

Short address by Graham Powell during the Service celebrating our Banners
27 October 2013

When Ali and I were talking about our many banners, and which ones to highlight, today, along with the one chosen for next year's United Church Calendar, I took on the 25th Anniversary Banner. I should say that I have not been involved with production of any of our banners – but I did, with Brian Cassidy's help, take the high-resolution photograph required for the banner in the Calendar. In fact, photos of four of our banners were sent in, by request, following initial work by Brian and Don Grant.

Thinking about this 25th Anniversary Banner (*placed on the wall for all to see*), took me back to the celebration of our first 25 years during our Silver-Anniversary Weekend in 1993. I searched for my old file, which I found I had kept because I had chaired a committee charged with organizing the activities for the event. I had forgotten about that!

In that file, which was quite thick, I found a copy of the United Church's 1988-89 Stewardship Magazine opened at the page where there was a photograph of our CGIT Group working on their CGIT Banner, which, today is hanging on the back wall below the clock. In the photo I recognize Brenda Cassidy who is often here with us. The photo shows how creation of a banner can be a concerted community effort – a time of rewarding fellowship. Some of that may have been experienced in production of the Anniversary Banner, as the list of those involved in the sewing has seven names. They were: Verna Corey, Claudia Barnett – a long-time former choir member, Jean Eagle – who introduced us to the idea of an Advent Festival, the late Eleanor MacKenzie who was the first wife of the Rev. Gil MacKenzie, May Houston, Jennifer Abbott, and the late Donovan Abbott. It was Donovan and Jennifer who designed the banner.

The Banner was dedicated during the morning 25th Anniversary Service, 21 February 1993. Our guest Preacher for **both** the morning and evening Services on that day was the Rev Jim Phelps, who had been our minister during our first four formative years, 1968-1972. There were three other former ministers present that day – Rev. Brian DeLong, Rev. David Cleveland, and our minister at that time, Rev. Andrew Richardson. (*Daily Gleaner photo of the four ministers shown.*)

Using words probably of Donovan Abbott, printed in the bulletin (*bulletin shown*) of the day, the banner depicts:

“Important aspects of the Christian Life and that of the Forest Hill Congregation.

The Dove (descending), representing peace and purity, is the symbol of the Holy Spirit that is to be our teacher, guide and comforter.

The Bible, as the Word of God, contains instruction for our daily living, for dealing with others, and for worship.

The Cross, symbolizing Christ's atonement and our redemption, and the Chalice, indicating the cup used at the Last Supper, are for worship. In worship we come together to praise, ask forgiveness and to seek God's revelation.

The building is the House of God where we worship and gather, in community, for fellowship and for the work of the church. *(The church as shown on the banner has four tall eastern white cedar trees along its front. Those got too large and were cut down. The cross on the building –placed there when the building was opened in 1977 – is now painted dark blue.)*

The People represent the congregation and our aspirations to be "The People of God".

The banner has been made by members of the congregation for the celebration of the 25th anniversary on February 21, 1993. The design and sewing has taken about 160 hours of work."

This latter kind of statistic was typical of the sort of records Donovan used to keep!

While talking of Donovan and banners, I wish to say that he, with Jennifer, designed and produced the bulk of our "Seasons of the Church Year" banners *(point out each one)*. They were based on the six pictures that appeared on the backs of most of the church bulletins for 1984 *(show a sample bulletin)*.

Banners brighten and are meaningful additions to our worship space. We give thanks for them, and for all their designers and creators.