



The Portauisque United Church, build by the congregation was debt free following its dedication on August 18, 1929. Currently the exterior front has been set up as a temporary memorial to the 22 victims killed in Canada's largest mass murder on April 18-19. (Submitted)

Portauisque United Church

By M. Allen Gibson

On August 18, 1929 the United Church of Portauisque was opened and dedicated. The report of the event which subsequently appeared in the denominational national publication, "The United Churchman" began with the words, "In the drowsy stillness of a Sunday afternoon..."

It is a phrase which stirs dreams of long ago and of Sabbath rituals which, on Sunday afternoons found one in some little rural church where no alien pound intruded on the voice of praise and worship. There were many who came to join in the special service on that August day in Portauisque. Capacity congregations were present both in the afternoon and in the evenings and there were those who were unable to find room.

To visit the church today is to realize that it is a find building, which the United Church people of Portauisque erected as their place of worship. "Excepting the pews", observed the United Churchman's correspondent, this building was entirely the work of the congregation's hands and as such will be doubly dearest to them.

Even with such a contribution of labour there were still expenses. The offerings of the open day, however, amounted to about \$500 and enabled the accomplishment of being debt free by the day of dedication was over. The minister of the day was J. I. Morrison, and he conducted the services on that first Sunday. The day's guest speaker was Rev Dr Show formerly of Pine Hill Divinity Hall in Halifax. Other ministers taking part included Rev. W. C. Morrison, Great Vil-

lage; Rev. J. W. A. Nicholson, Be-deque, PEI; Rev. J. A. Bradley, Wallace and Rev. A. H. Dymont from nearby Economy.

Music always has had a place in Christian worship. On the night of Christ's betrayal, are the Disciples and master had left the Upper Room to face Gethsemane, there was sung an hymn, "Music was a conspicuous part of the program at the opening of the United Church in Portauisque.

Mrs. A. N. Cooke presided at the organ and singing was lead by the choirs of Bass River and Portauisque churches. Singers from Truro brought special music; John Spratt rendering a solo and a duet being given by Mrs. Eugene Mosher and Mrs. A. A. Smith.

In 1963, while Rev. Gordon C Pringle was minister, a change in the structure of the pastorates linked Portauisque with Bass River, Economy, Lower Economy, Five islands and Lower Economy in the Pastoral Charge of Cobequid.

The United Church at Portauisque, it's identity revealed by the sign above the door and its divine function suggested by the tower at its front, is a building of simple lines reminiscent of the many places of worship in Nova Scotia, which, modest through they may be, are institutions of character and spiritual enrichment in their communities.

Precious are the memories, which many cherish of such churches and of the good folk who have worshipped there, amidst the golden sunlight of warm, summer evenings, when morning winds drove snow across the face of the land and in the quiet stillness of a Sunday afternoon.

Bible Hill Advances Accessibility

Village of Bible Hill is improving accessibility of its facilities and infrastructure. Last fall, the Village replaced much of its conventional playground pea gravel at Bible Hill Recreation Park with engineered wood fibre surfacing. The new wood fibre and log border complements the natural playground and the outdoors, but more importantly better absorbs falls and is more accessible for persons with disabilities and parents with strollers.

The Village implemented recruited and accepted the nominations of three volunteers to serve on the Accessibility Advisory Committee, (each of whom are a person with a disability or are an agent of an organization who represents persons with disabilities).

In June, first committee meeting was held by video call. The committee meets no less than twice per year, and its next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 16, at 2PM. In April an elevator lift for persons with disabilities was installed to move between the first and second floor of the Village Hall & Fire Station building at 69 Pictou Road. The project attracted partial financing of \$10,000 from the Government of Canada.

The Village has a number of

current year project plans to improve accessibility at its facilities, through construction of an accessible ramp at the Village Hall and Fire Station building at 69 Pictou Rd, as well as a new accessible washroom on the second floor. For this project, the Village eagerly awaits a decision on its application for federal funding that may well cover up to 100% of the costs.

Following a new install and upgrades to two existing crosswalks to include overhead and side mounted LED flashing lights, the Village has requested Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (NSTIR) consider approving Village funded upgrades to all

crosswalks in the community, in order to make fourteen crossings a uniform, common standard.

The Village has requested NSTIR consider approving the Village funded construction of a new crosswalk at the recently developed Riverwood residential subdivision at Covington Place and College Road. This particular subdivision is marketed and gateway signed as a 55+ residential community, and statistics show that 43% of seniors are expected to have at least one

For the first time, this fiscal year the Village Commission included funding in its budget to hire an accessibility advisor to review current accessibility

guidelines, evaluate Village owned facilities and infrastructure against those guidelines, summarize and report the data collected, and make recommendations to the Village Commission based on findings. This project attracted partial financing of \$6,302 from the Province of Nova Scotia.

As part of this role, the Village is reaching out to solicit feedback from the public on accessibility. Those who wish to participate are asked to identify barriers within the community that they feel presents a challenge to them or someone they know to fully engaging in society. The survey can be found online at www.biblehill.ca/access, or can be provided in alternative format by calling the office at 902.893.8083.

Applications Open for Age-Friendly Grants

Organizations interested in creating more age-friendly and inclusive communities in Nova Scotia can now apply for project funding. Seniors Minister Leo Glavine opened the first-round call for applications for the 2020-21 Age-Friendly Communities Grant program on August 21.

"The Age-Friendly Communities Grant program supports projects that improve the health and well-being of older Nova Scotians by helping them stay active, healthy and engaged in their communities," he said. "This year groups may need to think differently because of COVID-19. While we expect to see a range of great ideas, we hope to see projects that help address some of the challenges that have faced many older adults

through the pandemic, such as social isolation."

Partnerships with a local government and between two or more organizations are encouraged, to help reach more people and impact more lives. Applications are open until Feb. 1, 2021.

Applications received by Sept. 14 will be reviewed and approved by the end of October. Businesses and individuals are not eligible. For more information and to apply, visit <http://novascotia.ca/age-friendly-grant> Provincewide projects can receive up to \$25,000 and smaller-scale community projects can receive up to \$10,000. 30 projects were awarded in 2019-20 for a total of \$390,000 in funding.

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