

As Naramata is very much a fruit growing community, Rev. Stickney started an annual "orchard blessing" service. With the Bishop in attendance, the congregation met on Sunday morning at a local orchard and the service was held walking amongst the trees, blessing them. This service happened each spring for some years. However, the Church was blamed by some orchardists who noted that in a late heavy hail storm, the blessed orchard suffered no damage while the unblessed trees were hit hard.

The hall of Naramata Community Church is used by several different groups. Alcoholics Anonymous counsels those in need, giving good advice and hope. There is a moms' group of young mothers who gather with their young children and exchange experiences. It is used by ballroom dancers as well as Scottish dancers. The Naramata artists set up their exhibitions each year, giving visual pleasure to many. When there were troops of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, they too used the hall for their meetings.

No history of Naramata Community Church would be complete without relating the great generosity of the association of ladies once called the Auxiliary, then the Guild, but now known as the Naramata Community Church Women. This group, over many, many years has been a very strong support for the Church. In earlier years they paid for many pieces of furniture. They footed the bill for the often-needed painting projects. For many years the ladies made exquisite quilts. One was entered into a competition at the Pacific National Exhibition, winning first prize. Several quilts were auctioned, bringing in good prices. Much of the funds so gained were given to the Church to help out when collections fell short. The group hosts two teas each year. The one in the spring has plants for sale, tables of home baking and a very delicious tea with sandwiches and cakes. The autumn tea is a bit more elaborate. Tables of home baking, Christmas sewing and a

Religious services in Naramata began in 1907 in a tent. That was the year that Mr. J.M. Robinson and his family sailed across Okanagan Lake from Summerland to the fertile land that was to become the beautiful village of Naramata.

It was not long before settlers from the eastern parts of Canada and from overseas began to arrive. Mr. Robinson made plans for building lots, setting aside two pieces, one for the Baptist Church and one for the Methodists.

In the year 1911 the Methodist followers (later to become the United Church) built a church on the property that had been set aside for them.

St. Peter's Anglican Church in Naramata sprang from a very different and much earlier source.

Here, we must divert our thoughts to Penticton. This thriving town at the south end of Okanagan Lake was growing fast and the Anglican Church, St. Saviour's, built in 1892 by Mr. Tom Ellis, became too small. In 1907, with the Rev. Cleland in charge, it was cut in half, the two sections pulled apart and a transept built between them.

Five years after the completion of the building of the new, and present, St. Saviour's Anglican Church in Penticton in 1929, the chapel of the old building was moved to the south side of the new building, and the transept, cut in half lengthwise, was brought to Naramata by horse teams to the location where the Naramata Community Church is now. There the parts were put together again, and a chancel was added. It was dedicated on June 28, 1936 by Bishop Adams and given the name St. Peter's Anglican Church. A year later, on June 29, 1937, it was consecrated by Bishop Adams.

At that time the Reverend W.S. Beames was the minister in charge and his tenure lasted until 1957. Mr. Beames and his wife lived in a house overlooking the lake and it is said that one day as he gazed out over the water, he saw Ogoopogo swimming by. This, however, has not been substantiated.

By 1943 St. Peter's was thriving with a good congregation and a well-attended Sunday School. Thoughts turned toward the need of a church hall.

A building fund was started, the first contribution being \$10. Funds grew and a building committee was formed in 1952. Mr. E. Hogg was consulted and asked to draw up plans.

The following year the Diocese of Kootenay gave permission to the board of St. Peter's to sell four lots of the church property, at a minimum price of \$300 each, with proceeds to go to the building fund.

To further ensure sufficient funds in place, the church board applied to the Diocesan Churches Loan Fund for \$1,000. The request was granted and the loan was paid off in 1957.

Building of the hall commenced. The Penticton Sawmill offered to donate framing and floor materials. Needless to say, this offer was gratefully accepted, the church having to pay the haulage charges only.

On April 23, 1954 the Right Reverend F.P. Clark dedicated the completed hall. The final cost of this addition was \$3,118.79.

It was in the early 1950's that changes of minister took effect. Rev. Beames retired and in 1951 his place was taken by the Rev. T.R. Lancaster. Sadly, Rev. Lancaster died two weeks after his appointment and the position was filled by Canon

At this time a memorial gift was bestowed upon the Church. It was an electronic system that, attached to the roof, played hymns, marked the passing of the hours and rang peals of bells. There was some objection to the "noise" and things were toned down for the sake of the good neighbours. It is good to hear the music on special occasions.

We said a fond farewell to Rev. Rowles in September of 1996 and awaited the arrival of an Anglican minister. The Reverend Sandy Stickney, with her husband and small daughter, were welcomed on September 10, 1996. Rev. Stickney was only the second female minister the Church had been blessed with.

A Men's Club was formed with the first meeting on September 22, 1998. This group had many interesting outings and events such as whist games, where the ladies were included. One very special outing was a visit with the "Gleaners" in the Oliver area. Here the Naramata men helped with the food processing – drying fruit, mixing dried grains and vegetables into soup mixes – all of which were shipped to third world countries to help combat hunger. The Gleaners are a wonderful group of volunteers.

When Rev. Stickney's four years were coming to an end in 2002, there was a meeting of the congregation with the Bishop to discuss the future. Rev. Stickney indicated that she would like to continue as the minister at Naramata Community Church. At the full day meeting – with Rev. Stickney banished from the meeting after lunch – various members of the congregation gave their opinions, either in favour of keeping Rev. Stickney for a further term, or in favour of finding a United Church minister. At the end of the day it was clear that Rev. Stickney would be asked to stay.

It was at this time that the rules of "Shared Ministry" were being revised and the previous edict of four years United, then four years Anglican, was altered to suit individual situations.

long ago minutes was “the chocolate supplied for the Father’s Day lunch has now been consumed”. The somewhat sinister side of church life was exposed when it was moved to order a dozen copies of “Vices United”.

Back to more serious things. The members of the Church did get involved in some serious matters affecting the Okanagan Valley. When uranium mining loomed for the area, a letter was written to the Hon. William Vander Zalm in June of 1988. Copies were sent to the Prime Minister, the Minister of the Environment, The Minister of Forestry and Mines, the Minister of Parks, the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Health, Mr. Fred King M.P. and Mr. Ivan Messmer M.L.A. Replies were received from all, each indicating that the “situation was under control”.

1989 saw further construction to the Church hall. A new room was added to the north west corner, thus giving a quiet space for meetings. Underground sprinkling was also added which meant that water would turn on automatically. After the new room was added, Mrs. Percy Ritchie was asked to paint a mural over the door, indicating the welcome presence of children in the Church.

Once again it was time to exchange the Anglican minister for one from the United Church. There was as usual much discussion concerning what the congregation looked for in a new minister. It turned out that what was wanted was what the Church got.

The Rev. Sid Rowles was warmly welcomed in September 1992. He and Mrs. Rowles made, upon several occasions, huge pots of soup – all delicious. One was a stone soup, which by the very name sounds unappetizing, but was found to have a very distinct flavour!

A.R. Eagles. He was in charge of the Anglican flock until 1964, when Rev. Beames filled in for two years.

In 1959 Mrs. Percy Ritchie painted a beautiful mural on the east wall of the chancel, behind the altar. It depicted St. Peter with fishing nets in his hands. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be a photograph of this mural, except a rough copy from the newspaper. If anyone reading this has, or knows of, a photograph, the Church would be very pleased to have a copy. Later on, in approximately the mid 1970’s Mrs. Ritchie painted a different mural over St. Peter. It is very beautiful and portrays people winding up a road, possibly on a journey to heaven, or through life.

Both Naramata churches, the Anglican and the United, carried on smoothly until the mid-1960’s when dwindling congregations caused concern. The Rev. Frank R. Patterson of the United Church (which was located down 3rd Street where the packing house paved area now is), and the Rev. Canon Eagles of St. Peter’s started discussions in an effort to improve matters by joining the two faiths.

It took time and patience, but 1967 saw the two congregations unite, having services in alternate churches with the Rev. John Moorhouse in charge.

More ministerial changes took place. The Reverend D. Hodgkinson took over the care of the congregations in 1969 and he was followed by Rev. Roy Wood in 1971.

The annual custom of going caroling around the Village at Christmas was greatly enhanced in 1962 when the Naramata Choir was asked to join members of St. Peter’s congregation. This arrangement continued until 1987, when the church board asked Carol McGibney to take over the organization of the event. Since then this annual gala

evening has grown into a concert of Bible readings and Christmas carols, eagerly awaited by Naramatians and Pentictonites.

The two denominations, joined now in spirit, still used both churches. After considerable soul-searching, it was decided in 1967 to use the St. Peter's building and dispose of the United Church. The Naramata Packing House expressed interest in buying it and put down a \$1,000 deposit until they could be quite certain that they could acquire and use it.

As there were, and still are, several families who follow the Roman Catholic faith, St. Peter's board was asked in 1968 if a Catholic priest could take over the church after the Anglican/United service each week. This was readily agreed to and a charge of \$5 a week was levied. This arrangement held for several years, until the late 1990's, when it was discontinued for want of a priest.

When the United and Anglican churches merged, all assets were thrown into one pot. However, it was found that this was not permitted, so everything had to be put back to the original state until it was legally sorted out.

The renting of the hall to parishioners and outsiders was given a great deal of thought. Permission was given to groups of Naramata Girl Guides, the South Okanagan Sailing Association, and other local organizations. No charge was set but a donation was requested. In 1959 and 1960 the Girl Guides gave \$5 and the sailors \$10.

The serving of wine at wedding receptions and other celebrations was studied and it was decided to allow it for members of the congregation only. Celebrations by outsiders would have to be "dry".

taken all they needed, the sale was thrown open to the general public. The cost of felling and clearing was \$3,000.

Also in 1983 the Memorial Rose Garden was started. Using the memorial gardens at Okanagan Falls and Summerland as examples, the first bed was dug in April 1984 and 14 rose bushes were planted. These cost \$65.64. It was not long before most of these roses had been adopted and bore plaques which told the names of the deceased and the donors.

In the following years there were enlargements made to the bed and now, at the time of writing this history, there are 62 roses, all but 2 of which have been adopted. The bed was greatly enhanced in 2003, with a beautiful archway constructed by a member of the congregation. This arch allows a couple of climbing roses to be seen to perfection.

Much to our sorrow, Rev. Sherwood became ill and resigned in 1983. His remaining years of tenure were filled by the Rev. W. Morgan, who stayed until 1987.

The retired Anglican Minister, Rev. Jim Craig, filled in as incumbent for the next year until the induction of Rev. Mark Gibson. Rev. Gibson thus started his ministerial career in Naramata Community Church.

It was at this time that the church board, in its great wisdom, decreed that women could be sidepersons. This distributed the tasks of ushering and the taking up of the collection.

Speaking of the church board, there were one or two amusing items in the minutes of the monthly board meetings. On one occasion there appeared a short sentence in the middle of a discussion about the church organ – "Mrs. X was ordered to read a book" – no indication as to what sort of book. We can only hope that it turned out for the best. Another note in

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The Shared Ministry rules also dictated that a minister should serve for four years and then be replaced by a reverend of the other faith. This met with satisfaction until it was time for the Rev. Sid Rowles to leave. As he had only one more year to serve before retirement, he asked if he could stay for one more year. Permission was gladly given. But this did not happen until 1997, and we must back track a few years.

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In 1983 it was again time to have a United Church minister. The Rev. Garnet Sherwood was chosen to be the man.

In that same year the discussions over the removal of the cottonwood trees on the Church property grew more serious. Several tree cutting firms had been contacted but no action had been taken. However, friends of a member of the congregation got to work and 23 dangerous trees were felled. These were cut up and offered to members of the congregation for minimal cost. When Church members had

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