

United churches throughout Dufferin to mark 100th anniversary with community events

By Paula Brown

Three church congregations in Dufferin County will be coming together to celebrate the 100th year anniversary of the United Church of Canada.

Trinity Primrose United Church, Westminster United Church and High-Country United Church will be hosting four events over the span of a week to commemorate the centennial milestone. The ministers presiding over the celebrations will be Rev. Ann Harbridge, Rev. Janet Jones and student minister Aidan Legault.

"The world today has changed. A hundred years ago everybody went to church, even 50 years ago everybody went to church. Today that's not true. So, for us to still be here serving the community in this day and age, is a big deal and we need to celebrate it," said Rev. Ann Harbridge from Trinity Primrose United Church.

The festivities will kick off on June 7 at 11 a.m. at High Country United Church in Camilla, where the congregations will host an old-time gospel service. Westminster United Church in Orangeville will then host a Pentecost/Communion/Anniversary service on Sunday (June 8) at 10:30 a.m.

On the day of the 100th anniversary (June 10), Trinity Primrose United Church in Shelburne will host a service with a musical element., starting at 7 p.m.

"We're going to be singing a couple hymns from each of the hymn books that have been a part of the United Church's tradition in those 100 years," said Rev. Harbridge. "Some of the hymns we still sing today, some of them we don't, but it'll be fun to sing those again."

The final event in the centennial celebration will be an old-fashioned barn dance featuring music from Greg Holmes. The dance will start at 7 p.m. on June 14 and will be held in High Country United Church's barn.

"Each of our churches, while doing our own thing, are part of a bigger organization. Part of this is to remind ourselves and our congregation that we are part of something much bigger than just our own churches. It's also something special about worshipping in a large community and we wanted to offer that experience to our congregations as part of the 100-year celebration," said Rev. Harbridge.

The United Church of Canada is the largest Protestant denomination in Canada ?? ministering to over 1 million people across roughly 2,500 congregations.

The United Church was founded in 1925 as a merger of four Protestant denominations: the Methodist Church (Canada), the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, two-thirds of the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Association of Local Union Churches, a movement predominately of the three prairie provinces.

Additional unions have joined the United Church of Canada over the years, including the Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda in 1930 and the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1968.