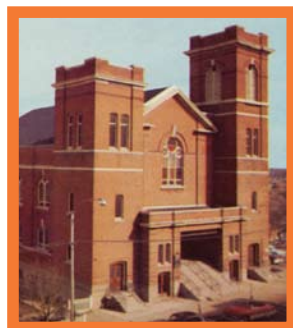


# Interfaith Generosity: McDougall United Church and Beth Shalom Synagogue, 1938

as provided by Tim O'Grady

In 1908 members of McDougall Methodist Church (today's McDougall United Church) started planning for the construction of a new sanctuary. The cornerstone for the new church was laid in April of 1909, and the church was dedicated January 15, 1910. The building held 1600 people and was much larger than their previous church, built in 1892, which held only 150. The new church soon became a venue for the city's major social events, including concerts, debates and socials. The total price for the new church was \$70,000, paid largely through a loan of \$50,000 from the Independent Order of Foresters – a fraternal benefits society still active in Canada and the United States.



*McDougall United Church*

Unfortunately, the First World War significantly lowered church attendance, and the church experienced financial difficulties into the 1920s and 1930s. By 1935 the Church had managed to pay \$70,000 back from its original \$50,000 loan, yet it still owed an additional \$40,000 as a result of accumulated interest. In 1938 the Foresters agreed to cancel the remaining debt of \$20,000 could be raised by October, 1939. Special appeals for donations went out across the city in what McDougall United called their "Victory Fund". As a result of the generosity of numerous Edmontonians who all gave a little, the Foresters received a payment of \$21,020 on May 22, 1939. Although affected by the Depression, members of Beth Shalom Synagogue were among those who donated what they had to the cause. Rabbi Eisen, who issued a \$50 cheque, proclaimed, "The men who made it possible were only too glad to let me have the money for this more than worthwhile purpose, I assure you, good friend, that your Victory shall be mine also".

*Tim O'Grady, Archivist at McDougall United Church found this story in the McDougall Church Victory Magazine, dated May 22, 1939, and the McDougall United Church 130th Anniversary Memorial Booklet, printed in 2003 by McDougall Church.*