Church milestone honored

STOUFFVILLE — As Rev. Don McKillican looked out on a filled sanctuary at St. James Presbyterian Church, Sunday, the sea of faces undoubtedly brought back memories of another day.

For it was 36 years ago that he arrived as a student pastor in Stouffville, serving also St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Markham.

The St. James congregation had dwindled in numbers to such an extent, there was talk of closing the church completely. However, through the ministry of Rev. McKillican and the persistence of elder Wm. Morris, the church remained open and services continued.

Sunday's worship, celebrating the 125th anniversary of St. James Presbyterian Church in Stouffville, reunited four former pastors, Rev. McKillican, (1949-1959); Rev. Fred Cromey, (1964-1974); Rev. Don Donaghey, (1972-1974) and Rev. Ted Creen, (1974-1984).

Each participated in the service along with Shaun Seaman, a third year student at Knox College, Toronto.

The congregation's present pastor, Rev. Herb Gale, brought the message.

The celebration, that included an anniversary dinner and program Saturday, was organized by Jean Davidson. Historical information, dating back to the congregation's founding in 1860, was researched by Bill and Muriel Keeping.

Music, both vocal and instrumental, highlighted Sunday's service. Participants included the Senior and Junior Choirs; soloists Christine McDowell, (vocal); Paul Grundy, (guitar) and Leslie Hartai, (trumpet).

Jean Thomas presided at the organ assisted by Helen Fabbro.

The Junior Choir was led by Esther Powell.

The present Presbyterian Church, located at 101 Main Street East, was opened Oct. 20, 1894. Previously, services were held in one of several halls in the village and later in a small frame church at the present site, built in 1864. The property was donated by James Johnson and the church opened free of debt.

Thirty years later, the present structure was erected. The contractor and carpenter was Nathan Forsyth. The bricklayers and masons were Mitchell Bros. of Ringwood.

In 1983, a sizeable addition was completed by A & S. Construction of Stouffville, with the help of much volunteer labor. It includes a minister's office, a lounge, a nursery and a remodelled kitchen. On March 4, 1984, the renovated downstairs was renamed Morris Hall to commemorate contributions by the Morris family.

The church manse was built in 1974.

The St. James congregation, linked with St. Andrew's, Markham, was made a student mission charge in 1974 and in 1976 became totally self-supporting.

History records the first wedding in St. James occurred Sept. 17, 1924. Lila Mitchell was married to Kenneth Campbell. Mrs Campbell, now of Dublin Apartments, Markham, attended the service, Sunday, accompanied by her daughter Helen Kelly of Caledonia.

Also in attendance were Susan Blainey of Markham and Elizabeth Westgarth of Kingston, daughters of the late Rev. and Mrs Gordon Hamill. Rev. Hamill pastored the St. James congregation from 1959 to 1964.

Rev. Murray Barron of Newmarket was also present. Mr Barron was the minister at St. James during the interval between the departure of Rev. Creen and the arrival of Rev. Gale. Appreciation was also extended to Rev. Alex Adam of Melbourne, Australia who, along with Rev. Cromey, pastored the congregation from 1970 to 1972. At the same time, he also served the United Church charges of Lemonville and Ballantrae.

Welcome bride of '24 at St. James anniversary

Rev. Herb Gale, pastor to the congregation of St. James Presbyterian Church, Stouffville, chats with Lila Campbell of Markham at the conclusion of the 125th anniversary service, Sunday. Mrs Campbell, the former Lila Mitchell of Ringwood, was married Sept. 19, 1924, the first wedding ceremony performed in the sanctuary. Ken, her husband, passed away in 1962. Jean Davidson, (left), organized the weekend reunion that included a dinner and program Saturday night.
—Jim Thomas

High News

By CHRIS GARBUTT

It's been another busy sports week at Stouffville Dist. Secondary School with both good news and bad.

On Wednesday, (Nov. 6), tickets were sold for an important athletic event, costing only one dollar. The activity was girls' basketball and man, do they know how to put on a show!

Their opponents, the Aurora Golden Gophers, were undoubtedly surprised to see all the Stouffville fans cheering on their Spartans. One can never overestimate the enthusiasm of S.D.S.S. students.

The game was a real nail-biter, close until the final quarter when the visitors opened up a ten-point lead. Despite an exciting comeback in the final minutes, the home club couldn't erase the deficit and lost 42-39. Camille Rutherford led the Spartans with 16 points.

The girls had it tough again the next day when they lost another close one by a single point.

The good news is Stouffville's outstanding success at a volleyball tournament.

The Seniors, Juniors and Midgets all qualified for the York Region Championships. The Juniors were eliminated in the preliminary round and while the Midgets lost in the final, they still qualify for the Georgian Bays. The Seniors, for the seventeenth year, are 1985 York Region Volleyball Champs. Next stop, Georgian Bay!

Garbage levels pit

GORMLEY — The in-filling of a worked-out gravel pit at Bruce's Mill Conservation Area near the 5th Concession, (Warden Avenue), has been questioned by several residents in the neighborhood.

They claim the location is close to Bruce's Creek that flows through the property.

However, Paul Flood, Director of Field Operations for the Authority, told The Tribune that only clean fill is being accepted and this includes sand, gravel and soil.

"We're only rehabilitating what we inherited," the official said. He explained the site was once used as a municipal dump long before the Authority purchased the land.

When completed, the area will be levelled off and planted with maples, he said.

The work is expected to be finished this week.

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