

History of St. Barnabas, Chapter III

St. Barnabas of Roxboro –Rev. R. Hollis

By Rosemary Bauchman, 1973

p. 23

On October 7th, 1963, newly appointed Rector's Warden, Doug Fewkes, announced that the Reverend Reginald Hollis, M.A., B.D., was to be the next incumbent of St. Barnabas.

Rev. Hollis was born in England in 1932; he came to Canada on an exchange scholarship and obtained his B.D. degree at McGill. Following his ordination he served as Anglican Chaplain at McGill and Diocesan College. Subsequently he was Assistant at the Church of St. Mathias in Westmount for three years.

Mr. Hollis and his wife, Marcia, a montrealer, with their children, two sons and one daughter, took up residence at the Rectory in October. The Induction Service was held at St. Barnabas on Wednesday, October 23rd, 1963, and was followed by an informal reception in the Parish Hall.

Up until this time all the clerical work of the parish had been undertaken by volunteers, but the volume had become so great that it was felt necessary to appoint a part-time church secretary on a regular basis, so in November, 1963, Mrs. Olive Dahlgren assumed these duties, working in an office set up at the Rectory. The practice of issuing a leaflet for the Sunday services was started in the Fall of 1963.

p. 24

It was also in November of 1963 that a teenager was hired to shovel snow off the church walks throughout the winter.

As the reports for 1963 were tabled at year-end, it was noteworthy that the Treasurer's Report showed the unusual and happy state of excess of revenue over expenditure, probably due in large part to the financial success of the 'Bazaarnival' held the previous September 13th-14th.

The Sunday School adopted a foster child, Chau Pui Yuk, in Hong Kong, each pupil donating ten cents a month for his support. Letters from this young Chinese boy were received with great interest by the students of the Sunday School.

Statistics for 1963 showed that the church had seen 78 baptisms, three weddings and six burials. Thirty-three girls and boys had been presented for confirmation along with six adults.

The wind of impending change was stirring through the parish of St. Barnabas. 1964 was a year of challenges and decisions as the rapid growth of the congregation made expansion of facilities a vital necessity. The church building had many cherished associations, particularly for those

who had put so much time, resources and personal endeavor into its construction. To part with it involved heart-aches and sacrifice, but the intensive study undertaken by the Church Expansion Committee showed that it could not be adequately altered to fill the needs of the burgeoning congregation, so the sacrifice was made for the good of the parish as a whole. Planning for a new church went into high gear.

p. 25

A new emphasis on Christian Stewardship was introduced into the parish as people were encouraged to pledge a portion of their income to the service of God on a regular basis, rather than become involved in a never-ending succession of fund-raising projects.

In the area of worship, one Sunday in four was observed as Family Sunday, when the Sunday School children remained in church with their parents for the entire service with a question-and-answer type of sermon designed to meet their understanding. Maundy Thursday saw a special service of Holy Communion to commemorate The Last Supper., the Bread and Wine being made by parishioners, followed by the stripping of the altar prior to the solemnity of the Good Friday services. Newly confirmed people took their first Communion on Easter Eve. Eight hundred and forty-three people worshipped at St. Barnabas that Easter and on the following Christmas Eve, the Church was filled to capacity and seventy of the congregation had to be seated in the church hall, sharing in the service by means of a loudspeaker. The urgent need for expanded facilities was underscored on these occasions.

p. 26

Twice during the year the church was made available to St. Paul's Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church to hold services for those of the Lutheran faith resident on the North Shore.

The Youth Group, interested in obtaining an insight into other religions, attended a Mass at Mary Queen of Peace Roman Catholic Church and a service at Temple Emmanuel Synagogue. They also held a Teens Work Conference at Camp Farthing from September 25th to 27th.

The Town of Roxboro marked its 50th anniversary on June 21st with a special service of thanksgiving at St. Barnabas. The clergy, choirs and congregations of the United and Presbyterian churches joined in to celebrate this memorable occasion.

In 1964 there were a hundred baptisms, three weddings, six burials and forty-two people confirmed.

Plans for a new building underlaid most activities in 1964. A General Vestry Meeting in May saw congregation approval for the purchase of a lot of land in Pierrefonds near the newly pinpointed centre of the parish. This location was a surprise to many who had felt that the Rectory was situated too far away. By a happy coincidence it would now be one half a block from the new church and at the hub of the parish.

p. 27

In September Mrs. Dahlgren found it necessary to resign from the position of church secretary and her place was taken by Mrs. Aline McCubbin.

Mr. John Sargeantson, a second-year student at the Theological College was sent by the Bishop to act as Assistant to Mr. Hollis in October.

The Women's Auxiliary was very active throughout the year. In the Fall, they commenced the practice of serving coffee after the 11:00 a.m. service on Family Sundays. One of the highlights of their year was the presentation of a Life Membership to Mrs. Grace McCarthy.

In May a Retreat for ladies was organized at Epiphany House in Iberville³ and nine members of St. Barnabas W.A. participated. This marked the first Retreat for women of the church. It was to become an annual event which received good attendance from this parish.

In January of 1965, the congregation was given a preview of the proposed new church when a scale model was set up in the porch for their inspection and Architect Kenneth Robb presented drawings by means of projecting colored slides at the Annual Vestry Meeting. It was learned at that time that plans for a full basement had been dropped due to the extremely rocky nature of the soil. Excavation of a basement would have added \$24,000 to the estimated cost. The proposed janitor's apartment was also eliminated to reduce costs.

p. 28

Naturally, these presentations stimulated a tremendous amount of discussion. Many expressed doubts that sufficient Sunday School space had been provided. The kitchen arrangements gave rise to a variety of opinions, as did the amount of space allotted to the Choir. The proposed skylight allowing natural light to fall upon the altar was a source of concern to some who felt it was too large and not aesthetically pleasing. (The skylight was subsequently redesigned and reduced in size.) Questions pertaining to parking space elicited the information that one car space had been provided for every five people's seating space. A motion was made that lavatory and sink facilities be provided in the narthex. This motion was carried and the idea incorporated in the building.

Mr. Hollis described his idea for the new Baptismal Font. He pictured it carved in the shape of a dove – a symbol of The Holy Spirit – and suspended from the ceiling near the entrance in such a manner as to be easily visible from any part of the church, with a mechanism installed to low it to a convenient height for baptisms. This idea was well received and Mr. Hollis arranged to contact an artist in Ottawa in connection with this.

p. 29

Discussions and studies of these plans went on at every Vestry Meeting throughout 1965, with modifications and additions being introduced and implemented as the work progressed.

The original plan called for a large wooden cross behind the altar, but the lighting arrangements precluded this. A new proposal suggesting life-sized crosses to the right and left of the altar with a gold crosses suspended above it was adopted. Ottawa artist, Art Price, designed the altar, font and hanging crown for the new St. Barnabas Church.

Mr. Tom Amberley and Mr. Harry Stephen were appointed to keep a record of the momentous and memorable events surrounding the planning and building of the new church. (We are indebted to Harry for the following detailed chapter.)

The actual building of the new church began in the autumn of 1965 when the first sod was turned by Tom Amberley at a ceremony on September 26th. (The cost of moving the corner stone of the existing church proved to be excessive so the decision was taken to leave it where it had been originally placed.)

p. 30

In April of 1965, Mr. Allan Butler announced that the original St. Barnabas church building was up for sale. A little less than a year later, an offer of \$43,500.00 was received for the property, land, building and contents from the Marantha Reformed Church Congregation, who asked for possession not later than August 31, 1966. On April 11th, Mr. Ted Goodier reported that the sale of the property, less certain equipment, had taken place.

Having paid the entire stipend of the minister in the preceding two years, the parish was now eligible for full rectorial status instead of that of a mission church. The Corporation of the Church was authorized to apply to the Diocese for this at what was considered an appropriate time. (This was eventually done to coincide with the occupancy of the new building.)

In the autumn of 1965 a Music Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Mr. Irwin Davies. The committee was interested in obtaining the services of a professional organist and choir director, preferably combining the offices in one person. This was not possible, so in March, 1966 Mr. Ron Gough was appointed Choir Director and Mrs. Betty Howes, Organist, for the new church. When the Hammond Organ was sold with the Roxboro church, a replacement organ had to be purchased. The Music Committee recommended a Roger's Triology as being the most effective instrument for the church's needs, and Mrs. Howes concurred with this opinion. (A Model Rogers Organ was eventually installed in the new church.)

p. 31

The Junior Choir entered the Lakeshore Festival for Young People and made such a favorable impression that their rendition of 'Ding-dong, Merrily on High' was recorded by radio station CFOX who featured it frequently during the 1965 Christmas season.

Rev. Hollis was well-known as a man of very few words in day-to-day encounters, but in the pulpit he was always endowed with eloquence and his sermons rarely failed to capture the unflagging interest of the congregation. Indeed they made such a profound impression that requests for copies began to be received on such a scale that it became the custom to have copies of the previous week's sermon available in the narthex.

It might be in order here to reproduce an item from the Sunday leaflet of March 7th, 1965.

“Why I Do Not Attend the Movies

“No one speaks to me; the movies are so unfriendly. When I go, they always seem to ask for money. One ticket should admit my entire family, because there is only one source of income for us all. When I get home from the office I am tired and I must rest. I saw a poor picture once and it rubbed me the wrong way, so I decided not to go again. There are so many hypocrites attending the movies I feel it is not the place for me. Movies may be a good thing, but I don't like the manager's attitude towards some of the social questions of the day. I can see just as good movies out of doors in real life. I stay away from the movies because I went so much when I was a child. I feel that no one in the seats cares whether I am there or not – They probably do not pay attention to me because my income is not very large. I don't go to the movies because the manager never calls on me.”

The autumn of 1965 saw a new curriculum introduced into the Sunday School for Grades One and Four. The Youth Group were re-organized about the same time by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mann. At Christmas they held a party for emotionally disturbed children from the Allancroft School, they also went carol-singing through the parish. By the year's end, they had thirty-eight very active members and a full itinerary. The G.A., J.A., Scouts and Cubs also had a full and interesting year, all with a big increase in numbers.

p. 33

The Women's Auxiliary were also very busy; an interesting article about the activities appeared in the national W.A. magazine, 'The Living Message'. Among other things, they convened a Confirmation reception for the Bishop, the newly confirmed people and their families; served breakfast after the Wednesday 6:45 a.m. service during Lent, and served dinner in the United Church hall for those taking part in the 'Every Member Visitation'. A new altar cloth and new purple burse and veil made by members of the Altar Guild and Mrs. Evelyn Cleminson was dedicated on March 7th.

White Gift Sunday was moved ahead to the first Sunday in December to permit disposal of the gifts before Christmas. The W.A. sorted and distributed the gifts which went to the Old Brewery Mission, St. Cuthbert's and Grace Church.

The Saint Barnabas Guild was formed in 1965, consisting of a fellowship of people who undertook to pray daily at home for the sick and for other needs of the parish.

In September 1965, Mr. Murray Brantford, a final year student at the Diocesan Theological College from the Diocese of Algonquin, came to St. Barnabas as student Assistant.

p. 34

At year-end the transience of the area was commented upon. During 1964-5, one hundred and twenty-three families had moved away and a number of new people had joined the congregation. The twelve-month period had seen 105 baptisms in the church, seven weddings and six burials. Fifty-two people were presented for confirmation.

In December, 1965, the congregation learned that the Rev. T.M.S. Kingston would be coming to St. Barnabas to work with Mr. Hollis the following May. They would be of equal status and would share the work between them. The church corporation would continue to consist of Rev. Hollis and the church wardens.

A lower duplex was rented at 32-6th Avenue, Roxboro, for the Rev. and Mrs. Kingston. Volunteers offered to redecorate it before they took up occupancy. This gave rise to an amusing incident, which was perhaps funnier in retrospect than at the time.

That same month, the W.A. were planning a big rummage sale to be held at Grace Church in Point St. Charles. They sent out an appeal for donations of saleable items which came in such vast quantities that all available cupboard space in the hall was quickly filled. They had several car-loads to take down to Grace Church hall that April evening. Soon after the ladies left, the volunteer painters reported to begin work on the Assistant's house but could find no paint – the cupboard, where it had been stored, yawned empty....It did not take long to deduce what had happened to it. Assuming it was a donation for the sale, the ladies had taken it along with them! Mr. Hollis made several fruitless attempts to contact them, but the telephone went unanswered, the W.A. were too busy selling their wares. When they finally returned home they were greeted with the demand...."What have you done with the paint for the Kingston's house?"

p. 35

Fortunately for them, the paint had not been sold, but passed over to the wife of the Rector of Grace Church, to use in redecorating the Rectory there! The ladies made an embarrassed explanation and were able to retrieve the paint and the decorating was happily completed in time for the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Kingston and their six-month old son! Rev. Tom Kingston had been ordained in Christ church Cathedral on April 10th, 1965. He had preached at St. Barnabas on October 17th following, so he was already known to the congregation.

The March, 1966 meeting of Select Vestry concentrated on Sunday School affairs. The aims of the Sunday School, the New Curriculum, the organization, teacher recruitment and training, the

disposition of classes in the new building were all discussed in depth. A special meeting of Select Vestry in May was called in conjunction with the United Church session for discussions to become better informed about each other in relation to the proposed Church Union.

p. 36

Lent of 1966 saw the churches of the North Shore combine to hold a series of Lenten Services. The first one was held in St. Barnabas on Ash Wednesday.

The Youth Group gospel singers put on two folk-music services which were very well received by a large audience. The music of guitars and the singing of new words to popular tunes was very effective.

The Confirmation service, usually held in Holy Week, was changed to late September.

The Foundation Stone for the new church was laid by Bishop Maguire on February 12th, 1966.

A fall with a cross and lily design was donated by a member of the congregation, and a lectern was also donated for the new church. The contract for the lectern, pews, pulpit and communion rail was arranged with Casavant Freres of St. Hyacinthe. (The sale of the old church had included those items, - the altar in the church had been on loan from Synod and was duly returned. The altar cross became a processional cross for the Sunday School.)

A Memorials Committee was set up under the chairmanship of Dick Godson. For the information of anyone wishing to donate a [pew as a memorial, it was announced that side pews cost \$70, middle pews \$110, choir or chapel pews \$130 each.

p. 37

The last service in the Roxboro church took place on Trinity Sunday, June 5th, 1966. Cliff Howes and Tom Amberley read the lessons. There was a display of photographs in the narthex tracing the building and the growth of the church. A nostalgic congregation crowded the church to capacity as they bid farewell to St. Barnabas of Roxboro before hopefully moving forward into and with the Church of St. Barnabas of Pierrefonds.