

## First United Church, Sherkston

The First United Church at Sherkston was built in 1863 by the Wesleyan Methodists. It was commonly known as "The Chapel".

The Rev. C.E. Price was one of the men sent from the United States to Niagara in the period 1853 to 1855. While here, he formed United Brethren classes at Black Creek, Stevensville and several other places. The first quarterly conference was held in Wainfleet in 1857. In 1861, there were 700 members consisting of 33 classes with 50 preaching places. Services were held in barns, houses and school houses. The United Brethren people were humble and zealous. The men and women sat apart at services. There were no choirs, no organs, etc. As yet the ministers did not read their sermons. The first quarterly meeting was held at Sherk's Crossing (as Sherkston was called) in 1864. Sherk's Crossing is mentioned again in reference to the salary of the minister. They were asked to pay \$37.50 but there is no record of this being paid. The quarterly conference was to have been in Stevensville in 1866, but on account of the Fenion Raid July 7, 1866, it was postponed and held later at Sherk's Crossing. In 1870, it was decided that Sherk's Crossing pay \$90.00 towards the minister's salary (which was \$550.00). The minister at that time was the Rev. D.B. Sherk. He only received \$450.00 as some of the classes failed in their commitments.

There are some names here that may sound familiar - Peter Learn, Benj. Troup, Peter Sherk, Andrew Sherk, Henry Zavitz and Aaron Sherk. In 1873, Sherk's Crossing became Sherkston.

This class in Sherkston was made up of Wesleyan Methodists and United Brethren. They held their meetings at different times and it was a bit confusing, so the United Brethren bought the Wesleyan Methodists out for \$150.00 and Mr. Hugh Sherk (who had given the land for the building) gave them a deed. Later the Wesleyan Methodists started holding services in Kennedy's Hall.

The Niagara Mission consisted of Sherkston, Garrison Road, Stevensville and Black Creek. Now we have some more familiar names - Chas. Sherk, Benj. Sherk, Emanuel Zavitz, Jacob Zavitz, David Sherk and Dr.N. Brewster.

In 1889, there was a division in the Sherkston class due to "secret societies". One body was called Radicals and the other Liberals. Again they were holding their services at different times. This became difficult so the Radicals held their meetings in Sider's Mennonite Church and later built their own church which was finished in 1897. This is the Grace United Brethren.

The "Liberals" went on alone now until 1906 when they joined with the Congregationalists.

In 1921, Bethel, Sherkston and Stevensville became a pastoral charge.

In June 1925, these churches united with the Presbyterians and the Methodists and are now a part of the United Church of Canada. Kennedy's Hall also came with us at this time.

The manse was built around 1906.

In 1952, Stevensville left this charge. This left only two preaching places, until 1964 when Cook's Mills was added.

In 1952, work began on the basement. The church was moved back from the highway.

The church was re-dedicated in 1959.

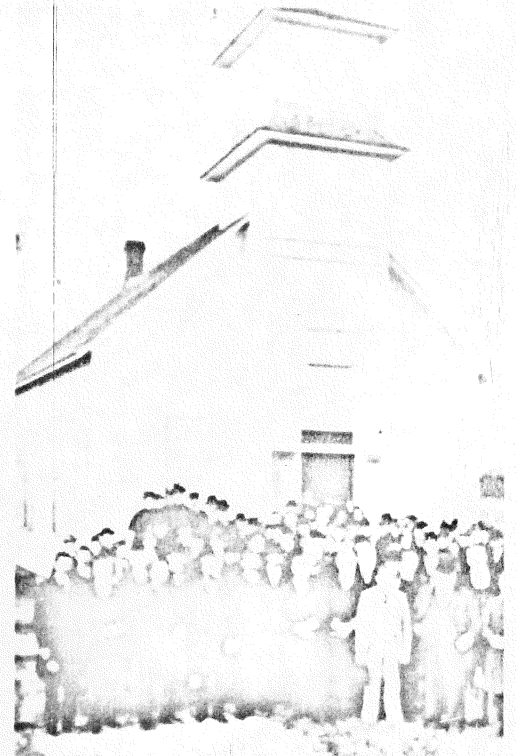
In 1963 (May 5th.) the Hundredth Anniversary was observed. During that week they had services for five nights. Ministers from the Grace United Brethren, Brethren in Christ and the Community Church participated.

Rev. Paul Packman, who is the minister now, came to Sherkston in July, 1965. He, his wife and two lovely children live in the manse.

If the surveyor's yellow stake remains in the same location to mark the northern edge of proposed four lane highway, much of lawn will be taken from the front of the manse - a long way from the little mud road when "The Chapel" was first built.



1967



1867?

### St. John's Lutheran Church, Gas Line

At a special service held on Sunday, November 7th. 1965, the members of St. John's Lutheran Church joyfully celebrated the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the church located at the corner of No. 3 Highway and Silver Bay Road, Gas Line, R.R. 1, Port Colborne.

In the year 1840, a group of devout christians who had made their homes in the Humberstone area, many of them having lived in Pennsylvania, and most of them of German ancestry, welcomed to their midst Dr. J.A.A. Grabau, a Lutheran Minister from Buffalo, who organized the congregation of St. John's, Gas Line, in the fall of that year.

From 1840 to 1845, services were held in a church of log construction at the north-east corner of Lot 11, Con. 1.

In the year 1845, a substantial frame church, with hand hewn timbers was erected. Attached to the church was a smaller brick building, used as a parochial school for many years, with a teacher in charge; and as late as 1905 the pastors conducted the school without the services of a full time teacher.

Just prior to 1869, partly due to a controversy between Dr. Grabau of the Buffalo Synod and Dr. Walther of Missouri Synod on the doctrine of "The Church and the Ministry", St. John's congregation severed its connection with the Buffalo Synod and applied for a pastor from the Missouri Synod, to which synod the congregation is still affiliated.

In the early history of the church, the services were held in the German language until 1905, when services in German were conducted one Sunday each month and later discontinued as with few exceptions that language was no longer used by the members.

The frame church of 1845, after having served the congregation for more than a century, was replaced by the present beautiful brick edifice, which was dedicated to the service of the Triune God and the proclamation of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, on July 23rd. 1950.

Upon the completion of the new church, the old church was sold to Bethel United Church congregation where it serves as an efficient Parish Hall and Sunday School.

In 1961, a modern brick parsonage was completed on Silver Bay Road, adjacent to the church, replacing the century old parsonage.

St. John's Lutheran, Pinecrest Road

Margaret, wife of John Wiedman, d. Sept. 8, 1842, age 59 yrs.

Catharine, daughter of John & Margaret Wiedman, b. 1833, d. Sept. 18, 1847,  
age 14 yrs. 3 mos. 6 dys.

David Johannes Wiedman, d. Nov. 1 --- , age 33 yrs. 21 dys.

Susanna, daughter of Charles & Rebecca White, b. Apr. 15, 1844, d.  
Apr. 11, 1849

Elizabeth Sterneman, wife of Johannes Nier,  
b. Apr. 10, 1795, d. June 20, 1854

Children of Charles and Rebecca White

Twins J. Wm. White, b. Mar. 3, 1851, d. Sept. 19, 1854

J. Thomas White, b. Mar. 3, 1851, d. Oct. 6, 1854

E. Christian White, d. Sept. 22, 1854, age 12 yrs. 5 mos. 12 dys.

J. Charles White, d. Oct. 3, 1854, age ---- yrs. 5 mos.

John Henry Near, son of Daniel & Elizabeth Near,  
d. Mar. 19, 1856, age 36 dys.

Elizabeth Cronmiller, 1st wife of Daniel Near,  
d. June 19, 1856, age 22 yrs. 5 mos. 15 dys.

Dorothea B. Lenz, wife of Johann Michael Kronmiller,  
d. Aug. 11, 1862, age 67 yrs. 7 mos. 2 dys.

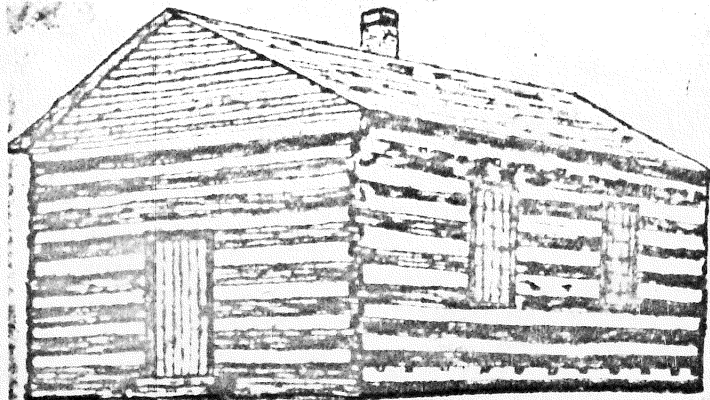
Mary Malze, daughter of Karl & Maria Malze,  
b. Oct. 10, 1842, d. Sept. 23, 1862

The following pastors have served the congregation:-

Dr. J.A.A. Grabau	1840 - 1843
Rev. Henry Von Rhor	1844 - 1846
Rev. Henry Miller	1846 - 1847
Rev. Dr. J.A.A. Grabau	1847 - 1850
Rev. H. Lange	1850 - 1851
Visiting Pastors	1852 - 1853
Rev. P. Schroer	1853 - 1855
Rev. C. Kuehn	1855 - 1862
Rev. F.R. Eppling	1862 - 1868
Rev. H. Koch (Missouri Synod)	1869 - 1874
Rev. J.C. Himmeler )	
Rev. M. Michael )	1875 - 1880
Rev. Christian Hochstetter )	
Rev. Frederick Bente	1881 - 1894
Rev. H. Dorn	1894 - 1905
Rev. Geo. E. Schroeder	1905 - 1910
Rev. A. Orzen	1910 - 1915
Rev. H.W. Sander	1915 - 1924
Rev. L.F. Higenell	1924 - 1946
Rev. W.E. Biesenthal	1946 - 1957
Rev. H.E. Kuhl	1958 - 1965
Rev. Lawrence Eifert	1966 -



1840



1950

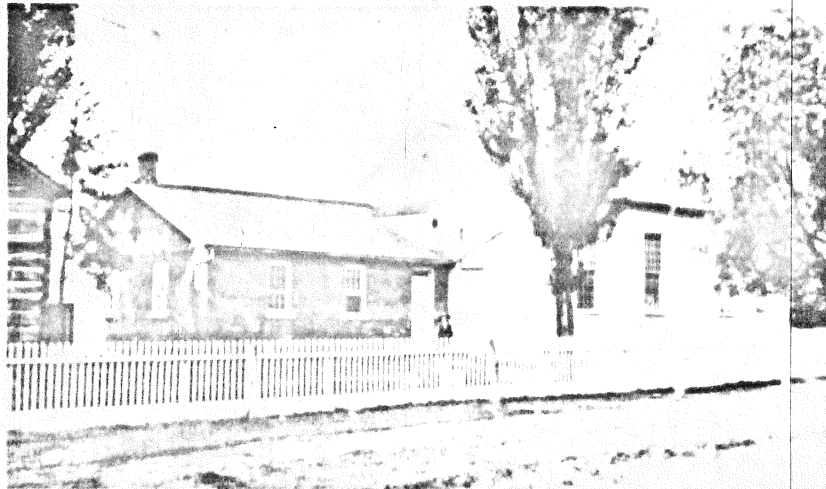
### The Grabau Lutheran Church, Gas Line

After the St. John's congregation severed its connection with the Buffalo Synod, a group of members wishing to remain with that Synod, under the guidance of Dr. J.A.A. Grabau, erected a small chapel at the south-east corner of Lot 14, Concession 2, on the north side of the now No. 3 Highway at Gas Line.

This church was completed about the year 1869. The congregation continued to hold regular services under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Grabau and for the most part conducted by the ministers of Emanuel Lutheran Church, Sherkston.

The last of the pastors serving this congregation were the Rev. J. Badke and the Rev. A. Gruhn.

About the year 1908, services were discontinued and in 1910 the church was sold and removed from the property.



First Log Church built in 1840 and second Church and brick School erected in 1845; St. John's Lutheran, corner No. 3 highway and Silver Bay Road.

## All Saints' Church, Welland Junction

In the late 1870's, the first school in the Welland Junction area was built and as it was the only public building there at that time, at intervals over the years church services and Sunday school meetings were held here by various denominations.

After the Dain Manufacturing Co. (now the John Deere Co.) located at Welland Junction in 1909, the population increased and a new four room school was built. This later was enlarged and became the Bridge View School. The one room school was now purchased by a group of Anglicans and moved to a generous plot of land donated by Mr. A.G. Scilly. The Rev. J.F. Carson, Rector of Christ Church, Wainfleet, began regular services with Mrs. R. McClelland as organist.

As the congregation increased the need of a larger church building was felt. At this time there was at Wellandport an Anglican Church no longer in use. This building was the original Holy Trinity Church, Welland, on Smith Street, where the Anglican Cemetery is still located. When the Holy Trinity Church on Division Street was built, the old church was moved on the ice of Chippawa Creek to Wellandport, where church services were held for some years, but finally discontinued. Permission was given and this church was moved to Welland Junction to fill the need there. In 1909, the church was moved and placed on the lot by the old school where the Anglican services were held. The latter building now became the Guild Hall, where meetings and Sunday school could be held. The Anglicans soon began to hold church services in their new church and continued until 1962.

The first mention in Synod Journals of All Saints' Parish, Welland Junction, was in 1912, when the Rev. J.F. Carson was Rector of Christ Church, Marshville, now Wainfleet, and of All Saints' Welland Junction.

The first wardens of All Saints' Church were Mr. A.G. Scilly and Mr. John Skelton.

On July 19, 1959, parishioners of Holy Trinity Church, Welland and members of St. David's and All Saints' marked the One Hundredth Anniversary of the first parish church when the services had been held in this building. At this Anniversary Service the Rev. Bruce Parry, Rector of All Saints' presided. The sermon was given by the Rev. Canon H.R. Bagnell, the eleventh Rector of Holy Trinity. Boys and girls and senior choirs of the three churches participated in the music. After the service a picnic was held on the grounds of All Saints'.

As All Saints' parish grew it was decided that a new and larger church was advisable. The site was donated by the Misses V. and M. McClelland on land held by their ancestors from a Crown Deed over one hundred and fifty years ago.

## The Reformed Mennonite Church

The first church built in Humberstone was erected by the early Mennonite Settlers in the year 1825. The church was of log construction located at the south-east corner of Lot 30, Concession 2. This church was replaced by the present brick church erected immediately south of the log church in 1872, at its present location, corner of Knoll and Killaly Sts. It serves a congregation of some 40 members.

Many of the United Empire Loyalists who came from Pennsylvania to settle in Canada in the 1780's at the close of the American Revolution were Mennonites. It was only natural that the area's first church should be of this faith and the early congregation included such well known and respected names as Stoner, Neff, Minor, Sherk, Knisley, Weaver, Anthes, Babion, Barrick.

The Reformed Mennonites are a small group of people who adhere to the doctrine and principals of love as taught in the New Testament and practiced by true christians in all ages, since the Church was established on the day of Pentecost.

The Reformed Mennonites believe the church is the effect of the power of the Holy Spirit, that there would be no true christian organization without it, and that the continuity and succession of the church is dependent on the presence and guidance of God's Holy Spirit. Without love and unity in the church, the Reformed Mennonites feel it would be impossible to keep the commandments and observe the ordinances given by Christ. The labour of love and the daily need of forgiveness by the Lord is exemplified for them in the ordinance of feet washing, which is participated in by all members of the church.

The Reformed Mennonites are entirely non-resistant and do not sue at law. They ask to be excused from military service; for this reason they do not vote nor hold any office in government. They try to live in simplicity, abhor strife, contention and worldliness. They feel they cannot consistently and conscientiously participate in worship with those who do not live in harmony with the doctrine of Christ, for in doing so they would be bidding them Godspeed as taught in 2nd John 10-11.

Their Ministers are selected from the congregation and serve without pay. They have a threefold ministry of bishops, ministers and deacons.

From 1825 to 1850, John Herr who helped to organize the church in Lancaster, Pa. made three trips to this community, two on horse back, the last by train. He took sick on this trip and died at Gas Line.

From 1841, Jonathan Kinsey served in the ministry till his death in 1867. George Augustine served from 1864 till his death in 1894. Jonas Anthes was the ordained minister from 1893 and died in 1935. Wilmer Steele ordained minister 1901, confirmed bishop 1917, died 1945. Arthur Cusler ordained minister 1931. Lloyd Weaver ordained minister 1944 and confirmed bishop 1958. Paul Fehrman placed minister on probation in 1964.



## Emanuel Lutheran Church, Sherkston

Lutheranism in the area dates back to the year 1827, when Rev. Philip Mayerhoffer served the people with word and sacraments. He was followed by the Rev. John Keller, who served here from 1835 to about 1845. From that time, it seems, no pastor had regular charge of this field, but preachers came from Fort Erie and Buffalo to conduct services in the homes of the people.

The first services were held in the German language. It was not until the year 1862 that steps were taken to have regular services conducted again, and to secure a regular pastor for this field. In that year Rev. C.W.F. Rechenberg, at that time President of the German Lutheran Canada Synod, came to Humberstone to settle some difficulties in St. Paul's Church. During his stay in Humberstone he visited the people of Sherkston and conducted a service in the home of John Near. Upon the advise of Rev. Rechenberg, this parish became a part of St. Paul's parish, Humberstone.

When the first regular pastor was called for the parish, the Sherkston people requested that one be sent to them who could preach in the English language, as most of them had almost forgotten the German.

Mr. A.C. Kuhs, a senior at Gettysburg, Pa. Seminary was called as pastor and took charge of this field on the 16th. of June, 1863. Services were held regularly now in the homes of William Michael Sr., Joseph Near and John Near. John Beach's home was used for catechetical instruction and practicing of singing.

Christmas Day, December 25th. 1863 is likewise the birthday of Emanuel Lutheran congregation. On this day, the first class of candidates were confirmed, the Lord's Supper was celebrated and the congregation organized. The name they chose "Emanuel", which means "God with us". At this meeting the first church-council was elected consisting of John Near, William Michael and John Michael as trustees and John Beach as elder.

On January 31st. 1864, the congregation decided to erect a church and a subscription list was started. In April 1865, Mr. John Beach gave one acre of land, pt. Lot 4, Con. 1, for the church site. Work on the new church was started in the spring of 1867, and dedication services were held on Pentecost Sunday, 1867.

In the year 1879, Rev. J.H. Freemyer who became the first resident pastor took charge of the flock. During his ministry the parsonage, a barn and church shed were built. He retired from the ministry on the last Sunday of 1887.

No spectacular changes are recorded in the interim period until on July 27th. 1902, Rev. A. Gruhn was installed as pastor. He served this congregation faithfully for seven years to July 11th. 1909. During his pastorage the congregation grew in numbers, a complete liturgy was introduced, a Sunday School was organized, a prosperous Ladies' Aid Society was started in January 1906, a new organ was purchased for the church, the parsonage was re-painted and the roof re-shingled, a large addition was

built to the sheds to accommodate the number of horse drawn vehicles on Sunday and new fences were built in front of the church and parsonage and around the congregational cemetery. The greatest event in the history of this parsonage was the erection of a new church building in 1909, which was dedicated July 4th. 1909.

Pastor Gruhn was assisted at the dedication service by Rev. John N. Grabau of Buffalo and Rev. Theo. Berner of Martinsville, N.Y. A week later Rev. Gruhn preached his farewell sermon.

Rev. H. Beutler took charge on January 1st. 1910, and for thirteen and one-half years held the longest pastorate in the history of the congregation, during which time the congregation made steady growth, and progress.

The following pastors served Emanuel Lutheran Church:

1. Rev. A.C. Kuhs
2. Rev. H.C. Kaehler
3. Rev. F. Ehinger
4. Rev. J.H. Freemyer
5. Rev. Thomas Snyder
6. Rev. J. Badke
7. Rev. A. Gruhn
8. Rev. Henry Beutler
9. Rev. C. Duwe
10. Rev. H.H. Hoessel
11. Rev. E.W. Sattler
12. Rev. P.P. Wilt
13. Rev. Bernard Walck

With the construction of paved roads and the elimination of the horse and carriage, the mode of transportation and the ease of travel has perhaps had some effect on church attendance trends.

On January 5th. 1951, Emanuel congregation merged with St. Luke's congregation of Ridgeway. The following year the Sherkston Church building was sold to a group of area christians and named "Gospel Haven" with opening services held April 13th. 1952.

At the time of this writing the church has been re-named "The Sherkston Community Church" with the congregation classed as inter-denominational.