

125th Anniversary Service – January 24, 2016

Led by Rev. Sue Hertell (served at RCMUC 2003-4) and Rev. Greg Wooley (present Minister)

Welcome, Announcements and Sharing the Peace of Christ

With special thanks for our dear Historian, the late Mary Smith, whose history of this congregation 1891-1981 was invaluable in preparing today's service.

Hymn intro:

In the 1880 Presbyterian Book of Praise, the source of today's hymns, each hymn had an introductory piece of scripture, which we'll share with you today before each hymn. We begin with our first scripture, Revelation 4:8 – ⁸ And [they] had each of them six wings about him...and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

INTROIT: Holy, Holy, Holy – 1

Lighting of the Candles

Remembering those who have worshipped in this place

Thousands of worshippers have gathered here, but as we review the history of this Church there are family names that keep coming up in the leadership of this congregation. Many of these names are from well before our time, but as these names are recited in thankful remembrance, I hope you will be reminded of the long-time stalwarts whose journey has intersected with yours:

Young, Wright, Wilson, Wignall, West, Summerhays, Southwood, Smith, Sherwood, Rodda, Riva, Ritchie, Ramsay, Price, O'Hearn, Musgrove, McLeod, MacLaren, Lyster, Louhela, Lewis, Latvala, Kernick, Jones, Jerdan, Jackson, Hubman, Greenhough, Fraser, Fowers, Fisher, Erickson, Elliott, Dredge, Dewis, Chakowski, Brown, Broderick, Briggs, Bracco, Bloxham, Baxter, Atkinson.

For the ongoing worship life of this congregation, and for all the saints who have served Christ's mission in this place, we give thanks.

Hymn intro: John 1: 29 - ²⁹ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Hymn: Just as I am – 151

Prayer of Confession

Hymn intro: Malachi 3: 17 - And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

HYMN: When he cometh - 591

Children's Time: things that have changed since 1891

- How we got here – on foot, horseback, train
- What we are sitting on – these came in 1945, old ones looked like this...
- Lighting – during the day, probably nothing; at night, oil lamps
- Heating – pot-bellied stove rather than furnace
- The TV and even the bulletin – hymns listed on board
- What's the same: people gathered to support one another, to hear the stories of Jesus, to seek God's guidance in their lives. We hope the next 125 years are as fun and exciting as these first 125 years have been!

Hymn intro: Luke 12: 6-7 - ⁶ Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? ⁷ But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

HYMN: God Sees the Little Sparrow Fall – 514

Messages of congratulation

- Lynn Maki, Executive Secretary of Alberta Northwest Conference
- Lois Birnie, a member at RCMUC who entered the United Church Ministry

- Catherine MacLean and Earl Reaburn, past team ministers here at RCMUC
- Bruce McIntyre, a past minister here at Ralph Connor
- Sue Hertell

Hymn intro: 2 Thessalonians 2: 16-17 - ¹⁶ Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, ¹⁷ Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

HYMN: Jesus Loves Me – 554

Metrical Psalm 121

Gospel Lesson, Luke 4: 14-21

Hymn intro: 1 Corinthians 1: 18 - ¹⁸ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

HYMN: Tell me the old, old story – 555

A recollection by Miss Minnie Fulton

One of the treasures uncovered by Mary Smith in her Church history, were the memories of a young schoolteacher named Minnie Fulton, who arrived in Canmore when this Church was brand new. In Miss Fulton's words, here is a description of that congregation and its first Minister:

“No Sunday services have ever been so impressive to me as have been those that I attended in the mountains. In the mornings the congregations were usually small: I have on more than one occasion been the only one of my sex present, and perhaps a dozen men. There really were not very many women in town. But in the evenings, what a change! The church would be packed to the doors; nearly all men, perhaps fifteen or twenty women; men of all sorts and conditions, men of all grades of society and of many different countries, and men of all ages. I sat in the choir on the platform and often I fancied I could read a whole life story on the faces as they listened to Mr. Gordon preaching. To me the 121st Psalm was written in an unknown tongue until I heard Ralph Connor read it for the first time in that little church in the mountains. The old story of the Gospels lost its remoteness and became a living, genuine fact, as the men heard it from his lips. I have seen tears in the eyes and on the cheeks of rough, hardened-looking men as he referred in the most sympathetic, brotherly manner to their temptations and discouragements, and to their battles lost and won.

“I wish you could have heard those men sing some of the old familiar hymns at the Sunday night services, ‘What a friend we have in Jesus’, ‘Rock of Ages’, ‘Nearer, my God, to thee’, and ‘God loved the world of sinners lost.’ It seemed as though they sang it from their hearts, and I am sure it helped them through the week to keep a little truer to the better things of life. I know for myself that I felt nearer Heaven in some of those services than I have ever felt since, or may ever again, till, by God's grace, I get there.”

Hymn intro: John 11: 35-36 - ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then said [they], Behold how he loved him!

HYMN: What a friend we have in Jesus – 404 (Canadian connection - by Joseph Scriven, Rice Lake/Peterborough/Port Hope ON)

Remembering our past Ministers

Over its first 125 years, over 40 Ministers have served this congregation. The early days were a particular struggle, with 17 Ministers in the first 25 years – even Charles Gordon/Ralph Connor was only here two years before heading to his next call. Today, we make special mention of those who with longer times of service, five years or longer. Some of the far-back names are now remembered only via their photos in the vestibule, but I'm certain that other names will evoke fond memories from days gone by:

- Matthew White, 6 years from 1919 to 1925
- George Kettys, 8 years from 1928 to 1936;
- Alex Mitchell, 5 years from 1939 to 1944;
- “Doc” MacKinnon, the longest-serving Minister, 11 years from 1944 to 1955;
- Tom Jones, 6 years from 1966 to 1972;

- Florence Wilkinson, 5 years from 1972 to 1977;
- Bill Thwing, 8 years from 1977 to 1985;
- Bruce McIntyre, 7 years from 1985 to 1992;
- Catherine MacLean and Earl Reaburn, 7 years from 1996 to 2003;
- Ron Jeffrey, 8 years from 2006 to 2014.

We give thanks for all who have taken on the mantle of word, sacrament and pastoral care in this Church over the years, in a spirit of humble thanks.

Presentation of our Offerings

Doxology: Praise God from whom all blessings flow - 615

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer (sung)

Hymn intro: 1 Corinthians 10:4 - ⁴ And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

HYMN: Rock of Ages – 161

A recollection by Rev. Charles Gordon (Ralph Connor)

The Presbyterian congregation at Canmore had been meeting for a couple of years by the time Charles Gordon arrived to be their Minister, and they started construction on this Church building almost immediately. Rev. Gordon recalled these days many years later, as well as a general impression of what it was like to Minister here:

“The congregation consisted of only a very few members and a large number of adherents. However, the whole community turned in and gladly helped, [as did] the people of Banff. From my personal friends in the east, the organ was secured. That organ was a great thing for us – it figured not only in our Church services but in concerts, in Literary Society events in which miners and railroad boys took part. The church became a centre of social life for all classes in the community, and especially became the means of drawing the miners into fellowship. They contributed splendidly to the building and came to the services, too.

“In our fight for a sober and clean town [thump pulpit!] the church led the forces of the railroad men and miners alike. Those were great days – plenty of hard work, long rides winter and summer, heat and cold and rain and snow, wolves on the trail and the Devil all around. But good, sound men and loyal-hearted women, in whose hearts God put courage and patience and faith, then as now brought victory to the cause of the Kingdom of God. “

Hymn intro: 2 Timothy 2: 2-3 - ² And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.³ Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

CLOSING HYMN: Stand up! Stand up for Jesus – 256

Acknowledgements and thanks

Benediction (from Numbers 6)

Now may The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

Threefold Choral Amen