

From a cookbook published by the First Presbyterian Church of Maple Ridge
Contributed by Marlene Banks
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History of the First Presbyterian Church of Maple Ridge

On May 11, 1886, the Church was organized with the following people as charter members: Neil Macaulay, Janet Macaulay, Angus Macaulay, Isabella Macaulay (wife of Angus) Alexander Baxter, Mayzie Baxter, Jane Munro, John Macauley, Isabella Macaulay (wife of John), Sarah Ann McEacheron, Malcolm Macaulay, Jennie Macaulay, Sally Ann Clayton, George E. Fish,, and Hannah Fish. The first session was held in the M.E. Church across the street and Alexander Baxter, George E. Fish and Angus Macaulay were elected as elders. The carpenters who constructed the building of worship were John Beaton and James Stalker. Of course there were many "bees" in which even the women took part.

In a year the structure was completed and on February 12, 1888 the members dedicated their Church with sermon, prayer and song. A little later an 800 pound bell was hung in the well-braced steeple. It was hauled by Frank Black with horses and wagon from the Turner railroad station. The first moderator was A.C. Kay and the first minister was John Macaulay. Rev. John Macaulay had given the land for the Church and when he died he left his property south and west of the Church to the Church.

The ten members who joined the Church on May 10, 1887 were: Andrew Black, Janet Black, John Kennedy, Agnes Kennedy, John Black, George Black, Laura Black, William Nixon, Jennie Nixon, and William Munro. A Sunday School was begun in the early 1890's assisted by Rev. Vandevere Van Arsdale Nicholas then a student minister from Princeton Theological Seminary. He later married Margaret Black and helped our Church in many ways. The Church has continued to perform its original mission since its dedication with the exception of short periods. Although it has never grown large enough to support a minister alone without a struggle and Home Mission Assistance, there have been better and worse periods in its history. Incorporated in July 1886, it is the oldest corporation in Arenac County. Our Church was the first Church organized in Clayton Township. We are still using the original building but there have been additions, gifts, and repairs to it.