

TRINITY UNITED

Saddle-Bag Preachers
Brought Methodist Faith

When Thomas Ingersoll and his
arrived at Oxford-on-
Thames in 1793, he found al-
most unbroken forest with the
of some squatters who
prevented him. They were the Car-
rolls, near the present site of
Beachville, another family of Car-
rolls near Ingersoll, the Lefaves
of Innesford and others.
Ingersoll at once allocated land
to his followers, on the trail now
known as the Hamilton Road and
proceeded to improve road from
Ingersoll to Beachville so the first
community stretched along this
stage road for five or six miles.
What is now known as Beachville,
Kent reville and Ingersoll was the
original Thomas Ingersoll settle-
ment.

Although settlement was begun
in this section as early as 1793
there is no knowledge of any re-
ligious services being held until
1811. In that year on the first day
of August, the first service was
sponsored by the Methodist Epis-
copal Church and the minister was
one of the old time saddle-bag mis-
sionaries, the Rev. Nathan Bangs.
Making a journey from the Ni-
agara frontier over the ancient
through Ancaster and Bur-
Mr. Bangs rode into the set-
tlement of Oxford. Many of the
settlers who came with Thomas
Ingersoll were former members of
the Methodist Episcopal church
and they welcomed Mr. Bangs and
aided him in the formation of the
first religious congregation. This
began the history of the Methodist
Church in this community.

The Reverend Bangs stayed in
Oxford nine days and then pro-
ceeded westward. From this time
on to about 1812 the Methodist
Episcopal congregation was kept
together, for their religious servi-
ces by their own leaders and were
visited from time to time by Mr.
Bangs and other travelling minis-

Sermon Review

As nearly all of these preachers came from the United States, in 1812 they were looked upon with suspicion as enemies and ordered to leave the country. Local teachers then carried on. A Mr. Burdich became a travelling preacher and his territory extended to Long Point.

Up to 1820 there had been no particular place of worship in the whole community except the old log school that stood on the present Memorial School grounds or in a house. Later in that year the Pipins, Galloways, Burdichs and many others erected a log building for church services, near or on the present site of the West Oxford church. In 1823, the West Oxford church was transferred from the Galloway property to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal church, Poel Pipin, Robert Corsari, Jacob Wood of the township of Oxford and Isaac Burdich and Thomas Wait of the township of Zorra, for a consideration of five pounds. The deed for this transfer was sworn to by Comfort Sage and Stepin Tuple and signed by Thomas Horner, registrar. Thus the West Oxford church was the first church home in the original Ingersoll settlement.

From 1823 to about 1840-50 the religious advantages of Ingersoll were limited and centred around the West Oxford church on the local school house but the various branches of the Methodist church were more organized and the visits of the travelling preachers more frequent, so that marriages and baptismal ceremonies were more certain. The village did not possess a church in 1828 and there were no ministers of any denomination regularly stationed here. The Methodist travelling preachers came around on their circuit once in two or three weeks, on horse back with saddle bags across the saddle. Generally they rode around to the different families notifying them of the service in the school house and they always had a packed house.

Sentinel Review
1952.

From 1840-1855 there was a rapid expansion in industry, trade and population and a corresponding expansion in church building among the various denominations. Many of these old churches are gone but among the different branches of the Methodist church which have united from time to time, until recently the last union formed the present United Church of Canada, there are several which are remembered by the older citizens.

The Bible Christian Church was a rather imposing structure for those days and was situated on Oxford street on the vacant lot west of Victoria Memorial school. This building was removed to King street west where it still stands and is used as a dwelling and a place of business. The John street church, after being abandoned for church purposes was used as a ward school for many years and is still standing on its former location. Ingersoll once had a colored population sufficiently strong to support a church situated on Catharine street, near the creek that runs through part of Mr. Lucas' property. This church was called the British Methodist Episcopal church.

The old Charles street church which stood where the armory is, is within the memory of most people in town.

With no many branches of the Methodist church in the early days situated in town it necessarily follows that many very distinguished Canadians of that faith have at various times been located here.

Rev. John Kay twice stationed at Ingersoll, was born in Napanee, Ont., in 1838. His father died when he was 14, yet he persevered in studies and work, helping his family and made such progress that he was received into the ministry in 1862.

Rev. Hardy Koyle born at Centralia, became a minister in 1878 and was stationed at Ingersoll. He was gifted with wonderful oratorical power and became an outstanding exponent of his chosen profession.

Rev. D. C. McIntyre, M.A., Ph.D.,

born in 1845 at Duart, Kent county, attended Chahtain high school and Victoria University, became mathematical master of Ingersoll high school which position he resigned to study theology. He was stationed in many cities and towns throughout Ontario.

Rev. John Laycock, born at Embro in 1848, joined the Methodist Episcopal church at the age of 21, ordained in 1873 served Ingersoll and many other charges and held important offices in the Niagara Conference.

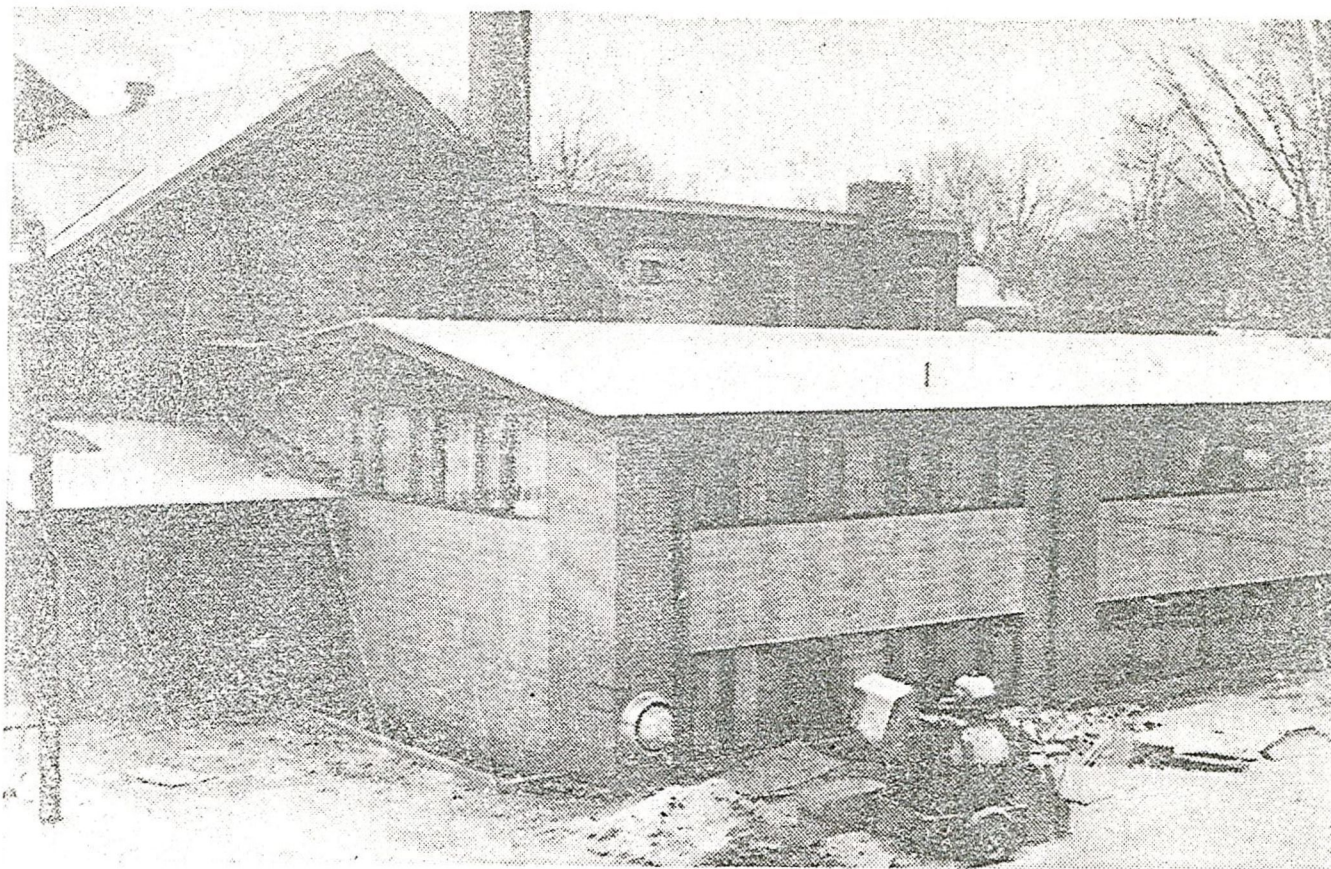
Rev. Edward Dewart, born in County Cavan, Ireland, in 1828, came to Canada at the age of six, became a school teacher in 1847, ordained in Wesleyan Methodist church in 1851. Stationed in Ingersoll in 1867 to 1869, when he was elected editor of the Christian Guardian which post he held over 21 years. While at Ingersoll, Mr. Dewart published a volume of poems "The Songs of Life" descriptive of the joys, sorrows, hardships and splendid courage of the pioneers of Western Ontario.

The Rev. Solomon Peter Hale, pastor of the congregation of the B.M.E. church in Ingersoll. He worked hard among his flock and was a good citizen. He loved to astonish his congregation with the use of big words which, when investigated by skeptical members of his audience, were usually found to convey the idea intended. He lived in poverty and died in poverty but he was a hero and a good man.

The present minister, Rev. Charles D. Daniel came to the church in 1938. During the war, while the minister was chaplain overseas, Rev. Harold Parr was minister.

Of late years, a new memorial organ has been installed, with which we hold out every Sunday over the country side. A new heating system was installed and the church and the Sunday School have been redecorated.

Sentinel Review
1952



DEDICATED AT INGERSOLL—Dedication of this \$120,000 new Christian Education wing marked an historic moment at Trinity United Church, Ingersoll, yesterday. The Rt. Rev. Angus J. MacQueen, London, moderator of the United Church

of Canada, officiated at the ceremony. Two floors in the modern addition include a board room, minister's study, ladies' parlor, banquet room and kitchen. Construction began a year ago.



SERVICE IN CHAPEL—The eventful day at Trinity Church also included dedication of a new chapel (above) and rededication of the church's redecorated sanctuary and vestibule. The new chapel, built in the former Sunday school rooms, seats

about 100 and will be used for weddings and other special services. Furnishings, donated as memorials, were dedicated by the Rev. Duncan M. Guest, president of the London Conference of the United Church. (Photos by Longfield).

NOVEMBER 30, 1959

November 30, 1959

TRINITY UNITED

Additions To Church Dedicated

INGERSOLL, Nov. 29 — Overflowing congregations at Trinity United Church here yesterday joined in the dedication of the church's new chapel, Christian Education wing and renovated narthex and sanctuary.

A sermon of dedication was given to the afternoon congregation by the Rt. Rev. Angus J. MacQueen, London, moderator of the United Church of Canada.

Functions of Church

The functions of the church, Dr. MacQueen told the congregation, include the worship of Almighty God, preaching of the gospel of Christ, the promotion of brotherhood and fellowship in the world and the building of moral character.

Increased Facilities

The moderator officiated at the dedication of the new Trinity church chapel, created in the former Sunday school rooms, and its \$120,000 Christian Education wing which encompasses a ladies' parlor and board room, minister's study, banquet room and kitchen.

The ceremonial presentation of the key to the new rooms was performed by Alex Morton, London, representing the architect, Harold L. Hicks; Gordon C. McLeod, contractor; L. A. Westcott, chairman of the building committee, the Rev. W. J. Maines, Embro, chairman of the Oxford Presbytery, and the Rev. Ralph King, pastor of Trinity Church.

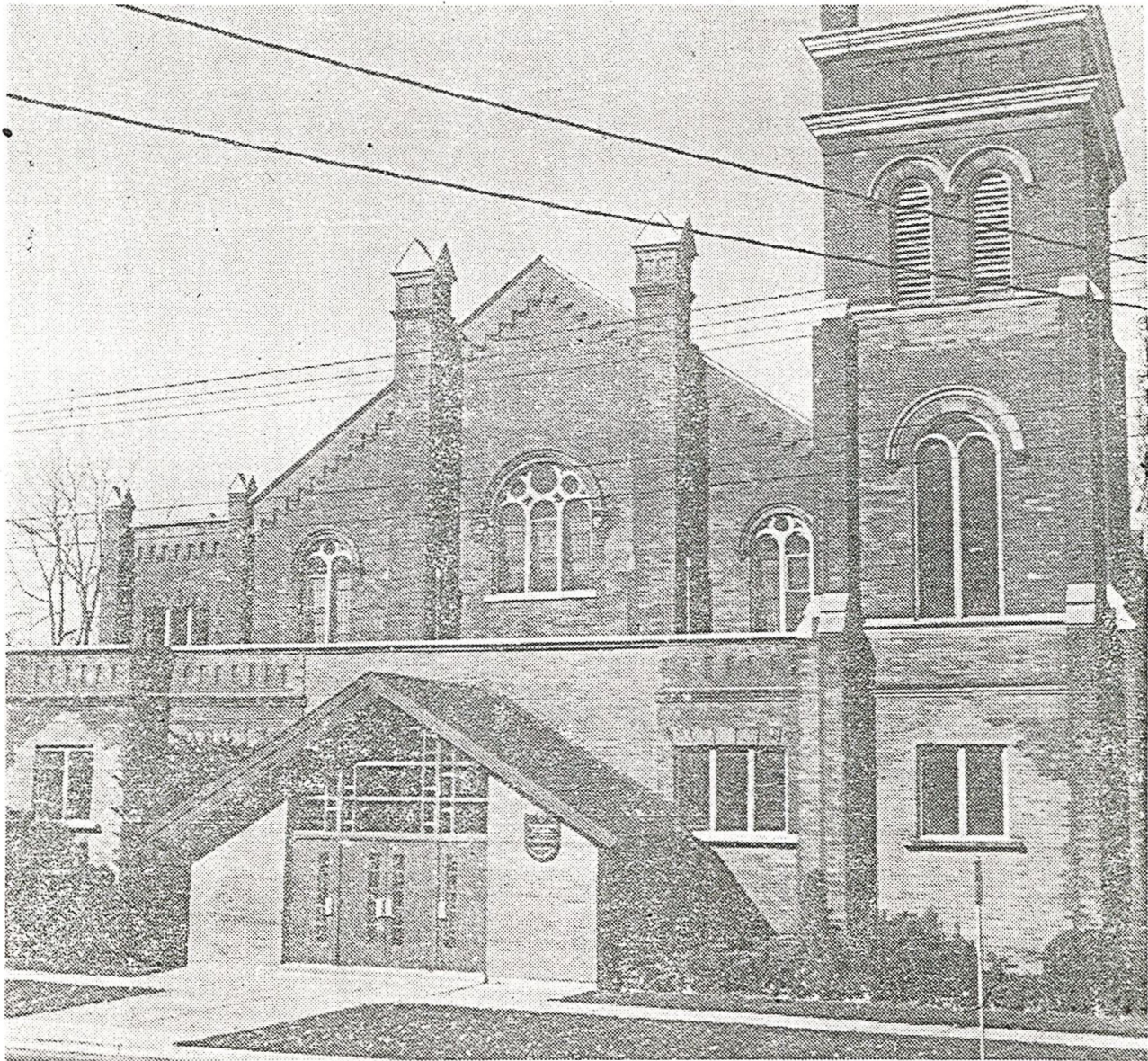
Bring Greetings

Mr. Maines brought the greetings of the Oxford Presbytery and the Rev. Dilwin T. Evans spoke for the Ingersoll Ministerial Association.

A representative procession of various church, Sunday school and mid-week organizations moved from the church to the new chapel for its dedication. J. H. Hunsberger, clerk of session, read the list of gifts and memorials which furnished the chapel.

At a special morning service, the Rev. Duncan Guest, Centralia, president of the London Conference of United Churches, officiated at the rededication of the church's redecorated sanctuary and narthex.

SENTINEL REVIEW
October 24, 1974



TRINITY UNITED CHURCH, located at King Street and Church Street in Ingersoll, will have a special 170th anniversary

service on Oct. 27 beginning at 11 a.m. While the present church was built in 1865, a minister, Rev. Nathan Bangs, started the

first organized congregation in Ingersoll in 1804. Rev. Stanford C. Lucyk, a former minister of Trinity United from 1964 to '68,

will be the special guest at the service. A pot luck sandwich lunch is planned after the service. (Staff photo)

Sentinel Review
October 24, 1974

TRINITY UNITED

Ingersoll church will mark 170 years Sunday morning

Music from the voices of two choirs, a former minister as the guest preacher, and a pot luck sandwich lunch will be just a few of the items to mark the 170th anniversary celebrations of Trinity United Church in Ingersoll on Oct. 27.

Rev. Stanford C. Lucyk, who served in Ingersoll from 1964

until 1968, will be in attendance on Oct. 28 to share in the celebrations at Trinity United.

Rev. J. Robert Williams, the present minister, said Wednesday that the church has a long history. An Ingersoll man, now a student at the University of Western Ontario, Doug Flanders, has written a history of the church as a project for the 50th anniversary of the United Church in Canada to be held in June, 1975.

Mr. Williams explained that the first organized congregation of what is now the United Church began in 1804 when a Rev. Nathan Bangs started

organized worship in Ingersoll.

Mr. Williams said that Mr. Bangs had been in Ingersoll as early as 1801 but it was not until four years later that a congregation was organized.

SADDLE BAGGER

Mr. Bangs, who was one of a group called 'saddle baggers' or travelling preachers, kept in touch with the Ingersoll congregation until the war of 1812 when he returned to his homeland in the United States.

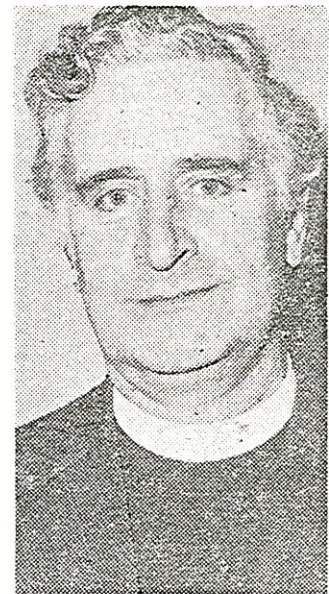
In 1823 the first log church for the congregation was built in West Oxford but it was not until 1841 that services were held in a building in Ingersoll, at this time

a log schoolhouse.

The present church, said Mr. Williams, located at Church Street and King Street, was built in 1865 and enlarged in 1911 to include a Sunday school hall.

Mr. Williams said that up until 1925 the church was known as the King Street Methodist Church, but when the United Church of Canada was formed in 1925, the name was changed to Trinity United Church.

In 1958 the Alma Street Extension Hall was built for Sunday school classes and in 1962 all of the women's groups in the church were organized into the United Church Women.



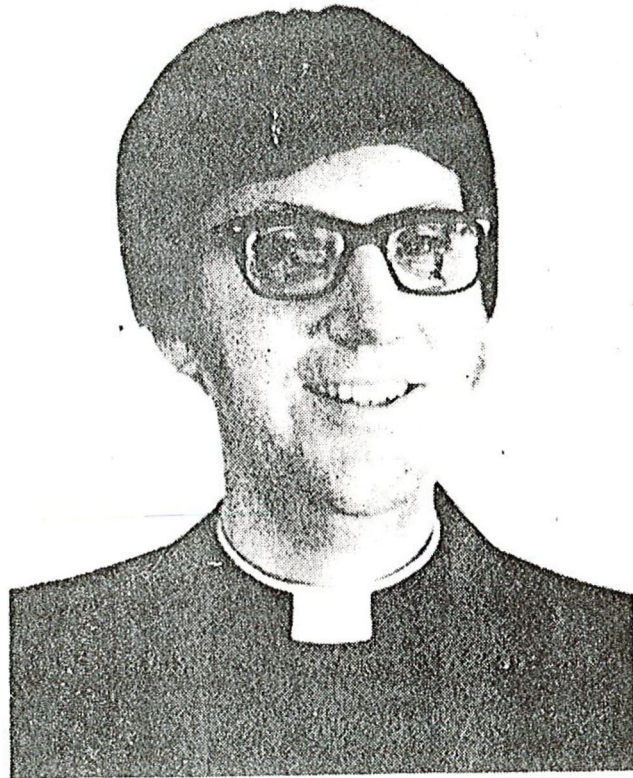
Robert Williams
.. Trinity minister

Sentinel Review
October 24, 1974

SENTINEL REVIEW
October 24, 1974

TRINITY UNITED

New minister arrives at Trinity United Church



REV. CARMAN HOLBROUGH B.A., B.D.

With the arrival of the new year has come the arrival of a new minister at Trinity United Church. Rev. Carmen Holbrough, B.A., B.D., took charge of the church last Sunday morning, replacing Rev. Robert Williams.

The church's pastoral relations committee took on the task of finding a new minister for the church last April. With the assistance of the Rev. Mary McNally and the Rev. August Meacham, the committee travelled from Oshawa to Windsor and from Toronto to Barrie looking for a new minister. After 20 contacts were made, Rev. Hol-

brough was found.

J.W. Dilamarter, a member of the committee, said "Rev. Carmen Holbrough is a young man of untiring energy. He and his wife are extremely active with young people. They have organized an ecumenical young people's group in Beaverton which is in itself some 300 strong. Carmen is a strong believer in a very active Christian Education program. He feels as well that the congregation must have some contact with their church".

Mr. Dilamarter continued, "as an aside it is worth mentioning that Carmen was ordained some seven-

years-ago. Previous to this he spent 10 years working for a bank. I feel this shows the sincere dedication that this man has. For a person to leave a vocation of 10 years and begin afresh takes great courage and determination".

Rev. McNally of Mount Elgin United Church served as supervising minister at Trinity United church during the term between Rev. Williams' departure and Rev. Holbrough's arrival. Mr. Dilamarter thanked Rev. McNally for her dedicated assistance and for her perseverance through the many meetings and hours of work while

looking for a new minister.

Rev. Holbrough arrived in Ingersoll after serving for five and a half years in Beaverton. Prior to that he served in Harris, Saskatchewan, for two years, and in Bright for five years, as a student minister.

Born and raised in Brigden, Ontario, he received his secondary school education from Petrolia District High School. Upon leaving high school he was employed with the Bank of Nova Scotia for 10 years in Sarnia, Brantford, Belmont, Bramalea and Barrie.

In 1966, Holbrough left the bank to return to

school, where he received a B.A. from the University of Western Ontario and a B.D. from Emmanuel College at the University of Toronto.

He and his wife Noreen have three children, Paul, 15, Jeff, 13 and Chris, 8.

*New minister arrives at
Trinity United Church.*

At request of church

Mennonites demolish house

Is it 1983 or 1883? As area Mennonite farmers demolished an old King Street house using only their muscles and hand tools, it could have been 100 years earlier.

The scene was one of co-operation as the Mennonite men, who live on farms south of Putnam, heaved boards out of second story windows and arranged them on horse-drawn wagons. The men volunteered to do the work in exchange for the material, said Norm Johnson, chairman of the property committee at the Trinity United Church, owner of the building and property. The house, built before the turn of the century, is being torn down to make more room for Church parking.

The process is a painstaking operation of manual labor. Hammers and wrecking bars are just about the only tools being used. And, as the thermometer's mercury soars to record temperatures of 32 degrees celsius, the heat is an added burden.

"Yesterday (Thursday) was pretty tough," said one of the workers, dressed in a long sleeve cotton shirt buttoned to the top and heavy blue jeans. "The heat and the dust are pretty hard on the guys."

On Friday, only two men from a crowd of 12 or more on the previous day remained. A Mennonite spokesman left on the job estimated it would take at least two more days to complete the project. But with hay drying quickly in the fields, the job may have to wait, he said.

The men started at the top of the house



Mennonite farmers worked throughout the week tearing down this century-old house adjacent to the Trinity United Church. The church now has room to expand its parking facilities, while members of the Mennonite community have wooden planks that will be put to use in their homes.

by removing the shingles. Then, the roof was taken off and also the second floor. All of the materials from the house will be used for new buildings and repairs on the men's various farms.

"Oh, a fair amount of it is waste, due to the splintering and the cracking of the boards, but about three quarters of it is reusable," said the farmer.

In tearing down the house, one of the Mennonites was injured when an inside wall fell and struck the man on his ankle. He was taken to Alexandra Hospital for treatment and released.

"He got a pretty smart bruise, so he'll be laid up for a couple of weeks," said the spokesman as he arranged glass windows on the wagon. He peered out of granny glasses and tugged at his bushy beard while he stopped to think.

He said his crew of helpers is used to doing strenuous work, and doesn't regret not having to use modern equipment.

"This kind of work doesn't bother us," he said pausing again to wipe his brow with the back of his hand. "But it's still hard work, no doubt about it."

The green and grey slab-sided house was once home to former IDCI Principal Jack Herbert. For more than 100 years, the house has stood beside the Trinity United Church. In recent years, it became run-down, and Church members decided to remove it to make available more space for parking.

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH

WEEKSOLL TIMES
JUNE 29, 1983

Minister leaving Ingersoll to meet new challenges in Barrie

BY RON PRESTON

The Reverend Carmen Holbrough will be leaving Ingersoll in a few months to meet a new challenge and congregation at the United Church in Barrie. "It's the church I attended," he said, "when I worked at the bank," a job he held for 10 years before he became a candidate for the ministry.

"It doesn't happen that way very often," that a minister returns to the place where he started.

"Most people who go directly into a profession (after school)," Rev. Holbrough said, "find they'd like to change." Some people do and some don't. "But if your main commodity is people it helps you understand what makes people tick."

Born and raised in Bridgen, just outside of Sarnia, Rev. Holbrough married his hometown sweetheart, Noreen, after graduating from the University of Western Ontario with a Bachelor's degree in history. He later obtained a Master's Degree in divinity studies from the University of Toronto.

Leaving the world of big business, his first ministry was in Bright, in 1966. Later moves

would take him to churches in western Canada, then Beaverton and finally Ingersoll.

United Church ministers can change ministries in three different ways.

The first is the way Rev. Holbrough's change has come about. The congregation at the Barrie church contacted him and asked him if they could consider him for the position.

The second method involves a minister checking a list of vacancies on national listing service. The final way is through the recommendation of a personnel officer, which is how a minister usually gets his first placement.

"Each of us have different talents," Rev. Holbrough said, "and churches need change -- the couples in the community change." He compared the work of ministers to that of doctors who are "general practitioners" serving a wide variety of problems.

He's very pleased at what he's been able to accomplish during his tenure here.

"Ingersoll has allowed me to project a style of ministry" he said, "that I think is important," which is reaching his congregation by treating them as a family unit, caring about each other's problems.

He's began work on a doctoral degree in family ministry at Princeton University

which he attended last summer for four months.

His Phd is "of no earthly value to me. It's primarily the knowledge I hope to gain."

Rev. Holbrough holds strong and clear views on the relationship between the church and society, disagreeing with democracy's separation of church and state.

"I really believe our Christian faith demands we get involved in the political scene," but he admits most clergymen "temper" their involvement.

Governments have questioned a church's charitable status, he said, when its minister's become too politically active.

"Somehow it's not quite as acceptable for a minister's political views to be known" he said, adding that if a minister runs for public office and loses, "he normally has to move."

Ingersoll has eight different churches in the immediate area, a situation Rev. Holbrough sees as a very positive factor for its citizens.

"I firmly believe that I can't serve every United Church member," he said, "(and) I'm glad there's another church they can feel comfortable in."

Today's "mainline churches" have accepted each other, he said, and aren't "in competition with each other at all."

New churches and sects have been on the increase in the recent past, as have been so-called cults. The difference, he says, is that bonifide faiths "hold very strong views but they're (members) allowed to move in and out," he said. "In a cult you're not."

Some people, he said, claim "the finger could be pointed at all churches but I don't believe it."

Young people today are questioning religion more because "society leaves them with a lot of unanswered questions." He said he has enjoyed his chance to discuss religion with school children.

"I don't know if the answer is to erect Christian schools," said the minister, "or whether we should have let the government take lifestyle or moral training out of schools."

The value system, he pointed out, had its origin in the religious setting, not the humanistic one. This town is "blessed" to have a teacher like the Rev. Roger McCombe in its system to reach some students who normally don't attend church, he commented.

Church goers have become "fewer in numbers but stronger (in faith) then it has been in a long time," he said.

"You've really got to believe to be a Christian today."

INGERSOLL TIMES
APRIL 11, 1984
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Ingersoll Times
Apr. 11, 1984

TRINITY UNITED



The Rev. Carmen Holbrough is leaving Trinity United Church after six years to meet new challenges at the Barrie United Church. His time in Ingersoll has allowed him to project a family-style approach to his congregation.

Ingersoll Times
Apr. 11, 1984

INGERSOLL TIMES
April 11, 1984
(Page 2 of 2)

Trinity welcomes new minister

BY THE REV. ROGER W. McCOMBE

Trinity United Church in Ingersoll has declared the month of January to be the "Welcome-to-the Fields" month!

The Rev. Paul Byron Field, B. Mus., M. Div., will officially become the Senior Minister at Trinity as of February 1, 1985. The congregation has been looking forward to, and preparing for, his arrival for some months.

His predecessor, the Rev. Carmen Holbrough, left this pulpit at the end of June, for a position with Central United Church in Barrie. For many months, the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Church worked at finding his successor. Their choice was announced to the congregation in October, and approved by them.

Trinity Church now would like to introduce their new pastor to the community.

Mr. Field earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Toronto, and a Master of Divinity degree from Emmanuel College, also in Toronto.

He has served a number of United Church charges since his ordination. For two years, he was at Angus, Ontario. Following that, he spent three years at Bethesda-Dixie United Church, on Highway No. 5, in Mississauga.

After those two short pastorates, Mr. Field undertook two charges where he remained for considerably longer terms.



The Rev. and Mrs. Paul Field

For nine years, he was at Streetsville United Church in Mississauga, where he was involved in the building program of a Christian Education unit. Also, he was a Camp Director for four years for church camps for boys, during his term at Streetsville.

A twelve-year ministry followed at Central United Church in Weston, Ontario. There he formed a Youth Choir, and a band called "The Chancellors", a musical ministry for young people. This group toured Canada, the U.S.A., and Europe.

Mr. Field was also instrumental in helping Central United to adapt to its downtown situation.

He left the Toronto area to serve at St. Andrew's United Church in Chatham, where he has been for the last five years. As in his previous churches, he has been heavily involved in Youth Work through music.

Mr. Field has also served beyond the walls of his own particular church. He was the Chairman and Secretary of the Halton Presbytery, Secretary of Hamilton Conference, Chairman of the Pastoral Relations Committee for Halton and Kent Presbyter-

ies, and Chairman of Kent Presbytery. He has also attended three of the national General Council meetings of the United Church of Canada.

And now, he is due to arrive in Ingersoll at the end of this month. The congregation is looking forward to his skills in preaching, and conducting worship services. His particular leadership in music is keenly anticipated by the congregation as well. His ability in administration and counselling will be welcome features for his work at Trinity.

His wife, Geraldine (Gerry), has already arrived in Ingersoll along with their daughter, Cathy, who began attending IDCI on January 7. They have moved into the new United Church manse on Kirwin Drive.

The Fields have three other children—Ruth, who is married with three children;

Anne, who is remaining in Chatham where she works; and Peter, who is a fourth-year journalism student at Carleton University in Ottawa.

Mr. Field will be arriving in Ingersoll towards the end of January in time for the official Induction Service to be held on Wednesday, January 30, at 7:30 p.m. The public is invited to join the congregation on this occasion in order to welcome this new pastor and member of our community.

For the first two weeks of February, Mr. Field will be taking a well-earned "Study-Leave" prior to taking his first service in Trinity United Church, on Sunday, February 17, 1985.

Trinity United Church would like to take this opportunity of welcoming the Fields to his new pastorate, and to the community of Ingersoll.

Ingersoll Times
Jan. 9, 1985

INGERSOLL TIMES
January 9, 1985

TRINITY UNITED

New diaconal minister at Trinity United Church

BY KIMBERLEY HUTCHINSON

Mary Leard looks very much at home in her swivel chair, surrounded by colorful posters, a handmade valentine and every sort of bulletin on church and community projects and functions.

She likes to keep in mind the image of a spiral as a vision of her ministry. The new diaconal minister at the Trinity United Church sees her daily activities as

revolving out and setting the community in motion. Mary Leard herself is, for Ingersoll, the image of both the expanding role of women in the church, and of the church reaching out into the day to day lives of its members.

Leard conducts evening services and prayer meetings, visits with church members, and helps organize church functions. What she does not do, at least under normal circumstances, is preach on Sundays.

As a diaconal, Leard has encountered some misunderstanding of her role.

"There is only one order of ministry in the United Church," she explains. She has been commissioned as a diaconal minister, whose duties are defined in the areas on education, service and pastoral care.

The ordained minister administers word and sacrament. She is not a student minister, or working towards ordainment; the diaconal ministry is an end point in itself.

Leard knows of situations in which a diaconal minister is in sole charge of a church, and in such cases, the diaconal will obtain special permission from the presbytery to administer the sacraments.

The United Church has only two sacraments: Baptism and communion.

Asked why she chose the diaconal ministry rather than the ordained ministry, Leard explains that there are many ways to minister.

"I felt that my gifts were in the area of community service. My background is in social work, and my gift is not in preaching every Sunday, but in enabling others to see and use their own gifts."

Born and raised in Charlottetown, Leard worked for a time in London, Ontario, before going to Toronto to continue her education. She studied at the Toronto School of Theology, where her courses were divided into three types: Academic, core (which she describes as an experiential group), and field work.

Leard's field work has taken her to a summer camp, where she served as chaplain, to Timothy Eaton Memorial Church in Toronto, to Saskatchewan, where she served on a two-point charge with another minister. Where she had not served, until August, was in a small town.

But Leard is enjoying her first charge, and speaks highly of the church community here and the closeness of the larger ministerial in Ingersoll.

INGERSOLL

TIMES

February 26, 1986

INGERSOLL TIMES

February 26, 1986

Over 200 attend Presbyterial meeting

Well over 200 members of United Church Women's groups within Oxford Presbyterial met at Trinity United Church, Ingersoll, for their annual meeting.

Guest speaker was Anne Egilsson of Corunna. Her husband, Rev. E. Egilsson, served as minister at Dundas St. and Otterville United Churches. Mrs. Egilsson has served on all levels of the church, having been the first lay president of London Conference and also London Conference UCW president. For a number of years she has been secretary of London Conference Division of Mission.

Since UCW's across Canada are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their organization, Mrs. Egilsson said it was good to remember and give thanks for those women who were willing to give up all they cherished in the previous organizations, the Women's Missionary Society and the Women's Association and launch out with visions and dreams for the new organization.

Mrs. Egilsson challenged members to fulfill the UCW purpose and beware of becoming a social club. Members must build on spiritual things, like faith, hope and love, and include more Bible study in meetings.

A humorous skit on the history of UCW was performed by Valerie Drane, Annice King, Phyllis Pippin and Dorothy Joslin. Tribute was said to those who have served on the presbyterial executive during the past 25 years, especially the presidents, who were all presented with rose corsages. These 11 women are Mrs. Harold Mannell, 1962-64; Mrs. Orion Cawthra, 1965-66; Mrs. George Wallace, 1967-68; Mrs. Archie Armour, 1969-72; Mrs. Harold Riddolls, 1973-74; Mrs. Oliver Facey, 1975-76; Mrs. John King, 1977-78; Mrs. Ray Edwards, 1979; Mrs. Lawrence Stoakley, 1980-82; Mrs. Donald Hevenor, 1983-84; Mrs. Robert Buchanan, 1985-86.

Greetings were brought by Edith Sommers, president of Trinity UCW; Mary Laird for Trinity United Church; Rev. Gary Boratto, chairman of Oxford Presbytery, who also installed the new officers and conducted the communion service, and Shirley Smith, president of London Conference UCW, who conducted the election of officers.

With the assistance of the UCW locals, archives convener, Marion Hevenor, has compiled a history of the groups in the presbyterial and



Oxford Presbyterial's 25th anniversary was marked at a meeting in Ingersoll. Past presidents were honored including, left to right, 1977-78 president Agnes King, 1969-72 president Audry Armour, 1987 president Celia Orth, 1980-82 president Ruth Stoakley, 1985-86 president Muriel Buchanan, and 1983-84 pres., Marion Hevenor.

this booklet is available from her in Tilsonburg.

In 1987, there will be some busy and dynamic women as theme speakers at UCW events. At the Westminster Week-end, June 5-7, Dr. Agnes Groome will be present. At London Conference UCW annual meeting in London, April 6-7, and again at the Day of Rejoicing at Alma College, Aug. 8, moderator Anne Squire will speak. At the First National Gathering and Celebration

for Women of the United Church, July 18-21, at the University of Waterloo, Dr. Lois Wilson will give the theme addresses.

UCW groups were invited to publicize their activities in the Church Mouse, a church newspaper distributed throughout the presbytery. It is published in February, April, June, October and December and information should be sent to Mrs. Violet Sackrider, Burgessville, by the last Wednesday of the preceding month.

Those present were asked to remember prisoners in South Korea, imprisoned because of their belief in justice and freedom, in their prayers and to write letters of support to these people. Names of prisoners were distributed to the UCW locals.

Worship on the theme, Work, was conducted by Helen Dickson and the In Memoriam tribute to members lost in 1986 was led by Mary McKay, the new first vice-president, who will work closely with Celia Orth, who became president.

INGERSOLL TIMES

February 4, 1987

INGERSOLL TIMES

February 4, 1987

Members celebrate Trinity's anniversary

Present and former members of Trinity's United Church Women met to celebrate its 25th anniversary last week at the church. An invitation was also extended to all women of the congregation.

The evening program began with a dinner, followed by a sing song. The Bell Ringers from Woodstock provided additional musical entertainment. Speaker for the evening was Lianne Joiner, who participated in the Canada-World Youth Exchange Program and recently returned from Indonesia.

The UCW was formed to unite the women of the congregation in study, worship, fellowship and service. Its first president was Mrs. Harold Uren who served from 1962-63, followed by Mrs. A.P. Silcox from 1964-65, Mrs. George Clifton from 1966-67, Mrs. G. Smith from 1968-69,

Mrs. D. McClintock from 1970-71, Mrs. J. Edwards from 1972-74, Mrs. D. McLagan from 1975-76, Mrs. H. Riddolls from 1977-78, Mrs. G. Wilson from 1979-80, Mrs. G. Bradford from 1981-82, Mrs. R. Harrison from 1983-84, Mrs. C. Wright from 1985-86 and co-presidents Linda Fishleigh and Edith Somers.

Throughout the years, UCW

members have carried on many projects, including delivering flowers and bulletins to hospital patients, delivering Meals on Wheels, knitting garments for distribution to Christmas baskets and the Women's Emergency Centre, and supporting Woodingford Lodge and Oxford Regional Nursing Home in their projects.

INGERSOLL TIMES

September 16, 1987

INGERSOLL TIMES

September 16, 1987

UNITED CHURCH STAND ON HOMOSEXUALITY

'Most divisive issue since slavery'

"It is probably the most divisive issue to split the church since slavery."

REV. BARRY ROBINSON
Trinity United Church
sermon of March 13, 1988

Stories and photo
by MARILYN SIMULIUS
of the Sentinel-Review

INGERSOLL — The United Church of Canada's wrestle with the issue of homosexuality has left it shaken.

"Things are hurting very much. Everyone is hurting," replied Trinity United Church member Lois Wilson.

The 32nd General Council's attempt to solve the hurt with a compromise solution may have aggravated it. In the words of Barb MacNeil, another Trinity member: "it distresses me that the General Council appears to have made a decision disregarding local reaction." Many congregations - the grassroots of the church - had sent in petitions opposing homosexual ordination.

When the 388-member council met in Victoria last week, they discussed a number of issues, including the role of children in the church, partnership with Third World congregations, the affects of proposed new

copyright laws, and sexism in society. But it was the council's reaction to the controversial report released in March that was focussing attention across the nation.

That 115-page document, *Towards a Christian Understanding of Sexual Orientation, Lifestyles and Ministry*, was tabled during the conference because it did not reflect the present position of the church. Instead, General Council adopted a four page report affirming the church's belief in Christian marriage and family.

This report goes on to admit the 860,000 member church still does not understand homosexuality. It also confesses that "as a Christian community we have participated in a history of injustice and persecution against gay and lesbian persons in violation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

All eligible

Moreover, the report advocates "that all persons regardless of their sexual orientation... are welcome to be or become full members of the church." As members, even gay or lesbian people then, are eligible to be considered for the ministry.

But, some churchgoers from the pews of Trinity United in Ingersoll don't want to see homosexuals on the pulpit.

"Their lifestyles are not acceptable to me or to many others," said John McBride. "I don't think that

such a person is the proper choice for a religious vocation."

"I feel personally that I don't want one (a homosexual) to be my minister," responded Lois Wilson. "A minister should set an example in the way he lives."

Even though the General Council has taken the step to accept self-declared homosexuals into the ministry, Rev. Barry Robinson believes most congregations aren't ready.

Years of training

When a man or a woman decides to become a minister, they've got to be prepared for years of soul-searching and training. After obtaining an undergraduate degree, it's off to a seminary to study theology. Internships in supervised pastoral settings follow.

When the process is almost complete, a committee of ministers assesses if the candidate is suitable for ordination. If the candidate passes the interview, then they've got to find a congregation to accept them.

"Even if a conference committee dared to ordain a self-declared homosexual or lesbian person, there would be little chance of them finding a job in the parish. That is clear regardless of what commissioners to General Council would like to believe," said Rev. Robinson. "In throwing the issue back to the congregations General Council has taken a leaf from Premier Peterson's provincial cabinet and has abdicated its moral authority on behalf of United Church people."

He continued: "There will be no rush of homosexual ministers into the pulpits of the United Church despite what some people and the media seem to be saying. Little has changed in the church with respect to the treatment of homosexuals and lesbians... They will stay in the closet with their deep, deep shame because they are afraid of us."

But Rev. Robinson applauds the General Council's appeal for repentance. A lot of church folk adamantly refuse any guilt when it comes to the treatment of homosexual people, he said.

On Sunday, Rev. Robinson elaborated on this point during his sermon.

"The record of history should at least jog our memory if nothing else. The word, faggot. Do you know where it comes from? A faggot was a stick used by our Christian ancestors up until as late as the early part

this century in a kind of religious ceremony. The ceremony was the ritual burning ordered by the church for any person who was discovered to be homosexual or lesbian. Faggots were the sticks placed under their feet and used to burn them alive..."

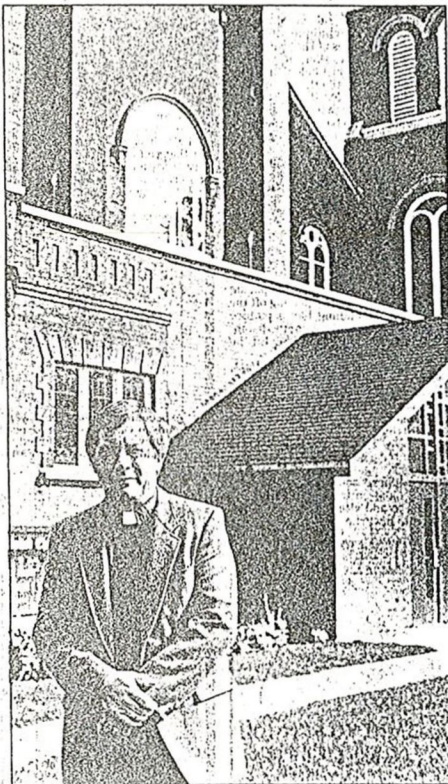
Well, we don't burn them anymore, but we do tell jokes about them. They and the United Church have taken quite a beating this week. The latest joke... is that the United Church is removing all of its pulpits and putting in fruit stands.

I confess that I laughed when I first heard it, partly out of nervousness because it has been a rather tense week, but partly too, I suspect there is still some residual prejudice within me about homosexuals that surfaces on some occasions. We have all laughed at some jokes; but they are not really funny at all.

And while the interest in last week's discussion in Victoria - and the months of dialogue beforehand - got people thinking about their own deep-seated views on homosexuality, it may have succeeded in burying other matters of significance to local congregations.

The role of the children in the church is one such issue; ways to help young people contribute more to worship and the general life of the congregation was deliberated at length, said Rev. Craig Raitton, the London Conference's consultant for communications.

"That issue will probably have more impact on our church than any other," said Trinity member Barb MacNeil. The homosexual issue, she feels, was "blown out of proportion - forcing people to take sides."



REV. BARRY ROBINSON, minister of Trinity United Church, believes the issue of homosexuality and the church has not ended with the 32nd General Council's meeting in Victoria last week.

Here's an outline of recommendations:

Here is a short outline of the General Council's recommendations as adopted in a report last Wednesday:

- That all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation, who profess in Jesus Christ and obedience to him, are welcome to become full members of the Church;
- That all members are eligible to be considered for ordered ministry and are called to a lifestyle patterned on obedience to Christ;
- That all congregations should work out the implications of sexual orientation and lifestyles in light of holy scriptures;
- That it is inappropriate to ask about the sexual orientation of those who are ministerial candidates;
- That further church-wide study is needed on the interpretation of

scripture and the theological and cultural premises that form understanding;

- That the report *Toward a Christian Understanding of Sexual Orientation, Lifestyles and Ministry* be considered a historic document;
- That the church takes action to address the church's participation in the oppression of people on the basis of sexual orientation;
- That the church address pastoral care of individuals or groups within the church that feel unheard, manipulated or estranged;
- And that the church urge governments to ensure the human rights of gay and lesbians; that the church become more active in support of human rights for homosexuals; that resources and study guides are made available to assist in these endeavours.

SENTINEL REVIEW

August 31, 1988

Homosexuals can enter ministry

Ingersoll minister angered over church decision

Homosexual men and women can be considered for ministry in the United Church of Canada.

That was the decision made by the highest court of Canada's largest Protestant denomination minutes after midnight August 23.

The controversy has sparked lengthy, emotional debates and unrelenting media attention.

The 32nd General Council's decision, however, did not distinguish between homosexual orientation and practice, leaving it to local church courts to work out the implications of a ministerial candidate's sexual orientation and lifestyle.

Reverend Barry Robinson, pastor of Ingersoll's Trinity United Church, said he was "angry but not much surprised" by the decision.

Although he said it was premature

to make a statement based only on the limited information available to him thus far, his immediate reaction was that General Council was "passing the buck" back to the conferences, Presbyteries and congregations of the church to decide whether self-declared homosexuals be allowed in the pulpit.

"It seems to have abdicated its moral authority on behalf of United Church people."

The United Church of Canada has an estimated 860,000 members. Both Robinson and the almost 600 families of Trinity United Church's congregation have gone on record opposing the action.

Marion Best, chairman of a special committee that drew up the resolution, agreed after the vote of 205 to 160, that the term sexual orien-

tation is still ambiguous and it is now up to the church people to "sit under God and sort that out."

"While it seems that Council has said that sexual orientation should not be a factor in determining fitness for ordination and has urged members of the church not to practice discrimination against homosexuals, it has also made a statement of confession upholding the standards of marriage and sexual abstinence outside of marriage, a confession which would not permit homosexuals to practice a homosexual lifestyle," Robinson said.

"No wonder the average person is confused and angry."

Robinson said the Council failed to address the critical question of whether or not sexually active homosexuals should be welcomed in

the church even though it has said their homosexual preference should not be a determining factor.

The recommendation reads: "That all persons regardless of their sexual orientation, who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, are welcome to be or become full members of the United Church. All members of the church are eligible to be considered for 'ordered ministry'"

A report - titled *Toward A Christian Understanding Of Sexual Orientations, Lifestyles, And Ministry/* touched off the present furor. More than 1,800 petitions were sent to General Council over the issue of ordaining homosexuals following the March report.

"The great majority of United Church people who are not in favor

of accepting self-proclaimed homosexuals into the ministry will feel misrepresented," Robinson said.

Despite the controversial decision, the Ingersoll minister felt the status quo had not changed.

"Homosexuals will still have to go through the usual channels like anybody else if they want to be ordained. Few if any Conferences in the church will ordain them. If they are ordained, they will have a terrible time finding a parish to minister in. I don't know of one congregation that would accept one."

The General Council's decision almost immediately led to talk of a breakaway in the deeply-divided church. Although acknowledging the issue as the most "divisive issue to split the church since the issue of

slavery" Robinson called breakaway the "coward's way out."

"We will continue to voice our disapproval of this action and our dismay at the lack of moral leadership by our elected officials and work for the reform of our church in this manner. We don't need to react by boycotting money or leaving the church."

Although opposed to homosexual ordination, Robinson called for more compassionate talk about the issue.

"They have been living with a terrible secret for a long, long time because we have persecuted and oppressed them. The persecution must stop. We are not excused from loving these people who are our own no matter how they got to be how they are."

INGERSOLL TIMES
August 31, 1988

Teachers reach out to youth

"It takes a special person"

Many middle-aged people have bad memories of Sunday school, a seemingly unending hour of scrip-

ture recitals in the basement of hollow, cold churches.

Ingersoll's Grace Kobialka and Vicky Whiting want to change all that with a revamped Sunday school program at the Trinity United Church.

Sunday school was created to give children a place to go while their parents worshipped. Both Kobialka and Whiting remember Sunday school as more of a labor than a pleasure where nervous children would stammer over memorized bible scriptures for a gold star reward.

"It was kind of scary sometimes," Whiting said. "We went through it but we didn't learn."

Today churches are promoting more family-oriented worshipping and a Sunday school where children are encouraged to ask questions. Under the guidance of Reverend Barry Robinson, those at Trinity are seeing some positive change.

"If children aren't involved we're going to lose them," Whiting said.

Sunday school curriculum, obtained from a resource centre in Woodstock, is based on the theme of the sermon of that day. Parents are given a copy of the program with the hope it will prompt conversation at home.

Children at the nursery and Grade 1 level Sunday school level complete coloring exercises and crafts based on the bible. Older groups will read over bible scriptures and ask questions.

Both Whiting, a newcomer, and veteran Kobialka said it takes a special person to be a Sunday school teacher. Outside of a basic belief in Christianity, teachers have to put their hearts into the instruction.

Whiting, who is joining the Sunday school teacher team for the first time this year, is herself still learning.

"I haven't been involved in church for a long time. I'm learning about

Christianity. I'm giving something back for what I'm getting."

She believes children can be learning about Christianity from as early as ages one and two.

"My four-year-old is just starting to learn," Whiting laughed. "He sings about Jesus taking the garbage out. We still have a long way to go."

"How do you explain God to a child," Whiting asked. "They think of him as a person. Spirituality doesn't come until much later. They have to have something to envision."

Church congregations numbers have taken a dramatic decline in past years. Only now are numbers slowly beginning to increase. Trinity United has a congregation of about 600 families with 50 children enrolled in Sunday school.

Kobialka believes Sunday school study gave herself and her children a "good foundation" from which ideas and beliefs are based.

"We want to make it fun," Kobialka said. "We bring it down to their level."

WATERLOO TIMES
September 14, 1988

INGERSOLL TIMES
October 19, 1988

Congregation calls for vote

By DOUG POWELL

The 900-member Trinity United Church of Ingersoll has 'overwhelmingly' endorsed a letter calling for a national referendum on the question of ordination of practicing homosexuals.

However, unlike several congregations, including one in Brantford, the ministers and members of Trinity United have opted to stick by their church, hoping to effect change

from within.

The vote came at a special congregational meeting after services on Sunday. Reverend Barry Robinson said in an interview the next day that his church has waited this long in order that they may form a "reasonable, thoughtful, response" to the motion entitled Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality, which passed at the United Church's 32nd General Council, held in Victoria, B.C. last August.

"It makes me nervous," said

Robinson, referring to the letter endorsed by Trinity United. "We're sitting on a fine edge between being very moderate and very authoritarian and self-righteous."

The letter, which will be sent to the General Council, the London Conference and the Oxford Presbytery, also calls for an immediate review of the process by which commissioners are elected. Many reverends within the United Church have complained that the commissioners - those who represent specific areas

and vote on General Council resolutions - are for the most part non-ministerial or non-theologian.

In calling for a national referendum of United Church members and ministers, Robinson agreed that the authority of the church may be undermined, but maintained that the ordination of practicing homosexuals is an issue with extenuating circumstances.

"I'm usually not in favour of referendums," said Robinson, "and the people who voted for this usually don't favour referendums. But we should not have to wait another two years (when the next General Council is scheduled) to deal with this."

The endorsed letter begins by summarizing the frustrations felt by many ministers and members of the United Church with the manner in which the issue was handled.

The debate centers around a controversial report released in February, 1988, entitled Towards a Christian Understanding of Sexual Orientation, Lifestyles and the Ministry which was the original endorsement of the ordination of practicing homosexuals.

However, the General Council rejected the report and its recommendations. It was tabled as an historic document. Instead, the Council passed a motion that would permit the ordination of practicing homosexuals, although the reference appears vague and buried within the motion. Nevertheless, it is there.

Continued on Page 2

Church examines set of values

Continued from page 1

Article three of the motion - approved by the majority of the delegates - states that all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation, who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, are welcome to be or become full members of the Church.

Article four begins 'All members of the Church are eligible to be considered for Ordered Ministry.' Taken together, the intent of the motions becomes clear: practicing homosexuals may become United Church ministers.

"We, furthermore, affirm our belief that fidelity within heterosexual marriage and celibacy outside of heterosexual marriage are the only appropriate lifestyles for members and ministers of the Church of Jesus Christ."

Robinson also said that while the church's examination of its values as a whole was a good thing, it was also very painful, something that is evident throughout the letter.

"We mourn the decision by commissioners to General Council to refuse to give leadership to the congregations, presbyteries and conferences of the United Church in this matter. The refusal of commissioners to regard the convictions of the vast majority of United Church

members and ministers in this matter has only added to the hurt, anger, frustration and mistrust that is growing within the United Church of Canada. It will also contribute to the continued persecution of homosexual and lesbian people who already find themselves and wish to find themselves in membership and ordered ministry.

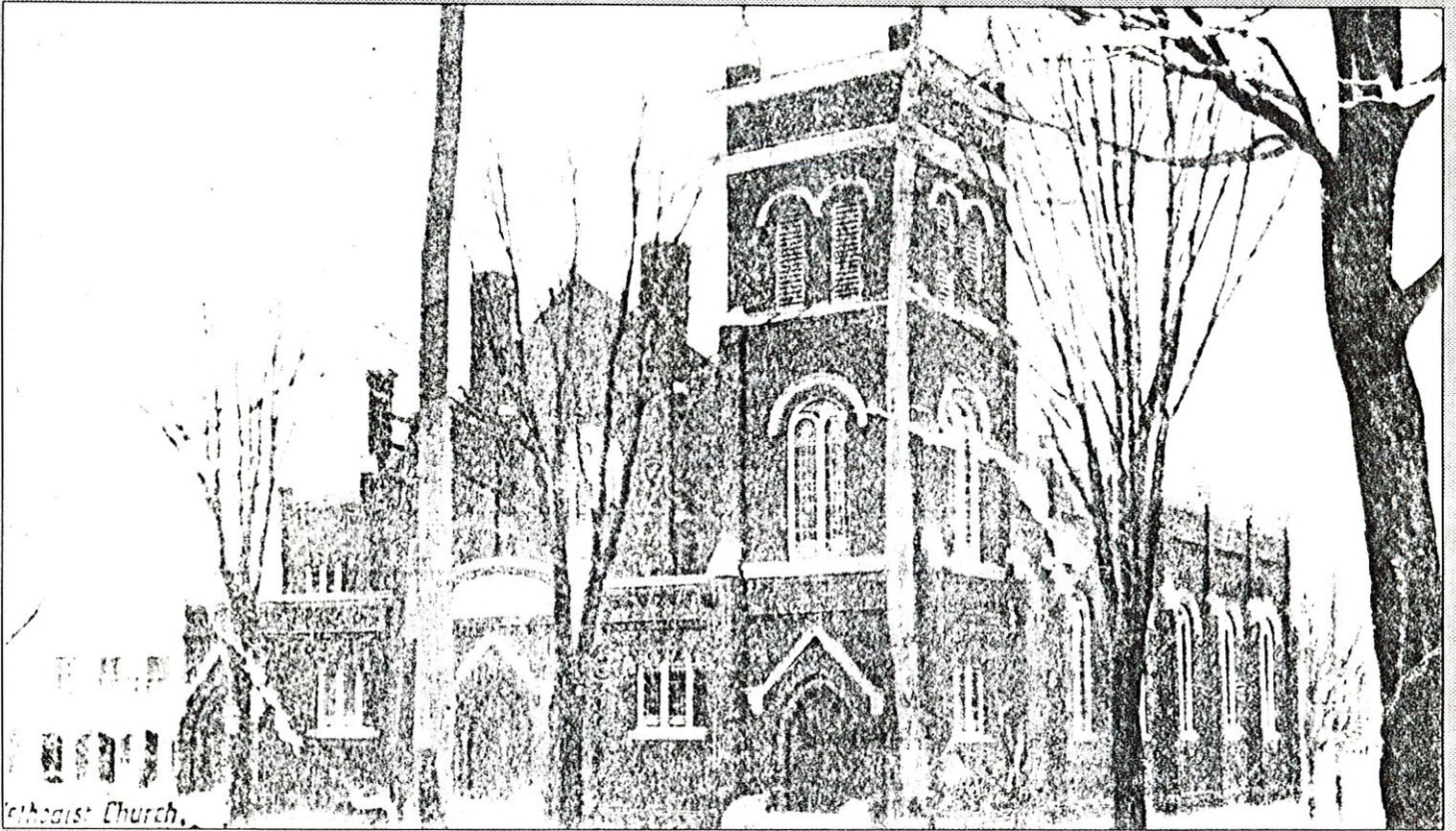
"While we are gravely concerned about the failure of the 32nd General Council to give leadership to the church in this regard and while we mourn the decision of members and ministers to consider leaving the fellowship of the United Church as a consequence, we the undersigned ministers and members of the United Church of Canada hereby reaffirm our faith in God, our com-

mitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and our loyalty to the United Church of Canada."

"No matter what their lifestyle," concluded Robinson, "they're our people."

INGERSOLL TIMES
October 19, 1988

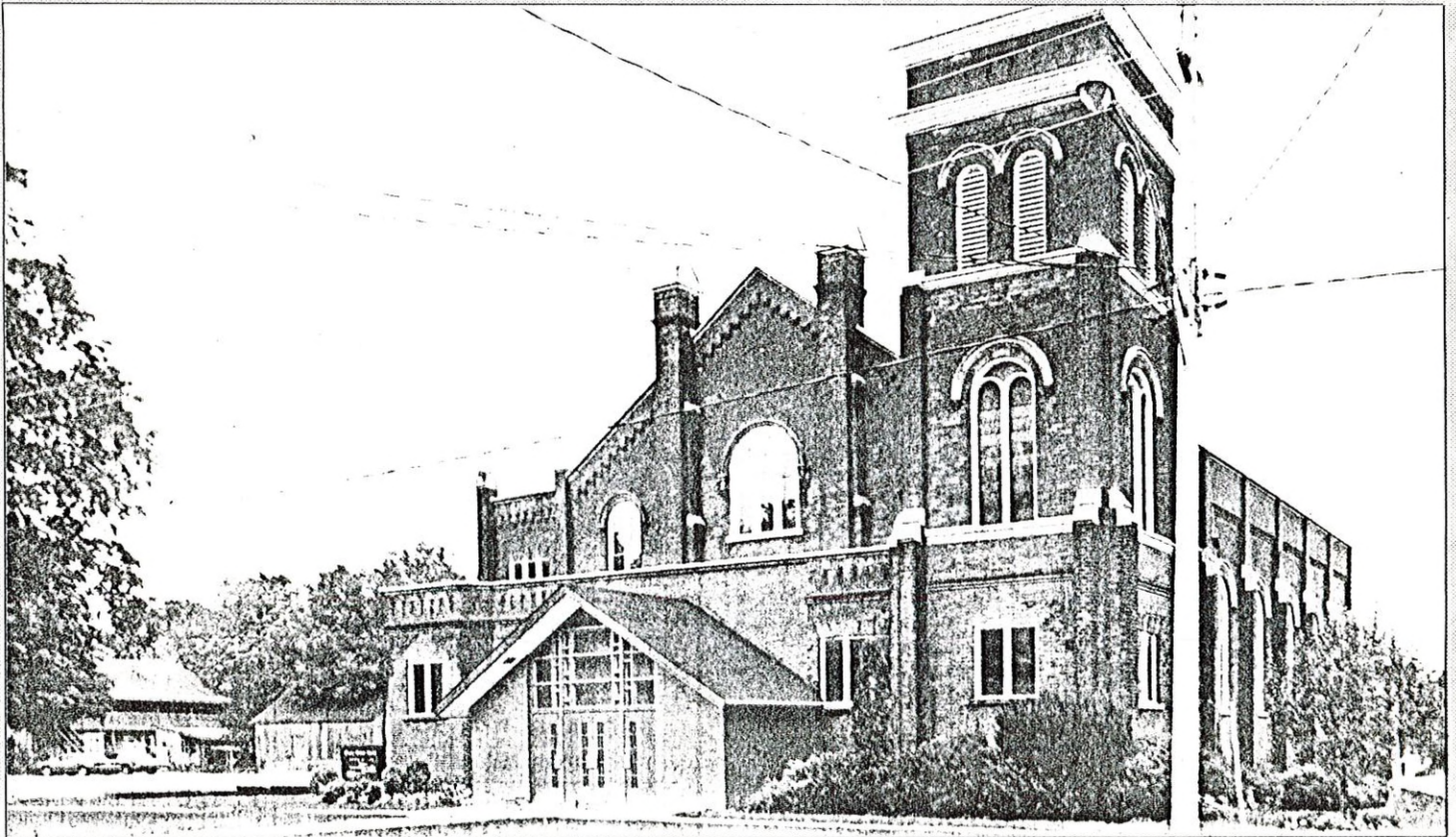
TRINITY UNITED



Methodist Church,

THEN

The Methodist Church in Ingersoll is shown in this photograph, circa 1915, from the collection of Don Whetstone of London.



NOW

In this contemporary photograph, by Sue Reeve of The Free Press, the same church at the corner of King and Church streets is shown. It is now called Trinity United Church.

Response to United Church story

Dear Editor:

Thank you for your editorial October 19 concerning the homosexual problem. A friend of mine who is a United Church minister has sent copies to friends who recognize compassion.

It is not easy to follow the admonitions of Jesus: "Love your neighbor as yourself" and "Judge not that ye be not judged." I think these are a beginning against which other writings have to be tested.

It is less than 300 years since witches had to be burned. Acceptance of our minority neighbors will probably take a long time.

Fred K. Noble

Divided
image not
the whole
picture



Dear Editor:

Many of us who are ministers and members of the United Church of Canada are finding it increasingly wearisome to read headlines which present an inaccurate picture of our church as it is experienced in most congregations. December 7 article on the divisions being felt at the Thamesford congregation contributes little to a fair picture of the United Church. We have been made the unwelcome centre of public attention for anyone who wants to engage in a bit of 'United Church bashing,' a popular pastime for Canadians in recent months.

There can be no argument that bad news is certainly news, but newspaper editors should be asking themselves whether one-sided headlines are not contributing to the problem - the problem being an inaccurate picture of the United Church in public perception. Responsible journalism, it seems to me, would make some attempt to present the whole picture.

We acknowledge that these are difficult, painful days for our church and that many United Church people are confused, uncertain and angry at their church. It is true that some ministers and members have found it too uncomfortable to stay within our fellowship. It is also true that some ministers and lay people have done their best to whip other people into a frenzy more for their own personal agendas than for the welfare of the church.

Most congregations have seen some members quietly disappearing people are still interested in becoming part of the United Church of Canada, in part at least because they have deep admiration for a church that is courageous and prophetic and faithful in its task to interpret the Word of God for today's world.

All of this means struggle, of course. Unfortunately, most people or withdrawing their support because their church has embarrassed them or because they have found it a convenient excuse to avoid their responsibilities to the institution they love to criticize. Some people who have a lot to say about the church have never bothered to read the statements passed at General Council regarding sexual orientation. One cannot help wondering how many who withdraw are simply using the current issue as a smokescreen for something deeper and more personal like a faith that has gone dry or a lack of commitment to the real task of discipleship. All of these facts which contribute to the 'bad news side' of the picture are true. They have also been true at other times in the history of our church.

But, there is another side to the picture of what the United Church is all about. The vast majority of United Church people have stayed with their church. Why does this never make the headlines? Even

those of us who are saddened and angry about some decisions made at a national level are, for the most part, staying because we are united in our opposition to a present lack of policy or because we believe the strengths of the United Church far outweigh its weaknesses. There are a lot of people who are still proud of their United Church, some of them proud because it has the courage to discuss controversial issues that deal with real human needs in an open-minded way.

I'll bet there is a positive side of the picture of the United Church in Thamesford that hasn't been told and that probably won't make headlines.

Trinity United in Ingersoll has had a painful year discussing the issue before the church as a whole; but, in that past year, we have also seen a large number of formerly inactive members return to active membership. We have received 31 new members, 36 new adherents and 60 new children and teenagers into our fellowship. It is obvious to us that assume that 'struggle' means bad news. It can also be a sign of good news. Struggle is what happens before new life begins.

The United Church was born out of the struggle its founding congregations endured to seek a union where there would be greater tolerance between people of different traditions and theological viewpoints who

confessed the same Lord. We live in a day where tolerance is often in short order in our society and sometimes even in the church. Our present struggle is about what it means to be both faithful and compassionate in our response to the Gospel when it comes to welcoming all people without distinction. We will probably always have disagreements over what we believe constitutes appropriate behavior for a minister or member of the church, but the United Church is united in its belief that all people are welcome.

That gets us into trouble sometimes. That gets misinterpreted sometimes by special interest groups and the media. For 63 years our policy and process of accepting and determining who is to be a member and minister of the church has not changed. It still has not changed, but I have never read that in headlines in any newspaper.

We are not a perfect church. We don't try to hide our divisions nor our controversies. We do try to be courageous, to be inclusive of all people, to be examples of the kind of lifestyle we believe Jesus calls us to, to be prophetic about the truths that God is revealing in this new day. It takes 'guts' to do that, literally - intestinal fortitude to ask difficult questions, have difficult arguments, and face the consequences of an often one-sided public perception of who we are. Give us a break and try

reporting the other side for a change!

The Rev. Barry J. Robinson,
Pastor,
Trinity United Church

Editor's comment

The Ingersoll Times did attempt to present an objective, balanced and two-sided story on the split in Westminster United Church, Thamesford. As the story pointed out, Westminster minister, the Rev. Stanley Stanhope, was contacted. He gave, "no comment" when asked his thoughts on the split.

The Rev. Barry Robinson was also contacted. He said he wasn't aware of the Thamesford situation and that he didn't wish to comment, although he was prepared to issue a statement which he insisted would have to be printed in full.

Unfortunately, the rush of journalism does not always allow a reporter to wait for a statement to be issued. Mr. Robinson was given full opportunity to respond verbally, in a telephone interview.

He also had an opportunity to tell the "positive" side of the story. Asked if any members had left his church, he refused to answer on the record.

People frequently complain that reporters don't tell both sides of a story. Every good journalist tries to do so but it is hard when those contacted don't co-operate.

INGERSOLL TIMES

December 14, 1988

*Letters to the Editor***United Church defended**

NOTE: Due to a mistake at the composition stage of putting together last week's edition of the Times, Rev. Barry Robinson's letter was printed incorrectly, with paragraphs not in their proper order. The Times apologises for this error and reprints the letter correctly below.

Dear Editor:

Many of us who are ministers and members of the United Church of Canada are finding it increasingly wearisome to read headlines which present an inaccurate picture of our church as it is experienced in most congregations. December 7 article on the divisions being felt at the Thamesford congregation contributes little to a fair picture of the United Church. We have been made the unwelcome centre of public attention for anyone who wants to engage in a bit of 'United Church bashing,' a popular pastime for Canadians in recent months.

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our fellowship. It is also true that some ministers and lay people have done their best to whip other people into a frenzy more for their own personal agendas than for the welfare of the church.

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But, there is another side to the picture of what the United Church is all about. The vast majority of United Church people have stayed with their church. Why does this never make the headlines? Even those of us who are saddened and angry about some decisions made at a national level are, for the most part, staying because we are united in our opposition to a present lack of policy or because we believe the strengths of the United Church far outweigh its weaknesses. There are

a lot of people who are still proud of their United Church, some of them proud because it has the courage to discuss controversial issues that deal with real human needs in an openminded way.

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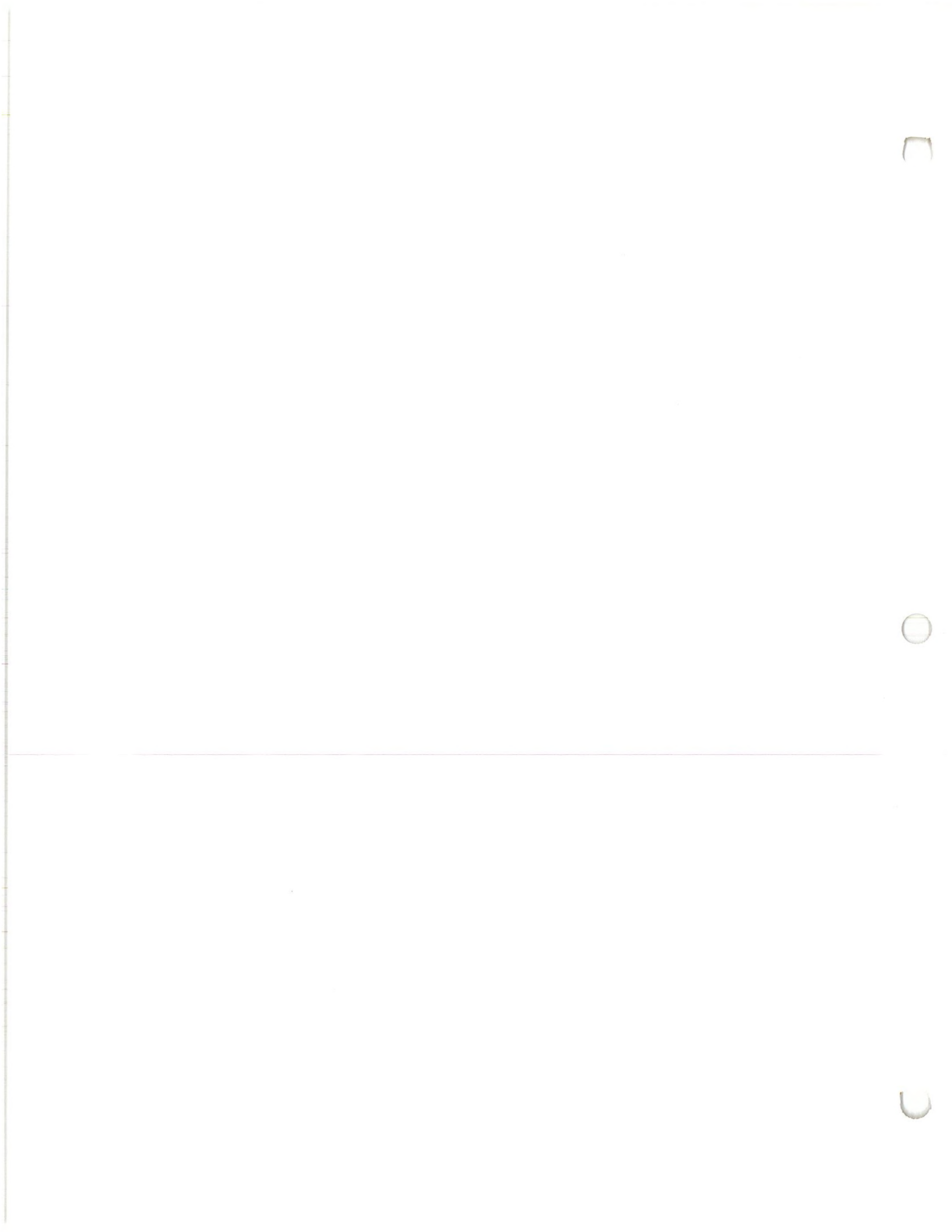
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The Rev. Barry J. Robinson,
Pastor,
Trinity United Church

INGERSOLL TIMES

December 21, 1988



Trinity United Church celebrates 185th anniversary

Trinity United Church celebrated its 185th anniversary on Sunday, Oct. 22.

Included within the rich history of Trinity are the traditions of the Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren Churches.

The church in Ingersoll was established while this was still a pioneer community. In the early 1800's, services were conducted by American horseback preachers, but by the time of the War of 1812, they were looked on with suspicion. Their work was carried on by local teachers.

In 1823, a log cabin at the site of the West Oxford Church became the centre of services by the M.E. (Episcopal Methodist) Church. Another log school on the site of the

armouries was opened for services in 1841 and was used until Methodist Union.

In 1854, the Wesleyan Methodist Church opened on Oxford Street. The women of this church did more than care for the needy of the town - this was an important part of the Underground Railroad, and escaping slaves were fed and harbored here. The slaves and their descendents built the colored M.E. Church on Catherine Street.

A growing population led to the construction of King Street Methodist Church at the present site in 1865. In 1887, the building was remodelled and modernized - galleries were removed, windows enlarged and the console and choir seats installed behind the pulpit.

Union of the two Methodist churches took place in 1909. The Charles Street building was used as a Sunday School and later sold, while the King Street church was once again enlarged. The east and west walls were moved out and the floor and narthex altered.

The first electric light and gas systems were installed in 1912.

At the time of Church Union in 1925, King Street Methodist Church became Trinity United Church, with a membership of about 975.

At present, Trinity has a Sanctuary which seats 900 people, a modern chapel, a gymnasium-auditorium complex, Sunday School rooms, offices, meeting rooms, nursery and washroom and

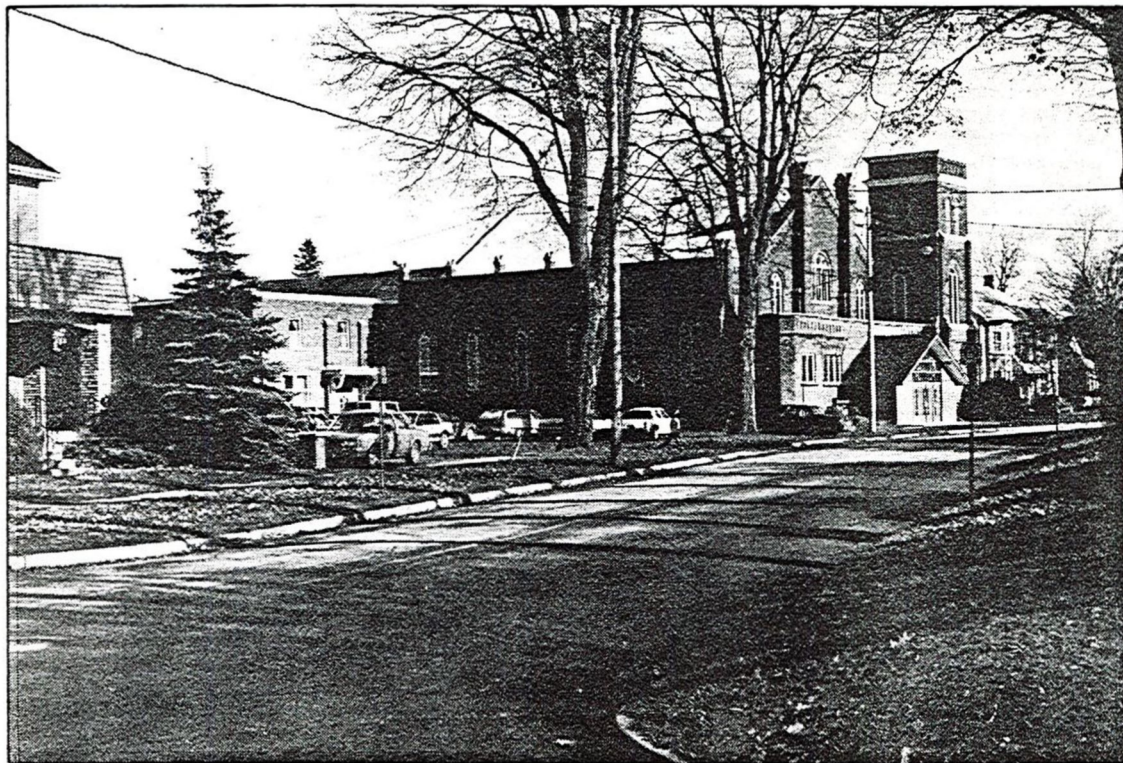
kitchen facilities. To accomodate the hearing-impaired, a modern sound system has been installed in the Sanctuary. The building is wheelchair accessible from the

Church Street entrance.

Trinity continues to be a busy place, with facilities well-used every day of the week by Beavers, Cubs, Brownies, Guides and

Pathfinders, Youth and Senior Choirs and many other groups.

Rev. Barry Robinson is minister. Susan Robinson is pastoral associate.



IT'S BEEN through a rich history of demoninational changes, but today's Trinity United Church is still a house of worship after 185 years.

(Staff photo)

SENTINEL

REVIEW

October 24, 1989

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH

TRINITY UNITED

Unhappy congregation wants ouster at top

INGERSOLL — Discontent among a portion of the Trinity United Church congregation has resulted in a petition calling for the removal of the pastor and pastoral associate.

On Oct. 25, a petition was presented to Rev. Barry Robinson and Susan Robinson, and to Barbara MacNeil, chairman of the Trinity Church council. Signed by 105 members of the more than 900-member congregation (as of Dec. 31, 1988 there were 639 resident members and 277 non-resident members), the petition demanded a congregational meeting to give members the right to vote on subject: "That the Rev. Barry Robinson and Susan Robinson be removed

from the Pastoral Charge and all responsibilities at Trinity United Church, Ingersoll . . ."

As published in the church bulletin of Oct. 29, the meeting is scheduled for Nov. 5. Only members of Trinity will be allowed to vote.

The petition stated the members who signed did so because no action has been taken to "improve the serious situation at Trinity United Church," since the report of the Oxford Presbytery Response Team was received and a congregational meeting on Oct. 1 was held.

When asked to explain the "serious situation," Susan Robinson said: "What's happened at Trinity is an internal matter so as far as the newspapers go, we have no comment at this time."

MacNeil also made no comment on the matter.

One long-time member of the congregation who requested names not be used because of the sensitivity of the issue said some of the people who signed the petition regret doing so because of the sure knowledge this will split the congregation. In addition, this is not the first minister removed from the church in similar circumstances.

A church member who is in poor health plans to vote on the matter even if it means going to the meeting in a wheelchair.

"It all comes down to what is in the best interests of Trinity in the future," another long time member said.

SENTINEL REVIEW

November 3, 1989

Group joins Hurricane Hugo relief work

BY LIZ DADSON

A group of local teenagers got a chance to see the disaster caused by Hurricane Hugo as they began the new year by helping clean up debris and repair houses in Eutawville, South Carolina.

Sixteen people - nine teens, one youngster and six adults - from Trinity United Church in Ingersoll left at midnight New Year's Day, arriving in Eutawville Tuesday, Jan. 2 at 10 p.m.

After four days of hard work, they made the 22-hour return trip, reaching Ingersoll Jan. 7 at 4 p.m.

But everyone agreed the project was worthwhile.

"The people were so friendly," said Janet Hodgson, 15, referring to the victims.

Michelle LeFaive, 15, said she could not believe the amount of work the youth group accomplished during its short stay.

"I couldn't believe that mobile home was flipped the way it was," said Scott Burrill, 13.

No one missed his or her television set, they all agreed. And the worst part was having to leave.

If given the chance, they all said they would like to go back.

The most thrilling moment was a telephone call from one of the victims, Mabel Feldman, while they were still in Eutawville, stating she was very happy with the work done on her house.

Doug Pettit, who spearheaded the organization of the local group, said the Ingersoll teenagers constituted not only the first youth group in this particular relief area, but also the largest group contributing aid.

"We helped six individual families with separate problems," Pettit said. "We fixed four roofs, did internal work and a lot of clean-up."

He emphasized the people the group helped were all black and poverty-stricken.

"The white people lost a few shingles (as a result of Hurricane Hugo)," Pettit said. "The black people lost their homes, everything."

Eutawville, located 60 to 70 miles inland from Charleston, was hit by the hurricane on Sept. 27. Pettit said earlier that while the initial clean-up has been done, the people are now rebuilding.

After returning from the disaster site, he said despite the hard work of the youth group and many other relief organizations, they have "barely made a dent" in the work to be done.

"It will take about another two years to clean it all up completely," he said.

Organized under the London Conference of the United Church of Canada, the relief work was based on the Mennonite Disaster Service which has also been helping hurricane victims, with a new group of workers arriving every week from the Pennsylvania area, Pettit said.

Don Langford, mission consultant with London Conference, said he was "extremely impressed" with the comments from the youth group and its involvement in South Carolina.

"They were very enthusiastic about being involved," he said. "They had a real sense of doing things on behalf of the church."

He was also impressed with the relationships the young people from Ontario struck up with teenagers in Eutawville. "They're talking of an exchange with the young people from there coming up to Canada."

The London Conference through its World Development Relief Committee spearheaded the project of aid in Eutawville through which the Ingersoll youth group worked.

Langford said it was a good idea to send the young people down to help. "It's often difficult to judge your own situation without having



Nine teenagers and one youngster from the Trinity United Church in Ingersoll, accompanied by six adults, went to South Carolina to help victims of the disaster left by Hurricane Hugo. Pictured, at back, from left, are Rev. Al and Mary Cole of Eutawville, South Carolina, Doug Pettit, Ruby Miree, Steve Masson, Milt Miree, Jeff Older, Pat Skinner, Len Elliott, Marty Stewart and Cathy Elliott. In front, from left, are Denise Vyse, Scott Burrill, Michelle LeFaive, Janet Hodgson, Sarah Skinner and Tammy Burrill. At the very front is Ian Elliott. (Photo submitted)

anything to compare it with. This was their first exposure to blacks in a community. That was almost more important than repairing roofs."

The local United Church held a fund-raiser, raising about \$700 (U.S.) for the project.

"That went toward our transportation costs and our food while we were down there," Pettit said. Ruby Miree cooked the meals, putting together many southern-style culinary delights, with no complaints.

The youth group met at Dave Skinner's home in Ingersoll last Sunday night to organize a slide presenta-

tion to be given at a luncheon at the Ingersoll United Church Sunday, Jan. 28, Pettit said.

Among the group's favorite pictures are ones of the people they helped and the work they did. They all agreed they would have liked to have stayed long enough to see the faces of the churchgoers (at the Church of the Epiphany in Eutawville) after they saw the church grounds were all cleaned up.

After the Ingersoll group left, a group was already arriving from St. Mary's, Ontario, through the London Conference program, Pettit said.

He said the local United Church is discussing the idea of another group travelling to South Carolina this spring to provide more help to hur-

ricane victims. This one would be adult-oriented, he said, pointing out that a number of adults wanted to go last time but had commitments during the holidays.

Residual funds from the January trip would be used to help fund the second one, Pettit said.

The young people who travelled to South Carolina in January included Ian Elliott, 7, Denise Vyse, 16, Scott Burrill, 13, Michelle LeFaive, 15, Janet Hodgson, 15, Sarah Skinner, 15, Tammy Burrill, 16, Steve Masson, 16, Jeff Older, 14, and Marty Stewart, 15.

The adults included Ruby and Milt Miree, Doug Pettit, Pat Skinner and Len and Cathy Elliott.

INGERSOLL TIMES

January 24, 1990

TRINITY UNITED

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

A group of Ingersoll teenagers shatters the myth of the lazy, soft and selfish younger generation by helping hurricane victims rebuild their lives in a rural South Carolina backwater

By Joe Matyas

IT'S SUNDAY NIGHT at a church in Ingersoll. A group of teenagers is sprawled on old sofas around a meeting room, dredging up memories from early in the year when they went south on a mission of mercy.

They're part of a young generation reputed to be lazy, soft and selfish, but what they did in January puts that myth to rest. Present this generation with a challenge,

other entertainment marvels to pitch in where they're needed.

They'll co-operate with adults and, by their participation, persuade them that good things shouldn't die. What these Ingersoll teenagers did under supervision lives on at Trinity United Church in their hometown.

With the blessing of the congregation, they went to South Carolina in January to help hurricane victims

but she enjoyed it nevertheless.

"I've raked leaves and mowed the lawn, but I had never done anything like lay shingles and tar roofs before," she says. "Once you do something like that you know what it takes. You gain some respect for people who do it all the time."

Jeff Older, 15, a Grade 9 student, found life to be simpler in Eutawville, S. C., than Ingersoll, Ont. "The people we were working with didn't have a lot of money. They weren't concerned about getting ahead. Some kept pigs and chickens in their yards. They were laid back and down-to-earth. They always had time to talk. They lacked ambition and opportunity, but they seemed happy."

Both Jeff and Sarah say they would jump at the chance to repeat the Eutawville experience.

The feeling generated by the congregation's young goodwill ambassadors has spread to the membership at large. The initiative has awakened the congregation to its own possibilities and now it wants to do more of the same kind of outreach work in the future.

"We talk about this kind of thing all the time in the church, the importance of it, but it doesn't really happen often enough," says Rev. Barry Robinson, Trinity's minister. "I've been working at community building for years. It usually happens when people share a sense of mission. It's emerging in our con-

gregation as a result of this experience (South Carolina)."

In its wake, the congregation decided to establish its own relief committee to attend to local needs and those beyond. One of the first things on the agenda was shingling the roof of a local woman living alone on a fixed income who couldn't afford to have it done. A member of the congregation offered the shingles, others their labor.

This is the way charity works: You plant a seed among people of goodwill, it grows and good works beget good works.

Trinity's South Carolina involvement began last November when Don Langford came to speak on Mission Sunday.

Langford is a staff officer for the United Church of Canada's London Conference. He's also a farmer familiar with international famine relief through the Canadian Food Grains Bank started by Mennonites and supported by other churches.

He came at a time when the congregation was struggling with internal problems and his pitch for volunteer labor was just what the doctor ordered — something outside the controversy which could pull people together.

It got off the ground not in Ingersoll, but with an ugly blowhard named Hurricane Hugo that ripped across the Caribbean and South Carolina late last September at speeds of up to 225 kilometres an

hour. Hugo was in a rage and cut a wide and mean swath. On the islands of the West Indies, 26 people were killed and 50,000 left homeless when their dwellings were smashed to smithereens. In South Carolina, 11 were killed and hundreds left homeless as more than \$1 billion in real estate was left in an unreal state.

Hugo showed no mercy to any

Rev. Barry Robinson has been working at community building for years. "It usually happens when people share a sense of mission"

inspire them and they'll rise to the occasion, just as their fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers have in the past.

They'll work for nothing and sleep on floors to help strangers stricken with misfortune hundreds of kilometres away.

They'll work from dawn to dusk, tarring and shingling roofs, removing building debris and clearing fallen trees from blocked laneways and plugged drainage ditches.

They'll do without TVs, CDs and

rebuild their shattered homes and dreams.

Sarah Skinner, 16, a Grade 10 student at Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute, was one of about a dozen teens who made the trip.

"I thought the idea of people helping people was great. I looked at the trip as an adventure and a learning experience. I knew it would be hard work, but that was part of the fun."

The work was more physically demanding than Sarah expected,

"I thought the idea of people helping people was great. I looked at the trip as an adventure and a learning experience. I knew it would be hard work, but that was part of the fun," says Sarah Skinner, front row at left.

Ingersoll teens who travelled with Sarah to South Carolina to help families rebuild their homes are, to Sarah's right, Michelle LeFaive, Scott Burrill and Tammy Burrill. In the middle row are Janet Hodgson and Denise Vyse, and in the back row, left to right, are Martin Stewart, Steven Masson and Jeff Older.

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June 16, 1990



social class, but the homes of the wealthy were generally better built and well insured, so it wasn't long before they were as good as new. The homes of the poor were often underinsured, sometimes uninsured, and repair was beyond the means of those who dwell in them.

Although South Carolina is a long way from London — about 1,500 kilometres and a cultural gap away — the plight of the poor hurricane victims didn't go unnoticed here.

Two farm families associated with the United Church's London Conference relief committee — Don and Carol Langford of Kerwood and Allan and Bev Slater of Lakeside — wondered if there was some small thing they could do to assist the hurricane victims.

"It seemed to us that involvement in the relief work would give us valuable experience in working with partners in a developed country where they would be the organizers and we would be laborers only," recalls Slater. "It would give us the opportunity to learn how to organize ourselves when disaster strikes our own area."

In one phone call to the U.S. National Council of Churches, Slater forged a participation agreement. A few days later, the Canadians were assigned to help an Episcopal congregation with reconstruction work in Eutawville, a rural backwater.

"Eutawville is an economically disadvantaged area with some lin-

gering divisions along racial lines," says Slater. "It's a leftover from the civil war. The remnants of the plantation system are still there. Big, unused barns and servants quarters. It's eerie. There are some people with nice houses, but poverty predominates among both whites and blacks. There doesn't seem to be much of a middle class, only rich and poor. There's not a whole lot of integration."

The assignment was unofficial, although Slater is chairman of the conference relief committee and Langford a staff officer. There was no budget for the project and no official approval for it.

"The church structure got a little edgy about this," says Slater. "It feared that some participants might not live up to expectations as representatives of the church."

"What we did was unorthodox," says Langford. "There was no central control over the relief effort. There was no selection process. We didn't know who was going. It was a volunteer-run operation and the decisions were made by the participants."

When Langford and Slater let it be known they were looking for volunteers, 16 groups involving 70 persons accepted the invitation. They went to South Carolina in one-week shifts late last year and early this year.

"We made it clear from the beginning that the (church) conference (similar to a diocese) wasn't offering

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any support, only an opportunity to serve," says Slater. "It was obvious that people would have to be self-sufficient."

Most of the groups were supported by their home congregations, a few by donations or fund-raising events. The Ingersoll congregation raised \$500 for gas and food at a hot dog lunch, and a dentist who attends the church donated his van for transportation.

Eutawville made an impression on the teens of Ingersoll. They saw and experienced a different way of life, laid back and friendly for sure, but also outside the mainstream of the American dream of wealth and success.

For the first time in their lives, the teens got a first-hand peek at poverty and racism. They repaired tiny houses, some not much more than shacks, some not much bigger than their meeting room in Ingersoll, in which large families lived.

"I couldn't believe the conditions," says Sarah Skinner. "It made me grateful for what I've got. I don't take it for granted as much."

Sarah became aware of class and racial differences while in South Carolina. She learned there was "a black side of town and a white side of town. We got along well with both groups, but they talked differently when they were apart, especially the whites. That's when they got into the racial jokes and comments."

Several of the groups which went to South Carolina felt they had gone through a consciousness-raising experience, says Slater. "All of them came back with stories to tell of new friends they made, often poor black people."

A group of low-income women and children from the Cheyenne, Limberlost and Cascade areas of London who went in February on a shoestring budget of donations were enriched by the experience, says Slater. As recipients of social assistance, they're dependent on the system and this was a chance for them to give rather than receive.

Peggy Urquhart, one of the welfare mothers, agrees the trip was an esteem-building experience. "They (the Carolinians) didn't know who we were, so they didn't make any assumptions about us. They welcomed us with open arms, with gratitude. It was very satisfying."

Upon her return, Urquhart felt she could do more so she contacted a sister who lives in the United States and persuaded her to raise some money and send a group, too. With the help of a radio disc jockey, it happened.

This is the way charity works: You plant a seed among people of goodwill, it grows and good works beget good works. ♦

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