

FAITH IN THE RUINS

Sept. 12/79
Burgessville



Rt. Rev. David Ragg at Oxford Centre service.

— Staff photo by Janice Vansickle

Even tornado can't stop worship in Oxford Centre

By JANICE VANSICKLE
Sentinel-Review staff writer

OXFORD CENTRE — Amid the smoke of burning ruins, the buzzing of chains saws and the rumble of bulldozers, members of Christ Anglican Church here gathered for Sunday service.

Sitting on makeshift pews hastily assembled out of bricks and wood salvaged from their tornado-mauled church, the ground and lawnchairs, about 100 members of the church sat solemn faced as Rt. Rev. David Ragg, bishop of the Anglican Diocese of London, asked them to be thankful for what they have left.

"Even though tragedy has struck we have so much to be thankful for," Ragg told the people, many of whom had their homes and farms levelled by Tuesday's tornado that all but obliterated the village.

"We are in the midst of life and we see around us what death could have done and we have so much to thank God for, that a miracle could happen, all the destruction we have lived through," he said, as the church members sat with their backs to the crumbled remains of their 112-year-old church.

Everywhere their eyes turned there were reminders of the horror they had lived through.

Rubbish fires dotted the scarred landscape, bulldozers levelled out building remnants and hydro crews worked diligently to restore power to replace downed lines.

But the spirit of the congregation was strong as they sang Onward Christian Soldiers from hymn books left behind by the tornado's thundering winds.

Organist Mary Aleya supplied music for the service on an organ that had survived serious damage at her home. The organ was supplied with power from a portable generator.

The church vestry, found about one-half mile away from the church, was circulated by an elderly man for everyone to sign.

Ragg said the vestry will serve as documentation of the historical service.

The church's minister, Rev. John Swain, is vacationing in England, but former minister Rev. George Pell, now of Sherbrooke, Que., assisted Ragg in delivering communion.

Upon hearing of the devastation that had wrecked the community, Pell said he couldn't stay away and attended Sunday's service as a former minister, neighbor and friend.

Ragg asked that the people be given courage to rebuild their homes and lives.

Church elder Mike Simmons said the church will definitely be rebuilt.

Down the road from the church one family had already started to rebuild their house, even though only part of the front wall and the shell of a room had been left standing after the tornado.

BURGESSVILLE (C) — Friends and neighbors gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Moore recently to honor Mr. and Mrs. David Slater (nee Cheryl Moore) Woodstock, who were recently married. Games and contests were played. Philip Buckrell gave the address and a presentation was made to David and Cheryl, who thanked all for the gift. A delicious lunch was served, bringing an enjoyable evening to a close with all wishing the couple congratulations.

The Burgessville Cemetery looked very nice with all the beautiful flowers placed on the graves of loved ones by relatives and friends. A special service was held in the church, with Rev. Max Johnston bringing the message. Special music was also enjoyed.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sreidrich, Ocala, Florida, spent Friday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Russel Clifford.

Miss Marguerite Hill spent a week with Miss Alta

Bectim, Chatham. Miss Hill and Miss Bectim were at the Blue Water Conference for three days.

Mr. and Mrs. Wray Broad have returned home from a two-week holiday at Callander, Manitoulin Island, and a few days at the home of their daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Ron Blackmore and family, Elliott Lake. They also spent a few days with their aunt, Mrs. Elsie Beckner, Mich., who returned home with them.

Misses Marian and Margaret Cameron, Toronto, spent the weekend at the home of their parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Cameron, Holbrook.

Mrs. Stanley Schultz, Woodstock, was a recent dinner guest of Miss Marguerite Hill.

The family of Mrs. William Beecraft held a family reunion recently at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Beecraft in Burgessville. Guests were present from

Kingston, Oakville, Chatham, Tavistock, Simcoe, Tillsonburg, Woodstock and Otterville. The occasion was to celebrate the birthdays of six of the family whose birthdays occur in August.

Miss Christine Koppert has returned home after spending her vacation in British Columbia.

Storm carries personal articles for miles

Tornado stories abound along with the devastation created by the August 7 storm.

Personal belongings and debris were carried miles after being sucked up by the winds.

A Hagersville area man, Harold Wilson, was reported to have found two \$100 Canada Savings bonds in a field while combining. They bore the name of a Woodstock resident, and had been carried some 35 miles. Mr. Wilson also found other papers from Woodstock, along with a pair of pants, and assorted debris.

Harry Green, of RR 2, Ohsweken, also reported he

had found items from the Woodstock area.

Driver's licence of a Woodstock resident was found in Dunnville, and in Waterford, a 13-year-old boy, Clark Hoskins, picked up a copy of the Woodstock paper in his front lawn.

There were reports of farm equipment and even motor vehicles that had simply disappeared in the storm.

Years from now it is likely that personal effects of storm victims will be turned up in forests and fields where they were finally deposited as the storm's fury diminished.

Burgessville News

Oct. 29/79
Friends and neighbors gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Roberts to honor their son and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Roberts who were recently married. An hour of fellowship was enjoyed. Maurice Buckrell gave the address and Mrs. Les Buckrell made the presentation of a bridge table and four chairs. Bill and Mary thanked all for remembering them. Lunch was served and a social time spent

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