

St. Stephen's Once Known As 'The Little Red Church on the Prairie'

Two years before East Kildonan was incorporated as a municipality, the parish of St. Stephen's was formed in 1912.

It was originally a Mission of St. John's Cathedral with Rev. Canon Murray as priest-in-charge. Mr. (now Rev.) Roland Hall conducted the first services in the old Municipal Hall and also in Polson School.

The present edifice was erected and opened in 1913. The first rector was Rev. H. A. B. Harrison, who served the parish for a period of three years.

The first officers of the church were the late A. H. Brazier and Morrison Sutherland, wardens; J. R. Tye, Sunday School superintendent, and Mrs. H. Dixon, organist.

The land on Helmsdale avenue was donated by the late Morrison Sutherland, and the church was built through voluntary donations of the parishioners.

Rev. J. A. Shirley came to the parish as incumbent in 1916 and served for five years. During his term the Washington Avenue Mission was organized and the present structure erected.

Mr. Shirley resigned from the parish to take up missionary work in the Diocese of Yukon, and is at present resident in California.

The parishioners invited Rev. J. A. Blackburn, who was then curate of St. Matthew's, to become their rector. Mr. Blackburn preached his first sermon as incumbent on the first Sunday in September, 1922.

After spending two-and-a-half years in the parish Mr. Blackburn resigned to take up missionary work in the Diocese of Saskatchewan, and is at present residing in Hornepayne, Ont.

Following the resignation of Mr. Blackburn the parish was in the care of The Church Army, under the supervision of Captain Thomas Smith, and other church army personnel.

Rev. Harry Sherstone was invited from the parish of Carman to become the rector of St. Stephen's in 1925. During his term as incumbent the church building was enlarged to its present size, and the parish continued to make good progress. Mr. Sherstone resigned in 1938 to take up missionary work in the lake dis-

trict in Northern Manitoba, and also became organizing secretary for St. John's College. His death in 1949 was a great loss to the ministry.

In September, 1938, the present rector, Rev. F. J. Ison, was called to the parish.

During his service the municipality and the parish grew in leaps and bounds. Many improvements were made to the church building, including the erection of a beautiful stained glass window, purchased by voluntary subscriptions in memory of the members of the armed forces of both world wars.

The original parish of St. Stephen's also included the following parishes, which have today become self-supporting parishes of their own: St. Timothy, Emmanuel, North Kildonan, East Elmwood, St. Saviour's and Washington Avenue Mission.

When St. Stephen's was first built it caused many misgivings due to being erected away from the centre of the population and came to be known as "The Little Red Church on the Prairie." Today, however, it is in the centre of the thriving city of East Kildonan.

