

Hamilton Baptist Church
“Surely the Lord is in this place”
Golden Jubilee of Church Building
1909—————1959

“There was a man sent from God.”

These words, which in their original reference concern John the Baptist, speak clearly of the personality and nature of the man who founded our Church. The Rev. J. R. Chrystal, M.A., B.D., like the Baptist, walked by faith; was the pattern of humility; was filled with the grace of God; and proclaimed His Word with courage and power.

After twenty years in the Church of Scotland ministry Mr Chrystal found he could no longer subscribe to the policy and practice of infant baptism. His severance from that Church entailed great sacrifice, involving a drop in salary from £400 to £70 per annum.

And this initial sacrifice was but an introduction to a life of sacrificial service on behalf of His Saviour and Lord.

“And there were added unto the Church such as should be saved”

The first Service of Public Worship according to the Baptist Principles to be held in Hamilton, was conducted in the Old Choral Hall, on the 14th of March 1886. It was conducted by Mr Chrystal, who had come to Hamilton on the invitation of the Scottish Baptist Denomination and the Home Mission Society to commence work in the town.

Eight members of the Hamilton congregation were baptized by their minister in Wishaw during the summer of that year. These were the first of the 341 persons Mr Chrystal had the joy of baptizing before his retiral in 1909.

Towards the close of 1886 the Church removed to more convenient premises in the old Granary in Almada Grange, where the Hamilton Baptist Church was constituted on Friday, 31st December, 1886, with a membership of twenty-seven.

This little community gathered round their pastor and soon the effect of their lives of prayer and witness was being felt throughout the town. These, with the vigorous preaching of the Gospel, and the consistent visitation of the pastor, brought their reward, and the Church grew and matured.

With the growth of the congregation the need for larger premises was felt. This was met by the purchase of the former U.P. Church building in Chapel Street for £750, a building which, although unsatisfactory in several respects, became the centre of a wonderful movement of the Spirit of God, and the place where many found Christ as Saviour and Lord.

HAMILTON BAPTIST CHURCH BUILDING

" Thus saith the Lord, Shall thou build Me a house for Me to dwell in."

Eight years after the purchase of the U.P. Church premises in Chapel Street the Minister and congregation felt the desire to build a house worthy of their God. Thus, in a pastoral letter, dated March, 1905, the Minister wrote: "We have agreed to start a new enterprise, nothing less than a new building fund." In 1907 the site in Kemp Street was purchased. The people gave willingly and sacrificially; and such was the reputation of pastor and people in the town, that many outside friends also subscribed. A substantial impetus was given to the building fund by the gracious and generous offer of Mr John Wishart, J.P., the Church Treasurer, who announced that he would add a shilling to each one donated by others to the building fund. Building was commenced, and on Saturday, 27th June, 1908, amid much rejoicing, Mr John Wishart, J.P., laid the Memorial Stone. In doing so he said that his chief joy that day was that he had the privilege of placing the chief stone of a house in which he felt sure many souls would be won for the Master. The Memorial Casket was fittingly deposited by Mrs Chrystal, who had shared with her husband the sacrifices and labours of the years. The President of the Baptist Union of Scotland, Mr Alexander Young, presided at the ceremony.

One disappointment, felt deeply by all members of the congregation, was the announcement by Mr Chrystal in May, 1909, that he was retiring from the pastorate of the Church. He felt, he said, "by reason of his age, unequal to the new phase that was about to open," and that he "wished to give his successor all the advantages and prestige associated with a new Church." Referring to this act of self-effacement at the Valedictory meeting, Mr John Wishart said, "Mr Chrystal's whole life has been one of self-sacrifice, and he has finished as he began."

Although retired, Mr Chrystal presided at the Dedicatory Service of the new church, on 25th September, 1909, and, "with earnest and impressive language" consecrated the noble edifice to the worship of God and the preaching of the Gospel.

“And some were appointed . . . pastors.”

The change from the old to the new Church building was carried out under the inspired leadership of Rev. EDWARD LAST, who had been inducted in May, 1909. At this time the Church was filled to capacity with eager congregations and, such was the influence of the pastor in preaching and personal evangelism, that there were many to be found seeking for the Lord. With the continued growth in stature of the Church members through prayer, Bible reading and witness, the influence of the Church on the community became more marked.

After the departure of Mr Last in 1912, a call to the pastorate was accepted by Rev. FORBES JACKSON, of Aberdeen. He was, however, called home by His Lord before he was able to take over his duties here.

Rev. A. BELL JOHNSTONE, M.A., undertook the pastorate in June, 1913, and, for eleven years, maintained the high standard of the ministry and held the attention of large congregations. When he left to commence a fruitful ministry in Galashiels, he left a church which was a hive of industry.

Following a vacancy of almost two years, the Rev. GEORGE DOUGLAS was inducted. A master of Bible teaching, he held large congregations, and gave to the Church a wider vision in his ardent emphasis on world-wide evangelism. Unfortunately the early brightness and promise of this ministry were lost in a difficult period which impeded progress.

The following short ministry of Rev. T. W. LISTER, brought new strength and courage to the congregation. Of gracious personality and humble bearing he won for himself a respect and affection reserved for those who truly walk with their Lord. Something of the fragrance of this ministry, short, as it was intended to be, is still to be found in the Church to-day.

In October, 1934, Rev. R. F. CONWAY undertook the pastorate and laboured for six years before accepting a call to St. Andrews. His zeal made itself felt throughout the whole life and witness of the Church, and the many homes of the stricken ones were familiar with his presence.

HAMILTON BAPTIST CHURCH BUILDING

It was during this ministry that the present Manse was purchased.

The Rev. JAMES TAYLOR was inducted in January, 1942, and, for three very difficult war years held the depleted congregation together, and sustained the members by preaching of an outstanding quality.

The induction of Rev. D. B. THOMAS took place in March, 1945. With the enthusiasm and temperament of the Welshman, Mr Thomas led the congregation through the later experiences of the War years and sought to build the Church up, and to make it again a place where men could come face to face with the Christ of the Cross.

The Rev. JOHN M. DINES, accepting the call of the Church, was inducted to the pastorate in September, 1951.

For these leaders and shepherds, some now gone to their reward, others still labouring in the work of the Kingdom here, we give God the glory.



Rev. J. M. DINES, M.A.

The Jubilee Effort

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Looking forward to September, 1959, with rejoicing, the Deacons were led to make an appeal to the members and adherents of the Church so that the occasion would be marked in a special way.

As the celebrations concerned the present building it was thought that the main effort should be centred on the beautiful suite of buildings which had been handed down to us. Many suggestions were made, such as the provision of new Communion furniture; re-wiring of the Church and the installation of new lighting fittings; re-decoration of the church and halls, and the modernisation of the church kitchen. For all this certain funds would be necessary. Thus it was that in March, 1956, a letter was sent to all members and adherents requesting that each should join a scheme in which they would agree to contribute any sum between 6d and 5/- per week for the period of three years. The target for the three years was fixed at £1500. It was with thankful hearts that the members received the news that the total promised was almost exactly £500 per year. This giving has been sustained in such a way that, at the time of writing, the total of £1,500 has almost been reached.

We seek to record our gratitude to God and the congregation for this magnificently sustained giving.

The sacrificial giving of the congregation has made it possible for certain works to be carried out in the Church in time for the Jubilee celebrations.

The church and halls have been re-decorated, the main colours in each being: pale peach, mushroom and duck blue; and all the woodwork in the church has been varnished.

The church lighting system has been re-wired, and new lighting fittings installed. The area and back gallery are lit by spot-light fittings recessed in the roof; the side galleries by hanging lights with opal shades; and under the galleries by bronze ceiling fittings with opal shades. The arch above the pulpit is lit by two fluorescent fittings concealed behind the arch. The old lantern fitting in the entrance, which was becoming dangerous, has been removed and two hanging fittings to match the stair lights installed.

The outside lights have been replaced by two bulkhead fittings designed to throw the light forward to the paths and down to the steps.

The passage to the halls is lit by two similar bulkhead fittings while an opal globe hangs over the steps at the hall entrance.

The floor of the vestibule, which was badly cracked with the building settling down, has been re-laid with terrazzo tiles.

The church kitchen has been modernised. Two stainless sinks and draining boards and new wall and floor cupboards have been fitted; and an electric water heater for the sinks installed. The normal supply of hot water will come from a new storage tank which will be heated through the church heating system; while an immersion heater has been installed in the tank to boost up the supply as necessary.

This means that there should be a supply of hot water when the church heating system is in use with very little extra cost. The electric metres and fuse boxes have also been boxed in. We are grateful to the ladies who have raised most of the money necessary for the alterations in the kitchen.

Communion Furniture

We stated earlier that part of the Jubilee Effort would be the provision of new Communion furniture. This part of our plan was altered owing to the generosity of two friends of the Church. The late Mr William Martin left a legacy of £100, and the late Miss Maggie Dunn also left a legacy for that amount. With these legacies we were able to purchase a Communion table as a memorial to the late William Martin, and three Communion chairs as a memorial to the late Maggie Dunn. These were dedicated at a special service held in September, 1968.

The choir area has been extended to make room for the new Communion furniture, and the pulpit and choir area are covered with red carpeting.

Church Officials and Members of the Deacon's Court

September, 1959

Minister:

Rev. JOHN M. DINES, M.A.

Secretary:

Mr JOHN McCORD.

Treasurer:

Mr ANDREW MOFFAT.

Deacons:

Mr WILLIAM TAYLOR. Mr JOHN NAISMITH.
Mr WILLIAM BLAIR. Mr THOMAS BARRIE.
Mr JOHN ROBERTSON. Mr JOHN LANG.
Mr JAMES NAISMITH. Mr ALEX. SINCLAIR.
Mr THOMAS KERR. Mr DONALD MacINNES.
Mr JAMES FARMER. Mr HENRY BAKER.
Mr DAVID QUINN (Snr.) Mr DAVID BARRIE.

Organist:

Mr PETER ANDERSON.

Sunday School:

Superintendent:

Mr WILLIAM REID.

Primary Leader:

Miss ISA McKENDRICK.

Junior Bible Class Leader, Mr JOHN McCORD
Senior C.E. President, Miss ANN FARMER
Junior C.E. Leader, Mrs ALEX. SINCLAIR
-Girls' Life Brigade Captain, Miss MORAG QUINN
Gospel Tea Meeting President, Mr ANDREW MOFFAT
Woman's Auxiliary President, Mrs J. M. DINES
Young Worshippers' League Leaders, Mr & Mrs THOMAS KERR

Church Officer:

Mr WILLIAM REID.

The following friends who were in membership when this building was dedicated are still with us:—

Mr William Taylor, joined church 1888
Mrs William Taylor, „ „ 1904
Mrs E. G. Forbes, „ „ 1905
Mrs J. Smith, „ „ 1905
Miss K. Napier, „ „ 1905
Mr John Naismith, „ „ 1909
Mrs William Blair, „ „ 1909

The following information as to the cost of this present church building is included for those who are interested in such details.

At present day costs the building' could not be put up for less than £60,000.

McLeod & Campbell—Mason Work,	£1962 5 9
J. C. Burns & Co.—Wright Work,	1456 1 6
John Paterson & Co.—Plumber Work,	246 15 7
William Bannatyne—Slater Work,	218 6 0
William Bannatyne—Plaster Work,	107 11 0
James Benson—Leaded Glazier Work,	72 14 6
J. C. Cooper—Painter Work,	125 14 1
Alexander Lindsay—Electric Installation,	195 3 3
John Youden & Co., Ltd.—Terrazzo & Marble,	78 18 7
John Youden & Co., Ltd.—Interiors, Range, etc.,	17 11 6
Taylor & Fraser—Heating Installation,	118 17 9
M. Bryce & Son—Linoleums, Carpet, etc.,	57 17 9
Cousland & Mackay—Ventilating- Valves, etc.,	972
Wm. Miller, Ltd.—Umbrella Rails & Pans,	8 19 0
Russell & Sons—Gates and Railing's,	65 00
National Asphalt & Concrete Co—	
Concrete and nailing- bitumen,	70 0 3
Burgh of Hamilton Electricity Supply—	
Electric Service Cable,	4 19 0
Burgh of Hamilton—Reasonable sum for use of sewer,	12 12 0
Holmes and Jackson—Stone Carving,	10 16 0
Stratford and Wark—Chairs,	23 19 3
Bennett—Furnishing, Reading Desks and Collection	
Plates,	6 10 0
Bannatyne & Jackson—Laying- of Ground & Shrubs,	12 0 0
H. B. McInroy—Mats and Table Cover,	2 14 5
Burgh of Hamilton—Three years Feu-Duty,	48 1 9
William Drennan—Clerk of Works,	27 8 10
Miller & Black, Architects,	246 4 10
T. J. & W. A. Dykes, Solicitors,	73 4 3
Alexander Anderson, Measurer,	108 5 6

£5387 19 6