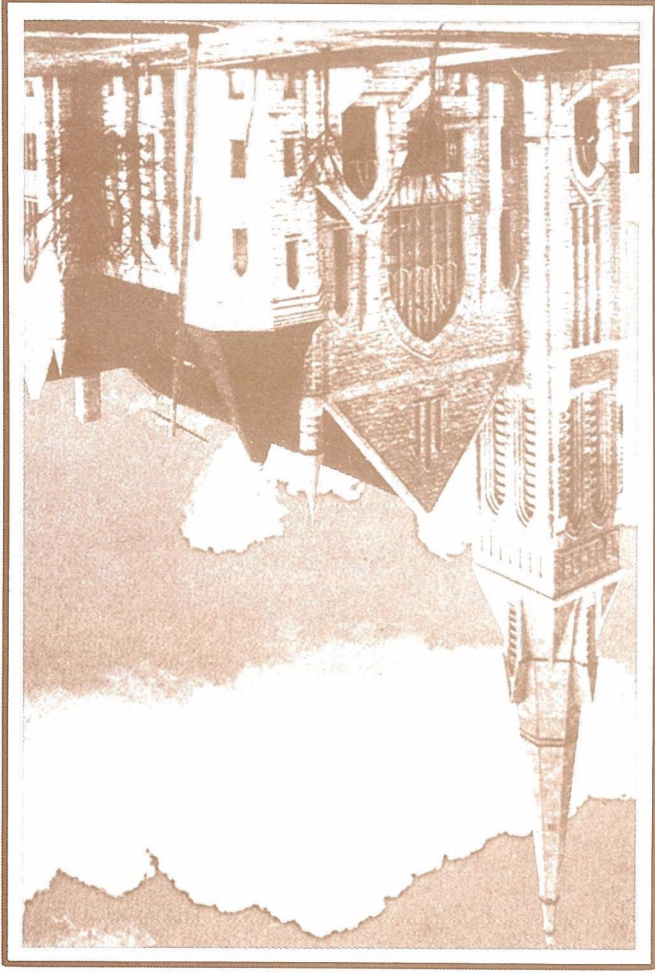


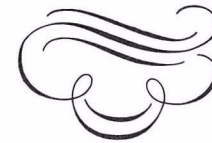
Centenary
Anniversary



One Hundred Years
of Augustine
1887-1987

One Hundred Years of Augustine 1887-1987

Centenary
Anniversary



Cover photograph of St. Augustine Church
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Augustine United Church
444 River Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

May, 1987

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PREFACE

Producing this anniversary booklet has been a memorable, but largely enjoyable experience. There were setbacks, such as the time when the whole text of the booklet was lost on the word processor and had to be retyped, but there have been many happy conversations with Augustinians about this church—its history, and what it means to them today.

I would like to thank all those who sent me personal reminiscences from Augustine's past. Their names appear beside the excerpts from their vignettes. I am grateful to the members of the Anniversary Committee for their advice and moral support: Enid Butler, Jeff Carter, Christine Coltart, Lilian Danish, Edith McCracken, Ernie Ray, Helen Sword, Margaret Thompson, and Larry Weckwerth. I am grateful to Bill Pond at the University of Winnipeg Library for assistance on technical details.

I would like to express a very special word of thanks to Edith McCracken for researching and writing the major part of this booklet, and for the delicious scones that she served me when we met to discuss aspects of the manuscript.

As we say many times in this book, we are grateful most of all to all those who through the last 100 years have helped to keep Augustine growing, adapting, worshipping, and serving the community. Here's to the next 100 years!

Linwood DeLong

FROM THE MINISTRY TEAM

One thing you can say about writing a letter for a church's centennial is you only have to do it once every hundred years. However, if you only have to do it once a century it had better be good. Why did I think of that? If I don't do a good job on this one I suppose they won't ask me to do the next one.

When I think of Augustine's centennial my thoughts naturally turn to the C.P.R., not the Christian Prairie Religion but the C.P.R., because in 1887 they printed a guide to the line which contains this description of Winnipeg:

"Notwithstanding all you have been told about it, you can hardly be prepared to find the frontier trading post of yesterday transformed into a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, with miles of imposing structures, hotels, stores, banks, and

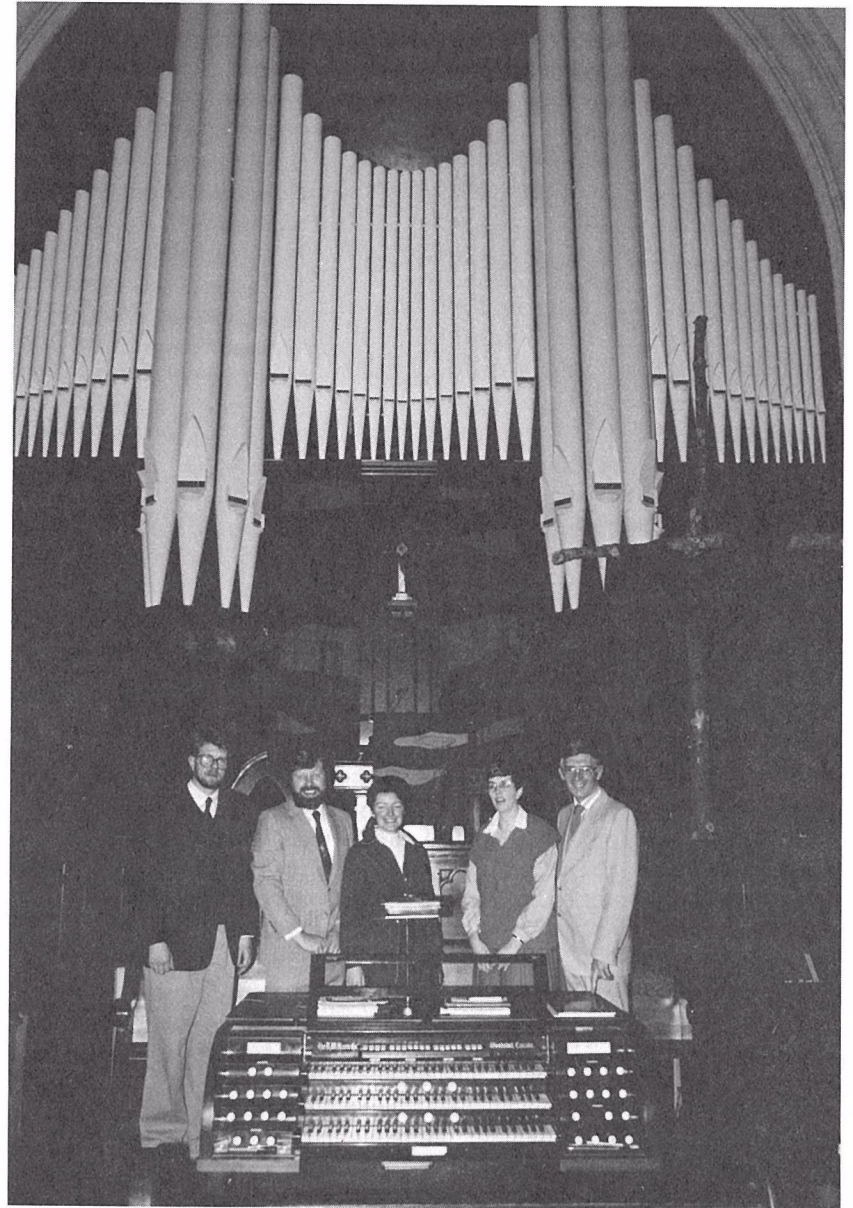
theaters, with beautiful churches, schools and colleges, with splendid and tasteful residences, with immense mills and many manufactories, with a far reaching trade, and with all the evidences of wealth, comfort and civilization to be found in cities of a century's growth."

Well, now we have a century's growth and much has changed, though some things remain the same. I can't resist one more quotation from our 1887 guide, "Before long we were out of the prairie—indeed at once, for every western street in Winnipeg ends in it."

Much has changed in the last century. In 1887 the British Empire was still growing, Zululand was annexed that year and Queen Victoria still had fourteen years to reign, the Great War was twenty-seven years in the future, the Great Depression forty-two years in the future, and the A Bomb fifty-eight years in the future. In some ways a century is only a blink in the eye of time, in other ways the last one hundred years have changed the world more than the millenium.

There have been other changes. In 1887 messages were confined to morse code, restricted to the reach of wires linked pole to pole along the railway. Now even without satellite dishes the world can come to our living room, but as Henry David Thoreau remarked when informed that Boston had been linked to Texas by telegraph, "Will they have anything to say to one another?" Will we who inhabit this place have the vision, the love, and the determination to "have something to say to one another?" Will Augustine's spire continue to pierce the skyline of businesses, apartments, condominiums, and older homes saying, "I belong here too, I'm part of this place as well, I've been here a hundred years and I'll be here a lot more?" If we are true to our roots in this congregation and the gospel it believes in, then we will indeed have something to say and something to do, more than another century could provide room for.

In the Faith we share,
Peter Mitchell,
for the Ministry Team



The Augustine Ministry Team
From left to right: Larry Weckwerth, Ian Macdonald, Janet Page, Karen Toole-Mitchell, Peter Mitchell.



Office of the Mayor
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1B9, Canada



William Norrie, Q.C.
Mayor

January, 1987.

Congregation,
Augustine United Church,
444 River Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Dear Parishioners:-

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to extend my personal greetings and best wishes as you celebrate Augustine United Church's 100th Anniversary of Christian ministry and service to the community.

At times such as this we think not only of the present achievements, but also we are reminded, with mixed emotions of the joy and sorrow of the past years. We also think of the people who laboured so earnestly and devotedly in the development of Augustine United Church. We must remember the many sacrifices they made in faith, which have led to the fulfillment of this 100th Anniversary.

May God grant you and your Church many years of Christian fellowship in which to carry out His work.

Sincerely yours,

William Norrie, Q.C.,
MAYOR.

INTRODUCTION

Edith McCracken

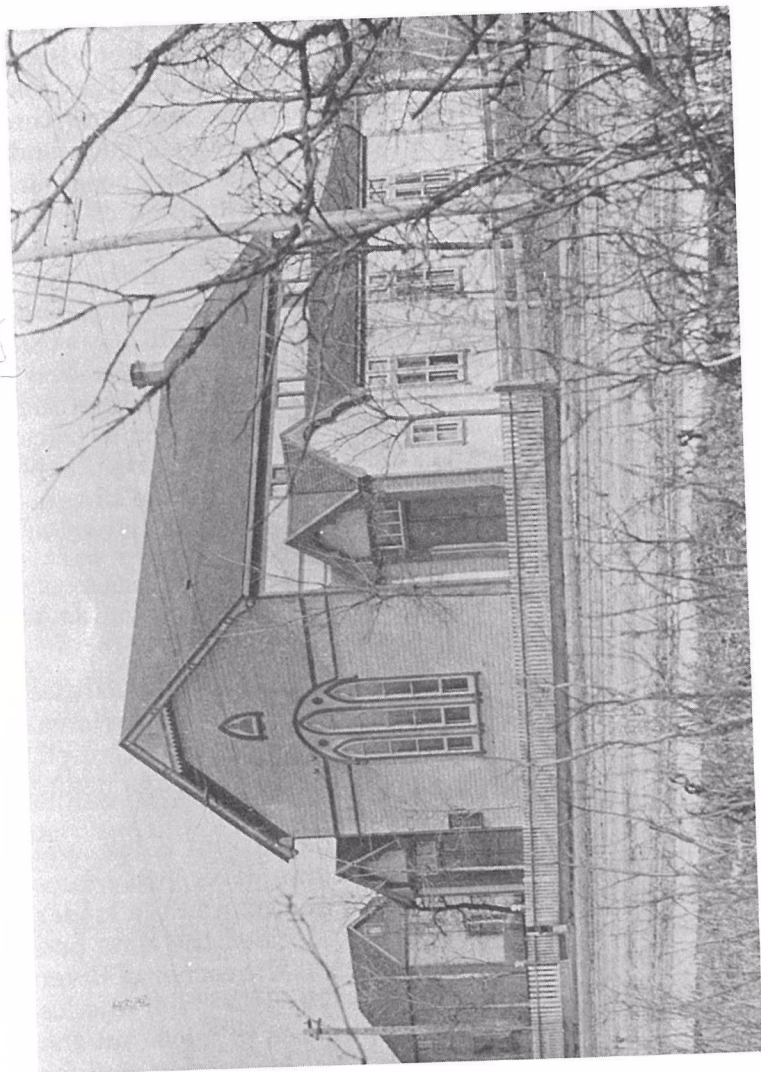
As one peers back through time to the year when the idea of Augustine was first conceived, one realizes that those devoted Christians had a vision. Though it was a modest vision to start with, it soon inspired the neighborhood and the idea became reality. Little did those worthy Christians know the reaches of their influence. After 100 years we look back and are impressed by the faith and dedication of so many people in our church. During the development and realization of these ideas, consider the meetings, plannings, the sermons, the hundreds of dedicated people who were involved in the hundred years of our church—one must agree with the hymn "God works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

It is impossible to name all the people who have been involved in the development of Augustine—the ministers, the board members, the choir, its leaders. What I can do is trace the growth, the highlights, the "lowlights" and the results of 100 years of ministry. To give a glimpse of Augustine's beginnings and early years, we turn to an excerpt from an earlier history written by Mrs. Edith Baragar:

EARLY DAYS AT AUGUSTINE

Fort Rouge was a small settlement in 1887, but a little group of Presbyterians felt the need of a church of their own. The nearest Presbyterian place of worship was Knox Church, and the long walk was quite a hardship in the days before streetcars or automobiles.

Chief Justice Taylor, a prominent Elder from Knox, had built a home on the bank of the Assiniboine River, just where Wellington Cresc. joins Wardlaw Ave., and he was the leader for a group of interested residents who decided the time had come to build a church. A lot was chosen at the corner of River Ave. and Royal St., now called Pulford St. The Chief Justice and Mr. John McKinnon cleared the bushes to mark out the site for the building. Mr. McKinnon was the builder, and for him it was a labour of love. The sturdy little frame church could seat about 150 people, and was heated by stoves, lighted by coal oil lamps. The lot cost \$800 and the total cost of lot and building was \$2,062.71. The congregation, with the help of



The First Church—Dedicated August 7th, 1887
Re-opened (enlarged as above) August 29th, 1892.

some good friends, raised the necessary funds, and within a year the church was free of debt. The new building was ready for dedication on August 8th, 1887.

Dr. Andrew B. Baird had come to Winnipeg to join the staff of Manitoba College, and he was asked to take charge of the church along with his college duties. He agreed and was inducted in October of 1887, to become the first minister of Augustine Church. A Communion Roll was formed with 40 names. The Session had three members: Chief Justice Taylor, James Russell and John McKinnon. The Board of Management also had three members: Chief Justice Taylor, D.A. Ross and W.B. Scott. The name "AUGUSTINE" was suggested by the Chief Justice, and unanimously adopted.

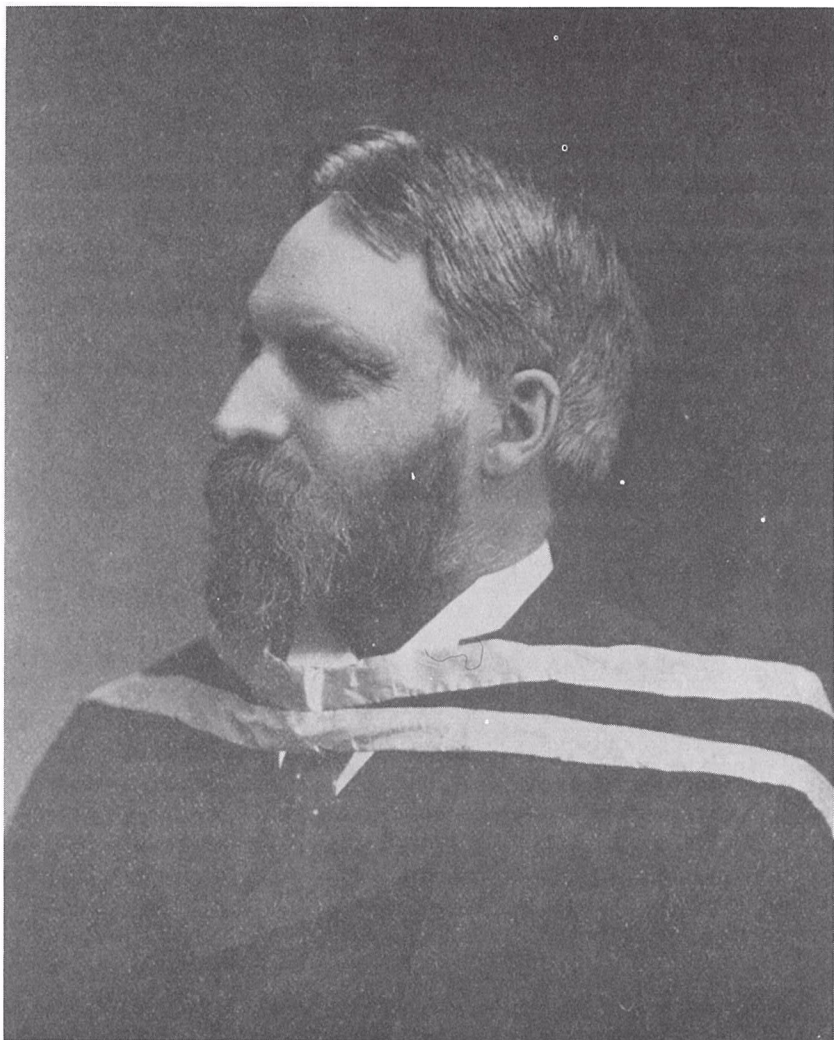
The Taylor family served every department in Augustine. The two boys looked after the lamps and built fires, the daughters swept and dusted, Mrs. Taylor (afterwards Lady Taylor) led the Choir and Ladies' Groups, Chief Justice Taylor was Clerk, Treasurer and Usher.

In 1891 the congregation had grown and Dr. Baird resigned, for he felt that Augustine now needed a full-time minister. But that was not the end of Dr. Baird's service to Augustine. Far from it. He became Clerk of Session, and his association lasted as long as life itself! No history of Augustine could be told without mention of Dr. Baird, for his presence in the congregation was a continuing benediction.

Rev. R.G. McBeth was the second minister, from 1891 to 1900. New wings had to be added to the church during these years, and a basement excavated and electricity installed. Pews took the place of chairs. Mr. McBeth received a call to First Church, Vancouver in 1900.

On December 4th, 1900, Dr. Gilbert B. Wilson was inducted. He was a fine scholar and preacher, very interested in all civic affairs and was a familiar energetic figure as he bicycled through the district, visiting and gaining support for Augustine. Progress continued under his devoted service, and a new church became a necessity. It was decided to buy more property, move the present church to the rear, and build on the same site.

Plans were made with vision and faith. The first sod was turned on April 25th, 1903, and the cornerstone was laid in June by Lady McMillan, wife of the Lieutenant Governor. On the 16th of October, 1904 the new church was dedicated.



REV. A. B. BAIRD, D.D
First Regular Pastor of Augustine Church.

There were many columns in the press describing "the magnificent Gothic structure"—"one of the finest and most elegantly fitted places of worship in all western Canada." The spire at 175 feet dominated the district with its lofty beauty. The architect was J.H.G. Russell and the contractor and builder Malcolm and Ross. The building cost \$55,000 and the next spring a pipe organ from Karn Bros. was installed at a cost of \$4,000. In 1909 the old building was replaced by the Guild Hall at a cost of \$30,000.

The Hall was badly needed because the first old church was being used as a meeting room and the quarters were quite inadequate. At the anniversary dinner in 1908 so many attended that the ladies had to use the manse kitchen next door as an auxiliary. The Hall was dedicated on January 16, 1910 and was used by the Sunday School, probably "equal to any in Canada," with an enrollment of over 500. The equipment included a stereopticon with 80 slides, mostly of the life of Christ, and a set of 500 lantern slides.

AUGUSTINE CHURCH: 1910-1986

Edith McCracken

The years after the opening of the new church were years of tremendous growth. As the city grew larger so did the interest in and attendance at Augustine. The church was filled to capacity. Most of the pews were spoken for, but "there were still good seats in the gallery" and there was no pew rent! The church buildings were refinanced and a new system of "duplex envelopes" was introduced. Some of the highlights of the musical activity of the church during this period were highly acclaimed recitals by Mr. Clarence Eddy, a renowned organist from Chicago, and by Mr. H. Lynwood Farnham, an organist from Montreal.

During these early exciting years in the church the ladies were very active. Although no woman's name appears on the various boards of the church, they were major contributors to the successful growth of Augustine. There were many groups for women and all flourished. The leaders were listed as "Congregational Officials." There was the Women's Missionary Society, the Ladies' Aid Society, the Young People's Guild (led by a man), the Young Ladies' Auxiliary, the Mission Band, and the Laymen's Missionary Movement (also led by a man).

The work of the women was continuous, social, and full of ways to bring in a little money. They were a deeply religious group, always aware of "the gracious Hand which has guided us throughout the year and which so surely has been upon us for good in all our undertakings" (22nd Annual Report). Their undertakings also included a Valentine Tea, anniversary suppers, a special musical concert by the soloists, and a Christmas sale.

Dr. Wilson was called to High Park Church, Toronto in 1915 and our next minister was Dr. Leslie Pidgeon, who gave us ten years of fine leadership. He was popular among many groups, serving for one year as President of the International Rotary. He was also a great supporter of church union, being a brother of Dr. George Pidgeon, first Moderator of the United Church.

From its beginning Augustine has been keenly aware of the missionary needs, not only by giving money, but also by involving the lives of its own members. In 1905 \$3000 was made available by Augustine to establish a mission church in the Riverview area of Winnipeg. Help was also given for a mission in the Norwood area. The Russell family sent three members to the foreign field—Frank and Norman to India and Jean (Mrs. Hall) to the Phillipines. Two other Augustinians should be mentioned: Miss Vera Hull, R.N. went to India in 1918 and Dr. Donald Black went to Korea as our special representative in 1925. Dr. J.D. McCrae was assigned to our church as our special missionary pastor in China at an annual salary of \$1200.

There was both a men's and a women's missionary group, but the women's society was particularly active. It arranged for thank offering meetings, invited missionaries on leave to speak at its meetings, read letters from missionaries, and studied a book on missions. An entry in the W.M.S. report of 1912 illustrates the seriousness with which they approached their work: "May we for the coming year have a greater realization of our responsibility, for helping on the work of Christ's Kingdom among the women and children of other lands and with genuine heart searching apply ourselves more diligently to our part of the work than ever before. As Christian women let us be willing to take part gladly in this Mission work."

The congregation had grown by over 200 members since 1908 and now numbered 880. The total donation to missions,

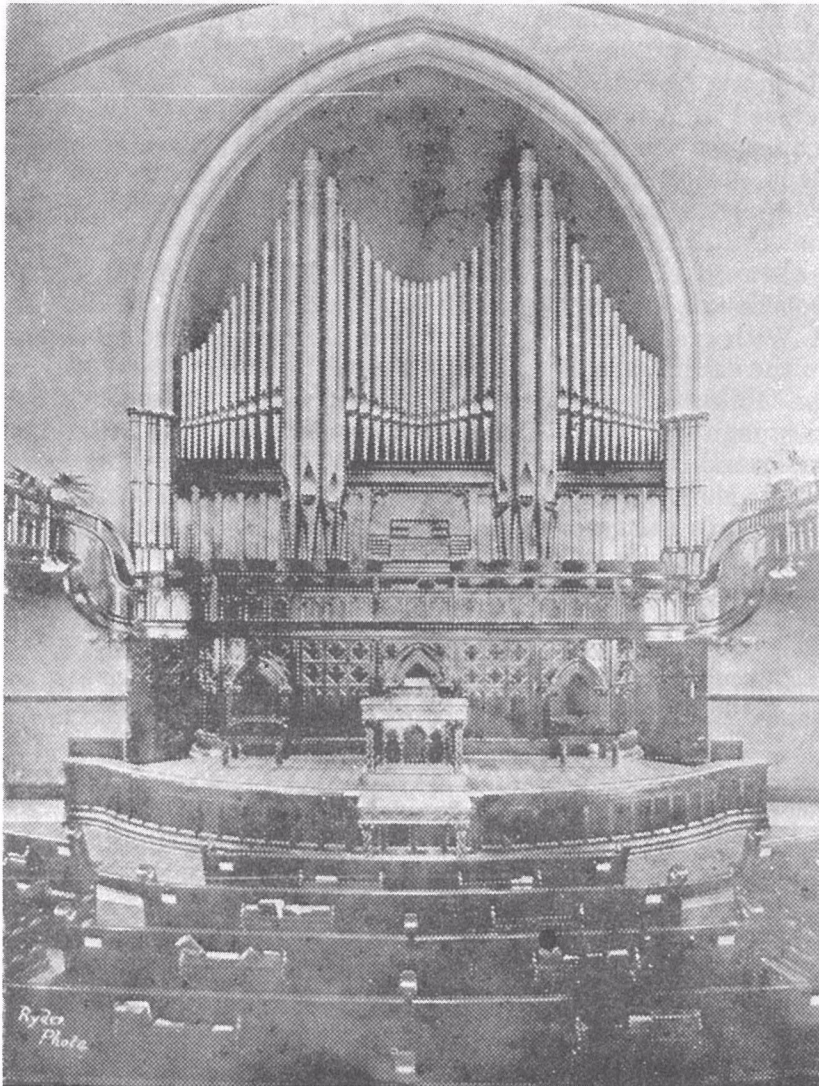
overseas and at home, was \$20,364.78. The Board of Managers reported the givings of the congregation in total as \$38,658. There was \$81,000 fire insurance in force, covering the building, furniture, organ and Guild Hall.

In 1925 Dr. Pidgeon received a call from Erskine Church, Montreal and we were fortunate to be served by Dr. R. B. Cochrane from College Ave. Church, Toronto. He was much beloved at Augustine and reluctantly left us at the urgent request of the General Council to become Secretary of the Dept. of Home Missions in 1929.

In 1929 Dr. Alex Kerr was called to follow Dr. Cochrane and the church continued its work in all departments. The 50th anniversary was celebrated in 1937 at the end of the Depression, and two years before the outbreak of World War II. With great effort, because of the Depression, the mortgage on the church building was "extinguished." At a ceremony in the Guild Hall attended by Dr. Baird in his white robes, the mortgage was set on fire and burned, Dr. Baird holding the paper and Dr. Kerr lighting a match. This gave great satisfaction to the congregation. The following is an excerpt from the 50th anniversary message from Dr. Alex Kerr to his congregation:

Today we pay our tribute to the great souls into whose labors we have entered and as we stand on the threshold of the future, conscious of the challenge which confronts us and convinced of the truth as it is in Christ, let us pray that we may inherit the mantle of the pioneers. In all the new occasions that teach us new duties may God find in this church a people who will respond to His will and love the City of God and serve their generation and see the light of the knowledge of the divine glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

Augustine Church in 1937 was a very busy place—there were many active groups and organizations, such as the Session with over 40 members, the Board of Managers with 12 members, and the Laymen's Missionary Committee with 25 members. Then there was the Sunday School with departments for different ages, C.G.I.T., Scouts, Mission Band, the Women's Association, the Women's Missionary Society, the Ladies' Sewing Society, the Andrew Baird Auxiliary, badminton, the Young People's Club, the Adult Bible Class, the Boys' Club, the Business Girls' Study Group, the Fireside Club, the Couples' Club, the Men's Club, and the Choir. Of course there was duplication in the memberships of these groups, but fam-



The interior of Augustine Church in 1906, after the installation of the three-manual Karn organ.

ily activity centered in the church. There was a place for people of all ages and ability.

The Couples' Club that was formed then consisted of 20 or more young married couples. We had a splendid fellowship. The friendships formed in this club have remained warm all these years, even up to the present, for the few of us who are left. Similarly, the Business Girls' Club, which was started by Dr. Kerr as a supper club with a membership of around 40 young businesswomen, is still meeting in the church for lunch now. Some of the original members still belong and attend.

During Dr. Kerr's term in office the Sunday morning service was broadcast over the radio from Augustine with Dr. Kerr preaching and Filmer Hubble serving as the choir-master and organist for the large choir. This was very well received.

Dr. McGillivray followed Dr. Kerr. He preached his first sermon in Augustine on the day war was declared in September, 1939 and he carried on the ministry of the church all through the war time to 1947.

During World War I the women of the church had done sewing for the Red Cross. Consequently there were already three or four treadle sewing machines in the "Red Cross Room" in the south end of the Guild Hall. When the Second War broke out the ladies now met every week, producing hospital gowns, shirts, and other articles for the soldiers. The name Red Cross Room has been used for many years, long after the sewing machines disappeared.

In 1944 Mr. Davidson Thompson became the choir leader with Evelyn Corben as organist. The sanctuary and the Guild Hall were redecorated, but the usual activities of the church continued. Allotments for Mission and Maintenance were met, although missionary activity was restricted by the extent of the war.

Dr. McGillivray's departure after a ministry of eight years was a painful time in Augustine's life. The divided opinions that developed prior to his leaving also divided church members and struck a serious blow at unity within the congregation. Rev. George Service was faced with the tasks of reconciliation and rebuilding when he was called to be the next minister. Dr. Harry Joyce, a retired minister with irrepressible Irish wit and charm, was his assistant. Rev. Service gathered a group of young women to form a study and work group

which was named the "Service Club." This group stayed together up to 1985, when poor health overtook so many members.

In 1948 the congregations of Augustine and Crescent Fort Rouge joined for worship in the summer, using each church and minister for one month. This became an annual arrangement for many years. As the membership had fallen away in 1947, Rev. Service made a special effort to bring new people into the church. At one Easter service nearly 100 new members were welcomed—the church and the gallery were filled!

During the flood of the Red River in 1950, Augustine Church was the relief centre for the area. Calls for help were accepted and attended to; coffee and food were served to tired sandbaggers. Sixty-eight army beds were set up for refugees from flood areas and meals, supervised by Mrs. Henry Wood, were served. It was a busy place.

When Rev. Service left in 1953, Rev. A. E. Armstrong was engaged as an interim minister. We were all very fond of Rev. and Mrs. Armstrong but welcomed Rev. Rolph Morden as our permanent minister in 1955. Before the Mordens arrived, the old manse beside the church was sold and a newer house at 385 Waverley St. was purchased and furnished, ready for the new minister. Many of our ladies helped with the selection and purchase of furniture.

One of the first important projects in the church at Rev. Morden's time was the use of the Wells Campaign. This was a professional group specializing in fund raising for the churches. There were dinners, preliminary training meetings and an organized canvas of the congregation. I'm sure the results were satisfactory, even though there was an expense entailed.

The church's activities continued. Now we had, in addition to the adult group, activities for boys: Tyros, Sigma C, and a successful baseball team organized by Ernie Ray.

The achievements for 1955 are listed in the annual report for that year. As well there were extensive repairs, alterations, and decorations to the church building. The memorial tablet, which honours Augustine's war dead, was relettered. A deaconess (Miss Ida Pitt) was appointed, the Mission and Maintenance budget was met in full, the operating expenses were met, a Hungarian family was sponsored and welcomed, and there was a credit balance in the bank for 1956!

A memorable event, which continued for many years in December, was the Old Men's Christmas Dinner. Senior lone men who frequented the Salvation Army and the Good Neighbor's Club were picked up by transit bus and taken to a movie, then brought to the church for a delicious Christmas dinner of turkey, Christmas pudding, and all the trimmings. They were each given a gift of Sox or mitts and returned to their lodgings. Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Maud Malcom usually convened these dinners, but all the women of the church helped, assisted by the men.

In 1958 Dr. Keith Clifford was called to replace Rev. Morden, whose illness prevented him from continuing. In addition to the usual activities in the church, a senior's group was started with over 40 persons enrolled. As well, a study group for university students was formed and led by Dr. Clifford.

There was much concern over the "static status" of membership in the church. A survey west of Osborne St. was carried out to inform the residents of the new high rise apartments that Augustine Church would welcome them. The changing scene around the church area affected the church. An Inner City Council was set up by Presbytery to help churches with dropping memberships. Fewer members meant fewer pledges. It was hard to honour commitments to Presbytery.

The 75th anniversary was celebrated in 1962. Messages were received from former ministers: Rev. Wilson (who died soon after), from Dr. Kerr and from Rev. George Service. Lists of activities and leaders over the 75 years were included in the 75th anniversary booklet, along with accounts of gifts to the church and the presentation of memorial windows. At this time it was felt that an assistant minister was needed at Augustine. Rev. William Titus was engaged to fill that position. He had been the Student Christian Movement staff person in Winnipeg.

One winter Dr. Clifford changed the format of the evening service to a study of Jeremiah. This was a note in the Augustine Messenger of February 1961:

In the "Affluent Society" with its "hidden persuaders," "organization men," "waste makers," and "lonely crowds," are we any closer to the Kingdom? Have "sputniks" and "Univac machines" brought us any nearer the truth? Are our national tensions, the "beat generation" and the "Kinsey Report" indications that we are sick and lost?

These subjects came up in the study of Jeremiah.