

Double celebration at St. Andrew's

By MARTHA REICHLER

Friday night, May 17, was a double celebration at the St. Andrew's United Church in Cardston. The occasion was the 65th anniversary of the United Church of Canada and celebrating the 65 years in which Bill Laidlaw has played the organ and piano for the Cardston St. Andrew's United Church.

Those in attendance were the local congregation, out of town people who had attended the church in the past, and members and wives of the Rotary Club. Bill Laidlaw is a charter member of the Cardston Rotary Club.

The evening started with a dinner followed by a program in the church hall. Master of Ceremonies Glen Christensen introduced Ardith Tjornelund,

who gave an outline of events at the church over the past 65 years.

A fashion show, featuring clothes worn during the decades since the United Church was formed, was one of the features of the program. Ardith Tjornelund and Bonnie Christensen were the fashion show commentators with Darlene Woolford at the piano.

Many of the clothes featured were types that were worn to church during those different years. Some beautiful wedding gowns were modeled and some of those were from weddings performed in this United Church.

A special tribute to Bill Laidlaw and his family was given by Ardith Tjornelund on behalf of the church, for the many years of dedication and faithful service Laidlaw spent as the church organist.

Best wishes were conveyed through letters to the church and Bill Laidlaw, from former ministers and past members of the church.

Gifts from the Rotary Club, the local church congregation and the church choir were presented to Bill Laidlaw.

The last part of the evening's events was held in the church sanctuary. The organist was Edith Lehr and pianist Helen Bilou. The choir sang a special number. Rev. Doug Cowan conducted the service.



Shannon Strang, Rae Olds and Billie Higgins (from l to r) show some of the clothes that people use to wear when they went to church in the old days.

photo by Arnim Joop

Local United Church he

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By JEFF MELCHIOR

The United Church congregations of Cardston and Magrath have been up to a great deal lately with a variety of public services and church-related activities.

One of the most important of these is their support of south and central American refugees. For the past while now the congregations have been supporting the refugees residing in a non-denominational church in Sunburst, Montana.

Since Canada is a "country of resettlement", refugees must wait outside of Canada until it is approved that they reside here. The United Church helps these people by providing food, clothing, and general support.

"It was really, really humbling for me to realize how lucky I am to live where I live," says Glen Christensen, chairman of the St. Andrew's board.

One example that really moved Christensen was seeing two 16-year-old refugees who had been surviving on the streets of San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, for 12 years of their lives. They had no education and their social skills were all geared towards survival.

"The only parable teaching Jesus gave on judgement did not include whether a person prayed, or read the bible, or even which church they belonged to," says Doug Cowan, minister for both Cardston and Magrath congregations, "but it did include 'Did you feed the hungry', 'Did you give water to the thirsty', 'Did you shelter the homeless', including refugees. Remember, Jesus was a refugee once."

For the past two years both Magrath and Cardston con-



Rev. Doug Cowan (left) and board chairman Glen Christensen are pleased with the growth of the United Church in the Cardston and Magrath area.

photo by Arnim Joop

gregations have been holding faith development meetings in their homes. The primary purpose of these groups is bible study, mainly certain passages outlined in their lectionary, but in a general sense the purpose is to give people the opportunity to discuss what it is like to be a Christian in today's world. Cowan also bases his sermon on scriptures designated for that week in the lectionary.

These meetings are held every Wednesday evening at 7:30 in Cardston at Christensen's home. Magrath meetings are held on Thursday evening at the same time at the home of Irene Ririe.

The United Church congregation in this area has grown greatly over the last couple of years. Christensen says that when he started attending in June 1989, there were only two couples his age. Now there are nine or ten

young families coming on a regular basis. "Both congregations are healthy and growing, and that's important," Cowan says.

Since last April the men in the congregation have been meeting the first Thursday morning of every month at 7:30 to have breakfast at Frankies Pizza. This has started in response to a concern that the congregation only sees each other on Sunday and that something needed to be done to increase fellowship.

This was a particular concern amongst the men because, unlike the women who have their own church organization in which they meet monthly, the men had no such way of meeting.

"One of our priorities over the next little while is to increase fellowship, so we're doing things as a church family throughout the week," says Cowan.

The annual White Gift

