

## Laskay United Church

In April, 1949, the Laskay congregation began the task of redecoration and renovation in their church. This involved the painting of the building both inside and outside. On top of all this, the system of the church lighting was changed.

Much voluntary labour on the part of certain men of the congregation went into the venture. It was such effort that made possible the speedier dispatch of the work as a whole.

On May 29th -- the 45th anniversary of the laying of the corner-stone of the present building, the services of reopening and rededication were held, and drew capacity crowds.

One cannot think of this work of beautification without making mention of the kindly interest and financial aid of the Women's Missionary Society of the Church. It was this group who paid the expense of redecoration, which cost in the neighbourhood of \$800. The men of the congregation undertook the expense of the lighting.

The Young People's Society purchased the picture of the "Head of Christ" by Sallman. Here in this lovely little country church, the efforts of man have sought to make God's House more worthy.

## Laskay Congregation 102 Years Old, Mark 50th Anniversary of Building.

The building of a new church at Laskay in 1904 was an important period in the history of the Primitive Methodist congregation at Laskay. It was important also for the Wesleyan Methodist congregation at Strange, on the sixth concession of King. A new building was a dire necessity to both congregations. The old wooden structure of the Primitive Methodist had served well and the white frame building of the Wesley congregation in the same circuit also was in poor condition and its numbers were diminishing.

When the time arrived to construct a new brick building that would unite both congregations, the question of a site was the subject of a heated controversy. Would the new edifice be on the same site as Laskay's Primitive Methodist church, which would be dismantled to make way for the new building? Or would a new site be chosen directly on the sixth line highway in Laskay.

Laskayites, now forming a thriving community, were proud that Joseph Baldwin, an early pioneer who came to this district in 1832 from Yorkshire, England, had given a portion of his land for "a Primitive Methodist church and a parsonage".



Picture of cemetery at back of first church built in 1856, showing Baldwin tombstone.



The parsonage, prior to being torn down, stood on 4th lot south of of the church.

Many were proud that the first church built in 1856, had its roots from the nucleus of the Primitive congregation that held worship in a cooper shop back in the "flats" at Baldwin's from 1852-6.

Almost everyone recalled how the first church, (Some 20 rods east of the sixth concession road) was filled Sunday after Sunday with whole families. They all remembered how the wide plank seats were built in tiers, rising to the back of the church, so the "minister could see all his congregation at the same time, and keep a watchful eye on the young folks and late comers". They remembered the pulpit near the entrance at the ~~northwest~~ <sup>southeast</sup> corner of the building and the row of choir members to his left. They recalled the embarrassment of the tardy person who had to walk before the pulpit before he could climb to a row of seats.

They were loathe to give up the old site on "back street", rising behind the main roadway. And so, apart from some hard feelings, Laskay's Methodist church retained the original site. On May 24, 1904, the laying of the corner stone was held. Five hundred people witnessed the ceremony. The minister was Rev. Newton Hill and the guest speakers were Hon. J. W. St. John, Hon. E. J. Davis, Rev. G. W. Robinson and Rev. Dr. James Carmichael, the minister of Strange Presbyterian Church. The trowel was used by Mr. St. John and in the corner stone were placed two half gallon jars containing daily Toronto newspapers, and the Methodist church periodicals.

A huge tent was pitched across the road on Bob Wiles' lawn for the big supper. The women of Laskay Presbyterian congregation helped with the celebration.

It was a wet late season that year and construction of the building was delayed. The building committee headed by James T. Scott was enrolled by William Boys, Wesley Hamilton, Edward Marshall, George Teasdale and others. Half of the cost had already been subscribed, and by completion Rev. Hill looked for the remaining \$2,000 or more to pay off the debt.

## Laskay Congregation 102 Years Old (Continued)

On Sunday, April 3, 1905, the following year, the opening of the new church was held by large congregations on Easter Sunday. Three times that day services were held with the overflows taken in the basements by other ministers. Rev. Brown, president of the Presbytery Conference, Rev. Dr. Carmichael, and Rev. Young were the preachers. Mrs. Wesley Hamilton played the new reed organ which is still in use.

Mrs. L. J. Glass has the honor of being in the congregation for 56 years. Before that time she was a small girl in the old Sunday school. Mrs. William Boys, 86, is the oldest member in terms of age, having come into Laskay from the Wesleyan church.

For many years, a community Sunday school served both Methodists and Presbyterians in Laskay. Both in the original church and later in the present church, Sunday school teachers were a mixture of both congregations. In fact, the sixth of King boasted four churches, two Presbyterian and two Methodist.

In 1925 the Laskay church became the United Church of Canada and for the past eight years, Rev. M. R. Jenkinson has been the presiding minister of the present circuit of King, Laskay and Teston.

On Sunday, May 23rd, 1954, the Laskay church will celebrate its golden jubilee anniversary at 11 A.M. and 7 P.M. The beautifully preserved building, with its solid oak seats and other special appointments has been carefully and proudly preserved.

More than 500 attended the "laying of the stone" and more than 500 people joined in the services of worship and thanksgiving on Sunday. Rev. Martin Jenkinson, incumbent, welcomed the members of the church and their guests. The inspiring influence of the church and the blessing it brings to the confused mind was the theme of the guest preacher, Dr. Archer Wallace, who is a well-known author.

The church was decorated with many bouquets. Those placing memorial flowers included: Mrs. Leonard Glass in memory of her parents, Mr. & Mrs. James T. Scott; Mary Marwood and family in memory of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan McMarchy.

Laskay Congregation 102 Years Old (Continued)

A reception was held following the morning service when the registry was presented by Mrs. Marwood and Mrs. William Bryson. It was held in the church hall.

The anniversary cake in gold and white with its spired chapel centred the decorated table. Mrs. Glass, a member of the Laskay congregation for the past 56 years cut the cake.

Hostesses for the reception was the W.M.S. Miss Winnifred Boys is the president. Pouring tea were Mrs. W. Baldwin, Aurora, Mrs. Percy Forester, Mrs. Sarah Harris, Mildmay, and Mrs. James Hunter.

Also at the guest table were Rev. and Mrs. Jenkinson, Dr. Wallace, Mrs. W. Williams, Mrs. Donald Paton, Mrs. William Boys, Mrs. Hazel Archibald Wellesley, Mrs. L. J. Glass, Miss Winnifred Boys and Mrs. Annie Evans. Mrs. Evans joined the Primitive church 61 years ago and was organist at the age of 15.

Mr. Jenkinson read an account of the "gala" cornerstone service of 1904. The register of names taken on Sunday will form a scrap book to replace the original church records burned in the manse fire in 1945.

A silver service, which had been presented to the late Mrs. Duncan McMurchy prior to her marriage in 1899 from the Wesleyan congregation, was used. The gift had recognized her services as organist for seven years. Her son, Marshall McMurchy, who is a Laskay official, read the original presentation address which had been signed by Mrs. Boys and Mrs. Charlotte Peterbaugh.

Mr. Jenkinson read letters of congratulations from those who were unable to be present. They came from Rev. R. J. D. Simpson, Toronto, a former pastor of the charge 60 years ago, Mrs. Annie Thompson Cathcart, a former teacher of Strange school and Sunday school teacher and from Mr. Elmer Davis, Kingston, whose father, the late Hon. E. J. Davis, participated in the ceremony 50 years ago.

At the evening service, Rev. A. C. Forrest, B.A., B.D., Port Credit, was preacher. He spoke of the blessings of "remembering". Mr. Forrest compared the hardships of the pioneers to the easy mode of living in the modern world.

Laskay Congregation 102 Years Old (Continued)

The Thornbury singers, the trio in the morning and a 30-voice choir at night, contributed to the service of worship.

At the evening service, Miss Winnifred Boys and Mrs. Norman Bryson were registry hostesses. The W.M.S. members were hostesses to the choir later in the evening.

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Prior to this 50th Anniversary a new Oil Burner Heating Unit was installed in the rear of the church basement. The removal of the old furnace and pipes made a good improvement to the floor space.

Also, at the rear of the church property, the church sheds were removed after being sold, and more ground was cleared of trees. Thus, there is ample parking space available.

This year the Sunday services were changed from afternoon to evening service at 7.30 P.M. during July and August. The Sunday school hour was dispensed with for the summer.

## HISTORY OF CHURCHES Cont'd.

### Presbyterian

Senator Reesor presented a site for a church, manse and small graveyard on the west side of the 6th con. to the Presbyterian Church of Canada. In 1858 the Rev. Jas. Dick of Richmond Hill Presbyterian church opened a mission at Laskay and in the same year the Church and manse were built.

This church was used continuously until the Union of Churches, June 10th, 1925. Then it was left idle and torn down in the 1940's. Mr. Charles Black has recently built his house on the lot. A few headstones show the site of the graveyard behind his house.

Mr. Wm. Dunning was also clerk in the general store and assistant postmaster. Having an education and being a good penman and bookkeeper, also having acquired a perfect knowledge of conversation in the Gaelic language, he was in great demand for writing deeds and wills.

The manse was built between the church and north of Laskay Hall and is now owned by Mr. Woods.



The above picture is on a postcard which was written on July 29-1910 by Thomas Cairns from Laskay to Miss Jean Patton, and was postmarked Laskay. The stamp was steamed from this card.

Rev. John W. Cameron, born 1851 in New York State, entered Knox College, graduated with a B.A. in 1881, and was immediately invited to take charge of the Presbyterian Church at Laskay. He had charge of churches in the west of King Township, three under him having a membership of 175. The churches were all comfortable frame buildings.