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# THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

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A COMPILATION OF ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HISTORY

*Noreen McNairn*

Father God:

We keep forgetting all those who lived before us.

We keep forgetting those who lived and worked in this community.

We keep forgetting those who prayed and sang hymns in this church before we were born.

We keep forgetting what our fathers have done for us.

We commit the sin, Lord, of assuming everything begins with us.

We drink from wells we did not find; we eat food from farmland we did not develop;  
we enjoy freedoms which we have not earned; we worship in churches we did not build;  
we live in communities we did not establish.

This day, make us grateful for our heritage.

Turn our minds to those who lived in another day and under different circumstances,  
until we are aware of their faith and work.

Today we need to feel our oneness, not only with those of a recent generation, who lived here,  
but those of every generation in every place,  
whose faith and works have enriched our lives.

We need to learn from them in order that our faith will be as vital,  
our commitment as sincere, our worship as alive, our fellowship as deep,  
as many of the devout and faithful who lived in other times and places.

Amen

(Displayed in the Covenanters' Church in Grand Pré, New Brunswick),

The compilation of this history has been a privilege, a joy, and, on occasion, a frustration. To helpful individuals at the Diocesan Office, at the Archives in McMaster's Mills Memorial library, to members of St. Luke's, St. Elizabeth's, and St. Philips, my thanks for your support.

Noreen McNairn 2002



In the early 1950's, Burlington was a town, not unlike many that hugged the shoreline of Lake Ontario, its financial base borne from the rich soil that fed the myriad of orchards and market gardens. The cannery at the foot of Brant Street was essential to the economy, taking in truckloads of all manner of fruits and vegetables. The basket factory at the railroad tracks in Freeman provided both products and employment integral to the community. Niagara Brand Chemicals manufactured pesticides and fertilizers. Brant Street was the retail hub of the community. Over on Maple Avenue, just south of the many market gardens, Nicholson's Lumber had found a large consumer niche in the production of prefabricated buildings. The firehall on John Street was the hub of emergency services, coordinating calls for not only the fire department, but police, ambulance, physicians, and the VON – the precursor of "911". For a population of almost 9,000, it was a secure and comfortable existence. Change, however was inevitable.

The post war housing crisis had pushed the boundaries of larger cities and highway expansion had accelerated that growth. Farmers took advantage of the opportunity to sell their fields to real estate agents, changing forever the landscape of every community around the major centres as they rapidly lost their unique identities to become suburbs for commuters. Highways proliferated, swallowing great chunks of the countryside. Glenwood Survey, just west of the Guelph Line had been developed just prior to World War II. In 1945, the Federal Government purchased 80 acres to be allocated under the Veterans' Land Act to returning servicemen, officially named "Queensway Veterans Settlement" for which Glenwood School was built.

In 1834, bushland had been cleared in the little hamlet of Wellington Square to erect St. Luke's Anglican Church. From that time onward, it has continued to play a significant role in the spiritual growth of the community. Reverend C.F. Heathcote became the rector in 1942. As the War drew to a close, he looked to the northern reaches of his parish and realized it was a geographic anomaly that hindered his ability to serve those families in the traditional way. Knox Presbyterian, Trinity United, and St. Luke's then sought and were granted the use of Glenwood School auditorium. On a rotating basis, services were conducted by all three but the project was short lived. Within six months, disinterest had reduced attendance to Reverend Heathcote and Mr. Brian Holliday. The members of St. Luke's Men's Club did not accept this as a defeat, however, but rather as an opportunity for redirection of plans for a mission church. With Reverend Heathcote, they focused their efforts on negotiations with the Department of Highways. To build the interchange to the Queen Elizabeth Highway, the Ontario Government had purchased a parcel of land on the east side of Guelph Line from Paul Fisher which happened to include the abandoned Fisher's Corners schoolhouse. Despite bureaucratic protestations that the building was needed for storage, St. Luke's won the dispute and twelve people gathered there to worship

on the first Sunday in Lent, March 2, 1952. The official opening of the parish took place on Palm Sunday, April 6, 1952.

The school itself had a colourful history, dating back to the 1830's when an acre of land was donated by Peter Fisher (grandfather of Paul who ultimately sold the family property to the developers of the Burlington Mall). Local residents constructed the twenty-four foot square log building,



spending less than fifteen pounds on materials. In 1872, the plan had been approved to amalgamate the villages of Port Nelson (East of Guelph Line) and Wellington Square to incorporate the new village to be known as Burlington. In anticipation of this growth, taxes were levied to pay for education and Fisher's Corners School was moved nearer to the farms where it remained until the Burlington Mall was erected. The Trustees of School Section #4 approved and proceeded with the construction of a larger brick facility on the site. After a fire in 1926, this school was also rebuilt, on the future site of the first access ramp to the QEW east to Toronto from Burlington. This was the building in which the fledgling parish worshipped on that cold March morning. Construction delays, union disputes, and government red tape allowed the mission to remain until 1955. This had not been what the Highways Department had anticipated when they had originally negotiated with Mr. Heathcote, but the additional time was indeed welcomed by the congregation.

The name St. Christopher, patron saint of travellers, remains most relevant today. In 1980, the large tapestry that hangs in the church was completed by Margaret Wallace and dedicated in memory of parishioner Glyn Stanger. It is a faithful depiction of the gentle giant from Canaan named Reprobus. In the third century, he was convinced that his great size and strength were worthy of serving a great king. He searched for the most magnificent ruler for many months until he confronted the devil who told him of the power of the cross of Christ. Surely this Christ must be the most powerful ruler! An old monk taught him about Jesus of whom he had known nothing. He built a hut by the side of a treacherous river so that he could follow the monk's instructions to transport travellers over the threatening waters. One stormy night, he carried a small child who had



cried out to him in the darkness. As the child's weight became overwhelming while he staggered through the raging river, the child told him that he had borne the weight of the Saviour of the World on his shoulders. From that moment on, according to that child, he would be known as "Christ-Bearer" or Christopher. The tapestry depicts the act including the flowers and leaves sprouting from his staff which, according to the legend, occurred overnight as a heavenly sign while the gentle man sought refuge in his hut trying to wrest reality from hallucination.

During that first year, the indomitable Reverend Heathcote drove up the Guelph Line between the two morning services at St. Luke's. The congregation came from the new housing developments, Mountain Gardens and Clarksdale, above the Queen Elizabeth, from the Queensway survey just north of the church, and from the east from Roseland to past Appleby Line to the border of Bronte. Children outnumbered adults and the expanding church school began to outgrow its space, created by partitioning the single room. Borrowed furniture and buckets of whitewash made the basement reasonably habitable and youngsters of all ages soon filled the lower level every Sunday. Parents rotated as volunteer teachers and shepherded their charges out of the service as the sermon began, heading down the stairs for the Sunday School lessons. Children also contributed to the music as they made up the first choir; it was not until 1955 that the adults joined them. Thus Reverend Heathcote, with a dedicated group of volunteers sowed the seeds and nurtured the growth of the new parish. It was with great pleasure and relief in 1953, that the congregation welcomed Ralph McKim, a Wycliffe student living in Bronte, and appointed by the Bishop to assist at services. His salary of \$175.00 for that year was paid by St. Luke's, as was the \$60.00 that Reverend Heathcote was given for his efforts. Public relations became a significant focus for Ralph as he set about welcoming newcomers to the survey and connecting with the established families in the Roseland area. This was definitely "leg work" for the young man who, as a student was car-less, in a town without any bus service. This early experience was no doubt of benefit to him when, in later years, he was appointed Director of Christian Education for the Diocese of Niagara. The enthusiastic student-assistant, Ralph McKim worked with the congregation to set their monetary sights on purchasing an organ. The goal of the fund was set at \$1,000.00 and a committee appointed to find the best bargain. One was located in Guelph and the group met with the owner to negotiate. The price asked was \$900.00 but with some astute bidding, the final cost was \$850.00.

Although the church continued as a mission of St. Luke's, an organizational structure was needed. To this end, Brian Holliday was appointed warden and as such, one task was to stoke the wood burning furnace on Saturday nights in the winter! In July 1954, the congregation voted unanimously to build a church, and with Bishop Bagnall's blessing, finance and building committees were established and a contractor and architect hired. At a special vestry meeting on July 19, 1954, plans

for the new church as submitted by L. M. Huget, were approved and James Kemp named as general contractor. The land, just south of the school and on the west side of Guelph Line was purchased from William Cardwell for \$10,000.00. At that meeting, the members voted to raise \$15,000.00 in pledges and to obtain a short-term loan of \$35,000.00 from the diocese. The site was marked by a thirty foot tall wooden cross lovingly crafted by a parishioner, possibly Ivan Owen who was an excellent carpenter. It was this same cross that would be carried in a procession in 1961 to mark the dedication of the site for St. Elizabeth's Church in the east end of the community. The sod-turning ceremony was held in September of 1954 with Mr. Heathcote wielding the shovel, and the cornerstone laid in December by Mrs. Tebbs, the widow of the former priest of St. Luke's. In January 1956, Harry Mansfield was appointed as rector of a parish that had truly come of age.

The first regular vestry meeting was held in January of 1955 where the congregation of approximately one hundred and fifty was able to elect the first representatives of their new parish –

- John Atkinson and William Kirkland as lay delegates to Synod with John Robinson as substitute,
- Bert Johnstone as Rector's Warden
- Ernest Death as People's Warden and Church School Superintendent,
- Allan Chrystal as Vestry Clerk,
- Joseph Cheatley as Envelope Secretary,
- Mrs. Brian Holliday as choir leader and Alice Woolvett as organist,
- Ray Bryant as Treasurer,
- Harold Sellers, Brian Holliday and Ted George as officers of the Building Committee.

These people took on a significant burden of responsibility and for some, their role continued for many years.

It is important to understand that the first church building was planned as a temporary locale until funds could allow expansion. The unimposing structure provided seating for 250 and an attached Sunday School with a capacity for 300. Architecturally, with its slightly sloping roof and no spire or tower, it could easily have been mistaken for a hall or arena.



Nonetheless, it was a vast improvement over the school house. The building committee proceeded with the plans for the next phase and found no problem

negotiating loans for the project. 226 families pledged \$86,000.00 over three years. As a result of this stewardship campaign, the \$35,000.00 loan was repaid in less than four years and the church was still able to pay \$4,000.00 for a new Hallman organ, installed in 1958

On March 8, 1955, just three years after that first Sunday service, the church was dedicated and Reverend Mansfield officially inducted as the rector. The community was continuing to grow and St. Christopher's was keeping pace. A rectory at 2226 Prospect was purchased in July 1955 for \$12,950, into which Harry Mansfield and his new bride were pleased to move. Two services had been needed each Sunday, with a third added in 1958 to accommodate the space requirements of the congregation. The Women's Auxiliary, the Brotherhood of Anglican Churchmen, the Women's Guild (later the Women's Church Year), the choir, Altar Guild, Married Couples Club, and the Junior Youth Fellowship were all flourishing as well. As a result the building was in use most evenings. As secretary, Nancy Chrystal, with her husband Alan would mimeograph and fold the bulletins for each Sunday. One evening in January of 1957, as Alan delivered the brochures to the church, he encountered a hall full of smoke. He ran to a neighbouring house for help and the volunteers from Fire Station #2 on Queensway Drive responded with haste, minimizing the damage which was covered by insurance.

It is of interest to note that the first monthly newsletter, "The Christopher", was printed in May, 1956. In that first issue, Rev. Mansfield wrote, "A parish magazine has two vital purposes in the life of the congregation – to keep everyone up to date on the worship and work of the church – and to teach about the Faith and Practice by which every baptized Christian is pledged to live." One of the regular columns listed the new families welcomed to the parish in each month; the growth is understandable as an average of 11 new families was identified each month!

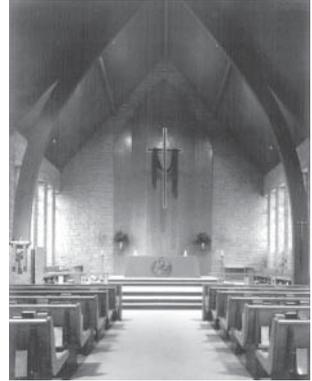
By 1956 there were more than two hundred and sixty families and the church school had an enrolment of more than three hundred. The annual operating budget for the year was \$40,466.00 and the rector and wardens petitioned the bishop to become a self-supporting church when he received the sixty-five candidates for confirmation that year. He formally announced that St. Christopher's had become self-supporting at Diocesan Synod shortly thereafter.

1958 was a year of major change. Burlington amalgamated with Aldershot and with Nelson Township thus stretching from Hamilton on the West to Bronte on the East. The outcome was a tripling of the population to over 33,000. Traffic to and from Toronto and Hamilton increased as the town developed the reputation as a bedroom community, although local industry was encouraged with the development of Progress Industrial Park, north of the QEW. Families where both parents worked outside the home were becoming increasingly common. The challenges to the newly

expanded town were reflected in those felt by the church. The congregation was spread from the Lakeshore to the Dundas highway in the North, Brant Street on the West, and East to the Burlington Oakville Town Line. Real estate developers built housing surveys where the land was plentiful and affordable, but not necessarily accessible by other than automobile. Efficient local bus service was not yet a reality. Of immediate concern to the parish, however, was the decision of the bishop to relocate the Reverend Harry Mansfield to St. Mark's in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

For almost five months, it was Reverend Edward Rigby (later Archdeacon) who acted as Priest-in-charge for St. Christopher's. He was assisted during the three Sunday services by a parishioner, Bishop Heber Wilkinson, retired after thirty-three years in India. In April, 1959, there was a great welcome for Clarence and Joyce Mitchell and their young family, including one month old Catherine, when they arrived from St. John's in Port Dalhousie.

While the need to expand was in no doubt, new strategies had to be employed; unfortunately, the original plans to extend the existing structure were no longer feasible. A costing was done and it was agreed that a new building would actually cost less than an addition. It was decided to include the original church in the design by adjoining it for use during the construction and as a parish hall afterwards. While the original property had been sufficiently spacious for the original design whose length was perpendicular to the road, it



would not be feasible for a larger church. The new plans called for the length to run parallel to the road and so the original lot, purchased from the Cardwell's, would be inadequate. A second piece of property, adjacent to the first on the south side, was purchased from C. McCammon in June, 1959 at a cost of \$11,00.00. In the fall of that year, Bert Johnstone and Brian Holliday carried out the symbolic sod-turning for the new church. The congregation of now almost five hundred families took on the task of committing to the proposed debt. The mortgage of \$175,000.00 was the largest that the Diocese of Niagara had ever granted at that time. On June 5, 1960, Canon Edward Rigby, then Secretary-Treasurer of the Diocese, performed the ceremonial laying of the cornerstone.

Ontario stone combined with huge laminated cedar beams from British Columbia to create the open and soaring design. With elegant simplicity, a cross over the altar was invisibly suspended before a massive blue mosaic reredos. Random blocks of coloured glass, while appearing modern in concept were actually symbolic of the windows used in early churches before stained glass became a religious art. The flagstone walkways and the square design of the walkways were also influenced by

a much early era of church architecture. The cloister, created by the hallways leading to the parish hall, provided a quiet space for meditation, and a showplace for the roses lovingly tended by the sexton.

There were many dedicated parishioners who donated talents, time, and treasure to beautify the new building for the inaugural service. As an example, Mrs. Stella Cox, owner of The Clans Restaurant across from the railway station at Freeman's Corners, funded oak furnishings, pulpit, altar and cross, which were installed in the chancel in time for the first service. Al and Gladys Hurst donated the processional cross. Joe Ostroski made the table now in the narthex in his wife's memory. James MacKenzie, an artist in his own right, was a supportive member of the arts community here in Burlington. It was through his generosity that the sculpture on the outside East wall was crafted and installed. Incidentally, the artisan who created that was a chef at the Estaminet restaurant on Water Street (now Emma's Back Porch). Mr. MacKenzie also donated the wooden sculpture on the pulpit; he is reported to have expressed his concern that the unadorned structure bore an unfortunate resemblance to a plumbing fixture, lacking only hot and cold taps!

By the time the new church was built, the Church School enrolment was over 500 with seventy-five teachers rotating on a monthly basis. The secretary's desk was shared with everyone who needed a telephone, typewriter, or just a chat. The rector's office was doubling as the nursery for Sunday services, and the workload indicated the need for an assistant. Leonard Jenner, a divinity student from Bishop's College in Quebec, arrived on June 1, 1960 to fulfil that role and undoubtedly learned how to work in close quarters.

On All Saints' Day in 1960, the Right Reverend Walter E. Bagnall, Bishop of Niagara dedicated the new St. Christopher's, five years after conducting the same service in the first building. The Crucifer led the Rector and Wardens to the main door of the church to receive the Bishop, attended by his Chaplain, and escorted by the Registrar, the Archdeacon, and the Rural Dean. At the doorway, the People's Warden, Dr. Barney Marsalles, requested the Bishop to proceed with the dedication service. The Bishop knocked three times on the door with his pastoral staff and the doors were opened wide as the keys were handed to him. A fanfare of trumpets accompanied the procession through the nave to the chancel where, after prayers were offered, he traced the sign of the cross and the symbols of Alpha and Omega upon the floor. He processed to the baptistry, to the prayer desk, the pulpit, and finally to the altar, offering prayers of dedication at each. It was a very dramatic evening.



Diocesan planners had already recognized the need for at least one new parish in Burlington; the geographical factors and population density were too diverse for St. Christopher's to effectively manage. Anglicans living in the area east of Appleby Line had already been worshipping in an Elizabeth Gardens' Public School since 1959, and in May of 1961, a ceremony was held to officially designate the building site for St. Elizabeth's. The thirty foot high wooden cross was lowered from the church lawn and the procession from St. Christopher's began. Led by the Teen Tour Band, the flags of the Anglican Church were carried by the Church Boys' League. Over a hundred men pulled the cross on its six mile journey to Bromley Road. Reverend Mitchell joined with Reverend Fred Etherden of St. Elizabeth's, to bless the new site. A second church, St. Philip the Apostle, opened in 1963, to serve the increasing needs of the area north of the QEW. Unlike St. Elizabeth's where the congregation had developed in the area, a number of the original members of St. Christopher's living in the northern part of the parish again took up the challenge of establishing a new congregation.

In 1963, the house on Prospect was sold and 358 Smith Avenue became a new and larger rectory for the Mitchells. The cost was \$19,500, negotiated with skill by Al Hurst, a successful realtor and parishioner. Real estate was significant to the parish, not just the houses, but also land transactions. There was the original tract purchase, followed by the second in 1959. In 1968, the Mall opened and commercial development spread south on Guelph Line. Just as Burlington was no longer a small town, neither was St. Christopher's a little neighbourhood church. Both had grown to encompass a larger, diversified population. By 1974, the little village that became a town was ready to move up to city status. Industrial growth had mushroomed along the service roads and in industrial parks. The population was mobile with families being transferred around the country and beyond. The self sufficient market garden economy of the forties and fifties had graduated to urban mode. The church was not immune to these environmental factors; attendance was fluctuating, age groups changing, interests more varied. Nonetheless, the church continued to reach out into the community and to expand internal programs in response to the new challenges. Commercial growth was proceeding on Guelph Line. Business plazas appeared on the north side of St. Christopher's and plans were being made to construct apartments to the south. It was reasonable to take full advantage of a volatile land market. After being wooed by developers for several years, it was agreed to dispose of some undeveloped property. In 1978, 1.3 of the acres purchased from Mr. McCammon in 1959 were sold; the proceeds of this transaction were used to pay off the remaining costs of the organ, the remainder going against the mortgage.

To Clarence Mitchell, music was a significant component of the worship service. If and when the congregation did not appear to be making sufficient effort in that regard, he would signal the organist to stop and proceed to stride down the centre

aisle to elicit optimal vocal efforts from everyone. It was about this time that serious consideration was given to upgrading the organ. In the original architectural plans, the east wall had been designated as a future site for a pipe organ but financially, it seemed inappropriate to consider such an investment. Alice Woolvett who had played the piano in the schoolhouse was then employed as the first organist until 1975. Lelia Holman acted in her stead when Alice was on vacation and during an extended period of illness. Jan Rolph provided temporary service and then, for the next eight years, Andy Dewhurst was the organist. Again, it was Lelia upon whom we relied until Cornelius Krygsman came but, unfortunately, he stayed for only a year. Nancy DeVries followed Cornelius and remained until 1990 when Mary Jane Price came on staff. Under her direction, the choir has recorded tapes and CDs and the musical environment has developed a much more varied ensemble including guitars, flute, bagpipes, drums, trumpet and even dancers, performing a more varied repertoire.

It was to be several years before steps were taken to locate an affordable instrument that would meet the defined needs of the church, both musically and financially. To that end, the corporation asked that several qualified musicians in the area form a committee. It was Richard Birney-Smith, a noted organist himself, who had contacts with a New England Society that dismantled and preserved organs removed from churches. After investigation and negotiation, the one that he recommended to the committee was from a Lutheran Congregation in Massachusetts. It was a one hundred year old Johnson organ, thus qualifying for duty-free import as an antique. Steve Angus and Herb Furness then proceeded to negotiate on behalf of the congregation and so started one of the lengthiest and most controversial periods in the life of St. Christopher's. The man in New England who took on the task of rebuilding the instrument proved to be an extremely poor manager. Steve Angus made a number of trips



to his New England workshop, trying vainly to reorganize his business practices but to little avail. The man was an artisan who either could not or would not look after the various aspects of accounting. With Steve's background in management, he hoped that he could keep him solvent but it was to no avail and organ builder declared bankruptcy. The pieces were retrieved from a barn and after considerable haranguing with an unbelievable number of border officials and legal representatives, the various organ components, in varying stages of disassembly, arrived from New England. Needless to say, there were many disheartened parishioners. During this tumultuous period, the corporation had been able to engage the services of the

Keates-Geissler Organ Company who did a most remarkable reconstruction job with an almost overwhelming load of bits and pieces. It was with both relief and joy that, on October 15, 1978, Right Reverend J. C. Bothwell, Bishop of Niagara dedicated the pipe organ at St. Christopher's.

In 1961, Keith Calder was appointed as an honorary assistant while employed at the National Office of the Church. After two years, he and his family moved to Bronte where he became the priest at the Church of the Epiphany. It was not until the spring of 1964 that Laughton Binns arrived as a deacon to assist in the ministry. The role of the laity increased. It was clear that ministry was a group responsibility and the congregation met the challenge. Community outreach was particularly important; when the Mothers' Union saw a need for child care, it organized St. Christopher's Cooperative Nursery School. A number of parishioners completed the Bishop's Diploma Course to enhance both their understanding and their skills. Services were shared with St. Raphael's Roman Catholic parish to enhance communication. Church members as individuals actively participated in the Joseph Brant Hospital both as volunteers and board members, and as visitors on behalf of St. Christopher's.

Desmond Fleming brought a breath of Ireland when he arrived in the spring of 1966. Unlike most of our curates, he brought a wife and family to the position and they quickly adjusted both to their new country as well as to their new parish. Between December of 1968 and Easter of 1969, Desmond provided a very capable bridge during the interim between Clarence Mitchell and David Luxton. The Mitchell's moved to the Church of the Ascension after Christmas; later, Clarence was to become Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of Niagara. In March, David Luxton, son of the Bishop of Huron, arrived from St. Michael's in Hamilton. It was during his tenure that the memorable negotiations surrounding the pipe organ took place. David was ably assisted by Desmond Fleming until the latter returned to Ireland before taking on responsibility for All Saints in Niagara Falls. In June 1969, Paul Carr was appointed as curate, remaining until January 1971 when he became rector of Holy Trinity in Chippawa. He was followed by Brian Shoemsmith who came as a curate and left to become the incumbent of Christ Church, West Flamboro in February of 1973.

When David Luxton moved to St. George's-on-the-Hill in Etobicoke in 1973, the second Irish invasion occurred in the person of Tom Crawford who came from St. James in Port Colborne. He and his family remained with us for eleven years until moving to St. James, Dundas in November of 1984. During his tenure, there was a greater need for lay involvement in the worship service as curates were at a premium. Chalice bearers were trained and their services implemented. Pastoral Assistant Ernie Francis developed an increased roster of servers of all ages as well as training readers and initiating services at the nursing home, Maple Villa. Alex Hewitt came

after his ordination in September of 1975 and ably accepted responsibility for the youth ministry during his three years until he left to go to St. James in Fergus. Keith Whittingham had just been ordained priest at that time and came to us from St. Mary's in Hamilton. Many parishioners have copies of the cook book that he and Anne Hay compiled. He followed in the role that Alex had defined with the youth of the parish and left to take on the combined ministry of St. John's, Jordan and St. Mark's, Louth. After his ordination in June of 1981, David Hamid assisted from June, 1981 until August, 1983 when he went to St. John's, Burlington, and again in 1996 until he was appointed as Director of Ecumenical Affairs and Relations to the Anglican Consultative Council in England. The next curate was Terry de Forest who stayed for a year and a half before leaving for St. Matthias' in Guelph.

In June, 1982, Tom Crawford presided over a significant ceremony, that of burning the mortgage. It had been made possible through the sale of a portion of the church property which also provided the funds whereby the organ was paid off. When Tom left in October of 1984, the parish looked within for leadership and were fortunate to have both Steve Coombs and Harry Preece as honorary assistants. The diocese provided some interim help as well through Hope Surdivall and David McCallion. Lay involvement was essential but with the training and experience already implemented, it was a time of intense cooperation and positive action. It was not until the following June that Malcolm Evans arrived from Bishop's College School in Quebec. Shortly before, Keith Morrison had come as a deacon remaining until, as priest, he went to Shelburne, Dundalk, and Whitfield, a rural charge where he felt very much at home.

Linda Corry, after ministry in the Presbyterian Church, was ordained into the Anglican ministry and arrived in September 1987 as assistant to Malcolm Evans, taking on responsibility for St. Luke's in Palermo in 1990. The musical atmosphere in St. Christopher's was greatly augmented with the arrival of the Tadmans who shared their talents both with the choir and with the general congregation, introducing the Tadman Setting of the Eucharist, which has become a standard part of our service. Lorraine and her husband arrived in May of 1989, remaining until she went on to become rector of St. Philip's in Burlington in June of 1992, just before Malcolm Evans moved to St. Andrew's in Grimsby.

In the fall of 1993, inquiries had been made at the Cathedral in Hamilton regarding space in the columbarium for burial urns. It was full, and a group of interested parishioners, headed by Leo Podetz began a study with other churches in the Diocese regarding alternatives. Under the



regulations of the Cemetery Board as defined in 1994, there was found to be no legislation covering outside memorial gardens for the sprinkling of ashes. The group continued to meet and presented a resolution which was approved by the corporation in May of 1998 to establish a memorial garden at St. Christopher's. The location was selected, landscaping completed, and the site dedicated on October 28, 1998, and in January of 1999, the stone was installed. The garden is one of tranquillity, inviting contemplation and reverence, a tribute to those whose memorial it has become.

The Church Secretary has been a pivotal position since Nancy Chrystal took it on when she and her husband Alan looked after the office and maintenance of the fledgling parish. After Nancy's death in 1971, Joan Silmser nurtured both clergy and congregation over the next twenty-three years. Since 1994, Sandra Rudge has continued in a role in which the computer has replaced the typewriter and a photocopier has taken over from the old mimeograph machine.

After Malcolm Evans left, the congregation of over five hundred was again without a rector but resilient as ever. This time, however, Lloyd Gesner was appointed by the diocese as interim, with Harry Preece (now deceased) and Steve Coombs to complete the team. While in theory they were "honorary assistants", they carried considerable responsibility for parish affairs until Fred Gosse, the current rector, arrived from St. Thomas' Church in Belleville. Carol Finlay received her orientation as both curate and priest before moving on to the Church at the Centre in Carlisle in the fall of 1995. To manage the expanding responsibilities, the position of Director of Christian Formation was created in 1995; Cathy Fairley held this role until 2002. Lynda Kealey, a nurse prior to her ordination, contributed greatly to the development of the pastoral care team with her appointment in September of 1995; St. Michael's in Hamilton gained a most capable priest in March 1999 with her move to that parish. Jean Archbell, now Associate Priest, came on staff in 1996 as Director of Inreach and Judy Jupp has served as Director of Lay Ministry and Fellowship since 1993. Ian Chadwick, ordained following a career as a civil engineer with the Ministry of Transport, brought an eclectic aspect to his role and remained with St. Christopher's for just under two years before becoming rector of St. Alban's in Beamsville in 2000. Carol Langlotz and David Burrows were appointed as curates in 2000. Carol is now in Milton as chaplain to Allendale nursing home and as honorary assistant at St. Mark's while David is Priest Associate at All Saints in Foxtrap, Newfoundland.

Current clergy includes the Rector Fred Gosse, Associate Priest Jean Archbell, and honorary assistants Steve Coombs, Ian Dingwall, and Lloyd Gesner. Retired Bishop, John Bothwell, is also a parishioner and assists as needed. In addition, there is a very large group of lay staff and volunteers who carry responsibility for outreach projects, youth programs, visiting, transportation, hospitality, reading the lessons,

acting as servers and chalice bearers, the Christmas Market, gift wrapping at Christmas, sorting clothes and hosting at Open Doors, and all of the other activities in which St. Christopher's participates as a parish.

In 1995, Project 2000 was initiated and culminated on May 4, 1997, as the Parish Centre became a tangible expression of the passion of a congregation. At a cost of \$1,164,587, it was a challenge taken on with careful scrutiny while maintaining a vision. Seen as an enhanced home for the groups within the church, it was also designed as a facility for outreach into the community at large. Both have come to fruition. Church programs include Church School, the Library, the Book Club, the Bridge Group, Fitness Classes, Singles Group, Choir, Parish Council, the Ginger, Holly and Omega Groups, Parents and Tots, Partners for Change and Social Justice Group, Stewardship Committee, Pizza and a Movie, Monday and Tuesday night discussion groups. Outreach into the community of Burlington is evident looking at the meetings scheduled each month: AA, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Al-Anon, Ala-teen, Amnesty International, Animal Aid, Anaphylactic Group, Burlington Civic Chorale, Karate, CODA, Brownies, Beavers, Cubs, Guides, Halton Anti-Poverty Coalition, St. Christopher's Pre-School, Therapeutic Touch, and the VON Foot Clinic. Special events such as the Christmas Tree Lighting invite the community join with the congregation. Entertainment such as concerts, dances and the popular pot luck suppers utilize the facilities as well. The Centre has met its goals.

St. Christopher's, in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Services, has been able to provide the site for the Family Visitation Program, a safe and discrete area in which supervised parents and children can come together. Open Doors on Saturdays provides good useable clothing for people of all ages. The Inter-Church Council of Burlington has long appreciated the representation and intervention provided. Hospital visitation is but one ministry that members of the congregation provide to Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital; many are with the Auxiliary there, and others have taken on Board and Committee responsibilities. Many more parishioners work with a host of agencies, boards, and committees that address the needs of people in the community, and beyond.

It has been a short distance down the road but the trek has taken half a century. It was the belief of a dedicated priest, the strength of heart and the faith of a small group of people that gave birth to St. Christopher's. Reverend Heathcote's vision for the little church in the school house has born fruit and continues to be, as was Reprobus, the gentle giant waiting to offer help to all who step in the swift flowing river of time.



The story continues; share your stories with us...

