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Bell to help church span past, future

On Sunday, Shelton Park Church of God took a step to help preserve its history.

The 64-year-old church, which plans to move to a larger building in August, removed the bell from its bell tower after a landmark Sunday service. The bell will be refinished and then installed in the new building.

"We wanted to have a piece of our history in our new location," the Rev. Scott Isham said. "With a lot of long-time members, I thought it was a good idea to bring a part of our past into our future."

Ruby Gibson, the church's only surviving charter member, thought moving the bell was an excellent idea.

"I feel fortunate we'll get to have part of the old building there," she said. "This way it will always be a part connecting the two churches."

In 1943, Mrs. Gibson's father helped start Shelton Park Church of God. The church began meeting in a building on Summit St. in Toledo when she was 15.

"We weren't there too long before we moved to George Street, and then we moved to the Bedford area," she recalled.

She said that Shelton Road is the only church she's ever known, and she wouldn't have it any other way.

"I love it, so I've stuck with it," she said. "The people are always there for you. When you need them, all you have to do is call."

She credits several things for keeping her there.

"I like that the people are really friendly," she said. "It's got good teaching, and I just like the way we worship."

She also mentioned how her church family helped her get through one of the most difficult times in her life, when her husband was ill for several years.

"I relied on their constant prayers and them being there for me," she said. "You couldn't find a better church people."

Even in 64 years, Mrs. Gibson said that not much has changed with the church.

"It's stayed pretty much the same," she said. "We've got a lot of people who have been there a long time."

Instead of being sad about leaving the old building behind, Mrs. Gibson said she has been looking forward to getting into a new building for a long time.

"I wondered if it would be done in my lifetime," she said. "I'm just thankful the Lord's allowing me to see it."