

CLUTE UNITED CHURCH 25TH ANNIVERSARY
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On June 25th, Clute United Church will mark the 25th anniversary of its founding. It was the first church to be dedicated in Toronto Conference after the formation of the United Church of Canada, and in recognition of this, the Moderator of the Church will be present for the Anniversary Service. The following historical record was prepared by Mrs. R. A. Dodds.

In a review of the early days in Clute, it is known that Rev. W. Edwards of the Baptist Church, Cochrane, came out during the summer of 1919 and 1920 and held services. Early in the spring of 1921, two ardent new settlers, Harold and Clarence Wilkins went to see Rev. G. Coulter of the Methodist Church, Cochrane, asking that a student missionary be sent by the Methodist Mission Board if possible. Accordingly, Mr. Hill was sent for the summer months, followed by Mr. G. Service, who stayed till the next summer. Mr. Service called a meeting of all interested to organize a church under Methodist supervision. Rev. G. Coulter, Chairman of the Cochrane District presided at this meeting on February 27, 1922, and so our church, under Methodist supervision, came into being. The elders elected were Messrs. H. Wilkins, T. Rowan and R. Dodds and the stewards were Miss Vera Cowan, Mr. R. Chapman and Mrs. R. Dodds, with Mrs. R. Dodds as Secretary-Treasurer.

As has happened in so many new communities, the school preceded the church, hence so far the services had been held in the school-house. This continued until our church was built. In 1924, when Mr. Dixon was student missionary and Rev. E. Baker was minister of Cochrane Church, meetings were held and the building of a church discussed. Rev. E. Baker was chairman of these meetings and it was he who had the correspondence with the Mission Board. The site, a portion of R. Dodds' farm, was chosen, and plans were drawn up and building began early in 1925. The building was made possible by the co-operation of the settlers, who gave lumber, money and time, ably assisted by the Home Mission Board, who gave a building grant of \$500 and a furnishings grant of \$200, followed by donations from members of Cochrane Church. Mr. J. O. Gibson was head carpenter and day after day the men of the community gave their time. By June 21, 1925, our church was ready for opening. At the opening and dedication services held that day, Rev. E. Baker was the guest speaker and it was Mr. Dixon's last service. So our little church was the first in the Toronto Conference to be dedicated after formation of the United Church of Canada, on June the 10th.

With a church in which to meet for worship, a great deal had been accomplished. From then on till the end of 1932, we had eleven student missionaries, with the exception of one Rev. A. Edington. Each served to the best of his ability the peoples' spiritual needs and the far-spread work served as a proving-ground. Of these eleven, four we know are preaching the gospel, Rev. P. Renner of Bayfield, Rev. A. Moore of Waterdown, Rev. G. Hazlewood and Mr. C. Clarke.

In July 1933 we entered upon a new stage. The Home Mission Board was able to send us newly-ordained ministers. Thus Clute, with the several appointments on the field, became a starting point for these men and for ten years it was so. Of these eight ministers, we know at the present time Rev. C. Higginson is at Prospect Park United Church, Toronto, Rev. A. J. Lawton is in the Prince Rupert Presbytery, P. C. Rev. J. C. Thompson is in Trinidad and Rev. R. S. Hiltz is in Temiskaming, Que.

Since 1943 seven student missionaries or laymen have served us, and of these we know Mr. R. McKinley is attending University, Mr. S. A. Smith is now ordained and at Shawbridge, Que., Mr. W. Behie is at Hornepayne, Mr. R. Usher is in Western Canada this summer

and Mr. J. Lake is returning to Clute this fall. In all, twenty-six men have laboured among us in the past twenty-five years. Some were not here long enough to get acquainted. We should like to mention also Mr. Geo. Service, who since ordination has ministered at Kapuskasing, Hamilton and Winnipeg.

Early after the building of the Church, a flourishing Sunday School was carried on under Mr. Harold Wilkins. After he left our church, the Sunday School was disbanded until 1933 when it was opened under Mrs. R. Dodds. Since then it has carried on, though lately only during the summer months.

Mention is also made of a W. A. which was formerly a working body but ceased to function till last year. Today we have a W. A. with twelve active members and it is proving a great asset. Our church today has twenty-one members living in our community.

The elders are Messrs. J. Webster, E. Phillips and R. Dodds. The stewards are Mrs. E. Phillips, Mrs. F. W. Knight, Mrs. R. A. Dodds Messrs. A. Morden and G. Knight, with Mrs. R. A. Dodds Secretary Treasurer.

Our present pastor, Mr. J. Lake is attending summer school, but will return in September. He is being supplemented by Mr. Douglas Gardner, a student.

So the piece of land, chosen and set aside for religious purposes twenty-five years ago is an ideal church property, the land being deeded to the United Church of Canada.

We have deep gratitude in our hearts for the experiences of the past, for the high courage of all those who have ministered to us, so often a handful. We look forward with knowledge of tasks as yet unaccomplished. We know they are many, yet have hope, believing that the God of our fathers will be with us yet. And we pray that the remembrance of the steadfastness and faith of our fathers maybe in other places, may be a spur to our endeavours.

For our 25th Anniversary we are being highly honoured in having Rt. Rev. Willard Brewing Moderator of the United Church of Canada give the message and in having Rev. J. A. Lyttle, Superintendent of Missions conduct the service. This is indeed a wonderful privilege and we wish to share our joy by inviting all to attend the service June 25th at 3 p.m. and also the supper on June 26th.

p.s. Owing to illness Rt. Rev. Brewing was unable to be present