

Our History



The original, small St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, built on Larch Street in 1883, and adjacent location.

The St. Andrew's story begins in 1883 when Presbyterian and Methodist churches were established in the town of Sudbury which had sprung up around the expanding railway. The churches shared many areas of their ministries and in 1925 they were united in the Act of Parliament which created the United Church of Canada.

They continued to use separate buildings until 1927 when the two congregations began to share one building and one ministry in the former Presbyterian Church on Larch Street. Many challenges lay ahead for the new church. The Depression brought numbers of unemployed transient men who were often fed by the women of the church. The Second World War brought tragic losses and sacrifices. Twenty-nine members of St. Andrew's died in action in WW II.



Methodist Church, Sudbury, Ont., Canada



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Sudbury, Ont., Canada

In the 50's St. Andrew's supported the building of several United Churches on the perimeter of the city of Sudbury. Strong ties were forged with Huntington University, the United Church college federated with Laurentian University In 1968 the St. Andrew's sanctuary was declared potentially hazardous and could no longer be used for worship. The congregation then embarked on a "wandering" period while it

discerned the next step of its congregational journey. A new vision of St. Andrew's brought about the decision to build a multipurpose building that would **"be a space that will be truly humanizing – a place for worship, of cultural activity and of community dialogue."**

St. Andrew's Place

In response to this dire situation, Rev. Charlie Forsyth developed a vision of replacing the church with a multi-use facility, as a form of mission to downtown Sudbury:

"...at the heart of the downtown, let us achieve a space that will truly be a humanizing centre – a place of worship, of cultural activity, and of community dialogue."¹

The original vision for this multi-purpose Place was three-fold: it would serve as the home for St. Andrew's Church, provide housing and ministry for seniors, and offer a commercial component. St. Andrew's Place opened in May 1973, incorporating church space on the first four floors (Sanctuary, offices, gym, church school, meeting rooms, etc.), 150 apartments for seniors, and commercial space. St. Andrew's Place Inc. is a separate corporation acting in the name of the United Church of Canada. It is owned by the



St. Andrew's Place, Completed in 1973

United Church through the St. Andrew's congregation. The congregation retains a management company to maintain the entire complex and lease its non-congregational space.

For many years the apartments at St Andrew's Place were full, occupied by members of St Andrew's who were given priority for the spaces as they came available. However, by the late 1990's, St. Andrew's Place was incurring deficits through reduced demand for the apartments and fewer commercial tenants brought about by changes in the complexion of downtown Sudbury. At the turn of the 21st century, the Place found itself with a 20% vacancy rate, no money for maintenance or capital refits, and a series of nine missed mortgage payments.²

In 2005, thanks to the efforts of several members of the Place Board and management team, the Place's CMHC mortgage was set aside by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for a period of 15 years, allowing the Place to re-channel its revenues into long-deferred maintenance and capital expenditures. As a result, St. Andrew's Place has experienced a period of revitalization in recent years. For example, the congregation approved a new mission statement for the Place in 2008:

“The St. Andrew’s United Church Seniors Housing Ministry in St. Andrew’s Place offers safe, affordable and supportive housing for seniors in the downtown community of Sudbury. This ministry is committed to becoming a source of ongoing and increasing support to the people it serves.”

This mission represented both seniors' housing and social housing, and the Place moved toward providing more services for our apartment residents, potentially culminating in the provision of assisted living. We look forward to celebrating the 40th anniversary of the opening of St. Andrew's Place in May 2013.

TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY: 2006 to 2009 The departure of Rev. Wm. Steadman to a position in the United Church's National Office effective December 31, 2005, led the congregation to investigate Interim Ministry. When the Search Committee was unable to find an Interim Minister willing to settle in Sudbury, Sudbury Presbytery appointed a team of two part-time supply ministers effective fall 2006: the recently retired Rev. Bea Arnill (2/3) and Rev. Dr. Ian Sloan (1/3). Recognizing after a few months that more transitional leadership time was required, in the spring of 2007 Rev. Sloan was appointed by Presbytery as full-time transitional minister until June 30, 2009.

In fall 2006, the Church and Presbytery established a *Transitional Steering Committee* to support Rev. Sloan's work with the congregation. Out Transition Period combined elements of an interim ministry with an emphasis on renewed program development. The work of the Transition Committee identified three primary goals:

1. To make mission and resources match;
2. To recreate the relationship between the Church and the Place; and
3. To cultivate an environment of mutual respect that is free of intimidation.

To meet the first of these transition goals, the Transition Steering Committee identified through a series of surveys, Town Hall gatherings, and workshops, where the congregation wanted to go in terms of its mission. Based on their research, the Committee developed the "Core Plan 2008-2010." The Core Plan asserted that the preferred path ahead was to work towards redeveloping as a program church (in excess of 150 attending members), a seemingly appropriate path in light of our corporate sized building, our centralized location in the heart of the newly amalgamated City of Greater Sudbury, and a healthy endowment fund which could be used to invest in new missions and programs. This vision would be realized by achieving a redevelopment of four key program priorities:

1. Encouraging the active involvement of young families and children;
2. Strengthening religious and music education programs;
3. Strengthening the residential seniors' ministry; and
4. Strengthening our mission in the downtown (our *neighbourhood*).

Approved by Council and Congregation in June 2008, the Core Plan recommended that we:

1. Renew our focus on programs to attract lapsed and potential new members;
2. Adjust our space utilization to reduce maintenance and occupancy costs; and
3. Reduce expenses through a reduction of committee budgets and salaries/benefits.

The following year saw a reconfiguration in the size and use of church space, including the Church's ceding of the fourth floor to the Place, which resulted in a 33% reduction in our occupancy costs. At the same time, we achieved a 33% reduction in the hours of the church secretary, Pastoral Care Associate and Director of Music, as well as attendant changes in the job descriptions for these positions. Although there was a volunteer youth worker at the time, there was a provision in the Core Plan for a youth worker to be paid 8 hours per week. Alternate arrangements have arisen in the interim for the provision of a Sudbury-wide United Church youth group.

While there has always been cross appointment of a Church Council representative to the St. Andrew's Place Board of Directors and vice versa, there was a need for both bodies to gain a greater mutual appreciation of their respective points of view. New leadership of both the Council and the Board has resulted in a renewed, genuine spirit of collaboration. Our congregation's history of strong lay and ordained leadership has allowed us to tackle a variety of significant projects over the years. During our first year of transitional ministry, it became apparent that strength of leadership had, in a few isolated cases, not been balanced with the necessary consultation with affected groups. Our recognition of the importance of addressing and eliminating this concern led to development of the third transition goal. A conflict resolution facilitator was retained and with her assistance, the congregation learned healthy ways to resolve conflict. As one of its learnings, the congregation developed and adopted a *Covenant of Respect* in March 2008.

A Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC) was commissioned in 2008 to establish what our future ministerial team should look like, taking the Core Plan's program-oriented goals into account. The Committee evaluated the roles of the ordained minister and the Pastoral Care Associate, and recommended that the Church retain a model of team ministry with an ordained minister (full time) and a Designated Lay Minister-Pastoral Care (part-time, 14 hours per week). The 2008-2010 Core Plan was intended to serve as a guide to help "bridge the gap" between the final year of our transitional ministry and the first year of our next pastoral relationship, which commenced on July 1, 2009 with the call of Rev. Dr. Judith Visser.

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE: 2009 to 2011 In June of 2009, Church Council created the Core Plan Redevelopment Committee (CPR) whose major task it was to oversee the ongoing implementation of the Core Plan. The CPR Committee undertook two major projects in its first year, employing an *ad hoc* Task Force method which involved the formation of focused task groups with representation from Council, the Place, and other affected church committees. The first task force undertook a review and restructuring of the Church's financial resources (general funds and endowments). The second task force reviewed the church's use of space within the Place, taking into account the Core Plan's program priorities as well as other needs. This led to renovations of the second floor kitchen, and a re-organization of office space and storage space. The third task force's work was perhaps the most ambitious. Established in the fall of 2010, the Visioning Task Force facilitated a major congregational review of our core mission priorities in the context of our downtown location, the community's goals as reflected in the City's Official Plan and the developing Downtown Master Plan, our strengths and weaknesses in terms of our human, physical, and financial resources, and the opportunities and threats we face as a result of our aging and shrinking membership, our church's location in the heart of downtown Sudbury, and other key influences. After providing numerous feedback opportunities to the congregation and committees at various junctures in the re-visioning process, all of which relied heavily on a comprehensive communications strategy, the end result was the development of new Vision, Mission and Values Statements, approved and adopted by the congregation in February 2011.

THE CHURCH IN THE PLACE: THE FUTURE IS NOW St. Andrew's Place continues to experience resurgence. The Place has continued to move ahead with its capital expenditure plan resulting in more modern infrastructure and an upgrading of common areas. At the same time, the Place has also made great strides in achieving one of its three primary goals coming out of a strategic planning session in the fall of 2010, that of reaching out into the community and raising people's awareness about what the Place has to offer. Out of this work has come a partnership with the City to host its Downtown Sudbury Master Plan community events within the Place, and the tenancy of the street level offices by the Laurentian School of Architecture until they can move into their new building in 2013. Further synergies with Laurentian and with Cambrian's proposed Architectural Technologies program will be investigated in the months ahead.

The Designated Lay Minister - Pastoral Care announced in November 2011 her decision to leave the position effective the end of January 2012. In December, Sudbury Presbytery and Church Council commissioned the formation of another JNAC to examine the pastoral care needs of our congregation and to discern how to meet those needs going forward, taking into account the demographics of the congregation (predominantly seniors with a small number of young families and children), the church's financial situation, and its dwindling reserves. As a result, St. Andrew's extended its part-time pastoral care arrangement with Rev. Erin Todd until June 30, 2013, and established a Pastoral Care Task Force whose primary function is to work collaboratively with Rev. Judith Visser and Rev. Todd over the 2012-13 church year to develop a new model for the delivery of pastoral care for St. Andrew's. Also in December 2011, Church Council worked with the Place Board to jointly establish a Mission Sustainability Task Force (MSTF). This group's mandate was to pick up where the Core Plan Redevelopment Committee left off the previous spring, with a continued focus on achieving our goal of making mission and resources match.

In support of the Joint Needs Assessment process, the MSTF first sought to find further budgetary efficiencies with the goal of reducing the church's annual deficit without adversely affecting the sustainability of the church's existing mission priorities. This preliminary work was accomplished by June 2012, leaving the church with a balanced 2012 budget and a healthy endowment fund which could be used to support new programs and projects. The MSTF's next assignment was to lead the congregation through a consensus-building exercise intended to address four major issues:

1. Coming to terms with the various implications of being a pastoral-sized congregation;
2. Examining the unique contextual confluences related to our location in an evolving downtown setting in what is widely considered the "capital of Northern Ontario";
3. Developing a prioritized list of mission priorities that are relevant to our circumstances, address in-service and outreach needs, and inspire our congregation's interest and commitment; and
4. Aligning our opportunities and competencies, and committing the human, financial and physical resources needed to achieve our internal and external mission priorities.

Related discussions will revolve around the possibility of further renovations to our existing church and commercial spaces as required by our mission priorities. We are confident that a concerted effort on the part of the congregation toward supporting a revised redevelopment plan will result in positive changes not only for the Church and the Place, but for the City of Greater Sudbury as well.

1. A History of St. Andrew's United Church, Sudbury", Graeme Mount & Michael Mulloy, 1982, page 99.
2. With contributions from Sylvia Carscadden, Donna Mese, and Phil Thurston.