

Centennial Service, Frome United Church, 1919

The service was presided over by Rev. J. B. Silcox (figure in black, centre), a grandson of the founder, Rev. Joseph Silcox.
Elgin County Museum



Frome United, 1969

Elgin County Museum
Gift of Frome United Church, 1970

This quilt commemorates the 150th anniversary of the founding of the first congregational church in Canada, formed in Southwold Township in 1819 by Reverend Joseph Silcox. Rev. Silcox came to Canada in 1817 and took up a 200 acre plot on the Talbot Road, west of St. Thomas between what was later Frome and Payne's Mills. He preached throughout the area and in 1842 provided a piece of his farm for a church. The present church, built in 1888, was designed by William F. Silcox, a grandson of Joseph. In 1919, another grandson, Rev. J. B. Silcox presided at a service marking the hundredth anniversary of the founding.

Congregational churches first appeared during the Puritan reformation of the Church of England. Each church maintained its autonomy and was governed by its own members. Frome joined the United Church of Canada during its formation in 1925.

The 150th anniversary service was held on September 7, 1969 with the then moderator of the United Church of Canada, Dr. Robert McClure as guest speaker. Hundreds of people attended the event, many of whom had to be seated in a tent next to the building.

The quilt, which has about 685 names, each hand-lettered in pen, was completed under the direction of Mary Silcox, Ada Bogart and Maxine Silcox.



Rev. Joseph Silcox and his second wife Mary Ann Constable
ECM



Rev. J. B. Silcox at his grandfather's grave, Frome United Church cemetery
ECM



Frome United, 2009

Photo: J. Nelson

The plaque in the foreground was erected in 1924 by the Elgin Historical Society and commemorates the establishment of the first Congregational Church in Canada.