

St. Paul's in Nobleton marks its 25th anniversary

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Nobleton celebrates 25 years in their current home on King Road.

One of the strengths of the congregation is its commitment to children's ministry, according to Pastor Jeff Loach. One of the most significant ministries that has drawn people from the community to St. Paul's has been their annual Bible Fun Camp, Camp WannaKnowGod.

The general makeup of the people who attend St. Paul's is increasingly diverse. They have several young families, as well as a good mix of seniors, youth, children and other adults. Many are not of a Presbyterian background originally, and the ethnic diversity is reflective of the community, too, Loach observed.

Numbers are growing. Loach said they will receive a half-dozen new members this month, and they received new members back in the spring, too.

Loach said their active youth group could use some more kids.

There are so many things that tantalize young people today that the youth group which is for the whole community, not just St. Paul's has become just one more thing to do among many. Our youth pastor, Dave Mullings, and his team of volunteers seek to bring fun and learning together each Friday evening.

Church history

In 1958, St. Paul's was established. There had been other Presbyterian churches in the area but none in "downtown" Nobleton and a need was felt to plan a new church. Longtime residents of Nobleton marvel how, in 55 years the church has grown from a small, concrete block pink church to the attractive building it is today.

It was a small group of local families who formed the first congregation. They first met in a one-room building called the "Orange Hall," located on the east side of Highway 27 north of the King Road. A pump organ was the instrument of choice for music and it is hard to believe that only 55 years ago, that first meeting place for the church had no indoor plumbing!

The late 1950s saw real growth in the village of Nobleton. Just as developers today provide building sites for parks and common space, so too was a site provided by a local developer for a new church building. The site chosen was where the current fire hall is now located. Fortunately for St. Paul's the Township saw a need to build a fire hall and purchased that property from St. Paul's. This allowed the church to build at its present location where there was space for a parking lot and room for future expansion.

The original church had marked improvements: flush toilets, a sanctuary, a large Sunday school room and a tiny 8-foot-by-6-foot kitchen. The building constructed of "oversized" concrete blocks costing only 13 cents a block became known to locals as the Pink Presbyterian Church. It is a true story that when volunteers gathered to paint the church, they discovered that the red brick paint they had purchased had been mislabeled and it was pink. They painted the church pink! The congregation flourished as "the Pink Church" and eventually purchased two school portable building to accommodate expanding children's programs.

Until 1983, St. Paul's was paired with St. Andrew's Church, King City, as a two-point charge "one pastor served both congregations. In this case, the pastor's home was in King City.

Significant growth necessitated a full time pastor and the erection of a larger facility in Nobleton. In 1983, the two congregations each became single-point charges and St. Paul's purchased a church manse on Cross Avenue.

The congregation began focusing on building a new church building. The original pink church building still exists today but was bricked over so that, from the outside, the whole building looked the same. The old church sanctuary became a gymnasium.

Today, the congregation is served by Jeff Loach, the senior pastor and David Mullings, the youth director. The original pump organ was retired and Haydn Evans, the director of music, leads the congregation with a keyboard, a grand piano, or electric organ. St. Paul's continues to grow, and on Nov. 17 the congregation of St. Paul's will celebrate 25 years in the present building. An invitation is extended to the community, whether you have ever been a part of the St. Paul's or not. Please drop in and see what they are all about. You will feel most welcomed.

The service is casual and starts at 10 a.m. There is a nursery for toddlers, church school for those interested and following the service, a complimentary lunch will be offered. There is always lots going on at St. Paul's, take time to visit the church web site at www.stpaulsnobleton.ca.