

# A Brief History

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## of St. Mark's Church Calgary

St. Mark's was dedicated by the Rt Rev'd Cyprian Pinkham, first Bishop of Calgary, on Wednesday, October 6, 1912. Regular services began with the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist at 11:00 am, October 27, 1912. The officiant was the Rev'd G. Bousefield. The Rev'd J.W. Thompson became incumbent of St. Martin's and St. Mark's. The Great War almost led to the closing of St. Mark's, but with the help of Canon Gale of St. John's East Calgary, the Rev'd H.H. Wilford became incumbent and St. Mark's survived. With re-orienting the church and its re-dedication by Bishop Sherman on November 30, 1927, the twenties were a busy decade. The Rev'd Robert Axon (our well remembered Archdeacon Axon) became incumbent on September 2, 1934 and our first Christmas Eve Midnight Eucharist was celebrated that year. Our twenty-fifth anniversary was held October 6, 1937 with Bishop Sherman preaching. The attendance was 158 people, the largest congregation until that date.

In 1939, the Anglican missionary Fr. Syme of Qu'Appelle Diocese conducted a Mission. The Second World War was a difficult period for our church with so many men in military service and a succession of priests. The post-war recovery began with the appointment of the Rev'd W.E. Askew whose incumbency was the longest in our history till that date. In autumn 1951 it was decided to build a new church. Bishop Calvert turned the sod on Wednesday May 14, 1952. The new church was dedicated (if not completed) by the Bishop March 31, 1953. The Rev'd. Reg Wright became the first Rector of the self-supporting St. Mark's, now independent from our sister parish of St. Martin's. Bishop Calvert laid the cornerstone September 19, 1954 when the brick facing was finished. The Rev'd Gordon Hendra became Rector March 3, 1957 and that summer our pipe organ was purchased from St. Augustine's, Lethbridge, one of the wisest purchases in our history. The old church building, used as a parish hall, was condemned the same year. Archdeacon Axon turned the sod for a new hall May 15, 1960. It was dedicated by the Bishop October 23, 1960. The stained glass window in the sanctuary was designed by Mr. Walter St. John Miller and was dedicated by Bishop Calvert June 18, 1961. Our fiftieth anniversary was celebrated in 1962 with a marvellous booklet on parish history.

In 1963 the Baptistry windows were donated. The arrival of the Rev'd Peter Niblock in June 1965 initiated a period of social outreach as the Rector became a "missionary for St. Mark's to the inner city". During this time Y-Neighbours met, the painful talks with the United Church took place, John Mash and Terry Dunn were ordained, and Bishop Calvert in one of his last episcopal functions consecrated the church on April 23, 1967. In 1968 the first of the south windows were installed. The opening of our daughter parish St. Laurence took many families from St. Mark's. The Rev'd Paul King Hei Yip came as Rector in 1970 and a period of pulling together with lunches, parties, Chinese dinners, the burning of the parish hall mortgage, and Christian fellowship. In 1973 Allan Gale was ordained deacon in St. Mark's by Bishop Goodman. In 1977 the new Processional Cross was blessed. For 8 1/2 months the Rev'd Donald Gray served as priest-in-charge until the arrival of the Rev'd Douglas Skoyles July 2, 1978. A High Mass was celebrated June 4, 1980 to mark the 10th anniversary of the ordinations to the priesthood of Archdeacon Terry Dunn and Fr. Skoyles. On September 14, 1980 the aumbry (tabernacle) was dedicated as later were the parish vestments, altar superfrontals, the new church carpeting, and the last of the south windows. Robert Korth was ordained for Huron Diocese. 1987 marked the 75th Anniversary of the parish with months of celebration including visits from Peter Niblock, Reg Wright, Don Gray, and Bishop Curtis. Canon Skoyles dedicated the new doors October 11, 1987 as our memorial of 3/4 of a century of witness by St. Mark's for Christ in this part of Calgary.