The History Of Innisfil Community Church Updated: March, 2017

Gospel meetings were held in Innisfil Township for many years on an intermittent basis. The Full Gospel Message had been proclaimed, but no Pentecostal Church was established.

In the 1950's and 60's Full Gospel Meetings were held at the Innisfil Park, then an overnight camping area. In the early 70's home prayer meetings were held with the hope of establishing a Pentecostal Church in Innisfil. Some dissension was evidenced and it appeared that it was not yet in God's timing. Yet, families continued to pray and trust God for His will in establishing a Pentecostal Church to minister to the many needful areas.

In October 1977, Kelly James, a teenager brought up and living in Innisfil Township, felt a burden for kids in the area. After consultation with Rev. Ray Running, Pastor of Hi-Way Pentecostal Church (her home Church), consideration was given to expand the Bus Ministry of the Barrie Church into the Township of Innisfil. Miss Kelly James, (along with Marlene Myers and other committed young people), developed the route and the bus ran for two years into the Barrie Church often carrying seventy or more children to Sunday School. This Bus Outreach was the beginning of a visible and viable, continuing Pentecostal Outreach Ministry to Innisfil.

In the Spring of 1979, Rev. Ray Running and Rev. Howard Courtney, (Hi-Way Pentecostal Church Pastor and Assistant), began to search for property in the central part of Innisfil on behalf of Hi-Way Church. Youth services were held for the month of July 1979 in the Alcona Community Centre, at which time some negotiations took place in the endeavour to purchase the Centre. An offer was presented in August 1979, but Innisfil Township Council affirmed later that they did not wish to sell it.

In November 1979 property was purchased on the South side of the 8th Concession, just West of the 20th Sideroad, (lot 4, Conc. 7, plan 1282). The securing of property with the help of Mr. Wilfred Sharpe was evidence of faith at work. The Church was coming closer to reality. The property purchased consisted of 3 Â« acres of vacant land, zoned Agricultural, at the price of $26,500.00.

Hi-Way Church indicated strong support of this branch work being established and voted overwhelmingly in favour of purchasing the property. On November 18, 1979 a special day was set aside as "Innisfil Sunday" at which time cash gifts and pledges were received to cover almost the entirety of the purchased property. God's blessing was clearly upon this venture.

With the purchase of property a mid-week service was begun. On November 7, 1979 the first Bible Study and Prayer Meeting was held in the home of Mr. &amp; Mrs. Bram Walbourne on Lebanon Drive in Alcona. Mid-Week services continued alternating among the various homes of the members every month.

In January 1980, after the purchase of property, an application was made to have the property rezoned from Agricultural to Institutional for the purpose of constructing a Church. The Township Council supported this change and after considerable planning approved the rezoning on May 28, 1980 with the passing of an accompanying "Site Control By-Law". Due to the opposition of a few nearby residents who felt the zoning change was undesirable, the beginning of construction in the Spring of 1980 was prevented. An appeal to the rezoning was launched and was not completed until March 13, 1981.

Although this delay seemed for a time to be disappointing, it seemed that the good hand of God was at work, helping to form a solid core congregation in the preparation for the building program.

Mid-week Prayer Meetings which began in November 1979 continued, and in the midst of the rezoning appeal, Sunday School and a Morning Worship Service was started in Goodfellow Public School on September 14, 1980. The leadership of the new work was given to Rev. Howard Courtney by decision of HI-Way Church Board. At this time Innisfil continued to join Hi-Way Pentecostal Church for the Sunday Evening Services, and all other special activities, including Women's Ministries, Youth Services, and Men's Fellowship.

On March 13, 1981 the Ontario Municipal Board ruled in favour of the rezoning of the property and a sod-turning ceremony was held on Sunday, April 12, 1981 at 2:30 pm. Construction then began early in May.

The Official Opening was held on September 6, 1981 after much hard work by volunteers and Mr. Frank Griffin, project manager. The new building seating 290, with approximately 9,000 square feet, was constructed for the cost of $241,000.00 which included carpet throughout, drapes, padded chairs for sanctuary seating, stacking chairs and tables for the Sunday School facilities, and a paved parking lot to accommodate 75 cars.

It is difficult to express the blessing of God in a history such as this. However, tremendous growth was experienced, and actual figures were recorded. During the first year in the School, the Sunday Morning Worship service average attendance was 54 persons. One year later, with the construction of the Church the average attendance increased by 87% to average 101 every Sunday. Likewise the Sunday Evening service which started when the Congregation moved into the new Church building, averaged 56 during the year.

The Sunday School grew by 31% from 67 in the School to 88 for the first year in the new Church. These figures reflect steady growth, and consistency rather than just a periodic "high" Sunday. The praise belongs to God for this development. Faithfulness is a necessity in God's Kingdom and the stability of this growth was evidenced.

On the First Anniversary, Sept. 5, 1982, the Congregation was pleased to farewell four youth as they left the Assembly to attend Eastern Pentecostal Bible College. Miss Carla Maas, Miss Gaelyn Groves, Miss Diane Vantil, and Mr. Kent Murphy left as the first representatives to go forth from our Assembly as labourers in the great harvest fields of the world. To God be the glory, great things He hath done!

Innisfil Community Church was assisted greatly financially by Hi-Way Church, under the leadership of Rev .Ray Running. With the purchase of property in 1979 in the amount of $26,500.00, a donation of $40,000.00 in April 1981 towards the construction costs, and a further donation of $20,000.00 on the Opening Day for the first year of operational costs, as well as an additional $5,000.00 gift received in 1981, almost $100,000.00 was given by Hi-Way Church. Pastor Courtney remained on salary at Hi-Way until the Official Opening, at which time the New Church assumed this responsibility.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada also contributed towards the New Church by a gift of almost $40,000.00 through the Women's Ministries Penny Day program.

After one year in the Church Building it was clear....THE WORK was just BEGUN! God was moving upon the hearts of many within the community. There were special occasions where there were capacity crowds. The Church moved forward knowing that "God is not willing that any should perish"! As long as there are unsaved in our community, the mission of Innisfil Community Church is not yet complete.

From 1982 to 1989 the Church experienced continued growth, with each individual member giving of themselves and their resources to assist in the various ministries.

On January 24, 1989, a "Mortgage Burning Service" was held to celebrate the retirement of all outstanding debt. The attendance graphs indicated continued growth and development since the opening services in 1980 in the School.

Not only has the Church been active in its own mission, but regularly supported other mission works. In 1988, almost $20,000.00 of the annual budget was sent to support other needy missions beyond the local Assembly.

In 1987, a long range planning manual was developed projecting needs and growth patterns. Discussion took place and efforts were made to move towards mothering a Church in Angus. However, these plans failed to materialize, even though the Board approved to pursue property purchase in the amount of $100,000.00 in December of 1988. Planning then was redirected towards expansion of the existing facility.

An Assistant Pastor, Mr. Peter Jones, was taken on staff in May 1988, and remained until July, 1991, when he was called to pastor in MacTier, Ontario.

Modifications were made to the Church in 1989, with the installation of air-conditioning, and erection of a steeple. Expansion of the parking lot took place, the sanctuary was expanded with the relocating of the offices, and the purchase of a portable classroom in 1990.

The Board met with builders to discuss the results of our long range plans in building. It was decided that we enlarge our building and launch a stewardship campaign to help finance it.

Building expansion began in April, 1991 for a 5,000 square foot addition, providing added vestibule space, new offices, car port, washrooms on the main floor, and a banquet hall/auditorium downstairs.

The Official Opening celebrations for the addition took place on the 10th Anniversary, Sept. 8, 1991.

A new Assistant Pastor, Mr. John Cook joined the pastoral staff in September 1991 and remained until 1994.

The Church attendance has continued to increase over the years. For 1991, Morning Worship attendance averaged 180, the Evening Service averaged 113 and the Sunday School averaged 103. It is not unusual with these averages to have in excess of 200 in our services! We praise God for His continued blessings.

In the summer of 1994, Rev. Sam Sibley joined the staff, replacing Pastor John Cook.

From our beginning until 1994, we have held 57 marriages, baptised in water 143, held 56 funerals and dedicated 91 babies!

Pastor Sibley concluded his ministry at Innisfil Church in 1999 to assume a Senior Pastor's position elsewhere. A need for a Children's Pastor was evident and Rev. Craig Head was taken on staff in this new portfolio in late 1999. His wife, Pastor Lori-Lynn Head accepted the role as Super Church Pastor during this time as well. The position of Youth Pastor was then filled by Pastor Dwane Parsons early in 2000.

Although the years from 1997 to 2002 were very difficult with many changes, including the passing of Carol Courtney,(the Senior Pastor's wife and the church's volunteer Music Director) the church has continued to serve the community in a multitude of ways, not only with a spiritual emphasis, but with considerable emphasis on humanitarian needs.

On April 1, 2000 Rev. Howard Courtney re-married his new bride, Beulah Luscombe, herself a widow of 8 years. Beulah became a wonderful partner in ministry along side of Rev. Courtney, and the congregation was blessed with a new pastor's wife.

In June, 2003 there was a Mortgage Burning celebration with the final payment of the 1998 gym expansion having been paid. This left the church debt free and able to take the needed steps for future growth.

With the conclusion of Pastor Craig Head's ministry at Innisifl in 2002, and Pastor Dwane Parson's ministry in 2003, new staff were sought out.

In 2003 three new staff members joined themselves to the church's mission. Pastor Charlene Roberts came as Children's Pastor for a period of just over one year. Pastor Dwayne and Eden Jamieson accepted the position of Music and Youth Pastors as well and for a year served in the assembly.

This period of time seemed to mark a fresh new era of vision, enthusiasm and passion.

In February, 2005, Pastor Crystal White joined staff to carry the portfolio of Children's and Music Pastor. And, after a vacancy of several months, the position of Youth Pastor was filled by Pastor Kris Reid in April, 2005.

In April, 2006, Pastor Crystal White left Innisfil to return to Newfoundland to pursue ministry there, and Rev. Rob Sharpe joined the staff as part time Music and Worship Pastor.

In February, 2007, Pastor Rob Sharpe increased to full-time Assistant Pastor. Also in February, 2007, Pastor Kris Reid completed his ministry at Innisfil Church and moved on to a new position of teaching English as second language in Korea.

In July, 2008, the church welcomed Pastor Mark Quinlan as full-time Youth Pastor.

Building expansion for our new sanctuary seating approximately 700 people has been completed and we are now enjoying the new space. The official opening took place on June 14, 2009 . Currently we have over 40,000 square feet of indoor ministry and program space!

Then in 2010, the church secured an additional 3 acres of property adjacent to the church for ministry purposes, including parking, children’s playground and games area, carnival space, and future expansion.

Pastor Rob Sharpe concluded his very successful period of ministry at Innisfil Community Church in December, 2013.

Joining the staff in February, 2014 as Associate Minister - Worship, Music and Arts, was Pastor Lisa Goldsworthy.

After 1 year, in 2015, Pastor Lisa resigned and took on ministry elsewhere.

In June, 2015, Pastor Mark Quinlan transitioned from his role as Youth Pastor to take on a new role as Executive Pastor at the church.

In June, 2015 we added Pastor Andy Hammond and his wife Pastor Sarah Hammond to our pastoral team. Pastor Andy assumed the role of Family Pastor, and Pastor Sarah became our Children's Ministries (Volunteer) Coordinator.

We stand in awe at the blessings of our God, and pledge our allegiance to Him as we serve this community to the best of our ability.