

1862

1912



*St. Paul's Church*  
*Leaskdale*

JUBILEE

JUNE, 1912

## OFFICERS

MINISTER - - REV. E. MACDONALD

### SESSION

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JAMES MUSTARD    ALLAN GRAY    ALEX. OXTOBY

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“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain  
that build it.”

## ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, LEASKDALE

In the early half of the 19th century small bands of settlers from Scotland, England and Ireland made their way into Canada and settled in the township of Scott. Like their ancestors in the old land they dearly loved their church and school, and the first things they thought of on their arrival were a place of worship and a place to educate their children. At that time the only Presbyterian Church within reasonable distance was the Kirk at Quaker Hill which belonged to the established Church of Scotland. Here, therefore, some attended on the "Means of Grace," while others who were not in much sympathy with the established Church drove all the way to Utica or to Wick, while a few attended services conducted by a Reverend D. MacKay of Hamilton, sometimes in the houses of the people in the village of Leaskdale, but more often in the barns.

This state of things did not long satisfy the settlers of Scott, so they decided to unite their forces, form themselves into a congregation, and have a minister of their own.

In the year 1861 the first step towards this desirable state of matters was taken.

In October of that year a meeting was held. At this meeting it was resolved to petition Presbytery that they be organized into a congregation, and commissioners were appointed to bring the matter before that venerable court.

The Presbytery cordially received the delegation, and appointed a committee to visit Scott. This committee after careful consideration recommended that a congregation be

formed, and that the village of Leaskdale be the locality. Accordingly in March of the year 1862 the Congregation of Leaskdale was duly organized with the following members: Alexander Mustard, Mrs. Alexander Mustard, James Leask, Mrs. James Leask, George Leask, Mrs. George Leask, Alexander Ross, Mrs. Alexander Ross, William Oxtoby, Mrs. William Oxtoby, John Imrie, Mrs. John Imrie and Alexander Henry,—thirteen in all.

The next step was the building of a place of worship. At a meeting of the congregation held at the home of Alexander Ross on August 25th, 1863, it was decided to build a



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church at Leaskdale in the most central place for the inhabitants of the sixth and seventh concessions of Scott. A Building Committee, composed of George Harrison, Hugh Ferguson, William Oxtoby and George Leask, was appointed and authorized to call for tenders. In April of the following year, 1864, the church was finished, and in November of the same year it was opened by Mr. R. H. Warden, a student, who afterwards became Treasurer of the Canadian Presbyterian Church.

It is only just to mention here that the efforts put forth by the Building Committee were highly successful, as

is shown by the fact that after all debts were paid the sum of sixty-one dollars was in the hands of the Treasurer. Here, also, should be mentioned the fact that the site on which the church was erected was kindly and freely given by George Leask.

In this year (1864) another event of importance took place. By the action of Presbytery Uxbridge and Leaskdale were united into one charge. This proved to be a happy union. The two congregations worked very harmoniously together for a period of sixteen years.

It was not, however, till 1866 that regular weekly service began. In that year Rev. James Thorn preached in Leaskdale and Uxbridge for three months. Next year Mr. R. H. Warden was student in charge. But even this did not satisfy the people. They wanted a settled pastor. This was granted them by the ordination and induction of the Rev. James Douglas on the 25th of January, 1868. Prosperous times followed. Under Mr. Douglas' ministry the congregation made great progress. During his pastorate the Sunday School room was erected and the Sunday School was organized. Unfortunately Mr. Douglas' pastorate was of short duration. After four years he resigned. In March, 1873, Rev. Edward Cockburn, graduate of Knox College, succeeded, and for seven years did very faithful work. It was a time when pastor and people worked very harmoniously together. If the cords were not lengthened to any great extent, the stakes were certainly strengthened. Pastor and people rejoiced together.

But these bright conditions soon suffered an eclipse. In March of the year 1880, after a period of sixteen years of happy union, Leaskdale was separated from Uxbridge. The following years were a trying time for Leaskdale. But the faithful band did not become unduly discouraged.

They resolved at once to obtain the services of a student until they were in a position to call a minister. Rev. Mr. Cockburn, whose services as pastor ceased at the separation, continued his interest in the congregation and organized Zephyr as a preaching station in connection with Leaskdale in November of the same year. With the aid of Zephyr Leaskdale was able two years after the separation from Uxbridge to call a settled pastor. In December, 1882, Rev. A. G. McLachlin began his work as Minister of Leaskdale.

The ministry of Mr. McLachlin was very successful. During his pastorate the present manse was erected, the Women's Foreign Mission Auxiliary was organized, instrumental music and the Book of Praise were introduced into the church. During his pastorate, also, the Leaskdale congregation was greatly strengthened by additions from a branch of the Methodist church. At this time the union of the Bible Christians and the Wesleyans took place. Many of the former declined to enter the union, and became members of the Presbyterian Church of Leaskdale instead. They proved to be loyal and faithful workers.

After eight years of faithful and successful work Mr. McLachlin resigned and the congregation again became vacant, and remained vacant for two years. During this time Mr. W. H. Johnston, now minister of Chesterfield, Ontario, labored as a student during the summer months. The people became dissatisfied with irregular services, and called Rev. Hugh Currie to be their pastor, in January, 1893. Owing to various causes the congregation became rather weak in those days. Mr. Currie resigned in December, 1895, and in July, 1896, Rev. William M. Reid became pastor. During his ministry, which covered nine and a half years, forty members were added to the communion roll.

Mr. Reid's pastorate ceased in January, 1905, and the

congregation became vacant, and remained so until Rev. R. McEachern, fresh from Knox College, Toronto, was ordained and inducted in June of the same year. The ingathering continued; forty-four members were added to the roll of communicants.

The people now became awake to the fact that their church was not large nor up-to-date enough, and they resolved to erect the present substantial and tasteful structure. The building was finished in the year, 1906, and within two years the whole debt was paid off. In 1907 the Women's Home Mission Auxiliary was organized and still continues



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to thrive. In October, 1909, Mr. McEachern was called to the Presbytery of Maitland, and on the 15th of March, 1910, Rev. E. Macdonald became pastor. With the loyalty of session, managers and people the work of the present minister has been a delight. The Young People's Guild, organized in 1911, has already justified its existence, and promises to be a great power for good in years to come.

This sketch would not be complete without some reference to the members of the first Session of Leaskdale, and other faithful men and women who rendered the church

such noble and efficient service in her early days. The names of James Leask, Geo. Leask, Alexander Mustard, Alexander Ross, John Imrie, William Oxtoby and many more might be mentioned. Of these only one member now remains—George Leask, the last of the faithful band who guided the church in her infancy.

And now, looking back over the past, we realize that on the whole our congregation has made encouraging progress. But encouraging as the past has been we believe the best is yet to be, knowing that

The heights by great men reached and kept  
Were not attained by sudden flight;  
But they, while their companions slept,  
Were toiling upward through the night.



