THE PAST 50 YEARS 1970-2020

A BRIEF HISTORY to COMMEMORATE the 100^{TH} ANNIVERSARY of the CONGREGATION of

EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH

Windsor, Ontario

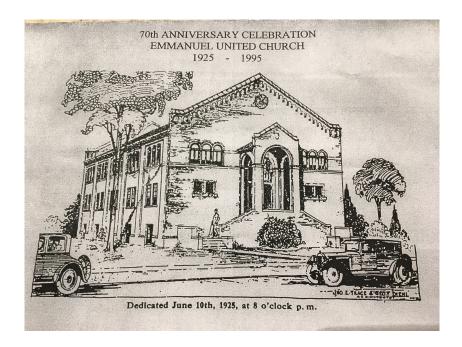


Emmanuel United Church Mission Statement

We are a Christian community gathered together to worship, celebrate, and serve God through Jesus Christ. Our church is accessible and welcoming to all persons for fellowship, learning, sharing, and teaching. We strive to show our love through service to all humanity.

Acknowledgement of traditional land

Long before today, aboriginal peoples have been the stewards of this place. We thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land - for thousands of years. In particular, we acknowledge that our faith community is located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosauonee peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.



Early Days

The first worship service of our congregation took place on September 19, 1920, in a frame building at the southeast corner of Ottawa Street and Moy Avenue. It was called Moy Avenue Methodist Church and then Ottawa Street Methodist Church. Within five years the congregation grew and built a new church at our current location on Lincoln Road. The church at that time consisted of the section of our current building known as Ottawa Hall. Construction was completed in 1925 with the first service held on Sunday, May 17. The dedication was on Wednesday, June 10, 1925, the day of "Church Union" in Canada.

The United Church of Canada was created by the merger of four Protestant denominations across Canada: the Methodist Church, Canada, the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, two-thirds of the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the Association of Local Union Churches, a movement predominantly in the Prairie Provinces. And so, Ottawa Street Methodist Church became Ottawa United Church and the date of Church Union holds an extra-special place in the history of our congregation.

In 1956, when an addition was completed to create the church building as it stands today, the name was changed to Emmanuel United Church.

Our Neighbourhood

Since 1975 when Mrs. Frances McLeod wrote the history of *Emmanuel United Church, 50th Anniversary 1925-1975,*¹ (celebrating 50 years since Church Union), Windsor and our church neighbourhood of South Walkerville have seen many changes. Windsor's population was 114,367 in 1961 and had grown to 217,188 by 2016, the same year the Windsor metropolitan area had a total population of 344,747. The city continues to attract immigration from around the world. The 2016 census shows over 25% of Windsorites identify as visible minorities.²

Few businesses that lined Tecumseh Road East in South Walkerville in 1975 remain today. A grocery store, drycleaner, shoe store, ice cream parlors, pharmacies, jewelers and barbers have all moved or closed. The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (now CIBC) has moved only a few blocks to the corner of Tecumseh and Lincoln Roads but recently closed. There remain a couple of Italian eateries: Franco's which recently moved a block west of their long-standing location at 1545 Tecumseh and Koolini's in the old Milano Pizza building. Another restaurant, Thanasis, has been in the neighbourhood since the early 80's. The South Walkerville branch of the Windsor Public Library closed when the newly built W.F. Chisholm Branch was opened at Optimist Community Centre in 2017.

The opening of the Devonshire Mall that was built in 1970 (at the location of the former Devonshire Raceway, a horse racing track) on Howard Avenue signalled a shift in retail that was common across North America. Small, family run businesses could not compete with the extended hours, large parking lots, convenience, and "climate controlled" comfort that mall shopping offered.

Civic institutions continue to be a draw for families to this neighbourhood. Metropolitan Hospital (now Windsor Regional Hospital's Metropolitan Campus), Hugh Beaton and John Campbell Public Schools were all opened in the late 1920s and continue today to be important anchors in the community.

During these 50 years, increased secularization of society has resulted in more commitments to organizations and activities outside of traditional religion. Church attendance has dropped significantly across many of the mainstream Christian denominations. In 1970 there were 17 United Churches in Windsor. In recent decades, 9 of the 17 have either closed or amalgamated with other congregations.

The Wider Church

"...for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" Ephesians 4:12

During the same period, the United Church of Canada responded faithfully and in new ways to the changing circumstances. It continued to work to articulate its Christian faith. General Council (1968) adopted A New Creed that continues to be widely used in United Churches today. Later, A Song of Faith: A Statement of Faith for the United Church of Canada was affirmed by the 39th General Council (2006) 3. In 1996 a new hymnal replaced The Hymn Book that had been in use since 1972. Voices United was published and remains as the current hymnal. A supplement, More Voices, was published in 2006.

Within the United Church of Canada a strong sense of mission and dedication to justice have remained constant throughout the years. The church wrestled with living its mission of "a church with purpose, believing its members are faithful when Spirit-inspired, Scripture-rooted, and Scripture-formed, inclusive, justice-seeking and justice-living." In these past 50 years a number of important milestones have been reached through the work of the church. For example, on August 16, 1980, the 28th General Council elected the first female Moderator, the Very Reverend Lois Wilson.

The General Council in 1986 offered "An Apology to Native Congregations" for failing to recognize the depth and richness of Aboriginal spirituality. In following decades, the United Church faced the legacy of cultural assimilation and child abuse in the residential schools that it had once helped to operate. A "Healing Fund" was established in 1994 and in 1996 an apology was made to former residential school students.

Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action



to Faith Communities⁵ (#44), the Church agreed to use the principles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a framework for reconciliation.⁶ In 2018 General Council approved *Calls to the Church* following two years of consultations and dialogue involving Indigenous leaders from across the United Church and the Aboriginal Ministries Council to discern a way forward. In 2012, the church crest was changed by modifying the background of the crest's

four quadrants, incorporating the four colours of the Aboriginal medicine wheel and adding the mohawk phrase "AkweNia 'Tetewá:neren" (All my relations) on the outer edge.

After consultation and much difficult discussion, the General Council of 1988 declared "all persons regardless of their sexual orientation, who profess their faith in Jesus Christ are welcome to be or to become members of the United Church of Canada" and further that "all members were eligible to be considered for ordered ministry".\(^7\) This action was not uniformly accepted across the church and caused deep divisions. Today, Affirm United is a movement that encourages ministries to study and reflect on gender identities and expressions and sexual orientations, and then to commit themselves to work for justice and inclusion within their community of faith, the wider church, and their community. Over two hundred ministries have completed the process to be recognized as Affirming and many others are currently working toward that designation. In 2012 the first openly gay Moderator, The Very Reverend Gary Paterson, was elected.

In 2000, the 37th General Council adopted *That all may be One: Policy Statement on Anti-racism.*⁸ Throughout the 1990s and 2000s the national church also worked to annunciate a commitment to global economic justice and recognition of the harmful impact "unrestrained global market capitalism" was having on lives and communities. A commitment to live with respect in creation, and decades of work on ecological issues resulted in the policy statement *One Earth Community.*⁹ This policy statement affirms twelve principles for the work of the church on ecological issues that include protection of biodiversity, sustainable lifestyles, economic justice and human responsibility.

The church's governance structure has undergone real changes to address the reduction in the number of pastoral charges, fewer people being called into ordained ministry and fewer members within many congregations. Perhaps most notably, following years of church-wide consultation and voting, General Council 43 (2018) approved a new governance structure and financial model. There are currently three levels of governance—the Pastoral Charge that is the congregation (community of faith), the Regional Council (replacing the former presbyteries and conferences) and the General Council. Emmanuel United Church is part of the Antler River Watershed Regional Council. At the same time an Office of Vocation was established to support the accreditation of ministry personnel and candidates for ministry (as previously done by presbyteries and conferences).

While the national church was changing and adapting to the times so was Emmanuel United. The governance structure was changed from the original Session to the Committee of Stewards and Session (2 groups dividing spiritual and administrative matters) then to an Official Board (amalgamation of Session and Stewards, with sub committees) and finally to the Council model.

The new Council would be made up of the minister, chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary, past chair and the chair of each committee. Also, over the years certain important groups had representation around the table such as the United Church Women, the representatives to Essex Presbytery, a youth and a seniors' representative. More recently, Council has made changes to reduce the frequency of meetings but otherwise this form is maintained today.

Leaders in Ministry 1970-2020

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah 6:8



Emmanuel has been blessed with wonderful leaders in ministry over the years. Rev. Allan Logan (pictured here) was minister at Emmanuel for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Church Union in 1975. Six years later he would leave Emmanuel after almost 11 years of faithful service.

Rev. Duncan White followed Rev. Logan and, after two years, announced his departure.

Rev. Dr. John Palmer accepted a call to Emmanuel in 1985. With his wife Jennifer and his two children, Dr. Palmer moved from London Ontario to make Windsor his home. By that time the manse at 2483 Lincoln Road had been sold and the Palmer family bought their own home on Moy Avenue.

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Dr. Palmer retired in 2005. In 2020, this year of our 100th anniversary, Dr. Palmer celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination. In 2012 he was recognized for his long and faithful service at Emmanuel United Church with the designation of *Minister Emeritus*.

In the years following Dr. Palmer's retirement there have been a number of ministry leaders and often several months with a "vacant pulpit" while the congregation searched for a new minister. During these times there were many blessings of both ordained and lay worship leadership, and the church council and executive provided consistent lay leadership. Linda Blair accepted a call to Emmanuel in the summer of 2006 until the end of 2009. David Colvin was called in 2011 and remained until 2014 when he and his wife Helen moved down east.



In 2015 the congregation called a minister from Jamaica who was interested in moving to Canada. Rev. Sadekie Lyttle-Forbes began her ministry at Emmanuel in September 2015. Members of the congregation welcomed Rev. Sadekie, her husband Imran and their three children with open arms and provided much assistance and support as they settled into their new life in Windsor and Canada. During her time at Emmanuel, Rev. Sadekie studied and was admitted into the United Church of Canada. She became active in the wider church and sat on a

number of national committees. In 2020 she announced her intention to move to the Toronto area and accepted a call to a church in Sharon, Ontario. The COVID-19 pandemic prevented a traditional send off from taking place but many members of the congregation participated in a socially distanced "walk by" to express their gratitude and best wishes to Rev. Sadekie and her family.

In October of 2020, Emmanuel called Rev. George Bozanich to lead our congregation. He was ordained in Detroit in 2013 and had ministered there as well as in Essex County. Rev. George has blessed us with his commitment to community engagement, spirituality, prayer and social justice. At the time of this writing, Rev. George has been getting to know the congregation and working through video conference and social media. We are all looking forward to being able to praise, pray and meet together in person—perhaps without wearing a mask which has been essential attire during the pandemic.



Congregation Members Called to Ministry

Rev. Dr. Sheila Macgregor was ordained in 1988. She has served congregations in Huron Perth and London Middlesex, and for many years now at Siloam United Church.

Rev. Allan Rush, whose family has a long and committed involvement in this faith community, was ordained in 1995.

Rev. Christopher Matheson was ordained in 2001. He has spent many of his years in ministry in Cape Breton but is now serving Peace United Church in Plattsville, Ontario.

Rev. Catherine Elsdon, though ordained in 2013 after Dr. Palmer's retirement, recognizes his ministry as a formative influence. She is currently serving the congregation of Bethel-Maidstone in Essex County. Catherine has also served since 2017 in the Canadian Armed Forces Primary Reserve as a military chaplain.



Rev. Dr. Sheila Macgregor



Rev. Allan Rush



Rev. Chris Matheson



Rev. Catherine Elsdon

Welcoming Grace United Church

In 1997, the congregation of Grace United Church amalgamated with Emmanuel and its members were welcomed in to form a larger church family. The chapel on the west side of the sanctuary was named the Grace Chapel. Three beautiful stained glass windows were removed from the Grace church on Riberdy Road. The windows were framed and backlit, and then installed on the north wall of the Emmanuel sanctuary. William Kalbfleisch did this excellent work. The windows are a reminder of the history and life of Grace United Church as a faithful and long-serving community of Christ.

Bible Study

Through this period there were a number of engaging study programmes but one was a multiyear project involving many at Emmanuel. The congregation committed to a programme of Bible study called the Bethel Bible Series. In 1994 a group of seven members trained with Dr. Palmer to become leaders and over the next few years many in the congregation enjoyed classes of this in-depth study of the Old and New Testaments.



Capital Projects

Of course this half-century did not see the tremendous building projects of the previous 50 years but one notable building improvement was the installation of a lift which provides access to the lower and main levels of the church and an entrance at the centre doors on Lincoln Road. Dr. Palmer cut the ribbon for the lift on March 24, 1992. It has been a great addition to the church,

providing easier access for anyone with mobility issues.

Also, the kitchen underwent a major renovation that included the installation of an automatic dishwasher and upright freezer. For most of the 50 years under review here, Mr. Lynn Byrnes as Chair of the Property Committee has directed the care and maintenance of the church building and property. Members of the congregation are very proud of the excellent condition of their Church home and are very thankful for Lynn's constant, meticulous and faithful work.

Sharing our space

Emmanuel entered into a rental agreement in 2013 with the Metropolitan Community Church of Windsor that provided them with office space and shared use of the sanctuary with worship time on Sunday afternoons. Metropolitan Community Churches, a world-wide denomination, has been at the vanguard of civil and human rights movements and has a specific outreach to LGBTQ+ families and communities.

"We strive to show love through service..."

Throughout all these years Emmanuel has sought to live out its mission in the community and in the world. Various groups and individuals have contributed significantly to the United Church Mission and Service Fund, the Downtown Mission, the Children's Aid Society, Gesstwood Camp, Ronald McDonald House and a number of other charities and special campaigns. Gifts of time and talent have also generously been given including preparation of many delicious meals and holding of positions of leadership and on the governing boards of the Downtown Mission,

Gesstwood Camp, area Home and School Associations, Girl Guides and Scouts Canada and others. Emmanuel partnered with local United Churches to sponsor a refugee family from Syria in 2016.

For many years members at Emmanuel have placed mitts on a Mitten Tree during Advent for distribution to children in need. In 2015 it was renamed the *Ruth Byrnes Mitten Tree* in memory of Ruth Byrnes, long-time member of Emmanuel who knitted countless hundreds of pairs of mitts over the years. Another Christmas tradition has been the Christmas Family—for decades donations have been given to buy gifts for a family in need as identified by the Children's Aid Society. For many years this programme has been under the direction of the Outreach

Committee and Bill Nanson with the help of many elves!



Speaking of elves, Bill Kalbfleisch has had a commitment to the beautification of the church and has transformed the sanctuary and other areas of the church each Christmas season and Thanksgiving for decades. With the help of his family and others (often from the Men's Club), Bill has helped create an atmosphere of wonder and joy for members and guests at Emmanuel every year.

Groups and Clubs 1970-2020

The Men's Club, established in the late 50's, has phased out its monthly dinner (or later breakfast) meetings with guest speakers and fellowship but a small and dedicated group still work to maintain the long tradition of delicious breakfasts on Mother's Day and the Family Christmas Breakfast each December. Only in the last



couple of years has the annual Harvest Dinner been lead by someone outside the Men's Club. All these delectable meals have been a gathering time for fellowship and celebration and have helped form many happy memories for our church family. Proceeds from the Men's Club events have benefitted charities in our community as well as our Church.

The United Church Women were very active at Emmanuel for decades, from its inauguration in the early 60's to the 2000's. These women were involved in many activities within the church: social events, educational activities, fundraising and more. They made significant contributions to the finances of the church, as well as to local and international charities. The annual bazaar, teas, guest speakers, travelogues, Bible study, rummage sales and so much more added to the rich sense of community at Emmanuel. The eight units of the UCW formed tight-knit groups and provided opportunity for Christian fellowship and lasting friendships.

As the last of the units of the UCW were closing down, a small group of dedicated women stepped in to continue some of the cherished activities of the UCW. For a time, women's breakfasts were organized with guest speakers. The rummage sales continue and the annual bazaar is still an opportunity to craft and cook together. Some of the



women created an informal group, known as the Happy Cookers, to help coordinate the many preparations for the bazaar, especially the making of frozen pies.

Emmanuel Senior Social Club Launched by Hazel Payne in the early 80s and continued by her daughter Barbara Chandler, the **Emmanuel Senior Social Club** meets weekly (except during the summer months) for fellowship, lunch and cards.

The early "Mr. and Mrs. Club" and then "Couple's Club" evolved in later years to "The In-Betweens" (meaning a group for those "between" the Youth Group and Seniors). There are a few activities that continue in this tradition—apple pie night when pies are made to sell at the bazaar, and the Progressive Dinner in the lead up to Christmas, for example

The Youth Club of the 70s and 80s met weekly for after school activities, faith



formation and dinner. Later, a **Teen Group** was formed under the direction of Kathy Nantais, Angelica Haggert and others.

The Children and Youth at Emmanuel have been ably lead by dedicated **Sunday School** volunteers and co-ordinators, all under the direction of the Christian Education Committee. To name just a few who have given their time and their talents to the fath life of our children: Peggy Krieger, Kristine Gosselin, Irene

Alexander, Kim Smith, Enid Bryans, Lynda Thibert, Angelica Haggert, Mary Dagenais, Kathy Nantais, Tina Limarzi, Gayle Tait, Launa Groulx, and Carol Middaugh.

Along with Sunday Bible lessons, the children and youth have done fundraising for various charities, enjoyed games nights, Rally Sundays and the annual picnic. The Sunday School Christmas pageant and White Gift service presented during Advent is a highlight of the season for the entire congregation



As a sponsor for the **57**th **Windsor Scout Group**, a number of Emmanuel members have volunteered to lead the youth of the 57th and to support the Scouting movement and Camp Cedarwin. Many boys from Emmanuel enjoyed being part of this active group. In 1972 Scouts Canada began accepting female



members into the Rover section and by 1998 females in all sections became policy. Many girls took advantage of this change. Scouting Sundays, Apple Days, tree planting, camping, canoeing and the Pancake Supper are just a few of the fun activities enjoyed over the years. Girl Guides also have a home at Emmanuel and along with the Scouts have provided rewarding and interesting mid-week programming for the children in our community.

The Choir

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Ps 100

From September to June every year, the Emmanuel Choir has led the congregation in the singing of hymns, provided uplifting anthems and a few times each year presented special music programmes. These dedicated choristers and Music Directors have greatly enhanced the worship and praise life at Emmanuel. For some, this is represented in decades-long commitment to the choir.





2019

Music Director/Organist

Mr. Nicholas Morvay – Feb. 17, 2012 to present
Mrs. Ann Marie Brunet -1996 to 2011 (During periods of leave
Marguerite Boughner and Ann Marie's sister Monique Simone filled in)
Mr. Cornel Isaila—1995
Mrs. Judy Boutin—1982 to 1995

Mr. Brian Sweetmam—1979 to 1982

Organization and Officials 1970-2020

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 1 Peter 4:10

No congregation can fully function without the dedicated commitment of its members to the spiritual and physical well being of the church. The members of the executive, committee chairs and committee members have admirably carried out the tremendous responsibility of administration within the church. We rejoice with thanksgiving for the blessings of these individuals.

Of course, many people have contributed to this work, too many to mention here! What follows is a snapshot of church leadership over the past 50 years:

1980 Executive: Monroe Schooley, Jim Tisdale, Charlie Richardson, Bill Totten, Helen Clarkson *Committee Chairs:* Charles Thurgood, Betty Richardson & Anne Cowden, Barbara Chandler & Shirley Wade, Margaret Jennings (UCW, Essex Presbytery)

1990 Executive: Bob Middaugh, Clyde Long, Bruce Parks, Cathy Perkins, Helen Clarkson *Committee Chairs:* Betty Long, Milton Grant, Lynn Byrnes, Charlie Richardson & Lloyd Smith (Essex Presbytery), Betty Richardson & Hilda Patrick (UCW)

2000 Executive: Mary Vanstone, Milton Grant, Cathie Bunt, Bill Totten, Scott Harrop *Committee Chairs:* Wayne Beneteau, Irene Alexander, David Holmes, Bev Donaldson, Lynn Byrnes, Jeanne Hays, Ted Alexander & Bruce Parks (Essex Presbytery)

2010 Executive: Bill Totten, Bruce Parks, Lydia Palmer, Linda Parks Committee Chairs: Rod Foell, Mary Dagenais, Michele McGregor, Irene Alexander, Cathy Shanahan, Lynn Byrnes, Jeanne Hays, Sheila Draper 2020 Executive: Tom Payne, Ted Alexander, Mary Vanstone Committee Chairs: Marg Grieve, Michele McGregor, Barbara Chandler, Irene Alexander & Lynda Thibert, Lynn Byrnes, Jeanne Hays

The **Board of Trustees**, with various members over these years and its own Chair chosen from among the Trustees, has the gratitude of the congregation for the responsible fulfillment of their duties, especially in oversight of insurance and certain investments.

Staff 1970-2020

Emmanuel has been blessed with dedicated staff members over the last 50 years:

Custodians

Dan Gurney 2009 to present Jany and Luca Bulz 1988 to 2008 Mary and Joe Grochowski 1957 to 1987

Secretary/Bookkeeper/Office Administrator

Heather Davidson- November 2020 to present Monique Pelltier- October, 2019 to October 2020 Melissa Yau--August, 2016 to present Kerry Carr-Monaco –2009 to 2016 Janice Stepharnoff – 1980 to 2009

In conclusion

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "**God is with us.**" Mt 1:23

Now, in 2020, we celebrate our 100th anniversary as a congregation. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic all anniversary gatherings and celebrations have been postponed. Indeed, church gatherings of all kinds have been suspended and in their place a weekly worship service recorded for viewing online, meetings by video chat and keeping in touch with phone calls, cards and emails. Although written almost fifty years ago, the words of Mrs. McLeod as she ended her 50-year history of Emmanuel United Church remain true for us:

We rejoice in the many blessings bestowed upon us in the past: we are grateful that the strength and courage of our church enables us to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world with faith and confidence.¹⁰

Endnotes

- ¹ Frances McLeod, *ed.* (1975) *Emmanuel United Church, 50th Anniversary* 1925-1975. Windsor Ontario: self-published.
- ² Canada, Government of Canada, Statistics. "Annual population estimates by census metropolitan area, July 1, 2017 City [Census subdivision], Ontario and Essex, County [Census division], Ontario".
- ³ A Song of Faith: A Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada/ L'Église Unie du Canada, UCC Proceedings, GC39, 2006, 433.
- ⁴ Allan, Gail and Legge, Marilyn. "Ecclesiology: Being the United Church of Canada." The Theology of the United Church of Canada. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2019. Chapter 7.
- ⁵ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015), 5, www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf/
- ⁶ UCC, "Statement on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Rights as the Framework for Reconciliation," March 31, 2016
 www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/undrip-united-church-statement.pdf
- ⁷ "Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality," UCC, Proceedings, GC32, 1988, 275-76.
- ⁸ "That all may be One: Policy Statement on Anti-racism," UCC, Proceedings, GC37, 2000.
- ⁹ UCC, Proceedings GC34, 1992, 501-5
- ¹⁰McLeod, Emmanuel, 10.

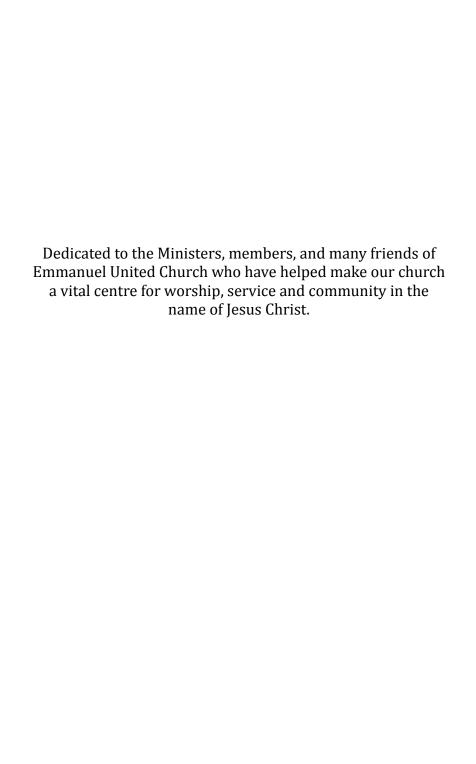
The 100th Anniversary Committee

Chair: Ted Alexander
Irene Alexander
Rev. George Bozanich
Jennifer Brooks
Mary Dagenais
Jeanne Hays
Peggy Kreiger
Tom Payne
William Totten
Christopher Waters

This history was written by Mary Dagenais Windsor ON 2020

Back cover photo of a quilted anniversary wall hanging. A gift created and donated by Cathy Shanahan.

My thanks to proofreaders Linda Parks, William Totten and Jennifer Palmer (although all errors that remain are mine alone!). Thank you to Cathy Shanahan and Bill Totten who provided photos (and also to unknown photographers over the years who provided the pictures in collections in the Church).





Celebrating 100 Years as a congregation

EMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH

1728 LINCOLN ROAD, WINDSOR, ONTARIO

Sunday, September 19, 2021