christmas baskets of homemade candy and cookies for the Senior Citizens Christmas Dinner. A special favour, as well as a basket, is also sent to all the shut-ins in the community. Each year, the people in Nursing Homes are remembered.

For the last two years a Tupperware Party has been held and the proceeds from this has made the group self supporting. The "Highlight" of the year is the "Open House" held every spring, where all crafts, made during the previous months, are displayed.

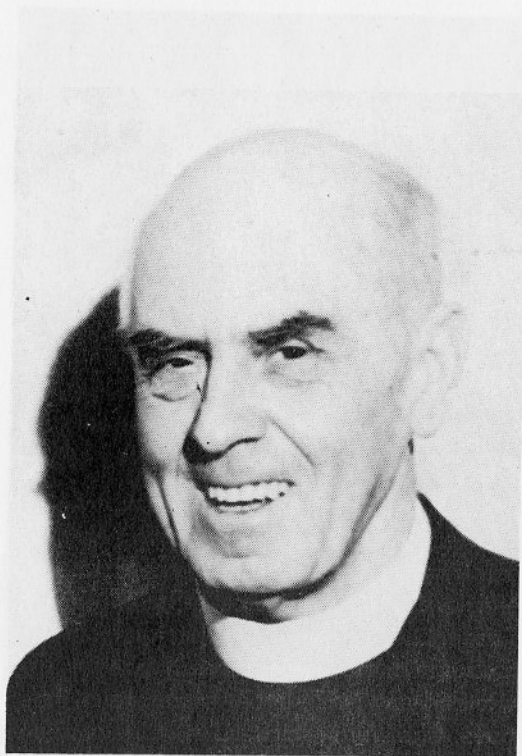


REV. HUGH G. CROZIER - 1927 - 1933

Thamesford Church has been exceedingly fortunate since union, both in its ministers and their wives. The first was Reverend Hugh G. Crozier, born in Holstein, the son of a Presbyterian minister. He began his ministry as a McGill Divinity student at Laguerre, Quebec, in 1895. His early work was in Manitoba where he was ordained in 1899. Then, after a term in Ontario, beginning in 1900 as pastor of Melville Presbyterian Church at West Hill, he returned to Manitoba for almost twenty years, serving at Hamiota, Neepawa and Chalmers Church in Winnipeg. In 1924 he came to Tavistock and then to Thamesford in 1927.

His wide experience of people, his openness to new ideas and his organizational ability made him an ideal person to begin the difficult task of uniting two congregations. Under him, the new organization was implemented and put in smooth running order. He advocated the building of a new church in the village and drew up plans for it which were later largely followed, and a building fund begun. His wife was a capable assistant and her gracious tact, as President of the Woman's Missionary Society was a big factor in getting the women working together.

In 1933, he left Thamesford and went to Pickering and in 1937 retired in Whitby, where he lived until his death in October 1965, at the age of ninety-two.



REV. JOHN W. HEDLEY - 1933 - 1937

In 1933, Rev. John W. Hedley was called to Thamesford, to succeed Rev. H. G. Crozier. A graduate of Victoria College, Toronto, he did missionary work in the interior of British Columbia and was ordained 1903. His charges included one in Haldimand County and three in British Columbia. In 1917, he returned to Ontario, preaching in Byron, Goderich, Essex and Blenheim before coming to Thamesford, in 1933. When he left Thamesford in 1937 he was called to Talbotville where he ministered until his retirement in 1940. He then became retired assistant in a St. Catherines United Church for a few years and concluded his ministry on a rural charge in Welland County.

Mr. Hedley will long be remembered as a kindly, old-fashioned pastor who loved to visit his parishioners in their homes. He, too, was blessed with a wonderful help-mate and family, all of whom contributed to music and drama in the community. With his wife he retired to St. Catherines where he passed away in 1949 at the age of 76.



REV. R. WASTON LANGDON - 1937 - 1941

Rev. R. Watson Langdon was born on a farm near Harrington, Ontario, where he attended public school and later, Woodstock Collegiate. Mr. Langdon, served in the first World War, graduated from Victoria College, Toronto, in 1928, having won the Sanford Gold Medal in Divinity.

His charges were at Lyons and Lawrence Station before coming to Thamesford in 1937. His work on various boards and committees of the United Church had taught him the knack of diplomacy and the art of getting along well with people which was a great asset in the building of Westminster Church during his pastorate here. It was a proud day for him when the corner stone was laid and the church eventually completed. He directed a whole month of special services at the time of the opening of the new Church.

His wife, too, was a tower of strength to him and her work in the various women's groups was an inspiration. In 1941, Mr. Langdon accepted a call to Riverdale United Church in Toronto and in 1951 he was called to Earls court United Church. It was while there that his untimely sudden death occurred after only two years in this latter charge in Toronto.



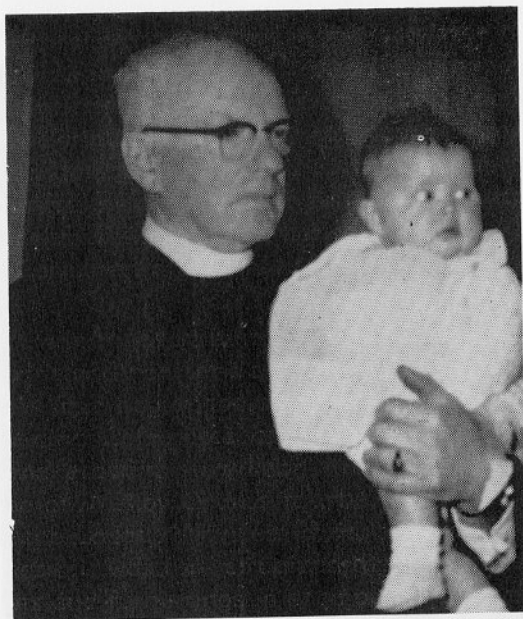
REV. C. ELMER TAYLOR - 1941 - 1947

Rev. C. Elmer Taylor was born and raised in Huron County and attended Wingham High School. He served in France during World War I, in the Second Battalion, Canadian Machine Gun Corps. He graduated from Victoria College, Toronto, in 1921 and was ordained the same year in London Conference in which he served his entire ministry.

Being a war veteran, Mr. Taylor had a very deep concern for the World situation in general and a sympathetic understanding of the problems facing the young people who were called to serve their country. His pastorate included the duration of World War II and thus he was vitally interested in seeing the young people go and return.

Again, we must mention the wonderful support Mrs. Taylor gave her husband with her lively interest in all the work of the church.

The Taylors exchanged pastorates with Rev. Stanley R. Johnston, in 1947, going to Cottam. When they retired they moved to Goderich for some years and are now at Albright Gardens, a Senior Citizen's Home for retired ministers near Beamsville, Ontario.



REV. STANLEY R. JOHNSTON - 1947 - 1956

Rev. Stanley R. Johnston was raised on a farm near Gorrie in Huron County. When he was twenty-one, he felt the call and went to Albert College, Belleville, to prepare for the ministry. After four years in military service overseas he graduated in Arts and Theology in Victoria College, Toronto, in 1921, and was ordained the same year in London Conference of the Methodist Church. After serving in five charges in London Conference, he was called to Thamesford in 1947. During his pastorate, the old Manse was sold and a new one erected beside the church. As the years passed the Sunday School grew in numbers and it became increasing evident that a new Christian Education wing was needed. There were many suggestion until, finally, Mr. George Matheson "dreamed" up one that met with general favour. At this time, 1956 Mr. Johnston was called to Curries. His successor, Rev. A. W. Meacham came at the opportune time to carry the dream into reality. Mr. Johnston had the distinction of the longest pastorate in Thamesford, nine years.

In 1959, Mr. Johnston became "Retired Assistant" in Trinity United Church Toronto. While there, he became vitally interested in a comparatively new movement - Senior Citizen's work. Upon his return to Thamesford in 1962, a Club was organized in Thamesford and it serves a useful purpose. In 1973, he was honoured by Westminster Congregation, being made, "Minister Emeritus." He is on call during the absence of the residing minister.

Mrs. Johnston, who was Church Organist for several years, took an active interest in every phase of the work of the Church.



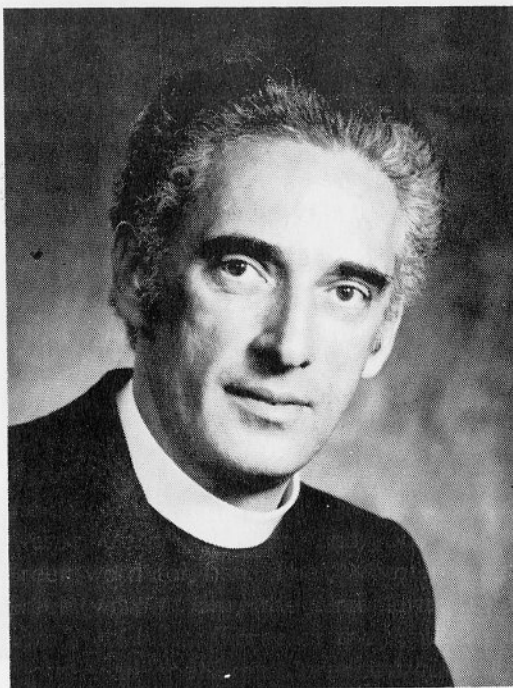
REV. AUGUST W. MEACHAM - 1956 - 1962

Rev. August W. Meacham was born on a farm near Princeton in Oxford County. He served with the Canadian Army overseas during World War II, receiving the Military Medal. He graduated at the University of Toronto in both Arts and Theology and was ordained in Woodstock in 1953. He went directly to Wawa, Ontario and in 1956 received a call to Thamesford. In 1962 he was called to Blenheim.

In 1968, he was elected President of London Conference and gave outstanding leadership during his two years in that office. He is now "Personal Officer" of the London Conference. This is a new position, created in 1973.

While in Thamesford, Mr. Meacham enjoyed working with the young people, helping to provide skating in winter and tennis in the summer on the present tennis court. As mentioned elsewhere in this book he gave much voluntary labour in the building of Westminster Hall. He was an inspiration to all as well as being a capable counsellor and builder,

Mention must also be made of Mrs. Meacham, who was an active and willing worker in all the organizations of the church, especially the younger groups, including the Sunday School.



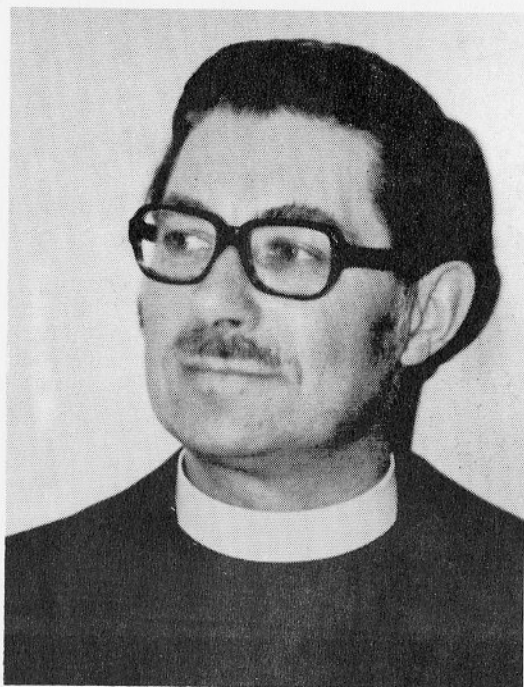
ROBERT G. BRAWN - 1962 - 1968

Robert G. Brawn was born at Raglan in Ontario County. Following his public and High School education he graduated in Arts at Victoria College, Toronto and in Theology at McGill University, Montreal. He graduated in 1956 and was ordained the same year in the Bay of Quinte Conference. He served on one rural charge before going to Zion-Wexford United Church in Toronto. He was called to Westminster Church, Thamesford in 1962.

During his pastorate in Thamesford he had the honour of organizing a Sigma-C Boy's Group to whom he showed great loyalty and devotion. Mr. Brawn will be remembered as a very systematic pastoral visitor, in a time when it was very difficult to find the members of his flock at home. He organized, "Every Family Visitors" and trained and sent men out in pairs to visit those who were out of touch with the Church.

Mrs. Brawn was a wonderful team-worker with her husband, showing interest in every department of Church work.

Mr. Brawn received a call to Cobourg in 1968 and served there several years before going to his present charge in Port Perry.



REV. J. H. WELLS ROBINSON - 1968

Rev. J. H. Wells Robinson, the present minister, was born in Russell, Ont., the son of Eber and Maida Robinson, farmers. He attended elementary and secondary schools at Russell and graduated from the Ontario College of Pharmacy, University of Toronto. He enlisted in the service during World War II but the war ended before he was called. After working as a pharmacist for several years, he obtained his B.A. at St. George Williams University and his Divinity work at McGill University and United Theological College, Montreal. In 1959 Mr. Robinson was ordained by the Montreal - Ottawa Conference. He served at Perdue, Saskatchewan and Innerkip, Ontario, before coming to Thamesford in 1968.

Mr. Robinson's outstanding executive ability has been recognized by the higher courts of the church and he is in much demand in the work of Presbytery, Conference and General Council. In 1972, he was instrumental in reorganizing the Official Board into its present Unified Board Structure.

Mrs. Robinson, being a graduate of Covent College, Toronto, is making a fine contribution to the Christian work of the church.