

St. Andrews on the Square is one of Kamloops' oldest public buildings. It dates to the early history of this city – back to 1887. In four short months, this church went from an idea and initiative to a reality. This work looks chronologically at the history of St. Andrews. Along the way, glimpses of the history of Kamloops will also unfold. From the early Presbyterian missionary years, to Reverend John Chisholm, Phil Gaglardi, and to the restorations of 1996–1998, St. Andrews is a glimpse into our rich and diverse past.

In 1872 a Presbyterian minister by the name of George M. Grant visited Kamloops. At this time, Kamloops was a small village nestled along the confluence of two rivers. Kamloops had one main street, coincidentally named Main Street (now called Victoria Street), and a few other buildings that were located west of what is today First Avenue. George Grant was traveling at the time with Stanford Fleming as Fleming's personal secretary. Both men worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.). Grant conducted Presbyterian services on September 29, 1872 in the old dining room of the Hudson's Bay Company fort – Fort Kamloops. In the years following 1872, Kamloops continued to be visited by various other Presbyterian Ministers. Their religious services were held in the old log courthouse that was located at the extreme west end of town. When a new wood framed courthouse was build in the late nineteenth century on First Avenue and Victoria Street, all religious services were moved there.

Reverend George Murray was the first Presbyterian Minister to start regular meetings and services in Kamloops. He was born in 1843 at Pictou County, Nova Scotia. In later years, he traveled to Scotland where he completed his educational studies at Glasgow University. In 1874, the Church of Scotland (known here as the Presbyterian

Church) sent Reverend Murray to Canada as a missionary. He was given a parish that extended from Kamloops to Osoyoos and from Lillooet to Cranbrook. He established his headquarters at Nicola where a local church was built in 1876. Reverend Murray traveled extensively in this huge region on horseback until 1884. It was at this time that Reverend John Chisholm succeeded Murray.

Reverend Chisholm, like his predecessor, had a very large and extensive region to cover in his missionary work. Reverend Chisholm was responsible for conducting services in fifty-seven different locations. His parish extended up and down the North and South Thompson Rivers, from Kamloops to the Shuswap, from Sicamous to Vernon, south to the Canadian-American Border, and east to Golden. He would visit and travel from place to place until 1887, when a permanent church was constructed in Kamloops.

Between 1885 and 1886, the Canadian Pacific Railway's transcontinental line across Canada was completed, and Kamloops was on the mainline that ran from Vancouver to points in eastern Canada. As a result of the railway, like in many other parts of Canada, the population of Kamloops increased. With the increasing population, the amenities of Kamloops grew in number and variety. Services such as schools, businesses, social activities, and churches were all needed to serve the growing community. Reverend Chisholm responded to the demand for a church. On September 25, 1887, construction of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church began, along with the construction of a manse that was built at the west side of the church. The manse was a duplex. One side was to house the minister while the other side was to be rented out. Funding for the church and manse construction came from the men in the C.P.R. camps that were located in and around Kamloops. The local population, which numbered

between 400 and 500, also helped raise money to build the church. Two lots were given to the church by the C.P.R. Robert Henry Lee was the architect of the building; he designed a church that was simple and of reasonable cost; all construction was done using wood as brick would could not be found in Kamloops at the time. The church was built using balloon-frame construction. The Hills Brothers Company, owned and operated by Alfred and William Hills, won the contract for the construction of the church. Additional funds continued to be raised through local musical concerts, Sunday School events, and socials. In the end, St. Andrew's cost a total of \$5,000 to build and furnish.

A steeple was constructed the main entryway to the church. This steeple measured at 24 meters tall, and was designed to withstand the heavy weight of a church bell. For unknown reasons, a bell was never place inside the steeple. Today, a bell is still not found within the steeple. A finial was placed atop the steeple with two meter cross at the top. The cross contained three cross bars instead of one. At the end of each cross was a crescent shape. Today, it is unknown what the symbolism represented. A stone foundation was installed under the church and the steeple in 1894; bricks were also added to reinforce the church.

Four months after construction started on St. Andrew's, the first service was held on Christmas Day, 1887. On January 1, 1888, dedication services were held. In attendance were: Reverend George Murray, Reverend J. Wood, and from Kamloops, Reverend John Chisholm. Till October 1888, the Methodist Church was welcomed to share St. Andrew's until their church construction was completed. Sadly for St. Andrew's, its founding minister, Reverend Chisholm, was called to Scarborough, Ontario in 1889. He accepted this move, and in 1890, Reverend Lee was sent to replace him.

In 1896, talks about introducing electricity in the church began. It was decided that electricity would be put into St. Andrews as long as the cost did not exceed \$20.00 for installation. Sadly, upon investigation of the costs, it was discovered that the total cost would be \$24.00. As a result of this high cost, the decision was postponed. At the same time that the investigation was going on regarding electricity, an application was put forward to the board by Reverend Lee to have electrical wires and lamps placed inside the Manse. The request was, like the electricity issue for the church, postponed. Reverend Lee resigned by the end of the year and was replaced by Reverend J. Clarke Steward.

To the joy of the parishioners, water pipes were laid on the east side of the church in April 1897. A waste pipe was soon added connecting the manse with the rear cesspit. The church managers also approved the placing of a signboard over the door of the church. Commencing in 1901, the Ladies' Aid began pressing for improved water and bathroom facilities for the church and the manse. However, the secretary to the managers was not asked to call for tenders until 1903, with the successful bid not to exceed \$20.00. A conclusion to this matter was not recorded in the poorly kept managers' minutes. Between 1910 and 1912, the wood stoves that were in the church were replaced with a coal furnace, and small balcony was added to the interior of the church.

In 1910, St. Andrew's Hall was built at the rear end of the church. It was also during the late 1890s and early 1900s that St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church became a main stage for the social activities taking place in Kamloops. The church had its own men's chorus, a Ladies Aid Society, a Sunday School, and a Young People's Society for Christian Endeavor.

In 1925, great changes were about to commence for the Presbyterian Church. It was at this time that a vote was taking place for the amalgamation of Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists. A new church was formed, and it was called the United Church of Canada. The majority of the Kamloops Presbyterian Church population decided that it would be beneficial to vote yes to the union, but there were some members of the religious community who opposed the union and who wanted to remain Presbyterian.

After the union and formation of the United Church of Canada, the old St. Andrews Presbyterian Church was abandoned, and it remained empty for many years except for the odd occasion when it was rented for recreational use. In 1936, the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society bought the building and used it as their meeting hall.

It was not until 1942 that St. Andrews was again used as a church. It was at this time that it was bought by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and renamed Calvary Temple. A congregation of twenty-five members moved in under the leadership and guidance of H. McAllister. By December 1945, the building had been fully restored by Reverend Phil A. Gaglardi, and dedication services were held in February of 1946. Gaglardi's restoration project included the lifting up of the structure and replacing the old foundation with a new concrete one, and there also was the installation of a full basement. The roof and steeple were re-shingled.

As the population of Calvary Temple continued to grow, it was essential to add perimeter seating and a larger balcony. In 1948 the old interior balcony stairs were removed, and a new set of stairs was put on the northwest side of the front entry leading to the new balcony, which had been rebuilt on the north side of the building. The ceiling

was also lowered, new fluorescent lighting was put in, and the windows were lightly painted over to provide some privacy. By 1957 the Sunday School had grown to the largest in Canada and another expansion was planned. In 1957 construction began on a new addition on the east side of the site. Connecting doorways were added in the basement, main floor, and balcony. The older building, after 1958, was used for the smaller children, Sunday School classes, and for Vacation Bible School while the adults and older children met in the new addition. The thriving congregation hosted a weekly radio show called "Chapel in the Sky" that was heard all over the interior of the province. A fleet of Sunday School buses faithfully picked up children from all over Kamloops to come to the church.

Sometime between 1974 and 1976, the main sanctuary of the original church was converted into a gymnasium. The church/school administrators installed a rubber gymnasium floor. Calvary Temple began its own Christian school named the Christian Academy in September 1979 and located it in the original church building with classrooms in the basement for thirty-one students.

By the mid 1980s, the old St. Andrew's Church had been abandoned. As the church building aged and the editions became too small for the huge congregations, it became evident that a new church was needed. On 23 April, 1990, St. Andrew's was scheduled to be demolished in order for the Calvary Temple to begin construction of a new church on the property. They gave the City of Kamloops the option of moving the old church and preserving it. In September of 1990, the Calvary Temple relocated to Aberdeen and the Christian Academy amalgamated with several other Christian schools

in the area on the north shore. The church was sold to the City of Kamloops in November for \$300,000, and the 1959 addition was demolished in 1994.

St. Andrews was used in 1993 as a registration building for the Canada Summer Games, which Kamloops hosted. Besides this brief use, St. Andrews remained empty: a shy building that once had a glorious and fascinating existence. Many proposals were put forward to save the old church, but nothing was done. In February 1995, the City of Kamloops declared St. Andrew's a heritage site, but they committed no more funds to its restoration

It was in 1995 that two ladies were walking along the sidewalk past St. Andrews. As they were talking to each other, they made a comment stating that someone had to take over St. Andrews and restore it to its former glory. And so it was that St. Andrews would begin a new chapter in its long history. The Kamloops Heritage Society was formed to start restorations. The society had its first meeting in November 1995, and it became an official society on April 12, 1996. The original members of the society included: Melody Formanski, Kate Lawrie, Kathy McGregor, Sharon Morrison, Kent Wong, Bonnie Franklin, and Ann McCarthy. The initial plan for the building was to restore it and use it as a restaurant. This plan soon fell through, as the building would not be able to have the necessary kitchen facilities it needed, and this proposal was not supported by the City of Kamloops. Since the building could not be used as a restaurant, it was decided that it would be used as a wedding chapel and event facility. Many people within the community, including some city councillors opposed the restorations. On many occasions, Kamloops City Council almost voted to tear down St. Andrews. Council Member Grant Robertson also went publicly to show that he believed St.

Andrews was a, "...bunch of old boards."¹ Still, the idea to restore St. Andrews was on the minds of many, and \$10,000 was given to the Kamloops Heritage Society by the city to come up with a proposal to save the old building.

Finally, after proving that St. Andrews should and could be saved, city council finally approved the funding for the project on May 27, 1997. The Kamloops Heritage Society commenced restorations of the old building in that same year. The society had the help of many individuals, groups, and businesses from the local community. For example, members of Carpenter Union Local 1540 volunteered their time and expertise to save the old church, Inland Building Supplies provided supplies, the City of Kamloops helped with the funds, as did the British Columbia Heritage Fund and the British Columbia Heritage Trust.

Today, St. Andrews is a city landmark. A total of \$500,000 was put into the restoration of the building, which reopened on November 6, 1998 with official ceremonies on November 15th. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church is now called St. Andrews on the Square, and it brings to Kamloops a sense of the past history that this city has. In January of 2001, St. Andrews on the Square received another enhancement as new stained glass windows were added to the building. Keeping with the idea to use as much local people and business as possible, the stained glass was created by local artist Sheila Dunn and Ray Atkinson. The Kamloops Heritage Society continues to run St. Andrews on the Square as a wedding chapel and event facility. Many people come to St. Andrews on the Square in order to take a trip through the past. It is the conservation of

¹ "Council to Assess State of Calvary Temple: Heritage church given reprieve," *The Kamloops Daily News* 26 February 1997

historical buildings, such as St. Andrews on the Square, which helps all of us gain a further knowledge of the history of Kamloops and those who built her.

The above has been compiled from many sources: local newspaper articles, previous works done on the building, and the records written by those directly involved in the history of St. Andrews on the Square. For those interested in finding out more information about the history of St. Andrews on the Square or the history of Kamloops, please visit the Kamloops Museum and Archives, the Kamloops Library, or contact the Kamloops Heritage Society.

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