

The  
HISTORY  
of  
Highlands Baptist Church



The Years 1950-1959

## Foreword

When does a church (as a body) decide it is time to write up their history? Is it on their fiftieth anniversary or should it have been sooner?

As a journey is made through the boxes of material accumulated in the buildings basement in 2002 it is the considered opinion of the researcher it should be started from day one! This is difficult, it is supposed, because how does a person know there is going to be a history?

Even after ‘only’ fifty years it has been discovered that much has been forgotten. Memories fail and records are lost or simply were not kept.

John Tidridge  
Edmonton  
Alberta  
October 24, 2002

## HIGHLANDS BAPTIST CHURCH

### HUMAN ANCESTRY



First Church



Syndicate Avenue Baptist

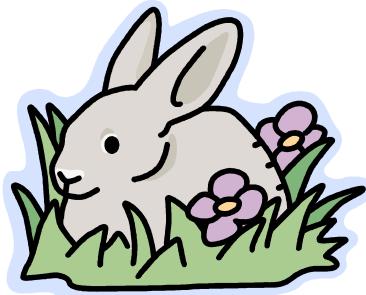


McDonald Baptist Church



Highlands Baptist Church

## THE CHURCH



112 Avenue from 53 to 55 Streets, and 55 Street from 111 Avenue to 112 Avenue is the area most closely connected with the Highlands Baptist Church even though the idea of a church was spawned when a minister rode his bike in the Virginia Park area. It is not known how avid a cyclist the minister was!

<sup>1</sup>Henderson's Directory, published annually for many years, listed homes, residents and addresses in the City of Edmonton and possibly most of Canada. It was done city by city. Old copies are available from the Edmonton Archives, located in the Prince of Wales Armoury, 10440-108 Avenue. The staff here is consistently helpful. Using the City of Edmonton editions, makes interesting reading (that is if you are interested in reading names and addresses!).

1950 Between house numbers 5005 and 6231-112 Avenue there was nothing. On the east side of 55 Street there was nothing from Jasper Avenue (now 111 Avenue) until 118 Avenue was reached.

1951 There were some fairly dramatic changes to 55 Street in 1951; seven houses were built on the west side of the street, but still nothing on the east side. There were no changes on 112 Avenue between 50 and 55 Street.

1952 showed there were now 2 houses on the east side of 55 Street and some moves to improve 112 Avenue. At 5339 there was the A and B Pigle Wigle (that's what it said), 5345 showed the Highlands Baptist Church, and at 5355a lodged the Mount Royal Milk Bar.

The 1953 Directory showed that there were now five houses on the east side of 55 Street including 11111-55 Street occupied by one Peter Sturko. 112 Avenue now had the following businesses: At 5335 Barbara's Ready to Wear, 35a Joe's Snack Bar, 39, Tetreas Super Market, 45 Highlands Baptist Church.

1954 showed some growth and change. Two new houses on 112 Avenue, Barbara's Ready to Wear had disappeared, Joe's Snack bar was still at 35a, Ensign Meat Market replaced Tetreas, a new house was up at 45, and the Church was without a number.

1955 Progress: 35 Joe's Snack Bar had turned into Duke's Barber Shop, 35a was now Lott's Snack Bar, 39, Mount Royal Super Market. 47 was a new residence. The church is still without a number!!

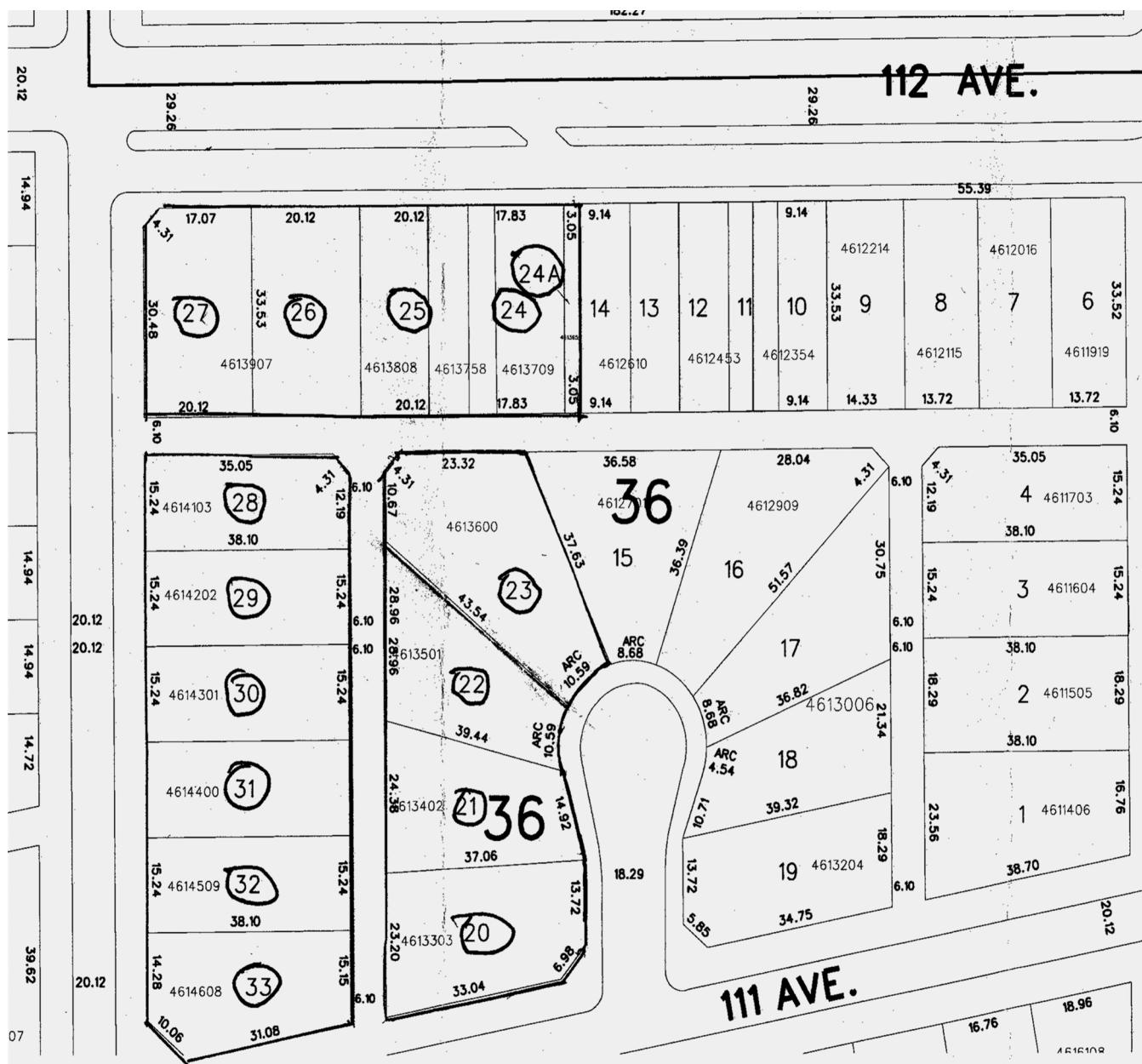
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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated all documents mentioned in this story are to be found in the records of the Church found in the Office Administrator's Office.

1956 Lo and behold the church was numbered, 5351, the number still used by the church. At 35, the snack bar had turned into Mount Royal Drug Store.

## **PLAN 2430 H.W. SHOWING THE LOTS AROUND THE CHURCH**

**The Church finally ended up owing lots 26 and 27.**



According to a Lands Titles Certificate dated December 8, 1950, Lot 20-23, Lots 24A, 24-33 Block 36 Plan 2430 H.W. were owned by a Peter W. Sturko, a Contractor. In layman terms this is the land on the south side of 112 Avenue from where 54 street would be to 55 Street and on the east side of 55 Street from 112 Avenue to 111 Avenue and the first three lots on the west side of 54 Street north of 111 Avenue. It seems unlikely that Peter, later a member of Highlands Baptist Church, realized what significant role lots 26 and 27 would play in the future of the yet unknown church! But read on!

### THE MAN ON THE BICYCLE

What is so special about a man on a bicycle? What if the picture bears no resemblance to the original bicycle or the man riding it? Well, for one thing if a minister, many years ago, had not ridden in and around the Virginia Park (and he probably went as far as the Highlands as well) area our church would probably not have been started!! Strange but true. The story of the man on the bike comes up at any meeting that talks about the history of Highlands Baptist Church. The man in question was the Rev. Stewart Trites, the minister at McDonald Memorial Baptist Church from 1944-1950, and he actually did ride his bicycle around the Virginia Park area.



So, who was this man on the bike, the Reverend Stewart Trites?

The following was taken from material supplied by the Baptist Union of Western Canada:

MERIT AWARD PRESENTATION this undated (perhaps in 1991) résumé gives an excellent story of the “man on the bike”

It is most appropriate that the recipient of the Merit Award this year is one who is well-known and much beloved in this area of Western Canada. He has been a vital part of our denominational life for half a century and he is a living personification of the scripture verse inscribed on the plaque that will be presented to him tonight:

*“Anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.”*

We would not be surprised if many present tonight from our host church and from this area will by now have guessed the name of the recipient. They will know there isn't anyone else who corresponds with the descriptive comments up to this point.

So, it is a pleasure and a privilege to announce at this time that the one we delight to honor this year is none other than

## REV. STEWART DAVID TRITES

### Early Life

He was born in Anaconda, British Columbia, ninety years ago (1901) last July and was raised in the Maritimes. He was baptized in Highfield Baptist Church, Moncton, New Brunswick, in February, 1918.

### Education

He graduated with a BA degree from the University of New Brunswick and with an MA degree in Theology as well as a BD from Acadia. Later in life he earned a B Ed degree from the University of Alberta.

### Pastorates

He was ordained in Wolfville, Nova Scotia in 1932 and his pastorates were as follows:  
New Harbour-Seal Harbour Tyron

North Sydney -all in the Atlantic Provinces

**MacDonald Church, Edmonton (1944-1950)** where he also served as chaplain of the  
Edmonton Fusiliers and the 19th Armoured Car Regiment)

First Church in Port Arthur

First Church in Brandon; where he had an effective radio ministry.

### Denominational Leadership

Stewart Trites finally retired to Bruce Mines, Ontario. But his retirement didn't last very long. As a matter of fact, it lasted only two years. He responded eagerly to a call from the Baptist Union to serve as Secretary for Sunday School Promotion and became affectionately known as "Mr. Sunday School". In this role he was known and beloved in our churches all across the West. Following this assignment he eagerly undertook two interim pastorates--one in Dauphin and the other in Swan River.

When this work was done he became interim Director of Home Missions for the Baptist Union and, then, interim General Secretary. At the time of the former appointment ~ Canadian Baptist said:

*"Stewart brings to his new task a cheery, optimistic Christian disposition. a deep and practical faith, and a firm belief in the mission of Baptists in Western Canada."*

When these assignments were completed he launched into more interim pastorates-- Medicine Hat, Swan River (for the second time), New Westminster, Halifax and Sault St. Marie.

Finally, he decided to retire and the place he and his devoted wife, Gladys, chose was Brandon because their hearts were in this city, in particular, and in Western Canada, in general.

It is no wonder he was elected Minister Emeritus of First Baptist Church, in Brandon, not only in recognition of "his earnest preaching, his pastoral concern, and his great-hearted brotherly spirit among us" but also in recognition of his service to our denomination all across Canada.

## Hobbies

Along with his preaching, teaching, pastoral and administrative skills, his life has been enhanced by several wholesome hobbies--stamp collecting, gardening and creative writing.

After fifty-four years in a wonderful marriage, his wife, Gladys, passed away and in October, 1990, he married Ellen Pollitt, a union that has brought much happiness to both partners. They have recently returned from a two month motoring trip to Florida and enjoy once again their life in Hobbs Manor, (a senior citizens residence he played a leading role in building) and in First Baptist Church. We are delighted that Mrs. Trites is present and also Stewart's daughter, Mrs. Judy Wilson, an active member of Crescent Heights Church in Calgary.

We gladly and enthusiastically salute this man of God and conclude the citation with his own words from the closing of his "Book of Memories":

*"So ends the chronicle of the man who is grateful to God for the privilege of serving as a minister of Christ and who at this moment enjoys life to the full"*

Stewart, we love you and delight to honor you! ,

Footnote; Reverend Trites died February 4, 1999, in Brandon Manitoba

So, that describes the man on the bike! We know he did come on a bike because he called on the Hawley's and invited them to the new Sunday school to open at the Virginia Park School located at 7324-109 Avenue. The Hawley's then became life long members of Highlands Baptist Church, totally involved in most aspects of the church. Norma Hawley, when interviewed on one of many occasions, October 24, 2002, said she and her husband Harry were attendees at First Baptist Church. She was not sure how Rev. Trites got their name but she believed he had several others as well, including Parnell 'Doc' and Minnie Richman; John and Lille Parker and Ernie and Mabel Wentworth, Verna and Alf. Guthrie, Peter and Helen Sturko. Norma was pretty sure this meeting occurred in 1949 the year she married. Norma recalled a lady asking her what kind of Baptists we were (she was checking before sending her children). Norma thought that we were pretty fundamental, no lipstick or drinking .....

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

Checking with Lori Clark, of our fellowship and of the Edmonton Public School Board , on October 25, 2002 she was able to confirm that the Sunday school started on April 17, 1949, or permission to use the school was granted on that date. So at that time Rev. Trites must have been in charge. Sue Emery, Benefits Coordinator, Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec provided the following information on Reverend Raymond LeDrew, on November 26, 2002.

Reverend LeDrew was married to Florence and they had/have two daughters Grace and Kathleen.

He was pastor at the following churches:

Alton & Hillsburg Baptist Churches - 1932 to 1936

Kenora Baptist Church. - 1936 to 1937

Lorne Park Baptist Church. - 1937 to 1941

Stayner Baptist Church. - 1941 to 1945

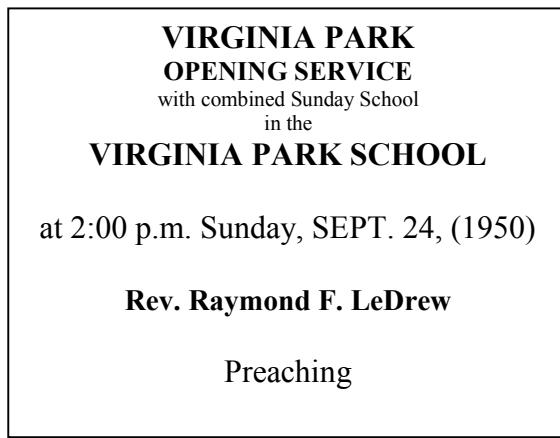
Ossington Avenue Baptist Church. - 1945 to 1950

**McDonald Memorial Baptist Church - 1950 to 1952**

First Baptist Church Orillia - 1952 to.....

From the advertising it would appear that now the Rev. Raymond F. LeDrew was in charge of the proceedings. Lille Parker thought that he came from Orillia, Ontario; Albert Munro thought he left for Orillia after spending a short time at McDonald's! Louis Kabesh thought he was at McDonald's for less than a year, and had found it difficult to settle in western Canada.

Lille Parker (October 30, 2002) recalled one incident from the Sunday school at Virginia Park. Her son Brian, then aged 3 years, was in class when the teacher, name unknown, held up a book (Bible) and asked if anyone knew what book it was. Brian, in a very deep voice said it was, "The Bible!!" Lille also thought that the following listed people were the "early ones". Mr. and Mrs. Sturko, John and Lille Parker, Harry and Norma Hawley, Verna Guthrie, "Doc" and Minnie Richman. She also mentioned the Shades; however, this is not borne out by the membership list at the time.



It would appear the  
operated for two years  
service was considered.  
ment appeared in a

Rev. LeDrew was the minister from McDonald's.

Sunday school  
before a church  
This advertise-  
local newspaper.

Very soon it would become obvious McDonald's Memorial Baptist Church was serious about the up and coming Sunday school/ church started in Virginia Park. They mortgaged their manse to finance the purchase of the two lots that were given to Highlands Baptist Church.

A copy of the mortgage follows. A note had been added to the mortgage:

**This cancelled mortgage document is significant and unique in that it represents money borrowed by McDonald Memorial Baptist Church, to present lots for the new Highlands Baptist Church in the City of Edmonton.**

Signed on October 13, 19954 by Wm. MacDonald,  
General Secretary Baptist Union of Western Canada.

## Mortgage

THE MCDONALD BAPTIST CHURCH of Edmonton, hereinafter called "The Mortgagor."

being registered as owner of an estate in fee simple in possession, in all the pieces of land described as follows:  
**All and Singular** ~~the~~ certain piece or parcel of land situate in the Province of Alberta in the Dominion of Canada  
being composed of

Lot Eleven (11) in Block Twenty-two (22) in River Lots Sixteen (16) and Eighteen (18) a Subdivision of the City of Edmonton in the Province of Alberta, Dominion of Canada, of record in the Land Titles Office for this Land Registration District as Plan XXIII,

Reserving thereout all mines and minerals.

as described in Certificate of Title #I85-U-106

in consideration of the sum of Five thousand .....

.....00/100 Dollars (\$5,000.00 )  
lent to me by The Baptist Union of Western Canada.

and assigns are hereinafter included in the expression "the Mortgagee") the receipt of which sum I do hereby acknowledge jointly and severally, COVENANT with the Mortgagee

**First**—That I will pay to the Mortgagee the above sum of Five thousand .....00/100.. Dollars (\$ 5,000.00 )  
in gold or its equivalent at Edmonton, Alberta.

**Secondly**—That I will pay interest at the same place on the principal sum remaining from time to time unpaid at the rate of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per centum ( $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ ) per annum by half yearly payments on the 31st day of October and on the 30th day of April in each year.

In Witness Whereof we have hereunto signed my name and affixed our seals this twenty first day of May one thousand nine hundred and fifty one.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered by the above named persons:  
The McDonald Baptist Church

(Having first been read over and explained)  
in the presence of S. Grimwood as Mortgagor

The McDonald Baptist Church  
F.G.L. Mitchell  
Herbert Horn

### Affidavit of Execution

Canada Province of Alberta To Wit: g. Sheldford Grimwood  
City of the Province of Edmonton  
in the Province of Alberta

1. That I was personally present and did see Fred G.L. Mitchell and Herbert Horn make oath and say:

are instrument, who personally known to me to be the person named therein, duly sign and execute the same for the purpose named therein.

2. That the same was executed at Edmonton Province Alberta of Alberta and that I am the subscribing witness thereto.

3. That I know the said Fred G.L. Mitchell and Herbert Horn they are and in my belief of the full age of twenty-one years.

Sworn before me at the City of Edmonton Province Alberta in the 21st of May this 51 day of A.D. 19

J. R. Townsend  
Commissioner for Oaths.

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## TURNING OF THE SOD



The sod-turning ceremony for the new Highlands Baptist Church occurred on Sunday, September 23, 1951. The pictures shows (it is believed) Mr. Shelford Grimwood, Past President, BUWC handling the spade or is it a shovel? The Rev. Edgar J. Bailey, President, BUWC is the 'supervisor'. The truck in the background has the name of P. W. Sturko on the door. Peter was a church member and owned the two lots before they were purchased by McDonald Baptist Church.

### CEREMONY

Of the turning of the First Sod  
For the construction of

THE HIGHLANDS

BAPTIST

CHURCH

(112 Avenue at 55 Street, Edmonton, Alberta)

Sunday, September 23, 1951

3.30 P.M.

The Church's open foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is His new creation  
By water and the word  
From heaven he came and sought her  
To be His holy bride;  
With his own blood he bought her  
And for her life He died

## ORDER OF SERVICE

Call to Worship: "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High. He that trusts in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the Mountains are round Jerusalem, so the Lords is round about His people from henceforth even for ever.

Prayer of Invocation: Rev. J. A. MacRae, Moderator of the Edmonton-peace River Ass'n of Baptist Churches.

Hymn: Now thank we all our God.

Old Testament Lesson: Rev. C. J. Smith, Pastor of Bonnie Doon Baptist Church,  
Edmonton.

Prayer: Rev. G. M. Edwards, Pastor of Strathcona Baptist church, Edmonton, Alberta

Hymn

New Testament reading: Rev. R. F. LeDrew, Pastor of McDonald Baptist Church,  
Ephesians 1:13-22

Solo                    Mr. Allen Dyer         "Bless this House"

Ceremony of Turning the First Sod. Mr. Shelford Grimwood, Past Pres. Baptist Union of Western Canada.

Address            REV. EDGAR J. BAILEY, President, Baptist Union of Western Canada.

Hymn: Onward Christian Soldiers

Benediction: Rev. J. A. McCrae

The ceremony of today is the outcome of a vision held by some of our people of a Baptist Church in the Highlands district of Edmonton. For some three years, under the direction of McDonald Baptist Church, a Sunday school has been organized and maintained, meeting Sunday by Sunday in the auditorium of the Virginia Park Public School.

From the beginning it has been realized that this modest service must assume a broader scope if the endeavour is to be permanent. With that in mind, McDonald Church, last spring, at a congregational meeting which was largely attended, authorized the purchasing of two sixty-six foot lots on the site where we now meet. It was hoped that

soon Baptist people of our city would erect a building that would lead to the founding of, Highlands Baptist Church. With the assistance of the Edmonton-Peace River Association of Baptist Churches, the Baptist Churches of Edmonton and the Baptist Churches of Western Canada under whose auspices a thorough survey of the district has been made, it has been decided to proceed to the erection of the first unit of the Church immediately. It is our hope that the organization of the Church will be a reality here very soon.

The structure to be erected immediately will be permanent in nature, consisting of an auditorium and a full basement. It will be used as a place of worship and for Sunday school work. Activities that will interest boys and girls, teenagers and all young people during the week we propose to begin. Thereby this Church will minister in the widest sense to the needs of this fine residential district. Ultimately, when the Church edifice itself is erected this building will be used for Sunday school work and all programs which the Church may authorise from time to time.

The prayers of all our people and their active support will make this Church a blessing to the community, a source of inspiration for all who may choose to workshop here and a place where youth may consecrate their talents to the service of God and their country.

The newly operating Sunday school and Church had moved to Mount Royal by at least November, 1951 on (date) and shortly thereafter the following letter was sent to the neighbouring community announcing the first service to be on November 25, 1951.

**McDONALD BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**EDMONTON, ALTA**

November 13, 1951

Dear Friends:

This letter is written to advise you that the first service of the proposed HIGHLANDS BAPTIST CHURCH will be held in the auditorium of the new Mount Royal School, corner 55<sup>th</sup> Street & 112th Avenue, on Sunday morning, November 25th at 11 o'clock. Across the road from this school is the location of the new Baptist Church, the first unit of which is now in the process of erection. We give everyone a very hearty invitation to worship with us. During the service a Sunday school program will be conducted for primary and beginner scholars.

It is recommended that at this service the new Church to be known possibly as the HIGHLANDS BAPTIST CHURCH will be formed. A charter members list will begin

and those wishing to members of it may indicate same to a clerk who shall be elected and who will write to the respective churches named for letters of transfer. Those wishing to join by Christian experience may indicate same at that time.

Our aim is to serve the community as a whole in every possible way. Hence an invitation is extended to all. We give a special welcome to the children of the neighbourhood who may wish to come to our Sunday school. There will be classes in the school for all. Services of the church and its various organizations which will be established, will, of necessity, be limited to the Sunday hour at present- until the first unit of our Church will be completed, which, we hope, will be soon.

Trusting to see you all on Sunday, November 25th at 11 A.M. and praying the blessing of God on our endeavours as we launch out on this new venture of faith with Him, we are,  
**Sincerely yours for Christian Fellowship,**

**Raymond F. LeDrew**

**Minister, McDonald Church**

From newspaper clippings it would appear that Rev. LeDrew did not preach or participate in many of the services at Mount Royal School. It does appear he may have been at the service noted above but an advertisement in the Edmonton Journal dated December 16, 1951 shows Dr. Smalley as the preacher.

## **HIGHLANDS BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE EARLY-MID FIFTIES**

### *Baptist Officials Dedicate New Church Building*

Dedication services marking the opening of the new Highlands Baptist Church, at 112 Avenue and 55 Street were held Sunday afternoon, (March 2, 1952) were attended by



Baptist clergy and officials of the city and district. In the group above left to right are: Rev. W. J. MacDonald, general secretary of the BUWC, Rev. G.M. Edwards, pastor of Strathcona Baptist Church; Rev J. A. MacRae, pastor of Delton Baptist Church, Rev. R. F. LeDrew,

pastor of McDonald Baptist Church, Dr. W. C. Smalley, who will have the pulpit charge in the new church. Rev. J. C. Smith, pastor Bonnie Doon Baptist Church and Rev. Frank W. Samis, pastor of Highlands United Church.

**HIGHLANDS BAPTIST  
CHURCH**



**112 Avenue at 55 Street**

**EDMONTON**

**Service of Dedication**

**Sunday, March the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1952**

**At 3 p.m.**

**Minister: Rev. W. C. Smalley, D.D.**

**Order of Service**

**CALL TO WORSHIP – The Doxology**

**INVOCATION-**

**HYMN (tune-Carrington)**

Jesus, where'er The people meet,

**WELCOME TO VISITORS**

**STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION- Mr. S. Grimwood.**

**ANTHEM: "He shall feed his flock" – The McDonald Junior Choir.**

**RESPONSIVE READING- Rev. W. J. MacDonald, B.A.**

1. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts.
2. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and My flesh crieth out for the living God.
3. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, Where she may lay her young, even
4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy House; they will be still praising thee
5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in while heart are thy ways.
6. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it well; the rain also filleth the pools.

- Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King  
And my God.
8. O Lord God of host hear my prayer:  
give ear , O God of Jacob.
9. Behold, O God our shield, and look  
upon the face of thine anointed.
10. For a day in thy courts I better than  
a thousand
7. They go from strength to strength, every  
One of them in Zion appeareth before  
God.
11. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the  
house of my God, than to dwell in the  
tents of the wickedness
12. For the Lord God is a sun and a shield:  
the Lord will give grace and glory
13. No good thing will be with-hold from  
then that walk uprightly.
14. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that  
trusteth in thee.

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

### **SERVICE OF DEDICATION – The Minister**

(Congregation standing)