

Celebrating 150 Years

This year marks the 150th anniversary of St. Peter's Anglican Church in Hackett's Cove (or Lower Ward as the area was once known). The church is situated on approximately one quarter acre of land that was originally conveyed by Jacob and Hannah Butilier (Boutilier) for the sum of five shillings. Even prior to 1870, there was a chapel on the same site built by volunteers around 1840 which eventually was taken down when the new church, the present St. Peter's, was built.

The architect and master builder was Alfred Worger. He must have been a shipwright as evidenced by the unique hand-hewn "knees" supporting the walls. It is said that if the church were to be inverted it would resemble the hull of a boat.

The rector at the time of construction was the Reverend J. Owen Ruggles whose son, Nepean C. Ruggles, bequeathed a quarter of his estate to the church when he passed away in 1944; the benefits of which still accrue to the church some 76 years later.

Many changes have occurred over the years: Obviously the original wood stove and kerosene lamps have been replaced, as has the first pump organ; an elegant solid marble baptismal font was installed in 1914 or 1915, having been moved by horse and cart from the former St. Alban's Mission Church to Halifax Harbour, by schooner to Boutilier's Cove, and thence to the church; a bell tower was added in 1930; all the windows on one side had to be replaced following a vicious wind and hail storm in September 1939; and a general purpose extension containing a hall, kitchen and washroom was added in 2003, greatly facilitating fellowship and social events.

Interestingly, when this extension was being built, it was found that the level of the 1870 church floor, constructed solely with hand tools, only varied by about an inch from the modern addition.

St. Peter's will continue to serve visitors and the residents of St. Margaret's Bay as it has for the past 150 years. Look for special events as this anniversary is celebrated, including Battle of the Atlantic commemoration on Sunday, 3 May, a plant sale in May, Open House every weekend in June, a special commemorative worship service with Archbishop Ron Cutler on Sunday, 7 June, a concert by the Maritime Brass ensemble on Saturday, 13 June, and a quilt show in July – all of which, of course, are contingent upon easing of the Covid 19 restraints.