

## **The History of St. Barnabas** (Typed from 1998 Parish Profile in July 2008)

In "History of St. Barnabas," Rosemary Bauchman wrote, "A church begins in the hearts of people."

During the 1950s, members of several Protestant denominations began to dream of a community church in the developing area known as Roxboro. In November 1954, these Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Salvation Army and United Church faithful together formed a Board of Trustees to found a common place of worship.

Mr. Roland Bigras, the Mayor of Roxboro, donated a plot of land. The president of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Clifford Howes, with the assistance of many volunteers oversaw the building of this church at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Gouin Blvd in Roxboro.

The first service was held on Christmas Eve, 1956, with Rev. Roland Bodger officiating, assisted by a student minister, Rev. Reginald Hollis, who subsequently became Anglican Bishop of Montreal.

Over the years, various denominations departed to their own buildings, and by 1959 the original building was used by Anglican and presbyterian congregations. Together, they decided to join the Anglican Communion in November of 1959. The church was named St. Barnabas of Roxboro, and the Rev. A.M. Reid was named as its first incumbent. The first Anglican service was held on November 29, 1959. The early life of the new St. Barnabas was characterized by a large Sunday school, an active Ladies' Guild and many lay ministries. In addition, the fledgling congregation was actively involved in canvassing the surrounding neighborhoods for potential members.

In 1960, Rev. J.W. McCarthy was appointed as incumbent. The neighborhoods surrounding St. Barnabas Church were growing, as was the community of the church itself. Many new groups emerged. Adult confirmation classes were begun and an Altar Guild established. The children were involved in Sunday school, Little Helpers and a Teenage Club. Both junior and senior choirs were started and the annual Christmas Pageant became a popular community event. A Couples club was formed. St. Barnabas became not only a religious, but also social, center for the community, and a car pool was organized to permit residents of near by Cloverdale to participate. By September 1963, the parish had 500 member families. The average attendance in Sunday school was 310, requiring 43 teachers.

Rev. McCarthy left St. Barnabas to join the Old Brewery Mission, and was replaced by Rev. Reginald Hollis in October 1963. The community continued to grow under his leadership.

In 1965, the necessity for a new building was recognized, and the preparation of the current site began in the fall of this year. Also, in 1965, Rev. Tom Kingston was appointed as assistant priest. The cornerstone was laid by Bishop R.K. Maguire on Feb. 12, 1966 and the church was formally dedicated on St. Barnabas' Day, June 11, 1966. Following the dedication service, the Bishop granted full rectorial status to the new church, and Rev. Hollis was inaugurated as the

first rector of the parish.

The membership of St. Barnabas continued to grow. By the fall of 1966, the Sunday school boasted 607 students and the junior choir consisted of 47 young people. Among the active groups in the congregation were a Senior Citizen's group, a Catering Club and an Anglican Church Women's group. This was also the year in which a continuing outreach program, the annual toy sale at Grace Church in Pointe St. Charles was begun.

In 1968 Rev. Fred Tiplady joined St. Barnabas as assistant priest. The spirit-filled social life continued with a youth group and men's bible study added to the existing groups. A 24-hour prayer vigil, pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday and the ACW's Lenten cupboard for Lakeshore Community Services became special annual events. The youth enjoyed retreats at Iberville Epiphany House.

In January 1971, Rev. Hollis went to Christ Church in Beaurepaire and was replaced by Rev. Tom Maxwell.

St. Barnabas continued to grow throughout the early 1970s. A strong emphasis was placed on discipleship and stewardship. Rev. Maxwell introduced Marriage Encounter to the parish. "Edge of Adventure" and "Life in the Spirit" seminars were well-attended. The choir was at the center of the social life of the congregation. Assistants Rev. Tom de Hoop and Rev. Murray Henderson enriched the parish with their gifts during this time.

In the late 1970s, however, the political realities hit St. Barnabas along with the communities from which the members came. This was the time of the exodus of many Anglophone families from Quebec. Many of the strong leaders of St. Barnabas Church were among those who moved west. In addition, a stewardship campaign in 1977-78 was received with mixed emotions and caused some dissent. Nevertheless, the loss of familiar leadership led to the emergence of new leaders with a renewed commitment. People who had previously remained content to count on the strongest members for guidance stepped forward to fill new roles. During this period there were several assistant ministers: The Rev. Roger Robillard, The Rev. Patrick Ormos, The Rev. Grant LeMarquand and The Rev. Kenneth Lee, all of whom added to the life of the parish each with his own particular gifts.

In 1982, Rev. Maxwell left for Edmonton and Rev. Roberts C. Smith joined the parish in January 1983. His wife, Aloha, also took on new roles as organist and choir director. Under her leadership, a handbell choir, the Bells of St. Barnabas, was formed. This talented group established a following throughout the diocese and beyond. Mrs. Smith eventually went on to Diocesan College to herself become an ordained priest and associate at St. Barnabas Church.

The late 1980s were busy times at St. Barnabas, despite a new exodus of influential and dedicated parishioners. During this period, the healing ministry became an important focus, with members becoming involved in the Order of St. Luke. An active parish life was reflected in the many groups operating in and around our church. Men's breakfast meetings and shepherding groups, which took place in the homes of parish members, were well-attended. The Family Life Committee planned many successful social events. The young people were committed to

programs in Crosstalk Ministries, like the monthly Crossroads service and traveling day camp teams for which St. Barnabas was a training parish.

In 1985, members of St. Barnabas collaborated with other churches in the area to organize a Christian rally called Christ Alive.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the newly recruited leaders of St. Barnabas worked to establish programs within the parish. A parish-run day camp replaced the Crosstalk program to involve children within the surrounding communities each summer. The Pierrefonds Community Center, which was run by a local CLSC, was provided space within the church building to provide services to impoverished families of the area. Bible study groups and youth-centered activities continued to be popular. St. Barnabas became actively involved in ecumenical events such as the March for Jesus.

From the early 1970s until the mid 1990s, mission was uppermost in the financial planning of each vestry. As a result, the mortgage loan to the Diocese of Montreal was not reduced substantially during this period. In the mid 1990s, this began to create a concern for the parish, and in recent years has been the focus of much of our fund-raising efforts. Proceeds from garage sales and bazaars, "looney Sunday" once a month and an annual dinner theatre have helped to reduce our debt.

As a result of attempting to re-establish an equitable level of debt reduction, our mission commitment to the diocese has been reduced. Nonetheless, St. Barnabas has established a partnership with our companion diocese in South West Brazil and a member of our parish was among the young people who visited there in 1997.

In August of 1998, Roberts and Aloha Smith, Now the Rev. Drs. Smith, left for California. A new search committee was established at a special vestry meeting, and another new period in the life of St. Barnabas began.