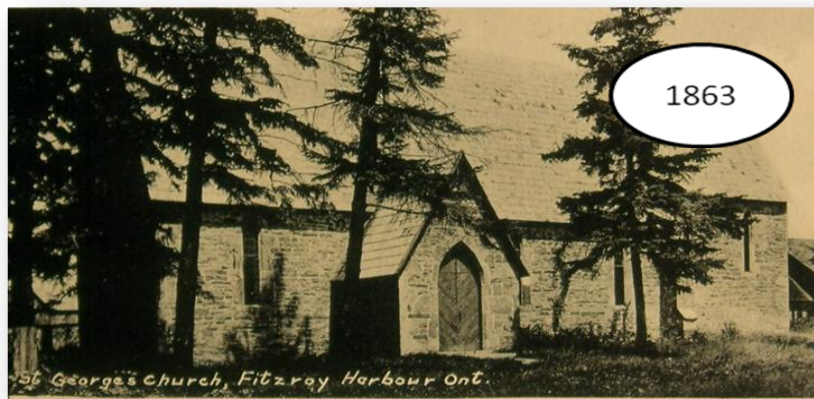


ST. GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH FITZROY HARBOUR

150TH ANNIVERSARY



*“Whoever you are
Wherever you come from
You are welcome here”*

**St. George's Anglican Church
Parish of Fitzroy Harbour**

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Fitzroy Harbour ON K0A 1X0**

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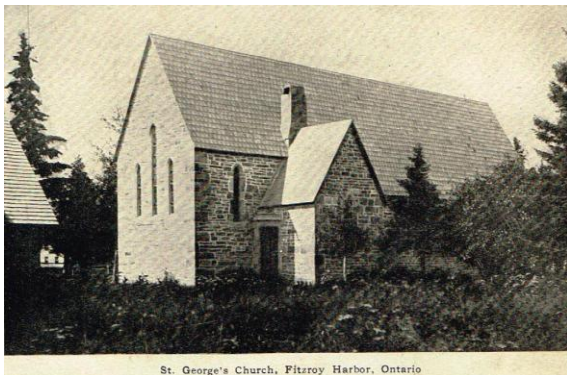
www.anglicanfitzroyparish.com

ST. GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

FITZROY HARBOUR

150th Anniversary

The Next Chapter: 1988-2013



St. George's Church, Fitzroy Harbor, Ontario

For 150 years the charming little Anglican Church in Fitzroy Harbour known as St. George's has been welcoming God's worshippers. This account is an update to the history of the church that was written in 1988. It summarizes the changes that have taken place, but also indicates the constants that have formed the character of this church for a century-and-a-half.

The last 25 years have seen changes in the physical church structure, as well as in some of our practices and procedures as a member of the wider Anglican community, and in the functions carried out in pursuing our mission.

Physically, the building has always been a work in progress. From the beginning - stone walls

with no roof and an opening for a door - to the complete worship center of today, the church has undergone many improvements. According to local lore, the once unfinished, open-door structure enticed worshippers of all kinds, including the avian, ovine and bovine varieties. You might say the ambience was welcoming to all.



Installation of Steeple and Bell 1981



Today, a solid oak door leads to a fully furnished church. Overhead, the periodically repaired roof keeps out the birds and elements. The original stained glass windows have been cleaned and restored; the stone re-pointed. And the list goes on. Physical upgrades and replacements find perennial spots in the budgets designed by Congregational Council.



Long ago, of course, the sheep of the field found greener pastures in which to contemplate God's creation. But now we have a different problem. The doors and steps that became part of the structure not only keep out the animals, but can be a barrier to humans, as well. The pendulum has swung to the other side.

Currently, this problem has brought the church hall into primary focus. Built in 1967 to accommodate the Sunday school, church meetings and social and fundraising functions, the hall is also used to facilitate some local community services. It is a crucially important part of the structure. No doubt the 19th century church-goers would have been thrilled to linger for warm post-service coffee gatherings and pot-luck lunches (such as we enjoy today) before returning home in their frigid horse-drawn buggies.



Church Hall

But needs evolve, and while the hall has served us well, changes are required. As a welcoming and caring congregation, we are aware that the hall is woefully lacking in the area of barrier-free accessibility. Plans have therefore been drawn up to modify the building to allow wheelchair access from both inside and outside. They include expanding the washroom, located on the upper level of the hall, and, in the longer term, enlarging the kitchen and meeting areas.

This project represents a significant financial undertaking, endorsed by the congregation as important and necessary. Participation in the diocesan program, GIFT, is expected to assist us in achieving our goal.

A second major commitment in the process of fulfilment at the time of writing is expansion of St. George's Cemetery. This peaceful one-acre property, purchased in 1865 for \$50, is situated on a hill leading into the village and overlooking the Harbour. As the resting place for some of the founders and builders of the church, it is historically significant, and as the chosen destination for the remains of many of our members today, its maintenance and capacity are important factors.

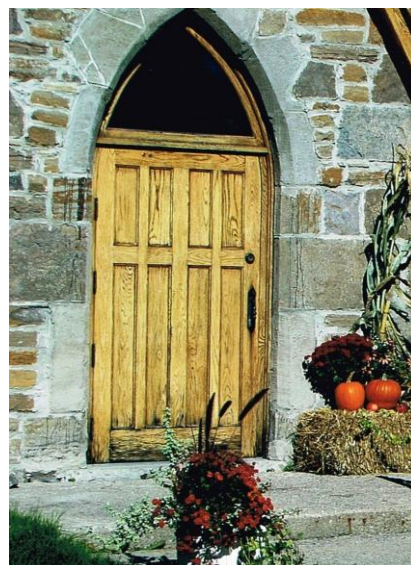
Naturally, over the years the cemetery space has become increasingly filled. In 1988 the committee in charge of its governance sought to acquire additional land, but expanding the cemetery has not been an easy undertaking or one readily expedited. Finally, in 2012, a deal was struck to purchase an additional acre from the owner of the adjacent land. Legal negotiations to this effect were in process as 2012 drew to a close. To enhance the cemetery, in 1994 a decorative iron gate and archway were installed at the entrance.



Church interior renovations

Twenty-five years ago Renewal 125 was the current significant fund-raising initiative. It was launched to raise money for repairs to the church and hall. Related to the 125th anniversary, a list of clean-up and improvement projects was approved and a sum exceeding \$20,000 was raised. The solid oak door was added at that time, as were transom windows both over the door and the doorway inside the entrance. New sign-boards and light fixtures, fresh dry-walling and painting, and a thorough clean-up and polish left St. George's sporting its "Sunday best" for some years to come.

While funding large projects can be a concern, St. George's has always stayed financially afloat. In fact, even through the austerity of the '90s, under the skills of careful long-term treasurer, Faye Stewart, no bill went unpaid and this congregation always met its apportionment under the Diocese of Ottawa's "fair share" practice. Since Faye's retirement (after 28 years of service), Darlene Weir has been keeping the books balanced and the accounts in good order.



Considering the church's sound financial record over the years, it was surprising, not to mention distressing, to be labelled a "final generation church" in the diocesan study known as The Boken Report, released in 2007. Such thinking had not occurred to us. In fact, the extent of any possible change in our status had taken the form of a discussion generated by the Diocese of Ottawa in the late 1980s. It explored the possibilities of realigning St. George's within the Deanery of Arnprior, but there had been no action taken.

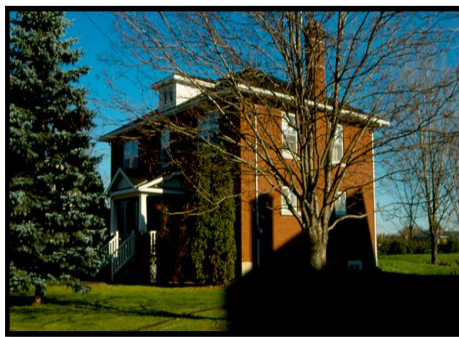
The Boken study was much wider in scope and more focused on results. It examined the issue of urban and rural trends in the area covered by the Diocese of Ottawa for the purpose of predicting future demographics that would affect church attendance and support.

St. George's was one of many churches included in that study, and it was predicted that ours would be among those unable to survive beyond the present generation. However, while the Diocese is still processing the results of the work, St. George's shows no signs of nodding off into its demise. On the contrary, it continues to be a vital and noteworthy entity in the community. To date, there is little change in church attendance, for - consistent with the past - new people continue to arrive.

In fairness, it is noted that some recommendations of the Boken Report were beneficially implemented, such as better signage and constant service times – items that were easily ignored or swept under the carpet through the years for one reason or another.

It's been said that "he who rejects change is the architect of decay."¹ Well, decay is not evident at St. George's, a true sign of how willingly the generations have adopted new ideas, new practices and new instruments of service.

Change is not always easy, however. The trend that was rooted in the eighties for clergy to live in homes they owned, rather than in the rectories provided, caught up with our parish in 1991. At first we were able to rent the rectory, but financial difficulties arose as tenants left and the house endured months of vacancy. The discrepancy between the housing allowance paid out and the rent that could be commanded also worked adversely. In due time, however, the problem went full circle, with a return to the incumbents of the Parish of Fitzroy Harbour inhabiting the big, roomy house next door to the church.



Rectory

¹ Rt. Hon Harold Wilson

Through the years (as related in the first part of this history) the congregation has easily moved away from the traditional Book of Common Prayer to the Book of Alternative Services and to new hymn books, incorporating modern language and music into the services. Women have risen to take an equal level of position and responsibility. Children are offered communion. Now, a special space is provided in the sanctuary for families with small children during services.

We've had Bless-the-Animals services, healing services, Seder meals on Maundy Thursday, and Saturday evening services – some of them retained, others tested and dropped – but always supported as they occurred. Ecumenical events have included a parade on Palm Sunday, Advent carol services, and shared leadership in Camp Awesome (formerly Vacation Bible School) for children each summer.



Vacation Bible School 2001

Some people may identify us by our fundraisers. A few of those, like the summer barbecue and corn roast, have been a perennial occurrence for more than 40 years. The Irish Stew dinner on or near St. Patrick's Day is another favourite that has sustained solid community support. Participating in the annual Fitzroy Harbour yard sale has proven a good way to raise a few dollars and get rid of our personal clutter at the same time. Fashion shows, Art-in-the-Park, dances, concerts, catering, Rural Roots Antique Road Show and home and garden tours have all raised money in the past 25 years.



Corn Roast 2011

Through its fundraisers and congregational generosity, St. George's supports a variety of programs. On a regular basis, we contribute to Bales for the North, the West Carleton Food Bank, the Jesse tree at Christmas and the Canadian Food Grains initiative. For several years The Men's Voyces, from Ottawa, performed at St. George's on All Saints' Eve, with the proceeds being directed to L'Arche Community in Arnprior.

Over a period of several years the church sent money to the Paynter Home in Sri Lanka to support a needy child. When that child moved on, the money was directed to the Carleton Secondary School Drug Addiction Prevention Program. During the Rev. Carolyn Langford's tenure as a Volunteer in Mission in Uganda, St. George's helped fund her work. The Snowsuit Fund, Share the Harvest in support of local shelters, the Primate's World Relief and the Residential Schools fund have all received support from St. George's.



Harvest Supper 2002



Irish Stew 2007

Since the turn of the millennium there has been a trend for older teenagers to do useful volunteer work to help underprivileged communities in the world. This prompted St. George's to establish and sustain the Youth Mission Initiatives Fund with which to encourage and help young people do terms of charitable work at home or abroad as part of their Christian growth and development.

In addition to the work that goes into financial outreach, church programs are well supported. Diverse study groups gather during Advent and Lent, as well as at other times. One year we studied Handel's *Messiah* as an Advent companion. On another occasion we invited the community to discuss the occurrence of violence in religions, with particular emphasis on Islamic radicalism. The study program, Alpha, attracted a great deal of attention and participation as it grew in popularity during the 1990s. Meetings were held in the homes of individuals, where a meal preceded the study.

Beginning in the nineties, on a monthly basis Communion has been offered to nursing home residents by certified lay assistants from St. George's.



Amahl and the Night Visitors 1987

Youth groups have taken on different formats through the years. On occasion overnight camping at the park has been organized; and movie, bowling and pizza nights are always popular.



Easter Day Camp 2007



Youth Camping 2008

Joint efforts with St. Thomas have included a Parish Worship Committee, convened in 1997. For ten years the committee assisted in designing services and acted as a sounding board for suggestions from the congregation. The annual Parish picnic and other joint services, as well as Bible studies, are still regular occurrences that include both congregations. The Parish administrative assistant, currently Catherine Rodger, is invaluable to our Parish. This position, along with those of Cleaner and Organist, changed from voluntary to remunerative capacity as we moved in step with the times.



Parish Picnic

Through the decades many hard-working members of St. George's have contributed to the church's maintenance, administration and the general care of its members. These are ongoing tasks taken on by the Wardens, Church School leaders, Treasurer, Altar Guild and Council members, readers, lay assistants and pastoral care visitors, cantors, choir, servers, sides people, catering coordinators, and the congregation in whole or part, in many capacities.

Led by four different members of the clergy over the past twenty-five years, the Spirit has wafted us in various directions. The Reverend Roger Young left in 1987, just before our 125th anniversary, to be replaced by the Reverend Ken Spear. Over the next 12 years the special musical talents of Ken and his wife, Susan, graced our services and drew audiences to fundraisers. The Reverend François Trottier and his wife, Nancy, then brought an emphasis on outreach and pastoral care for the next five years. After they vacated the rectory, the Reverend Andrea Christensen moved in, giving delight to the shut-ins. Since Andrea's departure in 2007, the Reverend Kathryn Otley's special skills in administration and diplomacy have been a particularly timely benefit in dealing with the parish's building expansion projects. These spiritual leaders, like their predecessors, have played an important part in our development as a church and as a caring entity in the community.



Servers 1998

St. George's is a sometime training ground for postulants who are studying to become priests in the Anglican Church. Those who have trained under our incumbents during the period covered are: Gale Edmundson (1991), Rhondda MacKay (1992), Linda Wheeler (2010) and Junior Smith (2011).

In 1991 we welcomed a visitor from our sister diocese in Pelotas, Brazil - Father Edouardo. As a young priest unfamiliar with customs foreign to his home country, Father Edouardo shared in our worship services and, for two months had an extraordinary opportunity to become acquainted with Canadian culture through the generous hospitality he received at St. George's.



For many years St. George's was blessed to be served by the talents of Emily Tripp, Velma Weir and Dorothy Lathem on the organ. These talented volunteers accompanied the hymns for Sunday services every week for many years and played at weddings and funerals, as well. This was finally recognized as a demanding and time-consuming job, and in 1990 the Parish Central Committee established the newly budgeted position of Parish Organist. Lenna Murray was the first to receive remuneration, followed in 1994 by Andrew Staples, who stayed only one year.



In retrospect, perhaps the problem of keeping organists had something to do with the antiquity of the instrument itself. In any case, on the initiative of our rector (the Rev. Ken Spear, himself a musician), a new organ was installed for a trial period and an organ fund was started. Soon a large cardboard graph was set up at the front of the narthex to indicate the fund's progress each week. As usual, the victory bell rang before the target date was reached.

With the brand new organ in place, in 1995 we were indeed fortunate to acquire the services of Morley Paget, who has remained with us for 17 years. Four years after Morley's arrival, when our accomplished soloist and choir director, Susan Spear, stepped down, Morley generously agreed to lead the part-time choir and went on to create a Parish choir in 2003. This choir performs at Christmas and Easter, as well as for special services, such as inductions.



Parish Choir

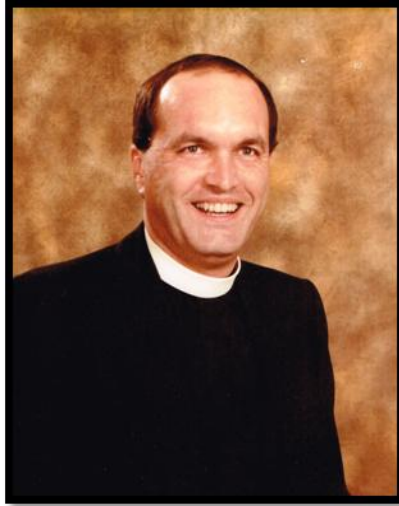
Music is a valued element of our worship at St. George's and not enough can be said of the blessings that have been bestowed through the talented musicians (including long-time cantor, Gary Weir) who have served us through the years.

Visits from the Bishops and Primate have always been highlights for the congregation. In January, 2005, a special service packed the church when the Primate, the Most Reverend Andrew Hutchison, and Bishop Peter Coffin attended St. George's to bestow the Anglican Award of Merit on Amy Newell. In recognition of her work at the national level, including her term as Prolocutor, Amy received the highest commendation a lay person can achieve in the Anglican Church of Canada. It was a proud moment for our little country church.

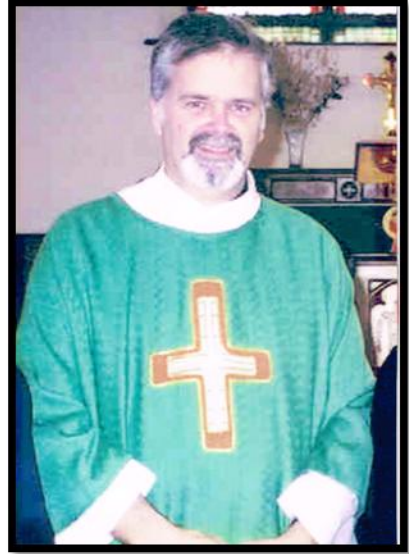


What, now, of the future? Will this, after all, turn out to be the final generation of St. George's? The future promises some stiff challenges, but the spirit of those who built the church has persisted through five generations and continues to embody us today - vibrant, hopeful, determined, optimistic and full of faith. On this 150th anniversary we pray for God's help in perpetuating the legacy so that St. George's will continue to serve for generations to come.

Rectors from 1988 to 2013



Rev. Ken Spear
1987 - 1999



Rev. François Trottier
1999 - 2004



Rev. Andrea Christenson
2004 - 2007



Rev. Kathryn Otley
2007 -

Wardens from 1988 to 2013

Rector's Warden	Year	People's Warden
Gary Weir	1988	Diana Deschamps
Gary Weir	1989	Diana Deschamps
Tom Jones	1990	Mary Lepine
Tom Jones	1991	Mary Lepine
Mary Lepine	1992	Ron Weir
Mary Lepine	1993	Ron Weir
Mary Lepine	1994	Ron Weir
Barney Deschamps	1995	Ron Weir
Barney Deschamps	1996	Jessie Beaudoin
Barney Deschamps	1997	Jessie Beaudoin
Barney Deschamps	1998	Jessie Beaudoin
Barney Deschamps	1999	Jessie Beaudoin
Gary Weir	2000	Jessie Beaudoin
Gary Weir	2001	Kevin Portt
Gary Weir	2002	Kevin Portt
Anne Senior	2003	Kevin Portt
Anne Senior	2004	Kevin Portt
Amy Newell	2005	Bill Boland
Amy Newell	2006	Bill Boland
Gary Weir	2007	Beth Portt
Gary Weir	2008	Beth Portt
Gary Weir	2009	Beth Portt
Gary Weir	2010	Beth Portt
Gary Weir	2011	Kevin Portt
Gary Weir	2012	Kevin Portt
Mary McNeill	2013	Mary Bennett

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL, CONVENORS, AND COORDINATORS FOR 2013

People's Warden		Mary Bennett	
Rector's Warden		Mary McNeill	
Treasurer		Darlene Weir	
Synod Member		Pat Weir	
Alternate Synod Member		Audrey Jones	
Congregational Appointment to Parish Central Committee			
Rector's Appointment to Parish Central Committee		Amy Newell	
Congregational Council Members at Large		April Eastman Audrey Jones Judy Watson Alison Armstrong Faye Stewart	
Intercessor Co-ordinator		Ron Weir	
Lay Assistants Co-ordinator		Anne Senior	
Readers Co-ordinator		Wendy Mayhew	
Sidespersons Co-ordinator		Faye Stewart	
Altar Guild Convenor		Susan Morency	
Catering Convenor		Amy Newell	
Church School Convenor		Beth Portt	
Cemetery Committee	Ron Weir (chair) Wayne Baskin Dave Morency	Alex Weir Mervyn Tripp Kevin Portt	Ed Poole Bill Boland Lorney Stewart
Conservation Officer		Dave Morency	
Nominations Convenor		Bill Boland	
Barrier Free Access	Gary Weir	Dave Morency	

*"Now we your people, the flock of your pasture, will give thanks
to you forever: from generation to generation."*

Psalm 79:13