

Minute for Grace
The People of Grace-Westminster
November 2, 2014

The Spiritual Nurture and Faith Formation Team would like to thank those who have responded to our Bulletin announcement asking for people with long histories in the church to contact us. Periodically we will feature some of our long time attenders and give you a brief overview of their involvements. These folks form two broad groups: those whose attendance has been ongoing and those who attended, worshiped elsewhere for a period of time, and then returned to Grace-West. Each person mentioned today has contributed far more to the church than there is time to summarize in this presentation. Our purpose is not to provide biographies but to celebrate the many years of affiliation. We remind ourselves that this congregation and this building have very long histories of blessing and strengthening individuals and families as they live out the faith – just as it blesses and strengthens us now.

Let's start with our present Clerk of Council, Marjorie Konescni.



You see Marjorie as she takes part in Baptisms, Communions, and Reception and Transfer of New Members. Marjorie also sits on the Official Board of our church and sings in the choir. But did you know that Marjorie attended this church when she was much younger.



She was baptized here. She attended Sunday School, Explorers, and CGIT. Her contributions to our music program started as a child when under the direction of her mother, Helen MacMillan, Marjorie sang in the Junior Choir.



GRACE JUNIOR CHOIR - 1963

You see her here at about 12 years of age. She is fourth from your right in the back row. Marjorie was confirmed here. She and Bruno were married in this church in 1971.



After attending other congregations for a number of years, Marjorie returned to Grace-Westminster in the early 1990's. She has done committee work and served on Church Council. Marjorie works tirelessly for the church in many, many capacities and has put in what I believe to be thousands of kitchen hours. We are proud to call her a founding member of our Team. Thank you Marjorie.

If we go further back in our church history we could easily be stunned by the size of the congregation and youth groups. In 1942 there were 225 in attendance at the CGIT Mother and Daughter Banquet here. The young people's group in the 40's and 50's numbered in

the hundreds. I have heard estimates of from 200 to 400. It would be fair to say that for many young people, the church was the center of their social lives. This photo was taken of a meeting some time in 1951 – 52.



Executive member names you would recognize from this group would be Gordon and Mildred MacDonald, Bill Chapman, Merv Harrison, a Miss Bernice Tyers (who we will come back to in a moment) and a fellow called Art Bevan.

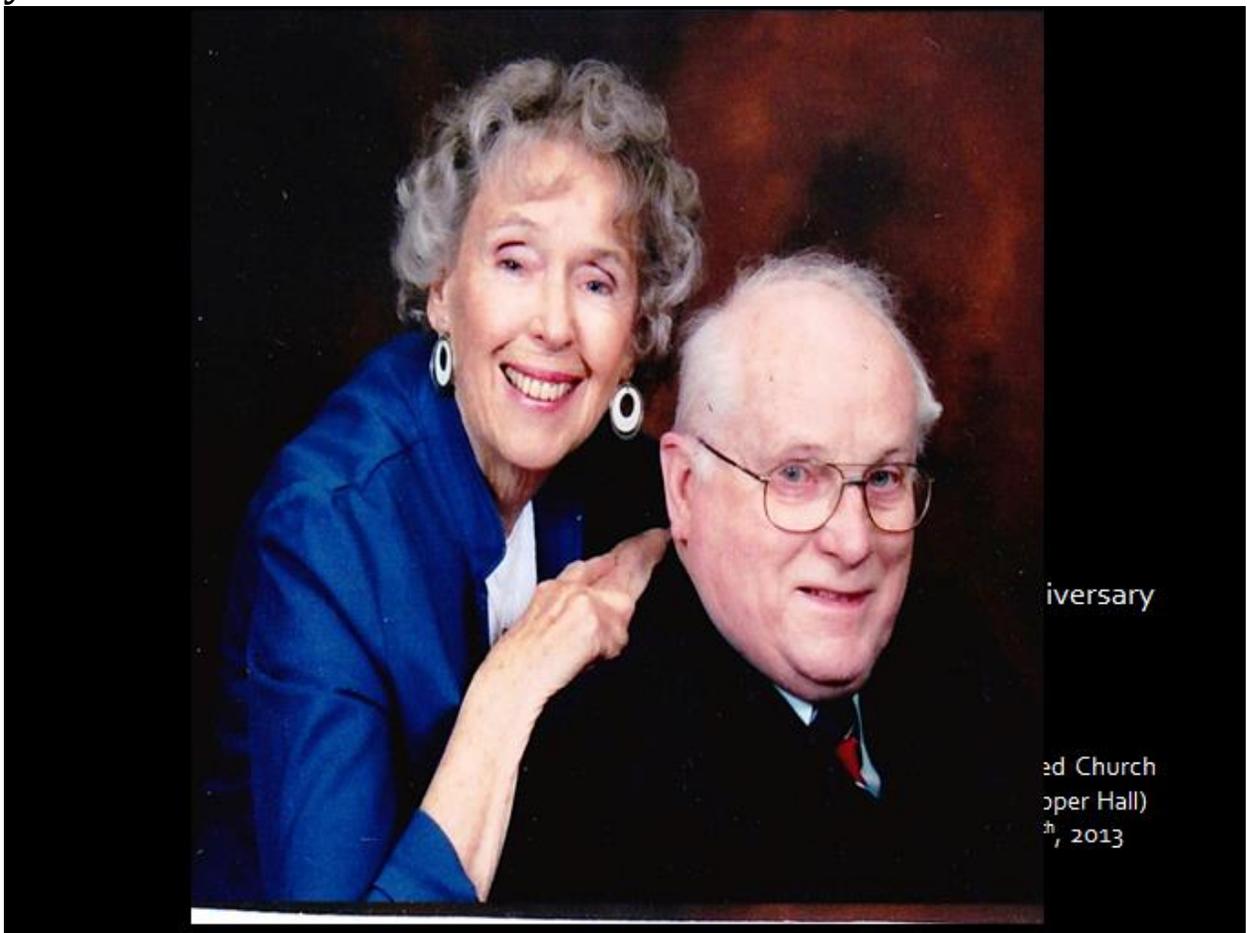
You may know that Art sings in our senior choir but did you know he started with the choir in 1948. At that time there was a waiting list of folks who wanted to join the choir. Those in the choir were reminded if they

missed too many practices, they could be turfed. There were more rows of seats in the choir in the late 40's. Art has served the church in many ways over the years. He is presently on our Board of Trustees and has served on the Board of Stewards. But getting back to that immense young people's group, there was a young woman named Dawn Nesbit in the group. She was in high school when she first joined Young Peoples and Art was in University. In 1953 Art and Dawn were married here in the church



in an evening ceremony, their reception was in the lower hall directly below the sanctuary. In years to come, their daughter and then three grandchildren also married at Grace-Westminster. Dawn joined the church in the mid 1940's and was also baptized at that time.

She encouraged her parents to come to services and joined the Senior Choir in 1952. Art and Dawn remember when there were line-ups to attend services, especially the popular evening service which came just before the Young People's meeting. Shortly after their marriage, Art and Dawn moved out of Saskatoon living on their farm and raising their children, although there was some back and forth in that period. Dawn worked as a nurse. Art as a teacher. They returned to Saskatoon in the mid 1980's and to Grace-Westminster where they have once again attended for almost 30 years.



Dawn's talents have brought us hours of pleasure

through the scores of musical theatre presentations she has directed. Thank you Dawn and Art.

Remember the Bernice Tyers I mentioned. She was attending Mayfair until Merv Harrison convinced her to join the Grace-Westminster Young People's group. Bernice also recalls the wonderful energy of that group and the central place it held in the lives of so many. The dances the group put on at Victoria school, particularly the New Year's Eve dances, are warmly remembered. The group always had a float in the yearly parade associated with the fair



Bernice recalls the singsongs from a songbook published by Ron Cole. As young people, Bernice and

Merv were active in the organization of Christian Youth Caravan teams who went out to establish Vacation Bible Schools in churches. Of the relationships established at Young People's, Bernice said, "Friendships were deep and long lasting. They were lifetime friendships." Bernice remembers teaching preschool Sunday School in a room called the parlor before the addition was built and then continuing with preschool classes in the new rooms. She taught CGIT. Although Bernice's health no longer permits regular attendance at church, Grace-Westminster has been her church since the late 1940's. Like others Bernice was married in this church



and like Art and Dawn remembers the reception in the lower hall. Bernice continues to serve the church by her

work on the Pastoral Visiting Team, telephoning and writing to many people in the church as they experience difficulties.



Thank you Bernice.

The Spiritual Nurture Team looks forward to sharing more stories of our long term members with you in future.

(Leave picture of Bernice while I leave the front of the church.)

