

Colborne Baptist Church closes

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PHOTO BY MANDY MARTIN
The Reverend Agnes Lee, right, with musician Adele Simmons of Whitby prepare for the final service of celebration and thanksgiving Monday afternoon at Colborne Baptist Church.

With a final service of celebration and thanksgiving, Colborne Baptist Church closed its doors Monday afternoon.

The church at 139 King Street East, Colborne, will be put up for sale.

The church was built in 1882 and formerly dedicated in July the same year. The first minister was the Rev. George Richardson.

"There was a time when East Colborne was a real Baptist settlement," the Rev. Agnes Lee smiles as she recalls some of the church's history. "Now, not enough people attend. If they can't bring their television to church, they don't come. But,," she says optimistically with a smile, "God is still on the throne!"

The Rev. Lee, who "officially" retired years ago, has been taking the Colborne services for the past 17 years. On Sunday, her relatives gathered to celebrate her 80th birthday coming up later this year.

As the church filled with families and relatives of former congregants and Colbornites, Elsie Lee prepared to give an outline of some of the history of the church. Back in the early years, she discovered, Colborne was requested to raise \$100 a year for the salary of their pastor. The Baptist Convention would match that \$100 with a \$200 contribution. Colborne services

were held Sunday afternoons. In the morning, a pastor led service at Wicklow (also asked to raise \$100).

The Mission Circle was formed in 1882 after a gathering heard of the work of missionary A.V. Timpani. One notable member of the Mission Circle/Ladies' Aid was Mrs. Newton Turney, President for 47 years.

Another long-time congregant of dedicated service was Fred Morrow who served as Senior Deacon for 30 years and also as Sunday School Superintendent. The Sunday School was organized in 1883.

At a Baptist council meeting January 1884, delegates recognized the Colborne church as a registered Baptist Church in full fellowship.

There followed some boom years at the turn of the century and into the first decades. Records indicate 64 baptisms were held 1906-10 under the pastorate of J.B. Davies.

"At Victoria Beach, down on the lake, there was a real Baptist summer settlement," Elsie Lee recalls. "There was a beautiful beach there. Our congregation really grew in the summer months!"

What happened?

"The lake kept eating away the shoreline. Some cottagers were even swept away, and then others moved. There's no beach there now. A lot changes over the years."

Elsie Lee was asked to be the "temporary" church clerk to replace a

woman who moved from the village "I served 17 years as a temporary," Elsie laughs.

Pastor for the Monday services was the Rev. Agnes Lee, with message delivered by Pastor Peter Moore of Norwood Baptist Church. Closing prayer was given by the Rev. Dr. Gordon Finlay who served as Master of Ceremonies at the reception following.

Music was provided by Brenda Mann, Moderator of Trent Valley Association; Julie VanderNuelen, Adele Simmons of Whitby, Tass Corbier and Carmen Lawrence.

The stained glass windows of the church had recently been restored by Linda Whaley. Each was given as a memorial. On Monday, the memorial plaques from beneath the windows were presented to the respective families.

Receiving memorial plaques were Phyllis Lanham (for Arthur Keagan plaque); Shirley Seale (Muriel & Gordon Haynes); Elsie Lee (Clarence and Annie Peters and Mabel); the Rev. Ken Bellous (for Rev. Cecil Dolby); Marion Palmer (Lydia Morton); Hazel Davis (Harry and Edith Jones); Elizabeth Laird (Don and Lucie Lee); Agnes Lee (Doris VanSlyke); Clifford Taylor (Mary Chatterson); Wanda Blackmore (Hazel Stone) and Marie Morrison for Roland Morrison.

The Memorial Cross was presented to Cobourg Baptist Church.