

# A Work of Faith, A Labour of Love

A Brief History of  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church  
Brampton, Ontario

IN COMMEMORATION OF ITS  
175TH ANNIVERSARY



MARY M. HARVEY

1880



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## FOREWORD

History is not just about something that happened yesterday. It is a living, moving entity, the ongoing story of people, plans, projects, successes, and failures, that can lead to a new vision for the future.

In *A Work of Faith, A Labour of Love*, the author identifies the many people, both clergy and lay, who have guided St. Andrew's down the years through stormy and, thankfully, calmer water to meet the ever-changing needs of our society and our world. She skillfully paints a comprehensive picture of the vision, challenges, and accomplishments of the many groups within St. Andrew's, which led mission and education programs, helped shape worship and created opportunities for social and fellowship gatherings. But as we see in the book, none of these programs and projects would have succeeded if not for the support of "the people in the pews", for without people there is no church and therefore no need for programs etc.

Today St. Andrew's faces some daunting changes and challenges but surely reading this story must inspire us to know that if our ancestors could to it, so can we!

by Rev. Rosemary Doran  
Minister Emeritus





## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The church is not a building,  
The church is not a steeple,  
The church is not a resting place,  
The church is a people.

(Words by Richard Avery, Donald Marsh, © 1972 Hope Publishing Co.)

By wisdom a house is built and through understanding it is established.

PROVERBS 24:3

These two quotations provide the foundation for this short history. The first edition was written in 1997 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of St. Andrew's. That brief historical sketch drew from Session Records, *the Background and History of Brampton Presbyterian Church 1847–1940* by Rev. A. Neil Miller, Annual Reports, newspaper accounts, interviews with long-time members, reports of the committees and individuals from within St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Brampton. This updated edition adds a section for the years 1997–2022. The research relied heavily on the complete archive of newsletters and annual reports carefully kept by Felicity Alexander. Her collection provided an invaluable resource. Several members of the congregation were consulted to confirm some anecdotal information. Special thanks to Elizabeth Giesbrecht who provided valuable proofreading help. Any errors or omission are the responsibility of the author.

—Mary M. (Molly) Harvey

## **DEDICATION**

To all the saints who from their labours rest; to members  
past and present who have each made a contribution to  
the life and work of St. Andrew's.

## Our Congregation's Roots

As early as 1823, Presbyterians were worshipping with one another in their homes in the areas surrounding Brampton. In 1848, these worshippers called the Rev. James Pringle to minister to their parish.

“We the undersigned elders and other members of the United Presbyterian Congregation of Centre Road, and under the inspection of, and in connection with the United Presbyterian Synod of Canada and the Presbyteries thereof, taking into consideration our destitute circumstances thro’ the want of a fixed pastor, among us, and being satisfied, by good information or our own experience, of the faith, piety, prudence, literature, and other ministerial qualifications of you, Mr. James Pringle, preacher of the gospel under the inspection of the said Synod, and of the suitableness to our edification of the gifts bestowed upon you by the great Head of the Church ... do invite, call, and entreat you to take oversight of our souls and to execute all the parts of the pastoral office among us; and upon your accepting this our Call, and being inducted into the pastoral charge of the said congregation by the United Presbytery of Toronto, we promise you all due respect, subjection, and encouragement in the Lord, and to contribute to your suitable maintenance as God may prosper us. In testimony whereof we have signed this call at Centre Road United Presbyterian Church, this First day of November, eighteen hundred and forty-seven, in the presence of Rev. John Jennings, moderator in said call.”

The Call was signed by James Hunter and Alexander Hamilton, elders, and by 29 other members representing in all some eleven or twelve households — Hamilton, Hunter, Brown, Oliver, Cumming, Clark, Bell, McBride, Moore, McDole, and McDowell.

### **Presbyterians Worship at Brampton**

Early in the year of 1847, Derry West opened a branch station in Brampton — a Sunday School conducted by two women at the outset. With the settlement of Mr. Pringle on January 19, 1848, this became a preaching-point, and through his residence in Brampton, it became the principal station. This was the United Presbyterian congregation, later called the First Presbyterian Church, and commonly referred to as Mr. Pringle's Brick Church. Services were first held in their brick church on Church Street (land given by John Scott) on the first Sunday in October 1849. In 1855, Knox Presbyterian Church was established on John Street.

Two years after the formation of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the two congregations amalgamated under the name of First Presbyterian Church. Beginning in 1877, the new congregation held services at Church Street.

### **The Presbyterian Church Brampton**

At the 1879 Annual Meeting of the amalgamated congregation, it was decided to erect a new, larger church. A site at the corner of Church and Union Streets was purchased from Alexander and Rebecca Patullo. In the spring of 1880, the building committee of the Brampton Presbyterian Church was in action.

*The Toronto Globe* and the *Brampton Conservator*, newspapers of the day, printed advertisements calling for tenders to construct a new "Stone Church" in Brampton:

"Tenders to be for the whole work or for separate trade branches; also, for heating and furnaces & etc. Plans and specifications to be obtained at the offices of Gordon & Helliwell, Architects, Toronto or the office of Jas. Fleming, Secretary of the Building Committee."

The building was designed by the Toronto architectural firm of Gordon and Helliwell, well known for their church commissions.

The cornerstone was laid July 1, 1880. The following news item appeared in the *Brampton Conservator*, Friday, July 2, 1880.

“There was a large assembly at the laying of the cornerstone of the new Presbyterian church yesterday. The proceedings opened with singing, followed by prayer by Rev. Mr. McLaren. Mr. Fleming then read the scroll, which included a sketch of the rise and progress of Presbyterianism in Brampton, from the ordination of Mr. Pringle to the charge of Derry West and Brampton; the formation of the John St. Church, the names of its successive pastors; the union of the two congregations and the appointment of Mr. McLaren as a colleague of Mr. Pringle last year. This, along with several other documents was placed in the cavity appointed to receive them. The trowel was presented to Rev. Mr. Pringle by Mr. Robert Smith, Esq. The stone was lowered to be placed in position and was pronounced by Rev. Mr. Pringle to be plumbed and well laid. Addresses were afterwards delivered by Rev. Messrs. J. M. King, John Smith, G. M. Milligan, and Hall. Refreshments in the shape of lemonade, ice cream, cake &c. were served by the ladies in adjoining grounds at Dr. Patullo’s.” (Ed. note: where Hallmark Place now stands.)

The new church was to be known as the Presbyterian Church Brampton. Dedication services were held in the completed building on October 9, 1881. Records of the Building and Finance committees of that period are lost but it is known that the cost of the church and land was \$25,000, undertaken by a congregation of 236 members who had subscribed over \$14,000 for the purpose of building the church. The subscription list includes many recognizable names of Brampton’s founding families.

“When the building was completed, and after \$1000 had been realized from the sale of the Brick Church to the School Board, the congregation entered the second stage of its existence carrying a mortgage debt of \$16,000 at 6% per annum. By terms of the agreement no reduction in principal of the mortgage was to be made in the first year, but thereafter reduction was to be made at the rate of

\$1000 per annum. A Ladies' Aid, the first in the congregation's history, was organized to raise the Interest Fund (and sometimes to help with the principal payments!) and the obligations for interest and principal were faithfully met each year—not always without hardship and difficulties. In 1896, on January 6th, the final payment on the mortgage was made less than 15 years after the church opened for worship.”

### **Credit Valley Stone**

The Credit Valley Stone used to build this church was transported from the Kenneth Chisholm quarry in Caledon via Credit Valley Railway to the church site where it was dressed by local mason Jesse Perry. Perry was also the plasterer for the project. Carpentry, seating, and roofing were the work of W.A. McCulla. John Ballentyne did the painting and glazing while James Nelson was contractor for upholstery and carpeting. Combination Gas Machine of Detroit provided gasaliers and lighting. Another Brampton company, Peaker and Runians, provided tinning and eavestroughing.

### **The Gothic Style Sanctuary and Auditorium**

The Gothic style sanctuary and auditorium are built of rusticated (with conspicuous bevelled points) bi-chrome (two colours of stone) Credit Valley Stone. The exterior walls are supported by buttresses (flared wall supports). The bi-chrome slate roof has eight small dormers. A distinctive weathervane surmounts the tallest finial of the massive square steeple on the southwest corner of the building. The gothic (pointed arch) trefoil (three leaf) motif is repeated in the lightning rods on the peaks of the two main roof lines.

The interior of the sanctuary is based on the Akron plan, i.e., semi-circular pew arrangement with a gallery of the same shape. The gallery is supported by massive cast iron pillars with ornamental plaster capitals and iron brackets. The intricate cast iron fence around the gallery is capped by a wooden handrail. The ceiling has numerous groined (intersecting) panels with decorative plaster ornaments and cusps (points of the intersections). During the 1898 re-decoration, the large panels were frescoed. The curved wooden pews with decorative cast iron ends are cushioned and sit on a floor sloping from the entry to the communion table.

## Windows

The large south facing window, centred between the two front doors, contains many symbols of our Christian faith.

- the Dove of the Holy Spirit
- the Ten Commandments
- the open Bible, from an era in church history when the Bible was withheld from the common people
- a burning bush, a symbol of the Presbyterian church, with the Latin phrase “Nec Tamen Consumebatur” meaning “yet not consumed”
- a scroll “Sanctify them through Thy Truth”
- a scroll “The Word is Truth”
- the Greek letters Alpha and Omega, used as a name for God, “the beginning and the end.”

This window is the work of McCausland and Sons and is an original feature of the building. It was restored in 1987 and again in 2000. The trefoil motif is also evident here.

Each stained-glass window on the sides of the sanctuary memorializes long time St. Andrew's members of the Lowe, Little and Beatty families. These windows contain one of two key symbols: either grapes or lilies. The grapes immediately bring to mind the shed blood of Christ, symbolized in the communion cup. Likewise, the lilies symbolize the promise of His resurrection.

The lower portions of the windows contain the powerful message of the Beatitudes, a part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew's gospel. The New Testament equivalent of the Ten Commandments, these positively stated standards for Christian living encourage believers in times of difficulty, and remind them of the requirements of mercy, pureness, and peacemaking that Christ set forth during His teaching ministry.

The upper west portions of the windows display symbols from the Old and New Testament including:

- the Chalice of Blessing as the cup of the Last Supper
- the Crown representing Christ's life of eternal reign with the Father
- the cross entwined with a serpent as a symbol of healing from the Old Testament which is still used as a symbol of modern medicine

- a helmet as the symbol of protection afforded by salvation in Christ
- a sword representing the truth of God's Spirit by which we are judged
- a lamp symbolizing the light and truth brought into the world by Christ
- a harp reminding us of the importance of joyful praise of God.

The upper east portions of the windows display:

- an open Bible with the Ten Commandments
- an anchor representing faith and hope
- a cross with the entwined letters of Christ's name
- a lamb representing the sacrifice for sin which Christ made
- a dove representing the Holy Spirit of peace
- a crown representing eternal life in Christ
- a chalice representing the cup of salvation of the Last Supper.

### **Brampton Presbyterian Grows**

The manse was designed by Gordon and Helliwell and was first occupied by Rev. Norman MacEachern c.1915.

Shortly after World War II, the congregation decided that they needed more space for the congregational activities and contracted with the Toronto architect, Gordon Adamson, to design a new single storey wing onto which a second storey could be added later. After consultation with the ladies on what was needed for the kitchen, the plans were drawn up and the first phase of the expansion was built. The second storey was built several years later when additional space was required.

On the opening page of a baptismal register beginning in 1910, the name St. Andrew's was inserted and stroked out. The confusion regarding the name was finally settled when the annual meeting of 1963 requested the Session to petition Presbytery that the congregation henceforth be known as St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Brampton. The Presbytery granted the petition February 12, 1963.

By 1997 the population of Brampton had grown to 268,251, and had three more Presbyterian Churches: St. Paul's Bramalea, Heart Lake Presbyterian and North Bramalea.



## **Ministers of Brampton Presbyterian Church/St. Andrew's Brampton**

**Rev. James Pringle** 1848–1887. A commemorative plaque at the front of the sanctuary memorializes his years of service.

Serving the John St. Church were Revs. Andrew T. Holmes 1849–1862; Francis Duncan 1865–1867; John Aull 1868–1870; John Baikie 1871–1875.

**Rev. E.D. McLaren** 1879–1889 served as Mr. Pringle's assistant and later as senior minister.

**Rev. Alfred Gandier** 1889–1893 served the Brampton congregation. He later served as principal of Knox College.

During the **Rev. Wylie Clark's** ten-year ministry 1894–1904 the debt for the construction of the church building was paid off and a substantial sum was raised to alter the pulpit and choir loft and purchase a Casavant organ. Electric lighting was installed in the church in 1904.

During **Rev. James Little's** ministry 1905–1909 the use of individual communion cups was introduced after three consecutive votes at annual meetings in 1906, 1907, and 1908.

**Rev. Norman MacEachern** was the first to enjoy the manse, built during his ministry. In 1916 during World War I, he was appointed Chaplain to the forces. Pulpit supply was provided by **Rev. H.E. Thornloe** until the 1918 induction of **Rev. Malcolm McArthur** who resigned in May 1925 to enter the United Church which was formed by the union of parts of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist churches. However, Brampton Presbyterian remained within the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

**Dr. James Wilson** rebuilt the congregation after the devastation of church union. He served from 1925–1930 at which time church membership was 600. He was followed by **Rev. J. F. Anderson** 1930–33.

**Rev. H.M. Coulter** worked diligently with the youth of the Depression Era and served in Brampton 1933–1938.

**Rev. Neil Miller** 1939–1947 served the Brampton Presbyterian Church during the war years and the centennial of the congregation.

**Rev. William Weir** was called to Brampton in 1948 and served until 1961. He ministered to a growing congregation that saw the need to expand its buildings to accommodate the baby boomers. The legacy from that era is the Christian Education Wing. The new wing was built on property that included a tennis court which for many years served as an enjoyable sporting venue for many in the congregation.

**Rev. John McBride** served from 1962 until his retirement in 1979. It was during his ministry that the congregation petitioned Presbytery to request the name of St. Andrew's Church. Through the challenges of the 1960s his ministry maintained a strong and vibrant congregation and paid off the mortgage on the CE wing. Upon his retirement he was appointed Minister Emeritus.

**Rev. Dr. Graeme Duncan's** ministry, beginning in 1980, can be characterized by outreach into the community, maintaining youth ministries when Brampton was growing quickly and when the ethnic mix in our community was diversifying.

In 1997, the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of St. Andrew's, the Presbyterian College, Montreal, conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity, Honoris Causa on him. Dr. Duncan took medical leave and then retired in 1998.

**Cheryl MacFadyen**, a diaconal minister, served as Ministerial Assistant 1985–1988 and is credited among other things with introducing Mystery Dinners, which encouraged monthly fellowship in the homes of parishioners throughout the winter months. She encouraged youth group activities and supported the Sunday School.

**Rev. Mark Tremblay** started as a student minister and then served 1989–92 as Assistant Minister encouraging youth ministry through S.A.Y, St. Andrew's Youth in mission. He led a group of 13 young people and two adults to Guyana where they provided a medical clinic (the first in 12 years on Wakenaam Island), leadership training to a national youth camp, a vacation bible school and road maintenance.

St. Andrew's was blessed to have two learned and wise interim ministers following the 18-year ministry of Rev. Dr. Duncan. In January 1998, Presbytery appointed **Rev. Dr. Arnold Bethune**. He served as our good shepherd and guided us through the process of preparation to look for a new minister. He served until September of 1999 at which time **Rev. Dr. Harrold Morris** was appointed as interim minister until May 2000.

**Rev. John McGurrin's** part-time ministry began in 1993. He conducted membership classes, marriage preparation classes, special children's presentations on Family Sundays and assisted with morning worship and sacraments. He resigned in 1998.

**Rev. Wes Denyer** was inducted at St. Andrew's in June 2000 and served until June of 2011. During his ministry he encouraged parishioners to take

on responsibility and new challenges such as the fledgling food cupboard and study groups. During this time, the Session committee structure was revamped and a framework of Standing Orders for Committees of Session was established.

**Carol Hamilton** served as student minister in 2000.

In 2001, **Rev. Rosemary Doran** was appointed Minister of Visitation, in a part-time capacity. She became Minister Emeritus in 2010 and is still called on to serve in a variety of ways.

**Anthony Sammut** served as Youth Director 2002–03 and **Laurie Denyer** served in that capacity for the next year.

**Rev. Blair Bertrand** served as Minister of Children, Youth and Families and was inducted in 2005 and served until 2008. He organized a mission trip to Nicaragua and worked to help organize Canada Youth 2006. He left St. Andrew's to further his studies in Youth Ministry at Princeton University.

**Rev. Rebekah Mitchell** was called in 2010 and served as Associate Minister with special responsibility for small group ministries. She served until 2017. During her time, GRACE groups were established. She also played a vital role in developing Vacation Bible Schools and worked on weekly bible studies with Rev. Rosemary Doran.

**Rev. Wayne J. Baswick** became a Minister in Association in 2008 and has provided pulpit supply and essential back up on many occasions. He served as interim moderator in 2022 when Rev. Geoff Ross was on sick leave

**Rev. Dr. Bob Spencer** was appointed as interim minister when Rev. Wes Denyer resigned.

**Rev. Geoff Ross** was inducted in 2012. During his time at St. Andrew's, he oversaw the implementation of term service for elders and initiated an annual Faith in Action campaign. The South East Asian ministry took root during these years. During 2020–22, Mr. Ross dealt with the difficult task of serving his congregation during the COVID pandemic which saw the closure of the church building for two years, requiring that services be broadcast via video link which was a challenging task for everyone.

### **Ministers of Word and Sacrament from St. Andrew's Brampton**

James D. Smart, Arthur Gowland, Malcolm McLean, William I. McElwain, Paul McLean, Dianne McLean Ollerenshaw, Donald Madole, Cathrine Campbell, Lara Scholey, Emma Duncan, Donna Carter.

### **St. Andrew's Celebrated in 1997**

St. Andrew's celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in a variety of ways during 1997. Of course, there was an anniversary dinner. Throughout the year, each issue of *Inside St. Andrew's* featured profiles of long time (more than 50 years) members of the congregation. Editor Stu Royal, and contributors Felicity Alexander and Molly Harvey interviewed Irene Wilson, Bea Fenwick, Dina Ingram, Ron Birss, Florence Fletcher, Arthur and Lois Death, Lillian Allison, Gord Lowe, Stewart and Marg Hunter, Mary Balfour, Bob McArter, Harriet Beatty, Gladys Martin, Archie Campbell, Don McLean, Alice Dickout, Elspeth Stansfield, Dawn Lowe, and Kay Beecham. Forty-two long time members received honorary commemorative certificates as part of a service of recognition. Each month the newsletter also included a story documenting the history of St. Andrew's drawn from the history booklet published that year.

In the spring, senior minister, Rev. Graeme Duncan was recognized by his alma mater, the Presbyterian College in Montreal, with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.

On anniversary Sunday in October 1997, the newsletter reported, "the subtle tones of the harp greeted worshippers as they prepared to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Presbyterian ministry in Brampton. Lori Gemmell, the guest harpist, along with our own Matt Baxter on French horn, and Ben Harper on clarinet provided instrumental accompaniment to the special music prepared by our Music Director, Shelagh Tyreman, and our Senior Choir. As they sang the Invitation to Praise "Come Lift Up Your Voices" with smiles in their voices they brought joy to our hearts and smiles to our faces. We all sang, "The Spirit of Gentleness," a special hymn chosen by our guest preacher, Rev. Dr. Tom Gemmell, a former Presbyterian College classmate of Rev. Dr. Duncan and the Senior Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. He based his sermon on the phrase, 'the spirit of gentleness' and illustrated his remarks with examples of how the Holy Spirit is at work in many places around the world and has been at work here in Brampton over the past 150 years. He encouraged us to let the spirit of gentleness work within all of us."

As is St. Andrew's practice of hospitality, following the service, the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee served anniversary cake.

## Our Congregation's Roots

To continue the historical theme for the year, in November many spent an enjoyable evening "Reliving Wedding Memories" with a fashion show of 29 wedding dresses dating from 1842–1975. The models were members of St. Andrew's and North Bramalea Presbyterian Church. They were accompanied by a variety of traditional wedding songs. A large contingent of volunteer traffic coordinators, makeup and hair stylists, musicians and soloists, sound technicians and videographers made the event a great success.

It was also in 1997 that the new Books of Praise were dedicated. Maureen Kelly, an elder and member of the congregation, served on the Life and Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church in Canada which was responsible for producing the new hymn book.

# St. Andrew's Moves into Another Century

When the town of Brampton was incorporated in 1873, the population was estimated as 2700. One hundred years later the population was 47,000. By 1986 the population had grown to 189,000. According to the 2021 census, the City of Brampton had a population 656,000 of which 73% reported as being a visible minority. The top three visible minority groups reported were South Asian (261,705), Black (82,175), and Filipino (20,100).

The congregation acknowledges the historic structural fabric of bricks and mortar of the heritage building and recognizes the significant contributions of previous generations. They now focus on the life of the congregation and how it continues with the able assistance of several committees and organizations overseen by Session with the guidance of the Senior Minister. From 1997–2022, the structure of the Session and committees changed while the tasks and inspiration from the Lord above continue.

From 1998–2000, interim ministers Dr. Arnold Bethune, and then Dr. Harrold Morris, helped the congregation to deal with the loss, to illness, of Rev. Dr. Graeme Duncan who had been the minister for 18 years.

These interim ministers helped the Search Committee and a Transition Team create a profile of the congregation and see a vision for the church's future. As a result, in 2000 when Rev. Wes Denyer accepted the call to St. Andrew's, the congregation was ready to make changes. Standing Orders introduced in 2005 and revised in 2014 helped to ensure Session, through its committees, could carry out God's work here. While the names of committees changed, the core functions of managing the business of church life remained the same and St. Andrew's continued its support of God's mission.

## **Session of St. Andrew's**

As the congregation of St. Andrew's grew, so did the size of Session. Farquhar MacDonald served as clerk until 2005 when Gord Warren was elected. Before 2014, each elder was expected to make quarterly visits to a segment of members of the congregation, provide pastoral care, and deliver communion cards, in addition to serving on a committee of Session and attending Session meetings. At St. Andrew's, each elder had at least 12

people to visit each quarter. With a congregation of more than 500, that meant more than 40 elders were needed to serve. Session meetings with more than 40 in attendance became difficult to moderate; a challenge to allow everyone to speak to a motion, and even harder to make quick decisions. During Rev. Wes Denyer's ministry a Session Advisory committee was struck to set the Session agenda and provide background information to help streamline decision-making.

In 2007, under the direction of the Planning Committee of Session headed by Jim Christian, the congregation undertook a process called Natural Church Development. The program analyzed eight essential qualities (staves) of a healthy church: empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspired worship, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships. It is based on the belief that a church can only grow to the level of its lowest staff. If a church is improving its lowest staff, it will grow in faith and ultimately in numbers. Congregational surveys, focus groups, and study groups met over the next two years to facilitate the health of the congregation and to learn about removing barriers to growing the church. This process focused attention on some of the shortcomings and helped the congregation look in new directions, such as small groups and empowering leadership. Following these studies, a search started for an Associate Minister to establish a small group ministry and Mr. Denyer introduced contemporary worship services on Sunday afternoons.

At the time of Rev. Wes Denyer's call to Rosedale Presbyterian Church in 2010, Session elected its first female clerk, Mary M. [Molly] Harvey and its first Deputy Clerk, Felicity Alexander, setting the stage for the next three clerks, Pam Loree, Kim Shepherd and Jean Bradshaw, all women. St. Andrew's first female elder, Dorothy Brown, was elected in 1981.

After considerable study and prayer following the call to Rev. Geoff Ross, Session recommended to the congregation and sought permission from Presbytery to adopt term service for elders with a Session of 15 members. Supporting elders, those who were ordained but not sitting on Session, were expected to continue their active roles on committees of Session. Great efforts were made to thank all those elders who graciously moved from serving to supporting elders. Every two years the congregation now elects five new elders for a six-year term, thus rejuvenating the

Session with new perspectives and initiatives. With this change, Session meetings with 15 at the table are more efficient with concise discussions and prompt decision-making. This became particularly necessary in the fast-moving situations of the COVID pandemic. The additional hurdle of meeting on-line was not ideal but was necessary to carry out the church business.

Because serving elders were relieved of their responsibility of quarterly visiting, a team responsible for congregational care was established. When there was an associate minister and a minister of visitation this system worked well.

### **A Commitment to Mission and Outreach**

St. Andrew's strong commitment to Mission and Outreach has been demonstrated over the past twenty-five years and longer through its consistent support of Presbyterians Sharing and Presbyterian World Service and Development.

Members have responded generously to give extraordinary support for appeals at times of famine and natural disasters such as the tsunami in Thailand in 2004. St. Andrew's youth and adults have participated in mission trips to Nicaragua, to Winnipeg's Anishinabe Fellowship Centre and the choir travelled to sing God's praises in England.

Mission-related activities include keeping in touch with the families and children baptized in our church and organizing used clothing drives. For many years, St. Andrew's maintained a partnership in Presbyterian Corn Share for Canadian Foodgrains Bank, which distributed grain to needy countries. It also partnered with NeighbourLink, which was a coalition of local churches to match local needs with available resources. There have been annual Mission Sundays to inform the congregation of missionary efforts of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

### **South East Asian Outreach Ministry**

The South East Asian Outreach Ministry has grown since it was first established in 2014. Rev. Geoff Ross and the Mission Committee have been instrumental in guiding this ministry. Considering the changing demographics of Brampton, this ministry has much to offer through Sunday afternoon church services in Urdu, Hindi, and Punjabi. An annual grant



from the Presbyterian Church in Canada provides resources to enhance these activities. Rev. Babar Allahditta conducts the Sunday afternoon services and Samina Babar serves on the Session of St. Andrew's. There are many opportunities for both groups to worship together.

### **Food Bank**

St. Andrew's largest continuous mission activity is the Food Bank. It was started around 1987 when food was given to those who asked at our door. Maureen Kelly spearheaded this effort when it began. The Food Cupboard, as it was known, grew as the need in our community grew. Initially supported by members of St. Andrew's through the Mission Committee, it now functions solely on money and food donated directly to the Food Bank and is administered by a team of volunteers. Donations from members of St. Andrew's and other local churches are generously supplemented by corporate donations and donations from food drives by schools, hockey teams, etc. Bruce "the Cookie Man" Cornish has sold cookies and fruit cakes each year during Advent to support the Food Cupboard. Over the years the organizing team has included Tom Campbell, Belle Campbell, Gord Warren, Valerie Warren, Grace Brewster-Yates, Sandra Jackson, Herb Eitner, Bruce Cornish, and Ian Jess. They are supported by a host of volunteers. The team improved the purchasing practices by taking advantage of bulk buying opportunities and through membership in the Brampton Food Sharing Network. The distribution area was moved to the downstairs portion of the Christian Education wing and purpose-built cupboards were installed. Before the COVID shutdown in 2020, every Wednesday afternoon the Food Bank supported up to 150 people and their families. During the pandemic closure, all of St. Andrew's 2020 and 2021-dated non-perishable food was moved to an offsite location for distribution by the combined forces of Regeneration and the City of Brampton. As the closures and restrictions lifted, the St. Andrew's Food Bank re-opened. At the time of writing, clients are beginning to return. With the planned redevelopment in downtown Brampton, many of the rooming houses are closed and those residents have been displaced and do not have the same easy access to St. Andrew's. Volunteers continue to demonstrate their Christian generosity and willingness to answer God's call by giving to and working with our Food Bank.

### **Women's Missionary Society**

The Women's Missionary Society (WMS), through its monthly study meetings, keeps mission work in front of mind for its members. St. Andrew's-Pringle WMS supports both the national church and St. Andrew's. The Pringle Women's Missionary Society began in the early 1900s and met for many years in the afternoons. In the 1930s, Mrs. Coulter, the wife of the minister, started the St. Andrew's WMS, which met in the evenings. In the 1960s, the two groups merged to form the St. Andrew's-Pringle WMS and have continued meeting the first Tuesday of the month, weather permitting. During the pandemic shutdown, those who were able met via Zoom. The WMS supports both the national church and our local church. The focus of its studies and work is missionaries locally and abroad. During the twelve years Rev. Paul McLean ( a son of St. Andrew's Church) was serving in Taiwan under the Board of the World Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the WMS group sent donations in support of his translation of the Bible into the Hakka language. The group also supports Armagh, the Leprosy Foundation, The Canadian Bible Society and Evangel Hall. The roster of guest speakers and vibrant study materials provide a wealth of knowledge to its members. Its faithful witness is a mainstay for many women of the congregation. St. Andrew's-Pringle WMS was at one time the largest group of its kind in the Presbytery of Brampton.

### **Faith-in-Action**

Rev. Geoff Ross initiated a spring Faith-in-Action campaign which energized and inspired many of the congregation to take up tasks in the church and in the community. Over the years there have been clean-ups in the church and local parks, painting bees, garden planting, shelf building, and thank-you card writing for first responders and healthcare workers during COVID. Members also helped serve at a community breakfast.

### **Refugee Sponsorship**

While the task of preparing an application to sponsor a refugee family is challenging, it cannot compare to the difficulties of living in a refugee camp. In 2017 St. Andrew's applied, and in 2018, shared in the relief and joy experienced by the family who finally arrived in Brampton. Since then,

the congregation has provided support and encouragement to the family. In 2022 a second family arrived after a long COVID-delay.

### **Newsletter**

St. Andrew's provides outreach to the congregation and shut-ins through its newsletter. For many years, Stu Royal served as editor, thoughtful writer, and book reviewer for the congregational newsletter *Inside St. Andrew's*. He was ably assisted by our intrepid news collector, Felicity Alexander, and inveterate reporter, Molly Harvey. In 1999, Elizabeth Giesbrecht and Sandra Shepherd joined the team. Published 11 times a year, the newsletter appears the first Sunday of each month except August, to inform the church family about activities within the congregation and the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and to provide inspiration to readers. For many years the team collated and stapled the newsletter, which the church secretary had printed and photocopied. Happily, it has graduated to a full-sheet stapled newsletter which is now commercially printed, and with colour! Molly Harvey retired from the team in 2001, as did Sandra Shepherd. When Stu Royal retired and moved north in 2008, Elizabeth Giesbrecht took over as a very capable editor and page layout specialist. She did a masterful job of chasing contributors to meet the monthly deadlines, writing and creating readable, typo-free copy for all to enjoy. When Elizabeth moved away from Brampton, the task of editor fell to the remaining member of the team, Felicity Alexander. She manages to prod the monthly contributors to submit their copy on time and does all the page layout, editing and proofreading. This is a monumental task. The success and effectiveness of *Inside St. Andrew's* is due to the contributors who report on various activities. There have been many over the years. During the COVID shutdown, hard copies of the newsletter were hand delivered to those without internet access.

### **Website**

Ben Harper, an enterprising member of the youth group, created a church website as part of a high school project in 1998–99. The content at that time was mostly from the newsletter. For many years since then, David Aleong served as website coordinator and thereafter Peter and Kim Shepherd have filled the role. The website now provides a wealth of information

on worship services, links to recorded services, opportunities to donate to the church and descriptions of church programs. With the adoption of changing technology, communication tools have expanded to include the use of e-mail, and e-blasts with timely messages of interest to the congregation.

### **Santa Claus Parade**

An additional outreach event was the presentation of St. Andrew's award-winning float in the Santa Claus parade in downtown Brampton. Many of the spectators passing by the church en route to viewing locations on Main St. were offered free hot chocolate and information about Christmas church services.. The re-development and construction in the downtown area has necessitated a parade route change so that future participation is on hold.

### **Community Needs**

Outreach into the community has spurred facility rental to groups which need meeting space. St. Andrew's provides meeting rooms for Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Dismas (a group for people returning from prison to meet with community volunteers to share a time of fellowship and friendship).

### **Making a Joyful Noise**

As the congregation celebrates its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it is hard to imagine how the first members worshipped each week. Were they allowed music? Did they smile, clap, jingle a bell, rattle a rhythm instrument, blow a whistle, and enjoy themselves as they sang the Lord's praises? St. Andrew's is a congregation which likes to sing, as evidenced by the practice of singing a few Christmas carols before the Sunday morning service during Advent and enthusiastic singing of hymns as part of worship services.

The congregation is truly blessed to have such a wonderful music program, which now includes Junior Music Makers, who share with us their delight in God's work through song. The Leap of Faith band and the Senior Choir share their God-given talents in voice and with instruments under the imaginative direction of Shelagh Tyreman and with the assistance of back-up organist/accompanist, Ruth Kelly-Boxe.

At a 1998 Ecumenical celebration at St Mary's Church, "Praise and Worship through Song", the St. Andrew's choir sang the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm arranged by Charles Collins. During rehearsals, the other choirs who were participating applauded St. Andrew's for their beautiful rendition of the anthem. It was the highlight of the celebration for all who attended.

In 2001, St. Andrew's showed its appreciation for the "king of instruments" by making a sound investment of \$100,000 to restore the pipe organ. Upon completion of the work, there was a celebratory concert in May which included our 29-voice choir singing a wide variety of classical and contemporary numbers. Shelagh and her husband Rob Hennig highlighted the power and the gentleness of the mighty organ. Listeners were treated to "Highland Cathedral" on the organ accompanied by bagpiper Joe Sellors and for the finale — the Hockey Night in Canada theme complemented by hockey jerseys sported by the ever-optimistic Toronto Maple Leaf fans in the choir.

In the summer of 2006, the Senior Choir and Leap of Faith band travelled to England where they performed at several fundraising events to benefit local churches. Over the years the choir has worked diligently through weekly practices to enhance Sunday worship through anthems and hymns. The annual Christmas Cantata often introduced new Christmas tunes and arrangements. During COVID and even after the return to in-person worship, singing was not, at first, allowed and then only with masks, but Shelagh encouraged everyone to take up rhythm instruments to express the beat of the hymns. On Easter Sunday 2022, the Junior Music Makers with the help of technology and, no doubt parents, provided the anthem, complete with original artwork. It is everyone's fervent hope that eventually the choir will be able to resume when the perils of singing in an enclosed space are reduced. May the Lord continue to be praised through music!

### **Christian Education**

A large and vibrant Sunday School provides instruction for children of the congregation up to the end of high school. In the 1990s, nearly 200 children were registered in the classes from preschool up to senior high school. The littlest angels filled the choir loft, and hearts, when they sang as part of morning worship. Dr. Arnold Bethune noted that St. Andrew's had one of the largest Sunday Schools in the Greater Toronto Area, with

as many as 25 teacher volunteers who spent preparation time and Sunday mornings with our youth. For many years, Maureen Kelly served as Sunday School Superintendent. She was followed by Colleen Peyer and then Jean Bradshaw. Each has made a significant contribution to the faith enrichment of St. Andrew's children.

The youth group was ably led by committed volunteers including Dave Conrad, James Klein, and Richard Duncan and Colin Jess. Laurie Denyer and Anthony Sammut were paid as part time youth directors. In 2005, St. Andrew's called Rev. Blair Bertrand as Minister of Children, Youth and Families. During the three years that he was at St. Andrew's, youth participated in a variety of foundation-building activities. The SAY (St. Andrew's Youth) Group has helped in serving at congregational dinners and at the tea room for the bazaar. Members have been inspired by their leadership and involvement at Camp Glen Mhor and then at Cairn Camp and at the Food Bank. Generations of youth have helped the church and community as they have had fun while learning about themselves and their own spirituality.

During Blair's time at St. Andrew's, he spearheaded the introduction and implementation of the Presbyterian Church in Canada Leading with Care program. It affirms the congregation's commitment to training and supporting teachers and leaders in churches so that children/youth/vulnerable adults will grow in faith and the love of Christ in a climate of safety.

Each summer Rev. Rebekah Mitchell conducted a Vacation Bible School, which has continued with lay leadership by Kim Shepherd.

A vibrant adult education program has taken many forms. Adult study groups, often led by elders, were held on Wednesday evenings. For several years, Alvin Kelly led the ALPHA video series, based on the program started in the England by Rev. Nicky Gumble. It proved to be a valuable faith-renewing experience for many. On Wednesday evenings, a community supper served in the Great Hall provided a fellowship opportunity for those attending ALPHA and the discussion groups led by Rev. Wes Denyer. Rev. Rosemary Doran and Rev. Rebekah Mitchell drew upwards of 40 people on Tuesday mornings for adult bible studies. Rev. Geoff Ross continued the Tuesday morning tradition.

Congregants have had opportunities to take parenting courses, grief seminars, a living will seminar and a planned giving information session.

GRACE Groups were initiated during Rev. Rebekah Mitchell's ministry. The acronym of GRACE described the purpose of holistic small groups to: **G**lorify God; build **R**elationships with neighbours; perform **A**cts of Service; work in the **C**ommunity and; **E**ducate. Potential leaders met as a group for several months to prepare them to organize groups. Membership in the groups was organized by postal code so that neighbours would meet. They met monthly in people's homes for a couple of hours once a month. Initially the intent was to grow the groups and subdivide them to create new groups. In practice it started with eight groups, and two groups have continued to meet over ZOOM during the pandemic. Those who are involved have said that they help to build a sense of community around church activities and to provide valuable support in times of need.

### **Stewards of His Kingdom in Brampton**

The congregation of St. Andrew's are stewards of a beautiful heritage building. In the last twenty-five years members have made monumental efforts to maintain this inheritance by supporting major repairs to the east wall and foundation; the restoration of the stained-glass window; the renovation of the Christian Education wing, including a new kitchen; replacement of boilers; improvements to lighting and roofing; abatement of asbestos; and meeting new fire precaution regulations. All these projects were overseen by conscientious members who served on committees responsible for the property.

To further God's ministry, members of St. Andrew's have provided sufficient funds to ensure that these projects could be completed. Most were completed as a result of special appeals for a specific project. There have been a wide variety of fundraising campaigns, the most successful being outright appeals for help for a particular cause, recognizing that all abundance comes from God. Donors could see that the congregation was administering the funds in a prudent manner.

By the turn of the millennium, St. Andrew's had received several bequests which prompted the establishment of a planned giving ministry to determine the appropriate investment and distribution of these funds. Over the period 2013–2021, the church received approximately \$775,000 from estate gifts, most of which were initially invested with the Presbyterian Church in Canada Consolidated Investment Fund. Subsequently, substantial amounts

have been used for those major building repairs and renovations. These expenditures have been offset by the superior investment returns achieved by the PCC fund.

In addition, there have been sales of fair-trade products, frozen meat, flower baskets, poinsettias and greeting cards and bazaars. All have contributed to God's mission.

Stewardship also involves the care and management of personnel. St. Andrew's has been blessed with a series of church secretaries, now administrators. In the last twenty-five years, the congregation has benefitted from the hard work and dedication of Joan Knox, Anne King, Judy Weaver, Margaret Bakkeren, Debbie Peacock, and Valerie Barrett. Henry Ettinger, the caretaker of more than 40 years, retired during the pandemic.

### **Fellowship and Congregational Life**

For many years, the Anniversary Dinner in October and the Strawberry Social Talent Night in June have been important events in the life of the church. The talent component was different each year, with songs, dances, jokes, and lots of fun. Few will forget the rendition of "there's a hole in my bucket" sung by the Irish duo of Rosemary Doran and Florence Martin. Weekly coffee fellowship after Sunday worship provided opportunities to catch up with friends and greet newcomers. The coffee fellowship is one of the things members of St. Andrew's missed greatly with the pandemic shutdown. The Zoom fellowship was not the same, but it did provide an opportunity for a brief chat after service.

Social and educational activities such as pot luck dinners, travelogues, breakfasts, theatre outings, golf tournaments, offered something for everyone. **SABRES (St. Andrew's Brothers in Renewal Edification and Service)**, a men's group met for social, sport and study for a few years in the early 2000s.

Mystery dinners took place the first Saturday night of January, February, and March and finished with a themed potluck dinner in the Great Hall in April. Joyce Wagg coordinated these dinners from 1987 until 2017. Four people would arrive at a host's house at 6:30 for dinner. The Mystery? The host did not know who was coming to dinner and (before the internet) the guests did not know to whose house they were going. An evening around the dinner table with people with whom you may only have a nodding acquaintance served as an excellent community builder.



### **St. Andrew's Craft Ladies/SALSA**

From 1982–1999, the Craft Ladies Group raised money through an annual Fall Bazaar to support the church. During that time, the women met every Wednesday morning to make craft items for the annual Bazaar; but all was not work. They also socialized and had tea and goodies made by their members.

In April 1997, they co-ordinated a Daffodil Tea and Fashion Show to celebrate the congregation's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. With the proceeds from this Tea, they had the three communion table chairs reupholstered. Also in 1997, they undertook the responsibility of providing the flowers for the sanctuary each Sunday to help glorify God. During Advent, they co-ordinated the decorating of the sanctuary and provided small craft items to go along with the plants delivered to shut ins.

The 2001 annual report shows that a new group was formed — St. Andrew's Ladies Social and Action group or SALSA. This group met monthly in the evenings for fellowship, learning and service to help with a variety of activities in the community and the church, including decorating the sanctuary for Advent, providing Easter treats for children of our Food Bank customers, and making jam for the Bazaar. It also supports Change Her World, a group which creates hope and opportunity for vulnerable girls and women in Malawi, started by former student minister, Rev. Carol Hamilton.

## Looking To the Future— From the Back Pew

We pray and hope for an end to the restrictions of the pandemic. If and when that happens church life as we knew it will not be the same, and perhaps it shouldn't be. Maybe we needed the shock of no in-person church to help us realize what is essential to our spiritual well-being. Perhaps it is time to look at life in the church and determine what we can and should do to further God's kingdom here. We pray for God's guidance and for leaders to stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.

In this our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year, as a congregation, we recognize the importance of our rich heritage in this small corner of the world. The pandemic over the last two years has delivered new challenges for all of us. With God's help we have continued to serve in the ways we could, recognizing that the church is people. At the same time, we know that these 175 years are only a tiny portion of the life of His Church worldwide. There have been challenges encountered and challenges met in other places and times. We have attempted to describe the short road we have travelled. With God's help, we will continue to do His work as a vibrant, active, and committed congregation.

—Mary M. (Molly) Harvey

O Lord, you have been our refuge throughout every generation.

PSALM 90:1

Rev. Geoff Ross, Senior Minister

Rev. Rosemary Doran, Minister Emeritus

Rev. Wayne J Baswick, Minister in Association

Rev. Babar Allahditta, Minister in Association

Shelagh Tyreman, Director of Music

### **Serving Elders as of May 2022**

K. Shepherd	2016–2022	A. Dewar	2019–2024
R. McMechan	2016–2022	S. Jackson	2019–2024
E. Emanuel	2016–2022	R. Kirkpatrick	2021–2026
E. Boyd	2017–2022	S. Babar	2021–2026
P. Willoughby	2018–2024	H. Peyer	2021–2026
J. Young	2018–2024	K. Hutchinson	2021–2026
J. Bradshaw	2018–2024	*Two vacancies	

### **Supporting Elders, Year of Ordination, Election**

(As published in 2021 Annual Report)

A.J. Hunt	1967	K. Jackson	1996
W. Gemmill	1972	S. Jess	1996
J.F. MacDonald	1972	L. Malek	1998
I.C. Jess	1981	A. Mear	1998
S. Kellam	1981	V. Warren	1998
C. Kester	1981	R. Wightman	1998
G. Burrows	1983	T. Campbell	2004
B. Embling	1983	R. Duncan	2004
H. Eitner	1986	S. Loree	2004
M. MacDonald	1986	R. Orrom	2004
F. Holmes	1987	D. Warwick	2006
B. Cornish	1989	M. Jackson	2014
J. Nicholson	1989	N. Frank	2016
J. Urquhart	1989	M Tedder	2016
M. Hunt	1989	G. Warren	1996, 2016
D. Volpe	1992	M. Nicol	2018
D. Young	1992	R. Hakim	2018
F. Alexander	1996	J Stratton	2021
M. Harvey	1996	P. Loree	2014
		D. Scott Donne	2014
		R. Scanlan.	2014
		C. Young	2014



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary M. (Molly) Harvey is the daughter of a preacher and a choir director. Born in Quebec City, she grew up in Stratford and Chatham, Ontario. She completed high school in Halifax, N.S. and graduated from Acadia University. She has worked as a museum curator, corporate communicator, and freelance writer. She is the author of *Pleasant Remembrances, a Memoir of the Mackay Family at Cap-à-l'Aigle, Quebec* and co-author of *What the Records Tell Us 1972-2022, A History of the Church of St. Peter-on-the-Rock, Cap-à-l'Aigle, Quebec*.

In Brampton, she has served on the Brampton Heritage Board and the Board of the Peel Museum. She has been a member of St. Andrew's Brampton since 1981 and has acted as Youth Group leader, Sunday School teacher and served on many committees, including the newsletter team. She was ordained an elder in 1996 and elected clerk of Session 2011, a position she held until 2015. She is now a supporting elder.

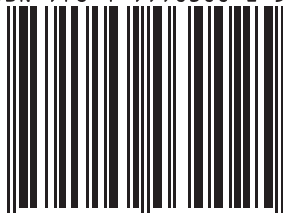






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