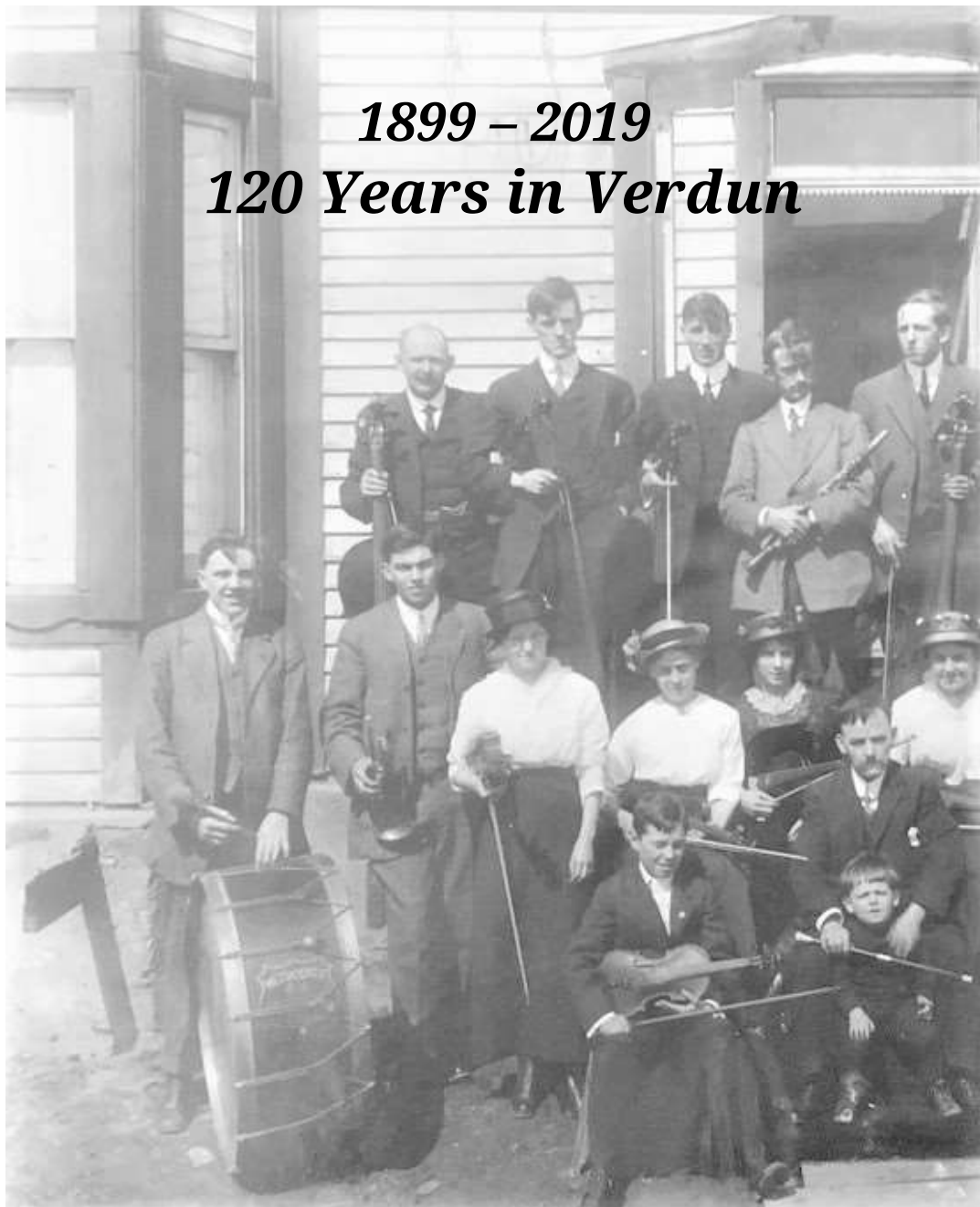


1899 – 2019
120 Years in Verdun



SouthWest United Church

This exhibit is not meant as an end but as a beginning. We hope to continue learning about our own history in the community and adding to it. The next step will be to preserve as much as possible of this material on our website. If you are interested in continuing the journey with us, please consider signing up for our Friday e-newsletter. You can do so on our website, www.southwestunited.net, or by sending an e-mail to southwestunited@gmail.com.

Cette exposition n'est pas conçue comme une fin, mais comme un début. Nous espérons continuer à en apprendre davantage sur notre histoire dans la communauté et à la compléter. La prochaine étape consistera à préserver autant que possible ce matériel sur notre site Web. Si vous souhaitez continuer le voyage avec nous, pensez à vous inscrire à notre infolettre électronique du vendredi. Vous pouvez le faire sur notre site Web, www.southwestunited.net, ou en envoyant un courriel à southwestunited@gmail.com.

Nous regrettons que ce livret ainsi que l'exposition soient uniquement en anglais. C'est simplement dû à un manque de temps et de ressources que le tout ne soit pas bilingue. Nous nous engageons à mieux faire la prochaine fois.



120 Years: Looking Back and Looking Forward

SouthWest United Church is one of only two remaining United Church congregations in Verdun (the other being the Montreal Korean United Church), but it carries the legacy of several churches and congregations stretching back to 1899.

How can that be, since the United Church of Canada was only founded in 1925? Glad you asked. One of our founding congregations, Verdun United Church, began life as Verdun *Methodist*, in 1899. It was one of many Methodist congregations that joined with Presbyterians and Congregationalists in 1925 to form the United Church.

Verdun had only been called Verdun for a quarter century when the first meetings about founding a Methodist church were held in the home of Mr. John Way on Church /De l'Eglise Avenue. By the beginning of the 20th century, Verdun was teeming with young families, and the Verdun Methodist Sunday School could barely keep up with the demand!

The original Verdun Methodist Church was built on Gordon Avenue in 1902-1903. Due to a growing congregation and Sunday School, a larger building was put up on an adjoining site in 1908. Verdun Methodist and then Verdun United used both buildings until 1931, when they built a new church at 650 Woodland Avenue. The Gordon avenue buildings no longer exist. The Woodland building, although sold in 2007 when Verdun amalgamated with Crawford Park, still stands and is in use by a Buddhist group and a daycare. Many Verdun United artefacts, including a triptych of stained glass windows, were preserved and incorporated into the new SouthWest United Church.

Our other founding congregation, Crawford Park United, came into being during another population boom, in the 1940s. Crawford Park was one of several Montreal neighbourhoods designated during World War II for the construction of “veteran’s cottages” - the distinctive pointed-roofed brick homes still very much in evidence in the neighbourhood. SouthWest United occupies the building the Crawford Park United congregation erected in 1947 after several years of meeting in homes and the local schoolhouse.

Both of these founding congregations came to life thanks to the can-do spirit of Verduners of the last century.

Over the years, Verdun was also home to Chalmers United, built in 1922 at 177 de l'Église. That congregation closed in 1997 but the building was transferred to the Korean United Church which still holds services there today.

Verdun was even home to a French-language United Church, Église Bethanie, from 1922 to 1978. Its building, located at 3099 Wellington, was home for a time to L'Église des montréalais, and is currently used as a private residence.

Verdun United and Crawford Park United began sharing ministry in the 1970s, with the same minister performing two services every Sunday. Rev. Maurice Nerny led both congregations from 1980 to 1998. He was succeeded in 1998 by Rev. David Lefneski who oversaw amalgamation in 2007 and the opening of SouthWest Mission in 2008. He stayed on as Minister of SouthWest United until earlier this year.

SouthWest recently began a new chapter with Pastor Beryl Barraclough at the helm. There are many female worship leaders in the United Church of Canada, both ordained and lay ministers, and we have had several of them as visiting ministers at SouthWest. Perhaps that's why we almost didn't register the historic importance of calling Pastor Beryl. A long line of ministers stretches back over 120 years, every one of them a white man... until now.

- The main sources for this brief history are written accounts found in commemorative booklets created for the 50th anniversary of Verdun United in 1949, and the from the 50th anniversary of Crawford Park in 1997. Reference was also made to the writings of Serge Durlinger, historian.

A Tour of the Sanctuary: Stained Glass and more*

- a. The focal point of SouthWest United Church is the triptych of stained-glass windows located at the front of the sanctuary*. They are the work of renowned artist Guido Nincheri, and were given to Crawford Park United in 1967 by Mr. Donald Hill in loving memory of his wife, Ruby Fern Hill.
- b. The Bible kept on the communion table was dedicated in memory of the Rev. Arthur Wilkinson by the congregation of Crawford Park United in 1945.
- c. The baptismal font we still use today was a gift to Crawford Park United in memory of Norman Herbert Gardner (1891-1926) by Jane Kennedy Gardner, his wife.

- d. The oak “Christian Literature Table” which sits on the left wall at the front of the sanctuary was given to VUC in memory of Annie Waye Whitlock (1874-1930) by her children.
- e. The Candle of Memory which we light every Sunday is dedicated in loving memory of Victor H. Stark (1932-2001).
- f. The pulpit fall bearing the crest of the United Church was a gift to SouthWest United in memory of Shirley Turner (1935-2016) received from the family in 2017.
- g. The lectern we use was given to Crawford Park United when Chalmers United closed in 1997.
- h. The wooden pipe organ was hand-built by Wolfgang Kater for Southwest and installed in 2008
- i. The stained glass panel on the north-east wall depicting Jesus baptizing John comes from Verdun United.
- j. The two round stained glass windows at the back of the sanctuary come from Verdun United.
- k. The triptych of stained glass windows at the back of our sanctuary portraying the Resurrection were originally in the front of the sanctuary of Verdun United at 650 Woodland Ave. They were given: in loving memory of Pearl Lillian, by her parents T & J Lochhead; in loving memory of Mrs. E. King and son Clement by the family; in loving memory of Alexander Mavor and Alexander George, his son, by the family.
- l. The two framed documents on the south-west wall are Rolls of Honour from the two World Wars. The first, from Verdun Methodist Church, lists the names of all from the congregation who fought in WWI, including five who were killed. (Note that Alexander George Mavor, memorialized in the aforementioned stained glass window, is among the fallen). The second lists the names of all members of Verdun United who fought in WWII. A star beside a name indicates Killed in Action.
- m. The stained glass panel near the main entrance, titled “A Friend on the Shore” was a gift to VUC from Gerry Mercer in memory of his parents, Harvey and Sylvia.

Believe it or not, this is not an exhaustive list.

*In our church, we refer to the whole space in which services are held as the “sanctuary”.

Ministers

Verdun Methodist Church 1901 – 1925

1901 – 1902	Rev. A.C. Hoffman
1903 - 1906	Dr. A.J. Martin
1906 – 1910	Rev. Thomas Bole
1910 – 1914	Rev. F.B. Allnutt
1914 – 1915	Rev. H.W. Burnett
1915 – 1916	Rev. D.I. Hart
1916 – 1920	Rev. William Timberlake
1920 – 1924	Rev. Fred Williams
1924 – 1925	Rev. Isaac Norman

Verdun United Church 1925-2007

1925-1933	Rev. Isaac Norman
1933 – 1957	Rev. J.G. Joyce
1957 – 1975	Rev. A.E. Jones
1975 – 1976	Rev. K. McLaughlin
1977 – 1979	Rev. J.R.H. Corbett
1979 – 1980	Rev. Harold Kennedy (supply)
1980 – 1998	Rev. Maurice Nerny
1998 – 2007	Rev. David Lefneski

Crawford Park United Church 1939 – 2007

1939 – 1944	Rev. J. Wilkinson
1944 – 1947	Rev. J. K. Brown, (supervising supply minister)
1947 – 1955	Rev. John Downing
1955 – 1957	Rev. A.E. Jones
1957 – 1971	Rev. C. Dawson MacDonald
1972 – 1973	Rev. J.R.H. Corbett & supply
1974 – 1979	Rev. J.R.H. Corbett
1979 – 1980	Rev. Ernest Barratt (supply)
1980 – 1998	Rev. Maurice Nerny
1998 – 2007	Rev. David Lefneski

SouthWest United Church 2007 – 2019

2007 – 2019	Rev. David Lefneski
2019 -	DLM Beryl Barraclough



Timeline

- 1899** -- Founding of Verdun Methodist Church, home of John Way, located on Church Ave., Verdun
- 1903** -- First church building dedicated on Gordon Ave, Verdun
- 1908** -- Second building dedicated on Gordon Ave, Verdun
- 1930** -- Dedication of church on Woodland Ave, Verdun
- 1939** -- Crawford Park begins holding services and Sunday school in 2-room school house at Churchill and Lloyd-George
- 1947** -- Verdun United burning of mortgage
Crawford Park United laying of cornerstone, initial structure completed
- 1951** -- Verdun United manse opens on Beatty Ave, Verdun
- 1952** -- Crawford Park completed sanctuary dedicated
- 1956** -- Verdun United adds Christian Education Building, adjacent to the church on Woodland Ave.
- 1957** -- Reverend Joyce completes and gives stained glass window of the UCC crest to Verdun congregation
- 1967** -- Crawford Park installs 3 windows in memory of Ruby Fern Hill (Guido Nincheri, artist)
- 1977** -- Verdun United and Crawford Park United begin sharing ministry.
Reverend Corbett inducted as minister of both.
- 1979** -- Crawford Park United burning of mortgage
- 1997** -- Crawford Park celebrates 50 Years
- 1999** -- Verdun United celebrates 100 years
- 2007** -- Verdun United building on Woodland Ave sold; Verdun United and Crawford Park United amalgamate to become SouthWest United Church located in Crawford Park

- 2008 –** SouthWest United opens the Mission on Melrose Ave, serving and assisting the community for 11 years until it closed in June 2019. Wooden pipe organ installed at SouthWest United Church
- 2019 -** SouthWest United continues to provide a welcoming church home to all who come to worship, and to extend a helping hand into the community in collaboration with partners old and new.

~~~

I hope this exhibit conveys the message that a church is not a building, but a growing, changing community. It is the people who have walked together through the joys, the tragedies, and all the seasons of their lives.

Many people helped and supported me in putting together this exhibit. A heartfelt Thank You to:

Beryl Barraclough and SW Church Council for giving the green light to the project and allowing me to spend so many hours on it.

Dennis Brown, whose most concrete contribution may have been meticulously scanning old glass slides to create a computer slideshow, but who was also there to answer a million questions along the way.

Darlene McKenzie, a volunteer who rolled up her sleeves and pitched in, bringing good ideas and keeping me on task.

Dianne Nolin, for information on the King and Mavor families.

Liz Ludlow Collymore, Liz Storey, Jim Lowson and others from the Crawford Park Kids Facebook group.

The late Ed Chaffey, whose personal papers yielded some photos and clippings that might not otherwise have been available.

Sarah Fraser, SWU Music Director, and members of the choir who provided music for the opening.

The SWU Congregation.

**Amy Barratt**  
**SWU Office Coordinator**  
**November 2019**