

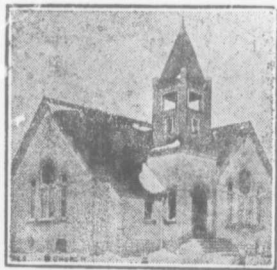
Jubilee Souvenir



Chalmers' Church, Dunwich

JUNE 17, 1856

JUNE 18, 1916



CHALMERS' CHURCH

The Diamond Jubilee
Souvenir

of

Chalmers' Church, Dunwich



*To the memory of those who have labored
therein and have entered into their
rest, this booklet is lovingly
dedicated*



REV DONALD MCKAY
PASTOR



SESSION—WILLIAM CARROLL, D. A. McNABB, JOHN FLETCHER, THOS. McCALLUM, REV. D. MCKAY, J. M. CAMPBELL.

OFFICERS FOR 1916

SESSION.

Rev. D. McKay, Moderator. D. A. McNab, Clerk.
Thomas McCallum John Fletcher Wm. Carroll John M. Campbell

TRUSTEES

Alex. H. McCallum. Donald McCallum.
Donald McBride

BOARD OF MANAGERS

Donald Turner, Chairman. Donald H. McCallum, Secretary.
D. R. Thomson John S. Tolman Alex. McLachlin, Treasurer.
P. C. McBride Wm. Little D. G. McTavish
J. W. McCallum

SABBATH SCHOOL

John M. Campbell, Superintendent. Donald McBride, Asst.-Superintendent.
R. G. Little, Secretary John Thomson, Treasurer Catherine McCallum, Organist
Mrs. Wm. Carroll Mrs. D. McKay Mrs. D. McTavish Mr. David Carroll Mrs. C. Bennet

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Mrs. D. McKay, President Mrs. Wm. Little, Secretary Mrs. J. W. McCallum, Treasurer

LADIES' AID SOCIETY

Mrs. D. R. Thomson, President Mrs. D. McTavish, Secretary Mrs. Wm. Carroll, Treasurer

Young People's Home Mission Society.

David Carroll, President Lydia Carroll, Secretary Victor Campbell, Treasurer



REV. JOHN STEWART
First minister—1863-1870.

Historical Sketch

A WAY back as early as the middle of the last century a number of families, most of them from the Highlands of Scotland, settled along the Thames River, in the Townships of Dunwich and Ekfrid. It is to that settlement which later formed the congregation of Chalmer's, Dunwich, that we, as a community, today turn and which we reverently call to mind. The religious instinct which had been carefully nurtured in the Homeland was strong in them, and coming to a country that had no past, a foundation must be laid, and the fact that that foundation must be laid in righteousness they never doubted or questioned. In their homes the Altar of God was set up and in order to obey the scriptural injunction, to "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together," they met in one another's homes and beneath the shelter of the forest with fallen trees for seats, and thus they conducted their own service of prayer and praise.

This was but introductory, as they longed for a definite place which might be known as "The House of God." It is said that one, Mr. Hugh McBride, never missed an opportunity of mentioning in prayer meeting, that desire. To this end a public meeting was held at the home of Mr. Hugh Fletcher, a short distance south of the river, on the sixth day of July, 1853. At that meeting we have on record the following resolutions having been passed:

1. "That a church was to be built on Mr. Hugh Fletcher's farm."

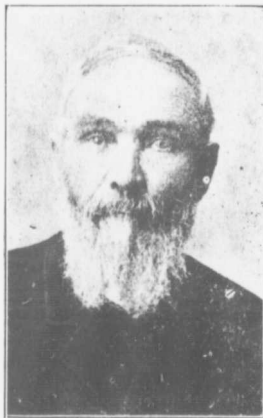


ANGUS FLETCHER
First Elder

2. "That it was to be 42 feet in length and 30 feet in width," etc.
3. "That it was to be a Presbyterian church, in connection with the Free Presbyterian Church in Canada."

It was a great day when the building was ready to be used for Gospel services. The building was a credit to the times and answered its purpose well for many years. It still stands in a good state of repair, but now as a barn. Those who had the building operation under their supervision were Messrs. Robert Brodie, Angus Fletcher, Robert Fletcher, John Campbell, Thomas Campbell, John McTavish and Hugh McBride. Mr. Angus Fletcher was treasurer, and Mr. Hugh McBride, secretary. The first subscription list was drawn up and the sums were named in pounds, shillings and pence. It was not until the year 1856 that the dedication services took place, the Rev. Mr. Scott, then minister in St. Andrew's, London, being present for the occasion. It is therefore sixty years since the congregation was formally recognized as a part of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The elders who constituted the first session were James Graham, Thomas Campbell, Robert Brodie and Angus Fletcher, and those who formed the first Deacon's court were Hugh Brodie, Robert Fletcher, Hugh McBride and Archibald McNab. Their duty was to look after the material affairs of the congregation and they corresponded to our present Board of Managers. In February, 1868, it was unanimously agreed that the temporal affairs of the congregation be managed by a Financial Committee, to be chosen by the congregation at the annual meeting.



Thomas Campbell
Elder.

Those were the days of long distances, with only trails through the otherwise unbroken forests. The services were maintained under great difficulties and somewhat intermittently. It was in the year 1858 that the Presbytery of London was appealed to to grant the services of a missionary for at least six months. The Rev. W. R. Sutherland, then in charge of the Presbyterian congregation on the Longwoods Road, was appointed moderator of the new charge. It was not until ten years after the church was built that definite steps were taken to have a settled pastor, when application was made to and granted by the Presbytery to proceed to moderate in a call. Accordingly in the year 1865 the Rev. John Stewart, then of Blyth, in the County of Huron, was called at a salary of \$400. The call was accepted and his induction took place on August 23rd of the same year.

The work of the church was now assuming a permanency, for we find that in the spring of the following year, no less than four Sabbath Schools were carried on under the supervision of the Session. Sabbath Schools were established at the following places: On the north side of the river, in Brodie's school house (Riverside), and at Melbourne; on the south side, at the church and on the townline at the junction of the townline and 5th Concession.

The Sabbath School at Melbourne was continued open all the year, but the others closed during the winter months. Mr. Thomas Gordon was the superintendent of this school. Mr. Gordon was a very faithful attendant upon the services of the church, notwithstanding the long distance and poor condition of the roads. His mode of travel was for a time a gig, but his unselfish nature soon found him using a larger convey-



REV. MALCOLM MCKENZIE

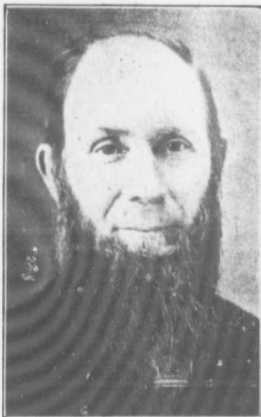
ance that he might bring others with him, and finally that gave place to a still larger one, that none who were willing might be deprived of the privileges of the sanctuary. Mr. Gordon was for a number of years leader of the service of praise.

In 1866, on the 22nd of March, the congregation decided to build a manse for the minister. Land must first be secured and it was decided to buy one-half acre of land from Mr. Angus Murray (across the road from the church), on condition that Mr. Murray give another half-acre free. Estimates were soon prepared and it was not long before a comfortable dwelling was provided.

In a short time the need for more Elders was recognized and the following were ordained to that office in 1868: Robert Fletcher, Robert Thomson and Thomas Gordon. In the same year, however, the Session sustained a serious loss in the death of Mr. Robert Brodie. The following year, however, the congregation elected to the office of Elder, Robert B. Campbell and David Crosson. In the autumn of that year, 1870, the pastoral tie which had continued for five years, was severed. This was in accord with Rev. Mr. Stewart's wish, who, because of family bereavement, desired to be released.

The Rev. Geo. Sutherland, of Fingal, was then asked to become their Moderator. It was about this time that Mr. Gilbert Hyndman, then an Elder of the congregation on Longwoods Road, presented his certificate as member and he was prevailed upon to take the office of Elder.

In the following winter a call was extended to the Rev. Malcolm

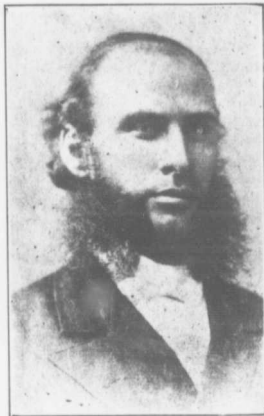


THOMAS GORDON
Elder.

McKenzie, of Doon and Hespeler. The call was accepted and on the 25th day of April his induction took place. It is interesting to note that previous to this time Gaelic appears to have been the language most commonly used in divine service, as we find a resolution passed: "That an English sermon be preached in Chalmer's Church every Sabbath forenoon and also at 3:30 p.m. in Brodie's school house and Melbourne alternately." Gaelic, however, continued to be used for many years, gradually, however, becoming less recognized as necessary. It always had a prominent place at the communion sessions, both at the pre-communion services and at the communion service itself. It thus occupied a place with more or less regularity in the church services till the beginning of the present century.

It was about this time that a strong feeling was manifesting itself on the north side of the river for more definite recognition as a congregation separate from Dunwich. There were serious difficulties in the way of their worshipping on the south side. The distances were great. The majority of the congregation was on the north side, the river was unbridged and a scow had to be used, which, to say the best, was inconvenient and expensive. Circumstances seemed now to make the time opportune to move definitely towards separation as their beloved and devoted pastor had received and accepted a call from Wardsville. Thus it was that in 1873 that part of the congregation on the Ekfrid side of the river was separated from the Dunwich part and found new connection with Cooke's church, Caradoc.

Thus Chalmers was very materially weakened, but they were not disheartened. It required time to adjust things and for a few years they



REV. ALEX. URQUHART

were without the services of a regular pastor. In 1876, however, a new chapter was opened for the congregation in the new connection formed with Duff's, Large, which connection lasted harmoniously for many years. It now became expedient to consider the moving of the church building to a more central location in the congregation. It was therefore decided to move to what was then known as New Montreal, later Cowal. This having been satisfactorily accomplished, a call was presented to the Rev. Alexander Urquhart to become the pastor of the united congregations of Duff's and Chalmer's, and early in the spring of the following year Mr. Urquhart's settlement took place. It was considered advisable to have the minister live nearer to the church and steps were taken to have the manse in Cowal as well as the church. The old manse was disposed of and a new one erected immediately north of the church, which building, with many additions and alterations, still serves its purpose. Mr. Urquhart labored with much devotion and success for nearly fourteen years, when he resigned to take up the work in another field of labor. During Mr. Urquhart's ministry, in the year 1888, Mr. Colin Campbell and Mr. Peter McNabb were ordained to the holy office of Elder. Shortly after the pulpit became vacant. A call was extended to Rev. J. Gillies, but which was declined.

In October of the same year another call was presented and this time with success, to the Rev. Alexander McKay, D.D., of Guelph. Dr. McKay's pastorate was a brief one, being only one year, and owing to sickness in his home his family never came to the field, which sickness culminated in the death of his wife. The congregations, in deference to his wish, did not oppose his release. Although his pastorate was so brief,



ROBERT FLETCHER
Elder

yet he left a very deep impression on the life of the congregation and community.

At the conclusion of Dr. McKay's pastorate there was a vacancy of nearly two years. A call was finally given to the Rev. John McNeil, of Uptergrove, in the Presbytery of Barrie. In the spring of 1894 his induction took place and he labored faithfully for about six years, when he was obliged, owing to ill-health, to seek rest. He was later restored to health and is still in the active work of the ministry in his native province of Nova Scotia.

It was at this time that an event took place which very much concerned the interests of the congregation and that was the severance by Presbytery of the connection between Chalmer's and Duff's. This arrangement was agreed to, because it seemed to be in the interests of several other congregations. After a short period of readjustment a happy settlement was effected, when Chalmer's was connected with McBride's. Since which time (1901) that connection has been maintained and the happiest relations still continue to exist.

Two new Elders were added to the Session shortly after Mr. McNeil's induction, viz., Mr. D. J. Campbell and Mr. D. A. McNab, and again during the vacancy two more were added, when Mr. Donald Thomson and Mr. John Fletcher were elected to the holy office of Elder.

In the spring of 1901 a call was given to and accepted by the Rev. S. Lawrence of Ilderton and Vanneck, in the London Presbytery, whose induction took place on the 25th day of April. The settlement was a most



REV ALEX MCKAY, D.D.

happy one and Mr. Lawrence ministered with success for six years, when to the regret of all he accepted a call to the Presbytery of Guelph, in which he still labors.

The early years of the century were important ones for this congregation. It had been decided that the old church was no longer adequate to the needs of the congregation and steps were taken to erect one that would in a measure express this desire. Accordingly, a site was secured, work was undertaken, plans formed and contracts let, and on the 26th of June, 1901, the corner stone of the present handsome building was well and truly laid, and in February of the following year it was formally opened and dedicated to God as a place of public worship.

The Rev. J. A. McDonald, then Editor of The Westminster, (later better known as McDonald of the Globe), was the preacher for the occasion. His stirring words are still recalled by many who heard them on that day. It was with the opening services of the new church that the organ first was used to aid in the service of praise. Previously the praise of the congregation had been led by a precentor. Several had filled that office but for several years previous to the coming of the organ Mr. D. A. McNab performed that duty with fidelity and ability.

In 1904 three more elders were elected, ordained and inducted to fill places made vacant by deaths and removals. These were Thomas McCallum, William Carroll and John M. Campbell. In the autumn of the same year the session sustained a serious loss in the death of Mr. Daniel Thomson.



REV. JOHN MCNEIL

In the spring of 1907 the congregation bade farewell to their beloved pastor, and in the fall of the same year a call was extended to the Rev. D. McKay, of Alton, in the Orangeville Presbytery. The call was accepted and on the 28th day of November his induction took place, since which time the work has received a measure of Divine approval.

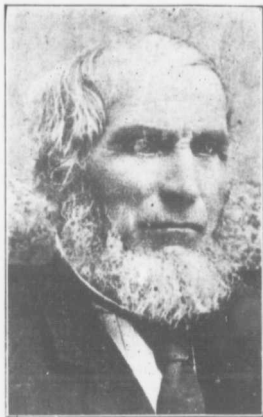
Much of the energy of the past was necessary for the maintenance of ordinances, but the larger claims of the church were always recognized and responded to in a measure as God had prospered them.

During recent years the congregation has suffered much from removals, by death and otherwise. To such an extent is this true that the number of families is much smaller now than it once was, yet notwithstanding we are encouraged to learn that our last year has been the best in a financial way in all the congregation's history. Especially is this true in the church's missionary activities.

It would not be right nor fitting to say nothing of some of the organizations which have labored so unselfishly to bring glory to the great King and Head of the Church.

Special mention might be made of the W. F. M. S., which has lately become the W. M. S.

It was a little over twenty-seven years ago that Mrs. Rogers, of London, after repeated requests, was allowed the privilege of addressing the ladies of the congregation with the view to presenting the need of an organization among them for missionary study and work. The request



ROBERT THOMSON
Elder

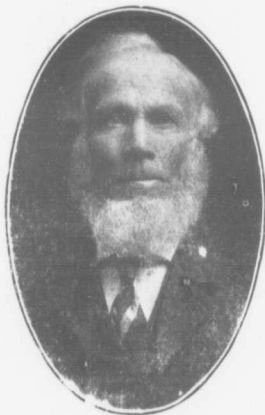
was finally granted with the definite understanding that such organization must not in any way interfere with the other and regular work of the church. The society has never been large but it has persistently adhered to its aim and has accomplished much real and lasting good. Mrs. Alexander Urquhart was the first president and the successive ministers' wives have occupied the same office. Special mention should be made of the late Misses Mary and Jane McTavish, who were so faithful to the society for many years, the latter being president for seven successive years. They also left a bequest of \$400 in 1914 to the work which the society represented.

The Sabbath School has always been a vital part of the church's life and has been maintained since 1866 by a succession of faithful and devoted officers. Among the superintendents of more recent years, mention should be made of Mr. D. A. McNab, John Fletcher and John M. Campbell, who still serves in that capacity with ability and devotion. The religious education of the young, however, has been supplemented for several years by the Young People's Society.

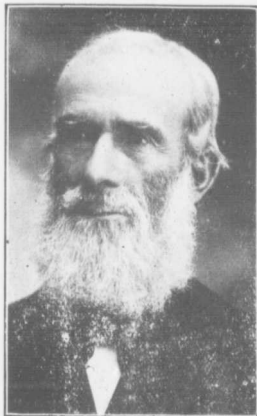
In 1894 a Christian Endeavor Society was organized and did much for the training of its members for a larger sphere of usefulness in the church's activities. This organization, however, was replaced by the Young People's Home Mission Society. Besides its being a training school for its members its efforts have been directed largely towards missionary lines, both educative and expressional. At the present time the young people have assumed and are bearing a definite share of the missionary budget that is being asked by the Assembly's Committee.



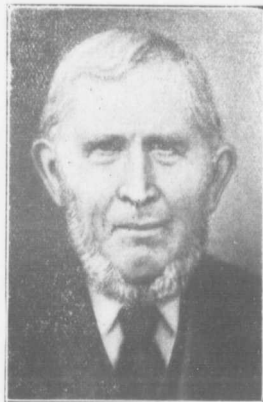
GILBERT HYNDSMAN
Elder



DAVID CROSSON
Elder



PETER McNABB
Elder



COLIN CAMPBELL
Elder



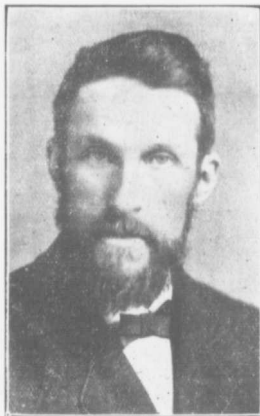
REV S LAWRENCE

The Ladies' Aid Society has also been an efficient and helpful organization. Often during times of stress they have been appealed to and seldom, if ever, in vain. The office-bearers of the congregation owe much to the ladies of the congregation for their ready willingness to help and which help they have so generously rendered. Mrs. D. R. Thomson has been for a number of years the painstaking president and has successfully guided the society's work.

The choir has also rendered valuable assistance to the congregation. With the passing of the precentor an organist must be sought and a most devoted and faithful one was found in the person of Miss Margaret Campbell (later Mrs. Dougal McTavish). She continued to occupy that trying position until a couple of years ago when, at her request, the session accepted with much regret, her resignation, and Mrs. D. McKay was asked to become the organist, which office she continues to hold.

The founders of Chalmers' church were men and women of undaunted courage and with a faith that would not be shaken. Of those who constituted the first communion roll only two now remain on the present roll, viz., Mrs. A. McLachlin, Sr., and Mrs. A. McNab, St., both of whom united with the church at the same time and are now spending the evening of life's day lovingly cared for by their families.

In this reminiscent time our hearts are refreshed in the thought of a Providence that has guided, protected and prospered God's people in all these years. We therefore look backward with gratitude and upward with thanksgiving, and forward with hope, as we stand today under the shadow of the nation's cloud of sorrow when the faith of many is shaken.



ROBERT B. CAMPBELL
Elder

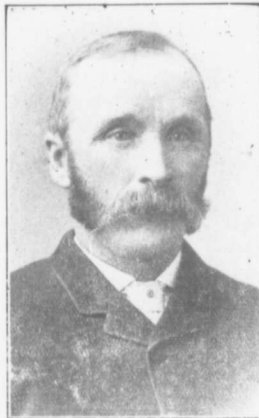
In looking over the past the congregation has unnumbered mercies for which to be thankful. Her ministers have been men, the combined influence of whose lives has left an indelible impress upon the intellectual, moral and religious life of the community. The Psalmist's prayer seems to have been answered in that "peace and prosperity have remained within the walls of our beloved Zion."

Let the achievements of the past spur us on to greater things. Those of our number who have fought the good fight and have finished their course, and in memory of whose lives this little book is lovingly dedicated, are witnesses encompassing us about, unseen on our side because of the veil lying thinly between, but on theirs the open vision, rejoicing in our joy, sorrowing, if in our feebleness of faith and lack of strength, we fail.

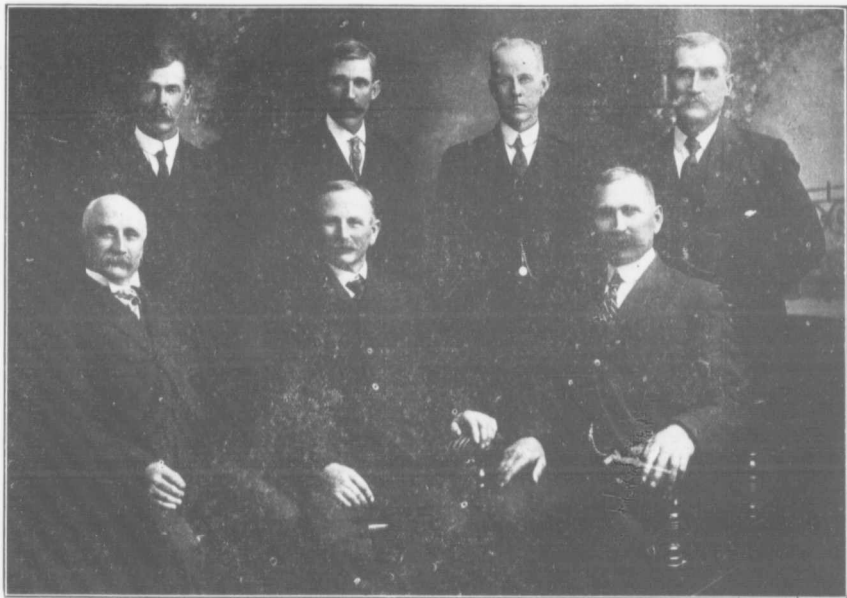




DUGALD J. CAMPBELL
Elder



DANIEL THOMSON
Elder



BOARD OF MANAGERS—Daniel H. McCallum, Daniel J. Turner, John S. Tolman, Peter C. McBride
D. R. Thomson, D. G. McTavish, J. W. McCallum.



CHOIR—Back Row—Jennie Carroll, Donald McBride, John Patterson (Leader), Anna Belle Murray, Mrs. T. Gervis, J. Fletcher,
Lena Whitelock, Barbara McCallum, Jennie McCallum, Mrs. McKay (Organist), Catherine McCallum,
Margaret Patterson, Flossie Murray.