

**Centenary of  
Castle Street Church of Scotland  
1909-2009**



*Castle Street Church of 1909.*

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## Acknowledgements

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Gordon Bruce  
Betty Wilson

## Foreword

We all know about being in the right place at the right time! For me this does not happen often, but since this is the Centenary year of our Congregation it is certainly true. I count it an honour to be asked to contribute this Foreword to the Centenary Booklet as minister of the Congregation at this momentous time. The fact that I am here is within the providence of God, and I am happy to commend this short history of the Congregation to you. This will inevitably mean most to those who have been around Dingwall for the longest time, since it will mention the names of individuals and families who have played an important part in the history of the Congregation, but I trust that even those who are comparative newcomers will find something of interest in our history.

Although the Centenary of the building does not occur until 2009, it is more important, I believe, to celebrate milestones in the life of the Congregation rather than in the stone and lime! A Congregation of the Christian Church is a living organism, the Body of Christ in a community. What we celebrate, therefore, is the fact that this organism has been around for these hundred years, and that while generations of human beings rise and pass away before the Face of Almighty God, the Body of the Lord Jesus continues, and will do so until He returns in His glory.

We do, however, have to reckon with the fact that the precise structure of the organism can change quite dramatically from time to time. This is no more evident than it is within our denomination - the Church of Scotland. Over the centuries and years there have been divisions and comings together. Indeed, our own Congregation is the product of such events during the nineteenth century, and doubtless such changes will continue to take place. However, for THE TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, there is, as there always has been, a bright future.

I would like to pay tribute to the extensive and laborious work undertaken by Dr. Gordon Bruce and Mrs. Betty Wilson in researching and compiling this history of our Congregation.

Rev. Grahame McL. Henderson

## Letter from Dr. Betty Cowan

*"I am grateful for the privilege of having been a member of the Castle Street Church family as its missionary partner for almost thirty years. I want to put on record my thanks for all your love and prayerful support throughout the years, and the warm hospitality of the manse on deputation visits.*

*Congratulations as you celebrate your Centenary. May God continue to bless you all and make you a blessing"*

Dr. Betty Cowan served her whole medical career at the Christian Medical College and Hospital Ludhiana, North India and was for many recent years our Church of Scotland Missionary Partner. Dr. Cowan continues as our unofficial partner along with Miss Carol Finlay who is a nursing tutor at Ekwendeni Hospital, Malawi. Through the years Castle Street Church has also maintained a prayerful missionary interest through a number of non-denominational societies.

## Minute of Kirk Session Meeting 6/12/1900

At Dingwall on the sixth day of December 1900 and within the Hall of the United Free Church of Scotland the which day the Kirk Session of said Church met and was constituted with prayer.

Sederunt: The Rev. Murdoch McAskill, Moderator, with ruling elders Ex Provost Colin Stewart, William Mackenzie, William Macdonald, William Sinclair and Benjamin Aird.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. It was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed that the Moderator be appointed to represent the Kirk Session at the Annual Meeting of the Ross Memorial Hospital and act and vote there on behalf of the Session.

It was also agreed that the Gaelic Service on the Sabbath Evening at the approaching Communion on the first Sabbath of February be held in the Hall of the Church, and the English Service in the Church.

Closed with prayer.

M. McAskill, Moderator  
James MacLennan, Clerk

## Looking Back and Looking Forward

When we commemorate the Centenary of our Church in Dingwall, it must surely be the time to look back and give thanks to God for His goodness to us and to give thanks to the men and women who had the vision to recognise that people were seeking spiritual guidance in Dingwall 100 years ago just as they are today. While we must not dwell too much on the past, we nevertheless must remember that our congregation was formed as the result of the Union of the larger section of the then Free Church with the United Presbyterian Church to become the Dingwall United Free Church, a smaller section of the original Free Church remaining outside this Union calling itself the Free Church.

While our Congregation formed in 1900, thus allowing us to celebrate 100 years of worship at the end of the year 2000, our Church Buildings were not built until 1909. Nevertheless now also becomes a time to appreciate the skills and talents of those who devoted their time and energy to the furtherance of God's Kingdom and to appreciate the skill of the architects who designed such a fine building as well as the builders who constructed it, and last but not least to remember the work of the ministers who have given guidance to many men, women and children over the hundred years which we commemorate.

In celebrating our Centenary perhaps we should first of all look at ourselves and reassess our own commitment to God and His Church.

# The Narrative Of Castle Street Church

The intention of this book was never to recall past disputes within the ecclesiastical life of Scotland, such as the Disruptions of 1843, when, because of apparent State interference with the spiritual life of the Church, 437 ministers signed a Deed of Demission (a copy of which can be seen in the Dingwall Free Church) to leave the Established Church to join the Free Church of Scotland; or such as the Union of 1900, when the great majority of the Free Church joined with the United Presbyterian Church to form the large United Free Church of Scotland. However as we celebrate the first 100 years since the formation of our Congregation, it is not possible to produce an accurate history of our Church without reference to the problems of 1900 which, almost ironically, catapulted our Congregation into its first 100 years, becoming the Castle Street Church of Scotland which we know today in the year 2000.

Between 1863 and 1873 there had been serious attempts to negotiate a union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church but this had proved abortive. However by 1896 the climate of opinion had changed and the result was that on 30th October 1900 the great majority of the Free Church joined with the United Presbyterian Church to form the large United Free Church of Scotland.

How did this affect Dingwall? Mr. McAskill, who was Minister of the Free Church in Dingwall at the time and initially opposed to Union, changed his attitude and felt that perhaps he could empathise with the National Recognition of Religion as opposed to the Establishment Principle, which to Free Church Constitutionalists was sacrosanct. He, therefore, enthusiastically entered the work of the Church's Committee, although he was never to gain the support of his entire congregation. The result of this was that on the first Sunday of November 1900 those who continued in the Free Church met for worship in the Masonic Hall, and Dingwall's largest congregation had become sadly divided into two congregations. However there still remained in town the parish church of St. Clements which was the then Established Church of Scotland and which had been built between 1801 and 1803.

Following these events the Free Church Congregation worshipped in the Masonic Hall (later to become the Dingwall Picture House), while the U.F. Congregation remained in possession of the Church building and of the Manse in Castle Street. However the minority group in Scotland still claimed all the property of the Church at home and abroad and brought its claims to the law courts. The Court of Session dismissed the Free Church's petition in 1901 and this judgement was upheld by the Court's Inner House when an appeal was heard the following year. The case was then taken to the House of Lords where judgement was given in favour of the Free Church, and so by the end of 1904 the Dingwall F.C. Congregation was again in possession of its Church and Manse.

From 1904, their claims to the Free Church Building and Manse having been dismissed, the U.F. Congregation was granted permission by the Town Council to use the Carnegie Library Hall for public worship and for weekly prayer meetings (see letter of 9/12/1904). The Congregation was very grateful to the Town Council for these facilities, for which the rental of 6 shillings/week was paid exclusive of fire, light and cleaning. The Council also agreed that the Town Bell be rung on Sundays for public worship. However because of the discomfort of cold in the winter months it had become necessary sometimes to use the Temperance Hall instead at a rent of one shilling and sixpence/week. The Rev. Ranald Macdonald guided the Dingwall U.F. Congregation of those days through troubled times with great dignity and forbearance until 1909 when there was built the

Manse in Achany Road and the handsome building which is our Church today in Castle Street. It was on the 2nd September 1929 that the Presbytery accepted that the Church be styled the Castle Street Church of Scotland, but not until 1992, and after reappraisal of town boundaries was it considered appropriate by the Presbytery that the Church be given its own particular parish.

At this time it is appropriate to recognise the service given by successive Clerks, Sunday School Teachers, Church Officers, Treasurers, Cleaners, Property Conveners and Magazine Editors: Mr. Willie Sinclair, our recently retired Treasurer, gave 15 years of service; Mrs. Betty Wilson 12 years as Free Will Offering Treasurer; the late Gordon Lindsay 14 years as Deeds of Covenant Clerk; Mrs. Agnes Starke has served a total of 22 years as Church Officer and Church Cleaner, helped with the cleaning in more recent years by her daughter Katrina and grand- daughter Liska; Mr. James McBain, 14 years as Church Officer; Mr. Stanley Morton was Sunday School Superintendent for more than 20 years and also a staunch supporting member of the Church choir; Mr. Murdo Bethune gave, as Sunday School Teacher and Superintendent, almost 20 years service and was also, for many years, a choir member; his successor, Mr. John Noble, gave 10 years as Sunday School Superintendent and is now in his 12th year as Session Clerk; Mr. George Strachan was Sunday School Superintendent for 9 years and Mr. Martin Craig followed him giving 6 years; Mr. Forbes Wiseman was Session Clerk for 7 years, Dr. Duncan McRae for 13 years and Mr. Neil McKechnie for 13 years. Col. Harry Thuillier was Clerk to the Congregational Board for 10 years and Dr. Gordon Bruce has been Clerk to the Congregational Board for 10 years; Robert Brown gave 13 years service as Clerk to the Congregational Board; Mr. Ian McNab, apart from many years service as an Elder and as a Sunday School Teacher, was also Magazine Editor for 22 years; and Mr. Colin Swan, Mr. Dennis Lyford and Mr. Gordon Lindsay did all recording of Sunday Services for many years. Mr. Lyford is now assisted by Mr. Fraser Jackson and Mr. Alan Crombie.

Finally our current Property Convener Mr. Alan Crombie has served 12 years and to him the Church owes much for the conscientious care he has exercised in maintaining the Properties in such excellent order. He is now assisted by Mr. Ross Sutherland.

It can be recorded, therefore, that Castle Street Church has an outstanding record of loyal long serving members; and, as we enter our second century we are mindful of them and grateful to them. We have much to zealously guard.

# **The New Building - 1909**

## **Dedication Service**

On Thursday 1st July 1909 the congregation of the Dingwall U.F. Church opened a splendid new Church on Castle Street.

Brilliant weather favoured the opening ceremony with the result that there was a very large gathering of the Congregation and friends from the surrounding district. Every seat was occupied and even after seats had been placed down each of the central aisles, a large number of people could find only standing room.

The Rev. Dr. David Smith, Blairgowrie, officiated and the other ministers present included the Rev. Ranald McDonald, minister of the Congregation; the Rev. J. R. McPherson, Parish Church, Dingwall; the Rev. J. G. Nicolson, Fodderty; the Rev. G. Johnstone, Strathpeffer; the Rev. A. Fraser, Tain; the Rev. Munro, Logie; the Rev. McLeod, Logie; the Rev. Gunn, Durness; the Rev. C. Cameron, Inverness; Rev. McGilp and the Rev. Reid, Inverness; the Rev. Cameron, Avoch; and the Rev. Cameron, Killearnan and others.

The service was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Smith who took for his text Exodus 19, 5 and 6 and Revelation 1,5 and 6 and preached on "The Priesthood of Believers". At the close of the service gratitude was expressed by the Minister the Rev. Ranald Macdonald, to the Provost and Town Councillors for the use of the Carnegie Hall from 1904 and he expressed regret that the late Ex-Provost N. McRae was not with them to rejoice. Thanks were also expressed to the Special Building Committee of the United Free Church and to the Directors of the Bank of Scotland for their help in obtaining the site on which the new Church was built.

A special thanks was accorded to the Rev. Dr. D. Smith for coming from Blairgowrie to open the new Church and he reminded the Congregation that as Dr. Smith had said in his consecration address, he had not come to open the Church but to ask all the members to open it with him, and to continue over the years to seek God's presence and His Blessing as they worshipped in this place, with which they were so happily provided.

Following the English Service a Gaelic Service was conducted by the Rev. Lewis McPherson of Fearn and the Psalmody was led by a large choir under the able direction of Mr. W. McKenzie, Precentor. The day concluded with an enjoyable social meeting held in the Carnegie Hall in the evening.

## **Items Presented To The Church In 1909 At The Opening Ceremony**

Mr. & Mrs. Wishart presented a Communion Plate, Mr. Dewar gave books. One Elder gave a Pulpit Bible; another elder gave a Gaelic pulpit bible; another gave the Congregational collection plate and another the stand for it and the Communion tokens. One lady gave a carpet for the Carnegie Hall platform; an office-bearer gave cloth for the platform and staircase and an elder did all the work

required. One generous lady provided visiting ministers with lunch between the services every Sunday for four and a half years.



The clock in the Church and the one in the Hall were presented by the choir; the Vestry furniture was supplied by the children of the Congregation. Another elder made the picture frames and tables. Someone offered a handsome donation towards a bell (which was never actually installed).

The Congregation had proved, therefore, in 1909 that there was no endowment so reliable and so permanent as a faithful people, and the then Minister the Rev. Ranald McDonald claimed the Church to be worthy of the Congregation and the Congregation worthy of the church.

In more recent times the Communion Wine was for many years donated by the late Mr. Granville W. Hay of St. Margarets, and also over many years the flower arrangements in the Church were prepared by Mrs. Hay until 1969. Thereafter floral arrangements were organised by Mrs. J. M. Bruce, Castle Street, with the help of members of the Woman's Guild and Young Woman's Group.

# The Church Building

It was Mr. William McKenzie and Mr. Donald Macdonald, the Dingwall Architects, who were to be certainly congratulated on the skill with which they had so economically combined artistic effect with an efficiency of structure in every way suited to all requirements. The contractors were - mason work, Messrs. Tuach & Sons; carpentry work, Mr. William Macdonald; plaster work, Messrs. Mackay & Sons; plumbing, heating and electric lighting, Mr. Donald McKenzie; slater, Mr. Rod Fraser; painter, Mr. James Mckenzie.

The buildings were erected on a site made available by the kindness of the Directors of the Bank of Scotland. The structure was of Covesea freestone dressing and Conon freestone rubble coarsed work, and the style was Early English. Internally the Church was finished in pitch pine. The foundations required extra treatment on account of the soft nature of the sub soil which had to be partly piled and laid with steel rails and concrete. A striking feature of the internal design was the pulpit and choir which were canopied and panelled in pitch pine. Behind the pulpit there is a pleasing arrangement of a pointed canopied Reredos which gives a strikingly handsome appearance to the interior as seen from the end gallery and the floor below. The front of the end gallery is panelled in pitch pine and overhead the principal coupled roof combines strength with gracefulness. The ceiling is not open to the apex of the roof but is carried across at a point mid way up so as to help both sound and heating. The premises are heated on the low pressure hot water system from a heating chamber placed under the vestry and the lighting is by electricity. The Church is built to accommodate 500 and the hall behind for 150.

The whole building with the square tower at the South corner rising to a height of 60 feet has an imposing appearance and adds materially to the amenities of the eastern entrance to the town. (Ross-shire Journal 2/7/1909)

The total cost of the Church Buildings was £3,500, while the Manse was built for £1,000. The entire project attracted a grant of £3,000 from the Special Building Committee of the Church of Scotland, while the Congregation contributed £1406 towards the combined building of both properties. While the site for the Church was made available by the Bank of Scotland, that of the Manse which was situated at the upper end of the feu of Mr. G. McCallum was made available through the kindness of Major Matheson of Lews who owned land in that area.

In his address at the Dedication Service the Minister, the Rev. Ranald McDonald, told the Congregation they had a Church and manse "worthy of the Congregation to which they belong".



*Interior views in later years.*



*Interior views in later years.*



*Interior views in later years.*

## Items Of Commemoration



*Stained Glass Window*

On Sunday 20th April 1930, after morning service, a memorial window, gifted to the Church by Miss Elma Crawford in memory of her mother and father, the late Provost H. Crawford and Mrs. Crawford, was unveiled by the Rev. James Johnstone of Strathpeffer. Mr. Johnstone was a friend of the Crawford family for over 30 years, and he had, therefore, great pleasure in being asked to unveil and to dedicate the memorial. This was his first function as the recently appointed Moderator of the enlarged Synod of Ross, Sutherland and Caithness and it was appropriate, too, that Miss Crawford and her Aunt, Miss Sinclair (sister-in-law of Provost Crawford) would desire to represent in a tangible form the ideal of Faith, Hope and Charity, which had so conspicuously characterised the lives of Miss Crawford's parents.



The window which is of gothic formation possesses four circular lights and tracery. The centre light portrays Christ as the Good Shepherd and is supported on the left by "Faith" and on the right by "Hope". The top light depicts angelic figures and cherubim. These subsidiary lights are of subtle beauty but do not detract from the central figure. The inscription reads "Therein is our love made perfect". The window was supplied by the St. Enoch Stained Glass Company of Howard Street, Glasgow, from a design prepared by Mr. James Wright, R.S.W., Kilbarchan. Messrs. H.A. Ross & Son, Painters & Decorators, Dingwall, cooperated in the local arrangements.



*Pedestal Collection Box*



*Presented by Provost Colin Stewart of Dingwall to the United Free Church Dingwall in 1909.*

**Vestry Furniture presented by the children of the Congregation  
on 1st July 1909.**



*Choir Chairs*



*Presented to the Congregation on 11th July 1961 on behalf of Mrs. Annie Cameron, widow of Donald Cameron, Elder and Former Session Clerk of the Church, who died on 16th December 1960.*



*Memorial Plaque of 1st World War 1914-1918*

On this plaque are 26 names of those who gave their lives in the 1914-1918 World War and whose families were members and adherents of Castle Street Church of Scotland.

"Greater love hath no man than this"

# CASTLE STREET CHURCH OF SCOTLAND DINGWALL

## ROLL OF HQNOUR 1914 – 1919

LT. DAVIDSON, A.J.	4TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
PTE. DOUGLAS, GEORGE	AUSTRALIANS
BOMDR. FINLAYSON, ALEXANDER	ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY
PTE. FRASER, WILLIAM	CANADIANS
PTE. HAY, GEORGE A.	CANADIANS
DVR. MACASKILL, JOHN ROSS	MOUNTAIN BATTERY
CAPT. MACDONALD, A. M. (Ray) D.S.O.	4TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
QMS. MACDONALD, DONALD	2ND SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
PTE. MACDONALD, RODERICK	CANADIANS
SGT. MACGILLIVRAY, ALEXANDER	4TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
SGT. MACGILLIVRAY, DONALD	4TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
PTE. MACIVER, WILLIAM	CANADIANS
PTE. FRASER, JAMES	4TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
SGT. MACKAY, KENNETH	4TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
SGT. MACKENZIE, ALISTER M.	4TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
PTE. MACKENZIE, DONALD	4TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
PTE. MACLENNAN, JOHN	CANADIANS
LT. MACMILLAN, JOHN	4TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
PTE. MACMILLAN, WILLIAM G.	CAMERON HIGHLANDERS
SGT. MACPHERSON, HUGH	2ND SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
SGT. MACRAE, GEORGE	4TH SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
CPL. ROSS, ALISTER J. R.	AUSTRALIANS
SGT. SKINNER, ALEXANDER	GORDON HIGHLANDERS
SAPr. WASSEL, WILLIAM S.	ROYAL ENGINEERS



## ROLL OF HONOUR 1939 - 45

LT. D. H. CRAN ROYAL  
BSM. J. MACKAY  
FL./L T. R. D. N. MACKENZIE  
PTE. A. WHITE  
BOY 1st CLASS H. WHITE  
SUB LT. W. WHITE

\*brothers

SCOTS FUSILIERS  
ROYAL ARTILLERY  
ROYAL AIR FORCE  
SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS\*  
ROYAL NAVY\*  
MERCHANT NAVY\*



*Communion Table and Chairs*

The Woman's Guild in 1949, at a cost of £132, provided the Communion Table and Chairs, purchased from Lord Roberts Workshops in Dundee. A communion cloth was provided by Mrs. Souter of the Old House, Castle Street.



*Reading Lectern and Bible*

In 1957 a reading lectern was purchased by the Church and on the 10th November 1957 (Armistice Day) Mrs. Dorothy White unveiled the lectern and plaque in memory of six members of the Congregation who gave their lives in the World War 1939-1945.



*Lectern Bible*

Presented by Mr. James Ritchie, Mrs. Anne McRae and Mr. David Ritchie in 1988 in memory of their parents Mr. James Ritchie (ex- Postmaster in Dingwall) and Mrs. Nan Ritchie.

**Pew Bibles.** Some pew bibles were also presented by the Ritchie family.

**Pulpit Fall.** In 1990 a new Pulpit Fall and matching bookmarks were presented to the Church by Margaret and Calum Buchanan in memory of their late father. These were dedicated at a service on the 9th December 1990.

**Baptismal Font.** Presented by the Sunday School in 1949.

## Ministers And Milestones

Castle Street Church of Scotland (originally the Dingwall United Free Church) has in its first hundred years been served by nine ministers, the ninth being Rev. Grahame McL. Henderson, who commenced his ministry in Dingwall on 19th March 1987, having previously been minister to the charge of Kilmonivaig with Glengarry. Four of Mr. Henderson's predecessors had come to Dingwall from the Western Isles and all four had been Gaelic speakers.

### Ministers

Rev. Murdo McAskill 1900-1903

Rev. Ranald McDonald 1904-1929

Rev. Alex McLean 1930-1932

Rev. Thomas C. Robertson 1932-1939

Rev. J.H. Boyd McPhail 1940-1945

Rev. Donald McLeod 1946-1951

Rev. Malcolm Buchanan 1952-1972

Rev. Archy MacVicar 1973-1986

Rev. Grahame McL. Henderson 1987-2004

## **Rev. Murdo MacAskill, M.A.**



*Rev. Murdo MacAskill, M.A.*

Mr. MacAskill was a native of the Island of Lewis who spent a short time in the teaching profession before beginning his ministry at Glenlyon Free Church Perthshire at the age of 30 in 1864. He was an able preacher and versatile writer who took a strong stand amid the resolute and sturdy defenders of constitutionalism in the Free Church of the day. In 1872 he received a call to the Gaelic Free Church in Greenock, where he further strengthened his position in the constitutional party and with his frequent visits to the Highlands he gained the esteem and respect of the people as a reliable and orthodox minister of the Church. In the last week of December 1900 Mr. MacAskill was inducted to the charge of the Free Church of Dingwall and under his ministry the Church continued to prosper. However while in his Ministry in Glenlyon he had moved Presbytery rejection of the overture for union with the United Presbyterian Church, always contending earnestly for the doctrine of authority or full inspiration of the Scripture; he was a strong opponent of the Declaratory Act and his discussions with the Established Church proved fruitless regarding the possibility of Union. He, therefore, joined the Union Committee in 1896, where he felt able to distinguish between the Principle of National Recognition of Religion and the Establishment Principle which to the Free Church constitutionalists was sacrosanct.

Mr. Murdo MacAskill therefore played a key role in the formation of the first congregation of the United Free Church of Dingwall (later to become the congregation of Castle Street Church of Scotland, Dingwall). However he was unable to take his whole original Free Church congregation with him into the Union and the five elders, two deacons and 400 members and adherents who refused to follow him continued to worship as the Free Church in the Masonic Hall (now the Picture House). Dingwall's largest congregation was sadly split in two. Mr. MacAskill however was never to be remembered as a combative controversialist but as a preacher of great power and a gifted orator in the Gaelic language. Apart from his spiritual guidance to the people of Dingwall and beyond he is also remembered for the great interest he took in the affairs of the town being a firm believer that the spreading of the Gospel did not stop within the walls of the buildings of the church,

and so as a member of the School Board and of the Parish Council he felt able to support the social, moral and spiritual progress of his people in the community.

Mr. MacAskill died on 12th November 1903, aged 66 years.

## Rev. Ranald McDonald, M.A., 1904 - 1929



*Rev. Ranald McDonald, M.A., 1904-1929*

Mr. Ranald McDonald M.A. was minister of the Congregation for quarter of a century and came to Dingwall in 1904 from Melness. He was a true Celt, a son of Benbecula, who after graduating from Glasgow University pursued his theological studies in Aberdeen, where Principal Salmond stated that he was "one of the ablest students who had ever passed through my hands". He was well noted for his tolerance and on one occasion told a member of his Congregation that "swears were preferable to some peoples' prayers!"

Mr. McDonald must have played a very major part in the consolidation of the new Congregation in Castle Street and especially so in the 5 years from 1904-1909 when the Congregation worshipped in the Carnegie Hall prior to the opening of the Church in Castle Street in 1909. As well as worshipping in such a building, many of the Session and Deacons' Court meetings were held in the Manse or in the homes of elders. Mr. McDonald's ability as a preacher and his helpful, sensitive and tactful nature did much to stimulate loyalty and zeal when the situation demanded it. In no way was this more conspicuous than in the Congregation's response to the appeal for funds to build the new Church when £1,406 was subscribed in sums from one shilling to £50. With this sum and a grant of £3,000 from the Central Building Fund of the Church the necessary plans were laid for the erection

of a new Church and Manse. After such a successful and significant Ministry in the history of Castle Street Church which saw the Congregation grow in numbers as well as spiritually, it was with the great regret of many people in Dingwall that Mr. McDonald was called to the charge of Kilchoman in Islay in November 1929. The gratitude of a Congregation went with him. In 1933 he was inducted to Snizort South in the Presbytery of Skye. He died in September 1972.

## Rev. Alexander McLean, M.A., 1930 – 1932



*Rev. Alexander McLean, M.A., 1930-1932*

Mr. Alexander McLean was a native of Contin where his father was an estate mason to the MacKenzies of Coul and his mother a daughter of Mr. Campbell of Achilty Farm. After education at Contin Primary School and Dingwall Academy he graduated M.A. at Glasgow University and followed a Divinity Course at Aberdeen. In 1907 he was ordained and inducted minister of Nethy Bridge U.F. Church and in 1912 accepted a call to Cromarty U.F. Church. From 1914-1918 he was a Chaplain to the Forces in France and after the war was called to East Parks Church, Glasgow, where he remained till March 30th 1930 when he came to Dingwall. His sudden death two years later was a great shock to all and not least to Mrs. McLean and their young family. Although his ministry in Dingwall lasted only two years, it was considered to be one of great promise because apart from losing yet another outstanding preacher whose sermons (according to a Minute of 1932) "were the fruit of careful study and immaculate preparation", Mr. Mclean was also a most diligent and caring pastor. He would have celebrated his semi-jubilee as a Minister in September of the year of his death and so it was agreed that his previous Congregations at Nethy Bridge, Cromarty and East Park Glasgow would cooperate with the Dingwall Congregation to raise funds to place a memorial stone on the grave in the Cromarty Churchyard where he was buried, and also to provide

a sum of money for the benefit of Mrs. McLean and family. At the time of his death at 52 years he had reached the meridian of his career.

## **Rev. Thomas Chapman Robertson, M.A., 1933-1939**

[No photo]

Mr. T. C. Robertson was inducted to Castle Street Church on 12th January 1933 from Ruchill Church, Glasgow. On 20th September 1939 Mr. Robertson received a call from the Gillespie Memorial Church, Dunfermline. This call he accepted and was inducted on 20th September of that year.

His fruitful Ministry in the stressful pre-war years is still remembered by older Dingwallians and especially his work with the children of the Congregation. It is reported in the Ross-shire Journal of 8th September 1939 that because of the International Crisis of the time it had not been possible for Communicants from Dunfermline to be present in Dingwall to support the call, but as proof of the unanimity of the Congregation the call had been signed by 502 members. The Congregation at Castle Street was sorry to lose its minister and all the more so in the uncertain time of pre-war Britain.

In 1952 Mr. Robertson accepted a call to Dunoon St. Johns and after a Ministry of 15 years he was inducted to Baldernock Church of Scotland in the Presbytery of Dumbarton from which he retired on 30th November 1970. He died on 3rd November 1986.

## Rev. J. H. Boyd McPhail, B.A., 1940-1945



Rev. J. H. Boyd McPhail, B.A.  
1854-1945

*Rev. J. H. Boyd McPhail, B.A., 1940-1945*

Mr. Boyd McPhail, who had family connections with Ross & Cromarty, was educated at Bradfield College Berkshire and at Magdalene College Cambridge where he took an Honours degree in History; he was, while at Cambridge President of Athletics at Magdalene College. On completing his studies at Cambridge he studied theology at New College Edinburgh. From 1936-1937 he was assistant to his uncle, Dr. Ebenezer Macmillan, who at that time was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa. From 1937-1939 he was minister of Gardens Presbyterian Church in Cape Town and in 1938 was Moderator of the Presbytery of Cape Town in the Presbyterian Church of South Africa. On 7th March 1940 Mr. McPhail was inducted to Castle Street Church Dingwall, when the service was conducted by the Rev. Norman MacDonald (then of Ullapool) whose firm connections with Castle Street Church saw him also speak at the Induction of the Rev. Malcolm Buchanan and also saw him as Interim Moderator prior to the calling of Rev. Archy McVicar to Dingwall. Mr. MacDonald is now in his 90th year and lives happily in retirement with Mrs. MacDonald in Perth.

Mr. McPhail remained in Dingwall through the war years and was an officiating Chaplain to the Forces and Area Supervisor for the Church of Scotland Huts & Canteens for H.M. Forces. After the war he was decorated by the late King Haakon of Norway for services to the Norwegian Brigade stationed in Scotland during the war. Mr. McPhail's war time years are well remembered in Dingwall for his work with the forces and for his counselling of families in war bereavement. From 1945 to 1964 Mr. McPhail was minister to Cairns Church, Milngavie, and then spent one year on a

preaching tour in America under the British-American Preacher Exchange programme. In 1967 Mr. McPhail was inducted to Aberfoyle where he served his final Ministry until retiring in 1976. He died in June 1996 when his funeral was attended by our current minister Rev. Grahame Henderson and by Mr. James McBain, Church Officer.

Rev. Donald McLeod, M.A., 1946-1951



*Rev. Donald McLeod, M.A., 1946-1951*

Mr. Donald McLeod was a native of Borve on the Island of Berneray in the Sound of Harris. After education at the local school and Kingussie High School he graduated M.A. at Glasgow University before completing his Divinity Studies at Trinity College. In 1938 Mr. McLeod was inducted to his first charge at Kilmuir Church, North Uist, where his outstanding preaching and especially in Gaelic was inspirational and led many people to worship at Kilmuir. He loved the Gaelic language and was without peer in his use of it. In 1946 he accepted a call to Dingwall Castle Street where older Dingwallians still remember his ministry with affection, and particularly his work with the youth. In 1951 he left Dingwall for Portree where he had his largest ministry before accepting a call from Fairlie, in Ayrshire, to the newly combined Churches of Fairlie St. Margarets and Fairlie St. Pauls. There he remained until his retirement in 1979. He died in 1990 and was buried in the Cemetery at Siabaidh on the west coast of Berneray, the people of which as well as their tradition of language and song he greatly cherished.

Rev. Malcolm Buchanan, M.A., 1952-1972



*Rev. Malcolm Buchanan, M.A., 1952-1972*

Eight completed ministries have accounted for 80 years of the Congregation's first hundred years and of those 80 years two ministers gave a total of 45 years' service, the Rev. Ranald Macdonald from 1904-1929 and the Rev. Malcolm Buchanan from 1952-1972.

Mr. Buchanan was born in Uig, Isle of Lewis in 1902 and was educated at Valtos Primary School, the Nicolson Institute Stornoway and then Aberdeen University from where he graduated in 1925 with the degree of M.A. He was an outstanding student and while at University was Secretary of the University Celtic Society, was a member of the University Shinty Team and was a formidable field sports athlete. He began his Professional Career in 1926 as a teacher at Cromarty where he taught English, History, Geography and Latin and then in 1931 he moved with Mrs. Buchanan to Aberdeen where he taught at the Middle School and at Causewayend. While in Aberdeen he responded to the call of the Gospel, was accepted for training for the Ministry and took the Divinity Course in Christ College, Aberdeen.

He was ordained by the Presbytery of Aberdeen and inducted to the Congregation of Midmar in 1936 from where he moved to the Parish of Marnoch in the Presbytery of Strathbogie in 1944 before coming to Dingwall Castle Street in 1952. He remained there until his retirement in 1972.

Sadly Mrs. Buchanan died in 1955 after only three years in Dingwall but despite this tragic loss Mr. Buchanan's ministry went from strength to strength and due to no small extent by the love and commitment of his daughter Margaret not only to her father but to the Manse and to the Congregation of Castle Street Church. As was stated by the then Session Clerk, Dr. Duncan McRae, at Mr. Buchanan's farewell presentation "the Congregation had much appreciated the many services she had done so well and so frequently for everyone and not least her calmness, courage and devotion to her father during illness and sorrow".

Mr. Buchanan's 20 years in Dingwall were hugely successful and were founded on humility and the excellence of his preaching which was frequently to a packed church with few empty pews. Apart from preaching many would vouch for his wise and thoughtful counselling which enabled him to enrich the minds and inspire the hearts of his people. On 29th September 1972 Mr. Buchanan retired after which he lived happily in Conon Bridge with Margaret until his death on 6th February 1990.

Rev. Archy MacVicar, M.A., 1973-1986



*Rev. Archy MacVicar, M.A., 1973-1986*

Mr. Archy MacVicar was born in 1920 on the Island of Baleshore off the West Coast of North Uist in the Parish of Corinish. He received his secondary education at Paible School and Inverness Royal Academy and after War Service in the Far East in the RAF he graduated with the degree of M.A. from Glasgow University before completing his Divinity studies at Trinity College. While in Glasgow he was student assistant for two years at St. Columba's Gaelic Church in St. Vincent Street. In 1952 he married Miss Isobel Budge, a native of Kyle and indeed a former pupil of Dingwall Academy. Mrs. MacVicar died in 1997. Archy and Isobel were rightly proud of their three sons John, Donald and Ronald and daughter Mairi all of whom graduated from Glasgow University in Medicine.

Archy's ministry commenced in 1952 when he was ordained and inducted to the charge of Bunessan in Mull and in 1956 he was called to the extensive charge of Strath, in Skye, where for most of his Ministry he was Clerk of the Presbytery of Skye. In 1973 Archy was called to Dingwall Castle Street from which he retired in 1986. However retirement did not herald the end of Archy's Ministry as he gladly provided locum service in several parishes in his native Island of North Uist as well as being Chaplain to Craig Dunain Hospital where he often served beyond the call of duty for five years. He was also an enthusiastic promoter of the work of the National Bible Society.

Mr. Archy MacVicar's Ministry of 13 years in Dingwall was characterised by a deep Christian humility, which came over in his preaching and especially in the beauty of his prayers. However it was probably in pastoral care that Archy would best be remembered and it was easy to understand why the Presbytery appointed him as pastoral adviser to young ministers. As was stated in his tribute by the Rev. Roddy Mackinnon at the funeral service "Archy's greatest gift was himself". He was a true Christian who practised what he preached, every single home in the Congregation of Castle Street being regularly visited. He was a master of practical outgoing Christianity. When Archy MacVicar left Dingwall in 1986 he took with him the good wishes of a very grateful congregation. He retired to Inverness where he spent 10 years' happy retirement with Mrs. MacVicar. He died on Saturday 31st August 1996 and was interred at Kilvean Cemetery Inverness on 4th September.

## **Rev. Grahame McL. Henderson, B.D., C.P.S., (1987-2004)**

[No photograph]

The present Minister of Castle Street Church is the Rev. Grahame Henderson, who was inducted to his current charge on the 19th March 1987. Born in 1943 at Bielside, Aberdeen he was the third child of five, the family consisting of 3 boys and 2 girls. His parents were David Henderson and Lyra J.C. Gray; his father ran a well known jewellery business in Aberdeen and was an accomplished organist. The young Grahame was educated at Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen from 1948 to 1959. On leaving school he joined his father's jewellery business in Aberdeen, working to gain experience in a large jewellery firm in Manchester from October 1961 to October 1963. He returned home in October 1963 and remained in the family business until August 1966.

On the 11th August 1965 Grahame married Kathleen M. Moir, M.A., who taught Mathematics and lived at Bridge of Don, Aberdeen. They have two children, Peter Grahame Henderson born in 1968 and Catherine-Anne Henderson born in 1972. Peter is now married with two sons and lives in London. Catherine-Anne at present lives with her parents in Dingwall with her son.

Grahame left the family business in August 1966 to study for University Entrance at the Aberdeen College of Commerce and thereafter entered the University of Aberdeen in October 1968. He graduated Bachelor of Divinity in July 1972 with passes in all prescribed subjects plus Psychology, Scottish Church History and New Testament as a Special Subject. The following year was spent studying for the Certificate in Pastoral Studies at New College, Edinburgh, awarded in 1973.

Mr. Henderson served his Probationary Year at Kirknewton and East Calder, 1973-74. He was ordained and inducted to the linked charge of Kilmonivaig and Glengarry in the Presbytery of Lochaber on the 27th August 1974 and served twelve and a half years in that Parish. During that time he was Moderator of the Presbytery and Moderator of the Synod, serving, too, on a number of Boards and Committees of the Church.

Since his Induction to Castle Street Church in March 1987 again, in addition to Parish duties, Mr. Henderson has served as Moderator of the Presbytery of Ross and as Convener of various Committees. He has also been Secretary and subsequently Convener of the General Assembly's Sub-Committee on Readers.

Grahame Henderson's call to the ministry developed as a teenager and young man through the family's participation in the life and worship of Gilcomston South Church of Scotland in Aberdeen during the ministry of the Rev. William Still. A man of firm beliefs and strong convictions Mr. Henderson is a fearless defender of the Christian faith, who "stands firm". He is also possessed of a delightful sense of humour, which contributes to his success as a pastor. His visits to the seriously ill and the elderly are very much appreciated; they are found to be extremely comforting.

The little free time left over after ministerial and pastoral duties and beyond family life Grahame devotes to his interests and hobbies, which include what he describes as "a modest amount of D.I.Y.", music (especially organ music) and travel.

Rev. A. Glass

## The Kirk Session

The first meeting of the Session of the United Free Church of Scotland in Dingwall took place on the 20th day of November 1900 within the Hall of the Congregation of the United Free Church of Scotland, and was constituted with prayer by the Rev. Murdo MacAskill Moderator with the ruling elders present being Ex Provost Colin Stewart, William Mckenzie and William Macdonald.

The second meeting of the Session took place on the 6th day of December 1900 and for the next six years there was apparently no increase in the number of actual ruling elders until 1907 when four more were admitted - they were Donald Duff, Roderick Hay, James McKenzie and Alexander Ross.

The photograph of 1905 taken in front of the then Manse in Castle Street was of all the office bearers of the church at that date (1905) be they Deacons or Elders.

Today Castle Street Church of Scotland has now 20 ruling elders and eighteen non elder members of the Congregational Board.



*Kirk Session members during the ministry of Rev Malcolm Buchanan.*

## Session Clerks

1900-1918 James McLennan  
1918-1927 James M. Duncan  
1927-1932 Alex Ross  
1932-1938 Arthur H. Duncan  
1938-1939 George L. Turnbull, Interim Clerk  
1939-1945 Colin Campbell  
1945-1952 Donald Cameron  
1952-1956 D.R. Walker  
1956-1963 R. K.W. Wiseman  
1963-1976 Duncan J. McRae  
1976-1989 Neil McKechnie  
1989- John W. Noble

# The Organs and Organists

## The Organs

For the first twenty two years of the life of Dingwall United Free Church there was no instrumental accompaniment to the worship. The retiral of Mr W. MacKenzie as precentor in 1920 precipitated thoughts of introducing some instrumental lead for the praise. The result was a Congregational vote in November, 1922, which showed an overwhelming majority in favour of the innovation. Despite a protest letter, Mr George Souter was commissioned to research an organ from various catalogues. A harmonium was purchased and dedicated in September 1923.

After the war it was felt that, with a Church building the size of Castle Street, the volume emanating from a harmonium was inadequate to give a proper lead to the worship, and, in the late forties, it was decided to investigate the possibility of purchasing a more substantial organ for the Church. An Organ Sub-Committee was set up in 1950 charged with the responsibility of bringing a recommendation to the Deacons' Court regarding a suitable instrument. The result of long deliberations was that the Brindlay and Foster organ, which at that time was installed in Carbisdale Castle, Sutherland, should be purchased. This organ was to be disposed of by the Scottish Youth Hostel Association, who had recently purchased the building,

The organ was dismantled, transported to Dingwall and stored in the Session Room and other spaces throughout the Church. Eventually it was erected in the front right hand corner of the Church in the place of the 'Manse Pews'.

This work was completed in 1953 and the opening recital was given by Mr John Brown, the organist, at the evening Service of Praise on 26th July, the organ having been dedicated at the Morning Service that day. This organ had seven ranks of pipes, but with three playing manuals and foot pedals. It had an exhaust pneumatic action unique to its builders, and it certainly fulfilled its function in enhancing the praise of the Congregation.

By the 1980s successive organists reported weaknesses in the instrument resulting from the poor state of the action. It has to be said that within the organ building trade, Brindlay and Foster's pneumatic action was not considered to be of a particularly good design, and when faced with problems and unreliability the advice was generally to rebuild with a more reliable form of action rather than to attempt to restore. Thus, in 1987/88, quotations were sought for a rebuild. These varied between £28,000 and £35,000 including V.A.T. By this time the Congregation was also faced with projected heavy expenditure on building a new hall, and it was decided to shelve the organ project until the Organ Fund was boosted to a point when the project could be considered to be feasible.

As time went by it became clear that there was little prospect of achieving the target of a rebuild, with a slow response and costs escalating annually. Through one of our members we were made aware of the possibility of a redundant organ from a closed Church in North Berwick, which had been recently electrified and renovated, and which would simply require dismantling and re-erecting in our Church at considerably less expense than that of rebuilding our own organ. Thus, it was decided to proceed with this project, and in September 1991 the 'new' Forster and Andrews organ was dedicated and continues to provide an enriching lead to the worship. In saying that it is 'new' it is, in fact, older than the previous instrument, having been built originally in Blackadder Church, North Berwick, in 1895, and had served without any major attention until the early 1980s.

Whereas the previous organ had 7 ranks, the new one has 13, but on two manuals with pedals. The organ is built at the back of the gallery, with a re-conditioned second-hand console situated where the former organ had been. With a few amendments and additions this instrument has served satisfactorily and acceptably for nearly ten years. Generally the Congregation has appreciated the restored light and space in the front corner.

#### The Organists

The first organist was appointed on 27th September, 1923 - Mr James MacKenzie (Saddler). The salary was £50 pa. This appointment lasted until 1930 with his resignation. Thereafter there was a succession of organists: - Mr George Mitchell, Miss Isobel Whyte and Miss Connie Campbell who served the longest period (1935-51). Mr John Brown was first organist playing the 'new' organ. (1953-59). Between 1959 and 1961 there was a vacancy, during which time Mrs Margaret MacKay's willing deputising was very supportive to the Congregation. Thereafter Mr E. Allan served from 1961-70. In 1970 Mr Norman Cairns was appointed organist. Mr Cairns was head of Music at Dingwall Academy, and is a very accomplished musician. During his time the Choir prospered and frequently sang anthems and other sacred music during the Services and on special occasions. In 1978 Mr Cairns moved to Edinburgh and became organist at St George's West Church. Mr George Borland was appointed organist following Mr Cairns. This post he held until he was forced to relinquish it due to his personal family bereavement. Interestingly, the salary remained between £50 and £70 per annum throughout the period 1923 -70. Thereafter, inflation took its toll when, over a ten year period it rose from £150 to £350.

It was, and still is, becoming increasingly difficult generally in the Church to recruit permanent organists, and the Congregation has been forced to opt for a 'temporary' arrangement. This has now lasted for fifteen years with the post being shared by Mr Hamish Menzies and Mrs Christine Matheson. It is in no way a reflection on these two very experienced musicians that there is no longer a Church choir but it became rather difficult to set aside time for practice. The former members are now dispersed among the Congregation which has had the advantage of providing encouragement to the Congregation by several good singers contributing from within, rather than from up front.

**Rev. Grahame McL. Henderson**

## The Church Halls

During the first 100 years of our church's existence we have had three Church Halls. The first Hall was built as part of the complete Church Buildings in 1909 (the total cost of which was £3,500). The first Hall served the Congregation well in various spheres including during the War (1939-1945) when it was used temporarily as a Forces Canteen. In 1974 when due to increasing numbers in Sunday Schools, increasing Youth Club Activities and to increasing Church Social Functions it became necessary to consider erecting a new building to accommodate more comfortably such increasing demands.

In 1974 therefore the new Hall was in place, sited at the west extremity of the church on concrete foundations which were laid by many willing members of the Congregation under the guidance and supervision of Mr. Rab McNaughton (Elder). The hall cost £7,500 with an additional £500 covering the costs of foundations and electrical and plumbing work. A further £360 provided 100 chairs. The ladies of the Church selected the curtains, and a new piano was bought from Balintore for £100.



The Building was a prefabricated structure similar to those currently being used at that time for educational purposes at schools in Ross and Cromarty and which Mr. A. I. McNab (Elder) and Depute Director of Education and Mr. N. McKechnie (Elder and Headmaster of Dingwall Primary School) were happy to recommend.

The new Hall served the Congregational purposes very well under the supervision of a Hall Convener and Hall Sub-Committee, and the increasing Sunday School members became more manageable and the functions of Congregational Organisations generally became more comfortable with the increased space available. In particular the Youth Fellowship Group flourished weekly under the diligent leadership of the late Mr. Peter Blackburn and his assistants, with Snooker or Table Tennis being favourite pastimes. Apart from Congregational use it had been agreed that the

Hall be made available at convenient times for the use of accepted non-Congregational organisations and thereby hopefully helping to serve our Community as well as to promote our Church. Further facilities were soon enjoyed when, again under the guidance of Mr. Rab McNaughton, a corridor linkage was constructed to adjoin the new Hall to its predecessor (now renamed the Session Room) and therefore to the entire Church Buildings.

After 16 years it became obvious that a more substantial building was required, therefore a hall fund was initiated under the able convenorship of Mr. Gordon Nicolson. So in November 1990 the third Hall to serve the Church was in use, built by Messrs. Tuach & Tolmie of Conon Bridge for an approximate price of £102,000. This splendid Hall, designed by architect Mr. Norman MacKenzie has served not only the Congregation for its various activities but has also, when not required for Congregational purposes, been of good service to various community organisations; not least in appreciation are its weekly Coffee Mornings arranged by the ladies of the congregation, and the monthly meetings of the Presbytery of Ross, and along with the Church the meetings of the Annual Strathpeffer Convention. The careful maintenance which it receives and the very substantial structure of the building should hopefully serve Castle Street Church and Dingwall well for many future generations.



*Church Hall lectern*

# The Woman's Guild

In the beginning was the Ladies' Work Party which organised annual Sales of their work, from which the proceeds were a help towards the Central Fund of the church. The earliest Minutes of a Guild meeting are dated August 1940 and at that time there was a Junior and a Senior Guild.

During the early years of the Second World War the Church Hall was used as a canteen for troops and so the Guild meetings were held in the vestry or the manse or occasionally in the Bank house or the YMCA hall. Wool was distributed and much work was done by both Guilds in knitting comforts for the Forces and darning socks! Later in the war years cards and gifts were sent by Guild members with greetings from the congregation to those serving with the Forces, and prayers were said at each meeting for Prisoners of War.

In December 1947 the Deacons Court suggested that the Woman's Guild might accept the responsibility for providing a Communion Table and Chairs and a fund for that purpose was then started with the sum of £25. By April 1949 the fund total had reached £135.15.4 and the cost of the furniture, purchased from Lord Roberts Workshops in Dundee, was £132.00.00

The Guild continued to meet each fortnight and during the years 1950 to 60 the membership increased considerably. The ladies always worked hard to make the Sales of Work and Produce a success and this was financially good for Church and Mission funds. There were also lots of interesting speakers quite a few of whom were home from the Mission fields and told of their work and experiences abroad.

In the Autumn of 1951 another call was made on Guild members to fund-raise and on this occasion for a new organ and lots of ideas were put forward for this such as "little plays" and "at homes". During the building of the organ the church hall was required for the laying out of pipes and materials and so for Guild parties and social evenings permission was kindly granted for the use of St. Clement's Hall. Also from funds raised by the Guild a new Pulpit Fall was presented to the Church and was dedicated at a service on 8th September 1963. During 1966/67 the Young Wives' and Mothers' Group was formed and thereafter the creche was started circa 1974 with one or two infants. In the beginning this was held in the Manse kitchen each Sunday but as more little ones came along it had to move to the Session room.

During the late 70s the group changed its name to the Young Woman's Group so as to welcome more young ladies. The meetings were held on alternate Wednesdays with the Woman's Guild, and the programmes were indeed very varied with cookery demonstrations, flower arranging, toy making and, of course, interesting speakers. Again much practical help was given towards making the Sales of Work & Produce so successful. However as from September 1988, the Young Woman's Group and The Woman's Guild were merged and a new combined committee was formed. So through the years, and into a new century, the Woman's Guild, now re-named the Church of Scotland Guild, continues to be an essential part of the Church. The theme for 1999 - 2000 was "Hold out the Word of Life " and this is something that we can all aspire to do in our daily living in the years ahead.

"Lord thy word abideth and our footsteps guideth,  
Who its truth believeth, light and joy receiveth"

# The Sunday School

*Jesus said "Suffer the little children to come unto me...."  
And so it has been in Castle Street Church from the year 1900.*

The Sunday School has always been an essential part of the church and the Bible stories told to the children in their formative years will, hopefully, equip them to play their part in later life in the work of the Church.

According to Kirk Session Minutes, there are now, in the Dingwall Museum, record books of Sunday School Attendances covering the closing years of the 19th Century and also the years during and following the 1914-18 war.

Mr. William Sinclair was the first Sunday School Superintendent in Castle Street Church at which time there were 140 Primary aged children and 49 in the 14-18 age group. In 1908 Mr. Sinclair advised the Kirk Session that the children would like to be allowed to furnish the Vestry. This offer was gratefully accepted by the Session. Mr. Sinclair continued as Superintendent until, on medical advice in 1926, he was obliged to resign.

Mr. Norman Macrae was then appointed to take over this position - a post which was the culmination of over 50 years' attachment to the Church, as a Sunday School pupil and then as a teacher. His death in 1933 was, therefore, a great loss to both young and old.

In October of that year, Mr. John Campbell, Clarkville, was appointed Superintendent, an office which he maintained with great efficiency until his resignation from it in 1936.

The Kirk Session then appointed Mr. Stanley Morton to continue and the Sunday School certainly thrived under his supervision with more than 100 children attending both Primary classes and a Bible class for the older ones. This number included boys and girls from the school hostels in the town. The Sunday School met in the Church before the morning service which then began at 12 noon.

This happy state continued during Mr. Murdo Bethune's time as Superintendent (1965-73) and Sunday School picnics were always well attended by both children and parents. There were usually two double-deck buses to travel, usually to Rosemarkie, where races were run and picnics enjoyed. The Sunday following was the prize-giving service which brought the session to a close.

Mr. John Noble followed Mr. Bethune as Superintendent and at this time (1973) Mr. David Howie took charge of the Junior Bible Class whilst Mrs. Margaret Paterson was appointed Superintendent of the Primary Sunday School.

Mr. George Strachan succeeded Mr. Noble and gave 9 years true service as Superintendent and Mr. Martin Craig took over the post for 6 years.

We are now indebted to Mrs. Jennifer Maxwell for her work with all the children.

Sadly the numbers have decreased considerably but there must always be hope for revival.

## Epilogue

Having looked back over the past hundred years in appreciation and thanksgiving to the many who have dedicated themselves to the furtherance of Castle Street Church we must now look forward to our own continuing commitment as we enter the second hundred years as members and adherents of our Congregation.

Our prayers are to seek God's help to prosper spiritually so that our faith individually and as a Congregation may grow and be strengthened in order that we may play a leading role not only in the life of our Church and Congregation but in the Community in which we live and serve.

*"O God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Be thou our guard while troubles last,  
And our eternal home"*



*Drawing (1981) by Mrs Sue Hughan, the daughter of the late Mr Murdo Bethune and of Mrs Mary Bethune.*