

This morning I plan to cover a few highlights from the years of 1947-1959. The population of Okotoks remained around 767 people during this time however the church saw considerable growth. In, The United Church of Canada, A History we hear this:

From 1946-1960 "... Sunday school enrolment, church membership, mid-week groups (for children, youth, men, and women), candidates for ministry, new congregations, new church buildings, and financial support all showed steady increases..." "...Canada prospered in the fifteen years following the Second World War. (source: UCC A History pg. 79)

"The United church gave a great deal of attention to Christian education during this period, and various factors led to this emphasis. One was the growth in Sunday school membership; it rose from less than half a million in 1945 to over three-quarters of a million at its peak in 1961. "(The UCC A History pg 85)

After Rev. Samis left Dr. Rev. J. V. Howey arrived on the scene 1947-1953

Dr. Rev. John Victor Howey was born in Keady, Ontario. He attended the University of Manitoba graduating in 1911 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. He took his theology work at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick. Rev. Howey also holds an M.A., Bachelor of Divinity and a Ph.D. from Oskaloosa University in Iowa. Rev. Howey came to Okotoks from Crossfield.

Reflections by Mauna & Jim Minue

Rev. Howey presided over our wedding on July 8, 1950. At the time, he lived in the manse which was across from where the courthouse is now (102 McRae Street). When Jim and I went to his home for the pre-wedding meeting he took us across the street to a vacant lot and gave us a lesson in astronomy using his telescope. He was very knowledgeable about the stars. He was a large muscular man (6'2", 220lbs. Okotoks Review Aug. 1947) and very kind. He liked to visit his church people to see if he or the church could help them in any way.

During Rev. Howey's pastorate, the **Ladies Aid was renamed the Women's Association** They continued the work of raising needed funds for the church.

We had a **baby band and a mission band** which were not musical. The purpose of these groups was to learn about children in far away places; how they live, work and play and the need to share with children from other lands. **Explorers, CGIT and Trail Rangers (boys 12-14)** were also active. The average **Sunday School** attendance was 96 and required 10 teachers and 8 substitutes to facilitate the program. Most of these helpers came from the Women's Association.

Members of the **Young Peoples Union** met weekly and annually put on a play that was entered in the Presbytery drama festival. In April 1949 Rod Bailey, member, gave a talk at a special evening service talking about the YPU which was described as the largest young people's organization in the Dominion with between two to three thousand branches.

A.O.T.S. As One that Serves was a ministry that was introduced by Dr. W. H. Riggs. The first dinner was on January 8, 1923. It was a men's club in the church. Inspired by Luke 22:27 "I am among you as one that serves." In 1948 Okotoks AOTS met monthly and included men from the Aldersyde church. They were typically fed by the Women's Aid. They adopted a child through Foster Parent Plan and continued to support a foster child through the form of mixed nut sales to members of the congregation and the community at-large during the Christmas season.

Okotoks-De Winton-Davisburg and Aldersyde formed the pastoral charge.

During his sixth year, here Dr. Rev. Howey suffered a severe heart attack, which hastened his retirement, and from which he never fully recovered. He moved to Calgary in 1953. He died on August 24, 1958. The funeral service was held at St. Matthews United Church in Calgary. Interment followed in the family plot at Burnsland Cemetery in Calgary.

Following Dr. Rev. Howey's departure Rev. Bert Loree arrived- 1953-1959

Rev. Loree was the son of Mrs. Loree and the late Hartley Loree who were early settlers in the Nanton district. He attended public and high school in Nanton and graduated from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Arts. He went on to study theology at St. Stephen's College in Edmonton. He was ordained at MacDougall Church in that city in May 1946. His first charge was at Thorhild

where he stayed for one year before requesting a leave of absence to take up the study of voice in Calgary. In 1948 Mr. Loree took up the charge of Stavely-Parkland where he remained until accepting the call for Okotoks. His induction service was held on Wed. Aug. 12 1953 at 8 pm.

Here is what Mary Bailey had to say, "When Rev. Bert Loree came to Okotoks from Parkland, we had something new at the manse, a bachelor, and a mandate from his mother to get him a wife. Then lovely Mary Murphy from Nova Scotia came to town to teach, and we were able to satisfy his mother's wish, and we had a bride in the manse. Mary Murphy and Rev. Loree were married in August or Sept 1955. On Jan. 25, 1957 their son, Robert was baptised at OUC.

Rev. Loree wrote in Okotoks and District Century of Memories, "I used to walk along the country roads memorizing my sermons. I had quite a fad for sun-bathing in those days. I enjoyed the visiting on the Okotoks charge. I cannot think of one home where I didn't feel welcome."

Rev. Loree installed the **first women elders** in Okotoks. Mary Bailey, Marguerite Noble and Agnes Forckel. Music he loved, and we were treated to the most unusual musical worship. He took voice lessons in Calgary every week.

The women and children and youth groups continued to be active **and Sunday school enrollment** reached 116! The church started using the Masonic Hall down the street from the church to hold Sunday School in 1959.

There were approximately 350 persons in the pastoral charge which included De Winton, Davisburg, and Aldersyde. During this time (1954 or 56) the Red Deer Lake Church was also re-opened and added to his charge. In 1954 Rev. Loree also supplied Blackie-Gladys Ridge charge given that Blackie had been without a minister for some time.

On **Jan. 16/17**, I contacted the Loree's at their home in London, Ontario. I spoke to Mary who shared that Bert was now 95 years of age and other than being hard of hearing was doing well. He had celebrated his 70th year of ordination in May 2016. Their daughter, Anne Loree is living in Calgary and wrote the lyrics to the song, Insensitive by Jan Arden