

Our Roots and their Legacy: 150 Years of Siloam United Church, 1857-2007

Forward

Two thousand and seven marks the 150th Anniversary of Siloam United Church in London, Ontario. On this occasion, it is fitting to explore our history in order to better understand the roots of our congregation, our present and our future.

This is not the first time a history of Siloam has been undertaken. This work owes much to the work completed by the 125th Anniversary History group whose excellent research has enabled this author to focus on Siloam's more recent history and other aspects of interest.

The name Siloam is taken from the name given to a pool on the edge of Jerusalem which is mentioned several times in the Old Testament and which is the site of the present day Birket Silwan pool. It is mentioned in the incident in which Jesus told the man born blind to go and wash in the pool of Siloam.¹ The word 'Siloam' means 'artificially fed' since the pool does not have its own source of water, but is fed by an underground conduit from the Virgin's Spring on the other side of the eastern hill in Jerusalem. The conduit was most likely built by King Heseekiah in the 8th Century B.C.²

Introduction

The history of Siloam is much more than the history of three buildings which have stood in North London providing a house of worship for congregants. Siloam has long been a welcoming community committed to helping others, within our own city and far beyond through worship and outreach.

The Legacy of Siloam United Church: The Martyrs of Tolpuddle

With the coming of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th Century and the accompanying Enclosure Acts in England, significant changes were brought about in the way farmland was managed. In Dorsetshire, England and in the town of Tolpuddle, these factors contributed to an over-supply of farm labourers who were forced into a situation of servitude, dependant on wealthy landowners for essentials such as shelter and a subsistence wage.³

¹ See John 9:1.

² Rose Marie Simpson and Ken Harding (eds.) *Siloam United Church, London Township, 1857-1982*. 1982, p. Forward; see also "Pool of Siloam," Bible History Online. Online: Internet: http://www.bible-history.com/jerusalem/firstcenturyjerusalem_pool_of_siloam.html

³ Anderson, Geoff. *The Martyrs of Tolpuddle Settlers in Canada*, Second Edition. Ontario: The Author, 2002, 11.

With the Industrial Revolution workers also gained the right to organize themselves to bargain for better working conditions and wages, a right which was guaranteed in law in 1824.⁴

In the town of Tolpuddle, a group of six farm labourers, led by George Loveless, came together in 1834 with hopes of organizing themselves to fight for better working and living conditions. The six men, George Loveless, his brother James Loveless, his brother-in-law Thomas Standfield, Thomas's son John Standfield, James Brine and James Hammett entitled their union 'A Friendly Society of Agricultural Workers' in Tolpuddle, and contacted the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union in hopes of gaining their support.⁵

Regarded as troublemakers for these organizing efforts, the local aristocracy moved to put a stop to the Tolpuddle six. Although organization was legal in Britain, the aristocracy in collusion with the courts managed to convict the six men under the 1797 Mutiny Act. They were able to do this because during their initial meeting the six men swore an oath of secrecy with regards to their activities. The Mutiny Act forbade the administering of unlawful oaths, and the six men were sentenced to seven years of hard labour in the penal colony of New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land.⁶

The fact that the six men were convicted on such a technicality, and with a seldom used law caused much public outrage, especially considering that aristocrats who were Masons or Lodge members routinely swore oaths. After two years of public outrage and constant attention in the newspapers the six Martyrs of Tolpuddle as they had become know were granted a pardon and free passage back to England.⁷

It took over a year for the men to receive word of their pardon and return to England. Upon their return, the men had difficulty reintegrating into their communities. Money was raised which allowed the men to lease two farms some distance from Dorsetshire, but near the end of their leases five of the six men decided to immigrate to Canada.⁸

It is believed that George and James Loveless along with James Brine arrived in Canada in 1844, followed by Thomas and John Standfield two years later.⁹

Some of the martyrs and their families settled north of the town of London in Upper Canada near present day Bryanston. The London area was growing rapidly at this time and would have made an attractive area for new settlement. By 1840 the population of the village of London had reached 1,716, not counting the garrison for British Troops and their families located in the village at present day Victoria Park.¹⁰

⁴ Ibid, 12.

⁵ Ibid, 12.

⁶ Ibid, 12.

⁷ Ibid, 12, 13.

⁸ Ibid, 13, 14

⁹ Ibid, p. 14.

¹⁰ Frederick H. Armstrong, *The Forest City: An Illustrated History of London, Canada*. Windsor Publications, Ltd. 1986, pp. 63-65.

The fame and notoriety of the five men did not follow them to the New World. Upon their arrival the men agreed to keep their past a secret. As a result their notorious past was not revealed, not even to their own families, until 1912 well after their deaths.

Upon their arrival in the London area the martyrs became the backbone of the Methodist community in North London. Having been a lay Methodist preacher in Dorsetshire England, George Loveless, was similarly active in London Township, traveling the countryside on horseback preaching to adherents before the formation of a formal church. Loveless performed services using a bible which he had purchased while in transport to the penal colony in Van Diemen's Land.¹¹

The Legacy of Siloam United Church: Methodism in Upper Canada

Methodism came to South-Western Ontario in early 19th Century, and several sects took root in the London area. In 1823 London Township was made a Circuit for the Wesleyan Methodists. The first preachers were not necessarily ordained ministers, but were full of zeal and sincerity, and travelled the countryside on horseback.¹²

In these early years Methodists were often regarded with a certain amount of disdain. Some conservative leaders, such as Anglican Archdeacon of York, John Strachan, accused Methodists of disloyalty, ignorance, and religious extremism. In addition, because many Methodists immigrated to Upper Canada from the United States they were accused of being republicans, and disloyal to the Monarchy. Furthermore, the emotional excesses and revival meetings of Methodist followers, drew criticism from the more established and traditional sects in Upper Canada.¹³

Methodist leaders, most notably Eggeron Ryerson, worked to combat these perceptions and foster acceptance of Methodists in Ontario. Ryerson worked against those calling for the Church of England to become the official church of the Canadas. In a widely reprinted letter Ryerson attacked the position of Strachan and others calling for an established Church of Canada arguing that “Our Saviour never intimated the union of his church with the civil polity of any country.”¹⁴

¹¹ Anderson, p. 18.

¹² Simpson and Harding (eds.), p. 1.

¹³ David Mills. *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1784-1850*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988, p. 52.

¹⁴ Eggeron Ryerson quoted in William Westfall. *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989, p. 25.

The Legacy of Siloam United Church: Establishing a Church

** Information in this section from 125th anniversary history

As mentioned above the Martyrs of Tolpuddle, most notably George Loveless would become the backbone of the Methodist community in North London. On March 9, 1857 Joseph O'Brien deeded land on which a church was to be built. In the previous year, O'Brien had also deeded land for a cemetery lot. Names appearing on the deed representing the church were: Thomas Knapton, Ceasar McLeod, John Fitzgerald, John O'Brien, Anthony Metcalfe, Eli Barter, Richard Scandrett, Richard Hale, John D. Fitzgerald, and William Bradshaw.

The original Siloam church erected on the O'Brien land was a wooden structure, and was considered to be one of the largest and finest churches in London Township at the time. Originally, Siloam was part of the London Circuit of churches. Rev. John B. Williams was the first minister in charge of the London Circuit.

In 1884, the four factions of Methodism were united to form the Methodist Church of Canada. In this same year, the London Circuit was divided into two circuits; St. John's (Arva) and Siloam. The Siloam Circuit consisted of three churches: The Grove, Zion and Siloam. Before the circuit was divided, the parsonage was in Arva, therefore when the circuit was divided Siloam was left without a residence for its minister. The Quarterly Board¹⁵ accepted a \$500 settlement from St. John's circuit, and in 1885 a residence for the minister was rented from Mr. J. Fitzgerald at a cost of \$85.00 per year.

At this time, congregants in the Methodist church were divided into various classes. Classes referred to the classes held for prospective church members. The church could have a large congregation in attendance on Sunday, but few of them would have been actual church members. To be a Methodist Church member, one had to have a religious experience and must have attended classes. If a class was missed, a perspective member would have to be reinstated. This led to terms such as 'removed', 'dropped', 'on trial', 'on probation' and in one case 'fallen from grace' being applied to church members.

In February 1888, a committee was formed to investigate the acquisition of land for the construction of a parsonage. Mr. S. B. Gorwill, a member of the official board, offered a half acre of land either on the north of his farm on the graded side road (Highbury Rd.) or on the fifth concession (Fanshawe Park Rd.). The conditions of the offer were that suitable buildings had to be erected and that finances had to be secured either in cash or by reliable subscription. The Board accepted the offer and approved \$1800 for the cost of the parsonage. A Mr. Kerr was awarded the construction contract for \$1785 which

¹⁵ The Quarterly Board was comprised of three members from each of the three churches in the Siloam Circuit. The nine members of the board were: Siloam: George Mitchell; F. Fitzgerald; T. Knapton. The Grove: William Smith; John Fitzgerald; S. Tackabury. Zion: J. Fitzgerald; W. R. Harding; G. Carrie. The responsibilities of the Quarterly board included inviting ministers to the charge and finances.

was to include the house, a barn, a well, a water closet and the fencing. Construction was completed on July 18, 1888 and the key given to Rev. Kennedy on July 24, 1888.

**The Legacy of Siloam United Church:
Constructing a New Church 1890-1920**

** Information in this section from 125th anniversary History

With a suitable parsonage established, the attention of the congregation focused on the church building. Documents indicate that the original wood frame church was partially destroyed by fire. The quarterly board gave permission to Siloam to either repair the damaged church or rebuild the church.

In the spring of 1891 it was decided a new church was to be built. Funds for the new church were to be raised by subscriptions consisting of three annual payments, the first payment being due by June 1892. Tenders for construction were as follows:

• Carpentering – Jas. Wilkie -	\$1410.00
• Plastering – Jas. Wilkie -	\$ 215.00
• Painting & Glass – Ed Minder -	\$ 232.00
• Brick & Stone Work – H. Hayman -	\$ 975.00
• Cut Stonework – M. Powell -	\$ 175.00
• TOTAL	\$3367.00

Church trustees George Mitchell and James Stanfield were appointed to oversee the construction of the new church. Before the old church was demolished, a farewell service was held on March 13, 1892. Addresses at the service were given by Rev. Herber Crews, and Bros. F. Lewis and J. Ralph. Rev. Jas. Phelps spoke in the afternoon at Rev. W. Godwin spoke. Evening activities included a tea meeting and phonograph entertainment.

On April 11, 1892 the trustees removed the seats and pulpit which were used in the downstairs Sunday School room of the new church until the 1950s.

The two corner stones of the new church were laid by Mrs. Dr. Eccles representing the Ladies Aid Society and Mr. W. M. Spencer, the Mayor of London. The laying of the cornerstones was celebrated with a day of activities which included music provided by the 7th Battalion Band and a picnic. Over 1000 people attended the festivities, which raised over \$500.¹⁶

The official opening of the new Siloam Methodist Church took place on Sunday, October 9, 1892. The *Christian Guardian* described the church as:

A handsome brick structure with basement, alcove and porch and is capable of holding three hundred persons. The building stands upon the site of the old church which was built thirty six years

¹⁶ \$300 was left on the cornerstones and \$225 was raised at the picnic.

ago by the late Rev. Dr. Williams. The old church had been pulled down amid some difference of opinion but with the successful consummation of the undertaking, everybody is satisfied and no one has left the church.

In June 1893, Rev. Herber Crews left the Siloam circuit and was replaced by Rev. Ferguson. At a November meeting of the board chaired by Rev. Ferguson a Sabbath School committee¹⁷ was established. This was likely the beginning of a Sunday School in the churches of Siloam Circuit.

With the church established, church business took on the form familiar today with a focus on activities of worship, repairs and maintenance.

Guest choirs, tea meetings and a Dominion Day picnic held in Port Stanley were some of the most common church activities held in the 1890s. Outreach efforts also became increasingly important when in 1892 the congregation sent money to aid distressed people in Russia.

By 1895 women began to be appointed to church committees.

The early 1900s were a time of significant change at Siloam. In May 1903, the membership of the Siloam Circuit of churches was reported at 235. This figure reflects the fact that church membership seem to have dropped in the early 1900s. Despite declining numbers, the salary for the minister was increased twice in the 1900s, in 1906 from \$700 to \$750 and in 1908 to \$800. In addition, efforts were also made to modernize. In 1908 a telephone was installed in the manse for a cost of \$5. The pastor paid \$2 and each of the three churches paid one dollar. Worship services were also changed in 1909 when a committee was formed to investigate forming a church choir.

In 1909 congregants were shocked when Rev. Thompson died during church services. His funeral expenses were paid for by the Quarterly Board.

The Legacy of Siloam United Church:

1920 – 1960

** Information in this section from 125th anniversary History

On June 10, 1925 the United Church of Canada was formed when the Methodist Church, the Congregational Union of Canada and seventy percent of the Presbyterian Church of Canada entered into a union. It was the first union of churches in the world to cross denominational lines. The impetus for this union was concerns over servicing the vast Canadian North-West and over a desire for improved overseas mission.¹⁸ As early as

¹⁷ The Sabbath School committee consisted of brothers: Carrie, Mitchell, Loveless, Treblecock, and Robson.

¹⁸ "Brief History of the United Church," Online: Internet. <http://www.unitedchurch.ca/ucc/history/>

1912, the Quarterly board of the Siloam Circuit had voted in favour of church union, showing its support for the new United Church.

The stock market crash of October 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression had a great effect on Siloam. For example the costs of social events were cut in half and many events were cancelled altogether.

During this period the church took up the cause of prohibition when in 1929 the Ontario Prohibition Union was granted permission to conduct a Sunday service.

Members of the congregation were given more control over financial and committee dealings in the church in 1935, when the first congregational meetings were held in the 1930s to discuss financial reports and activities of various church organizations.

In 1935, the Siloam and Bryanston charges were amalgamated, meaning that one minister was now responsible for six churches. This necessitated the use of a student minister with each minister preaching to three congregations on Sunday. At this time, the church official board met twice a year to discuss matters including minister's salaries, anniversary dates, presbytery delegates, annual financial statements, and other matters.

By 1938-39 the Missionary and Maintenance fund was "in dire straits" and a group of young men were recruited from the university to help increase the givings of the congregation to help maintain church activities though the financial crisis. In 1938 funds were available to replace the barn at the manse with a garage.

The onslaught of the Second World War brought forth new challenges for the church as many congregation members enlisted in the military and the congregation as a whole worked to support the war effort from home. In 1940 a petition was circulated in the congregation to prohibit alcoholic beverages as a war measure, and in 1941 each member of the congregation was encouraged to invest \$25 in war bonds to support the war. Among those from Siloam who joined the combat overseas was Blair Spencer, the student minister at Siloam, who enlisted in the R.C.A.F. and was subsequently killed in action.

The Legacy of Siloam United Church: Becoming a Modern Church 1960 – 1980

** Information in this section from 125th anniversary History

The 1960s were a time a great change at Siloam. In 1961 the Siloam – The Grove charge was formed. This arrangement would last until 1963 when The Grove and Emmanuel United Churches were amalgamated to form Gethsemane United Church, and in 1965 Siloam and Gethsemane became separate charges. Gethsemane was offered \$5000 for their equity in the parsonage and Rev. Mahoney minister at Siloam.

Rev. Mahoney spearheaded many initiatives to reach out to the families of Siloam. In 1962 he spoke of the need for a couples group which led to the creation of the Friendship

Club. This year also saw the formation of the Christian Education Committee. In addition to these initiatives an annual Vacation Bible school began in 1965. Initially this was held at Northridge Public School and then moved to the Christian Education Centre.

In 1966 and 1967 several projects were undertaken in celebration of the Canadian Centennial. These projects included painting the church, landscaping and other repairs.

In 1968 some major infrastructure developments took place. An acre of land next to the church was leased in order to provide a parking lot. In a major development, the congregation purchased the "Red School" building on Fanshawe Park Road (Now Memorial Funeral Home) for use as a Christian Education Centre at a cost of \$5000. The new C.E. Centre became a focal point for many church activities including Sunday School, church social activities, meetings, and various mid-week functions. In 1969, the C.E. Centre was rented to the Board of Education providing rental income to the church.

The 1970s witnessed many new Sunday services and changes in worship at Siloam. In 1970 the congregation began holding an annual outdoor service at the C.E. Centre, and in December the white gift service became an annual event with active participation by the Sunday School students. In 1972, an Easter sunrise service was held with a breakfast provided by the Intermediate and Senior Sunday School classes. In 1973 new hymn books were purchased for use in worship. In 1975 the fiftieth anniversary of the United Church of Canada was celebrated at Siloam using the 1925 order of service. In 1977 lay readers began reading scripture during service. In 1978 the Executive Council decided that the minimum age for church membership would be Grade ten.

Several new initiatives and groups were also developed in the 1970s to serve the congregation. In 1973 a church photo directory was released to help congregation members get to know one another. In 1976 a Bible study group was formed as well as the Men's Breakfast Club.

Outreach efforts were also important in the 1970s. In 1972 Mission festivals began to be held at Siloam, and in 1977 the congregation supported Linda Huehn's participation in the Crossroads Africa project during which she travelled to Zambia. In 1978 Siloam's minister Rev. Pocklington participated in an exchange, and as a result, Rev. John Kerr of New Zealand took over as minister of Siloam from July 1978 to July 1979.

The Legacy of Siloam United Church: Building a New Church 1980-1990

The 1980s would usher in another time of tremendous change at Siloam. In 1980 a visitation to every member and adherent was completed to provide an opportunity for suggestions and criticism. In 1981 Rev. Ron Pocklington left Siloam and an interim minister (Rev. Jack Thompson) took over until the Rev. Douglas Hallman arrived in July of that year.

In 1982 Siloam celebrated its 125th Anniversary with a number of special events.

In 1984 Siloam's congregation began thinking seriously about the future. With the church building almost a century in age the attention of the congregation focused on the future building needs of the congregation. A committee was formed to investigate funding sources and to make recommendations as to the pros and cons of keeping the old church or building a new facility.

In 1985 the future of the church building remained a key focus. In this year the Growth Fund and Church Development Committee were established to investigate the acquisition of land. At this same time the Official Board discussed the possibility of building a new church, Siloam requested Ventures-In-Mission funding and the manse was sold. Rev. Douglas Hallman left Siloam and an interim minister Rev. Bill McLeod took over until the arrival of the Rev. Kenneth Martin in 1986.

In 1986 the Board of Trustees took a key step towards the construction of a new church and acted on an offer of land from Mrs. Mabel Sproule, who offered to sell four acres of land to the church for \$1.00.¹⁹ For this act of generosity the Library Chapel in the new church was named in honour of Mabel Sproule in 1990.²⁰

1987 would be a year of major change for the Siloam congregation. The old church would be sold and C.E. Centre properties were sold and authorization was given for the construction of a new church on the property donated by Mabel Sproule on Fanshawe Park Rd.

The construction contract for the new church was given to Frank Van Brussel & Sons. On October 4, 1987 a groundbreaking service was held at the construction site and the cornerstones and stained glass window were removed for installation in the new church. In December of 1987 the final Christmas service in the old Siloam church was televised.

1988 would be a year of transition for Siloam. On June 26th 1988 the Sunday service began at the old Siloam, and then everyone walked down the road to the new church where the service continued. The old church would be sold and subsequently demolished on June 9, 1989.

In addition to the major undertaking of the construction of a new church, the congregation of Siloam remained committed to providing a welcoming environment for church adherents and reaching out to the community at large. In 1983 a Siloam representative was named to the East London United Church Outreach Cluster, a commitment of considerable involvement in some of the most in needy areas of London.

In 1988 the Youth Group celebrated the coming of the winter Olympics to Canada by traveling to see the torch pass through London. Also in this year the Siloam Friendship

¹⁹ *Siloam United Church: 129th Annual Report*, 1986, p. 10.

²⁰ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, October 14, 1990.

Club was formed as a social group for persons in their later years.²¹ In 1989 the death of Rose May Birrell, a long time and very active church member, prompted the renaming of the women's group and a garden in her honour.²²

In addition to this, several new staff members were hired in 1989 including Marie McClenny as Director of Music, Val Hodgins as a Staff Associate in Christian Education and Margaret Kennedy and Mae Blunt as Staff Associates in Pastoral Visitation. These additional staff members helped the church meet the needs of the congregation.²³

The Legacy of Siloam United Church: 'Growing' a New Church 1990-1998

The 1990s were a time of expansion at Siloam. As the congregation drastically increased in numbers, the church looked for ways to cater to the various desires of church members.

The 1990s would begin with another search for a new minister. In May a committee was formed to find a replacement for the departing Rev. Ken Martin. In September the Rev. Gary Boratto was welcomed as a supply minister until a full time minister could be found. In January 1991 the Rev. Richard W. Hawley was invited to become minister of Siloam and was officially welcomed in April of that year.²⁴

Reports from this era indicate a rapidly growing congregation. The 1992 Annual Report noted that "Every Sunday this fall and winter we have had new people in church. Some are 'shopping' for a church home, some have already made the decision to become part of our family. How do we make sure that new people feel welcome and needed? Are there better ways to integrate new people into our church family?"²⁵

Recognizing the need to help the congregation grow, Rev. Hawley made several recommendations including that name tags be ordered to help church members get to know one another. He also recommended that a series of 'cottage meetings' be initiated. With 8-10 people attending each meeting the meetings were intended to provide an opportunity for people to meet one another and discuss their hopes for the church. A new photo directory of church members was also undertaken to aid with this process.²⁶

To meet the needs of a growing congregation Church Council decided that Siloam would begin to offer two services on Sunday mornings with one service on Sundays during the

²¹ *Siloam United Church: 131st Annual Report*, 1988, pp. 16, 19.

²² *Siloam United Church: 132nd Annual Report*, 1989, p. 5.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 6.

²⁴ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May 27, 1990; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, September 16, 1990; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, January 13, 1991; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, April 14, 1991; *Siloam United Church: 134th Annual Report*, 1991, p. 4.

²⁵ *Siloam United Church: 135th Annual Report*, 1992.

²⁶ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, September 8, 1991; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, March 9, 1994.

summer months. The Rev. Stan MacDonald was also hired as a salaried employee for New Church Development. His duties included greeting congregants on Sunday mornings and visiting new attendees on Mondays and Tuesdays.²⁷

Youth programs were also growing rapidly at Siloam at this time. In 1991 Val Hodgins initiated the 'Religion and Life' program for the Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Guides who meet weekly at Siloam, many of whom chose to attend church at Siloam.²⁸ In 1994 a Beaver Colony was formed at Siloam. A Junior Youth Group for children in grades 5-8 and a Senior Youth Group were also created.²⁹

In 1995 Executive Council decided that a second full-time minister was needed at Siloam to meet the needs of the growing congregation. A vacancy was declared in February and in May the congregation met to arrange the settlement of Rev. John Lougheed at Siloam. John Lougheed began work at Siloam on July 1, 1995.³⁰

In October of 1995 Rev. Hawley was granted permission from council to approach the board of Gethsemane United Church about the possibility of amalgamating the two congregations. This meeting was unsuccessful.³¹

Nineteen Ninety-Six saw two important outreach efforts undertaken by Siloam and other local churches come to fruition when two refugee families were aided in their efforts to immigrate to Canada. The first was the family reunification of LemLem and her husband Kifle Mekuria with LemLem's brother Josef Teklesenbet from Ethiopia. Unfortunately while awaiting approval to come to Canada in Rome, Josef's refugee claim was denied as he was considered to be in a safe place. The second was the sponsorship of the Jozic family from Bosnia. The sponsorship provided the congregation with a unique opportunity to share in the financial, emotional, and settlement support of the family which arrive in Canada on August 27th.³²

Nineteen Ninety-Six also saw a change in the worship service when the hymn books *Voices United* were adopted by the congregation.³³

Nineteen Ninety-Six would once again begin with a change in ministry at Siloam. On January 15, 1997 Rev. John Lougheed announced that he would be leaving Siloam to accept a position as a Resident in Pastoral Care at the Vancouver Hospital. He left Siloam in June of 1997 and a vacancy for a second minister was declared. At this same time Rev. Stan McDonald informed council that he would not be continuing with paid work at Siloam, he would, however, continue greeting congregants on Sunday mornings.

²⁷ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May 2, 1993; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, October 12, 1994.

²⁸ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, January 13, 1991.

²⁹ *Siloam United Church: 137th Annual Report*, 1994, pp. 6, 15.

³⁰ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, February 5, 1995; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May 17, 1995.

³¹ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, October 17, 1995.

³² *Siloam United Church: 139th Annual Report*, 1996, p. 28.

³³ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, April 1996.

Rev. Rick Hawley put forth a motion to present Stan with the title Minister Emeritus in recognition for his ministry work at Siloam.³⁴

Despite some changes in the ministry at Siloam the Congregation also kicked off a celebration marking the 140th Anniversary of the church. Events included a tea, a fashion show, a roast beef dinner, and a large garden party held at the Leach Family Home.³⁵

In 1997 Siloam welcomed a new second minister the Rev. Catherine Patterson to the church with a covenanting service held in October.³⁶ At the end of 1997 a Bible was purchased in memory of Trudy Haworth to be placed on the lectern in the sanctuary.

The Legacy of Siloam United Church: Years of Transition 1998-2000

1998 would once again be a year of significant changes at Siloam. In January the property committee informed council of the large donation made by the Kiwanis Club in memory of Catherine Newton for the construction of a Memorial Children's Garden at the front of the church. The beautiful garden was completed in June of 1998.³⁷

In February of 1998 a three octave set of hand bells were purchased with funds from the Catherine Newton memorial fund. The new hand bells prompted the creation of two hand bell choirs (an adult group and a junior group) which have become an important part of worship service and special events at Siloam.³⁸

Perhaps the most drastic change which occurred at Siloam in 1998 was the announcement that Rev. Richard W. Hawley would be leaving Siloam and a committee would be formed to seek a new lead minister for Siloam.³⁹

With the departure of Rev. Hawley a temporary supply minister was appointed to Siloam. Rev. Bob Strachan arrived in June of 1998, and remained until January 1999 when Rev. Thomas Davies took over.⁴⁰

Despite the upheaval in ministry the congregation attempted to remain committed to worship and outreach to the community at large. In June of 1998 the church council was

³⁴ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, January 15, 1997.

³⁵ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, February 19, 1997; *Siloam United Church Celebrating 140 Years Annual Report*, 1997, p. 24.

³⁶ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, September 17, 1997. The covenanting service was held on October 5, 1997.

³⁷ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, January 21, 1998; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May / June 1998.

³⁸ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, February 18, 1998; *Siloam United Church: 142nd Annual Report*, 1999, pp. 1, 2.

³⁹ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, March 18, 1998.

⁴⁰ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, June 17, 1998; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, November 18, 1998.

informed of the need for each United Church congregation to contribute \$365.00 to the Healing Fund, a foundation set up by the United Church of Canada to compensate First Nations peoples harmed by residential schools.⁴¹ In September 1998 Siloam's commitment to E.L.U.C.O. was retained with a donation of \$1000.00.⁴² In March of 1999 Siloam pledged money to aid a refugee family in covering the cost of DNA testing required to allow a father and his children to stay together in Canada.⁴³

The effects of having no lead minister and a second minister on medical leave were felt deeply in 1998 and 1999. A number of groups including the Devereux Singers, Junior Singers, A Joyful Sound and the Men's Breakfast Club either did not meet during the year or folded up all together.⁴⁴ In addition concerns were raised about the decline in Sunday School attendance.⁴⁵ To help cope with the shortage of ministers at Siloam during this time Rev. Dolly Dickens was hired on a contract basis to assist with visitations and other duties at Siloam. Her contract would be extended many times during her time at Siloam.⁴⁶

The long search for a new lead minister at Siloam ended in May of 1999 when Rev. Dr. David Williamson was welcomed.⁴⁷ With the arrival of a new minister, Siloam worked to remain committed to its outreach efforts. In June of 1999 Siloam joined with six other local churches to sponsor a refugee family from Kosovo.⁴⁸

After several months on medical leave Rev. Catherine Patterson announced that she would be leaving Siloam in September of 1999. A collection was taken up to provide Rev. Patterson with a gift thanking her for her time at Siloam.⁴⁹

Upon the departure of Rev. Patterson church council began to reassess Siloam's position including the key question of whether or not Siloam could afford the cost of a second minister. It was decided that the second minister was very important to the Siloam community particularly to the youth of the church. Therefore a search committee was formed to seek a new second minister.⁵⁰

The end of 1999 and the beginning of a new millennium brought many changes to Siloam. In October of 1999 Rev. Williamson led a modernization effort requesting improved internet service for the church as well as a church website to provide information to the congregation and community.⁵¹

⁴¹ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, June 17, 1998.

⁴² *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, September 15, 1998.

⁴³ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, March 17, 1999.

⁴⁴ *Siloam United Church: 142nd Annual Report*, 1999, pp. 1, 2.

⁴⁵ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, October 14, 1998.

⁴⁶ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, January 27, 1999; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, April 21, 1999; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, February 7, 1999.

⁴⁷ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May 16, 1999.

⁴⁸ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, June 16, 1999.

⁴⁹ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, September 2, 1999.

⁵⁰ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, September 22, 1999.

⁵¹ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, October 20, 1999.

A number of millennium celebrations were undertaken at Siloam in the year 2000. A large ‘Millennium Gift’ fundraising campaign raised \$44,800 for the church and outreach projects and the congregation celebrated with a number of events including a large gala at the Leach Family home, and a new church photo directory.⁵²

In 2000 Siloam also marked the 75th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada. The anniversary was marked with decorations using special ribbons distributed by the United Church and a luncheon to mark both the anniversary and the contributions of the U.C.W. to Siloam.⁵³ In May 2000, Siloam issued a call to Rev. Margaret Scott to take on the position of Siloam’s Education and Development Minister beginning July 1, 2000.⁵⁴

Despite the settlement of two new ministers at Siloam in 2000 the church continued to struggle to retain members and youth. Church membership was reported as 873 resident and non-resident members and 489 families. Even with these numbers, several groups including the youth group, and ladies chorus were discontinued.⁵⁵

Among the most major projects undertaken in 2000 was the discussion and work undertaken by Rev. Williamson and the congregation to revamp the church constitution and develop a new mission statement. Discussion centered around the fact that Siloam’s previous mission statement; “To be witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ through worship, teaching and service” was considered too vague and difficult to relate to today’s church. These discussions would begin several months of work towards the development of a new constitution and mission statement.⁵⁶

The Legacy of Siloam United Church: Our Recent Past 2001 – 2007

In April of 2002 Rev. Margaret Scott decided to leave Siloam. A farewell service was held on June 23, 2002.⁵⁷

Following the departure of Rev. Scott, and considering the shrinking numbers in the congregation, the need for a second minister at Siloam was re-evaluated. It was subsequently decided that Siloam would instead hire two Staff Associates on a part time basis. The positions would be for youth ministry and a ministry of visitation.⁵⁸

⁵² *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, January 19, 2000; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, February 16, 2000;

⁵³ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, January 19, 2000; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May 17, 2001.

⁵⁴ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May 21, 2000.

⁵⁵ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May 17, 2000; *Siloam United Church: 143rd Annual Report*, 2000.

⁵⁶ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, September 20, 2000.

⁵⁷ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, April 16, 2002.

⁵⁸ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May 21, 2002.

In July 2002, three congregation members were selected to fill these Staff Associate positions on an interim basis. Lynn Mellon was selected for the position of children and visitation ministry, while Cynthia and Brian MacKinnon were selected to lead ministry to the teens and youth of Siloam.⁵⁹ In July of 2003, church council decided to make the two staff associate positions permanent. Therefore two vacancies were declared at Siloam for Staff Associates.⁶⁰

In August and September of 2003, the staff associate positions were filled when Siloam welcomed Rev. Catherine Moore as the minister of visitation and retained Lynn Mellon in the capacity of Children and Youth Ministry. Cynthia and Brian MacKinnon decided not to seek the paid positions, but remain as leaders of the teen youth group on a volunteer basis.⁶¹

In addition to changes in the ministry staff at Siloam, the church also experimented with changes to the worship service. At this time church membership was reported at 902 families with reduced numbers in attendance at Sunday services. Given these numbers church council began to reconsider the necessity of holding two services on Sunday mornings. It was eventually decided that two services would continue to be offered, but with a different format at each. The earlier 9:15am service would be revamped as a contemporary service with the hope that the service would attract new members looking for a more modern service, while the 10:30am service would retain its traditional format.⁶²

To accommodate the new contemporary format of worship at Siloam, the worship committee worked to research new ways of integrating technology into the service. In addition to this, church council approved the installation of a new sound and multimedia system in the church sanctuary. Several members of the congregation lent their expertise to the installation of the new sound system in an effort to keep the cost of the new system affordable.⁶³

Despite changes in ministry and service, Siloam's commitment to outreach remained strong. In particular the congregation participated in a number of refugee sponsorships. In 2001 and 2002 Siloam supported the efforts of Yousef Sadiqui to aid the immigration of his mother to Canada from Pakistan.⁶⁴ In 2003 Siloam aided a single mother of five children to immigrate to Canada from Afghanistan, and in 2005 Siloam, along with a

⁵⁹ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, July 24, 2002.

⁶⁰ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, July 22, 2003.

⁶¹ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, July 22, 2003 and *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, September 24, 2003.

⁶² *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, March 19, 2003; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, June 15, 2004.

⁶³ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, November 20, 2002; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, April 20, 2004; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May 17, 2005.

⁶⁴ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, August 27, 2002.

number of area churches, sponsored the Khalil family of the Sudan who arrived in Canada in June of 2005.⁶⁵

Siloam also remained committed to its surrounding community through various outreach projects. In October of 2002 the City of London's Unity Project, a home for homeless youth, was relocated to Mabel Sproule's farmhouse on the edge of Siloam's property. Siloam assisted the Unity Project providing meals, and other assistance.⁶⁶ In addition to this effort Siloam remained the largest supporter of ELUCO, and congregation members continued to volunteer as servers for the hospitality meals held at St. John the Evangelist Church.⁶⁷

Under the leadership of Rev. David Williamson, Siloam strove to better define its values and remain relevant to Canadian society. In 2004 and 2005 Siloam responded to changes in provincial and federal policy and defined a same-sex marriage policy.⁶⁸ In 2005 a committee of church members also undertook the task of defining Siloam's core values in an effort to both attract newcomers to the church, and to ease the congregation through times of transition for example following the departure of a minister. The result of this committee's work is the "Growing our Roots" core values. The five core values outlined were: Outreach, Inclusiveness, Fellowship, Spiritual Integrity, and Stewardship.⁶⁹

In February of 2006 at the annual meeting Rev. David Williamson announced his intention to retire at the end of 2006. Therefore a search committee was formed to seek a new minister for Siloam. The career and ministry of David Williamson was marked with a farewell service during Siloam's annual advent potluck and carol sing.⁷⁰

In 2007, Siloam will kick off the celebration of its 150th Anniversary. Plans include the return of former ministers Richard Hawley, John Lougheed, and Doug Hallman. Several congregational dinners are also planned as well as a large gala at the Spinney. As this study has demonstrated, Siloam has a rich heritage to build on as we move forward. For 150 years Siloam has been a welcoming community committed to worship, outreach and fellowship.

On September 4, 2007, Rev. Sheila Macgregor began her call as Worship and Pastoral Care Minister at Siloam United Church.

⁶⁵ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, May 20, 2003; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, June 15, 2004; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, June 21, 2005.

⁶⁶ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, October 15, 2002

⁶⁷ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, July 22, 2003; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, February 4, 2004; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, October 12, 2004.

⁶⁸ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, June 21, 2005.

⁶⁹ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, June 21, 2005; *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, December 13, 2005.

⁷⁰ *Siloam United Church: Church Council / Executive Council Minutes*, February 5, 2006.

Appendix: Ministers of Siloam United Church

London Circuit – Siloam

1857 – John A. Williams; John S. Clarke
1858 – John A. Williams; Amos Russ
1859 – John G. Turver; Amos Russ
1860-1861 – James Laird; Samuel Tucker
1862-1863 – William English; Isaac Barber

** In 1864 the circuit was divided Siloam became part of the London South Circuit

London South Circuit

1865 – Noble F. English
1866-1868 – James Dyer
1869-1871 – Richard Forman
1872-1873 – Noble English (died in 1873)
1874-1876 – Benjamin Sherlock
1878 – Thomas Crews (Arva) and Albert Crews
1879 – Thomas Crews and George Lounds
1881-1882 – Joseph S. Calling (Arva)
1882-1883 – Francis Cassidy

** 1884 Two new circuits formed – St. John's and Siloam

Siloam Circuit

1884-1887 – James E. Ford
1887-1890 – Rev. James Kennedy
1890-1893 – Rev. Heber Crews
1893-1896 – Rev. J.A. Ferguson
1896-1897 – Rev. J. Russell
1897-1900 – Rev. J. W. Robinson
1900-1902 – Rev. Quance
1902-1905 – Rev. Fair
1905-1909 – Rev. Thompson (Died in Service early 1909)
April 1909 – Rev. Mahan
1909-1913 – Rev. Shaw
1914-1916 – Rev. A.D. Whalley (married Louisa Loveless, 1921)
1917-1919 – Rev. G.C. Gifford
1919-1921 – Rev. Harold Williams
1922-1925 – Rev. A. J. Love
1925-1928 – Rev. S. R. Johnston

1928-1935 – Rev. D. D. Thomson

Siloam – Bryanston Circuit of six churches

1935-1943 – Rev. C. H. Quaife

1943-1944 – Rev. G. E. Morrow

1944-1950 – Rev. A. J. Elson

1950-1960 – Rev. G. T. Simpson

1960 – Rev. Duncan McTavish (Interim Supply Minister)

1961-1971 – Rev. H. J. Mahoney (Siloam – The Grove until 1965)

** 1965 Siloam becomes self supporting

1971-Feb. 1981 – Rev. R. Pocklington

1981 (Feb. – June) – Rev. Jack Thompson (Interim Supply Minister)

1981-1986 – Rev. Douglas Hallman

1986-1990 – Rev. Ken Martin

1990-1991 – Gary Baratto (Supply Minister)

1989-1995 – Val Hodgins (Staff Associate)

1991-1998 – Rev. Richard Hawley

1995-1997 – John Lougheed (2nd Minister)

1997-1999 – Catherine Paterson (Youth and Visitation Ministry)

1998-1999 – Rev. Bob Strachan (Supply Minister)

1999-Rev. Tom Davies (Supply Minister)

1999-2006 – Rev. Dr. David Williamson (retired Dec 31, 2006)

1999-2000 – Rev. Dolly Dikens (Youth and Visitation Ministry)

2000-2002 – Rev. Marg Scott (Youth and Visitation Ministry)

2002-2003 – Cynthia & Brian MacKinnon (Youth Ministry)

2002-Present – Lynn Mellon (Staff Associate - Children and Youth Ministry)

2003-Present – Rev. Catherine Moore (Visitation and Newcomers Ministry)

2007 – Rev. Barry Moore (Supply Minister)

2007-Present – Rev. Sheila Macgregor

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