



Church of the Good Shepherd - Anglican Parish of Lancaster - Saint John N.B. A History of the Parish

Anglican ministry in Fairville began as a mission from our "mother church," the former St. Anne's in Musquash. The "Good Shepherd" window in the Narthex came from another daughter church of St. Anne's, St. Mary's in Prince of Wales, when it closed in 1974. In 1846, a small church was built on the site of the present Good Shepherd Cemetery. Named "St. John's", it was torn down after the present building was built in 1885.

In 1873 the "Fairville Mission" launched a Sunday School at the Fairville Railway Station, under the direction of the Rev. T.E. Dowling of St. George's Church. The next year a hall was built –the present "Small Hall" in our complex– and plans were begun to build the church. In 1877 Mrs. Alice Tilley, wife of Lieutenant-Governor Samuel Leonard Tilley, laid the cornerstone for the new church. Only six days later Uptown Saint John's famous Great Fire forced a delay in construction, as the available wood was given to homeless families.

The first service in the Church of the Good Shepherd was held on All saints' Day, November 1, 1885. At this time only the Nave of the Church was finished. In 1886 the Rev. J.C. Titcombe became the first Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of Lancaster. Under his leadership the parish grew and paid off its mortgage, so that the Rt. Rev. John medley, first Bishop of Fredericton, was able to consecrate the church on June 11, 1890. The church was packed for Holy Communion at 5:30 am! The time was arranged so parishioners could attend before heading off to work. "Father Titcombe" (his title indicating his Oxford Movement churchmanship) retired and returned to England in 1893.

After a seven-month ministry by the Rev. R.W. Hudgell, the Rev. W. LeB. McKiel was appointed Priest-in-Charge in 1894. He served for eighteen years, dying shortly after his retirement in 1912. The Rev. Walter P. Dunham was appointed to the parish, which became self-supporting in 1916. Father Durham served for twelve years.

Older parishioners remember the ministry of the Rev. Canon F.J. LeRoy, 1925-1955. During his time the Church Hall was enlarged, and a pipe organ was installed. The parish started a mission in Ketepec, where a new St. Anne's Church was consecrated in 1945. Its parish was incorporated into the new Church of the Resurrection in Grand Bay-Westfield in 2009. Our Church Hall was again expanded and dedicated as the "Memorial Hall" in 1947. The Church Chancel and Sanctuary were completed and dedicated on December 20, 1953. Canon LeRoy resigned in 1955 and died in 1962. He is buried in the Good Shepherd cemetery, and descendants of his family continue to be members of the parish today.

The Rev. Donald Colwell served as rector of the parish from 1955 until 1974. He was made Archdeacon of St. Andrews in 1968. During his ministry the parish continued to grow. The present Rectory was built in 1957. A new auditorium (now called the "Large Hall") and Narthex were added in 1962. Archdeacon Caldwell retired in 1974, and died in 1990. During this time the parish enjoyed a very busy social life and large Sunday School. Its famous scouting program, under the direction of George Totten, kept the new auditorium busy. George's son, Larry, continues to serve as our Church sexton.

The Rev. Milton F. Dorman was appointed Rector in 1974. He became a Canon of Christ Church cathedral in 1984. An Anglo-Catholic of the "old school", Father Dorman was known for his exemplary spirituality, teaching ministry, and compassionate care for the needy. St. Barnabus' Chapel was constructed to accommodate his mid-week Eucharists. In 1986 Father Dorman moved to take up priestly and teaching duties, including ministry with the Anglican "Sisterhood of St. John the Divine" ("SSJD") in Thornhill, Ontario.

The Rev. Canon Arthur W.R. Gregg was appointed Rector of this parish in 1987. He later served as Archdeacon of St. Andrews as well. During his ministry two parishioners, his beloved late wife Joyce and Judy Urquhart, who is still active here, founded Gentle Path Counselling Services, with which Art served as President.

The Rev. Chris McMullen, who was also Regional Dean for St. Andrews, served as Deacon-in-Charge of the Parish of Musquash under the Ven. Gregg's leadership. He was ordained priest in our church on January 6, 2000. After Art's retirement and a brief ministry by the Rev. John Tremblay, Chris was appointed rector on September 1, 2002 and retired July 1, 2019.

During this time the parish entered into an exploration of closer cooperation with our neighbouring St. George's and St. Jude's Anglican churches in the lower West Side. This began with the three parishes hiring Michael Caines as a full-time Youth Minister in 2003. Mike went on to ordained ministry, and now serves as the rector of the Church of the Resurrection in Grand Bay-Westfield. One of Mike's "protégé" junior youth leaders, the Rev. Dan McMullen, served as the youth minister here until he went to study for ministry at Wycliffe College. He now serves in the Parishes of Sussex and St. Mark.

In the meantime, St. Jude's and then St. George's churches were closed as the parishes united and then evolved into the Westside Anglican Mission, with which the Church of the Good Shepherd had a close partnership, until WAM closed Dec 31st, 2019. The restored Brass Eagle Lectern from St. Jude's, and the stone Baptismal Font from St. George's, now enhance worship in our church here. Many families from the former two sister churches have strengthened and enlivened our own life and ministry.

The Rev. Jonathan Springthorpe was appointed Priest and Rector of the Parish of Lancaster, effective Jan. 6, 2020. After his passing on April 13, 2022 the Venerable Keith Osborne was appointed interim priest until the end of August, 2022. The Rev. Keith Joyce became interim presider at our worship services effective Oct. 2, 2022.