



Gelert United Church

ZION UNITED CHURCH, CARNARVON

On January 24, 1891 the adherents of the mission known as the "Brown appointment" called a meeting of the members. This meeting was for the purpose of considering the advisability of erecting a church at Carnarvon. It was held at the home of Mr. Higginbottom (now the Russell place) with Missionary Rev. J. W. Shier presiding.

It was unanimously agreed that a church should be built and that it be located at the corner of the Peterson and Halls Lake road. The land was donated by Mr. A. Warner, grandfather of Mrs. M. Windsor, Mrs. G. Allcorn and Bert Harrison.

A committee was formed comprising the following: Jos. Hopkins, Jos. Cook, Alfred W. Moore (We know him as Pop Moore, who was Mrs. J. Gregory's father), Wm. Cowan, Robert Moore and Isaac Higginbottom. The church was to be 24' x 30' with 12' walls, balloon type frame, sheathed outside with pine lumber and sided with waterproof siding. The inside was to be finished with ash V-joint, oiled and varnished. The sidewalls and ceiling of our church today are still the V-joint installed 80 years ago.



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Several bees were held to cut the logs and move them to a sawmill at Buck Slide. The foundation timbers were hewn square with a broadaxe. Numerous teas and two concerts were held during the winter to raise money for the construction. One of these was held at the home of Mrs. Damien's place, now Moorefield Acres, on February 25, 1891. The minutes state, the weather very inclement with nearly eight inches of slush and water on the ice of the lakes, making travelling extremely difficult.

Naming of the church was a matter of considerable debate and it was finally agreed that the place of worship be known as "Zion", being a charge of Lindsay district of the Methodist Church.

In May of this year several bush fires broke out in the area and the men working on the church were called to fight them. Being unable to finish the job, they hired a carpenter, Louis McDonald to do the inside finishing for \$45.00. This \$45.00 would possibly cost \$800 to \$1,000 today. As part of the outside wasn't finished he agreed to do this at his regular daily rate and donate 50% of his wages to the church. The men were back from the fires in time to shingle the roof.

Shortly after the Zion church was built the district missionary Rev. Shier was transferred elsewhere and for several years our area was served by student ministers.

In 1921 the Methodists and Presbyterians united in our area and we became part of the Minden charge. In 1925 at the time of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Union we became the Minden, Carnarvon and Maple Lake Charge.

A stone basement was put under our church in 1934, in order to make more room for our Sunday School and community gatherings. This was done chiefly through the efforts of Mr. T. H. Rogers, father of the late Clayton Rogers, who had been superintendent of the Sunday School for many years. Although a minister was not available at times Mr. Rogers kept a very active Sunday School going the year round. We owe a great deal to this man for his untiring efforts for God's work in Carnarvon.

An electric storm started a fire in the church in 1952. Considerable damage was done to the south end of the church. With the insurance money and further donations a new spire and entrance were added. At another date the chancel and two side rooms were put on the north end.

When Mr. T. H. Rogers was unable to carry on as Superintendent, his son Clayton took over his work in our Sunday School. At a later date Ralph Hussey took over as Superintendent. During these years a very vital part of our church was the Sunday School. There were around 70 children attending. As more room was needed it was decided in 1961 to build a Christian Education Building 32' x 70'. It was finished and dedicated in December, 1962, with most of the labour being donated by the men of the congregation.

Following the usual pattern the ladies of the church raised the money through various projects to pay the cost of the building. It is now used as our Community Centre.

Our church is quite active with good sized congregations during the winter months and usually overflowing during the summer.



Zion Church choir