

ST. ANDREWS KIRK

A LOOK AT YESTERDAY

It was in 1830, that a small group of Scottish plantation owners who were residing in Grenada made the decision to construct a Presbyterian church on the island. Plans were prepared by a prominent proprietor. Major General Sir James Campbell, the Governor of Grenada, with the assistance of three Masonic Lodges laid the corner stone in November of 1831 on St. Andrews Day on land granted by the Government on the Grand Etang road.

The church building was completed on July 14th 1833, followed by the arrival of our first minister, Rev. William Haig, who was sent by the Church of Scotland to serve the St. Andrew's Kirk. Church services began with a small congregation of twenty persons.



The tower was added in 1836 and years later the bell and clock were installed as well. In the early 20th century, different families donated the pipe organ, the marble font and the mahogany pulpit, all of which are still being used today.

In 1856, there was great concern for the East Indian Indentured labourers whose numbers had grown from 300 to 5000. The Kirk petitioned the Church of Scotland for assistance in providing Christian instruction for these East Indians in Grenada. All Government grants, which the church received in its early years, were withdrawn in 1860 and the Kirk was nearly disfunctional for almost 15 years.

A mission station was opened in Samaritan in 1885 as well as in Belair in 1891. Schools for the East Indians were opened at these churches and some East Indian catechists became the teachers with a few additional teachers from the Government. During 1893, 114 and 129 students were enrolled at the Belair and Samaritan schools respectively. Later on, a catechist was also ministering to the East Indians in Gouyave. In 1912 the number of Presbyterians in Grenada had grown to 901. By 1933, East Indian Mission Stations were opened at Mt. Carmel in St. Andrew's, Concord in St. John's and in St. David's. However, because of transportation difficulties during World War II, these stations were closed.

In 1945, the Church of Scotland withdrew its support for the mission work in Grenada and a recommendation was made that the Kirk Mission congregations join the Methodist Church and sell the church building. This idea was strongly opposed to, by the congregation. Instead, the assistance of the Church of Scotland in Trinidad was sought and Trinidadian Ministers made quarterly visits to Grenada.

By 1953, the Kirk began exploring the possibility of entering the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad, which had close links with the United Church of Canada. Canadian Missionaries from the United Churches, who were working in Trinidad, began spending short periods in Grenada to assist the Kirk and the Mission churches.



The island was struck and battered by hurricane Janet in 1955 and both the Samaritan church and school were destroyed but temporary accommodation was found and the church and school were continued there. The Government took over the management of the Belair School.

The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad & Tobago and Grenada was formed in 1956 and many Ministers were supplied to Grenada from the United Church of Canada (UCC). The first was Rev. J. C. Macdonald who was appointed the Moderator of the Grenada Pastoral Charge of the St. Andrew's Kirk and the Mission churches of Belair and Samaritan.

In 1957, a new church was constructed in Samaritan and in 1958 the Government handed over a new school building for primary education, which became known as the Samaritan Presbyterian School. Dr. MacDonald landed a committee to provide a secondary school in St. Patricks and in 1963, MacDonald College was dedicated.

Around 1966, the church manse was converted in to a church hall, which we now know as Knox House, and a new manse was built in Tanteen where our Minister presently resides.

In 1969, the UCC stopped supplying Ministers to Grenada and in 1982, the Grenada Presbyterian Church became independent.



In July of 1997, we ordained our first Grenadian Minister, Rev. Roy Williams

Throughout the 170 years that this Presbyterian Church has been in existence, we have been through approximately 50 different ministers from all parts of the world including Grenada itself. They have served the Kirk faithfully and we will be forever thankful to them for their service

Only the Lord knows what the future holds
And little by little he'll reveal some
But before we move on to live our lives
We must know exactly where we've come from.

For 170 years these walls have stood strong
Through trials and triumphs within.
All of this strength comes from one man above
And we are forever grateful to him.

This church has lots of history
As well as plenty to be written
So long live our Presbyterian church
Which the Lord has to us given.