



F R E D E R I C T O N   C H U R C H   O F   C H R I S T

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## F O R E W A R D

The writing of this history is to commemorate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Fredericton Church of Christ, to be celebrated on October 23, 1977. We take this opportunity to look back at the people and events which have shaped this congregation since its beginning.

Many of the basic details were gathered by Ann MacDowell in her research paper on the church's history for her U. P. E. I. class on the History of Prince Edward Island, with Dr. F. W. P. Bolger. Her paper was used as a basic framework, with additional facts being gathered and inserted in time sequence. This history attempts to follow a chronological order, and any omissions are not intentional, but rather are caused by our imperfect knowledge of the events of the past.

It is unfortunate that very little personal history of the congregation can be found in the church records. Therefore it has been necessary to go to some sources outside the church for written historical records and dates, some of which may prove inaccurate. Many thanks are extended to the various individuals who provided various tidbits of information, some of their names being listed in the Bibliography at the back of this history.

Hopefully we shall leave a small memory of the past for the future years. Also, let us determine to preserve with care the incidents of the future, which shall someday be history to the generations of church members yet to come. But most importantly, let us not be contented to gaze at the history of the past; but to do our best to assure many future years of success for our congregation, so that the last chapter of our history will never be written.

- Paul D. Stevenson, Compiler  
(Fredericton: October 20, 1977.)

Background History of the Formation of the Area Churches.

In order to give the full picture of the origin of the Fredericton Church of Christ, it is necessary to explore briefly the historical backgrounds of the two older congregations of the area. The history of the Fredericton Church of Christ goes far back beyond its day of founding as a body of believers, on October 23, 1927.

In 1820, a group of Scotch Baptists arrived from Paisley in Scotland. This group of silk-weavers first went ashore at Rustico, in a place now called Stevenson's Cove. This was named after John Stevenson, who had provided the spiritual leadership to the group on their voyage, and continued to do so in their new homeland. It is thought that the group spent about three years in the Rustico area before moving up the Clyde River to settle at New Glasgow.

NEW GLASGOW  
BELIEVERS'  
UNITY

A desire to meet faithfully each week to participate in the Lord's Supper gave unity to this group, as well as a common belief in baptism by immersion. Eventually these people progressed from meeting in their homes to the point where they needed to construct a plain frame meeting house in New Glasgow in 1832.

In the 1840's, two of John Stevenson's sons, William and Andrew, settled in Fredericton, about seven miles away. So important to them was meeting around the Lord's table that they often walked the distance to New Glasgow. These men became leaders in their own community, and organized cottage prayer meetings in the homes around Fredericton and sometimes in Hazel Grove.

The church in New Glasgow had progressed to the point that an evangelist by the name of Donald Crawford was working from that location. Many times he spoke to the gathering of the faithful in the Fredericton area. Such interest was shown that plans were made to construct a church building. A site was chosen on the farm of James M. Stevenson, and some lumber was cut and sawn and hauled to the location. But it seemed that a church in Fredericton was not to be at this time.

In some ways, the plight of the believers in Fredericton was similar to that of Abraham, who had been plucked from his homeland with the promise of a land where he would establish a great nation. Just as Abraham continued to wander and never saw his dreams fulfilled in his lifetime, so it seemed with the number of Fredericton who dreamed of having a church building of their own.

BREADALBANE  
CHURCH  
BEGINNING

Around 1876, Donald Crawford held evangelistic meetings in Breadalbane, about five miles west of Fredericton, which resulted in several baptisms. As a result, it was felt that maybe Breadalbane was the better location for a church, as it was more distantly removed from New Glasgow. The lumber destined for the church at Fredericton was hauled to Breadalbane, with construction beginning in June, 1877, and the building being completed in the latter part of October.

The church in Breadalbane never had a regular minister of its own, but those who served it usually did so in conjunction with New Glasgow. Often the speaker would come as far as Fredericton from New Glasgow, then travel with the others up to Breadalbane. For the next fifty years, the members of the Church of Christ who lived in Fredericton travelled faithfully to Breadalbane for their worship services.

The Second Beginnings of the Fredericton Church of Christ.

FREDERICTON  
BIBLE CLASS  
1882

In 1882, Bible classes were organized in Fredericton in the home of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Stevenson, and were later organized in the Fredericton community hall around 1900. There is no record of the length of time that these efforts continued, but apparently they ceased for some period of time.

BIBLE SCHOOL  
1918, IN THE  
COMMUNITY  
HALL  
C.E. Armstrong

In 1918, a Bible School was once more organized by Mrs. George Walter Stevenson and Mr. J. W. Hayter, the minister in the area at the time. This group met in the Fredericton hall every Sunday afternoon, with services being conducted by the minister twice a month.

1926 SPECIAL  
SERVICES

In June, 1926, the area minister, Charles E. Armstrong, held two weeks of evangelistic meetings in Fredericton which resulted in twelve baptisms. The baptismal service was held on July the first, in a stream leading to Campbell's Pond near New Glasgow. Those original twelve, who were destined to become the first charter members of the newly-conceived Fredericton Church of Christ were as follows: Mildred Ferris, Reigh Ferris, Lawrence Hickox, Leslie MacDowell, Emerson Murray, Russel Nicholson, Sadie Stevenson, Mary Stevenson, Alma Weeks, Eldred Weeks, Roy Weeks, and William Weeks.

TWELVE  
BAPTISMS

Because of the enthusiasm over the success of these meetings, the believers were fired with an incentive to become a church body of their own. Plans were made to go ahead with the construction of a church building. That same week the men went to the woods to cut the lumber, just as their fathers had done fifty years before. But this time their fathers' dreams were to be fulfilled.

BUILDING SITE  
AND LUMBER  
DONATED

A large part of the lumber was donated by George W. Stevenson, as was the land where the church was to be erected. This site was almost exactly where the church had been planned to be located, over fifty years before.

COMMUNITY  
EFFORT IN  
BUILDING

The construction of the church building was an example of real community effort, with many outsiders asking for the privilege of helping in such a worthy cause. Many donated lumber--some at a sacrifice--which was sawed free of charge at the mill of Howard Weeks, who was not even connected with the Church of Christ movement. Sand was hauled from Stanley Bridge by horse and cart to mix the cement for the foundation. Here again, community effort was evident, as many who were not members offered their animals and vehicles, as well as their time.

C. E. Armstrong acted as architect and carpenter, donning overalls to work with the men. John McDowell, of Fredericton, was hired as head carpenter; although most of the work was done voluntarily. The building was completed by fall of the following year and ready for the people's use.

DEDICATION  
SERVICES  
W.H.HARDING  
Oct.23,1927

The dedication services were held on October 23, 1927, with stirring messages being brought by W. H. Harding, the minister of the Summer-side congregation. The services were a remarkable success, resulting in more gifts so that only a small debt was left to be paid. This enabled the congregation to quickly wipe away their bills and concentrate on the stewardship of their offerings in the work of the Lord.

Mr. Armstrong worked with the new congregation, while still serving the churches in Breadalbane and New Glasgow. Many were saddened when he left the area in 1929.

The First Twenty-five Years of the Church until 1952.

- W.G.QUIGLEY  
1930-1938 The year of 1930 brought with it William G. Quigley as the second minister to the Fredericton congregation, who also served the Breadalbane and New Glasgow congregations throughout his ministry. He left in 1938 for a ministry in Saint John, New Brunswick.
- YOUNG PEOPLES  
SOCIETY  
1934 It was during his ministry that the first Young Peoples' Society was organized in 1934. This group society for the church's young people has continued quite steadily from then until the present.
- I. CAVENDER  
1939-1940 Mr. Isaac Cavender was the third minister with Fredericton. He spent a year, from 1939 to 1940, in service of the Fredericton congregation as well as its two sister congregations.
- ROBERT SHAW  
1940-1945 In July, 1940, Robert E. Shaw began his ministry to the church. He had been one of the earliest ministers to have come from the Central Christian Church of Charlottetown. *— Originally from Montague, P. E. I.*
- W. M. S.  
ORGANIZED It was in the period of Mr. Shaw's ministry that the Women's Missionary Society was first organized. This society of active ladies has continued from that time to the present, often strengthening and encouraging the work in the church.
- J.W.HAYTER  
1945-1947 Joseph W. Hayter began a ministry with Fredericton in 1945. This was his second time in the area, having served at Breadalbane and New Glasgow from 1917 to 1921, prior to the formation of the Fredericton congregation. He served until the end of 1947, when he retired in the area of Charlottetown.
- PAUL L.  
RICHARDSON  
1948-1951 Several supply preachers filled the pulpit for the interim period until a permanent area minister could be found. In 1948, such a person was found in Paul L. Richardson, a native from Deer Island, New Brunswick. His ministry was interrupted on October 2, 1949, when he was disabled by a heart attack.
- S.ACKLAND  
SUPPLY While Mr. Richardson was convalescing, several supply speakers came to the area. Byron Howlett served for the month of November; and Bryer Jones, a Mr. Craig, and others preaching in the months of 1950. But the majority of the speaking was done by Stephen Ackland, a lay minister of the Baptist church, who served from December of 1949 until the end of 1950.
- SUPPLY  
SPEAKERS Mr. Richardson was again hired, on January 7, 1951, but was again forced to resign at the end of April because of poor health. The church at Fredericton was again without the solid leadership of a full time minister, being forced to rely on supply speakers until the end of October. Those who served, or spoke, were as follows: Bryer Jones, Roy Jones, Owen Still, Russell H. Carr, Ralph Richardson, George Jeffrey, John Richardson, Merrill Nicholson, Stephen Ackland, Maitland Watterworth, and Neil Herman.
- M.WATTERWORTH  
1951-1954 A permanent minister for the three churches was secured on October 28, 1951, when Mr. Maitland Watterworth began a two and one-half year ministry.
- In the year, 1952, several special meetings were held. Mr. Watterworth's son, David, held two weeks of evangelistic meetings from August the third to the seventeenth. Special meetings were also held on November the thirtieth, featuring E. P. Benoit and Marvel Dunbar.

The Second Quarter of a Century: 1953 - 1977.

- The year of 1953 saw many interesting changes for the Fredericton congregation. It appeared to become more missionary minded: MISSIONARIES Tom Rash, missionary to India, spoke at the May third service; and TOM RASH LaVerne Morse, missionary to Burma, spoke on July the twelfth. L. MORSE
- But the real event that marked the second twenty-five years of service was the renovation of the church building. The church had to be moved as the government was widening and paving the main highway through the village. The church had to be moved back and west about its own width. Therefore, the church decided to put a full basement under the building, instead of just another cement foundation. The church was closed for repairs from the sixteenth of August until the Sunday of October 4, 1953, when special services marked the rededication of the building. Ed P. Benoit was the guest speaker, with William O. Weale as the song leader at the services. The Sunday School annex was completed in the latter part of October and November of the same year.
- Mr. Watterworth terminated his ministry with the three area churches at the end of April, 1954. He moved to Montague soon after. After he left, a student minister, Bryer Jones, came and conducted services in the summer months between semesters, from May the ninth until September the twelfth. He was promised a position with the New Glasgow church after graduation, but those of the Fredericton and Breadalbane congregations felt that he was not suitable for their needs.
- The search began again for another to provide the spiritual leadership for the two congregations. The church had several temporary speakers in this period, some of them being: H. R. Bell, E. P. Benoit, Stephen Ackland, Paul L. Richardson and Samuel Gillespie.
- Byard Thurber began to minister to Fredericton from December 19, 1954, until sometime in October of 1956. About the only noteworthy event recorded as taking place during his ministry was the Island Convention of Churches. Fredericton hosted it from September 16th to the 18th, with Bruce Stainton as the guest speaker for the occasion.
- Marvel Dunbar and William O. Weale provided pulpit supply for the remainder of 1956, and the following year until December, 1957. During the summer of 1957, Robert Howell served as interim minister during the summer months, but returned to Alberta that fall.
- On December 29, 1957, Merle Zimmerman arrived on Prince Edward Island from Alberta, with his wife and two young sons. Fredericton did not have a parsonage, so the family moved into a poorly heated house in the nearby community of Elliots for the winter. The next spring, they moved into a house in Hunter River, where they remained until 1959 when they moved to Fredericton.
- It was soon decided that a manse should be built, and some property next to the church was donated by Miller Stevenson. The building of this house was another demonstration of generosity and unity. All of the lumber was donated; most of it coming from the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Mallett; with additional lumber provided by Miller Stevenson, Arnold Weeks, Roy Weeks, and smaller amounts from other individuals. The men of the community gave generously of their time in the construction of the manse, with work beginning in the spring and completed in late fall of the same year.
- CHURCH  
MOVED  
BASEMENT  
ADDED
- RE-OPENING  
Oct. 4, 1953
- WATTERWORTH  
RESIGNS
- BRYER JONES  
May 9th to  
Sept. 12th
- BYARD THURBER  
1954-1956
- MARVEL DUNBAR  
and  
W. O. WEALE  
R. HOWELL
- M. ZIMMERMAN  
Dec. 29, 1957
- FREDERICTON  
MANSE  
1959

ACCEPTS  
CALL TO  
CAVENDISH  
and NEW  
GLASGOW

Mr. Zimmerman had been serving the Fredericton and Breadalbane churches for a little over a year, when the congregation at New Glasgow and the Cavendish Baptist Church called him to act as their minister as well. He was kept very busy serving the needs of four churches in the area, but he managed to accomplish many things with the church at Fredericton, which by now had become the strongest of the group.

BUILDING  
CHANGES

Additional renovations to the church building were completed under his ministry: the choir and pulpit area was remodelled; the stained glass window was installed at the back of the church sanctuary; and the change was made from heating with wood stoves to using an oil furnace. But he was also busy with the affairs of the true church -- the people. During his ministry, the Young People's Society became strong, the mid-week Bible study popular; and for a time, Friday night was known as Family Night at the church.

GROUPS &  
ACTIVITIES

EVANGELISTIC  
SERVICES

At three different times, evangelistic services were held at Fredericton during Mr. Zimmerman's ministry. Charles Herndon, from Central Christian Church, conducted services in June, 1960. Alan M. Smith came from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, in April, 1963, shortly before the federal elections, (April 18, 1963). Jim Phillips, of Alberta conducted two weeks of services in the month of June, 1966.

ZIMMERMANS  
to WEYMOUTH  
June 3, 1967

The congregations of the area regretted to hear of his decision to accept a ministry in the churches of the Weymouth region of Nova Scotia; but he felt that that area had the greater need, and the Zimmermans left Prince Edward Island on June 3, 1967.

NEIL BURT  
last of Aug.  
1967

Soon the position was filled by another "Westerner." Neil Burt, with his wife and son and daughter, came to us from a ministry at Grande Prairie, Alberta. He continued to serve the four area churches during his six-year ministry, providing good leadership--especially to the young people--in the congregations. Under his ministry, the Fredericton church hosted at least two youth conferences. Evangelistic services were held in April of 1971, with Richard Hollis, who is now working with the Go Ye Chapel Mission of New York City.

RESIGNS  
last of June  
1973

In 1973, the Burts terminated their ministry with the churches, and moved to Southport where Neil had found employment in a lumber yard for a time. After he left, for a period of about one year, services were conducted by several area speakers. John G. Macdonald and E. Leslie Jones of Maritime Christian College, as well as some of the students, preached at most of the services during this time.

JOHN B.  
HERRING  
1974 -

In September, 1974, John B. Herring, a senior student of M.C.C., was hired as supply preacher during the winter months, with the promise of a full-time ministry following his graduation in April of 1975. He has served as the preaching minister to the Fredericton and Breadalbane churches from that time to the present.



The Involvement of the Young People in Our Lord's Church.

The first  
D.V.B.S.  
1944

CAMPS at  
BRUDENELL  
CANOE COVE

YOUNG PEOPLE  
to BIBLE  
COLLEGES  
Alberta  
Bible  
College

Maritime  
Christian  
College

CHALLENGE FOR  
CONTINUED  
SERVICE

The congregation has been an active one in programs geared to, and involving, young people. The first Daily Vacation Bible School was held by Miss Margaret Stainton in July, 1944, with D.V.B.S. continuing in almost every year since then. Many of the young people of the congregation attended the Christian Camp at Brudenell in the past, and the Canoe Cove Christian Camp that followed it. Many of them could recount fond memories of tents, oil lamps, cold water and Annabelle Houston; but some of the more recent campers have had enjoyable times at the new and modern facilities now available.

Some of the young people of the church showed their interest in the things of the Lord by making time in their lives to attend Bible Colleges. Merrill and Eleanor Nicholson were the first two of our congregation, attending Alberta Bible College, and were followed some time later by Elmer Nicholson. The benefits to the home church were seen when Eleanor returned from Alberta in 1954 with her husband, Alvin Rowledge, who together helped organize a Young People's Society for the youth of Fredericton and Breadalbane.

When Maritime Christian College was established in 1960, Donald Stevenson was one of the original students to enroll that first year. In the following years, Gordon MacInnis and Allison Weeks each have spent a year in the study of God's Word. At the present time, Paul D. Stevenson is in his fifth year of studies towards the Christian ministry.

May we hope that the future years also bring with them young members of this congregation who "study to show themselves approved unto God as workers who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," (II Timothy 2:15).

With the writing of this history, the Fredericton Church of Christ honors the first fifty years of active service for our Lord. But in our celebrations, we should take time to remember that the success of the congregation lies not in the continued existence of this building, but of the original purpose that banded together the original members. Let us take to heart the warning to the church in Ephesus as given in Revelation 2:4, that we do not leave our first love. Let us continue to proclaim with joy the wonders of the Son of God who has called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light, and continue to proclaim to the people in and around Fredericton the blessed promise of salvation in His wonderful name.

OUR CHURCH'S MINISTERS

- + Charles E. Armstrong  
(1926 - 1929)
- + William G. Quigley  
(1930 - 1938)
- + Isaac Cavender  
(1939 - 1940)
- + Robert Shaw  
(July, 1940 - 1945)
- + Joseph W. Hayter  
(1945 - 1947)
- + Paul L. Richardson  
(1948 - Oct.2/49)  
(Jan.7/51 - Apr.1951)
- + Maitland Watterworth  
(Oct.28/51 - Apr./54)
- + Bryer Jones  
(May 9 - Sept. 12/54)
- + Byard Thurber  
(Dec.19/54 - Oct./56)
- + Merle Zimmerman  
(Dec.29/57 - Jun.3/67)
- + Neil Burt  
(August/67 - June/73)
- + John B. Herring  
(September/74 - )

EVANGELISTS FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

- + Charles E. Armstrong  
(June, 1926)
- + William G. Quigley  
(1932)
- + Robert Shaw  
(date unknown)
- + David Watterworth  
(August 3 - 17, 1952)
- + Edward P. Benoit and  
M Marvel Dunbar  
(November 30, 1952)
- + Charles Herndon  
(June, 1960)
- + Alan M. Smith  
(June, 1961)
- + Jim Phillips  
(June, 1966)
- + Richard Hollis  
(April, 1971)

VARIOUS SUPPLY PREACHERS

(Names are not available prior to 1949, and are not all complete for the following years. This list is of the main ones, as remembered.)

1949

Byron Howlett (November)  
Stephen Ackland (December)

1950

Stephen Ackland (January - December)  
Mr. Craig (August 6th)  
Bryer Jones (September 3rd)

1951

Bryer Jones (May 29th)  
Roy Jones (June 10th)  
Owen Still

Russell H. Carr  
Ralph Richardson  
George Jeffrey  
John Richardson  
Merrill Nicholson  
Stephen Ackland  
Maitland Watterworth  
Neil Herman

(These supplied until the month of October's end)

1952

Ronald J. Pelham (December 7th)  
Bryer Jones (December 21st)

1953

Merrill Nicholson (January 4th)  
Tom Rash, missionary  
to India (May 3rd)  
William O. Weale (June 21st)  
LaVerne Morse, (July 12th)  
missionary to Burma  
Carlyle Watterworth (July 19th)  
E. P. Benoit, (October 4th)  
and W. O. Weale

1954

James Clague (May 9th)  
Merrill Nicholson (August 29th)  
H. R. Bell (September 26th)  
E. P. Benoit (October 3rd)  
Stephen Ackland (October 10th)  
H. R. Bell (October 24th)  
Stephen Ackland (November 7th)  
Paul L. Richardson (November 21st)  
Samuel Gillespie (December 5th)

1956

Marvel Dunbar (Shared services of  
William O. Weale October - December)

1957

M. Dunbar & W. O. Weale (January - December)  
Robert Howell (spring - September)

1973 - September, 1974

E. Leslie Jones & John G. Macdonald

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centennial anniversary, October 9, 1977.

PERSONAL INFORMATION AND RECOLLECTIONS:

(Many thanks are extended to the following individuals:)

- Mrs. Reigh Ferris
- Mrs. William Kells
- Mrs. Leslie MacDowell
- Miss Catherine Stevenson
- Mr. and Mrs. J. Miller Stevenson