

# COLES ISLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

11308 Route 10 | Coles Island, NB | E4C 2P7

## OUR COMMUNITY

Coles Island, NB consists of a general store and about five homes. Bridges on both sides connect this small rural community with Canaan, Young's Cove, Lakeview and Long Creek residents.

Founded in the mid-1800s, Coles Island began as a farming settlement for a number of families. By 1871, it had a population of about 100 people, a post office, two stores, a hotel, a church, a sawmill and a train depot. By the end of the 1900s, the Canaan River was the main source of travel for logging, and many families made a living running the river. The community was named after loyalist David Cole. A one-room schoolhouse was used to educate the children of the community until 1971. A new school was built at that time to provide classrooms for grades 1 thru 12. Over the next few decades, the school was gradually decreased in grade levels until 2015 when the Department of Education decided to close our school entirely. Our children are now bussed to the neighbouring communities of Cambridge-Narrows and Chipman.

There are currently three stores in the area. McReady's Motel & Restaurant, Vail's General Store and Connell's Grocery all remain in business year-round. We continue to have a post-office, two churches (Baptist and our own), an active Lion's Club, Seniors Hall, and a seniors apartment complex, which houses six. Our government garage was downsized but is still operating during winter months. Seasonal take-outs have become popular in the past few summers as well.

Because of our location, the community has become a very popular spot for seasonal residents. There are three campgrounds currently and many more within 10-20 minutes in any direction. There are also many seasonal residents with camps and trailers along the water. We are also a popular destination for hunting and fishing.

This provides an opportunity for increased seasonal employment; however, many residents travel for work. Because of the new four-lane highway, we are about 45-60 minutes away from the major cities of Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John. We are also about 25 minutes to Sussex and 40 minutes to Oromocto. Mill Cove is only 20 minutes and is the home of the Mill Cove Nursing Home, which employs a number of residents of the surrounding communities. Home Care is also popular employment. Seasonal work is a reality for a great number of residents here, and it is not unusual for many families to depend on Employment Insurance in the winter months.

## OUR CHURCH

Coles Island Community Church was formerly known as Coles Island Pentecostal Church and was founded in the 1940s. The Blakney family of Mill Cove, NB, had a hand in founding the church as they held a number of evangelical church meetings, which led to churches being planted. The original church was only half the size it is today and was built on donated land. There was a parsonage next to the church, and a little red store was on the corner lot where our parking lot is now located. In the mid-80s, a tractor-trailer crashed into the church, destroying most of the structure and the parsonage. After that, the church was able to purchase the corner lot, and the church was rebuilt further back. Another house was purchased off property for a parsonage. In 1988, through much prayer, funds were raised,

and donations from various community supporters were used to add to the church, and it doubled its size. In 2012, the congregation voted to sell the parsonage. A portion of these funds has been annually invested in a GIC to help the church carry on.

As a church, we have strived to be active within our community and to be a positive force for those around us. This is not without its challenges. Attendance has dwindled and tends to vary throughout the year. Although we get financial support from some members of our community, it is a challenge to get them involved in the church itself. At one point, we had a thriving kids ministry and a well-attended youth program. For a number of reasons, attendance dropped off, and we were unable to provide these programs consistently. Volunteers are a challenge and make it difficult to run effective programs as well as maintain the duties needed to keep our doors open. We continue to do outreach as often as possible and keep our doors open to the community. Kids Club activities, Family Game Night, Men's and Ladies events, a community BBQ and Corn Boil, are some of the events we have continued throughout the year. Weekly bible study (spring/summer/fall) and Sunday morning and evening services are continued as well.

God has called us to step out into the world and share His love with the lost. This church is looking for someone bi-vocational who has a passion for ministry. We are currently a small group of people who share a burden for this community and the lost. We are in the midst of neighbours, friends and family who see no need for God and need to see Him in the midst of our everyday lives in action. We require more than someone just to preach the word. This community needs Christians who will step out of the church and be involved in their lives, setting a positive example as we do so. We have a number of pastors come and go, and it has had a negative effect on our area. This is not a place for someone who is simply called to preach the word on Sunday morning. They need a willingness to get involved in the lives of the people here and associate with them. They need to be willing to build relationships and not make them feel judged, and love them unconditionally, allowing God to work through us in them. And we know that as a congregation, we need to lift up our leaders in prayer and be ready and willing to work with them when called. Today, many people do not feel the need for church or a day to set aside to worship God and give Him praise for all He has done and will continue to do if we fully put our trust in Him. Although we live in challenging times, Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Our prayer for this church is to be a light for our community. We desire to be more than a building with a weekly service. There are families who need love and children who are longing for someone to pay attention to them. We have an opportunity to share in the lives of those around us and are searching for a pastor who shares that kind of burden.