

WESTBOURNE BAPTIST CHURCH

1905 - 2007

NAME

In 1888, Mr. Stovel came to Calgary from Winnipeg for the purpose of gathering Baptists together and organizing a church. A meeting was called on May 15th in the home of Mr. & Mrs. E. King, and that evening, First Baptist Church was organized. In 1903, First Baptist started a little Mission on the South side of the CPR tracks at 13th Ave. & 2nd St., South East. This Mission consisted of a Sunday School with two little girls and the Pastor's wife, Mrs. Linch, as the teacher.

In 1905, First Baptist Church transferred 23 members to this Mission. That same year they had special meetings in which the Rev. John Clifford of London, England, was the speaker. Upon his return to England he received a gift of money from the Westbourne Baptist Church in England, and these funds were transferred to help establish the work of this little Mission. Consequently, they took the name Westbourne in honor of their benefactor and at a later date moved the church to a site on 13th Ave. & 4th St. South East.

1920 – 1930

The early Twenty's found Westbourne having financial difficulties and very little growth. In 1921, under the leadership of William Aberhart, Westbourne became independent of First Baptist Church and the Old Convention, partly due to doctrinal differences being taught in the Baptist Universities in the East. Mr. Aberhart began the Radio Sunday School, and his ministry reached out to, not only Calgary, but also Saskatchewan. Many souls came to Christ through this media as well as his preaching and teaching ministry. Before long the little building at 13th Ave. & 4th St. was packed to capacity. In 1927, this congregation, under Mr. Aberhart, built the Prophetic Bible Institute on 8th Ave. West. Westbourne Baptist Church moved to this new location. After a couple of years due to some differences, several of the former members of Westbourne, encouraged by Mr. Harry Scrimgeour, returned to the old Westbourne building and began services there once again. They obtained pulpit supplies and after several months had a thriving Sunday School work.

1930 - 1940

Dr. Morley Hall came to Westbourne in February of 1930, and he commenced what proved to be a fruitful ministry, which eventually became known as The Regular Baptist

Fellowship of Alberta. With several church members he went to the small outlying towns of Crossfield, Benalto and Drumheller. These, together with Norwood in Edmonton, became the five churches, which formed the basis of the Fellowship. As in the days of Aberhart, the radio ministry once again proved to be very fruitful. The Broadcast known as the "Back Home Gospel Hour", was aired each Sunday evening from Westbourne Baptist Church. Many accepted Christ through this broadcast and became members of the church. Under the direction of Pastor Hall, and Rev. George Dawe, it became apparent that a Bible College was needed. A College opened in the basement of the church with Rev. Dawe being principal. Students came from British Columbia and Alberta. The Graduates from this College served the Lord in Pastorates throughout the country and some to service in foreign lands. During the war it was necessary to close the college due to a lack of students. Pastor Hall continued his ministry to the congregation for approximately fourteen years, then he moved on to pioneer work in the East.

1940 - 1950

In 1944, Rev. J.B. Cunningham was called to the pulpit of Westbourne Baptist Church. Under his ministry, Kilarney Baptist Church was formed, with several members from the Westbourne congregation. Cambrian Heights Baptist Church was also established under the ministry of Pastor Cunningham, and again with several families from the Westbourne congregation. This left Westbourne with a membership of around 27.

1950 - 1966

With the congregation of Westbourne now nearly depleted – and those left were very young – things did not look too encouraging for the remaining few. Rev. Fred Meyers, missionary with Bible Christian Union, was visiting with his brother here in Calgary, and he accepted a call, and faithfully worked to revive Westbourne. A visitation program was begun and every Wednesday night there was an outreach into the community. Due to a large increase of new immigrants into the downtown area, which posed a language barrier, it was decided to move the church to the Thorncliffe area. No Evangelical work was being carried on in that area, thus with the urging of the Fellowship, the church moved into this well populated area. Sunday school and church began in the Thorncliffe Community Hall, April 4th, 1965. An agreement was made with the Alliance Church on 2nd Street & 18th Avenue, to carry on with Sunday school children and some members that remained in the old area. Rev. Meyers and his family left for the Eastern United States in 1966.

1967 - 1978

Rev. W.T. Adkins was called by the Westbourne Congregation during the summer of 1967, and arrived in September of that year. With growing interest in Sunday School and

Church services, it became evident to the members of the Church that a community hall did not portray something that was permanent so they began to consider getting a church building. Land was purchased on 4th Street N.W. a block or two South of 64th Avenue. This purchase was made with the money received from the sale of the old building on 13th Ave. & 4th St., South East. Church Enterprises from Toronto were engaged to do some survey work for the church. Their first word of advice was to sell the piece of land, as it would soon prove to be a liability as it was far too small. The former owner of the land kindly agreed to buy the land back and the church was able to procure a site from the Carma Developers farther up 64th Avenue. A pre-fabricated building was acquired and was used for Church services and also Pre-school classes. Prior to this, the need for accommodation for Senior Citizens in close proximity to a church had come to the attention of the Pastor and Deacons. The construction of such a building by Westbourne Baptist seemed possible. After a great deal of investigation, on the part of the Pastor, many consultations with Government Officials, and much prayer to overcome many seemingly insurmountable obstacles, the Senior Citizens facility known as "Westbourne Place" became a reality. This residence being connected to the church afforded the seniors the opportunity to attend services regularly.

With the completion of Westbourne Place, the congregation turned their attention to the construction of a permanent church facility. In October 1974, the project commenced and was completed by March 30th. 1975. Our first service was Easter Sunday. The seniors were able to walk from their homes to the church without going outside, by means of the Multi-Purpose Room, which connected Westbourne Place to the church building.

Pastor Adkins left Westbourne in 1977.

1978 - 2000

Pastor Dennis Burriss, who was Pastoring at Benalto, accepted a call to Westbourne, and commenced his ministry January 1, 1978. Under the ministry of Pastor Dennis, the Church thrived and grew in numbers. An open door policy into his home saw our Youth Group increase and there was a good spirit throughout the church. In May of 1986, Pastor Dave Ferguson accepted a call to be Assistant Pastor. Dave, Deb & family, had just returned from missionary service in the Philippines. The Church grew and exciting times were enjoyed; God's blessing was upon Westbourne. The Spring of 1989, brought more changes when Pastor Dave was called to be Senior Pastor of Drumheller Baptist Church. The church continued to flourish and it was with sadness that the church said goodbye to Pastor Dennis and Ruth in May of 1993, when Dennis accepted a call to Pastor the Red Deer Baptist Church, he was missed by all.

Westbourne was once again seeking a Pastor. From 1993 to 1994, they engaged four Interim Pastors before calling Rev. John Thompson, who served from May 1994 to September 1998. During this time Vaughn Manson came on board as Youth Pastor, and

served faithfully until June 2000, when he was called to be Senior Pastor of Arrowood Baptist Church. Vaughn was loved by all and was sorely missed.

A search committee was commissioned by the church to seek a Senior Pastor once again and from January 1999 to the Fall of 2000, they searched diligently, while Vaughn and Retired Pastor Les Drew – who came as Interim – provided Pastoral leadership.

2000 - 2006

In the Fall of 2000, a call was given to Rev. Cam Loewen. Pastor Cam had been serving the Lord in Fort McMurray, Alberta, as Assistant Pastor, and he began his ministry at Westbourne Baptist as Senior Pastor, in February 2001. Since coming to Westbourne, Cam and Corilyn have had three little girls join their Family, Erykah, Renae and Caitlan; the Lord has Blessed them.

The present membership of Westbourne are expecting great things from God as we move forward, prayerfully anticipating our numbers to grow and our Spiritual lives to be enriched. We praise God for His keeping Power and blessing throughout these 100 years, and we say with Jeremiah in Lamentations 3:23, “....Thy mercies are new every morning, great is Thy faithfulness”.

Pastor Cam and Corilyn resigned, effective December 31, 2006, from service at Westbourne Baptist Church.

2007 -

In the early Spring of 2007, A call was given to The Rev. Wes Stanley of New Brunswick. Pastor Wes and Diane began their Ministry on April 1, 2007, and there has been a coming together of the congregation and excitement to see steady growth in church attendance and membership.

At a church meeting in July, 2007, Andrew Wagantall was called as Pastor of Worship and Youth. Andrew, Lisa and family are a welcome addition to the church family.

FOOTNOTE:

Over the past years, many Conventions and Anniversaries have been Celebrated at Westbourne. On September 10th & 11th, 2005, we celebrated our **100 years Anniversary**. This special weekend was a time of looking back and remembering when this Adventure for God had its beginnings and looking forward to the future ministry of the Church in the days ahead. We Praise the Lord for His goodness to His people all these years, and honor those who have gone before, and are now rejoicing in the Lord's presence.

SOURCES:

Fellowship Publications; Westbourne Baptist Church files.

Abbreviated History compiled by:

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