

The Faith is Strong



**Knox Presbyterian Church
Embro
1832 - 1982**

Introductory Page

Knox Presbyterian Church

Embro

1832 - 1982

Anniversary Historical Committee

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Mrs. Alvin McKay

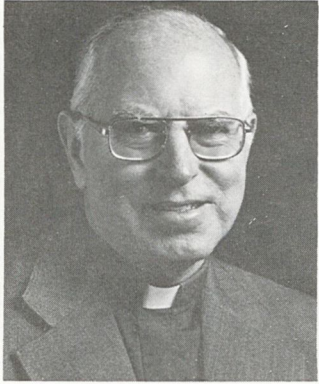
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MINISTER'S MESSAGE



REV. A.C.G. MUIR

For human beings to record the mysterious ways of God is an awesome task. In the following pages you will find this done with amazing skill and sensitivity, as the story of Knox Presbyterian Church unfolds before you.

Our ancestors in the faith were not perfect. There is the constant danger of idolizing them. At the same time there were some marvellous Christians among them, and the marks of Christ were clearly upon the whole community. "The Faith is Strong" is surely a God-given title for their story. No words could better

convey the essential impact that their lives have left upon us who followed them.

They believed in a great and good God whom they worshipped as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He was the sovereign Lord. All things were under His control. In Christ He had chosen and predestined them to belong to Him and serve Him. Since nothing could ever thwart His holy will and purpose they enjoyed a sense of eternal security that saw them through the severe hardships that often came upon them; even the pain and personal agonies of the Church Union issue, when they had to choose sides in 1925.

This doctrine of divine election and predestination, whatever flaws it had, created in their souls a reverence and a loyalty, a love and obedience of a high order. God in Christ was dear to them and they were determined to glorify Him at all cost. Only such a faith can explain the lives of a Donald McKenzie, a George Leslie MacKay, a Gustavus Munro and a host of others; some famous, some obscure who have left an indelible mark on the life of this Church.

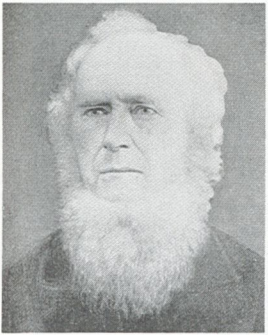
The combination of Public Worship every Sunday, Family Worship every day, and regular community Prayer Meetings laid a firm foundation for the free and responsible political and social institutions we enjoy to-day. We must never forget that link.

We have a most distinguished history in our Embro Church. With the help of this same Almighty Lord we will carry on this great tradition. One Hundred and Fifty Years hence, if another historical book should be published, it is up to us to be certain that it can still be called - "The Faith is Strong."

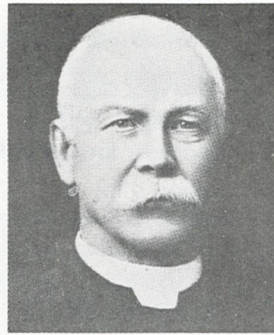
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1835 - 1872



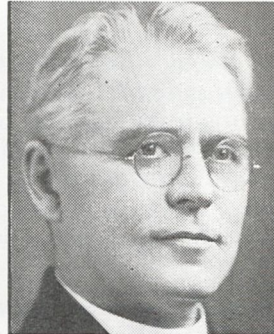
Rev. Gustavus Munro
M.A., D.D.
1813 - 1891



Rev. G. C. Patterson,
M.A.
1892 - 1907



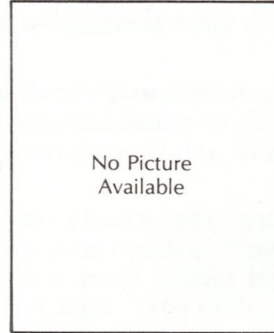
Rev. James Barber,
M.A., B.D., Ph.D.
1907 - 1910



Rev. Finlay Matheson,
B.A.
1910 - 1914



Rev. W. P. Lane, B.A.
1914 - 1926

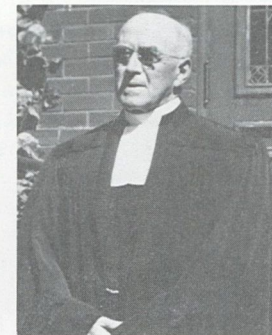


Mr. A. McAuley
1926

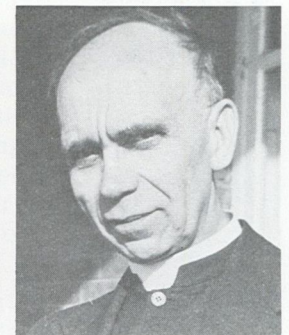
MINISTERS



Dr. M. C. Campbell,
M.D., D.D.
1928 - 1930



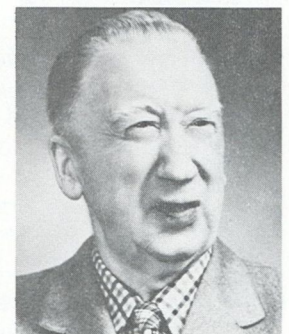
Rev. A. McLean
1931 - 1946



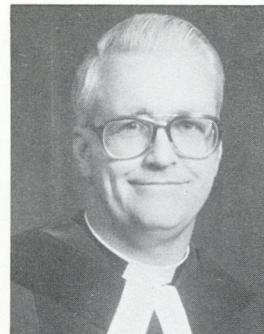
Rev. J. A. Isaac
1947 - 1953



Rev. R. A. Sinclair
1953 - 1958



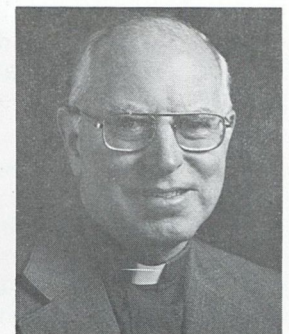
Rev. S. Kerr
1960 - 1969



Mr. Gerald Thompson
1969 - 1970



Rev. S. Cunningham
1972 - 1976



Rev. A. C. G. Muir
1977 -

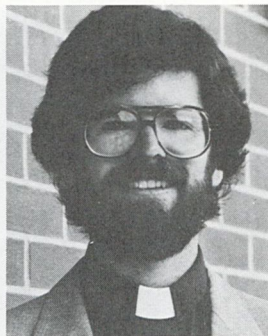
Sons and Daughters of the Manse



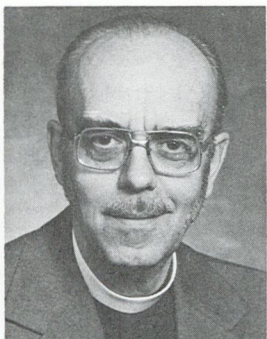
Barbara (Isaac) Weir



Rev. Samuel Howard Kerr



Rev. Donald Muir



Rev. W. J. O. Isaac



Margaret (Sinclair) Morris

Missionaries of the Church



Rev. George Leslie MacKay & Mrs. MacKay



PIONEER ERA

Our story begins in 1811, a year which was to mark the beginning of the final and most devastating of the infamous Highland clearances. From that year until 1820 a total of 15,000 people were evicted by the second Duke of Sutherland from his ancestral estates. For centuries these poor tenant farmers had lived on small rented plots in the Scottish Highlands. They and their fore-fathers had served their lairds well, secure in the mystical concept of true clan loyalty. By the dawn of the nineteenth century, however, changing economic circumstances had made their land more valuable for other uses. The crofters were to be denied the use of the soil and they were to be ejected from their low stone cottages.

They were a deeply religious people and their simple unadorned belief was to serve them well in the difficulties that were to follow. Homeless, they made their way to the seashore where they attempted to make their living on small potato plots, or by farming kelp from the sea. Thousands huddled on wharves to embark on emigrant ships for Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

It is small wonder, therefore, that the first trace of Highland settlement in Zorra was in 1819. Until that time there had been only a few scattered loyalist settlers on the fourth line, and even by 1822 only 150 acres had been cleared. The story of Zorra's first Highland settlers has been well documented in several books written by Zorra people. We are deeply indebted to those inspired early authors, including W. A. MacKay, W. A. Ross and W. D. MacIntosh for preserving the details of early settlement which follow hereon.

Legend has it that the first Sutherlandshire settlers to arrive were two McKay brothers by the names of William and Angus. They arrived in Zorra in 1819, having worked on the Erie canal before taking up their homestead on the ninth line of West Zorra. It appears that before a decade had passed, the boys had convinced many of their dispossessed Sutherlandshire neighbours and relatives to join them in the Zorra forests. A trip home by Angus in 1829 prompted the sailing of an entire shipload. Among those to come was the boys' mother, Isobel, who was to die within three months of arriving. Her grave was to be the first in the pioneer log church cemetery on Zorra's seventh line.

Early worship took place in the homes of these Scottish pioneers. By 1832, however, a decision had been made to erect a church. Through the generosity of Squire Gordon, one of their more affluent brethren, the new settlers were able to erect a log church of approximately 1,500 square feet. It was eighteen logs high and a gallery was located across the rear. It stood at the brow of the hill on lot 9 concession 7 where the burial ground had already been located in 1829. It doesn't appear that the settlers had necessarily looked upon this church as a permanent place of worship. In 1833 they took advantage of a £50 grant from the Synod of Upper Canada to furnish their present church and to establish also a new building in the village of Embro. There appears never to have been a question of a separate congregation forming. By 1836 a large frame structure known in

later years as "the auld kirk" was erected in Embro in the park opposite our present sanctuary. This new church was to become the central building for the Zorra congregation. Despite this fact, many meetings of session continued to be held in the old log church on the seventh line. It stood for a good fifteen years after the erection of the "auld kirk" in Embro and it apparently served for a variety of church functions.

"I have the greatest pleasure to inform you that we have got a minister of our own confe(f)sion, one Mr. Donald McKenzie from Ro(f)shire. He is going to be married to our church in Zorra the first of June" So wrote Alex McKay to his mother Christena on March 8, 1835. It is difficult in our day to realize the immense satisfaction that such an event gave to the young congregation meeting in that log structure on the seventh line. Presbyterian Scots had always placed considerable importance on the services of a duly ordained and properly educated minister. That their choice in 1835 came from Rosshire must have been an added bonus. Despite the preponderance of Sutherlandshire people in Zorra there were also large numbers from the other neighbouring Highland shires of Ross and Inverness. They must have known that their new minister shared an understanding for their recent sense of loss and desolation. Scottish Presbyterians never exhibited the enthusiasm of their Methodist neighbours for lay preachers, or for any type of spontaneously trained clergy; hence their delight at the prospect of having found a pastor who was impressively educated and duly ordained.

Their search for an ordained minister had been the result of a planned conscientious effort. Once the new log church had been completed in 1833 the Zorra congregation had appointed a committee to solicit the services of such a clergyman. It was while they were involved in this quest that their attention was drawn to the young Scottish missionary, Rev. Donald McKenzie. He had been sent to Upper Canada as a missionary by the Synod of Ross following his ordination in the Presbytery of Dingwall on April 16, 1834. Shortly after his arrival the young McKenzie had responded to an invitation to visit Zorra and made his way to the home of Squire Gordon.

We are indebted to Hugh Matheson for the anecdote of Mr. McKenzie's arrival. His horse, apparently had foundered in a bog on the eighth concession. Ready help was available, and the impression made by Mr. McKenzie while his horse thrashed in the mud was apparently a noteworthy one. The local farmers concluded that a man who didn't "cuss" while in the midst of such frustrating misfortune must have been a "saintly man indeed".

The Zorra congregation was immensely impressed with their new missionary for other reasons as well. He spoke the Gaelic as well as English and on the subsequent Sunday he delivered his sermons in both tongues to the delight of the congregation. Donald McKenzie then continued his missionary venture to other small communities in the wilderness. The church in Zorra never forgot him. In January of 1835 the congregation issued a call signed by eighty-one men asking that McKenzie return to be their pastor for the sum of £ 90 per year.

Return he did. Zorra was to be Reverend McKenzie's first and only charge. He served the congregation for thirty-seven years with the faithfulness and determination which are hallmarks of his race. Despite the fact that he was now a resident with a particular congregation, he continued to exercise some responsibility for servicing those of Presbyterian faith in all the mushrooming pioneer communities of what is now Southwestern Ontario. Sacraments were held yearly only, and on those special five-day-long occasions the Zorra church with its highly respected and ordained minister acted as a focal point. Presbyterians who thirsted for the privilege of communing in their own faith came to these yearly communions from a wide radius.

People travelled from London, Thamesford, Nissouri, Easthope and the Williams townships. Stories are told of a crowd of 5,000 celebrating communion on the hills of Dent's bush to the south of the village. One descendant of an early family recalls the stone in Thames creek about a mile west of the village where communion visitors as well as regular church goers would stop, wash their feet and put on their shoes, before continuing for the rest of the journey.

Reverend McKenzie built a large stone home to the east of Embro on the south side of the side road that is south of the village (Snakes Trail). While his home was being erected he boarded with Squire Gordon. The stone house which he called Glenness was to become home for his bride, and it was there that Donald McKenzie was to raise his family of six children. The house keeps its lonely vigil even today. To the south it overlooks the log church cemetery on the seventh line. Its northern windows face toward Embro.

The years following 1835 must have been prosperous years indeed for the Zorra church which was now established in the new frame building in Embro. Further Highland settlement was encouraged by better roads and quickly organizing school sections. Donald McKenzie took a keen interest in education and he appears to have done a significant amount to encourage at least two residents to pursue Ontario certification. Mrs. Alexander Rose and her family had settled on the tenth concession of East Zorra and she had begun an informal school in her own kitchen for the service of her own family and for neighbouring children. When she and her husband moved to Zorra's third line she continued the practice. It was at that time (1843) that Mr. McKenzie encouraged her to travel to London for certification. Egerton Ryerson's remarkable administrative skills were just beginning to make order out of the hodge-podge of pioneer schooling in Ontario. Obviously Donald McKenzie was well-attuned to the developing trends of his day.

Likewise he coached another devoted student, Mr. Hugh Matheson, and he too was prompted to apply for certification. With teacher certification came government grants. It appears that Embro's first Presbyterian minister was no laggard when it came to saving a few hard-earned dollars. (He wasn't born a Scot for nothing). McKenzie became Superintendent of Education for Zorra in 1844. He continued to fill that post intermittently until 1857.

The years in the "auld kirk" building were years of rapid expansion and growing confidence. Scottish immigration prompted by high rents and potato blight, continued to strengthen this frontier community. As one reads through the old session minutes, one struggles to capture the essence of a developing frontier community. The seriousness with which they took their faith, and the sternness with which they carried out their duties are two striking themes of these early records. A modern minister, well-drilled in carefully treading discretion's fine line, must feel some astonishment on reading some of the issues which received the attention of Reverend McKenzie and his session. On occasions they sat almost as a court, rendering judgements on such accusations as blasphemy, drunkenness and sacriligious conduct. Those accused of such varied sins were "cited" and "compeared" to defend their actions. What is even more astonishing, is that the decisions rendered were frequently as blunt and specific as were the original accusations. The elders may not have approved of playing cards, but they firmly believed in calling a spade a spade.

Not only did the minister and his session feel free to render unequivocal judgements in correspondingly forthright language, but they were apparently able to make such decisions stick. Confessions and contrite promises of reform were not uncommon. In one particular case an elder himself had his long confession (regarding his uncharitable conduct toward a neighbour) written into the session minutes. His efforts at atonement were apparently of little avail because his neighbour had him hauled up again before the subsequent session meeting accusing him of only *pretending* to be sorry.

In those years, however, a gradual softening and tempering can be observed. Session business gradually progressed from questions involving personalities to less sensitive issues. One brief entry shortly before Mr. McKenzie's retirement noted the need for an elder to sit in the balcony to oversee and to use his constraining influence on the conduct of boisterous young boys. Was it really that long ago? The more things change, the more they stay the same.

On June 20, 1861, Reverend Donald McKenzie, now approaching his sixty-third year, laid the cornerstone for the new brick building which until 1925 served as Knox Presbyterian Church. The land for the new church was donated by Donald Matheson and it was built some two hundred metres north of the "auld kirk". In the cornerstone were placed a glass bottle containing the list of elders and deacons, copies of the Montreal Witness, the Toronto Globe, and the Embro Review, and some coinage of the day. In the midst of a February thaw the gracious and expansive new church was officially opened in 1863. It had been built at a cost of \$8,217.15 and, as was the custom, had doors at the end of the pews. The communion table stretched down the centre of the church and the original pulpit was so elevated that it was level with the gallery. Three services were held on that drizzly nineteenth day of February and they were attended by over 1,400 people.

Mr. and Mrs. McKenzie had been living in their stone home on Glenness Farm since 1838. The property had been personally theirs and, with an eye

no doubt to the future, the church managers decided to buy a manse in the village. In 1867, a large red brick home in the southeast corner of the village was purchased for \$1,000 along with a considerable parcel of land. Rev. McKenzie would not now have to make the arduous journey from his farm to the village. Close to this same time, the session minutes give some indication of his declining health. A short leave of absence was followed by a longer one. Both were to provide time for recuperation.

Before Mr. McKenzie was permitted the contentment of eventual retirement in 1872, he and his church had to endure a painful disagreement which resulted in the creation of a Congregational Church here in Embro. From our modern day vantage point, it would appear that the doctrinal differences were small and scarcely worthy of such dissension. Lest we be too smug, we need to remember that our days are different from those of a century ago. Two hour sermons were common, and matters of church law were taken with a supreme seriousness by a minister and his session.

Furthermore, the rift probably was aggravated by other social changes taking place in the young nation. The evangelistic fervor of the tent meeting provided a keen satisfaction for many people who wished a more demonstrative and uninhibited form of worship. It is not surprising, therefore, that in 1870 we read of a crusade being held in Embro, and being conducted by travelling evangelists. In meetings held in the church there were fervid sermons followed by testimonies and conversions.

Such spontaneous demonstrations of belief probably did not sit well with some segments of the congregation. Hard life on the Highlands and stern challenges of a virgin frontier had bred in many of those old settlers a distaste for open emotion. Their religion, too, reflected their phlegmatic nature, for it was serious and stern. In some eyes it may even have been considered severe.

Whatever the causes, the disruption appears to have been complete by 1872. The newly formed Congregational Church worshiped in the "auld kirk" while the Presbyterians continued in their new sanctuary.

Despite this fleeting cloud of sadness at the twilight of his ministry, Reverend Donald McKenzie must have derived considerable satisfaction as he followed the careers of the many men who under his influence had joined the ministry. One of these young men called George Leslie MacKay was sent out from this congregation as a missionary in 1872, the year Mr. McKenzie retired. He was to travel to Formosa and undertake a campaign of mission and service that would last a lifetime. Mr. McKenzie must have followed his student's career with great pleasure. MacKay returned home frequently to sustain enthusiasm for his new school in Formosa which was fittingly called Oxford College. Like his mentor, MacKay too must have had a keen interest in education. He respected local culture and was thus able to avoid some of the paternalistic overtones of nineteenth century missionary endeavours. His goal was to see mission fields become self-supporting entities within the societies where they had been planted. He is still revered in Formosa for his supportive and sensitive contributions.

George Leslie MacKay was not the only acolyte of Rev. Donald McKenzie's. His Zorra congregation was to become famous in later years for the number of students who entered the service of the ministry. Rumour has it that by the time Mr. McKenzie retired thirty-eight young people had followed in his footsteps - an average of one per year. Today the number stands at fifty-four.

Mr. McKenzie was to live in retirement in Ingersoll with his wife for another twelve years. With his retirement the pioneer segment of our church's history comes to a close. In contemplation of the efforts and sacrifice of our Highland ancestors it seems entirely appropriate that our anniversary theme should speak of faith and strength. These early church pioneers cemented both these qualities into an inseparable iron-clad legacy which 150 years later continues to endure.

II PROGRESS AND GROWTH

By 1873 great changes had taken place in the history of Knox Church Embro. The 2,852 people of West Zorra listed in the Oxford gazetteer of 1852 as belonging to the Free Church, Presbyterian and Church of Scotland were now served by new churches in the surrounding area. Thamesford Presbyterian Church was opened in 1847, although without a minister until 1855 when the Rev. Neil Bethune was inducted.

Ten years later the Harrington Church opened with the Rev. William Meldrum as its first pastor.

Services were held in the Brooksdale area with its Church of Scotland grant of 200 acres, Lot 25 Concession 5. On July 1, 1864 this land was conveyed to the grantees Wm. Wilson, James Innes and James McBurney to be held in trust for the Presbyterian Church in the township of Zorra in connection with the established Church of Scotland.

Burns Church, a log structure on the 10th line of East Zorra, had been opened for worship after the purchase of land in 1860.

In October 1872 the first Kintore Church was opened and dedicated. All of these Presbyterian churches had been assisted in their formation by the descendants of Dr. McKenzie's first church session of 1836.

Many influential families had left Knox to form the Ebenezer Congregational Church.

Although the Embro central church remained a strong and vital force, these were the conditions as plans were made for calling a new minister to fill the vacancy caused by Dr. McKenzie's retirement.

The following are excerpts from the diary of Wm. Sutherland. He states that the purpose of the diary is a "Memorandum of weather, farm work and other events in West Zorra, Lot 16, Con. 4" Among the other events are the church services at which he was a regular attendant, usually recording both the name of the minister and his text. Thus we are presented with one man's opinions and impressions; a man who was alive at the time which we are considering.

After the retirement of Rev. D. McKenzie the finding of a new minister would likely be a matter of considerable urgency. It is safe to assume that the variety of persons in charge of church services was due to the fact that the "canny" Scots were searching for a satisfactory successor. The first series of excerpts record this search from January, 1873, until the final choice of Rev. Gustavus Munro was made in June 1873, and his subsequent installation as minister.

1873 Wat Yorra Lot 16, Con. 4 1873

Saturday 25th Frosty this morning, but not so cold as the former day.
 Sabbath 26th Frosty and cold all this day; I was at Church for both services to-day; One Mr. Clark from London preached to-day Gaelic text 2nd Cor. 5th Chap. 17 verse to end of Chap. English text Col. 1 Chap. from the 20th verse to end of Chap.
 Saturday 27th Frosty and very cold all this day.
 Sabbath 28th Frosty and very cold all this day; I was at Church to-day for both Gaelic and English services One Rev. Mr. Sage; a young man from Scotland, preached to-day. He will have his services for the next two weeks; Gaelic text Rom. 8 Chap. 14 verse; English text 46 Psalm 4 verse 1st clause. This young man is a very nice English preacher, he is not very fluent in the Gaelic he is only commencing to preach in Gaelic.
 Sabbath 29th Exceeding frosty all this day; it was very frosty last night; I was at Church to-day at the English service only. It could not get away in the morning on account of my son Robt. & I could blink away; One Rev. Mr. McFingie preached to-day in our Church, English text 107 Ps. m. 7th verse.
 Sabbath 30th Light frost this morning mild in the forenoon; cold in the afternoon; Rev. Mr. Rennie; preached in English this afternoon. 24th Chap. of Luke 53 & 54 verses.

1873
 Church

Sabbath 9th Mild to-day and pleasant winter weather; I was at church to-day we had no Gaelic preaching to-day; One Mr. McDonald a student preached in English, there was quite a number at Church to-day.

It is quite probable that the Mr. Munro referred to in the next excerpts is Rev. Gustavus Munro but only the surname is used in the record.

Sabbath 12th Frosty this morning, but nice winter weather; freezing hard at dark; I was at Church to-day; One Rev. Mr. Munro, (a young man) preached to-day; Gaelic text Exodus 17th Chap. 5, 6, verses; English text Luke 14th Chap. 21, 22 verses.
 Mr. Munro is an able preacher, and I believe a very sincere man.

Sabbath 30th Cold and frosty this morning, a storm milder; Rev. Mr. Munro preached this day; Gaelic text English text St. John 14th Chap. first verses; he preached a very excellent sermon from this text and also from the Gaelic text.

Sabbath 13th Very pleasant weather all this day; Rev. Munro preached to-day; Gaelic text Luke 24 Chap. 26 verse English text Rev. 22 Chap. 17 verse.
 Mr. Munro is a very sincere man and an excellent preacher.

Although it would appear that Mr. Munro had made a favourable impression the call was not forthcoming. Several other ministers were still considered.

1873 April

Sabbath 28th Frosty this morning & frosty all day; He had no Gaelic preaching to-day. One Rev. Mr. Johnson preached in English; text, Proverbs 41 Chap. 18 verse.

1873 May

Sabbath 18th Frost this morning, dry dry and pleasant during the rest of the day; The Rev. Mr. Alex. McKay, son of the late Mr. Robt. McKay of this place, preached to-day English text Eph. 2nd Chap. 19th verse & last clause. Gaelic text; Numbers 10th Chap. 29 verse.

It is in June that Rev. Munro is again preaching in the church. At this time he also assisted at the communion service and the decision is made.

Sabbath 1st June) Light frost this morning very pleasant weather during the rest of the day; Rev. Mr. Munro preached in our Church to-day; English text St. Luke 24th Chap. 50th verse and the first clause. Gaelic text 144 Psalm 15 verse.

Sabbath 8th Dry and pleasant weather all this day; Rev. Mr. Munro preached in our Church to-day; English text St. John 11th Chap. 35 verse; Gaelic text St. John 17th Chap. 24 verse.

Sabbath 15th Dry and warm all this day; Rev. Mr. Gustavus Munro preached in our Church to-day; He is a fine speaker a good preacher and very promising young man. his English text was in Rev. 22nd Chap. 17 verse Gaelic text Song of Solomon 1 Chap.

Thursday 19th Dry and very warm all this day. This day was observed in our Church, at Embury as a fast-day in view of a Communion Sabbath; Rev. Mr. Jarvis preached in English; and Rev. Mr. Grant of Ashfield preached in Gaelic; They are able preachers.

Friday 20th Dry and very pleasant all this day; Rev. W. Grant conducted the English service, the Gaelic service was as usual, several men speaking on a Scripture question given out by some one of themselves.

Saturday 21st Dry and warm all this day; Rev. W. Gustavus Munro preached in English to-day, from 2nd Timothy 2nd Chap. 19^{verse}.

Sabbath 22nd A light sprinkling of rain this morning, and heavy rain afternoon up to 5 1/2 o'clock P. M. The Sacrament of The Lords Supper was dispensed in our Church at Embro to-day, Rev. W. Cameron of Aton preached the English service from 1st Cor. 15th Chap. 3, 4, verses. Mr Grant preached in Gaelic, there was two large Congregation to-day; W. Cameron preached in English in the evening.

Sunday 23rd Dry and pleasant weather till evening a light sprinkling of rain at even, heavy rain thunder & lightning after dark. This was the last day of the Sacramental solemnity; W. Gustavus Munro preached in English from the 2nd Chap. 2nd Cor. and the two last verses, W. Cameron preached the Gaelic service; We have been blessed with very able and I believe pious Ministers. There was a meeting of the Congregation convened after the services were over.

the Presbytery to Moderate in a call to a Pastor for our Congregation with as little delay as possible. At or rather after this meeting was closed we had another meeting in order to get the mind of the Congregation, to whom they would give a call, The Rev. W. Gustavus Munro was unanimously chosen. We had a large & very agreeable meeting and I believe all left well pleased with the proceed.

Sabbath 29th Dry and pleasant all this day; Rev. Gustavus Munro preached in our church to-day, English text 3rd ch. 12 Chap. and 10^{verse}; Gaelic text Matt. 13 Chap. 44, 45, verses; there was a large Congregation at the English service.

July

Monday 1st Cool this morning, pleasant weather during the rest of the day; We had a congregational meeting in our Church at Embro to Moderate in giving a call to a Minister we had a large meeting; The Rev. Gustavus Munro was un-

animously chosen, there was not one dissenting voice and 42 Names were signed to the call in the Church, 41 names were to the call without calling at any house.

Following this decision several ministers officiated in the church until August 19 when Rev. Gustavus Munro was ordained and inducted into the Knox Church, Embro.

Tuesday 19th Dry and warm to-day; We had all great joy & trust & glad day in our Church at Embro to-day; The Rev. W. Gustavus Munro, was Ordained and inducted into our Church to-day in the forenoon, early in the afternoon, we had a festival or social in the Basement of the Church. I would judge that nearly 800 persons sat down to tea there was two billings, there was an abundance of eatables all of the very best and I would suppose that there was nearly as much left as was used. Rev. W. Hay of Delaware preached the sermon and a very excellent sermon; Our Much esteemed Rev. W. M. Henry, Ordained & Inducted the Rev. W. Munro into his charge. Rev. H. McDonald of ~~Dorchester~~ ^{Thamesford} and Rev. W. McDonald of ~~Dorchester~~ ^{Thamesford} the Congregation when the Ceremony of Ordination & Induction was over, the new Minister retired with the Moderator, W. H. McDonald, the front door, so that the Congregation could have an opportunity of shaking hands and welcoming their Minister.

After all had partaken of the abundance that the Ladies had provided for refreshing the inner man; we went into the chapel, where we were treated with excellent speeches from the following Ministers. The first from our retired, and much esteemed Pastor, W. M. Henry, giving a short account of the progress of the Church since his induction into the 3rd Presb. of the Presbyterian Church, in the year 1855, then W. Grant of Dryden, W. McDonald of Thamesford, W. Wright of Angus, &

Tuesday 19th (Continued) W. Gordon of Harrington, Professors, W. Blain of Toronto, and also a short address from our new Minister. Then after saying and pronouncing the benediction we separated I can truly say, all well pleased with the proceedings of the day, it was being nearly 7 o'clock P. M.

Sabbath 24th Dry and cool this morning; very warm afternoon. This is the first Sabbath for our new Minister after his ordination and induction; We had a large Congregation to-day, English text 1st Cor. 2 Chap. 2nd Verse, Gaelic text 1st Cor. 5 Chap. 14^{verse}.

The Rev. Gustavus Munro graduated from McGill University where he had taken his B.A. & M.A. degrees and from Presbyterian College Montreal, in the spring of 1873. Following his induction at Embro, he married Mary McCuaig of Glengarry County and brought his bride to the Embro manse where their six children were born. His pastorate of eighteen years was a most happy one filled with outstanding congregational work. Mr. Munro's sister married Hugh Murray and came to Zorra to live. The Rev. Daniel Gordon whose son wrote "Glengarry Schooldays" came to Harrington Church and his pastorate from 1871 - 1900 was approximately the same period as Mr. Munro's.

The mission work of the congregation grew in importance with the formation of the W.F.M.S. in 1878 with Mrs. Munro as president, Mrs. Wm. Stewart as secretary and Miss C. Murray as treasurer. These three officers' names remained the same for the following twelve years. This interest in foreign missions was increased by the work of the Rev. Geo. Leslie Mackay in Formosa. On his first furlough in 1880, his powerful and passionate appeals for all Christians to higher consecration resulted in a gift of \$6,200. for the erection of Oxford College in Tamsui where native students would be trained as preachers of the Christian gospel. An additional \$8,000 was contributed for the building of the college and the Mackay hospital there.

In 1890 Mr. Munro was honoured when he was chosen by the Synod of Hamilton and London as its Moderator, and in the following year Montreal College presented him with a D.D. degree.

It was with sorrow that the Embro congregation that year bade their beloved pastor farewell when he accepted a call to Guthrie Church, Harriiston. Seven years later he accepted a call to Ridgetown and in 1906 went to Bethel and Bryanston. In 1913 when he retired he was appointed as assistant pastor of St. Andrew's Church in London.

His death occurred in 1916 as he prepared for a service in St. Paul's church Ingersoll, where he had preached the preceding Sunday. His greatest joy was in the work of his church.

G. C. Paterson, M.A. 1892-1906

Extensive renovations were made on the manse in 1892, before the Rev. G. C. Patterson came from St. Enoch's Church, Toronto, to Embro to begin his ministry here.

Continued interest in missions was evident when in January of the following year, thirty-five collectors from the country part of the congregation and eight from the village were appointed to visit their areas monthly to collect funds for the "Schemes of the Church" (Budget). A separate report naming each young lady collector with her list of contributors was printed for the year 1893 with the allocation of the funds of \$505.34 thus raised. The special collectors continued their work throughout Mr. Patterson's pastorate.

Major renovations at a cost of about \$4,500 were made in the church with funds subscribed for this purpose in 1899, 1900 & 1901. The walls were stripped, lathed and plastered and a beautiful decorated ceiling put into place. Changes in the pulpit area and gallery were made, and new church pews and stained glass windows were installed.

People



Special Service honours Mrs. W. Ross for Long Service, May 1973



Mrs. Strickler presents Mrs. McKay with gift honouring long Service, Apr. 8, 1973



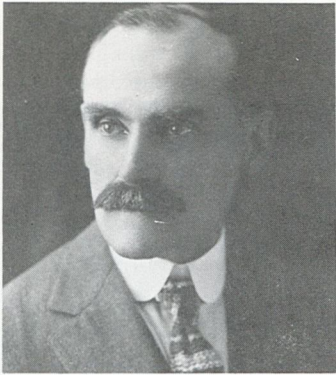
Willing Workers in the Church Kitchen
October, 1954



Mr. Matheson presents Mr. McCorquodale with gift. April 3, 1973



Memorial Service for Dr. G. L. McKay Log Church Cemetery, May 28, 1972



David M. Ross., M.L.A. 1871-1941
M.P.P. North Oxford 1921-1934



Rev. McKenzie Plaque (1798-1884)
Honoured Sunday, June 15, 1975



Agnes Craig Bell 1883-1962
Nursing Sister W.W. I 1916-1919



Mrs. Robt. A. Matheson
1st Pres. of Ladies Aid



Mrs. D. I. Rose, Supt. of S.S.
Pres. of W.M.S., Nov. 1958



W. R. McPherson
1st Treas. after Union, 1925

Early Group



At a Meeting of Knox Girls Auxiliary - 1941

Manses



New Presbyterian Manse - Embro
Built 1976-77



McKay Property on John St. (Embro)
Purchased in 1943, Sold in 1976



First Knox Presbyterian Manse

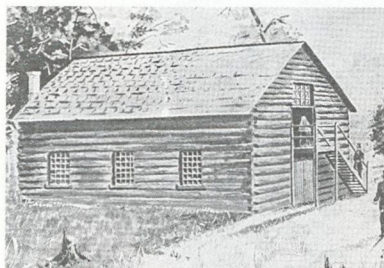


Manse rented to the Church
for Dr. & Mrs. Campbell, 1928-30

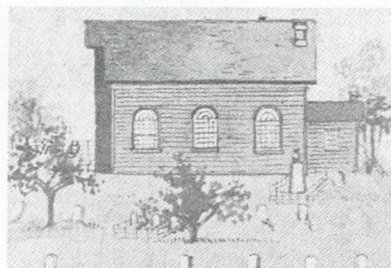
The Churches



Present Knox Presbyterian Church



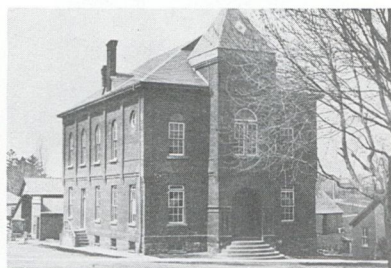
Old Log Church



Ebenezer Congregational Church



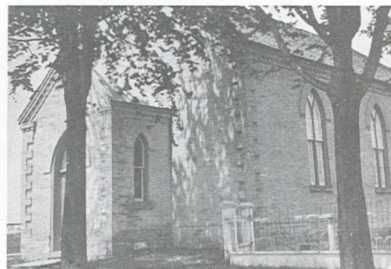
Presbyterian Church



Town Hall



The Manse and Church



Methodist Church

The Ladies' Aid raised an additional four hundred dollars and assisted in the placing of electric lights in the church. New carpeting and other improvements were made.

An organ had been in use in the Sunday School in 1893 and the New Presbyterian Hymnal was introduced in the public worship two years later. A new organ was purchased and used in the services at the re-opening of the church after all renovations were completed.

In 1896 the Auld Kirk was torn down and its burial grounds were cleaned up including the removal of grave markers and mortal remains to the North Embro cemetery, the land for which had been purchased in 1865.

Mr. Patterson resigned in October 1906 because of ill health. His ministry of some fourteen years had been one of great progress and accomplishment. He spent the remainder of his life in California where he died in 1918.

James Barber M.A., B.D., Ph.D. 1907-1910

The Rev. James Barber accepted a call to Embro in 1907. He was known to many of the congregation because he had worshipped with them during the four years when he had taught at the Youngsville Public School, before entering the University of Toronto in 1891. He graduated four years later, then entered Knox College.

His first church was at Forest where he was ordained and inducted in November 1898. Following his work there he spent four and one half years at St. Andrew's Church, Arthur.

The Presbyterian Sewing Guild of Bennington was organized in December 1908 to aid Home Missions. In their first year of work a box of new clothing was sent for the work of the Rev. C. H. Munroe of Ethelbert, Manitoba.

The Young People's Guild and the Sunshine Mission Band reports show that their work and interests were in Home Missions also.

Mr. Barber took particular interest in the Young People and Sunday School of his church. He left Embro in the spring of 1910 when he accepted a call to St. Andrew's Church, Niagara Falls where he continued to serve with distinction until his death in 1928.

Finlay Matheson, B.A. 1910 - 1914

In the fall of 1910, the Rev. Finlay Matheson B.A. of Bruce County began his work in the Embro Church.

In March of the following year, plans were made for the 50th anniversary of the building of Knox. An individual communion service was purchased at that time.

The King's Daughters Home Mission auxiliary was organized for the young women of the church with Mrs. Finlay Matheson as its first president.

Many new members had been added to the roll of the church before Mr. Matheson left in 1914 for services in Stratford churches. In 1928 he left Stratford for First United Church in Waterloo.

III THE HILLS AND THE VALLEYS

1914 - 1946

In 1914, the beginning of this era, Canada entered the first World War. For the first time in the memory of most Canadians it was a stark and frightening reality to see local lads enlisting for overseas service and going off for Military training. Unprepared as everyone was, the organization of the army was soon receiving volunteers. Forty eight names were recorded on the Church Honour Roll and twelve paid the supreme sacrifice.

The church as ever was the corner stone and at this time was vibrant and strong. It had enjoyed the growth and prosperity that had taken place in the community during the last few years.

The forests had been cleared, larger brick houses replaced the log dwellings and large frame barns and sheds housed the herds of cattle and stored the modern machinery. The C.P.R. had built a railway from Ingersoll to St. Marys in opening up new marketing services. New telephone and hydro lines and the introduction of the automobile improved communication and provided new comforts. With these changes also came expanded educational opportunities and more and more rural children were able to attend High School and Business College.

It was into this setting that Rev. W. P. Lane, his wife the former May Irwin and small daughter, Helen, came in 1914.

Born in Huron County, Mr. Lane received his early education in adjoining Bruce County, and graduated from Knox College, University of Toronto in 1908. After ministering for 6 years in Bond Head and Schomberg, was called to Embro.

Affable, a good preacher, and pastoral visitor, the church flourished under his guidance.

Mrs. Lane's musical ability and her organizational skill was of great assistance.

In the year 1917 with funds available, from a legacy bequeathed by the late D. M. McCaul a new Estey, two manual Reed organs with an electric blower was installed.

Many young people joined the church at this time. A missionary auxiliary was formed at Holiday, and the Bennington Sewing Guild became a W.M.S. Auxiliary. Two mission bands, the Busy Bees in Embro, and the Proctor at Golspie were organized.

An educational, Revitalization movement called the Forward Peace movement, created a great deal of interest around 1920 and a most successful drive for funds resulted.

The Young People's Society, which had a membership of 53 in 1920 was very active, and good relations with the Young people of the Methodist and Congregational churches provided many happy joint meetings.

Union services in the summer months were begun about this time.

For several years around 1920, a new union movement received much attention in the courts of three denominations of the Christian Church, the Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist. Efforts were made for the acceptance of the three separate doctrinal bases to be merged into one church to be called the United Church of Canada. There was also discussion by the membership in the local churches.

In June 1925 a vote was taken. One third of the members of Knox Presbyterian Church Embro, voted against the move and decided to leave the church. The Methodists united as a body with the New United Church and brought 62 members into its communion. The Congregational voted for union, but worshipped in their own church until it closed in 1943, leaving the members to choose their place of worship.

The following year Mr. Lane, who had guided the congregation through this difficult time was called to Seaforth.

The minority group of continuing Presbyterians started again to form a church, without a building, a minister or a manse.

Three members of Session remained Presbyterian, Alexander Murray, Alexander Smith and John McLeod. A board of managers was appointed with D. M. Ross as secretary and W. R. McPherson as treasurer.

On July 5, 1925 they began to worship in the Town Hall with ministers and students from the Toronto office.

For a time Embro, and Harrington, who had retained their church and manse were joined. For a year Mr. A. McCauley was appointed stated supply for the two churches.

On February 17, 1928 Dr. M. C. Campbell, M.D., D.D. was inducted into the charge and he and Mrs. Campbell, took up residence in the bungalow owned by Alex and William Sutherland. Dr. Campbell came from Richmond Hill, Thornhill and Aurora.

On June 8, 1927 a Ladies Aid Society was formed by Mrs. Brown of Ingersoll at the home of Mrs. White. This group of 40 women was very enthusiastic and did a good job of raising money to supply the needs of the congregation.

Mrs. R. A. Matheson was the first president with Mrs. A. G. McCorquodale as secretary.

On July 5, 1925 at the home of Mrs. Harry Munro, Miss Libbie Munroe, Vice President of Paris Presbyterial organized a Women's Missionary Auxiliary. Mrs. A. Hayward was the first President with Miss Marion McLeod as Secretary.

In 1929, Mrs. Campbell, wife of the minister organized the Young Women of the church into the Florence Campbell Auxiliary.

The first officers were: President Barbara Halkett, 1st Vice-President Muriel McPherson, 2nd Vice-President Margaret Matheson, Secretary Margaret Campbell, Treasurer Gertrude McDonald.

This was a very active group. They had a booth at Embro Fair, and the Church Garden Parties and made and sold reed work.

In August 1929 the Congregation celebrated the centennial of the landing of the first organized group of Highlanders in the community. It was a very popular gathering, and large crowds came by bus and car to join the festivities.

The morning and evening services were taken by Rev. David Perrie, D.D., Moderator of the General Assembly. Local Ministers took part in the services, and the Provincial Government was represented by Hon. Dr. Monteith of Stratford.

In the afternoon a Gaelic service was held with Dr. Campbell in charge and Mr. William Munro of Hamilton as precentor.

Dr. Campbell retired in 1930 and in June 1931 Rev. Alexander McLean was inducted.

Mr. McLean - 1931 - 1946, came to Embro at a very critical time in the history of the church.

On August 29, 1931, the D. R. Ross house was purchased from Mr. D. A. McLeod for \$1,500 and remodelled into a combined church and manse.

The auditorium on the lower floor seated 150 people and 20 for choir. The upper floor made a very comfortable apartment.

It was dedicated by Presbytery and formally opened July 9, 1933. While these were depression times and money was scarce, funds were raised by a unified effort. Envelopes were used for weekly contributions, and many friends and supporters outside the church assisted with gifts.

Garden parties at the farm home of Mr. & Mrs. Alvin McKay and on the church lawn helped raise funds. The Ladies Aid and Campbell Auxiliary raised money in various ways.

In 1937, the Caledonian Society invited the women's organizations of the local churches to provide meals for the Highland Games - on July 1. This has been a very remunerative project since that time and much of the success of the venture in those early days was due to the superb organizational ability of Mrs. D. M. Ross.

In 1933 Mr. W. R. McPherson, who had been church treasurer since 1926 resigned. His daughter Muriel took his place.

In 1941 the congregation was saddened by the death of Mr. D. M. Ross, M. L. A. who had been the first secretary and also clerk of session. He was replaced by A. G. McCorquodale, who still holds the position of clerk of session in 1982.

In 1943 all indebtedness of the church was wiped out. On November 14, 1945 a congregational meeting gave the Board of Managers permission to purchase the Ebenezer United Church building for the sum of \$5.00. Some renovating was done and on May 15, 1946 the church was dedicated. On June 23 of the same year Major Dean Johnston, M.B.E., M.A. of Brantford formally opened the ediface.

The same year, the D. R. Ross property was sold to W. E. Waterhouse for \$5,150.

In the summer of 1941 the Presbytery of Stratford, requested the Presbytery of Paris to arrange a two point charge with Harrington and Mr. McLean as minister. This has been a very happy and helpful arrangement since that time.

In September 1946, Mr. McLean retired after a pastorate of 15 years, and went to live his remaining years in Chatham, Ont.

In paying tribute to this fine man, one could aptly describe him as a "Man of God".

His rare wisdom and kindly guidance at this troubled time in the history of the church, coupled with his dedication to pastoral visitation, helped to promote harmony and goodwill in the congregation and in the community and also forged a closer link with Harrington. Mrs. McLean whose capable leadership in many fields especially the music of the church and its organizations and her untiring energy, and Miss Mary the "homebody" with her typical Scottish background and her skill at knitting for Red Cross made up the manse family.

IV MODERN ERA — 1947 - 1982

The turbulent times of the last era had passed, and the world looked forward to a future of peace and prosperity. Disputes would be settled in an atmosphere of conciliation, and the peoples of the world would be free from starvation, poverty and disease.

Although, in chronicling the years, this has not been fully accomplished, we see tremendous advancement in many areas. Science has brought about much change, but at the same time has challenged many of our values. The tremendous volatile explosion of communication and travel, has left us at times almost breathless. This is truly the space age.

The local community once predominately Scottish and agriculturally oriented, now boasts residents from many European countries and many places. Its people do not depend on farming, alone as a means of livelihood.

What of the church in these changing times? It has of necessity become more widely organized to a larger and fuller participation in the area and in the affairs of the larger field of service in the denomination.

New people and new talent have strengthened and encouraged the growth of the local church, and we are assured that the faith is still strong.

Rev. J. A. Isaac — 1947 - 1953

Rev. James Isaac was a native of Aberdenshire, Scotland, where he obtained his early education. He graduated from the University of Glasgow and studied at McMaster University, Hamilton, after coming to Canada.

He had spent some time ministering to poorer districts in Glasgow and came to Embro and Harrington with a tremendous love for the hills of Zorra and the kindly people who lived there.

The young family at the Manse, William studying for the Ministry, Barbara at Ewart College and Jean (Mrs. Frank Tester) of Dundas brought to the church a great deal of enthusiasm. Mr. Isaac's keen sense of humour and Mrs. Isaac's kindly Scottish hospitality made them a great many friends in Embro and Harrington congregations.

All indebtedness of the congregation was cleared at this time. With the sale of the D. R. Ross property and the purchase of the Congregational Church, along with the purchase of the McKay property, which was a former Methodist parsonage, for a manse, comfortable and commodious church buildings for the congregation was assured.

In 1952 a new furnace was installed in the church. The church school flourished at this time.

In 1953 Mr. Isaac accepted a call to Moncton, leaving both churches in thriving condition. He passed away in 1958 and was laid to rest in Harrington Presbyterian cemetery.

Rev. W. J. O. Isaac

Rev. W. J. O. Isaac, son of Rev. and Mrs. J. A. Isaac was ordained in Embro, May 26, 1950.

He ministered in Tatamagouche, N.S., Maissonneuve, Montreal and Gloucester, Ottawa.

As Chaplain in the Canadian Army from 1960 to 1976, he served in Gagetown N.B., Germany, Calgary, Cyprus and Borden.

Since 1976 he has been Superintendent of missions in the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces.

Barbara (Isaac) Weir

Barbara, daughter of Rev. James & Mrs. Isaac, graduated from Ewart College in 1947. She worked as a student in Portage La Prairie and Winnipeg, coming east to Central Hamilton, and then as Hospital visitor for New St. James, London.

She married Wm. Weir of London, and they have 2 sons, John and Paul (Isaac) and a daughter, Nancy. They live on a farm near Thorndale.

Barbara often is called on to take church services.

Rev. R. A. Sinclair, B.A., D.D. — December 8, 1953 - October 1959

A marked church growth was evident in the Embro and Harrington congregations during the six-year pastorate of the Rev. R. A. Sinclair which began with his induction in Embro on Dec. 8, 1953. He was a son of the manse and his father, Dr. N. R. D. Sinclair preached our anniversary services in June of the following year.

Mr. Sinclair received his B.A. degree from the University of Toronto. After his graduation from Knox College, his first mission charge was at Sylvan Lake, Alberta. This was followed by his work at Olds and Innisfail. He came to Embro after his third Alberta charge at Bassano.

His interest in the missions of our church was shown at all times. The Rev. Y.H. Wu, vice-moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Formosa visited us in November 1954, accompanied by the Rev. C. C. Chen, moderator of the Northern Synod. They presented our church with a pulpit fall in memory of the world famous Zorra Missionary, Dr. George Leslie MacKay who had spent over a quarter of a century from his coming to Formosa in 1872 to his death in 1901 in mission work there.

Other visitors from Presbyterian missions in India, British Guiana, the Korean Church in Japan, and Nigeria stimulated our interest in their work and our Budget givings increased.

Growth in the Church School under Art Williams who became its new Superintendent in 1958, continued for his six years in that office. The attendance reached a new high of 95 under his leadership and devoted and energetic staff of teachers. A film strip and slide projector and a large screen purchased with the aid of money gifts from congregation members were valuable teaching aids to the school.

A Baldwin organ was purchased at a cost of \$4,500. and dedicated in May 1955. The organ fund was aided by a gift of \$1,000. from the estate of Hugh McKay who from 1926 was one of the most devoted and generous workers in our church. The organ project was support by the whole congregation until the final payment was made in 1957.

It was with regret that we bade goodbye to Mr. & Mrs. Sinclair and their young family of Glenn, Margaret, Ann and Alex, when they left Embro in October 1959 for their new work in Madoc and Tweed. Our interest has followed them in their work there and at Smith Falls and at their present charge at North Pelham and Rockway.

Glenn returned to the Canadian West. He is at present in Regina where he was appointed Education Director for the Indians of Saskatchewan.

Margaret was awarded the Jennie and Belle Hossack Scholarship at Ewart College and graduated from York University in 1969. She married Ted Morris, a United Church minister, and lives in Faro, Yukon Territory with her husband and three young children.

Ann, Mrs. Tom Tucker, a graduate nurse, lives at Cold Lake.

Alex, the youngest of the Sinclair family, makes his home in Toronto.

Mr. Sinclair was appointed Moderator of the London and Hamilton Synod in 1976, and was awarded his doctorate in 1979.

Rev. Samuel Kerr — 1961 - 1968

In June, 1961, Rev. Samuel Kerr was inducted into the Embro and Harrington charges, and he and Mrs. Kerr came to live in the Embro Manse. Their family, Edward of Toronto, (Mary) Mrs. Gabe Eros of Brampton, (Grace) Mrs. Paul Wuthrich of Toronto, and Howard studying for the ministry.

Born in Lurgan, Northern Ireland, Mr. Kerr worked on the Belfast City Mission before coming to North America. He graduated from McMaster University in Hamilton with his B.A. and from Knox College, in Toronto (Theology). He later obtained a B.D. degree from Knox, and was ordained as a minister of the Presbyterian church in 1930.

Mr. Kerr served in the Ministry in Avonton and Motherwell, Brussels and Bluevale, Grace Bay (Cape Breton), Exeter-Cromarty, and Embro-Harrington.

Mr. Kerr's keen sense of humour and his love of travel, made him very popular as an after dinner speaker. In 1962 the church was painted. In March, 1964 fire destroyed the sister Church in Harrington. This was a historic church, and contained many early artifacts. A modern new edifice was erected on the site and many gifts of furnishings received. The Embro congregation gave a communion table as a token of friendship and good will.

In 1965, the congregation was shocked by the sudden death of Mrs. Kerr. While not in the best of health, her gracious interest and participation in the work of the church, she was loved by all. Mr. Kerr presented a gold cross to the church and 4 brass offering plates were dedicated in her memory. The W.M.S. presented a memorial certificate in her memory, and at the same time a similar framed certificate honouring Mrs. D. M. Ross was hung in the church schoolroom.

Mrs. Fraser McNabb was appointed Treasurer of the Church in 1968, succeeding Mrs. J. D. Hossack who had held the position since 1942.

The next year, Miss Dora Harrison resigned as organist after 18 years of service. Miss Harrison drove from Ingersoll each week for practise and the service on Sunday, often bringing with her talented guest soloists to assist the local choir. She was also musical director for Zorra Schools.

Mr. Kerr retired in 1969 and moved to Stratford where he continued to do supply preaching until his sudden death March 13, 1976.

After his retirement he married a second time to Lyall Erskine of Stratford. She has since passed away.

Howard Kerr (Son of the Manse)

Howard was born August 8, 1935. He graduated from High School in Glace Bay Nova Scotia in 1954; from London Teacher's College in 1957 and from Waterloo University with a B.A. in 1962. He then entered the Ministry, graduated from Presbyterian College, Montreal with a B.D. in 1964.

He was very active in the activities of the College, and won the Alumni Prize at Graduation for contributing most to the life of the college.

He did some work with juvenile delinquents in Minneapolis, Min., and taught summer school in Montreal.

He was ordained by the Presbytery of Stratford at Caven Presbyterian Church Exeter, May 1, 1964.

He married Marilyn Strang of Exeter in 1963 and accepted a call to Vernon B.C. where he remained until he passed away after a lingering illness in 1972.

Rev. Gerald E. Thompson

Mr. Thompson was a student Minister at Embro and Harrington for 2 years - 1969 to 1971. While attending university in Toronto.

He was born in Westville, Pictou county, Nova Scotia. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Education from Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, and Master of Divinity from Knox College, Toronto.

His pastorates include;

Two summer mission fields in Nova Scotia - 1964 & 1965

Student minister, Embro & Harrington 1969 - 1971

Eldon, Station - 1971 - 1972

Minister at Kirkfield, Bolsover - Eldon Station 1972 - 1973

Minister at Holstein - Dromore, Knox Normanby 1973 - 1974

Minister at Teeswater, Kinlough, 1974 - 1981

The two years, Mr. Thompson served in the Embro and Harrington churches were busy ones for him. He spent the week days at College and then took up the weekend duties of both congregations.

An interesting innovation was the congregation get togethers on Sunday which helped both the church and the minister. His wife, Wanda, and small son, Nathan lived in the manse at Embro.

Rev. Cecil Cunningham — 1972 - 1976

Rev. Cecil Cunningham, his wife the former Mary Kozachuk, and their children, John, Robert, Ivan, Jim and Elaine came to Embro in 1972.

Mr. Cunningham was a native of Toronto, where he received his early education, graduating from Knox College, University of Toronto in 1971.

Embro, and Harrington was his first charge. He brought to it a great deal of enthusiasm and vim as well as a lot of practical experience in dealing with social problems, and also a great deal of technical skill in carpentry which was this trade before entering the ministry.

These were exciting years in the Presbyterian Church. Plans were being made to celebrate the Centennial of the Canadian church in 1975 and committees were already set up that would cover every facet of the organization, at home and abroad.

The Canadian Government put out a Commemorative stamp to honour the occasion.

In April, 1973, outstanding service in the home church was recognized by special services honouring Mrs. Alvin McKay, A. G. McCorquodale, and Mrs. Walter Ross.

An essay contest on the life and ministry of Dr. Donald McKenzie, the first minister of the congregation was won by Anne McNabb.

Dr. Finlay Stewart, Kitchener, was the 100th moderator of the General assembly in 1975.

Mrs. Verne McArthur and Mrs. James Strickler represented the Embro Church in June 1975 at Congress '75 held at McMaster University, Hamilton.

Anniversary celebrations culminated on June 15, 1975 when Scott McKenzie of Erie Pennsylvania, a great grandson of Rev. Donald McKenzie assisted Miss Helen Brown of Ottawa to unveil a Historic Plaque honoring the first minister of the congregation.

There were 23 of his descendants attending the special service at which Rev. Alan Farris of Knox College gave an inspiring address. Special music and a dedication service attended by many friends and dignitaries completed the day.

Dr. David Hay, M.A., D.D. the 101st Moderator of the General Assembly visited the Embro and Woodstock churches in May, 1976.

In 1976 Mrs. John Hiscocks was elected President of Paris Presbyterial W.M. S., W.D. and Mrs. Donald Matheson, Secretary.

In the fall of 1976, a plaque recognized the work of Rev. Oswald Smith, a local lad, who went out from the Presbyterian Church here, to found the Peoples Church of Toronto, one of the largest of Canadian congregations.

He wrote 1,000 hymns, and travelled to 72 countries as a missionary.

The Ladies Aid served coffee at the church for the visitors.

THE MANSE

In June of 1975 at a congregational meeting it was decided to sell the manse on John Street and build a new manse on the property next to the church. This property had been purchased for \$20,000 with the idea of building a manse.

In September of 1976 the manse was sold netting \$28,300. Money had been left to the church at different times, and this was used.

A building committee of Mrs. & Mrs. Lewis Thomson and Mr. & Mrs. Willis Matheson, Mr. & Mrs. Chas. Munro were appointed to plan the new building. Much thought and concern went into the new plans. Mrs. Fraser McNabb was much help as treasurer of the church. Rev. Mr. Cunningham our minister had been a carpenter by trade and his drive got the work going.

In the fall of 1976 the footings were poured and work proceeded with much help from many volunteers. The roof finally went on and the windows and doors were put in before winter.

Rev. Mr. Cunningham was called to Petrolia in November and he continued coming back every week to see the work progress. He put in the plumbing and made many trips back.

The ladies undertook the decorating and spent many hours painting and papering with a deadline of July 31 when the dedication of the building took place.

Rev. Wm. Henderson of Woodstock, the Clerk of the Presbytery, presided. Mrs. Lewis Thomson on behalf of the Building Committee, presented the key to Mr. Verne McArthur who represented the Board of Managers and the ribbons were cut by Mr. Cunningham and Mr. L. Thomson.

After the dedication a song service of Thankfulness was held in the church with a large crowd in attendance and lunch was served to all.

In August Rev. & Mrs. A. C. G. Muir moved in to be the first minister with his family to occupy the new building.



Lewis Thompson presenting Verne MacArthur with the keys.



Rev. Cunningham and Lewis Thomson cutting the ribbon.

And so we come to the present! Our final five years reflect the same perseverance and dedication that have been so characteristic of our various stages of growth. The spectacular moment has never been a hallmark of Presbyterian tradition. We, like our ancestors, have shown a marked preference for the unsung hour. This quiet and faithful service so unstintingly given by unassuming people continues and abides with us now, as it did in that pioneer congregation of a century and a half ago.

Our final five years begins with the arrival of our present minister on September 1, 1977. Rev. A. C. G. Muir came to our congregation from Timmins and his induction service was held on September 7, shortly after his arrival. Rev. Muir was uniquely suited to serve in a congregation that took such pride in its Highland ancestry. He cherished his own Scottish background and he delighted his new congregation with his smattering of Gaelic and his proficiency with the pipes. Mr. Muir was raised in a Scottish community in Artemesia Township in Grey County, attending Flesherton High School. During World War II he served as a piper with the North Nova Scotia Highlanders as well as with the Forty-Eighth Highlanders. He completed his theological training in Knox College and went on to serve in Presbyterian congregations in Barrie, Toronto, and Timmins.

Mr. Muir's wife Jean and his maturing family have been welcome additions to our church community. Like her husband, Mrs. Muir has given selflessly of her time and talents in the service of our congregation. Margaret Muir teaches in Timmins and she is always a welcome guest when she comes to Embro to visit with her parents. Peter and Libby Muir have been active in our community and in our young people's organizations. We have been pleased to see them grow into young adults among us.

Donald Muir, in the tradition of his father, entered the service of the church. In May 18, 1980 Donald became the fifty-fourth candidate to be ordained into the ministry from the Zorra congregation. The records of old speak with glowing pride of the number of young people who were inspired to become ministers. Donald's ordination, therefore, was truly a time to celebrate enduring church traditions.

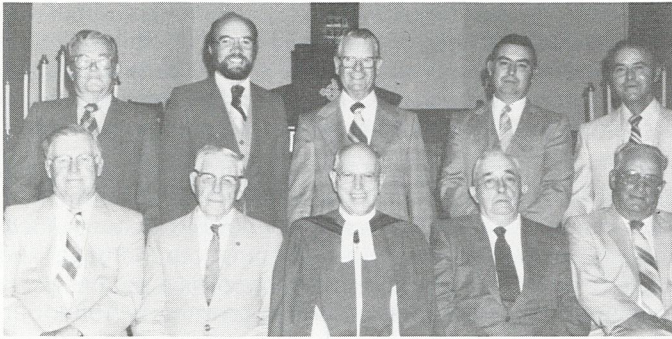
Church reports of 1977 indicated that there had been a concerted effort in the preceding months to have the new manse completed. Dedication ceremonies were held on July 31, 1977. Our church manse has continued to be a source of pride to the congregation. Even in a day of rising interest rates the mortgage has been reduced to a near nominal sum.

Records of these final five years continue to reflect the striving determination of a Christian congregation in the midst of the stern realities of the twentieth century: the annual oyster suppers, the election of new elders, the re-organization of the Presbyterian Young Peoples, the dedicated work of Sunday School teachers, the faithful service of the ever indomitable women's groups. In the midst of such intense effort, the congregation was able to find the time and resources to do its part in hosting a refugee family from Indo-China. All reports of kirk session inevitably refer to the exhilaration of forming friendships new, and to the haunting sadness of adjourning friendships old.

We conclude with our final year. As a special recognition of our anniversary celebrations our church hosted the Synod of Hamilton and London in the autumn of 1981. It was at that time that Reverend Grant Muir was elected as moderator of the synod. This was to be the first time in this century that such an honour was to be bestowed on our own minister.

We would hope that later generations might remark on our enthusiasm for our anniversary. We realize with some humility, however, that anniversaries will come and that anniversaries will go. For all of us, such anniversaries measure a span - forever lengthening our heritage and forever shortening our days. Faith, on the other hand, is a timeless entity which defies the finite dimensions of structure or century. In 1982, our celebrations measure depth as well as length, and strength as much as number. We are indeed thankful to be able to say,

"The Faith is Strong"



Embro Session - 1982

(back row) - John Hiscocks, Ed Westendorp, Lewis Thomson, James Turpin, Verne McArthur.
 (front row) - Charles Munro, A. G. McCorquodale, Rev. A. C. G. Muir, George Murray, Donald Matheson.



Embro Board of Managers

(back row) Allan matheson, Lloyd Masters, Ed Westendorp, Donald Innes. (front row) Ross McDonald, Jim Hart, Mrs. Donald Matheson, Richard Moon.



Choir Embro

Ed Westendorp - Leader Lynn Westendorp - Organist
 Jennifer Strickler, Brenda Turpin, Laurie Strickler, Dana Westendorp, Mrs. W. Zimmer, Mrs. J. Turpin, Ed. Bell, Verne McArthur, Mrs. Muir. Absent - Mrs. Fred Howe



Sunday School Teachers

Allan Matheson, Bety Turpin, Loretta Murray (front row) Phyllis McArthur, Anne Matheson, Helen Hart, Marybelle Brennemen.



Ladies Bible Study Group

(back row) Dorothy Moon, Anne Bell, Muriel Thomson, Susie Strickler, Phyllis McArthur
 (front row) Lynn Westendorp, Jean Muir, Muriel McPherson.



Presbyterian Young People Society - Embro and Harrington

(back row) Betty Turpin, Gordon Howe, Calvin Thompson, Larry Moon, Peter Muir, Gary Visser, Brad Green, Doug Innes, Darwin Cooper. (2nd row) Jim Green, Geoff Green, Ron Palmer, Carolyn Cooper, Susie Strickler, (Leader) (front row) Allison Lupton, Joan Thompson, Christine Lupton, Brenda Turpin, Dana Westendorp Session Leader - Rev. Grant Muir



Sunday School Pupils



Ladies Aid & W.M.S.

Muriel Smith, Beth Turpin, Annie McKay, Lynn Westendorp, Dorothy Moon, Muriel Thomson, Helen Hossack



Vacation School



Jean Muir, Janet Clement, Anne Hiscocks, Ruth Matheson, Loretta Murray, Phyllis McArthur, Florence Chambers, Lene Prouse, Norma Howe, Anne Matheson, Janet Munro



Adult Bible Study Group

(back row) Stewart Taylor, Phyllis MacArthur, Nancy Matheson, Helen Hart, Joanne Vanvoort, Helen Dunseith, Lewis Thomson, Jack Vanvoort. (middle row) Mary Monteith, Verne MacArthur, Ann Houthuyzen, Ann Bell, Susie Stricker, Chris Houthuyzen (front row) Fraser Monteith, Grant Muir, Muriel Thomson, Jean Muir.



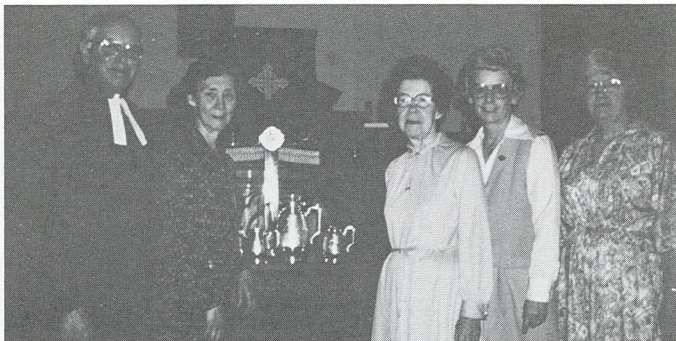
Annie McKay, Annie Sippel, Jean Matheson, Judy Reesor, Clara Innes, Jessie Porterfield, Betty Matheson Muriel McPherson, Marion Smith, Susie Strickler



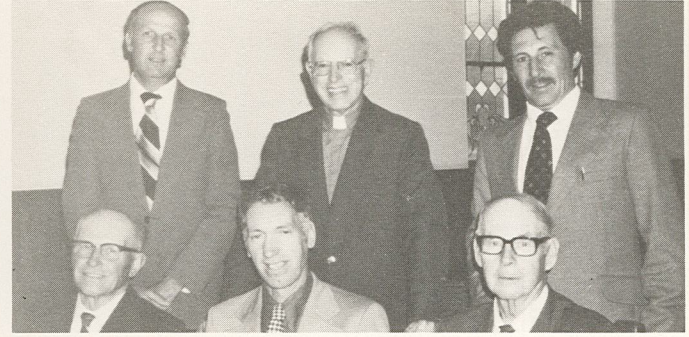
Lau Family - 1979



World Day of Prayer - 1979



Miss Anna McKay of Toronto, granddaughter of George Leslie & Mrs. McKay of Formosa who presented a silver tea service given her grandmother while she and Mr. McKay were home on furlough, to the Embro Church. Receiving the gift are the minister, Rev. Grant Muir, Mrs. Anne Hiscocks, Mrs. Ruth Matheson and Mrs. Betty Matheson.



Harrington Session - Sister Church



Managers of Harrington
Jack Green, Fraser Monteith, Wm. McIntosh, Jas. Thomson, Margaret Hyslop, Glen Meadows.



Presbyterian Church - Harrington