

70th Anniversary



St. James Church
Cobalt
1976

Resident and Non-Resident Clergy

who have Served St. James'

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| The Reverend E.P. Spencer* | The Reverend A. Ross |
| The Reverend John Leigh * | The Reverend R. Haines |
| The Reverend F. Colloton * | The Reverend John Watson |
| The Reverend H. Sims * | The Reverend A. Bruce * |
| The Reverend R. Fairbairn * | The Reverend L. Bruijn |
| The Reverend T. Young * | The Reverend John Jordan |
| The Reverend H. Cox * | The Reverend T. James |
| The Reverend J. Evans * | The Reverend G. Johnston |
| The Reverend E. Irwin * | The Reverend A. Wyham * |
| The Reverend C. Glover * | The Reverend D. Smith |
| The Reverend J.S. Rhodes * | The Reverend M. Dunnill |
| The Reverend N. Thornton * | The Reverend E. Patterson |
| The Reverend G. Lowe | The Reverend F. Roberts |
| The Reverend F. Hincks * | The Reverend F. Brazil |
| The Reverend C. Goodier | The Reverend R. Locke |
| The Reverend L. Sinclair * | |
| The Reverend E. PINNINGTON * | * deceased |

Bishops of Algoma

- The Right Reverend Frederick Dawson Fauquier 1873-1881
- The Right Reverend Edward Sullivan 1882-1896
- The Most Reverend George Thorneloe 1897-1915
- The Right Reverend Rocksborough Remington Smith 1927-1939
- The Most Reverend George Frederick Kingston 1940-1944
- The Most Reverend William Lockridge Wright 1944-1974
- The Right Reverend Frank Nock 1974



DIOCESE OF ALGOMA

To the members of St. James' Church, Cobalt:

It is a great joy for me, as your bishop, to write a message on the occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of your parish. In the total life of the church seventy years is a small passage of time, but in the life of our diocese and of Cobalt in particular it is an impressive span of history.

I send to you my loving greetings, those of my wife, and the rest of the diocese as you celebrate this happy event. This event marks seventy years of devotion and service to Our Lord Jesus Christ in your community, in the diocese and beyond. This has only been possible through the sacrificial labours of numerous clergy and many lay people through times of prosperity and adversity, and I commend you on this steadfast witness.

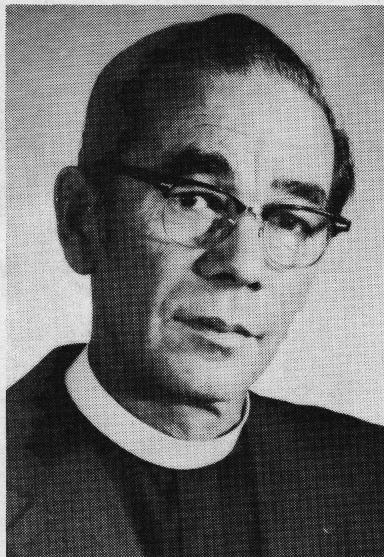
It is my prayer that you will continue to uphold Jesus Christ, Our Saviour, in your community by your life of sacrifice and love and that St. James', Cobalt, in the years to come will always remain a centre of worship and service.

May God be with you all and bless abundantly with all spiritual blessings.

Your friend and bishop,

FRANK: ALGOMA.

From our Minister



Dear Friends,

I consider it a distinct honour to be a member of St. James' Parish on this occasion observing the seventieth anniversary of its founding, and as Rector of St. James it is a joy to extend a welcome to friends, visitors, former members and former clergy of the parish and a word of greeting to those, who for whatever reason, are unable to be with us.

It is a time to pay thankful tribute to all who have laboured before us and especially to those who have been called to higher service in Christ.

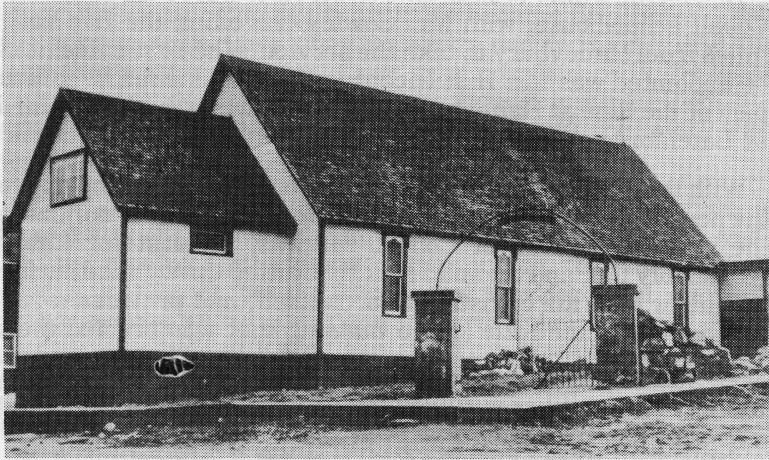
It is also a time to recognize and accept the challenge to us who remain, whether in St. James' or in other places to which the affairs of this world have called us, to maintain the tradition of faithful service which has been so vividly set forth in this place over the past seventy years.

Above all, let us offer humble and joyous thanksgiving to our heavenly Father that neither time nor space nor any created thing can separate us from those who have gone before or remain with us, for we are all one in Christ Jesus:

Praise be to God!

Roy A. Locke

St James of Cobalt



The little church on the hill

It must have been a cold day, and the prospects were certainly rugged. That was in December of 1905, when Reverend R.A., Cowling, B.A., the Rector at Haileybury, and the Most Reverend George Thorneloe, Bishop of Algoma, visited Cobalt to seek a site for a church to serve the pioneer silver mining town.

Silver had been discovered at Cobalt two years before, and now miners and their families were beginning to pour into the little town, throwing up homes as best they could. There were two schools of thought, the more optimistic that Cobalt would become a major city, the more pessimistic, that it would soon fade away, leaving nothing but scars in the rock to mark its passage.

Like Cobalt itself, St. James has never become a major edifice, but like the town it has settled down, surviving some incredibly good years, and a lot of very poor ones, but the congregation and its priests have worked hard and diligently to preserve and improve the little frame structure.

Through its doors have passed both the famous, and some not-so-famous. A lot of very good people, and, in all probability, some who have fallen by the wayside. It has seen baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals. A lot of happy times, and times of grief.

But the two Anglican clergymen who came to Cobalt with the intention of providing a church for the Anglican people of the area could not, we suppose, foretell the future. Rather they wanted to build a church that would meet the needs of the people, and hopefully grow with the town.

During the winter of 1906, church services were held in the little Cobalt schoolhouse, with Mr. Cowley travelling the five rough miles from Haileybury to take the service. The first catechist to be appointed was Mr. H.J. Richards, an Englishman, who lived part of the time at Haileybury with Mr. Cowling, and afterwards at Latchford.

With the co-operation of the Mining Corporation, a property for the new church was acquired at the top of the hill that dominates the southern portion of Cobalt. It was, at least for Cobalt, reasonably flat, and the solid rock that jutted through the surface was older than the Christian Church itself, and provided a solid foundation for the little frame building that was erected there.

St. James' is not an architectural masterpiece. Its design is utilitarian, but it has survived the test of time, even if in recent years the congregation installed steel rods to strengthen the original wood structure, and replaced the original wood posts with a cement foundation.

Bishop Thorneloe opened the church on August 19, 1906. Bishop Montgomery, secretary of the S.P.G. was the preacher. It was probably fortunate that the opening was in August, for generations of Anglicans in Cobalt were to shiver through the winters, when the old wood stoves failed to generate enough heat, or in a contrary wind the acrid smell of burning poplar permeated the building. Later the stoves were replaced with an often tempermental oil stove, and later still a modern gas space heater.

It is perhaps worth noting that for many years the church was surrounded by a handsome wrought iron ornamental fence and impressive gates. These were the victims of vandals and thieves, but the church now has an attractive little belfry, the cross has been moved from the rear of the building to the front, and stained glass windows have replaced the plain glass that the pioneers installed.

In October, 1906, Mr. W.E. Phillips became the catechist in charge, living at Latchford until the fire of that year destroyed all his possessions and he moved to Cobalt. Here he remained until after Easter, 1907, when he was compelled to give up the work because of the ill health caused by the hardships of living in a pioneer mining camp.

His successor was Mr. R.C. Bartels, who remained at Cobalt only a few Sundays. He was succeeded by Mr. M.S. Banewell, a student of the Virginia Theological Seminary. During the summer the Reverend J.M. Ballard of North Shields, England, visited Cobalt.

The Reverend E.P.S. Spencer, M.A. held his first service in Cobalt on Sunday, October 6, 1907. He became St. James' first Rector a few weeks later when the vestry decided to increase the incumbent's salary from \$600 per annum to \$800, with the hope that he would then be relieved of the care of looking after Latchford. And, at the Easter vestry meeting of 1909, the salary was increased to \$1,100.

In January of 1909, with more people flocking into Cobalt, a chancel was constructed to increase the seating capacity. And, with the mining activity spreading out in the surrounding territory, in May of 1909 the Bishop sent Mr. Herbert J. Hawken to take services at the mines and in North Cobalt. During June, services were held at Kerr Lake and Temiskaming mines, and subsequently Mr. Hawken's services were confined to North Cobalt.

In January, 1911, Reverend John Leigh of North Cobalt began to hold Sunday morning services at the Kerr Lake school house. The Reverend S. Gould, general secretary of the M.S.C.C. made an official visit to Cobalt on Sunday, April 9, 1911, preaching on the work of the Missionary Society.

Mr. Spencer, the first Rector, resigned in March of 1911, and at the Easter vestry meeting it was decided to increase the stipend to \$1,200 for his successor.

It is impossible in this little booklet to write a complete history of St. James Church at Cobalt. Elsewhere there is included some interesting highlights, but many of the old records have been lost, and no doubt many items that should be included are not. Sufficient to say that St. James still carries on, facing difficulties in the same spirit as the pioneer Anglicans who founded the church.

And, let us add, that while St. James' has always been on the hill, we have always enjoyed the friendliest possible relations with all the other denominations in Cobalt. To our friends in St. Patrick's, Ste. Therese, and the Cobalt United Church, we gratefully acknowledge their help and assistance through the years. And to Ste. Therese church, we hope the 70th anniversary, which they also celebrate this year, will be as successful as our own, and that they, like us, will continue to march confidently into the future.

Canon Sims



While St. James' has been fortunate in having many dedicated Rectors over the years, it would be inappropriate not to make special mention of a pioneer Anglican clergyman who, during his lifetime, became symbolic of everything that is admirable. Canon H.A. Sims became Rector at St. James' in Cobalt September 5, 1915 and remained until January 2, 1921. But in later years he stayed in close touch with Cobalt and almost until he died, at the age of 93, he took services in Cobalt whenever he was needed.

His services to Cobalt transcended the normal requirements of the ministry. During the war years he provided community leadership in organizing aid to the needy, particularly the wives of soldiers, war widows and children. Old-timers still remember how he organized wheelbarrow brigades to haul black muck out of the bush to spread on Cobalt's rocky gardens, to grow food to aid the war effort.

He was a small, friendly man, who delighted in buzzing around the district in his little car, stopping and talking to everyone of every persuasion.

Canon Sims joined the Church Army in England in 1903, and came to Canada in 1908. He served as pastor at Manitoulin, New Liskeard, Cobalt, Fort William, North Bay, Kirkland Lake and Chapleau.

One of the prized exhibits in the Cobalt Mining Museum is a photo of Canon Sims standing with a group of Boy Scouts waiting to be reviewed by the then Prince of Wales during a Royal visit to Canada in the 1920's.

Canon Sims died in 1974. But he and his wife, who died in 1944, will be remembered for many years by Northern Anglicans, not least by the people of St. James.

Some Historical Highlights

The purloined breadboard

St. James' Church is probably the only one in Canada where the font includes a breadboard acquired by stealth. The font is made of grey stone and wrought iron with a handsome cover of highly polished wood. The font was made by Mr. Charles Appleby, a carpenter and craftsman of some renown. When he had almost completed his masterpiece, he realized that he needed a proper cover, and he couldn't find a piece of suitable wood. So he took his wife's breadboard, shaped it and polished it, and it has served its purpose ever since.

A Special Service

A total of 16 men from St. James' parish gave up their lives in the First World War. On November 14, 1920, a special service was held, at which the honor roll was unveiled by the late Mrs. Annie Ramsay. The Memorial Tablet was unveiled by Scout Sergeant W. Binney, M.M. It was presented by Mr. F. Bourne. The prayer desk was dedicated at this service. The Great War Veterans' band was in attendance, and the congregation numbered 320.

St. James' was closed

In April, 1910, St. James' was closed for two weeks due to a smallpox epidemic. In October, 1918, it was closed for three months due to an influenza epidemic.

Organ dedicated in 1970

The modern electric organ at which our dedicated organists, Mrs. Peggy Keen and assistant organist Mrs. Evelyn Skorey play each Sunday, was dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Annie Sims by Archbishop W.L. Wright in June of 1970. It replaced the faithful old groaner whose air pipes extended into the basement, and during hardtimes were replaced with sometimes terrible results by lengths of old stove pipe. The old groaner was originally hand-pumped, and later electrified. It served well and faithfully, but few tears were shed when it was replaced.

A gift from Toronto

The heavy brass cross on its unusual base was donated to St. James' at Christmas, 1908 by St. Mathias Ward CBS, Toronto.

St. James' altar

From 1906 to 1954, the altar in St. James' was made of rough boards. It was replaced when the Anglican Church in Elk Lake closed and the congregation kindly donated their altar to Cobalt.

The first confirmation

The first confirmation in St. James' was November 29, 1908, when the Most Reverend George Thorneloe officiated. The congregation of 220 provided an offertory of \$8.15. Since then 675 have been confirmed in St. James'.

Processional Cross

The Processional Cross was donated by the Birtch family in memory of their parents, and the late Ormond Birtch.

The Bell

The bell was donated by Fulton Purdy and his late brother, Walter, in memory of a brother, Frank, who gave up his life in the Second World War.

Thank you Mr. Weight

Through the years many lay readers have aided the congregation of St. James' Church in Cobalt. In thanking Mr. Maurice Weight of Haileybury for the countless times he has conducted services for us, we feel that we are also saying thanks, however inadequately, to all the dedicated Anglican layreaders who have helped St. James, and many other churches. Perhaps one of the most famous was the late Herbert Hawken, who tramped the bush roads around Cobalt in the early days, and was superintendent of our Sunday School for 30 years or more. May Mr. Weight be with us for many years more.



An early meeting of St. James' Women's Auxiliary, Mrs. H.A. Sims, front row right.



ANGLICAN CHURCH - COBALT, ONTARIO