

Church balances diverse parish

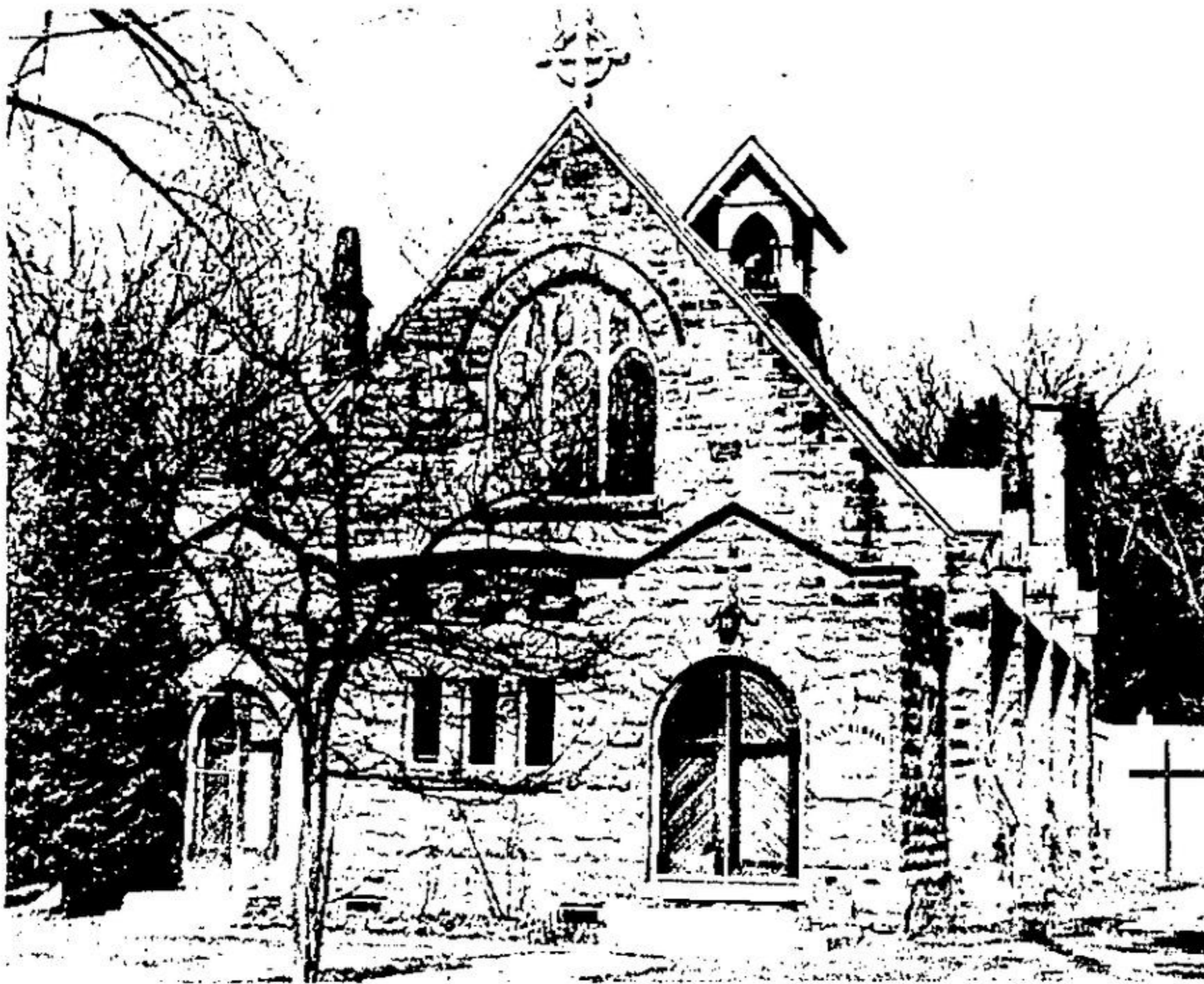
Glen's St. Alban's to celebrate 80th

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff Writer

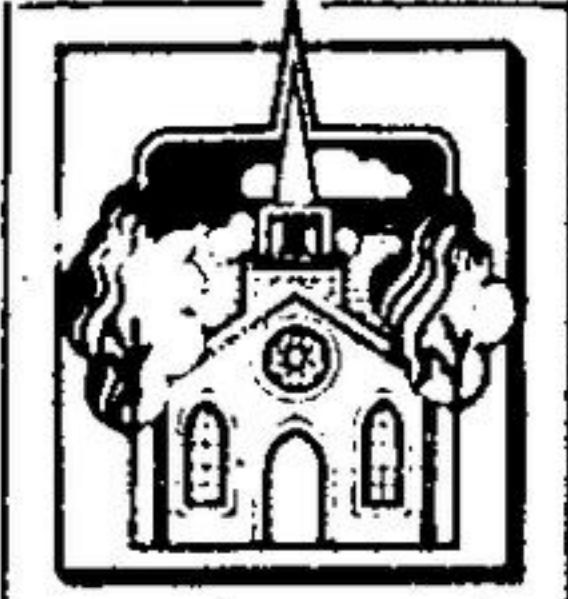
Economic hard times or not, St. Alban's Anglican Church is taking on a financial risk for the benefit of its 130 members this year, its 80th anniversary.

Beginning May 1, St. Alban's will be able to boast its own full-time pastor after years of sharing ministers. The financial risk is a two-year pilot project by the church.

Rev. Graham Bland is assistant pastor at the George-



Chunky grey bricks stand honorably one atop the other giving St. Alban's Anglican Church a charming and quaint look. Built in 1902, the church building followed the founding of a



Thirtieth in a series

town St. George's Anglican Church, where he works with Rev. Jim Boyles and also serves the Glen Williams congregation at St. Alban's. He's held the position since September, 1980. Soon all his efforts will be concentrated on the Glen parish.

"We have always leaned on other churches to help us financially and this year we've become self-supporting, and I'm proud," former people's

warden Gord Graham, 81, said. "I voted to become self-supporting because I thought 80 years ago people

built a church for us and I've been using it for 80 years and we're still sort of leaning back on them. Surely in 80 years, after somebody else put up the building for us, it's time to pull up our shoelaces and keep it going on our own."

He added that the parish had needed a goal to work for. Without such a goal, Mr. Graham said people become stale.

Calling the changes in the Glen Williams community the most important factor in the life of St. Alban's in the last 20 years, Rev. Bland said that 50 per cent of his parish is made up of people who have moved to the village from other places, whereas when the church was erected in 1903, the parish was nearly all made up of descendants of long-time residents in the area.

GLEN HOUSES
"A lot of Glen houses are occupied by commuters," Rev. Bland said. "It may have caused some tensions originally, back in the '60s. Now however, the two groups of people are starting to sit down and accept that this is the way things are."

Family networks are still strong among members of the congregation and Rev. Bland

calls them one of the great strengths of the church.

"A lot of the people who come Sundays are related to the other members," he said.

Vi Haines joined the church when she got married 52 years ago.

"All my life I've been in this area," she said. "There's not too many of the old families left. The kids have grown up and moved away."

Noticing new families joining the congregation in its pews Mrs. Haines said it takes time to get to know them.

"Like the congregation, the choir members come and go. You may have a low ebb which builds itself up, then down again," she said. She's been a choir member for 40 years.

Membership in the Sunday school is the same. Its all time high has been 95 pupils about 20 years ago. Now it's about 25.

Graham said.

He said that although at different stages of his life he has gone away from St. Alban's, he has always come back. When he was young his parents would make him go to church.

"As you get older, your church becomes more important to you," Mr. Graham said.

He remembers Joseph Beaumont, owner of the Beaumont woollen mill in the Glen, being lay reader.

"Whatever the tab was, Joseph Beaumont would make up the difference, bringing it from the red," Mr. Graham said of the church debts. "It was to the detriment of the church because the congregation had never really been pushed for money and suddenly they had to be re-educated when he died."

"Maybe even to this day I sometimes feel that our

congregation isn't as generous on the collection plates as they could be, and it's a carry-over from the days when Mr. Beaumont made up the tab."

Mrs. Haines has been a member of the guild, a ladies organization in the church, for 48 years and recalls making quilts, sewing and packing parcels to be sent overseas during the war years.

After the war, the guild began running a fair in 1947. The St. Alban's Fall Fair lasted 'til 1954 when there wasn't enough help to run it. "It was fun. We used to have ball games and the night

before, always, a garden party. It really attracted a lot of people and was the major event of the year for the Glen," Mrs. Haines said.

The guild is now involved in catering to raise money for the church.

HOW PARISHES?
When and how did the parish of St. Alban's come to be? After St. George's Church was established in Georgetown in 1852, people from the Glen would drive the distance in their buggies or sleighs to attend. On occasion, Anglican services would be held in the

Continued on page 5

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Back in 1976, Rev. Graham Bland was in Papua, New Guinea, teaching nearly everything from agriculture to English. He spent two years there in a program much like Canadian University Students Overseas. Originally from Manchester, England, Rev. Bland didn't return there at the conclusion of his work stint, moving instead to St. Catharines, the home of his new Canadian bride. In Canada, he pursued studies in theology and was ordained deacon in 1980 and priest in 1981. He is now minister of St. Alban's Anglican Church in Glen Williams. (Herald photo)

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