



**Stonewall Church of the Ascension
Parish Profile 2008**

Mission Statement

To worship God enabling us to create a spiritual home for our Parish family; to uphold the ideals of stewardship and celebrate our gifts and share our blessings; to support each other and serve our community; to grow in faith and to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ

Vision

You call from tomorrow Lord, showing us Your Presence and purpose in a strong parish family made up of faithful, happy and harmonious people from all ages and backgrounds: praying, worshipping, listening, learning, welcoming, visiting and growing together. Through the example of Your Son, we are caring and show kindness to each other and throughout our community

Parish Prayer

Almighty God, our heavenly creator, who has called us to share in extending throughout the world the kingdom of your dear Son, we give you humble and hearty thanks for the material and spiritual gifts you have bestowed upon us. Guide and direct our hearts, we ask You, that we may be faithful and honest stewards of all You have given us, our time, our talents and the fruits of our labours. Open our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit that we may return to you a just proportion of Your bounty, in accordance with Your Holy will through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

History:

This unpretentious, dignified little church at the corner of 2nd St. W and 1st Ave. N has been standing for 125 years due to the loving care and ministering of its parish family. It is reported that the first church service in the new church took place at 11:00 o'clock July 8, 1882 with Bishop Machray (later Archbishop) officiating.

The exterior of the Church of Ascension, built from the local limestone, remains as solid and peaceful as the date it was built. The total cost of the structure in 1882 is estimated at just over \$3000. The chancel was added during the ministry of Rev. E. L. Howe in 1906. As the church structure remains resolute through time and weather, its interior has continually adapted to the growing needs of its congregation. Maintaining the historical integrity of the artifacts within the church walls has been accomplished while simultaneously modernizing the setting to keep pace with modern congregations.

When looking at the history of the Church one cannot forget to mention the beautiful stained glass windows that are so much a part of the church building. The large centre altar window, installed in 1907, was given in memory of Anna Claire Jackson, daughter of Samuel (Stonewall) Jackson, the Founder of the town of Stonewall. It was refurbished in 1992 and rededicated at the celebrations of the 110th Anniversary. Bordering this window are two smaller windows originally donated by the Sunday School in 1907. Other windows on the west end of the building were given in memory of congregation members who lost their lives during World War I between 1914-1918 and the Pearson family donated the "Rose" window above the front doorway in 1965.

One is unable to include all of the beautiful adornments of the church that have been donated or hand made specifically for the church and adorn the walls each Sunday as you come to worship. A memorial book has been kept in the church to recognize these donations.

The story of the church would not be complete without mention of the Parish Hall that the congregation built in 1901 because the Sunday School enrolment was just getting too big to meet in the church. It was reported to have cost \$815 to build and although it was painted in 1904 the paint soon wore off and it remained unpainted for years until renovations and additions were carried out and it was stuccoed in 1948. After a **very** long period of controversy about replacing the hall (it was worn out and tired) a new hall was built in 2002 at a cost of some \$300,000. Let's hope it stands and serves the congregation and the town as well as the last one did.

Demographics:

The Church of the Ascension is located in Stonewall, Manitoba, 24 km. north of Winnipeg on highway #7 and 5 km. west on highway #67. Parishioners are drawn from Stonewall and surrounding areas. There is a large farming district (grain, cattle and swine) in the surrounding Rural Municipality of Rockwood.

Stonewall was founded in the late 18hundreds because of high quality limestone in the area which was quarried until 1967. There are still several active quarries for crushed limestone in the vicinity. The town still proudly maintains its heritage of limestone production through their many historic buildings. Main Street is lined with notable limestone buildings such as the Post Office and the Town Hall. One of the abandoned quarries has been beautified and developed into the Stonewall Quarry Park. The park preserves much of Stonewall's history.

In the 1960's, Stonewall began to diversify its economy and move away from its dependence on limestone. Agriculture in the surrounding district and commuters to Winnipeg has resulted in a prosperous community, with a positive and diverse economic environment. With a population of some 4500, it has all the amenities to make it a great community. There are seven other Christian congregations, three schools (from kindergarten to high school) and two private Christian schools in town. Consumers enjoy a variety of grocery, pharmacy, hardware, clothing, banking, restaurant and various other outlets. Sports facilities include a curling rink, indoor arenas, baseball diamonds, soccer pitches, and Quarry Park for hiking, camping, swimming, tour and interpretive activities. Health facilities and services include a hospital, seniors housing, personal care home, medical and dental clinics, physiotherapy, optometry, chiropractic services, and natural healing practitioners. Major shopping areas in Winnipeg are accessible within a 30 minute drive. Location and the foregoing amenities make Stonewall one of the fastest growing towns in Manitoba. People are drawn to Stonewall by its friendly people and its rural lifestyle.

Population Area Information

	<u>1991</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2006</u>
Town of Stonewall	2995	3689	4000	4012	4376
RM of Rockwood	6985	7504	7500	7654	7692

Our Church Community:

Approximately one hundred (100) families are on the **parish list**. There is a 9:00 am Service (BCP Said Eucharist) which has a usual attendance of about 20 and a 10:15 am Service (BAS Choral Eucharist) with a usual attendance of 40 - 50 including the Sunday School students and teachers. At the present time Morning Prayer is offered on the 5th Sunday of the month.

Services are also held 3-4 times a year at St. Peter's, Balmoral and at All Saints, Victoria which are smaller satellite parishes of the Church of the Ascension.

Monthly services are held at **Lions Manor** (a Seniors Housing complex). Weekly services are held in conjunction with the local Ministerial Association, on a rotating basis at Rosewood Lodge (a personal care home) and **Stonewood Place** (an elderly persons housing complex) This Association is comprised of clergy members from participating denominations in Stonewall who hold regular meetings.

See Appendix #1 for parish data

Easter is a focal point of our church year. We begin Lent with a Shrove Tuesday supper and an Ash Wednesday service. During Lent and Holy Week we celebrate with a Seder Supper on Maundy Thursday followed by a Eucharist and then begin an Easter Vigil in the church that night, lasting until Good Friday. The Parish usually participates in a "Cross Walk" through Stonewall, to Quarry Park. Easter culminates with a joyful Easter Sunday service in addition to our strong involvement in the annual Easter Sunday ecumenical Sunrise Service.

Vestry consists of six (6) members, the two (2) wardens, three (3) synod delegates and the rector and meets monthly with the exception of July and August. Vestry directs the operations of the church and hall. Policies have been put in place and include financial policies, the sacraments and policies regarding hall operations. There are three paid employees: an interim rector, a part time caretaker and a part time secretary.

See Appendix #2 for financial data.

The Diocese of Rupert's Land has a **companion diocese (Diocese of Central Buganda, Uganda)** and the Church of the Ascension has a companion parish in Kiwawu, Uganda, to which we offer prayerful support.

Our **lay leadership** consists of the Rector's Warden, the People's Warden, lay readers, servers and parishioners who read the weekly lessons. The rector and wardens form the parish corporation and meet monthly. An organist and a 5 member choir provide musical leadership for each 10:15 service and on any special occasions.

Approximately 20 children are registered for **Sunday School**. There is a Sunday School coordinator and three teams of teachers who work on a rotational schedule. A nursery is provided during the church service. The children join the congregation for the Eucharist and a children's story.

The **Worship Committee** is comprised of the rector, vestry member, choir director, lay reader, Sunday School coordinator and interested parishioners who meet as necessary to assess and guide worship services.

A small **Prayer Group** of parishioners meets weekly along with the rector to discuss the week's lections and to celebrate the Eucharist together. Also a Bible study is held weekly during Lent.

There are three **Healing Teams** who were trained by an experienced priest in our diocese (The Rev. Gordon Shields) in the fall of 2007. These teams offer healing prayers and the laying on of hands each Sunday after the services and in homes, upon request.

The former Rector, Kenn Garrity, designed and directed the creation of a fabric **Labyrinth** based on the Chartres model, with tent fabric donated by a parishioner. The Labyrinth is available in the church hall to all wishing a peaceful and spiritual mini-journey

The Anglican Church Women (ACW) forms an integral part in the life and mission of the church. With approximately 20 members they meet monthly and carry out numerous fundraising and outreach activities. Fundraising activities include a spring and fall tea, spring and fall garage sale; catering of lunches and dinners, sale of homemade perogies and sale of cook books with recipes contributed by parish members.

The ACW sponsor two foster children through the Christian Children's Fund of Canada, a girl in Sri Lanka and a boy in Paraguay. Baby clothing and articles are collected in support of the Thelma Wynne Project operated out of St. Matthew's Church in Winnipeg for low income moms. Financial support is provided to many local, national, and international charities, such as Youth for Christ in Stonewall, the Canadian Bible Society, and Christian Blind Mission. Single Seniors Potluck Suppers are held monthly with an average of 25-30 people from the local community attending. Also local seniors receive recognition on special occasions with flowers or cards and transportation is provided to various church social events. Recently the church women have started a Prayer Shawl Ministry and have knit a number of shawls which are blessed by the rector for distribution to anyone in need of comfort.

The ACW keeps the Parochial Hall kitchen well supplied with both groceries and other necessary equipment. A significant portion of the funds raised each year are used for the operation of the church and the hall.

A **Visitors Group**, consisting of approximately 8 members, visits senior parishioners, shut-ins, people in the hospital and those confined to the “care home”. For those celebrating 90+ birthdays, flowers or a gift are given. There are approximately 40 people on the visiting list. The group serves coffee and dainties after the church services held in Lions Manor and occasionally at Stonewood Place. Christmas dainty trays are also provided to church seniors in the area. The group holds a card party in the spring and fall as a fundraiser.

The **Altar Guild**, consisting of 8 members, looks after the altar; setting up for the services; taking care of the linens and vessels; hanging appropriate seasonal banners; and arranging flowers for the altar.

A parish newsletter called “**The Connection**” is published quarterly which includes items submitted by parishioners and reports of events that have taken place within the church family and also any upcoming events.

A **social committee** has organized and implemented fun(d)-raisers to involve the parish family and the community at large. Events have included a murder mystery, concerts, and dancing. Some events have included dinners. The committee is looking for new members to increase their “bench strength”.

On July 8th, 2007 the church celebrated its **125th Anniversary**. Invitations were sent to former parishioners and the week-end celebration was advertised widely. History books were compiled using the vestry and WA/ACW minutes from the last 125 years as a main source of information. A photo album containing pictures from various parish events was also available for perusal. 227 people registered for the various events which culminated in the worship service on Sunday with Bishop Donald Phillips preaching the sermon.

In the fall of 2007 a **parish survey** was composed by the wardens at the suggestion of the interim priest as a supplement to the parish profile. Copies of the survey for all congregation members could be found at the back of the church and all replies were accepted at the church office. Some parishioners were also approached directly for their responses. Questions asked were:

1. WHAT DREW YOU TO THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION?
2. WHAT WAS CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION LIKE IN THE PAST?
3. WHAT'S THE CHURCH LIKE NOW?
4. WHAT DOES CHURCH/FAITH MEAN TO YOU?
5. WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THE CHURCH MADE TO YOU?
6. WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION?
7. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE THAT CURRENTLY IS NOT DONE?
8. GENERAL COMMENTS

There were 33 replies received. While the replies cannot be described as statistically representative of the parish, it can be taken as somewhat indicative of parish characteristics and does supply the views of the respondents to the questionnaire. 25 of the respondents indicated that a reason for attending church was related to family.

General trends included:

- Anxiety about decreasing numbers
- Anxiety about increasing the congregation
- Perception of missing middle aged group
- Desire to attract new people.

Responses to “What does faith mean to you? And “What difference has the church meant to you? can be found in Appendix #3.

Satellite Churches:

Parish of All Saints, Victoria

All Saints, Victoria Church is located north east of Stonewall, 4 miles north of the junction of highways #7 and #67 and ¼ mile west. It is considered the “mother” church of the Church of the Ascension. It was built in 1877 and although it closed for a short period of time in 1954, it was rejuvenated in 1971 and a major renovation undertaken in the early 1980s. The church has been designated a Provincial Heritage site. The cemetery which surrounds the church was used by early settlers in the area and by some Hudson Bay employees. It continues to be used to the present. At least 3-4 services are held there each year. Christmas of 2007 was its 130th Anniversary and a “standing room only” congregation was in attendance. The Parish of All Saints supports the Church of the Ascension in Stonewall with annual contributions.

Parish of St. Peter’s, Balmoral

Built in 1955, St. Peter’s served the people of the area with twice monthly services. The congregation has diminished over the years from the thriving parish it once was. Services are now held at Christmas, Easter and Harvest Thanksgiving with 5-10 members attending. St Peter’s supports the Church of the Ascension with annual contributions.

The Future...

The Church of the Ascension will face many challenges over the next decade, as will most organizations relying on “faith, hope and charity”. In today’s busy world there is an ever increasing competition for everyone’s time, talent and financial support.

We are committed to maintaining and expanding our church family and to assure that our focus is directed to all segments of society including children, youth, young adults, baby-boomers and seniors. We will continue to capitalize on our core of enthusiastic and energetic workers who presently supply their continued support and expertise.

We also must maintain our place and profile in the community and beyond. Our outreach via social events such as the church teas, pancake suppers, seniors single suppers and entertainment evenings to name a few, will still provide us with a strong connection to the local community. Our church participation in interdenominational services in Stonewall provides further community togetherness and enhances our commitment to ministry, mission and outreach which will continue to expand in the future.

Presently we are exploring the concept of Shared Ministry with two neighbouring parishes, St. George’s, Woodlands and Christ Church, Stony Mountain.

It is the hope of the congregation that the above information provides a succinct comprehensive overview of the Stonewall Church of the Ascension with all of its many endeavours and that it shows its valuable place in Christ’s community.

As we search for a new priest to help carry us forward into the future we feel that we have many things to offer in addition to the forgoing details provided in this profile:

- A full- time position with salary commensurate with experience of the person selected according to the present diocese salary scale and a housing allowance
- 125 year old church that has been well maintained and has been modernized
- A new sound system in the church that was installed in 2007
- A hall that was constructed in 2002 that contains a private office for the priest, a secretary’s office, a Board room, a large space for events to be held as well as a modern kitchen. It serves the Sunday School, church events, as well as the community at large

- Computer and internet availability as well as a church website
- Five (5) lay readers
- A very active ACW
- Part time secretarial support
- An excellent organist as well as an active choir with a variety of musical talent
- A strong ecumenical ministerial support group in the town of Stonewall
- A debt free parish with sound financial management

The parish congregation hopes that it can attract a new priest that will have:

- A willingness and ability to offer a visiting ministry to all the congregation and in particular to shut-ins and people in care communities
- Strong communication skills - written, speaking and listening skills
- Visibility and participation in the community at large
- Passion and enthusiasm for Bible based Christian teaching that can relate the bible teachings to our everyday life.
- Openness to young people and the ability to relate well with them
- Interest to become an active member of the Pastoral Care committee and the Ministerial Association of Stonewall
- The ability and involvement to help our church grow and thrive

Our preference is that the new priest will live in the town of Stonewall or the surrounding rural municipality.

As our parting prayer from the Sunday service says:

“Go forth into the world to love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, and be who we are: the Church in the World”

Appendix #1

Church of the Ascension Data

<u>Membership</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2007</u>
# Families	106	119	75	94	93
# Individuals	50	57	41	80	75
Total	402	500	*231	268	200

*Revision done to remove inactive members

Age Breakdown (Estimated)

0 - 9	6%
10-19	4%
20-44	30%
45+	60%

Residence of Parishioners

Within Boundaries	80%
Adjacent	10%
Commuters	10%

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2007</u>
Average Sunday	75	75	71	53	55
Easter (2 Services)	146	146	53*	133	107
Christmas Eve (2 Services)	135	186	240	180	148

*winter storm

Appendix 2

Financial Information

Church of the Ascension September 2007 Financial Statement				
	September	Year to Date	Budget	YTD budget
Church Income				
Offering – envelope	6394.00	53,780.75	84000.00	
Offering – Open	301.85	3,139.82	2,000.00	
Offering – Special		1,427.00	5,000.00	
A.C.W.& other churches		3,500.00	4,500.00	
Other & misc.		1,730.05	3,000.00	
Parish Events			2,000.00	
GST Rebate		291.43	1,000.00	
PWRDF	22.00	716.00		
Total church Income	\$6,717.85	\$ 64,585.05	\$ 101,500.00	\$ 76,125.00
Church Expenses				
Rector's stipend	7,478.25	44,976.69	\$ 59,700.00	
Payroll expenses		180.00		
Rector's mileage	55.00	1,665.84	\$ 2,100.00	
Organist	664.00	3,154.00	\$ 5,000.00	
Secretary		1,980.00	\$ 2,400.00	
Caretaker	190.23	1,156.90	\$ 1,600.00	
Apportionment	860.00	3,880.00	\$ 10,300.00	
Conferences			\$ 100.00	
Office supplies	428.16	2,456.53	\$ 4,000.00	
Insurance		\$ 2,450.00	2,400.00	
Repair & Maintenance			\$ 700.00	
Taxes		74.58	\$ 50.00	
Gas		2,632.00	3,000.00	
Hydro		600.00	1,000.00	
Telephone & Internet	218.46	1,076.14		
Worship supplies	178.45	830.45	1,000.00	
Youth supplies	502.19	502.19		
Outreach	321.76	972.26	900.00	
PWRDF				
Bank Charges		27.00		

Total Church expenses	11,336.50	\$ 68,614.58	\$ 94,250.00	70,687.50 \$
Income – Expenses	(4,618.65)	(4,029.53)		
Parish Hall	September	Year to Date	Budget	YTD Budget
Income (Rentals)	165.00	\$ 4,153.95	\$ 5,500.00	4,125.00
Expenses				
Caretaker	680.69	4,128.38	\$ 4,850.00	
Insurance		2,513.00	\$ 2,500.00	
Maintenance & supplies	127.41	907.78	\$ 1,000.00	
Taxes		215.44	\$ 150.00	
Gas		1,376.00	\$ 3,000.00	
Hydro		1,120.00	\$ 2,000.00	
Total Hall expenses	808.10	\$ 10,260.60	\$ 13,500.00	10,125.00
Income - Expenses(Hall)	(643.10)	(6,106.65)		
Total Income – Expenses	(5,261.75)	(10,136.18)	\$	

Appendix #3

2008 Parish Survey (partial results)

Responses to Question 4 “What does the church/faith mean to you?”

Comfort and calm	Learning
God’s and Jesus will	Community & People
Spirituality	Guidance and values
Growing	Way of life
Place to pray	Thanking
Contributing	Be with family
Reinforcement	Caring
Praising God joyfully	Youth front & centre
Hard to explain	

Responses to Question 5 “What difference has the church meant to you?”

Learning	Day to Day Guidance
Proper perspective/Values	Support
Meet people	Family
Love example Belonging	Strength/Support
Faith	Comfort
Give back/Thanks	Uplifting everything
Growing	

