

The Pilgrim's Guide to
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada



Praising God in the heart of the city.

Welcome to the mother church of the
Diocese of Niagara.

DEANS OF NIAGARA

John Gamble Geddes	1875 -1891
Stewart Houston	1902 -1911
Henry Pryor Almon Abbott	1912 - 1914
Derwyn Trevor Owen	1915 - 1924
Lewis Wilmot Bovell Broughall	1925 - 1932
Charles Edward Riley	1933 - 1937
Robert Harold Waterman	1937 - 1948
Walter Edward Bagnall	1948 - 1949
William Ernest Jackson	1950 - 1963
Harold Robert Bagnall	1963 - 1973
Joachim Carl Fricker	1973 - 1986
Harry James Dawson	1986 -1998
Peter Allan Wall	1998 -

BISHOPS OF NIAGARA

Thomas Brock Fuller	1875 - 1884
Charles Hamilton	1885 - 1896
John Philip Dumoulin	1896 - 1911
William Reid Clark	1911 - 1925
Derwyn Trevor Owen	1925 - 1932
Lewis Wilmot Bovell Broughall	1932 - 1949
Walter Edward Bagnall	1949 - 1973
Charles Robert Heber Wilkinson	1960 - 1970
John Charles Bothwell	1973 - 1991
Edwin Kent Clarke	1976 - 1979
Clarence Malcolm Mitchell	1980 - 1990
Walter Gordon Asbil	1990 - 1997
David Ralph Spence	1997 - 2008
Michael Allan Bird	2008 -

GUIDE TO CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

In 1827 Bishop Stewart of Quebec noted in his journal that "a village seven miles from Ancaster named Hamilton is asking for the services of a clergyman". The Hamilton area, originally a part of the Diocese of Nova Scotia, was at this time in Quebec Diocese. In 1834, a young man of 24 years, who had been at Trois Rivières, Quebec, was appointed.



The Rev. John Gamble Geddes arrived in March 1835, to find part of his congregation meeting in the log courthouse with the Rev. John Miller from Ancaster, although some Anglicans held pews in the First Methodist and in St. Andrew's (now St. Paul's) Church. That year, a building committee was formed with Allan N. MacNab as chairman, and a lot offered by Nathaniel Hughson accepted. George Hamilton had offered the site where the Church of the Ascension is located; but the lot on James St. N. was felt to be more accessible to residents, both by road and water - an inlet and stream at the rear of the property led into Burlington Bay, enabling some to come by boat. (When the Parish Hall was extended in 1960, the old sandy shore, now covered, led to problems for the builders in establishing firm foundations.)

The first church built on this site was designed by the architect Robert Charles Wetherall, who had been chosen by Sir Allan MacNab two years earlier to design Dundurn Castle. It showed the same Regency elegance and eclectic taste as that mansion - a frame building with tower and spire at the west front, 100' long and 60' wide. The Presbyterian clergyman told Mr. Geddes that the Building Committee must have intended it, from its enormous size, for a Cathedral. (The present nave is 100' long, and 72' wide.) Of that first building, some of the foundations, the cornerstone (wrongly dated when repositioned in the south-east exterior corner of the chancel), some of the memorial tablets and windows and the bell from the steeple, now on the Parish Hall, are all that remain.

The church was consecrated in 1842 by Bishop Strachan of Toronto, in which Diocese the city of Hamilton was then located; his writ of proclamation still hangs in the Dean's Vestry. Within ten years it was decided that the building was too small, that it should be enlarged by the addition of an 18' chancel, and rebuilt in stone. Unfortunately, the funds being insufficient to complete the project, only the stone chancel and two bays were built on to the original frame, in 1854. It was known, in Hamilton, as "the humpbacked church" for twenty years. That chancel did contain the lovely traceried stone East Window copied from that of the ruined Guisborough Priory in Yorkshire. In 1870 the Stone School House was built to the north.

CHRIST CHURCH BECOMES A CATHEDRAL

In 1873, when it became certain that six counties were to be cut off from the Diocese of Toronto to form the Diocese of Niagara, the firm of Leith & Langley, Architects, of Toronto, was engaged to finish the church that it might indeed be suitable as a Cathedral. Because of costs, the design, from the original frame church with tower and spire to the west, was changed to a much simplified west front, similar to that of Winchester Cathedral: a picture of which hangs at the foot of the steps in the narthex. Total costs with accessories were stated in 1877 to be \$42,700, with Mrs. H. B. Witton Sr. acting as treasurer and heading the building campaign fund.

The Cathedral was opened in 1876 with the original minister, John Gamble Geddes as Dean and Thomas Brock Fuller, Isaac Brock's godson, as Bishop. In 1890 the Font was placed inside the west entrance as a memorial to Dean Geddes' 55 years of ministry, during which he had baptized 5,186 persons. He died in 1891, greatly loved and respected: it is said that when the first church was being built, people began to call it the 'Geddes' Church' - it was his reproof, that it was not 'Geddes' Church' but Christ's Church', that led to its present name with the unusual addition of the 'apostrophe s'.

ARCHITECTURE, WINDOWS AND FURNISHINGS

The interior of the Church is in the style called Decorated Gothic which is particularly exemplified in the chancel arch and the clerestory and roof. The stained-glass windows of the nave are of various periods and styles. The south-west window is in memory of Mary Ainslie and her baby; Mary Ainslie's was the first burial in the churchyard in 1876. The first window on the north-east end, the Annunciation, is a Canadian work shown in London at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition of 1886, and received high commendation in the official report to the British Parliament. The south-west window in the chancel is the newest, by a modern Canadian artist, Yvonne Williams; it shows the four great events of the Christian Year: Nativity, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Pentecost. Like the windows, the memorial tablets throughout the Cathedral are of many styles and dates, the earliest being that of the death of Sir Allan MacNab's brother David, who died in the rebellion of 1837 and continuing through the South African and The Great Wars.

As 1925 approached, the congregation thought of ways to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the church as a Cathedral. It was decided to enlarge and beautify the chancel and the architect, W.P. Whitton, was commissioned. The rich Decorated Gothic style was chosen with the Hammer Beam roof, similar to Westminster Hall. A new organ in memory of the fallen of the 1914-1918 war was ordered from Casavant Freres of St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. They incorporated every stop and pipe of the old Johnson Massachusetts organ in the new casing designed by Mr. Witton, moving it from its former position in the northeast corner of the nave into the chancel. He also designed the sanctuary and chancel rails and the pulpit; all were executed by the Valley City, Dundas, wood carvers who have had sculptors of note, including the present well-known sculptor William McElcheran. The pediment in the sanctuary are copied from those in Gloucester Cathedral, The Bishop's Throne is adapted from one in Truro Cathedral, Cornwall and his prayer desk from one in Manchester Cathedral; the latter shows the Dragon of Wales. The arms quartered with the arms of Niagara on the east side are those of Archbishop Owen who was Bishop of Niagara when it was made. In 1932 the splendid reredos was placed in the chancel as a memorial to the Southam family. It is of Caen stone from France and carved by J. Whippel & Company of England. It was designed to enshrine the existing cross given by Dr. and Mrs. Henry Ridley in 1907 and the deeply carved oak altar given by the Glassco family in 1917. The reredos shows four scenes from the life of Christ and 18 saints and figures representing the virtues, arts and heroes of the church; a key to it is appended. When the chancel was built in 1925 the DuMoulin family gave the marble floor and in front of the altar is the grave of Bishop DuMoulin.

THE SECRETS OF THE CATHEDRAL

Around the east wall of the chancel behind the altar runs an ambulatory, allowing access from the Dean's vestry to the sacristy without passing across the sanctuary. Entrance to it from the chancel is through magnificent bronze Parclose Screens, given in 1955 in memory of Mr. & Mrs. C.S. Scott. Mr. Scott's history of the Cathedral is the main source of information up to the time of Bishop Broughall. Within the ambulatory are memorial windows and tablets, including one in memory of Miss Margaret Ambrose who was the organist for 47 years.

In 1960, to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the first church on this site, the handsomely carved west doors were given, the Parish Hall was enlarged and the grounds landscaped. Behind the Parish Hall are a few of the oldest gravestones that were in the old burial ground behind the church; included is the family memorial of Richard Beasley, the first settler at the "Head of the Lake" (as Hamilton was then known), the owner of the property on which Dundurn Castle now stands.

THE SACRISTY

The Sacristy on the south side of the chancel, furnished in memory of Bishop Broughall, was designed by John T. Bell of Souter & Associates, architects and executed by the Valley City Company in 1967. There are kept and cared for many of the treasures of the Cathedral: processional crosses, the embroidered silks and richly-worked linens used in the services, the Bishop's crozier of silver with enamelled crests, the silver-gilt chalices made from the melted jewellery of the parishioners as a thank offering for the Golden Anniversary, the silver chalices set with amethysts from former bishops' rings and their gold pectoral crosses.

GIFTS TO THE CATHEDRAL

As a Cathedral, Christ's Church unites with others of the Anglican Communion in many causes and thus receives thank-offerings and memorials from other lands. Above the pulpit hangs the silver cross of nails from the old Coventry Cathedral bombed in World War II, similar to one found in the ruins fused together by fire. In the north chancel arch is set the Canterbury Cross from the old walls of Canterbury, the mother church. In the link between church and hall hangs a copy of the coat-of-arms of the Diocese of Polynesia, sent from Fiji to commemorate a visit here by their Bishop in 1967. It is impossible to list all the gifts in the Cathedral and its precincts; at the foot of the narthex steps a book of Remembrance contains as complete a record as could be obtained by a search of early documents.

In 1977 a major restoration of the Cathedral was undertaken. This work had become increasingly necessary because of on-going deterioration of the condition of the nave walls and ceiling. As well it was thought wise to put the total area into a more functional condition, which included a major improvement in the general lighting and painting of the building. The old fixed pews were sold to parishioners, with movable ones installed to allow a flexible use of the space; this has enabled the parish to use a nave altar situation during summer periods which many members really enjoy. A portable stage allows orchestral or choral groups to be seen and heard more clearly.

The Cathedral is a centre for the performance and display of the arts; many diocesan and community groups and local agencies use the building, attracted by the resonance and vaulted sound. A great improvement in periods of bad weather, a connecting link from the west end of the Cathedral to Myler Hall, as well as a removal of tons of earth under the church from this area to the crypt under the east end, made a single unit of the church and parish hall. A wheel chair lift at the connecting steps and alterations of the washrooms make all of it completely accessible.

The massive expenses, in 1977 and 1985 when the exterior fabric was renovated under the guidance of Deans Jo Fricker and Harry Dawson, were prayerfully and strongly organized and supported by the parishioners of the Cathedral, the staff of the diocese of Niagara, parishes throughout the Diocese and Friends of the Cathedral. During this latter time, the church itself was declared a Heritage Building by the Province of Ontario, the Cathedral receiving therefrom a grant which matched those donations.

In 1992, thanks to a vigorous committee of the Cathedral, one of the open spaces under the church was made a Columbarium, for the inurnment of cremated remains. The use of these niches is open to any member of the Diocese of Niagara and this holy place, named All Souls' Chapel, was dedicated by Bishop Asbil on Good Friday of that year. The chapel contains beautiful windows from St. Mark's Church, Bay Street. In order to provide wheelchair accessibility to the Columbarium, a chair lift was installed in May of 2000. This enhanced the entire building by providing accessibility to all levels of "Cathedral Place".

In 1995, the School House, Myler Hall and Daycare were remodelled, upgraded and redesigned to accommodate the Synod Offices. The bishop's office, administrative, financial and programme divisions were installed upstairs, with passages from front to back of the building added. The Diocese and Cathedral signed a joint-ownership agreement; and "Cathedral Place" was opened and dedicated by the Primate, Michael Peers, on January 7, 1996.

In September of 1999 the East Window was completely enclosed and scaffolding erected to begin the process of cleaning and restoration. This project was a cooperative effort between Summit Restoration of Burlington and Luxfer Stained Glass Studios of Concord Ontario. Several pieces of stained glass were replaced including Christ's head in the centre panel, depicting the ascension. The spectacular window was unveiled to the congregation during the Palm Sunday service on April 22, 2000.

On May 23, 2000 the Cathedral was presented with its Coat of Arms (as pictured on cover), by the Chief Herald, at the Diocesan '*Jubilation*' service at Hamilton Place.

MEASUREMENTS OF INTEREST

The Nave - Length 100', Height 52', Width 72'

The Chancel - Length 48', Height 50', Width 35'

Total length of Cathedral (including ambulatory) - 154'

Height and width of East Window 35'X19'

KEY TO THE FIGURES ON THE PULPIT

The four great Preachers - Isaiah, John the Baptist, St. Peter and St. Paul...
And Moses bearing the law, which was added later.

KEY TO THE REREDOS

Four Reliefs depict scenes from the life of Our Lord...Christ among the People, Christ before Pilate, Christ with St. Thomas passing from doubt to faith, Christ commanding Peter "Feed My Sheep".

Single Figure... On the extreme left, above, are Moses, David, Isaiah; and below, a Bishop representing the care of the Church, St. Christopher for service and St. Joseph for labour.

On the extreme right, above, are St. George, St. Andrew, St. Patrick; and below, St. Cecilia for music, the Venerable Bede for literature and William of Wykeham (founder of Winchester College), for education.

Dividing the scenes, from left to right, are Courage, Mercy, Hope and Victory. The canopied figures above are St. Peter and St. Paul.

SIGNIFICANT DATES

- 1835 The Rev. John Gamble Geddes sent by Bishop of Quebec as first Anglican minister in Hamilton and October 13th, foundation stone of first building laid.
- 1837 No congregations at Hamilton or Barton because of the breaking out of rebellion.
- 1839 July 29th first service held in Christ's Church.
- 1842 Christ's Church consecrated by Bishop Strachan of Toronto.
- 1852 Cornerstone laid for enlargement of church in stone.
- 1870 Cornerstone of Parish Hall laid.
- 1875 Dr. Thomas Brock Fuller consecrated at St. Thomas Church as first Bishop of Niagara.
- 1876 The Cathedral of Christ's Church was opened.
- 1891 Dean Geddes died after a ministry of 57 years.
- 1909 Cathedral of Christ's Church consecrated.
- 1916 Parish Hall enlarged with Chapel of Our Saviour.
- 1924 Cornerstone for enlargement of Chancel laid.
- 1925 Consecration of Chancel and dedication of organ.
- 1960 Cathedral beautified, surroundings landscaped and Parish Hall, named Myler Hall, extended, for 125th anniversary of founding of Christ's Church Parish.
- 1977 Restoration of the Cathedral: nave walls and ceiling, connecting link built between Cathedral and Parish Hall, and earth removed under the church to give access from east to west. During this time, services were held in Myler Hall.
- 1985 The 150th Anniversary of Christ's Church Parish.
- 1985 -1990 Restoration of Foundation and Exterior of Cathedral carried out at a cost of 1.8 million. This debt was ended, celebrated on Founder's Day, October 14, 1990 with a special service. A commemorative plaque was hung over the Book of Remembrance, at the narthex steps.
- 1999 - 2000 Restoration and cleaning of "East Fuller Window".