

Pastor Don Fitchett, of Maple Avenue Baptist Church, looks over a certificate he received from his first church in Shedden.
Photo by Ted Brown

Baptist Church's Pastor celebrates 50th anniversary

When Pastor Don Fitchett at Maple Avenue Baptist Church delivered his sermon to the congregation two Sundays ago, he admitted it wasn't a new sermon—he'd actually delivered it before.

But the congregation had no problem with him doing so, as it was the first sermon he preached to a small congregation at Shedden Baptist Church (near St. Thomas), 50 years ago to the Sunday.

"It was the last Sunday in September of 1953, and I was 21-years-old," recalls Fitchett, "I was a part-time minister at that church at that time before I was ordained. There were probably a dozen people in that congregation."

Originally a circuit church with the Baptist Church, Shedden was Fitchett's first church, before he was ordained following his education at Western University.

"I spent seven years at Shedden, then took courses at Western from 1960 until '63," said Fitchett. "After I was ordained, I moved to St. Thomas Baptist Church."

Remaining at St. Thomas until 1980, Fitchett held charges at Kitchener Baptist Church from 1980-88, then moved to Orangeville until he retired in December of 1999.

He has held the position of interim minister at Maple Avenue Baptist for the past year, while the congregation is searching for a full-time pastor.

"I felt it was appropriate to use the same sermon as that first time in Shedden," said Fitchett. "I remember being so nervous before delivering it that first time—I read it over twice and it was seven minutes long."

"Strangely," he joked, "I wasn't anywhere near as nervous this time."

Fitchett has a number of interesting ties with the Georgetown Church he is now

leading.

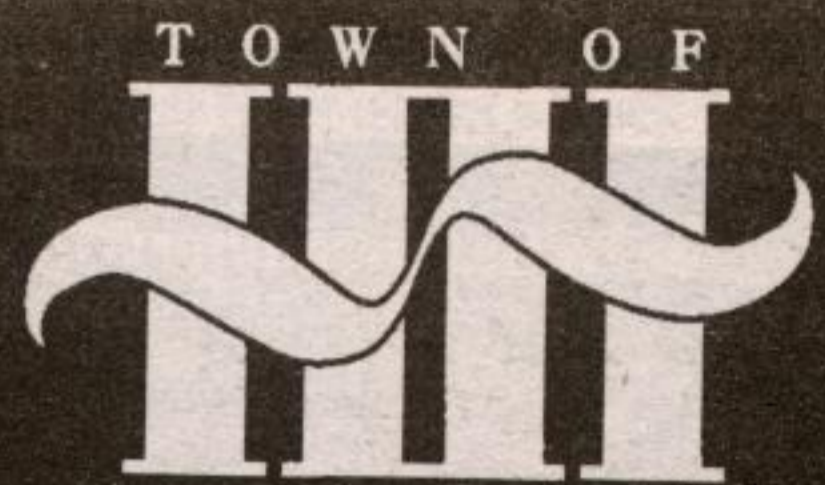
"The first minister at Maple Avenue (Baptist) from 1960 until '66 was Rev. Bruce Woods," said Fitchett. "Interestingly, Bruce Woods was the one who lead me to the Lord when I was a teenager."

The connections with Maple Avenue don't stop there. A subsequent Maple Avenue minister, Rev. Ed Mitchell, was present for Fitchett's ordination.

As he celebrated his 50th year in the ministry last Sunday, Fitchett was visited by a number of old friends, many from his previous churches.

"I was most pleased to have the first infant I ever dedicated at Shedden, back in 1954, to be in the congregation Sunday," said Fitchett. "He brought his mother to the service—it was such a wonderful feeling, to see him and his mother, almost 50 years later."

—By Ted Brown, staff writer



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