



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH

An inclusive church welcoming everyone

61 Dundas Street, Dartmouth, NS
www.christchurchdartmouth.com

What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. - Ecclesiastes 1:9

June 4, 2020

Dear Friends,

My first university degree was a Bachelor of Arts in History. I loved learning about the world; it's past and humanity. I will forever be a student of history. One of the great delights I have as Rector of Christ Church is knowing how much we appreciate and cherish our history. We have extensive archives, and our historical committee, in my opinion, is the best in the diocese! Our group is active, and very much adds and supports the ministry of the parish. I'm so thankful for the number of times members of the committee have invested for me, in answering my questions, or gathering information for a speech or sermon I must prepare.

As we realize that we will not be worshipping in our church soon, we experience the sorrow and grief as we long for one another's company. When we experience these feelings, I believe we can learn from our past that what we are going through has happened to our community before, and like them, we will come out on the other side of this.

I want to acknowledge and thank the members of our Historical Committee who have graciously provided me with the following information. What you will read are excerpts from C. Walter Bayer's book and actual diary notes between a mother and her son. These were provided to us with permission for publication from parishioner Marilyn More.

Janice Silver looked through our archives, and other documents and discovered:

- The Halifax Explosion forced our parishioners to worship in the hall.
- During Spanish Influenza on three occasions, schools, churches and other organizations in Dartmouth were closed between the Fall of 1918 and early 1920.
- A newspaper clipping from October, 1918 recording that Rev. Wilcox, Rector conducted a funeral at the home of an Albro Lake woman who died of the flu.
- Nova Scotia, reportedly did a very good job quarantining folks early on and the death rate was considerably lower than many other areas of Canada and the world.
- Unlike the COVID-19 virus, those under 40 were more likely to die – the theory being that those over 40 may have been exposed to the Russian Influenza in 1890 and acquired some immunity.

Excerpts from C. Walter Bayers' *Christ Church, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia: 1817 to 1959*:

On December 6, 1917, the explosion of a munition ship in Halifax Harbour... wrecked on the City of Halifax and the Town of Dartmouth, a devastating toll, and in that terrible disaster Christ Church, Dartmouth, received a staggering blow. In addition to the loss of life and injuries to parishioners, the damage to church properties was very extensive. ...at Christ Church, a partly destroyed church building and a badly damaged parish hall and rectory remained after the blast. Broken stained glass windows, twisted framework, fallen plaster and cracked, ruined chimneys made up the heart-breaking picture that confronted the congregation. (59)

Repair work was completed early in 1919, and services were resumed starting on the first Sunday of March. (65)

Accidents or epidemics such as in 1917 when the explosion caused the death of a number of parishioners, and in 1918 when in two months, Archdeacon Wilcox buried fourteen members of Christ Church, victims of the influenza pandemic that raged at that time. (139)

References regarding the 1918 Spanish Influenza in Nova Scotia, taken from letters from a mother to her son overseas

Preston Rd. October 18, 1918

The Spanish Influenza is having full swing in Massachusetts. Aunt Len says they are lots of cases around where she is. There are quite a few cases around Halifax too and they are going to close the schools, theatres and churches. I hope it doesn't spread.

Preston Rd. October 25, 1918

We have had a sick week here with the "Flu". Bert is nearly well, he had a quite a spell of it, and he certainly got thin, but is feeling better each day. And George took down with it day before yesterday, and is in bed, but isn't as bad as Bert, and I think he will soon get around. I had it but not badly, but only for a few days. So in a few days with care all hands will be alright I hope. And over at our neighbours they have had quite a time. Burtelson is still sick with pneumonia. He was very low but took a turn for the better a day or two ago and I haven't heard yesterday or today. The Influenza is certainly spreading and the doctors and nurses are busy.

Preston Rd. Nov 10, 1918

Well, the Influenza seems to be dying out now and a good thing. There were quite a few deaths from it and I do hope it won't break out again. They are opening the school and churches and theatres etc. again.

Preston Rd November 15, 1918

So at last the war is at an end. If you are still safe I shall be thankful indeed. Everybody went nearly wild in Halifax and Dartmouth on Monday and Tuesday. The four guns fired 5 o'clock am Monday but it was very windy so we didn't hear them. But Mr. M called in at 7 o'clock on his way out from Dartmouth to let us know. Monday and Tuesday were holidays. Monday

evening they had a big procession in Dartmouth and Tuesday a school children procession in Halifax in the afternoon and another monster procession in the evening. I think there must have been some tired people in Halifax Wednesday but all the time I was thinking what it must mean to you boys over there - no guns and the other horrible things flying around. I know you are thankful and happy bunch.

Preston Rd November 25, 1918

I hope you don't get the Flu again. There is quite a lot in Halifax and Dartmouth – now. More cases broke out after the celebrations. We have no cases around here but some are sick in Cole Harbour. Sadie is very sick with pneumonia following the Flu - was a very little better yesterday

Dartmouth December 22, 1918

The Flu is all over on Preston Rd now except Arthur is very sick but they think he will come through now.

I believe these diary entries and excerpts reveal to us the church has always faced adversity, and always will. Presently, we are experiencing a great deal as a church family. As such, I feel we must recognize the need for effective communication with one another. We are called to show compassion in our frustrations of not being able to gather in our beloved church, knowing that we will indeed meet again.

In Christ,



The Rev. Dr. Kyle Wagner
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