

Glen Leslie Church marks centenary



Charles Wales holds up a picture of him and his classmates back in 1920 when they were attending school at the Glen Leslie Church as well as a certificate honouring him as the Mayor of Glen Leslie for the day for his help in outlining the history of the church while celebrating the building's centennial on Sunday. The church has been restored and held a birthday celebration with some old photos similar to the one held by Wales.

Jocelyn Turner/Daily Herald-Tribune

One hundred-year-old stories came alive on Sunday when the Glen Leslie Church celebrated its centennial.

Located on Highway 670, 21 kilometers east of Grande Prairie, the church was constructed in 1915 on a 10-acre church grant applied for by Thomas Leslie and Rev. Alexander Forbes.

Charles Wales, who just so happens to be 100-years-old, shared some of his memories of the church, which was also a school between 1918 and 1928.

"I didn't start school until Feb. 1, 1920... I went to school until I was in Grade 11," he said.

"They had to have eight kids to make a school. My brother wasn't quite old enough but they put him in anyway."

Wales said for the older kids, the teacher would teach them later in the day and give them lots of homework so they could stay home and do their chores.

"It was a way to keep (us) going to school," he said.

Altogether, Wales said there were about 35 students and just one teacher.

"It was the only church in the county, the only church this big in the county," said Wales of its importance. "And instead of building a school they used this."

Wanda Zenner, president of the Glen Leslie Preservation Group said the community has been working for more than a decade to restore the church for the celebration on Sunday.

"This little building and of course the adjacent cemetery is very important to this community and it really services a wide area now, all the way up to Grande Prairie, all the way up to the Smoky and into the Wapiti and quite far a ways north, up into Teepee Creek," she said.

Councilor Harold Bulford of the County of Grande Prairie and MP Chris Warkentin were on hand to help celebrate the prestigious milestone.

"When we see the community come together and really celebrate 100 years and also have this type of a building to celebrate around, I think it brings people together," said Warkentin. "I think it reminds people of the values that the settlers brought. Not only were they concerned about coming here and building a future for their families but (it was) also important to build a community."



Rev. George Malcolm, of Forbes Presbyterian, held a rededication ceremony for the church. There were old-fashioned games like three-legged races and sack races as well as cemetery tours and a barbecue for the dozens who turned out to celebrate the day.

For more information about the church, visit www.glenleslie.ca.

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