

Baptist congregation celebrates 35th anniversary

Submitted By
THE MAPLE AVENUE
BAPTIST CHURCH

This history of Maple Avenue Baptist Church has been prepared to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the first gospel service held by this congregation in Georgetown.

THE PAST

In July 1953, several families from Calvary Baptist Church in Brampton sensed the need for an evangelical thrust in Georgetown and began an afternoon Bible group for children. Attendance reached 27 by the onset of the cold weather and the group moved from Bill Ganton's lawn into the house of William Hill. With the addition of several families, it was decided in February, 1954 that the Sunday School would function under the name of Grace Baptist Church.

It was a happy occasion on May 15, 1955 when the first gospel service was held under the ministry of Mr. Bruce Penny. In December, 1955, the official organizational meeting for the Grace Baptist Church was held and Mr. Penny was called to pastor the 14 charter members. With the encouragement of Rev. Glen Wardell of Brampton, Pastor Penny laid a firm foundation and the congregation experienced steady growth.

In 1960, there was a change of pastors and Rev. Bruce Woods began his ministry in Georgetown. Under his guidance, the congregation looked to the Lord in faith and in 1960 purchased the present land on Maple Avenue for \$3,000.00. The name of the congregation was then changed to Maple Avenue Baptist Church. Plans were made for a church building and were quickly put into motion.

The ground breaking ceremony used an unusual method; the mayor drove a bulldozer and the pastor and deacons rode as passengers. The church building was dedicated on Sunday, April 16, 1961 with Rev. L. Roblin giving the sermon of dedication.

The years following the dedication of the original church building were years of steady growth and by the time of Rev. Wood's departure for Vancouver in 1966, the church membership had more than doubled.

In February, 1967, Rev. Robert Lohnes was called to serve at Maple Avenue Baptist Church. Under his capable leadership both church and Sunday school attendance continued to grow. Two portable buildings were purchased and two school auditoriums were leased to accommodate the ever increasing numbers being reached through the grace of God.

As it became obvious that larger facilities were needed, plans were made to build a large extension to the existing building. The present 500 seat auditorium was dedicated to the glory of God on May 26, 1974, with Dr. W. H. MacBain giving the sermon of dedication. The new facilities enable all Sunday school departments to meet in one location and gave a boost to the thriving ministry.

In January, 1974, another milestone in the life of Maple Avenue Baptist Church was reached when Rev. Donald Gorrie was called to serve as associate pastor.

Following an active two years in this capacity, Pastor Gorrie retired from service in 1976. In February, 1977, Pastor Lohnes completed 10 years of service here and he and his wife Barbara were called to missionary service in Colombia.

During 1977 and 1978, Dr. Sidney Kerr served as interim pastor while a new pastor was sought. In September 1978, Rev. Edwin Mitchell responded to the call and moved to Georgetown from Oakville with his wife Dorothy and family. Under God's guidance and Pastor Mitchell's leading, the congregation has resumed its active ministry to the Halton Hills area.

Gord Mann was called by our congregation to serve as assistant pastor from 1982 to 1985. Along with Pastor Mann, Pastor Godfrey Thorogood served an internship from 1982 to 1984 while studying at Central Baptist Seminary.

THE PRESENT

At our 35th church anniversary we continue to give thanks to God for His faithfulness to us in our ministry here.

Our Sunday activities include our Family Bible Classes and two services which are augmented by our adult and children's choirs, orchestra and individuals' musical ministries. A Youth Choir has been formed recently. Nursery and Children's Church programs are conducted by a staff of forty caring workers on a rotation basis.

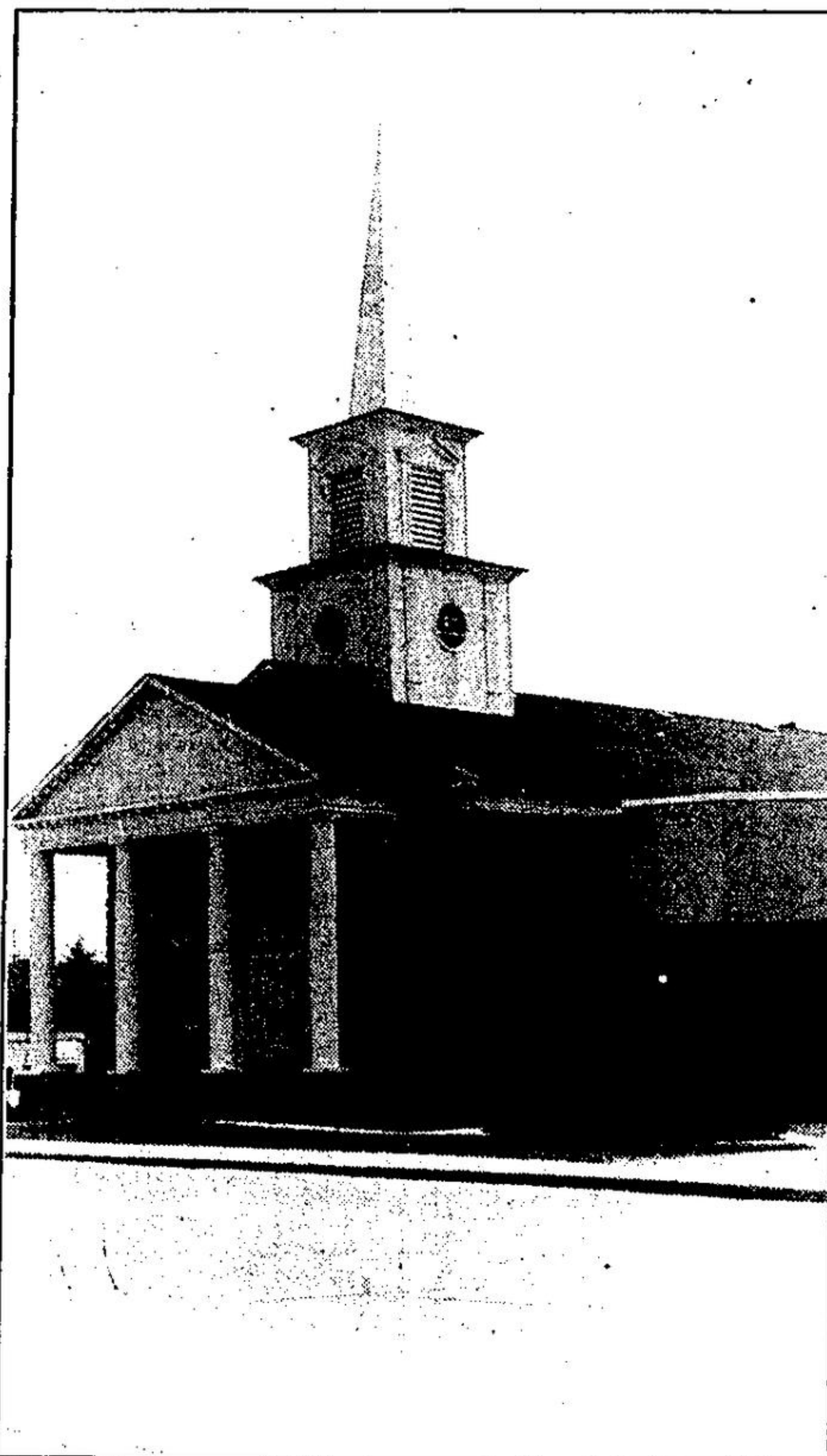
Weekly Pioneer Clubs and Christian Service Brigade enrich the lives of children and teens. Ladies' Coffee Hour and several Growth Groups form an outreach ministry where Christian principles taught, are applied to daily living. The claims of I John 1:3 are the basis for both Men's Fellowship and Ladies' Fellowship groups which meet periodically.

Little Cherub Nursery School enrolls 75 children in morning and afternoon classes where a staff of three teach with patience, love and wisdom.

Our High School Fellowship, College and Careers, meet for Sunday classes, as well as for Wednesday Bible Study and Friday Recreation night. They also participate in retreats and conferences. Jolly Seniors fellowship meet monthly at the church and also join in a variety of outings. Several ladies meet weekly to stitch quilts for our missionaries.

Our church supports many world-wide and home missionaries as well as short term workers. In Quebec, we support Brodie Brittain who works with French churches. Bill and Blanche Phillips pastor a French language church in a suburb of Montreal; Francois and Denise Nolet pastor a home mission church in Val C'Or.

Peter and Louise VonZuben and their children work among the Inuit in Yellowknife, North West Territories.



Maple Avenue Baptist Church as it stands today

Overseas, Hans and Simona Hamer and children serve in Holland where they are working to form a second evangelical church.

Tim and Joanne Kerr, along with Andrew, missionaries to Japan, are diligently learning Japanese.

Hannah Leutbecher, who recently returned to Shikarpur, Pakistan, operates the maternity hospital there.

Andy and Diane Large and children serve in Iquitos, Peru. Most recently they have begun a "boat ministry" along the Amazon River.

Steve and Barb Shantz along with Aaron and Jasmine live in Monaco, where Steve works as a technical engineer for Trans World Radio.

The Stephenson's live in Brazil, where Effie teaches at the Amazon Valley Academy and George is its administrator.

Rev. Grant and Mrs. Robinson are on furlough from Africa and are residing in British Columbia.

In Sebring, Florida, the Beachams work out of the S.I.M. office.

As a church, it is a joy to be co-labourers with these people who have been faithful to fulfill the great commission given in Matthew 28.

Pulsar Photographed

A new pulsar—the superdense remnant of a dead star that is whirling around its axis 20 times a second, throwing out an intense searchlight beam of energy—has been discovered and photographed by two teams of American astronomers.

The pulsar is the first ever to be photographed outside the earth's own galaxy. It lies in a nearby galaxy known as the Large Magellanic Cloud, about 150,000 light years from the earth. (A light year is the distance that light travels in one year at 186,000 miles a second.)

Mr. and Mrs. George Clements minister to the seniors in nursing homes in Ontario.

On the home front we support our Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Canada and also Rev. Stuart Sylvester who represents Fellowship Home Missions.

Other ministries we support at home are the Prison Fellowship of Canada, Kay England of Pioneer Clubs, Mark Clayton of Christian Service Brigade in Burlington and Daniel Oigny of Christian Service Brigade in Quebec.

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