



**Allan Appleby, left, co-chairman of the Siloam United Church building committee, and Rev. Kenneth Martin display a sketch of a new \$1.2-million building to replace the existing church.**

## **History repeated as land donated for a new United Church building**

History has repeated itself at Siloam United Church. Rev. Kenneth Martin, minister of the church at Highbury and Fanshawe Park Road, said congregation member Mabel Sproule has donated land for construction of a new building. The donation duplicates the generosity of Joseph O'Brien, her husband's grandfather and a founder of the chapel, who was the driving force behind the construction of the original structure 130 years ago. 'The grandparents of several congregation members were involved in the building of the existing church which, in its early days, was known as the Siloam Methodist Church, Martin said.

The recent donation of 1.6 hectares (four acres) north of Fanshawe Park Road was one of the factors in the decision to build, Martin said. The existing building isn't large enough for the congregation of 250 families. Parking is a problem and there is not enough room for Sunday school classes, which have been held in a nearby building. The land, valued at \$250,000, has substantially reduced the cost for the new church, which will accommodate 400 members. The \$1.2-million building will house a multi-purpose gymnasium and a large Christian education facility, Martin said.

The seats will be movable so concerts and plays can be held in the sanctuary. "We envision this building to be a focal point in the community," Half the building costs will be covered by the sale of the original site, while the remainder will come from donations and a loan from the United Church of Canada. The building fund has already surpassed the construction costs of the existing building, which 130 years ago cost \$3,367. Construction is expected to start in September, with the opening planned for Easter.

**A commemorative window over the front door and the two cornerstones will be used in the new structure.**

**By Wayne MacPherson  
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