

# Service starts in old church, finishes in new one.

## \$1.58-million Siloam United Opens



Rev. Kenneth Martin leads 200 parishioners from the old Siloam United Church to their new building 500 metres (about 1,600 feet) west on Fanshawe Park Road.

Nearly 200 men, women and children stepped out of a page of history Sunday and marched a country block into a new era. They made the move quietly but dramatically in mid-church service, leaving behind the aging Siloam United Church on Highbury Avenue in London Township and heading west along Fanshawe Road to their sparkling new place of worship.

There, in the larger \$1.58-million Siloam United Church, they sat through the last half of the service

Age played a big part in what Martin was saying. Abraham, he noted, was "picking up stakes and moving" when he was 75. And now the congregation would be doing the same, 131 years after the birth of their church.

Siloam had its beginning in 1857 when a man named Joseph O'Brien donated the land for the first building on a location that is now the northeast corner of Highbury and Fanshawe.

The building was replaced in 1892 by the present structure.

The old and new buildings sit just over north London's border in settings that have retained a countryside appearance. A white ceiling fan whirled silently in the old building as Martin prepared the congregation for the move. The stained glass window from above the door had already been moved to the new building, along with the cornerstones.

There is a possibility the congregation may have to return to the old church at least one more time. That

on wooden chairs that will soon be replaced by regular pews. They were still in the old yellow brick church, overflowing the pews, and filling the chairs that had been strung along the two aisles, when Rev. Kenneth Martin spoke of the need, challenge and spirit of change.

"Abraham was not a victim of change - he was an agent of change."

"Tradition has it that the first church burned down," said Martin as he walked with others toward the new structure, "but there doesn't seem to have been anyone who actually remembered seeing it burn."

The land for the new church was also donated - this time by congregation member Mabel Sproule who lives on an adjoining farm.

Martin is a comparative newcomer to Siloam. A native of British Columbia, he took over as minister two years ago after moving from Toronto.

depends on whether lighting for the new building arrives from Germany before next Sunday.

Meanwhile, a for sale sign sits outside the old building. Realtor and church member Allan Appleby said the asking price is \$249,000.

In spite of this, said Appleby, "there is a possibility the building will be dismantled and sold back to the congregation in pieces."

By Don Collins  
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