

Religions & Worship

Huron County home to many different faith communities

Huron County has been welcoming newcomers throughout our history. Since the early 1800s, many thousands of people have arrived and made Huron County home, bringing with them a variety of faith traditions. Huron County is currently home to many different faith communities.

If you are interested in finding out more about other religions or Huron County's many places of worship, the fall issue of the Make Huron Home newsletter is here to

help. Finding a place to worship can provide a sense of belonging and connection for someone who is new to an area. In Huron, you will find over 40 places of worship providing faith-based activities and services. All religions are respected here, each having equal footing with its neighbour. Newcomers can find support and ties to language, culture and tradition within the various religious communities.

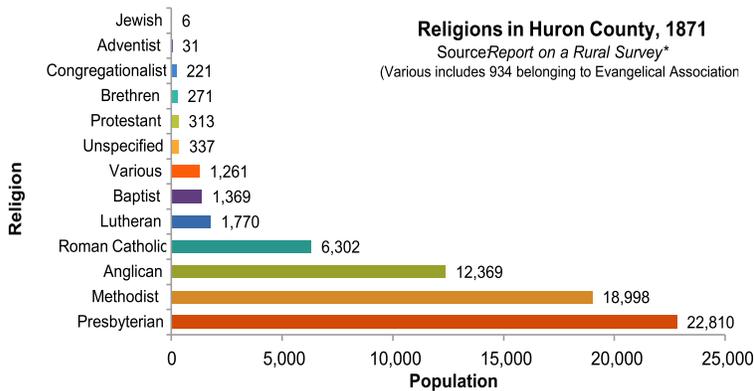
“Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life.” — Buddha



In the beginning...

In the Report on a Rural Survey of the Agricultural, Educational, Social, and Religious Life, County of Huron, Ontario (1914) published by the Cooperating Organizations of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, the results of a religious background survey were presented and examined. The report looked at the status of different religions in Huron. The Huron Survey was the first rural survey conducted in Canada and included the government census of the religions of the people of Huron County covering the years of 1871 to 1911. The 1871 census statistics for Huron County are displayed in the chart below.

Religions in Huron County in 1871

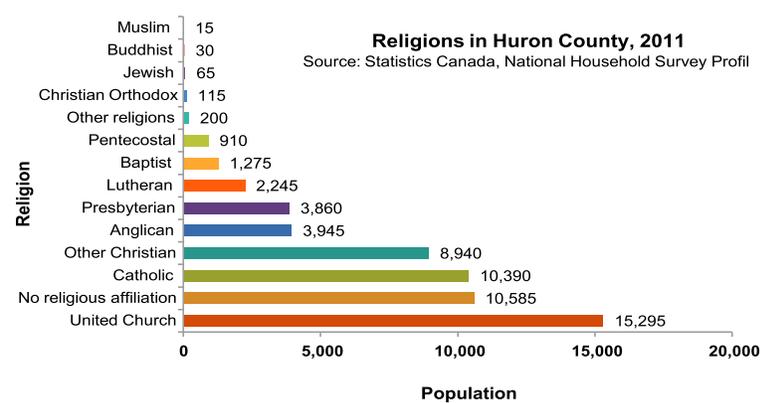


And today...

Although the majority of people in Huron are Christians, people of all faiths are welcome. Freedom of religion is a basic human right in Canada. Well-established places of worship in the county include the following faiths:

- Anglican
- Baptist
- Bethel Reformed
- Bible Chapel
- Christian Reformed
- Faith Tabernacle
- Gospel Hall
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Lutheran
- Mennonite
- Pentecostal
- Presbyterian
- Roman Catholic
- Salvation Army
- United Church

Religions in Huron County in 2011



Religious traditions - a quick overview

Islam: Islam began in Arabia and was revealed to humanity by the Prophet Muhammad. Those who follow Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe that there is only one God. The Arabic word for God is Allah.

- The word Islam means 'submission to the will of God'
- Islam is the second largest religion in the world with over 1 billion followers
- Muslims base their laws on their holy book the Qur'an, and the Sunnah

Buddhist: Buddhism is a tradition that focuses on personal spiritual development. Buddhists strive for a deep insight into the true nature of life and do not worship gods or deities. Buddhism is a way of living based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama.

- Buddhism is 2,500 years old
- There are currently 376 million followers worldwide
- There is no belief in a personal God. It is not centred on the relationship between humanity and God

Judaism: Judaism is the original of the three Abrahamic faiths, which also includes Christianity and Islam. There were around 13.1 million Jewish people in the world in 2007.

- Judaism originated in the Middle East over 3500 years ago
- Judaism was founded by Moses, although Jews trace their history back to Abraham
- Judaism has a rich history of religious text, but the most important religious document is the Torah

Christianity: Christianity is the most popular religion in the world with over 2 billion adherents. The world's biggest faith, Christianity is based on the teaching of Jesus Christ. Within Christianity there are many denominations.

- Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament
- Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God
- The Christian holy book is the Bible, and consists of the Old and New Testaments

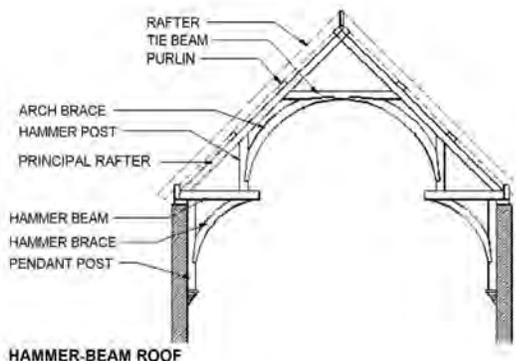
Source: BBC: Religions

Places of worship

In Ontario, in addition to their various worship traditions and practices, places of worship often provide social services such as organizing food or clothing drives for people in need, or helping newcomers settle into their new communities. Huron County churches have long well-established traditions of helping and contributing to their communities.

While many of the churches in Huron County date back to the mid- to late 19th century, some have been constructed relatively recently. The earlier-built churches in Huron County share some interesting similarities: the buildings were constructed using materials readily available, they incorporated a 'hammer-beam roof' method of roof construction, and many were examples of an architectural style known as Gothic Revival. A glimpse at some of Huron's earlier places of worship is a glimpse back in time.

Gothic Revival Definition: Gothic Revival is an architectural movement that sought to revive the Gothic style, which flourished in Europe in the medieval period. There are a number of stylistic streams of Gothic Revival architecture, though styles are often mixed. Common features between the different styles include: pointed arch windows, rib-vaulted ceilings, buttresses, steeply pitched roofs and an overall emphasis on height. Gothic Revival architecture was massively popular in Ontario, and was the most common style for religious buildings in the mid- to late 19th century. The emergence of Gothic Revival coincided with Ontario's early settlement by Europeans and was at the height of its popularity just as many of Ontario's towns and cities began to boom. Today, many Christian religious groups still associate the Gothic esthetic with their places of worship. (From the Ontario Heritage Trust: Ontario's Place of Worship - www.heritagetrust.on.ca)



HAMMER-BEAM ROOF

The diagram above depicts the hammer-beam frame structure that is common in many churches through our region. This system provides for the clear spans typically required for nave space. (Image Credit: Allan Avis Architects Inc.)



Above: Exterior of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church located in Mount Carmel, ON, with tower and roofing work completed. Original construction was completed in 1888; architectural style: Gothic Revival. (Photo credit: Allan Avis Architects Inc.)



Above: The existing nave/sanctuary of Wingham United Church, Wingham, ON. Construction was started in 1901 by builder, Bennet and Gutteridge. Structural system: timber frame/post and beam; architectural style: Gothic Revival. (Photo credit: Allan Avis Architects Inc.)

Finding a place of worship

To find a place of worship if you are...

- Christian: search Make Huron Home www.makehuronhome.ca
- Jewish: visit the London Jewish Foundation at www.jewishlondon.ca
- Buddhist: visit the Samudra Kadampa Buddhist Centre at www.learnmeditatelondon.org
- Muslim: search through the Mosques and Islamic Centers at www.londonmosque.ca

As well, you might...

- Visit a nearby place of worship
- Visit a local branch of the Huron County Library
- Check through your phonebook
- Ask a neighbour



Above: The renovated interior (sanctuary) at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church in Goderich, Ontario. Construction was started in 1896; architectural style: Gothic Revival. (Photo credit: Allan Avis Architects Inc.)



Left: The renovated sanctuary of the Exeter United Church, Exeter, Ontario. Construction start date was 1862; architectural style: Gothic Revival. (Photo credit: Allan Avis Architects Inc.)

Sources

- Ontario Heritage Trust, Ontario's Places of Worship: www.heritagetrust.on.ca
- Report on a Rural Survey of the Agricultural, Educational, Social, and Religious Life, County of Huron, Ontario (1914) * published by Cooperating Organizations of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches: www.archive.org/details/cihm_74466
- Statistics Canada, National Household Survey Profile, Huron County, Ontario, 2011
- The BBC: Religions: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions

Religious traditions resources

- Canadian Council for Religious Freedom: www.canadiancouncilforreligiousfreedom.com
- Evangelical Fellowship of Canada: www.evangelicalfellowship.ca
- Judaism 101 www.jewfaq.org/index.shtml
- Muslim Association of Canada: <http://www.macnet.ca/English/Pages/Home.aspx>

- Ontario Multifaith Council: www.omc.ca.
- The Buddhist Society www.thebuddhistsociety.org
- The Canadian Council of Churches: www.councilofchurches.ca

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The Huron County Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) formed in 2010 as one part of an overall County plan for long-term sustainability. Newcomers are a vital necessity to population growth and continued economic development in Huron County.

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