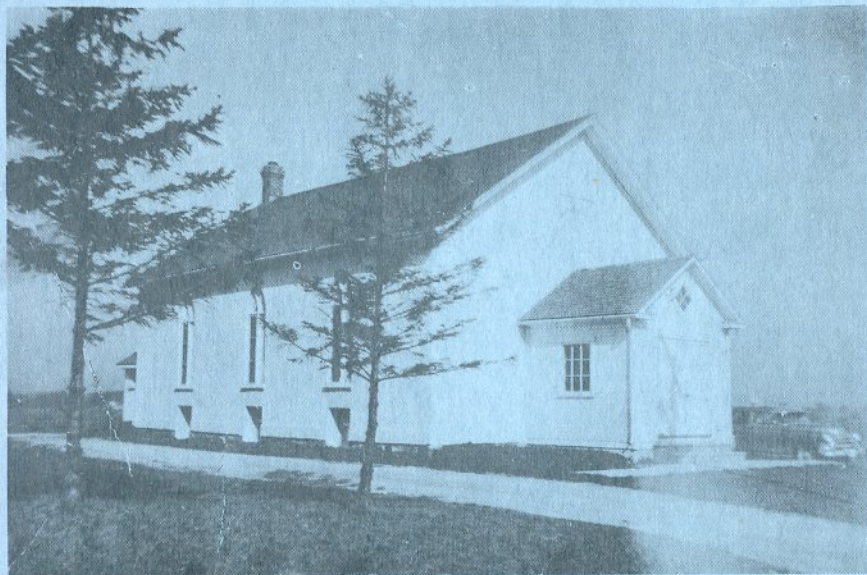


# CENTENNIAL

South Zorra Baptist Church



For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid  
which is Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 3:11

# 1870-1970

One hundred years ago, a candle was planted on a little hill and set alight. It burned brightly at first, but as the years went by it became weaker and weaker, and finally, when the winds of adversity blew, it went out. In the darkness brave souls saw the need of that light and soon it was restored and burning again. Just a candle? Yes. A very small light! Yes indeed; but do you know that its rays have shone into areas from the Arctic to South America, from British Columbia to the Maritimes, across the sea to Britain, in Europe and in many places in dark Africa.

By now you have probably guessed that we have a story to tell. We do, and it is about that little light, which in reality is people. Famous people? Oh no, just ordinary folk but folk relying on a loving and provident Heavenly Father. Then this is a Church? Yes, it is, and its founders named it the South Zorra Free Will Baptist Church.

Perhaps you wonder about "Free Will". Let us explain. The early settlers of New England regarded it as their right and duty to protect themselves and children from all error. This in turn led to a belief in the necessity of uniformity of public worship, though this prevented religious freedom. It also often led to the connection of church and state, a connection which resulted in suppression of all who differed from the legal church -- which was Congregational; in compulsory support of churches and ministers, this being collected the same as taxes; and in worldly and not



always converted ministers who were led into the ministry because of the salary and the great influence a minister had in the community.

Baptist churches were started with difficulty, accepting the same Calvinistic doctrine as held by the Congregational church. In protest to this and other existing conditions, there came into being a new denomination which took issue mainly on four points of difference, two directed to government, and two to the accepted interpretation of the Scriptures and so involving Church doctrine.

First, they demanded separation of church and state. Secondly, each organized assembly of believers was to be completely self-governing with the Scriptures and the Covenant laws of the new denomination as their guidelines. The third point was their rejection of the belief that God provided a limited salvation in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures reveal that God created man a free agent with the privilege and ability to choose intelligently. They also tell us the Son was sent to "whosoever" would believe. As John Oxenham so aptly states it:

"To every man there openeth a high way  
and a low

And every man decideth the way his  
soul shall go."

Therefore, every man with a Knowledge of the Gospel determines his Eternal destiny by his own personal choice.

The fourth point had to do with the Lord's Table, and again the responsibility was placed on the individual who must, as the Scriptures require, "Examine himself" and so determine his right to partake. Access to the Lord's Table was not to be restricted but open to all brethren in Christ on the above basis.

The name of "Free Will" was given to this new group by those whom they left and who refused to have fellowship with them. At first it was not used, but years later became a part of the denominational designation.

In the year eighteen hundred and forty-nine under the direction of Elder Stephen Griffin, a Free Will Baptist Church was organized in this area with thirty members. Stratton Rowell and Stephen Tree were appointed Deacons and William P. Brown appointed Clerk. Meetings were held in the school house at the Tollgate on what is now 59 highway. It is recorded that at the first Covenant meeting, almost one hundred took part in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

Very shortly a canvass was made to secure funds to make possible the erection of a meeting house, which was built in 1851 on a lot donated by Harvey Dibble being part of Lot 6, Concession 13. The land is now owned by Mr. Fay Chong. This church was disbanded in 1861.

Later the church was re-organized as the South



Zorra Free Will Baptist Church. A lot was secured from Mr. Thomas Burgess, part of Lot 7, Concession 12 (13 th line) for the erection of a meeting house and a white brick building was completed in eighteen hundred and seventy. Today, as then, it forms the main auditorium and offers silent tribute to workmen, unknown to us, who builded well. The fact that there is no record of the planning, financing or erection of this building could be disturbing but somehow it set a precedent for years to come. --- There was a need, and suddenly the need was met. --- This has been a continuing testimony in the experience of the church through the years with regard to material requirements.

Across the front of the church was a plank platform with steps in front and a step down at each end just the right elevation to enter into the horse drawn buggies of those days. Two large box stoves were used to provide heat. Light was obtained from bracket lamps mounted on the wall and on standards at the end of pews. One central fixture, hanging from the ceiling, carried either four or five lamps. Some time later, this and the lamps on the standards were replaced with four large brass hanging lamps.



Sheds were built in 1883 and stalls rented at three dollars each per year. The money received was applied on the minister's salary. In 1922 a closed porch was erected in place of the platform and proved very beneficial, not only providing shelter in bad weather but also in protecting the main entrance. In the twenties, hydro became available and was installed in the church in 1929. Installation was done by Mr. Bert Murray and his father, the late Mr. Arthur Murray, gratis.



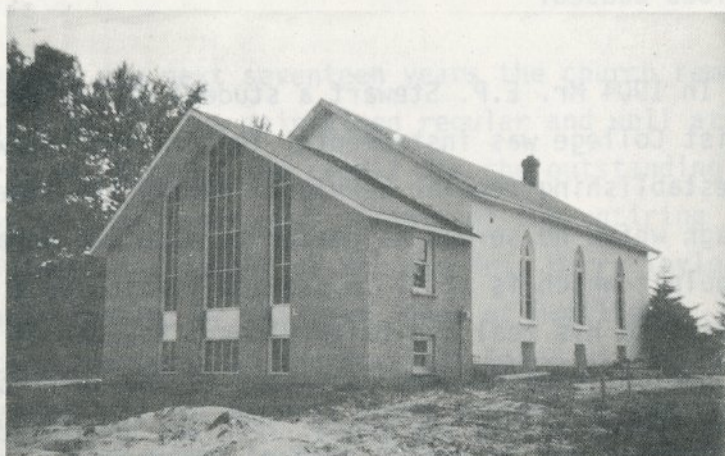
At this time membership was increasing and with space at a premium it was decided to renovate the building. Mr. Howard Marshall, a qualified carpenter, agreed to take charge and in November the men of the church went to work. The following February sixteenth services were resumed and the building re-dedicated now complete with basement, baptistry, furnace, choir loft, new platform and kitchen. The Pastor, Rev. Frank Mesley, provided much of the inspiration for this project.



In 1942, being for the most part unused, the north sheds were sold. A few years later the west sheds were removed, the land levelled and trees planted for wind-break. In 1954 an oil furnace was installed and a water supply donated by Mr. Howard Hallock was piped in. On many occasions members and interested friends gave of their time and talent to protect and improve the buildings and grounds. Worthy of mention was the work done by Mr. Clifford Brooks and his brother, the late Stanley Brooks who pointed the brick work and painted the outside of the building, supplying the material used.

In 1961 looking forward to a full time pastor, a building fund was established and in 1966 with the need for a parsonage having become a reality, a lot was purchased from Mr. Lloyd Goodall on which a three bedroom brick veneer house was built by Hanenburg Construction Co. and dedicated on September 16 th of that year. By early 1969 with the indebtedness on the premises met by free will offerings, thoughts and planning were turned towards 1970, the centennial year.

Once again there was a definite need for more space to accommodate Sunday School classes, and early in the year a decision was made to add a new front to the Church. Plans drawn by Rev. Reg. W. Scott of London and accepted by the membership are now at this time of writing in the hands of the contractor, Hanenburg Construction Company. The addition will provide two new rooms, washrooms and adequate entry space.



And so it stands, solidly constructed, carefully maintained and enduring, but by itself just a building cold and lifeless: the story of the candle.

Let us now consider the light. Services were begun in the new church with an enrolment of sixty-two members under the pastorate of Rev. Robert Martin. In 1878 the South Zorra Church commenced working with the second Free Will Church located two miles north of Hickson on Lot 26, Concession 11. The first pastor to the enlarged field was Rev. Thomas MacElroy. Existing records tell us but very little of the efforts of faithful people to maintain the work through the years that followed. On one occasion a committee of men was appointed to keep order and protect the property inside and outside the building. On another occasion it was necessary to examine gifts placed on the Christmas Tree because of practical jokers with a crude sense of humour. By 1898 interest had ebbed away and regular



services ceased.

In 1904 Mr. E.P. Stewart a student at the Woodstock Baptist College was instrumental in reviving the work and establishing regular services. During the time through which he served as pastor he made and donated the pulpit which is still in use and remains as a memorial to his zeal and faithfulness. Because of the idle period, repairs were necessary to the interior of the church and to the organ. This was completed in 1905 and on the first Sunday of 1906 a thank offering was taken to defray expenses.

In 1907 the South Zorra Church affiliated with the 16 th Line Baptist Church which was a member of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. The first pastor of the joint charge was Brother J.G. Whitten. The South Zorra Church withdrew from the Convention in 1928 and for a time was affiliated with the Union of Regular Baptist Churches. Following this withdrawal, the church had some association with Baptist Fellowship Churches but tended to emphasize its position as an independent church. However in 1935 and for four years a Bible Conference was held on Thanksgiving Sunday and the following Monday for pastors and members of nearby churches.

At the time of the church's withdrawal from the Baptist Convention, Rev. R.J. Campbell was pastor and was followed in turn by Rev. Frank Mesley, Rev. C.P. Van Duzen, and Rev. James Henshaw covering the period.

from 1928 to 1939.

During the next seventeen years the church remained without a pastor but maintained regular and well attended services. Much of the credit for the outstanding success of those years was because of the untiring faithfulness and labour of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Tayler and their family. Mr. William Jones of Hamilton, secretary-treasurer of the American Board of Missions to the Jews was for several years present on the first Sunday of each month to take charge of the services and the Communion Table. Mr. David Tait of Woodstock was a regular speaker and was often accompanied by his coloured friend, Fred Smith, with a song for good measure. Faculty and students of the then London Bible Institute gave of their talent willingly through the years and there was no lack of sound, helpful teaching. Several Bible Conferences were held during the fifties, again at Thanksgiving time. Guest speakers included Rev. John Dodds of Owen Sound, Rev. Frank Koksma, Dr. Bedford, Dr. Harris and Dr. Beckman all of London College of Bible and Missions. It may be a record that through those seventeen years, almost nine hundred Sundays, services never had to be cancelled for lack of pulpit supply.

In 1956 with the willing consent of the members, the Board of Deacons began to seek a part time pastor. Once again we were indebted to the London College of Bible and Missions for their recommendation of Mr. Murray Hicks a senior student in the school who after



due consideration felt led of the Lord to accept the offer of the Board. The presence of Mr. Hicks was the beginning of a new day at South Zorra for which we are humbly thankful, not only for the kind and capable ministry which he performed to young and old alike, but also for the opportunity of being able to recognize the necessity of having a dedicated Shepherd in the midst of the flock. Following Mr. Hicks in 1958 was Mr. Wilfred Kent also a student at the school and in October 1959 Mr. Bernard Holloway for a short time. In 1961 Mr. Ed Payne a returned missionary agreed to serve as pastor and he remained until early 1963.

In April 1964 a call was extended to Rev. Richard Smith to come to South Zorra as part time pastor. While Rev. and Mrs. Smith had served two terms as missionaries in South Africa, Mr. Smith a graduate of John Brown University was taking further studies at L.C.B.M. In March 1965 Mr. Smith agreed to become full time pastor. Five happy and profitable years have passed and the Smiths now a family of four have by their untiring devotion to their calling, brought honour and respect to the work of the ministry and added stature to the assembly of believers among whom they serve and have gained for themselves a host of friends throughout the area. In 1968 the church voted to join the fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Canada and is beginning to enjoy the advantage of being associated with more than 350 churches of like faith.

Nature reveals to us that where there is no

growth decay is soon evident. This is true of trees and also of churches: and the inverse also applies. As we pause to consider the past years and the people of those years in the church circle, we might perhaps be led to wonder why and how certain conditions came into being. Better still, let us relate those years to the present. When our offering to the Lord is taken, it is gathered on plates of solid black walnut given by the Hallock family presently serving in the church in memory of other Hallocks who served for more than a century ago and through the years. As we partake of the Lord's Supper it is served from a Communion table presented to the church by Mr. William Goodall in memory of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Goodall. The Communion trays and glasses, a gift from Rev. and Mrs. Murray Hicks bring to mind the step of faith taken in 1956 when the assembly was once again adorned with a pastor. There are other memorials in inanimate things but much more important are the living memorials. Those serving today because of the faithful witness of parents, pastors or other Christians. To these, two lines of the immortal poem of Lt. Col. John McCrae might well apply:

"To you from failing hands we throw  
the torch

Be it yours to hold it high".

From shortly after the turn of the century there has been evidence of growth at South Zorra. First, and most important, the fruit of the ministry. During these years more than one hundred and thirty have publicly



given evidence of their faith in Christ by being obedient to Him in the waters of Baptism. As the strict preaching ministry of the early days more and more became a teaching ministry, there developed a greater awareness of the necessity of being involved. A missionary spirit began to abound and also a desire for training and preparation for full and part time service.

Mrs. Robert Watson (Eugene Tayler) was the first from South Zorra to graduate from a Bible School, Toronto Bible College. A daughter, Mrs. Douglas Parker (Hazel Watson) graduated from Central Baptist Seminary. Mr. Parker is presently pastor of a newly organized Fellowship Church at Newcastle, Ontario. A son, Alex Watson, also graduated from Central Baptist Seminary and after taking further studies at Waterloo University was ordained into the ministry at Bethel Baptist Church in Kitchener on November 22, 1969. He and his wife, the former Linda Mann of Windsor, Ontario, have been accepted as Missionaries to Japan. Rosella de Montmorency studied at Toronto Bible College and after graduating spent a short time with the American Board of Missions to the Jews in New York. In 1953 she began working with Canadian Sunday School Mission and was placed at Amaranth, Manitoba and remained there for eight years. The benefit of those years became evident when a church was started in 1965. After spending five years giving religious training in the schools of Sault Ste. Marie and area, Rosella, with Miss Shirley Whitehead began a new ministry of Children's Gospel Crusades under C.S.S.M. This work has taken them

into seven provinces with opportunities to present the word to children of many nationalities and has proven to be a profitable outreach.

Miss Hazel Tayler began her life of service as a member of the staff at the Gowans Home for Missionary Children at Collingwood. After serving there for several years, she also became associated with the Canadian Sunday School Mission and was sent to the Peace River area of Alberta. Regular services were established at Eureka River, Hines Creek and Worsley. Summer camps are a regular part of C.S.S.M. schedule and through these coupled with the week by week ministry, converts were made in this isolated area. When Hazel returned to her parental home she left not only these trophies of grace but also a church building at Eureka River as a memorial to her zeal and faithfulness. Now living at home and working with the Christian Service Centre in Area Public Schools she is able to have a part in the activities of the South Zorra Church again. Ann Hook, a graduate of Ontario Bible College this year with a B.Th. degree, is planning further studies in language and translation as related to missionary endeavour. Judith Hook a sister began studies at O.B.C. in September 1969. Mrs. Bruce Scott (Glenis Rowe) is looking forward to being a pastor's wife as Bruce is a 1970 graduate of Central Baptist Seminary with full time ministry in view.

"Let your light so shine before men,  
that they may see your good works  
and glorify your Father which is in  
Heaven."



When there is growth in the spiritual vitality of a church it becomes evident in several ways, one of which is voluntary financial support. In the year 1920 the budget was set at \$700.00. In 1921 for the first time on record, money was voted for missions -- the sum of \$100.00. In 1946 receipts were \$899.00 of which \$358.00 was voted to missions. This was during the period when there was no pastor to support. In 1969, receipts to the church treasury amounted to \$8221.00 of which almost \$2900.00 was for missionary support.

The sound of music and singing have ever been a part of the services of South Zorra. During the space of sixty years three organs were used and in the early thirties the third was replaced with a piano. Mr. William Hill organized the first choir in 1896 with Miss Lizzie Hill as organist. The choir later was under the leadership of Mr. Frank Lappin, Mr. Clifford Brooks and Mr. and Mrs. Will Carter. Organists following Miss Hill were Miss Edith Thompson, Mrs. William Rowe, Mrs. Marguerite Cook, Mrs. Carl Murray and Mrs. Clifford Brooks.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord,  
all ye lands. Servethe Lord with  
gladness; come before His presence  
with singing."

#### THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Although the records of the Sunday School at South Zorra are available only from 1883, it seems apparent that this branch was a vital part of the

work from its inception. The form and method of operation has not changed to any great extent through the years. Much care is taken to assure efficient use of the time available which begins at 9:50 with ten minutes of choruses in the auditorium. After an opening hymn, prayer and scripture reading by a member of the school, the classes with their teachers move to their respective rooms or spaces for study. The schedule is altered on the last Sunday of each month which is designated Missionary Sunday. A short talk is given in the auditorium on a subject of missionary interest before dismissal is made to classes. On this Sunday also a special missionary offering -- in addition to one taken regularly -- is taken for a specified need.

Special events for the Sunday School are a picnic in mid-summer, a rally day in September and in late autumn a Sunday School Supper and Christmas program. The two latter events for many years were separate but are now combined into one evening.

Attendance in the early days varied from less than twenty up to the fifties and for those who came six to eight classes and teachers were maintained. 1969 shows an average attendance of 78 which were cared for in nine classes.

It may be interesting to note that since 1887 the office of superintendent has been held by only four men, Mr. Joseph Meadows, Mr. William Rowe, Mr. Harry Tayler and Mr. Glen Rowe.



Sunday School through the years has been self-supporting with total offerings recorded as low as three cents on a Sunday. Along with other departments, it has adopted a missionary outlook and the records for 1969 show a gross income of almost \$1000.00 of which \$568.00 was directed to missionary support.

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

### LADIES AID

On January 3rd, 1905, the Ladies of the Church met at the home of Mrs. E. Harrington to organize a Ladies Aid. Through the years meetings have been held once a month and for the most part in the home of a member. The devotional part of the meeting usually included a visiting speaker and a variety of items of mutual interest. During that period of time from 1907 to 1928 when the Church was affiliated with the 16th Line Baptist Church a union meeting was held once a year. With travel so much more restricted in those days this meeting could be classed as one of the highlights of the year.

While the Ladies enjoy these monthly meetings, for their spiritual uplift and the time of fellowship, the society's main objective is, as its name implies, to help. The resources developed are directed not only to the local church, but to missionary friends, the sick, the shutin, and the aged. Many types of projects are developed and brought to completion and each in its own way provides something useful, needful,

or just a bit of cheer. For instance, a missionary in South America needed cement to strengthen the mud walls of his home. A project raised \$50.00 for this purpose. For several years, small items to be used as Christmas gifts for children were made and sent to Miss Hazel Tayler and Miss Rosella de Montmorency working in the West with the Canadian Sunday School Mission. On other occasions clothing has been made and given to missionaries and their families. In 1969 more than \$175.00 was raised for missionary support. Christianity at work.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto  
one of the least of these, my  
brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

#### YOUNG PEOPLES GROUP

A Young Peoples Society was first organized during the pastorate of Rev. F.W. Waters, 1913-16 and quickly caught the interest of quite a large number of teen-agers. Meetings were held at members homes and the fact that travel was by horse and buggy, bicycle or on foot was no deterrent. The meetings, especially in winter, very often included a social hour and lunch and the favourite all-social evening was a crokinole party.

When motor travel became established, as many as were able attended Young People's rallies held in spring or at Thanksgiving time and these associations proved helpful and inspiring. As the years pass, the numbers in this age span varies considerably and sometimes outside interests receive the preference.



During those years when no pastor served at South Zorra, worthy of mention are Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Norrington for their efforts on behalf of the Young People.

During the last few years the society has progressed very favourably, with a large membership. A much more varied yearly program has been put into practice to create and hold the interest of Youth. One of the highlights is a retreat to a resort area for study, fellowship and fun and this has proved to be a worthwhile venture.

The Young People at South Zorra or at any church are indeed a very important and necessary part of the organization for out of their ranks must come the leaders and the labourers of the future.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse  
his way?

By taking heed thereto according to  
Thy Word."

With the realization that there was lack of activity and interest for those growing out of the Young Peoples organization, two new groups have been formed in recent years. First, the Young Adults and secondly The Young Couples or by their chosen name, The Goodnews Fellowship. These groups meet for fellowship and study and offer an opportunity to share those things of mutual interest which appear in the complex way of life which is ours today.

### JOY CLUB

In 1947 Miss Hazel Tayler, Mrs. Ross Dean and Mrs. Harvey Norrington organized what has been known through the years as the JOY Club. This is for boys and girls 8 to 14 and is unrelated denominationally. Evening meetings are held weekly during the summer and the time is spent learning and singing choruses, Scripture memory work, Bible Quizz and a Bible based story. To help create and maintain enthusiasm, sides are chosen and on the final night, which is open house for parents and friends, proficiency awards are given. The Children are gathered and taken home by volunteer drivers. One meeting during the summer is designated a picnic and there is also a Christmas Party. During winter months, the leaders keep in touch with a monthly paper called "Links with JOY Club."

The number of children attending JOY Club has been very gratifying, average attendance as high as 70, but more important is the knowledge that through the years many have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour and have in later years continued to be a witness for Him. The Spirit of giving is encouraged in JOY Club Meetings and two small churches are provided to receive the offerings brought. On closing night this money is dedicated and given to Missionaries whose ministry is with children in Canada and abroad.

"Suffer the little children to come  
unto Me and forbid them not, for of  
such is the Kingdom of Heaven."



We now bring our story to a close and in so doing confess that in order for it to remain a short story, many items of interest have been deleted. As we mentioned at the beginning it concerns people, ordinary people but relying on a provident and loving Heavenly Father. As we anticipate the future we can do so with assurance so long as our trust and our hope is anchored in the Rock of Ages.

The future for the Church is not just tomorrow, next month or next year. Four thousand years ago Abraham looked for a city with foundations whose builder and maker is God. In its closing verses the Scriptures are adorned with a glimpse of this wonderful and eternal home which our God brought into being for His people. John writes:

"And I, John, saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven adorned as a bride for her husband.

And the foundations of the wall were garnished with all manner of precious stones.

And there shall be no night there and they need no candle, neither light of the Sun; for the Lord God giveth them Light."

And so the candle must continue to burn and send rays into the deepening darkness until the great day of revealing and victory; and so it will be, for the Light that shines is Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, reflected through the lives of His people.

The following served as pastors since the turn of the century.

E.P. Stewart	-	1904 -
J.G. Whitton	-	1907 - 1908
John McKinnon	-	1908 - 1909
John Pettit	-	1909 - 1911
Harvey Dodge	-	1911 - 1912
F.W. Waters	-	1913 - 1916
J.H. Moore	-	1916 - 1917
Roy Harris	-	1918 - 1919
W.B. Walker	-	1920 - 1925
R.J. Campbell	-	1925 - 1928
Frank Mesley	-	1929 - 1933
C.P. VanDuzen	-	1935 - 1936
James Henshaw	-	1937 - 1939
M.L. Hicks	-	1956 - 1958
Wilfred Kent	-	1958 - 1959
B. Holloway	-	1959 - 1961
A.E. Payne	-	1961 - 1962
R.A. Smith	-	1964 -



### CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Mr. C. Brooks

Mr. R. Smith

Mr. H. Norrington

Mr. G. Rowe

Mr. D. Scott

Mr. A. Watson

Mrs. H. Hallock

Mrs. C. Brooks

### HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Mr. and Mrs. G. Rowe

Mr. and Mrs. H. Hallock

Mr. W. Carter

## FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

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

Faith of our fathers! we will love  
Both friend and foe in all our strife;  
And preach Thee too, as love knows how,  
By kindly words and virtuous life;  
Faith of our fathers! Holy faith!  
We will be true to Thee till death!