

News Release: October 25th and 26th 2



The Anglican Church of the Ascension in New Sudbury celebrates its 60th Anniversary

This weekend members of the Anglican Church of the Ascension will be giving thanks for their congregation, for 60 years of ministry, and an Anglican presence in New Sudbury. There have been a number of 60th Anniversary celebrations at the church throughout the year, including a neighbourhood BBQ, a children's party, and a coffee house, and a book study (*Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer), but they will culminate this weekend in a Dinner and Dance at the Howard Johnson Hotel on Saturday evening, and a Service of Thanksgiving on Sunday 26th October at 10am. The Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Algoma, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen Andrews will be attending both of these celebrations.

The Church of the Ascension, now a vital and healthy congregation, had its humble beginnings in January 1954 as a mission outreach of the Church of the Epiphany in downtown Sudbury.

The 'New Sudbury Mission', as it was called, held its first service on January 24th 1954 at Charles McRae public school. There were 29 people in attendance and Frank Nock was the officiant and preacher. The offering was a mere \$5. 71. These services of evening and morning prayer continued and Cyril Varney, a well known Sudburian and lay reader frequently lead the 11am Matins service during the early years. By 1957 Rev. Harry Morrow was the incumbent. The Ascension started as a neighbourhood family church with generations of the same family filling the pews on Sunday mornings.

Services continued in Charles McRae Public School and also at Carl Nesbitt Public School and by the end of December 1957 the attendance was between – 60-90 on a

Sunday morning. There were also communion services held in parishioners homes, a reminder us of how the early church gathered for worship.

There was a strong desire in the congregation to build a church of their own and a piece of land was obtained in New Sudbury, near the corner of Barrydowne Rd and Lasalle Blvd. Members of the Church of the Ascension built the church themselves, and some of the men who are still around today remember going down to Sparks Street after work to do their part in the construction of the church. Even today, when there is a building project at the Ascension, it is the members of the church who offer their skills to build something new.

Ground breaking ceremony for the new church on Sparks Street was held on the Sunday closest to Ascension Day at 1pm on May 15th, 1958. There were 52 people in attendance. In the vestry book Rev. Harry Morrow remarked that it was an 'impressive ceremony'. The following Sunday, May 18th children lead and conducted the service and acted as sides people. Our love of youth and their full inclusion as participants in the life of the congregation had an early beginning and continues today. In 2013 the Church of the Ascension started using the Godly Play program for teaching their children the stories of the faith. It is based on the Maria Montessori method of teaching and involves storytelling and 'wondering' about what has been heard.

The Cornerstone of the 'Parish Hall' was laid on Monday October 5th 1958 with +William (Bishop Wright) as the officiant and preacher. The first service in the new Church of the Ascension was held on Sunday November 9th, 1958. There were 158 people in attendance! The idea was that worship would be held in the hall for a time, and that eventually a larger sanctuary would be built where the parking lot is situated today. Unfortunately that dream of a huge church never materialized and over the years worship was held in the same 'hall' space which was also used during the week for all the social activities. Members remember having to move the church chairs for card games and lunches and then put them all back in place for Sunday morning worship.

In 2004 the members of the church decided to build a Fellowship Hall on the north west side of the building and this large bright space is now frequently used by members of the congregation for their meeting and potluck suppers, for Messy Church (church in an informal setting) and the annual kids summer camp. It is also used by community groups for AA and Al Anon meetings, as well as an exercise program for seniors that is run by the Sudbury and District Health Unit.



Youth and children at the Annual Summer Bible Camp in August 2014 enjoyed having their faces painted as “Weird Animals”.

Since the 1950s the Church of the Ascension has gone through seasons of plenty and seasons of hardship, but members have continued to meet faithfully for worship and prayer, for fellowship and to further the work of God’s kingdom in our small corner of the world. The ‘family’ feeling to the Ascension still exists, but now our church family is made up of single men and women, couples, young families with children, working adults, and seniors. Parishioners come to the Ascension from all over Greater Sudbury including Onaping, Wahnapiatae, Azilda, Skead and Garson. We believe that every member of our congregation has a role to play in its growth, health and vitality and each person is called to find ways to serve God in our church. We have a strong lay leadership at the Ascension and over the years we have been served by a number of clergy including the Ven. Lloyd Hoover, the Rev. Bill Ellam, the Rev. Michael Hankinson, the Rev. Guy Snell, and today’s rector, the Ven. Anne Germond.



Church of the Ascension on Sparks Street

The Ascension is known for being a caring community and we still have a very active group of parishioners who make pastoral visits to those who are in nursing homes, or who are 'shut in', bereaved, or recovering from illnesses. One group of women attended the Thursday morning service at Falconbridge Extencicare for more than 50 years, ensuring that residents in the nursing home were able to get from their rooms to the hall where the services were held.

Outreach is an important part of our communal life at the Church of the Ascension. That includes outreach at the International, National and Local level. For years we supported ministry to those living with and dying from AIDS in South Africa, and we helped fund a local day program from orphaned children. We have given money to children in Canada's north, and we are involved with some important outreach ministries in Sudbury. For years we have been supporting the Elgin Street Mission with gifts of money, monthly sandwiches and donations of clothing and personal supplies. Friday evenings during the winter months sees members of the Ascension serving dinner

at the Church of the Epiphany as we support the Out of the Cold Dinner program for homeless and lonely people. Our women gather to make quilts out of discarded fabric every Tuesday during the winter months and these are given to shelters and churches in the Diocese of Moosonee. In the last three years we have also become involved in an outreach ministry to the students at Barrydowne College and we are delighted to be making a difference to today's youth who are right in our back yard.

This weekend we will give thanks for the blessings that we have received as a community of faith these past 60 years. As we remember and honour our founders, and those who have supported us through all the years we have shared together, we are humbled that from such a small beginning, such a beautiful church has grown. In thanksgiving for 60 years of ministry at the Ascension, our members will be invited to make a 'thank offering' to a new church that is starting in the Diocese of Tarime in Tanzania, our sister Diocese. We want to help them take their first steps to their 60th Anniversary.

Above all, we acknowledge that Christ dwells at the very heart of the Ascension community, and for that great and wonderful gift, we give thanks to God.

The Ven. Anne Germond (Rector of the Church of the Ascension and Archdeacon of Sudbury/Mantioulin)

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