

Forest Hills United Church resulted from initial discussion and planning within Halifax Presbytery. Substantial growth in the Cole Harbour - East Dartmouth area challenged both Presbytery and local United Church congregations to study and apply a strategy to expand the United Church presence in the area.

A Presbytery Calling Committee was formed and given the mandate to call a minister to what was initially named as the East Dartmouth New Church Development Ministry. On April 15th, 1985, the Rev. Blake Caldwell was inducted to this ministry.

Following a door-to-door canvass by the minister during the spring and summer of 1985, a school gymnasium was rented for worship and Sunday School, and a basement room in the Nova Scotia Department of Housing office building in Cole Harbour was rented and used as the minister's office.

Worship and Sunday School commenced in the Robert Kempt Turner Elementary School in Cole Harbour in September of 1985.

Halifax Presbytery, acting on a request by the new congregation, officially constituted Forest Hills United Church a Pastoral Charge and Congregation within the United Church of Canada, and service was held in the Robert Kempt Turner School on Sunday, March 2nd, 1986 with the Rev. Blake C. Caldwell as its first minister. There were sixty-five (65) charter members of this newly established congregation.

In 1986, with the assistance of a Venture In Mission loan from the Division of Mission in Canada, Halifax Presbytery, through the Church Extension Board, purchased a 4.9 acre parcel of land situated along Forest Hills Drive in Cole Harbour. This land was transferred over to the Forest Hills congregation (with mortgage) to be the site of a new church building.

A Building Committee within the congregation was formed, and following an outstanding amount of dedicated work, effort, consultation and prayer, with a \$600,000.00 Ventures in Mission Loan, a \$60,000.00 loan from Presbytery Church Extension Board, and approximately \$250,000.00 raised by the congregation through a Capital Building Campaign, ably chaired by Jim and Sharon Lisson, the new church was built. B. D. Stevens Construction Ltd. was the contractor, MacFawn and Rogers the architects, and Byron Mullett chaired the very dedicated and hard-working Building Committee.

The Forest Hills United Church building was dedicated to the glory of God in a Presbytery Service of Dedication held on Sunday, September 18th, 1994. The Rev. Dr. David MacLachlin, Chair of Halifax Presbytery led the service; the preacher was The Rev. Dr. Thomas Bandy; the Organist and Choir Director was Eunice Caldwell; Soloist was Fred Deare; and the Forest Hills Choir led in the singing. Members of the congregation taking part: Marg Cudmore, Chair - Christian Development Committee; Byron Mullett, Chair - Building Committee; Cliff Coveyduc, Chair - Sanctuary Planning Committee; Scripture Readers were Kevin Downing and Jennifer Halliday. David Chard acted as Master of Ceremonies for the reception that followed the service.

Forest Hills United Church presently has 230 families under pastoral care, with 240 resident members, and is still growing.

It is with a deep sense of joy and thankfulness that all those who labored together have jointly shared a privilege that comes to only a few generations in the history of a congregation - that of birthing and building a new church. To all of us who have had any part to play in this history, it has been an experience that is deep and lasting, a labor of love, and a process we will surely never forget. And to God be the Glory!