

MEMORIES



of the
**Grand Bend
United Church**

MEMORIES
OF THE
GRAND BEND UNITED CHURCH

By
Helen Sturdevant Desjardine
(nee Love)

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PUBLICATION INFORMATION

DISCLAIMER

The information in this book came primarily from the personal memories of the author and her brothers and sister, from personal photos, a collection of old newspaper clippings, letters and previously published books and memoirs. Although efforts have been made to check the accuracy of the contents of this book, the author and publisher cannot guarantee accuracy and regret any errors which may have been missed. Errors which may have occurred in earlier accounts may have been inadvertently carried forward in this book.

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Memories of the Grand Bend United Church

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My thanks to the following for their assistance in the researching, writing, editing, proof reading and publishing of this book and for the encouragement which many of you provided which kept me motivated and determined to get it down on paper.

My four daughters Donna Lovie, Ann Russell Mary Fraser Tavner and Susan Lee
My editor and publisher, Libby Dawson

SOURCES

Much information came from my personal newspaper clipping collection from the following newspapers:

The London Free Press
The Exeter Times Advocate
The Grand Bend Advance

Copies of various Church newsletters, calendars and weekly Sunday Service sheets provided lots of photos, confirmation of dates and reminders about all of the activities we have enjoyed. *The Grand Bend Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Books* were also a source for facts and photos.

In 1964, Rev. A. M. Grant, who followed Rev. Sam Carriere in the Presbyterian church wrote a book entitled "From Log School to United Church" which provided much of the early history of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, and a record of the planning that went into church union. It was a great help.

The Lambton County museum provided access to information and a photo of the "White Church." Many thanks.

This is not a scholarly history. There are no academic citations and proper attributions. In many cases there aren't even dates on the newspaper clippings being used or an indication of which paper they came from. But what I remember and what I have been able to find is all down on paper now so that information and stories are preserved to pass on to the next generations telling how past generations built a church and what it meant to them.

Our Mother – The Author **A tribute by her daughters**

Helen was the second child of four born to William and Florence (Gill) Love in 1925 on a farm at Highway 81 and Crediton Road. She has an older sister Ruth Whiting and two younger brothers, Jim and Alex.

She walked to S.S. #10 Stephen school for grades 1 to 7 and then for grade 8 and 9 rode her bike to Grand Bend School, staying with her grandparents in Grand Bend when the weather was bad. The closest high school was in Parkhill. There were no school buses, so she boarded there during the week going home for the weekends. Graduating at the age of 16, she was too young to enter nursing school, so she worked in the Grand Bend Post Office where her grandfather was Post Master. Her nursing education was at Saint Joseph's Hospital in London, graduating as a Register Nurse in 1946.

Helen first dated her husband, Bill Sturdevant, in high school. They attended a ball game and he rode her home on the handle bars of his bike. They renewed their dating in London where he was apprenticing as a master plumber, married and began their family, the first two of their four girls. In 1950 they decided to move back to Grand Bend to start a Plumbing and Heating business. Two more daughters arrived completing the 'Sturdevant Quartet,' also known as 'The four sisters,' Donna, Ann, Mary and Susan.

With no doctor in the village, Helen became the unofficial town nurse giving injections, doing dressings and being on call for anyone who needed help. Her involvement with the Church and community included Sunday School teacher, superintendent, and President of United Church Women. The UCW were very active at that time putting on a Pageant for Canada's Centennial, making millinery creations, serving meals and supporting many other community Centennial activities.

In 1960 Helen and Bill built a laundromat on Highway 21. Bill worked at the water plant and Helen ran the laundromat while raising the girls. In 1970 they sold the laundromat and built a home at the end of Sauble Road where daughter Ann now lives. Helen returned to nursing at Goderich Psychiatric Hospital and braved the blowing snow on Highway 21 every day in the winter. When Dr. Charles Hoch was starting a practice in Ailsa Craig, Helen applied. After an interview her girls joked that it was a two way interview and she deemed him the kind of Doctor she would like to work for. She retired in June of 1990 with a retirement party which involved a large portion of the Ailsa Craig population.

Husband Bill died in 1991 and Helen immersed herself in her projects and her volunteering, the Church and the Horticultural Society being at the top of the list. She found a Nativity Scene that used to be displayed on the front lawn of the Church at Christmas. She cleaned, repaired and repainted it and it has become her pet project. Every autumn someone would comment that “Grandma is painting the Nativity Scene again! “

Helen reconnected with an old school friend, Emerson Desjardine, and they married in 1993. They moved into a condo and not having a yard to look after Helen turned her green thumb skills to the Church gardens. When Emerson died in 2011, she immersed herself in gardening, helping the church to win prizes for their beauty.

Helen has remained remarkably fit and healthy. Her love of walking lead her to enter seniors athletic competitions bringing home medals. This year she has spent much effort in creating this book. It takes all of her four girls working in relays just to keep up with her.

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MEMORIES OF THE GRAND BEND UNITED CHURCH

By Helen (Love) Sturdevant Desjardine

OUR RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

The religious heritage of Grand Bend dates back to the 19th century. In 1830 Brewster (now Grand Bend) was a port and lumber centre. It was a rough and ready place but long before there was a church building, people gathered in log cabins for bible reading and prayer. The nursery rhyme "This is the church and this the steeple. Open the doors and there are the people," makes the observation that churches are not buildings; churches are people who gather together to worship God.

The Early Presbyterian Church

A log school house built in 1861 at the foot of the sand hills near the cemetery was used as a gathering location for worship.

In 1865, Rev. Gracie of Thames Rd. was appointed by presbytery as supervising pastor over Grand Bend and Drysdale north of Grand Bend. He served the first communion to 12 families and eleven members. The commu-

nity was mostly of Scottish descent,



Sketch of the log school house (upper right) and the 1874 Presbyterian Church located next to the cemetery. To the right of the present cemetery entrance gates, the church was located down the hill in the flat area facing the highway where another building now stands.

but also included several families who were French speaking Protestants.

In 1874, the Presbyterians built a white brick church at a cost of \$1,445.00. The interim ministers and seasonal students came and departed, usually for lack of promised funding, and it became clear that a resident minister who was bilingual was needed. Eventually a summer student from Quebec came, and the following year after his ordination in 1882, Rev. Samuel A. Carriere B.A. came to serve the growing congregation and stayed for 42 years. He was bilingual, a good singer and a gifted musician. He served a two point charge where worship was conducted at 10 a.m.

Sunday morning in Corbett; then in Grand Bend at 2 p.m. in English and 4 p.m. in French.

During the early days, the Methodists mingled happily with their Scottish neighbours in worship conducted by either group. In communities like Grand Bend before there was sufficient population to build and support churches with resident ministers, itinerant ministers travelled from place to place giving services for people from all denominations. They came to be married and to have their children baptized. Thus, merger in 1926 to form the United Church came fairly easily in Grand Bend .

GRAND BEND AREA'S PIONEER MINISTER

Memories of his parents written by Donald Carriere son of Rev. Sam Carriere

“My father, Samuel Anselm Carriere went to Point aux Trembles to study at the Protestant School, then to McGill University, graduating and being ordained in 1882. He was then 29 years old. During the summer of 1880 he was assigned as a student preacher at the Presbyterian Church at Grand Bend. Both he and the congregation asked the church board to appoint him to that congregation after graduation. This was arranged, and in 1882 he began a ministry that lasted until he retired in 1922.

The original congregation was predominately Scotch. There were about 150 French Canadian families at Drysdale north of Grand Bend and he little realized

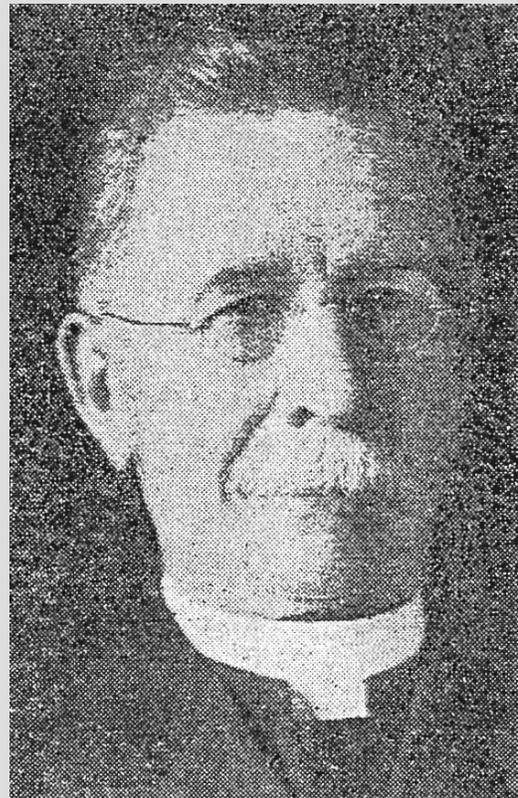
at the beginning what this was to mean to his ministry. He spoke English fluently but with a magnificent French accent at first. On one occasion he preached about Moses in the “dessert.” Scottish elders do not laugh in church but they made an exception and loved him for it.

He boarded with the Armstrongs who operated a general store/post office at Porto exchange pulpits with the minister at Bayfield and was billeted with the Campbell family. Margaret Campbell, who was seven years younger than he, was so taken with his accent and laughed so much during the service that a friendship developed and matured.

While he had saved some money for emergencies, he made frequent visits to Bayfield. Sixteen miles is a long 3 hour drive with a horse and buggy, but that did not deter him. He would return to Port Blake singing lustily in the early hours of the morning so people rejoiced to know that he was returning safely. However, he learned to approach the Armstrongs’ with the silence of a conspirator in the vain hope that he would finally, just once, succeed in escaping detection and teasing.

He and Margaret were married in 1886 and with modest belongings, they took up residence in a house rented as a manse at \$50 a year from Mr. Fulton in Bosanquet south of the river Aux Sables in Grand Bend. It was a comfortable eight room frame house. The outside pump was handy for a water supply. There was a good “weather heated” outhouse not 100 feet away. The stoves downstairs with skillfully arranged stovepipes and two “drums” upstairs provided good heat, at least until three or four a.m. After that, endurance was commended. Wood was the only fuel ever thought of.

For almost 20 years my father preached at Corbett in the morning and at Grand Bend in English at 2 p.m and then in French at 4 p.m. Some of his people attended both services to learn the language. Even after the French people spoke



Rev. S. A. Carriere B.A.

English well, they preferred the French service. This was partially due to the differences in music. The French style of simple harmonies suited their temperament. Later, after the younger generation of French people who spoke English only or by preference grew up, the French service became superfluous.

The family moved to a new manse constructed beside the church about 1901. The large substantial brick building together with a good stable and carriage shed cost \$2,200. It now seems incredible that a house with nine large rooms, hallways, full basement with furnace and flue lined chimneys, cistern with inside soft water pump, two outdoor wells and a serviceable attic could be constructed so cheaply. I remember the bricklayers laid 1000 brick for a regular day's pay and received a bonus for bricks laid in excess of 1000. The youngest child, Margarite was born in the new manse.

There was a public telephone at the Grand Bend Post Office when I was quite young, possibly 1895, but house phones were not in use until around the time of Word War I. I had my first auto ride when I was attending High School in Parkhill about 1905. People lived happy contented lives before the days of "gadget" civilization.

Mother made our clothes until we reached the age of eight or so. Father was an excellent gardener and cultivated an extensive and comprehensive garden. A cow provided us with milk and butter (but I well remember that the cow did not operate the churn.

Highways were dangerous in the early days of the auto. When an auto was about to be encountered, some people made a hurried evacuation of the roadway regardless of the depth of the ditches, flowing water or thorn bushes, and held or tied the now frantic horses to the fence until the enemy was well on its way.

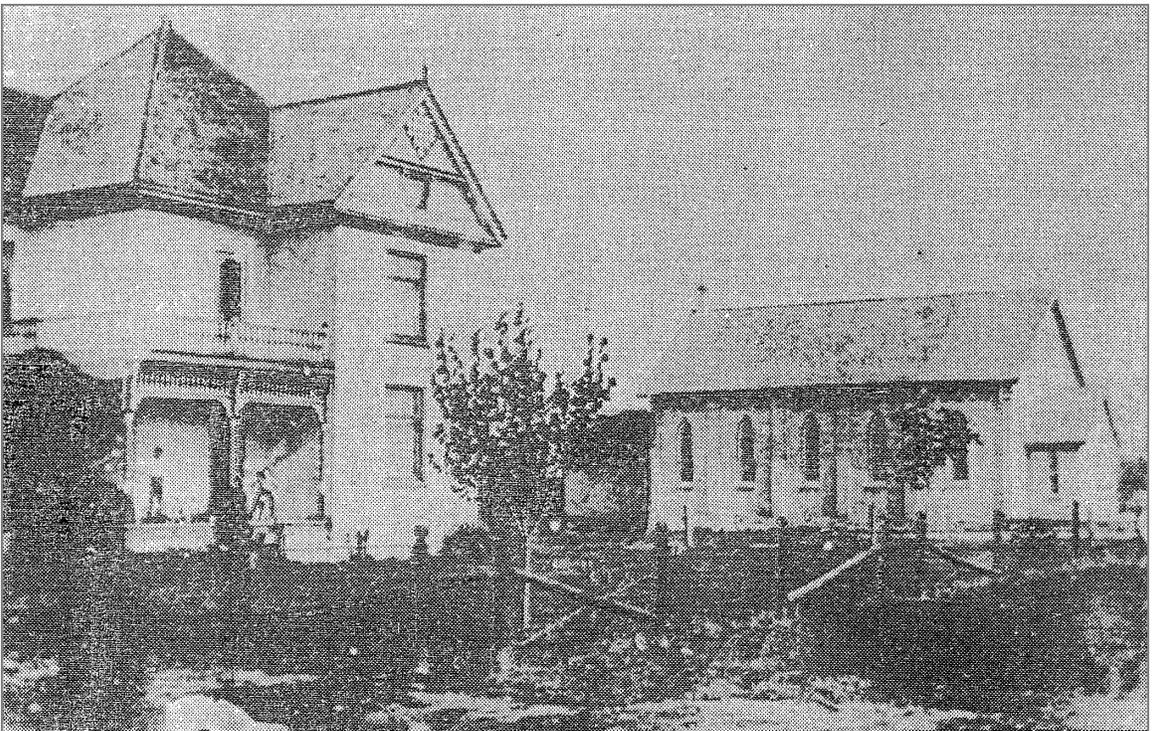
My parents retired and moved to Toronto where they could meet their family more easily. My father returned to Grand Bend on May 24, 1927 to lay the corner stone for the new Grand Bend United Church.

Father died in 1928 and mother in 1933. They are interred in the family lot in Grand Bend.



Above is the Presbyterian church at Corbett which, along with the Grand Bend Presbyterian Church, was a two point charge which Rev. Carriere served for about 20 years.

Below is the 1874 Grand Bend Presbyterian church and the manse built in about 1901 for Rev. Carriere and his family. They faced the highway below the cemetery.



Old churches give way to new ones and only old pictures are left to show future generations how the original edifice looked. This early picture shows the

old Grand Bend Presbyterian Church and manse. A new United Church was built in 1927 to serve the united Methodist and Presbyterian groups.

My Father's Memories of the Carriere Family

My father, Bill Love, was a friend of the Carriere boys, Rev. Carriere's sons. After choir practice at the manse, they were having a 'taffy pull'. Marguerite, the younger sister, had been sent off to bed early in the evening. She was miffed at not being included in the fun so she stealthily came down the stairs and threw a handful of hair clippings in the candy mix! Even then, being a minister's child did not guarantee perfect behavior.

Another of dad's stories was about his adventures when helping the Carriere boys deliver milk door to door in the summer, providing housewives with fresh milk for 5 cents a dipper full. They carried the milk in a pail and poured the milk into a container provided by the housewife, usually a pitcher. One wonders about the number of tummy upsets which were caused by unpasteurized and unrefrigerated milk being carried in open pails with a dipper used over and over pouring it into containers of unknown cleanliness. People seemed to be immune to it.

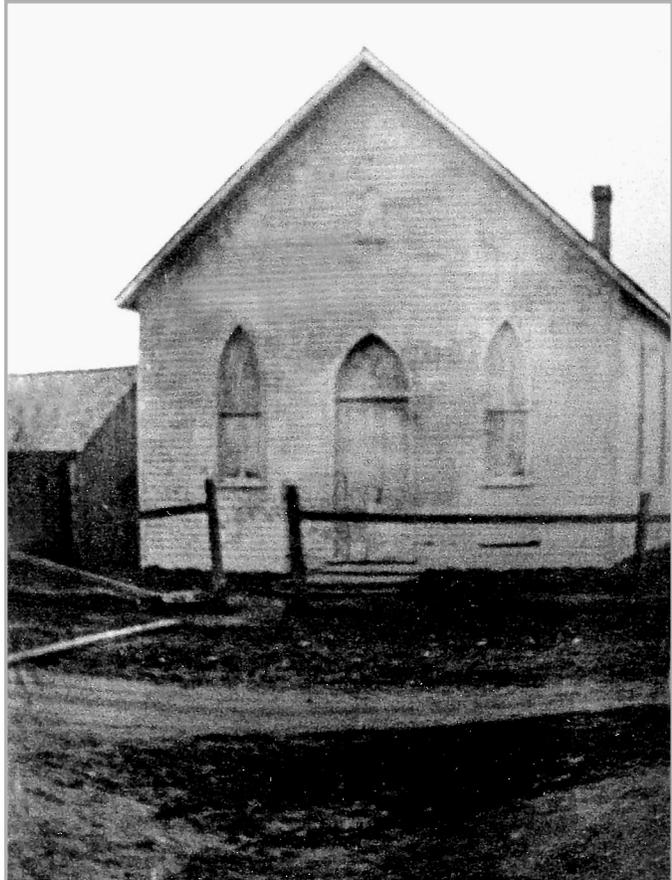
CHURCH UNION : THE FORMATION OF THE GRAND BEND UNITED CHURCH

In the pioneer days, people came to Canada from many regions of the world bringing their religious affiliations with them. Among the first things they built in their communities was a church. Sparse populations and costs of maintaining churches eventually lead to discussions about church unions with the first unions centred largely in Western Canada. In the early 1920s the Methodist Church of Canada, The Congregational Union of Canada and 70% of the Presbyterian Church of Canada along with the small General Council of Union Churches from the west began discussions for union resulting in the formation of the United Church of Canada in 1925. It is now the largest Protestant denomination in Canada.

At that time in Grand Bend, there was a Presbyterian Congregation, a Methodist Congregation, and a group of vacation campers who had held non-denominational services on the beach and at other outdoor sites for many decades. These three were the founding groups for the Grand Bend United Church.

The Methodist Church

During the early days the Methodists mingled happily with their Scottish



The Methodist Church, known as 'The White Church,' was located at the corner of Mollard Line and Parkhill Road.

neighbours in worship conducted by either group. In the early 1870s, building a Methodist church was discussed. The location was debated and remained controversial. Legend has it that the lumber for the church was ordered and was unloaded at a site on the B Line, but early the next morning it was gone. It was found at the west side of the Mollard Line and Parkhill Road (Highway 81) half a mile from

the village, and that is where the church was built. The church was known as the "White Church" and served the Methodist worshippers until union in 1925. The minister was shared with the Methodist congregation in Greenway.

The Summer Campers

At the turn of the twentieth century a group of campers gathered on the Grand Bend beach or in the Gibbs Park grove every Sunday morning for a worship service. Visiting ministers were invited to conduct the service, which was ecumenical. People with musical talent were welcomed and invited to perform. In the Gibbs park, a platform was constructed with an enclosed area for storing a pump organ. People involved in this group included Henry Hueston, Rennie sisters, George Southcott and son Charles, McCallum family, J. G. Jones of Exeter, J. H. Jones of London. Freda Spackmand and Evelyn Hueston shared organist duties.

There were camp grounds on both side of the river as well as in an area north

of Main Street. Many people came back year after year and pitched their tents; well equipped to act as their homes for the summer. From these people came a devoted summer congregation who loved their outdoor services.

When Rev. Sam Carriere retired from the Presbyterian church in 1922 Rev. A. M. Grant became the minister, also serving Corbett Presbyterian church.



Campers were drawn to Grand Bend for the beach, the sand and the shady camping groves. Families came annually with their elaborately outfitted tents from nearby towns such as Parkhill and Exeter, and from more distant cities such as London and Detroit. From these groups were drawn the informal 'church al fresco' parishioners and the third group to join the union in creating the Grand Bend United Church.

He was aware that church union was anticipated between the Presbyterians and the Methodists. He also saw the possibility for including the campers in the union, but there were two issues to be resolved. The Presbyterians and Methodists feared that they would have

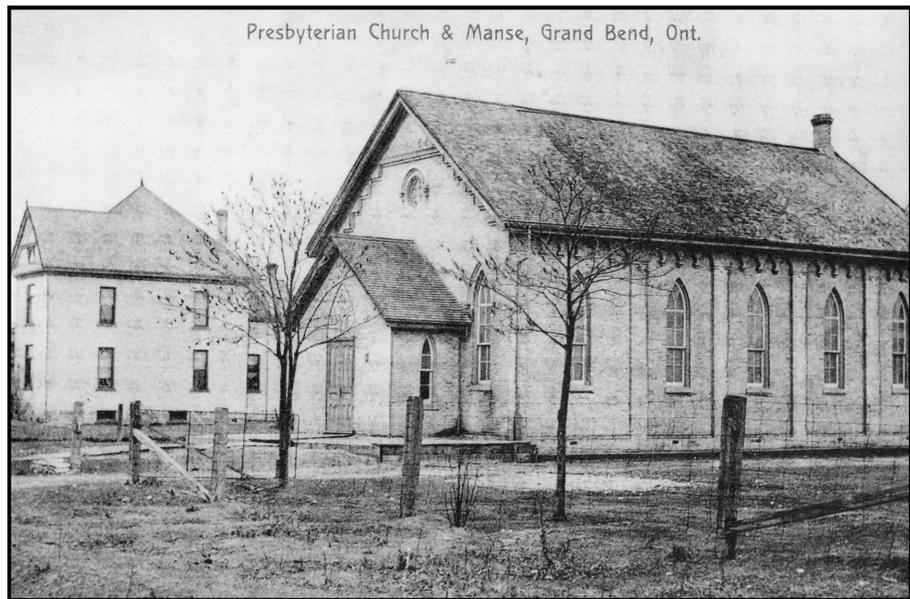
to build a larger church which would be half empty except in July and August, and the campers were reluctant to give up their outdoor services. The Campers provided the solution by raising \$1,700 to buy the lots adjacent to the new church and gave this lovely setting to the Church with the understanding that worship would be outdoors during the summer when the weather allowed. This made a larger church unnecessary as the outdoor area could accommodate everyone who wished to come.

Church Union

On June 27, 1926, the formal service of union was held in Greenway conducted by Rev. Grant and Rev. Maines resulting in the formation of two United Churches. The Presbyterian Church in Corbett entered union with the Methodist church in Greenway and the Methodist “White Church” joined with the campers and Presbyterians in Grand Bend. The Grand Bend United Church built their new church at its present Main Street location to accommodate its enlarged membership. It appears that the Grand Bend parishioners may have been trying to save

some money on the cost of the plans as the new Grand Bend church bears a striking resemblance to the Greenway church built in 1897. The buildings are very similar in design with entrances at one corner and the congregation facing the opposite corner.

Grand Bend Pastoral Charge was formed in 1925. It included Grand Bend and Greenway United Churches. Both of these churches had prior histories of sharing ministers or taking in the parishioners of other churches which had been forced by declining membership to close their doors. Union was not unknown to them, and for them, union was easier than for many churches whose parishioners found that it was not easy to give up their old spiritual homes.



The Presbyterian church was dismantled in 1927 and the bricks were used in building the new United Church on Main Street. Although the outer bricks on the new church are red, beneath are the yellow bricks of this church. These bricks are visible in the belfry where the church bell is housed. Note the work of the brick masons under the eaves.



This cornerstone from the Presbyterian church is dated 1887, but several records list 1874 as the date it was built. No answer to the mystery has been found, but possibly the church was originally frame and bricked over in 1887.

Union ended Rev. Grant's and Rev. Maine's respective jobs and it was felt that a new church needed a new minister. The newly united members extended a call to Rev. J. M. Colling who preached the first sermon to a united congregation under the trees on July 4th, 1926. A drive shed was built

on the new site and church services that summer were held outside with the shed available in case of rain. In the winter, the old church was still available.

The cornerstone for the new church was laid by Rev. Carriere on May 24, 1927. The next morning the workmen began dismantling the old Presbyterian church, as the bricks were recycled to insulate the new building.

On the Sunday prior to the laying of the cornerstone, a service to close the old church was planned with Rev. Colling taking the service. Unfortunately he fell ill, but fortunately, and perhaps symbolically, Rev. Carriere was in Grand Bend at the time, and Rev. Grant was called to come from Thedford. One took the morning service and the other the evening service. The two ministers who had served in the church over its entire existence lead the last services to be held in the little yellow brick church by the cemetery.

Volunteer labour by many able members was welcomed by the construction crew. The church shed was built first at a cost of \$906.00 and served many purposes until church construction was

completed. Many, many hours of time and talent were needed from officials and committees during those months to develop the red brick, slate roofed Grand Bend United Church which is an attractive centerpiece on Grand Bend's Main Street. The church became not only the religious centre, but also the social centre for many of the permanent residents and summer visitors in the community.



WINDOWS DEDICATED - New windows in the entrance to the Grand Bend United Church were dedicated Sunday to the memory of the late Florence and William Love. On hand for the occasion were the four members of the Love family, left to right, Helen Sturdevant, Ruth Whiting, Alex Love and Jim Love.

The churches which the new church replaced were lovingly built and appreciated, but like most rural churches at the time, they were quite austere with few of the things which are usually associated with churches. Photos show that the decorative brick work on the old Presbyterian church was an exception. Over the years, there have been many gifts of time and money which have added to the beauty of the sanctuary.

A church bell was imported from Scotland. Stained glass memorial windows have been added, donated by several church families. Installed more recently are the long narrow windows in the narthex in memory of my parents. A section on many of the donations appears later in this book.

THE CHURCH BUILDING: FEATURES, MEMORIES, MEMORIALS



Jim Love with “Grandpa’s Folly,” in 2009. It was manufactured in Scotland and installed in the church belfry shortly after the church was built.

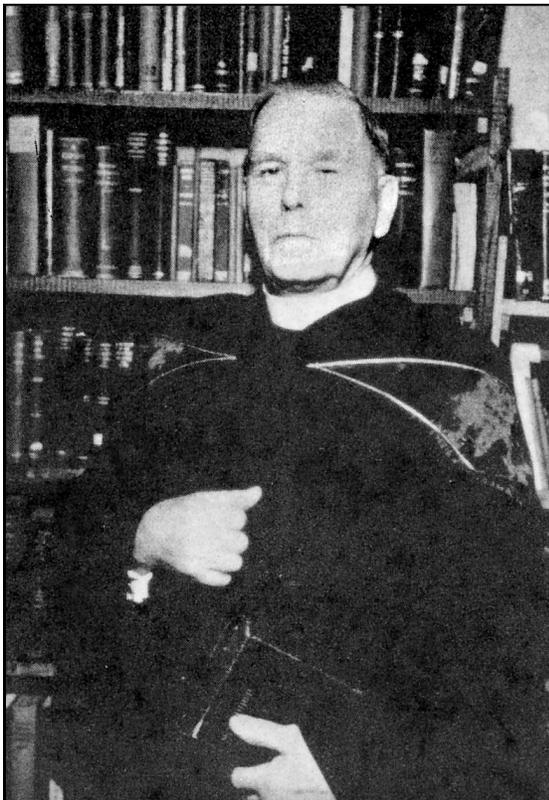
The Church Bell

In Scotland before most people had clocks in their homes, the sessions records explain that the ringing of the first bell, the second bell and the third bell on Sunday was used to wake people up and remind them that they were expected at the church service on time. A bell was pealed to celebrate weddings, the end of war and other occasions of community celebrations. Sadly, they were also tolled at funerals of

church members and when the reigning monarch died. Perhaps it was memories of those bells that prompted the Scottish immigrants in the Grand Bend area to feel that their Presbyterian church needed a bell. The old Presbyterian Church was never provided with a bell, but several felt that the new United Church should have one. Until after World War II when the custom began to fade, church bells all over Canada were rung every Sunday morning to call people to worship. That custom is almost extinct in Canada but not in

Grand Bend. There is no doubt that the ringing of the bell might not be well received by nearby Saturday night revelers trying to sleep in, but it continues to call people to worship with a sweet tone straight out of the Scottish glens. And it's a tone which brings a smile to all my family every time we hear it.

A family story associated with this bell is one I don't remember hearing from my parents, but my sister Ruth and brother Jim remember the bell being called "Grandpa's Folly." John Love, my paternal grandfather, wanted a "bell of quality" for the new church and thought it should be imported from Scotland as the local ones sounded like cow bells. Ed Gill, my



Rev. A. M. Grant B.D.
Last Minister of Grand Bend Presbyterian Church who worked on negotiations for church union and wrote a brief background history of the churches involved in the union.

maternal grandfather, suggested that a "Bell Fund" be established and offered to cover any amount not covered by donations. It was duly ordered from Scotland and shipped to Grand Bend— however there were few donations and Grandpa ended up paying the bill.

Our family pauses to appreciate its fine tone every Sunday morning. I guess you could say that my paternal grandfather 'got what my maternal grandfather paid for.'

The bell is a metre tall and has two ropes which go down through the belfry floor to the church entrance. The rope on the right swings the bell sounding a peal, and the bell rings when the clapper hits the inside of the bell with each swing. The rope on the left provides for the ringing of a slow toll. The bell remains stationary and a metal ball is pulled up to strike the bell for each ring.

The last time I remember the bell being tolled was in 1986 during the funeral procession for my father Bill Love. .

THE GROVE, THE GARDEN AND OUTDOOR SERVICES



OUTDOOR SERVICE — For 50 years Grand Bend has had an outdoor church during the summer. This year's "Open Air Temple" started on Sunday when cottagers and resident joined together to worship under the trees. The vacationers take part in the service and visiting ministers preach. Rev. W. C. Smith is the resident pastor. —Jack Doer

Grand Bend "Church In Wildwood" Carries On 50-Year-Old Tradition

Grand Bend's "Church in the Wildwood" maintained a 50-year-old tradition on Sunday when it held its first service of the summer.

The outdoor chapel, being the red brick United Church in the centre of the resort, brought vacationers from all over the United States and Canada to worship with the village residents.

Since the turn of the century open air services have been held at Grand Bend. Campers of various denominations from Exeter, Zurich, Parkhill, London and Mitchell established the custom and it has been a popular one ever since.

When the United Church was built in 1927, the campers pur-

chased land to the north of it for the outdoor church. The Grand Bend congregation landscaped the grounds and cared for them.

Evergreen Sermon

On Sunday, Rev. W. C. Smith delivered his sermon from a pulpit set apart by an evergreen hedgerail. An all-male choir sang in front of a circle of evergreen trees. Organist Douglas Gill played the church organ, watching the service through a mirror in an upstairs window.

Five or six large oak trees shield the congregation from the sun.

The service opened with the church's theme song, "Church in the Wildwood", and the Canadian

and American national anthems.

As in the past years, campers are asked to take part in the service. On Sunday, Clifford Coram, of Berkley, Mich., sang solo at the morning service. In the evening, Dr. Harry Godsall of Pontiac, Mich., and W. C. Dorey, formerly of the U.S., led in a song service.

The resident pastor of the church conducts the services during July. In August ministers of different denominations are asked to officiate.

A guest book maintained by Session Clerk Ezra Webb has been used at the services for seven years and contains names of vacationers from all over the North American continent.

Clipping from Exeter Times Advocate circa 1950 (Date unknown)

(Editor's note: The author of this book, Helen Sturdevant Desjardine, is an avid gardener. She wrote this section from her long time personal involvement as a committed participant in building and maintaining these gardens to which she continues her contributions to this day.)

It is thanks to the campers, the group which held a religious service outdoors each Sunday and which joined the Presbyterians and Methodists to create the Grand Bend United Church in 1926, that the church has its grove, its gardens and its outdoor services in the summer.

As mentioned in the 1950 Exeter Times Advocate newspaper article on the previous page, the land behind the church was purchased by the campers as a contribution to the new church, and the area was landscaped and maintained by volunteer parishioners. It has been

called the “Outdoor Temple”, “Church in the Wildwood” and the “Green Cathedral.”

Originally, the sermon was delivered from a pulpit set apart by an evergreen hedge. An all male choir sang in front of a circle of evergreen trees and the organist, playing the organ inside the church, watched for his cues through a mirror placed in an upstairs window. Large oak trees shaded the congregation from the sun.

Well!! Forty-five years later that lovely evergreen hedge was a ratty mess. The oak trees had been replaced by maple shade. Bulldozers took out the cedars and the Jennison boys trucked in rocks and top soil. Volunteers arranged a rock garden eighty-five feet long to shelter the grove from Queen Street traffic.



**The “Green Cathedral” chapel, Grand Bend United Church
Idella Gabel—Organist 1993**

The UCW ladies were very involved. They contributed \$500 for the basic landscaping. Jerry Van Lewen and Andy Vrotyk, both owners of garden centres at the time, were helpful with advice. Zoie Raithby brought hosta and sedum from a friend's garden in Toronto and Mrs. Alan Walper contributed perennials from her lovely garden. The Snow in Summer and Periwinkle for the rock garden came from our river bank. Eventually it all came together.

Lloyd Mousseau headed a group of volunteers to build a platform and a rustic cross which serves us to-day. The offering from an anniversary service allowed the purchase of material for new benches which were built by willing volunteers. They were very much needed.

Gardening at the church is always an adventure. The squirrels and I have been playing hide and seek with tulip bulbs for years. I try to check the garden early Sunday morning to pick up garbage tossed among the flowers. The refund from the bottles goes on the collection plate.

Sometimes there are surprises. One morning I picked up a pink bikini and another morning I picked up a large jar of sauerkraut.

My kids help with spring cleanup and come with electric hedge clippers and pruning shears to keep things tidy. I have planted some ornamental grasses with the idea of replacing so many annuals which are getting quite pricey and don't do well in the shade... but I love them for their colour.

There have been so many willing helpers there are too many to mention, but you all know who you are. Thanks to all of you, and thanks to those who have come with compliments. Your encouragement and thanks makes all the work worthwhile. And thank you to all



Church Garden July 2010
Winner, 'Best Bloomin' Church Garden, Communities in Bloom

the church members for letting me play in your garden.

Our massive group effort has not gone unnoticed. In 2005 the garden won a Trillium award and in 2010 it won a

Communities in Bloom award for 'Best Bloomin' Church' in North Lambton. I'm sure that if the original camping group could see the results of their contributions to church union, they would be very proud.



**The Church Rock Garden in the New Millenium
2000**

MEMORIALS, DONATIONS AND CHURCHCRAFTS

Stained Glass Memorial Windows

Over the years beginning when the church was first built in 1927, the Grand Bend United Church has been filled with coloured rays of sunlight created by its beautiful memorial stained glass windows. Three windows were donated when the church was first built; a matching set depicting Jesus with the Children, Jesus at the Door and Jesus the Good Shepherd. The others were added over the years, the most recent being the large Hendrick window in 1993.

It is rare to find such a wonderful collection of magnificent church windows in the churches of rural Ontario towns. Grand Bend United Church is fortunate to have such beautiful examples to contemplate as the sun sparkles through the colourful glass.

The windows were donated by several parish members in memory of deceased members of their families.



Lawson Window “Jesus with the Children”

This window is in memory of Elsa Lawson donated by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Love. As a young mother, she died of complications from diabetes before insulin was in general use.



Hendrick Window

Installed in 1994, this beautiful big window is a memorial to Donald Hendrick, his wife Ruth Turnbull Gill and their son, Richard. They farmed on Hwy. 21 at the Hendrick curve. There were four Hendrick children; Don, Sam, Lloyd and Laird, all with farms in the area.

The window is the work of internationally known stained glass artist Christopher Wallis. He was born in the UK where he learned his craft. He moved to Canada in 1956, working first in London Ontario. He later bought the Hendrick farm and built a studio in which he created windows for buildings all across Canada. It may be this Hendrick/Wallis connection which inspired the creation and installation of this Nativity window in Grand Bend United Church.



He has designed and made more than 800 windows which are in many well known structures including St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Rideau Hall in Ottawa, Osgoode Hall in Toronto, Christ Church Anglican Cathedral and Government House in Victoria BC, and New Baptist Church in Prince Albert Saskatchewan.

The church and the people of Grand Bend are very fortunate to have such a wonderful example of stained glass artistry in the community. Christopher Wallis windows have been unveiled by the Queen, photographed by Karsh, exhibited in the Museum of Civilization and chosen by Canada Post for an international stamp.



Taylor Window "Jesus at the Door"

This window is in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. James J. Taylor. Mr. Taylor and his wife Hannah (Jennison) Taylor's great grandchildren are Lorraine, Eleanor, Karen, Larry, Kathryn and Brenda. All grew up attending this church.

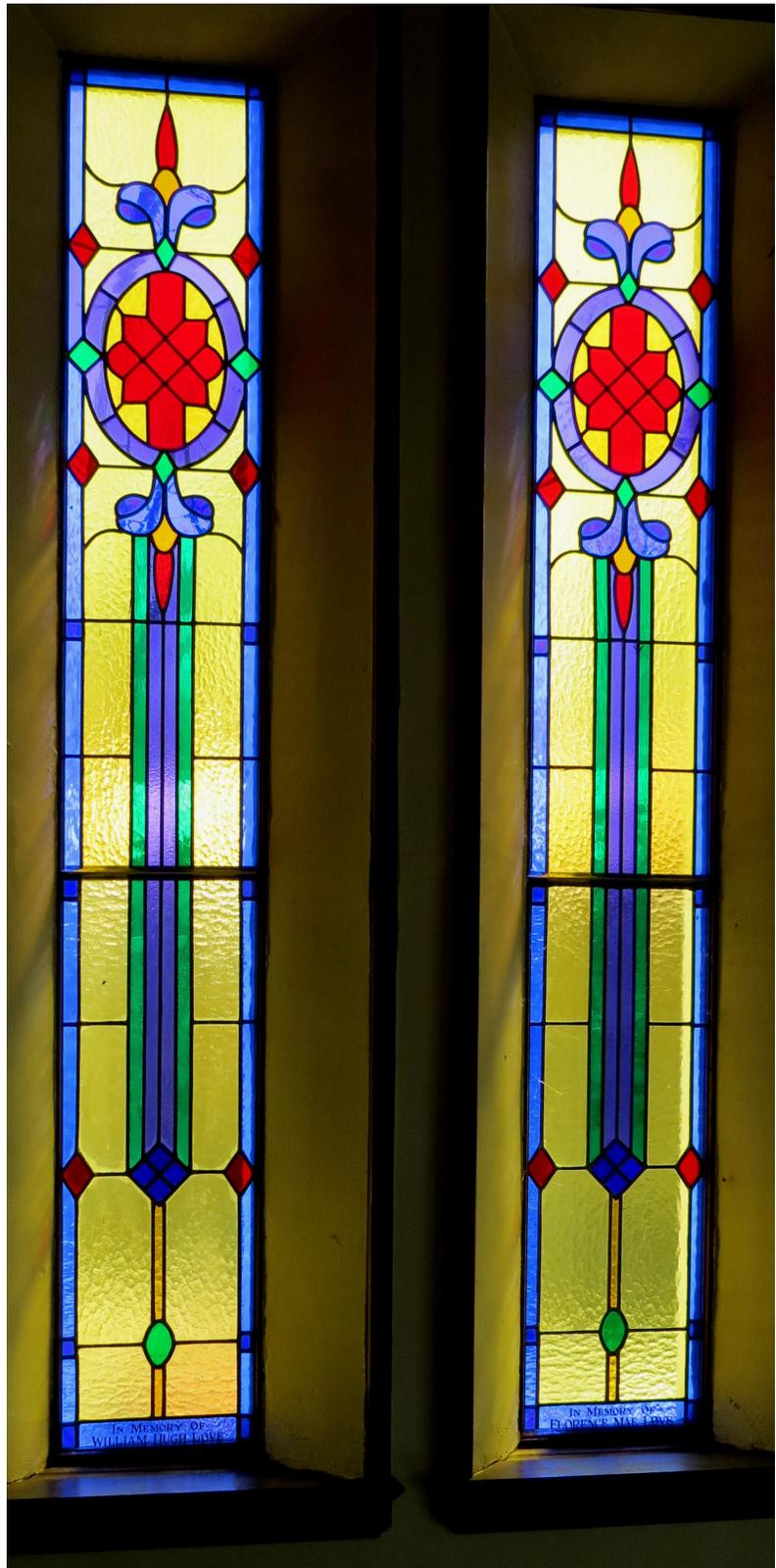
Sherritt Window
“Jesus the Good Shepherd”

Donated by the Sherritt family in memory of Mr. and Mrs. George Sherritt. A member of the Methodist “White Church”, Mr. Sherritt was one of the founders and original members of that church in 1874.



**Love Windows
Installed 1988**

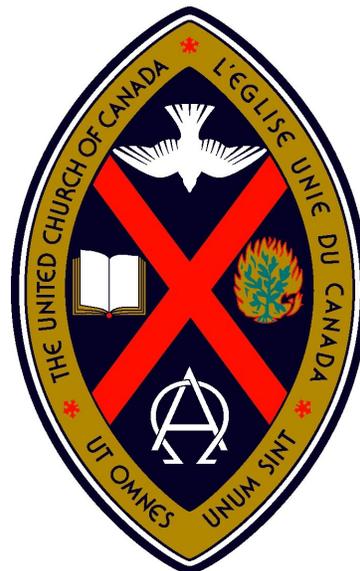
Donated by their family, six stained glass windows have been installed in the Narthex in memory of William and Florence Love. Mr. Love was church caretaker for many years and his wife was an active member in church organizations.





The above window is located over the front entrance door. It features doves, emblematic of the Holy Spirit, one of the symbols which appear on the crest of the United Church of Canada.

Four stained glass light fixtures hanging from the ceiling in the sanctuary and this window were installed in 1984, and are dedicated to the memory of Bob Johnson.



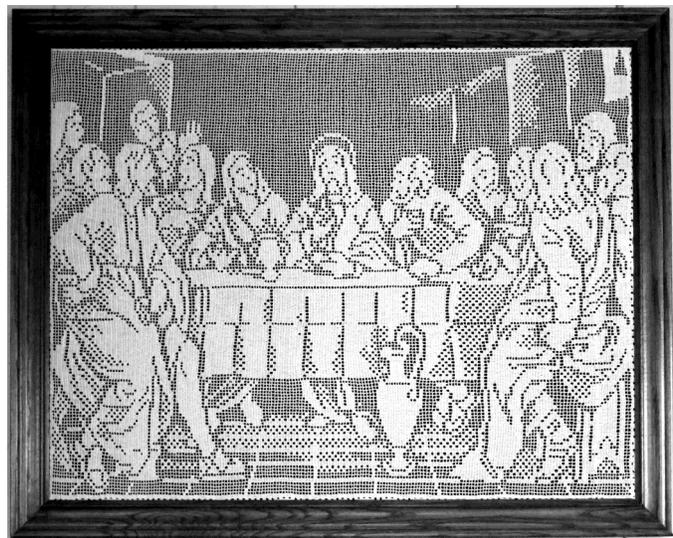
Churchcraft Treasures

It is a very old tradition in Christian churches for the adherents to contribute to the church by donating objects either purchased or created by their talent and skills. Grand Bend United Church is no exception. The church has been blessed with many creative and generous people who have given freely of

time, energy and money to create a place of beauty and objects which encourage thought, memories, meditation and prayer. Some examples of donations include the silver communion set, organs, art objects, baptismal font, hand carved wood items, needle work and even the previously mentioned donation of labour and dump trucks to help create beautiful gardens for the chapel “en plein air”.



The cross with a back light and a background of red velvet is in loving memory of Morgan Gill (1930—1947) presented by his parents Wellwood and Alice Gill



The crochet gifts of communion cloth and picture of the Last Supper were the work of Zoie Raithby and donated by her in 1997.



The brass Bible stand was donated in memory of Murina and Vern Ridley in 1986.

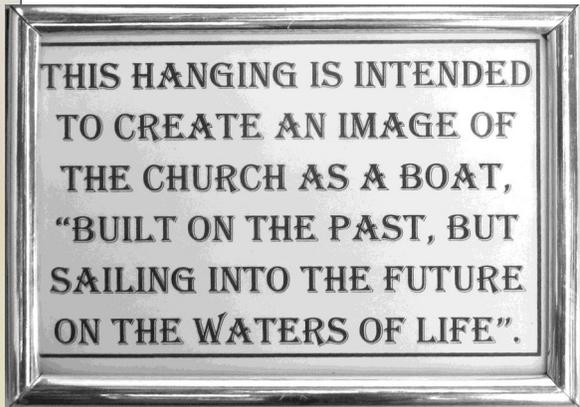


Two Honour Rolls are dedicated to the Glory of God and in loving memory of church members who served in W.W. I (1914-1918) and W.W. II (1935-1945.)

Christian flag above in memory of Murine and Vern Ridley 1986.



This quilted wall hanging entitled “The Ship” and another entitled “The Lighthouse” with religious symbolism as well as associations with Grand Bend’s summer pastimes as a lakefront town were crafted by the U.C.W. ladies.

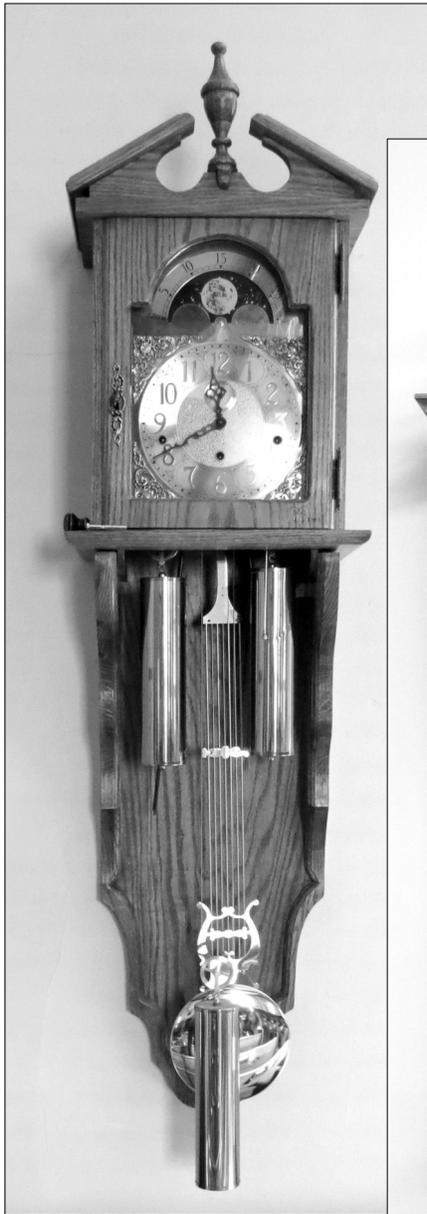


Oil painting by Marion Lampman in loving memory of Alma and James Prance.





The elevator was purchased and installed through fund raising done by the United Church Women organization in order make the church accessible those who have difficulty with stairs.



Two clocks, a chair rail and various wooden articles were crafted by Jim Love and donated by Jim and his wife Margaret Love.

THE GRAND BEND UNITED CHURCH CEMETERY

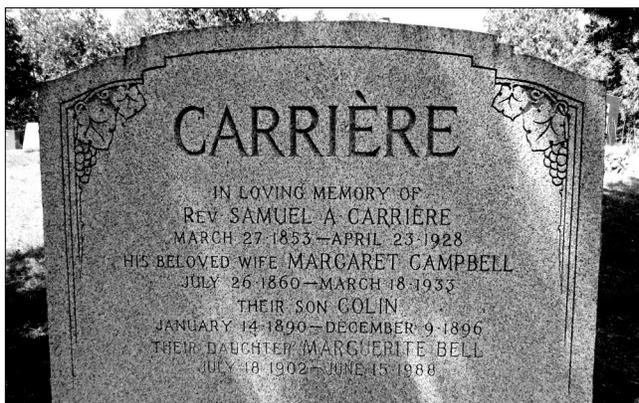
When Grand Bend was a new village two of the first needs were a cemetery and a school. A lot was secured for the cemetery where it now stands. A log schoolhouse was built near the North-east corner of the lot in 1860. By the next year the school house building was being used for many purposes including as the location for church services for Presbyterians from the surrounding area.

There was no permanent minister and a stream of students of divinity from Knox College in Toronto and McGill University in Montreal came to the log schoolhouse when weather permitted to provide church services including funerals. The cemetery beside it was the only cemetery for miles around.

In 1872, Rev. Henry Gracie of “Thames Road congregation” (probably on Exeter’s Thames Road) came to the log school house

and met with local Presbyterians to establish an official Presbyterian congregation. Construction of a church began next to the schoolhouse facing on what is now Highway 21 and was followed in later years by a manse just to the south of the church. Neither building survives today.

The cemetery is the last reminder of these early pioneer days. Because it was the only cemetery in the area, members of all religious denominations are buried there including many founding members of Grand Bend United Church, both Presbyterian and Methodist. And because Grand Bend is on what was a busy pioneer road, there is also an unmarked section of the cemetery where indigent travelers who had the misfortune of passing away while in the community are buried with no stone marking their name; some because they were never identified.



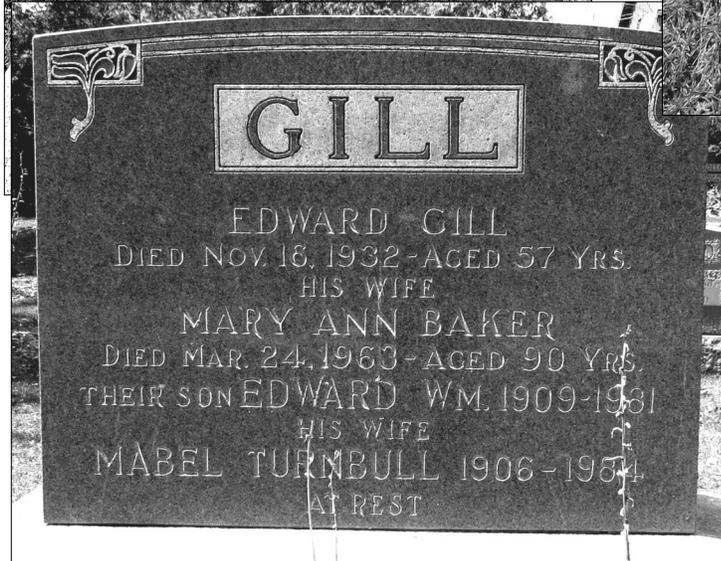
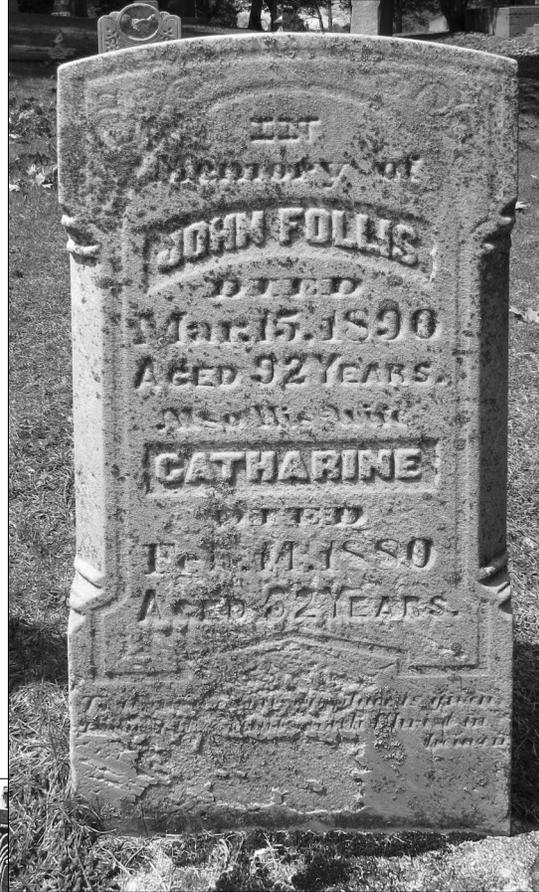
Rev. Sam Carriere was the Minister of Grand Bend Presbyterian Church located beside the cemetery and facing on Hwy 21. He and his wife raised a family in the manse next door to the church. He was the longest serving minister in Grand Bend history serving 42 years. He rests only steps away from where his home once stood.



A view of the cemetery taken in the spring of 2015 from near the site of the log school house. Many of the stones mark the resting place of the early parishioners of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches which joined creating the Grand Bend United Church.



Cemetery building at the entrance gate. The cemetery is run by a voluntary Board of Directors under the Grand Bend United Church.



The Gill, Follis, Lovie and Sherrit families were early members of the Methodist “White Church”. George Sherritt’s name appears as a founding member in 1874. Many of the family names are still familiar and their descendants are still active members in the United Church.



Hugh Love (photo to the left) was among the first members of the Presbyterian church and was a church elder when the brick church was built in 1874.

His son John Love (photo below) along with Edward Gill Sr. (author's two grandfathers involved in the purchase of the church bell) were both mentioned in the church records as participants in the building project for the new United Church in 1927.



The third group which formed the Grand Bend United Church were campers and summer residents. Their homes were elsewhere. There may be some who are interred in this beautiful spot, but no records have been found to confirm that.

MINISTERS WHO HAVE SERVED THE GRAND BEND UNITED CHURCH

1927 Rev. J. M. Colling
 1930 Rev. S. J. Mathers
 1934 Rev. J. S. Moore
 1937 Rev. C. B. Beacom
 1942 Rev. W. T. Cleave
 1947 Rev. K. M. Wood
 1951 Rev. W. C. Smith
 1956 Rev. A. E. Holley
 1962 Rev. C. A. Brittain
 Rev. G. E. Morrow
 Rev. Harley Moore
 Rev. E. J. Roulston
 Rev. Robert Peebles
 Rev. T. Smits
 Rev. Colin Stover
 Rev. Robert Putnam
 Rev. Harry Disher



Rev. C. E. Beacom

In 1955, Rev. Beacom's daughter became one of the first group of female ministers in the United Church of Canada.



Rev. W. T. Cleave

Rev. Cleave was from Saskatchewan and in 1922 was a minister in Clairevale Saskatchewan. He died in 1959.



Rev. K. W. Wood & Mrs. Wood.



Rev. M. J. Colling



Rev. W. C. Smith



Rev. S. E. Mathers

By 1939, Rev. Mathers was minister in a church in Flesherton Ontario



Rev. A. E. Holley and Mrs. Holley.



Rev. J. B. Moore

In 1945, Rev. Moore was at St. Paul's United church in Milton Ontario.



Rev. & Mrs. E. J. Roulston



Rev. Robert Peebles



Rev. Robert Putnam



Rev. Colin Stover



Rev. Harry Disher



For those who have been members of our summer congregation, a winter view of our outdoor chapel, the garden and the back of the church in December of 2010. It was a good year for snow.

OUR CHURCH PEOPLE IN ACTION ORGANIZATIONS, OUTREACH, ACTIVITIES

Editor's Note:

There have been a lot of people enter the doors of Grand Bend United Church since its beginnings in 1926. For the 90 year old author, it would take a lot more time than the average 90 year old is allotted to research all the activities, find all the photographs and name all the people in them. Therefore she has turned to her photo albums, newspaper clipping collection and saved church publications for this section.

Consider those mentioned and pictured here as representative of all the active people over the years; their organizations, their charitable work and their contributions to the church and the



community. Many names or pictures may not be here, but they are not forgotten and their contributions have been appreciated over the years.

Baby Band

The earliest document found of church activities and organizations is the photo below. It is a photo of the Baby Band children and mothers group which was taken in 1933. People in the photo include Fern Love holding Glen love, Alice Gill holding Joan (Gill) Mitchell, Ruth Hendrick with Audrey (Gill) McKinley, Maureen Webb holding Morris Webb, Olive Webb holding Mervyn Webb, Florence Love holding Jim Love, Mrs. Mathers (the minister's wife) and children Eloise Gill and Morgan Gill.

Those were the days when everyone dressed in their 'good' clothes when they went to any church gathering; even the children who ended up playing in the grass. And there were no automatic washers and driers to make it easy to remove grass stains.

Sunday School

Sunday School has also been around from very early in the Church history. Sunday Schools began in Scotland and many children learned to read and write there as they also learned bible stories and the Catechism. Although a very poor country, it was among the most literate countries in the world. There is no doubt that some form of Sunday School existed in Grand Bend churches from the beginning.

By 1945 there were 12 classes of Jr. and Sr. Sunday School. Tokens were given for learning Bible passages and books of the old and new Testaments. There were awards for regular attendance. In summer, visiting children

were very anxious to receive proof of attendance to take to their home church.

Children's hymns sung often were "Hear the pennies dropping," "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam," and "Away in a manger." Children eagerly dropped their pennies in the Birthday Box as the assembled Sunday School children counted. Teachers dropped coins to be counted too, but they were more likely to be dimes.

Christmas concerts were family occasions when developing talents were nervously endured by parents and heartily applauded by everyone.

The author remembers teaching a Sunday School class of seven year olds



Sunday School teacher Elsie Keyes coaches the kindergarten class during a rehearsal for the Grand Bend United Church concert. Children are Lorna Miller, Carla Taylor, Matthew Miller, Elizabeth Russell, Michelle Lovie, Theresa Petch, Jodi Desjardine and Kenneth Desjardine.

about the Ten Commandments. Unsure of how to approach the seventh commandment “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” She asked the group, “What

does that mean?” One little boy emphatically replied with a pretty accurate answer, “Don’t cheat.”



Saint Nicholas, in the robes he wears while visiting the Netherlands, came to visit the children of Grand Bend United Church in 1959. The robes were provided for him by Dick Goemaat who was a textile merchant and who moved to Canada eight years before this photo was taken. The children who were very excited to meet St. Nick were : Back row: Donna Sturdevant, Dianne Shaw, Jimmy Desjardine, Neva Johnson and Wallace Desjardine. Front Row: Ann, Susan and Mary Sturdevant, Dick Goemaat Jr. and Daisy Goemaat.

**Sunday School Teachers
1987**

Back Row:
Bob McKay, Eveleen Jennison

Middle Row:
Wendy Jennison Trish Murdock, Donna Lovie, Eleanor Durie

Front Row:
Joan Eagleson, Connie Russell, Susan Fischer





Ann Russell's summer Sunday School class held outdoors under the trees.

United Church Women (U.C.W.)

The U.C.W. organization evolved from two earlier organizations; the Women's Missionary Society and the Ladies Aid. The Missionary Society raised money for Missions and the Ladies' Aid contributed to church needs and repairs. These organizations became the United Church Women with all women of the church as members. There were two groups within this organization; an afternoon group and an evening group to accommodate career women and young mothers.

Oyster suppers, catered weddings, fu-

neral lunches, bazaars, bake sales all provided funds for the diverse interests of a vibrant church. The turkey supper, traditionally held in November at anniversary time, was their biggest project feeding as many as 300, and always well attended by the community. In



**The U.C.W. turkey pie brigade
Zoe Raithby, Betty Haist, Bertie Keyes,
Evelyn Johnson, Norma Walper, Joyce
Thompson**

2006 proceeds from these activities were used to install a lift to improve access to the church for aging parishioners and to meet new standards of access to public buildings.

With the 21st century came government rules for food preparation that curtailed the donations of delicious home cook-

ing the ladies so generously donated and which ended many of the fund raisers involving food.

In December of 2012, the U. C. W. was disbanded and the services provided by them became the responsibility of the church Events Team.

**U.C.W Executive
1987**

Annie Morenz, Geri Wright, Hilda White, Clara Hamilton, Eleanor Jary, Bertie Keyes, Unknown, Mary Johnson, Elizabeth Norris, Lorene Gill, Irene Kennedy, Beulah Holt.



**U. C. W. outing to
Westland Nursery**

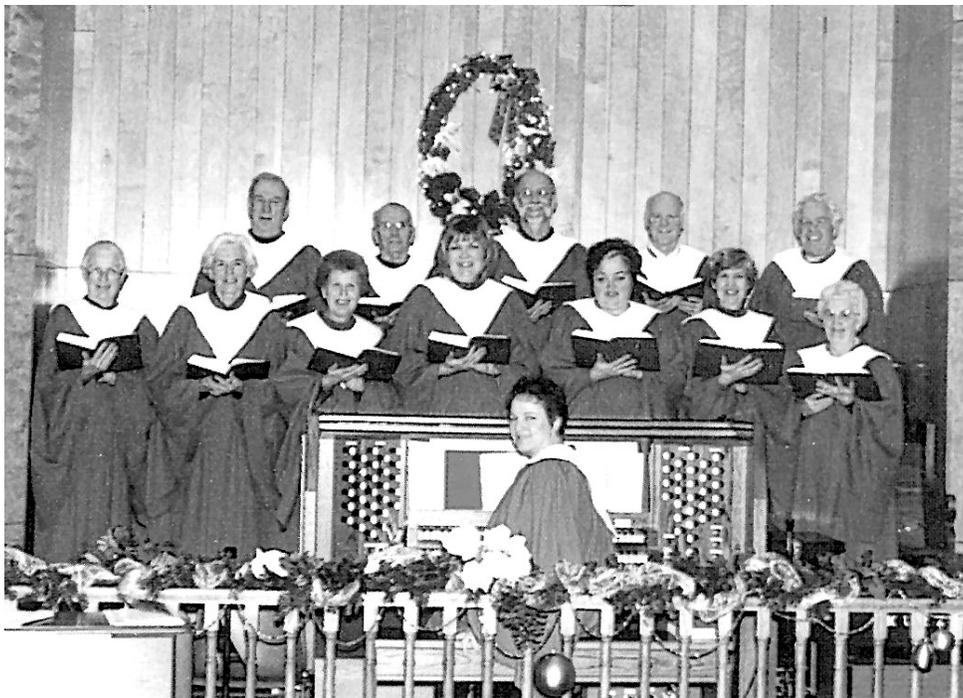


The Church Choir

The choir under the direction of a series of talented organists and choir leaders has always been a spiritual addition to worship. Grand Bend people love to sing. There were many fine harmony quartets, both male and female, in the early church. Saul Pollack, Arnold Ravelle, Ezra Webb, Emery Desjardine, Mae Holt, and Jennie Mason, are a few

singers who come to mind.

In summer, soloists and musicians volunteered their time and talent at the open air services. Today we have an excellent 'Award Winning Choir' which has presented concerts, cantatas, plays, has made recordings and CDs to raise funds for gowns, music, organs and charities.



Choir 2012

Young People's Group Couples' Club 20 Plus

Photos of these groups are scarce and their titles and age range they included changed over time. Originally intended for teens, as interest dropped off the age range expanded to include young couples. But in a busy world, those are age groups whose time is most in demand for many things, and maintaining the membership in these church groups was difficult.

Youth and young adult activities early in the church history included long gone "Valentine Box Socials" and picnics to more recent Hallowe'en parties. The most recent of these organizations was the 20 Plus club, which worked to organize an Easter Sunrise Service and breakfast. It proved to be very popular and has become an annual tradition.

C. G. I. T.

Canadian Girls in Training or C.G.I.T. is a church based program for girls and young women aged 11 to 17 and in 2015 celebrated its 100th anniversary. Initially supported by the YWCA along with the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist churches, it later became a program of the Canadian Council of Churches. Today it is supported by the United Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Canadian Baptist Ministries. In Grand



20 PLUS - 1993

Back Row: Larry Taylor, Leroy Keyes
Middle Row: Larry Lovie, Donna Lovie,
Paula Taylor, Elsie Keyes
Front Row: Fred Desjardine, Marlene
Desjardine, Jean Weigand, Don Weigand

Bend, CGIT was sponsored by the Grand Bend United Church.

The CGIT middy uniform was originally taken from a women's fashion from 1915. In those days of WWI, it would have been very common to see young women on the Grand Bend beach wearing the navy inspired white shirts with blue naval collar and cuffs.

The church facilities were used for other youth groups including Girl Guides, Brownies, Cub Scouts and Beavers. These were community organizations which used the church for their meetings and activities. The church continues to be used for youth centred activities.



Graduating from the Canadian Girls' in Training group at Grand Bend, are, from the left, Mary Lynne Kennedy, Cassie Ann Desjardine, Linda Miller and Donna Sturdevant. The girls are now in a position to give leadership to younger girls in the same training. The village C.G.I.T. is inter-denominational and open to all girls.



Becoming Senior C.G.I.T. members are, from the left, front, Kathy Taylor, Linda Klopp and Valerie Snider; back, Neva Johnson, Karen Jennison and Ann Sturdevant. They were promoted at a mother-and-daughter banquet attended by C.G.I.T. members and also Explorers of the Grand Bend United Church this month.



COOKIE SALE - These four members of the Grand Bend Girl Guides were busy in the village on Saturday during the Farmer's Markets days offering cookies for sale to the visitors. Left to right are Amy Rader, Kim Hagle, Bobby Jo Meunier and Karen Lovie.



Twelve children were invested as Beavers into the first Grand Bend Beaver pack Oct. 16 by Scout Debbie Roy of Exeter. The new Beavers are back, Joel Fraser, Tom Love, Taylor Britton, Jeffrey Boyes, Mitchell Nieuwland; front, Korey Broadley, Adam Ivey, Jessie Kadlecik, Brandon Baird, Nathan Brown and in front of the flag are Devon Scott and Josh Belliveau. (photo by Nellie Blake)



OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Outreach activities have touched the lives of many people in the area who are not necessarily church members. The list of such activities includes Fun and Friendship Golf, the Food Grain Project, Free Store Days, Caring Through Sharing, Adopt a beach, Angel

Tree at Christmas, the Parking Project, Sunday Nighters, Christmas Eve Service and our new Power Point presentation have all taken activities beyond the church into the community and made contact with the greater world. And our Sunday outdoor services continue to reach out to people and to invite them to wander in, sit down and be part of the Church if only briefly.



Fun and Fellowship Golf Day

PERSONAL MEMORIES OF GRAND BEND UNITED CHURCH

I was born in 1925 (just a year before the church was created) to a Methodist mother and a Presbyterian father, so I am truly of United Church parentage. I've been told that I was one of the first babies baptized in the new Grand Bend United Church.

My first memory of attending Sunday School is riding to the church in a touring car with mica side curtains... very drafty! In winters when it was put up on blocks because of road conditions, I travelled to Sunday School in a horse and cutter cozy under a buffalo robe.

Grandpa Gill and my Uncle Eddie fed me jelly beans in church to keep me quiet, which was a difficult task. Imagination was my escape from adult sermons. I spent the time composing stories, often about colourful red jacketed English

horsemen 'riding to the hounds' and wondering how the unfortunate fox wound up as a stole around the neck of the lady who sat in front of us every Sunday. The head with its beady black eyes, and black nose, invariable ended up pointing in my direction and the eyes seemed to stare at me through the whole service.

Dad never attended Sunday School. He said he had learned his catechism in the Presbyterian Church. Instead, he spent the hour with the "Hot Stove League" at the local garages exchanging the latest local news with his friends.

The church had many activities directed at children. I remember in Mission Band reluctantly parting with my hard earned berry picking money donating it to a fund for little Chinese girls whose feet were bound. Somehow it seemed that there were always missionaries and children in remote places in the world who needed my piggy bank money more than I did. It took me a while to grasp the concept of charity and good works.



Not the Loves' car, but very much like it right down to the mud and dirt.

Easter time always required a new hat; not for an Easter parade, but for church. After a winter of galoshes, woollen socks, tuques and mittens, it was fun to go to Mr. Zwicker's department store in Crediton where we could select a new pair of shoes, white gloves and an Easter bonnet. The store had a millinery department upstairs away from parental supervision and we had such fun trying on most of the hats before making our selection.

A few years later Young People's box socials on Valentine's Day were always a big worry. Who will buy my boxed lunch and be my partner for the evening? For children, youth and teens of the church and of the village, there were many activities including Hallowe'en parties, weiner roasts on the beach, ball games, picnics, and my social life revolved around them.

Once we were old enough to drive, I remember attending a picnic at Poplar Hill. Afterward, several of us piled in a car to attend a movie in London. Having the use of a family car was a rare opportunity. When we exited the theatre it was dark. We became disoriented and lost away out on highway #2. Eventually we arrived home safely but not before curfew and a few worried parents.

I attended the summer outdoor services with my grandfather. I remember the cicadas almost drowning out the music. The trees seemed to be full of them. Evening service outdoors was lit by one bare light bulb hung from an oak tree; and yes, the stump is still there Bruce.

In 1944 the church mortgage was paid

off; no mean feat during a war and a cause for celebration and a mortgage burning ceremony. In 1945, the church shed was torn down and a new manse was built on the property as the world celebrated the end of the war and began to look ahead to better days.



Helen and Ruth Love in front of the then new Grand Bend United Church circa 1929

There was a gap in my Grand Bend United Church attendance when I went off to London to Nursing School, got married and had our first child, but my husband Bill Sturdevant and I returned to Grand Bend and the United

Church as a great place to live and raise our children among friends and relatives.

Public Health nurses held clinics in the church basement where I took our children for checkups and advice. Our children considered it a sin to miss Sunday School because there were prizes for perfect attendance. At Christmas concerts they were billed as "The Sturdevant Quartet," not that they sang in harmony; just hopefully in tune, songs such as "Suzie Snowflake," "Rudolf," and "Alvin", all the latest Christmas hits.

During Canada's Centennial year, 1967,

the U.C.W. decided to present a pageant showing church history in the area. All went well until the part about the laying of the church corner stone. Our mortar was thick porridge applied with trowel on cardboard bricks. The 'mortar' soaked the bricks and the whole structure collapsed. Why do we always remember the disasters?

The story of the Grand Bend United Church is the story of five generations of my family. Our four daughters were married in the church as were some of their children. Our family memories of the church and what it brought to our lives is forever etched in our family history. The story includes family roots in the Presbyterian and Methodists churches, participation in their amalgamation as the Grand Bend United Church and the more recent amalgamation with Greenway United church and renewal as the Huron Shores United Church. By the grace of God, may the church continue the dedication to His work begun so long ago.



THOSE DANDELIONS DON'T HAVE A CHANCE — Even with a foot and an arm in casts, Bill Love, caretaker at Grand Bend United Church mows the lawn. T-A photo

He's a hard man to keep down!! 1978.

It would take a lot to slow Bill Love down, especially with last week's warm weather, and dandelions rearing their yellow heads. Despite having both a foot and an arm in casts, Mr. Love continues mowing the grass and doing the cleaning at Grand Bend United Church.

Two accidents earlier this spring resulted in a broken wrist and fractured ankle for Mr. Love. A window broken

by vandals in cold weather caused some of the church's pipes to freeze up. While Mr. Love was inspecting the damage, a pipe gave way and fell on a chair, breaking it. Pieces of the broken chair hit Mr. Love's ankle. This freak accident caused the other injury. While hobbling on the sore ankle, Mr. Love stumbled and broke his wrist.

Mr. Love didn't consider the accidents major at the time, but after a few days, he had the bones x-rayed and both fractures were set in casts.

The cumbersome plaster didn't stop Mr. Love from doing his work as caretaker of the church. With a plastic bag over his foot, and an elastic band holding his shirt sleeve in place over his arm, he carries on.

But the casts are soon to come off, and Mr. Love says "I'm counting the days, don't think I'm not."

Mr. Love who says he's "just 80", has been the custodian of Grand Bend United Church for about 25 years. He estimates that length of time by the fact that the present furnace was installed in 1956, and he can remember stoking the fire in the wood stove before that.



Jim Love at the top of the church steeple for the installation of the cross after replacement of the roof in 2014.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the corner stone of the church is not at a corner of the building? It is above the front entrance door.

It took the author of this book 90 years to find it.

WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BRING?

When you have lived almost a century, one thing you learn is that the only thing certain in life is change.

In the early days, life in villages and on farms settled in to a routine. There was a rhythm to the seasons, the weeks and the days. Monday was for washing. Tuesday was for ironing, Wednesday was for house cleaning, Thursday and Friday were for baking, cooking and other chores of the week not completed because of weather or illness. Saturday was for going to town to shop and for Saturday night baths.

Sunday was the day when almost everyone went to church. Aside from its spiritual role, it was 'community' time. After church, groups would chat outside the front door or go to the church hall for a cup of tea and to exchange the news and gossip of the week. Church attendance was at its peak in Canada.

With the coming of the motor car followed by radios in every household, then television and now with iPads and cell phones, gradually the church was no longer the centre of community life and many churches found their membership dropping.

World War II saw improvements in employment outside the villages and many

young people moved into cities near and far breaking up the close family circle.

The Lord's Day Act of 1885 was overturned by the Supreme Court of Canada and in 1992 opened commercial establishments for business on Sunday. Many such factors of modern times saw a change in the dynamics of society and for many churches, diminished memberships which put the future of the churches in peril.

Grand Bend United Church membership rolls have had their ups and downs, but when smaller churches in the nearby rural areas closed, frequently the remaining members chose to come to Grand Bend helping the church to survive and thrive.

Over the last 150 years, many country churches have amalgamated and many have closed. The Grand Bend United Church is the product of these closures and of the closures which added to the membership of the Greenway United Church. The Greenway church had received members from the closing of a number of long forgotten churches, Methodist, Presbyterian and a Lutheran church, until finally the Greenway church closed as well.

As we moved into the new millennium a new church building for Grand Bend was discussed. Property was purchased on Hwy 21 and architects' drawings secured, but the general feeling was that the present location on Main street was, in itself, an outreach of faith to the community and the newly acquired property was sold.

When the Greenway United Church, built in 1897, closed its doors in 2014, the membership joined with the Grand Bend United Church. It was agreed that with the added membership from the Greenway community and the expanded borders served by the church, a new name was needed. Known as Grand Bend United Church for 88 years, it is now known as Huron Shores United Church.

Preparing for the future of the newly energized church has included some building improvement projects such as replacing the original slate roof with a new metal roof, and planning for renovations and an addition on the back of the church. This is a sign of the opti-

mism which has always existed in Grand Bend, a community of busy summers and semi-dormant winters when people plan and prepare for the next summer's onslaught of visitors and activity.



May the church continue to thrive for our children and grandchildren. It has been a visible centerpiece for the community and the Main Street of Grand Bend since it's corner stone was laid and God willing, will continue to do so for a long time to come.



Proposed addition for the church on the right.



Photo of John Love who was the force behind the purchase of the church bell, and his wife and son. The bell remains in the Huron Shores United Church belfry calling future generations to worship and reminding them of the generations who worshiped in this church before them.