



Islands Trust

Statement of Significance

Church of the Good Shepherd



South elevation of Church of the Good Shepherd showing gable entryway.

Location: 8978 Gowlland Point Road, South Pender Island, British Columbia

Date of Construction: 1937/38

Date added to Community Heritage Register: June 12, 2018

Description of the Historic Place

The Church of the Good Shepherd is a simple, wood-frame building nestled in a grove of mature trees near Bedwell Harbour on South Pender Island, British Columbia. The historic place includes the church building with its window depicting a shepherd holding a lamb, the small cabin, the memorial garden, the service schedule sign and an oak tree planted at the time of church construction.



The stained glass window above the altar was crafted in the 1860s and installed at the time of church construction.

Heritage Value

The Church of the Good Shepherd is of historic, aesthetic, spiritual, social, and cultural value to the community of South Pender Island.

The church building has historical significance to South Pender Island as a symbol of the community spirit on the island at the time of the building of the church. Early residents of the island donated time and resources to its development and their descendants and new arrivals to the island ensured the continued existence of the church as a community space.

- 1938** On Sept. 24, the first wedding in the church is performed, Elizabeth (Betty) Hodgson, of Bedwell Harbour, marries Cyril Andrews, of Victoria.
- 1940s** The “Prophet’s Chamber” is built behind the church for the minister’s use on service days, and/or for overnight accommodation when necessary.
- 1944** Canon Harold George King performs double-baptism of two infant boys of the Teece family.
- 1950** Church pews are built and installed, using lumber purchased with the proceeds (\$250) of a fund-raising event held at Port Washington Hall by Winifred Spalding and Marie Craddock.
- 1954** In the summer, naval cadets at Bedwell Harbour make improvements to the church building.
- 1961** The church is wired for electricity, and the interior walls are finished.
- 1969** On November 16, a new altar rail is dedicated in memory of Bishop Coleman; George Campbell made the rail from a red cedar tree donated by Herbert Spalding.
- 1976** The oak tree from the Windsor acorn planted in 1937 is designated as a “Heritage Tree.”
- 1982** A new altar is placed in the church in memory of Marie Craddock, donated by her daughter, Victoria Gillespie.
- 1983** The Memorial Garden is designed and created by Ted Madeley and Marjorie Bailey, for the interment of ashes of deceased parishioners and their loved ones.
- 1985** A plaque is dedicated to the memory of Gerry and Tessie Parkyn; Gerry Parkyn (d. 1984) was instrumental in the planning, design, and construction of the church in 1937-38.
- 1988** A picnic is held in May at the home of Jiggs and Derek Christy to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Church of the Good Shepherd; earlier in the year, the Sea Scouts, supervised by Charlie Illsley, built a new fence around the church grounds.
- 1997** A new lychgate is dedicated to the memory of Herbert & Winifred Spalding.
- 2000** A tradition is established of commemorating each interment in the Memorial Garden with a bronze plaque with the person’s name on it fixed to one of the local granite rocks in the memorial garden.
- 2009** In July, the Church of the Good Shepherd is listed as one of the Anglican churches to be “disestablished.”
- 2012** In December, the “South Pender Historical Society” is formed to protect land and structures of historical value on South Pender Island. The Society is working with the Parish to preserve and maintain the building, grounds, and memorial garden of the Church of the Good Shepherd for the benefit and use of the Pender community and visitors.
- 2017** Installation of the Tsawout Thirteen Moon calendar on the church grounds.

In 2012, the South Pender Historical Society was formed; the society is committed to preserving the history of South Pender Island, including land and structures of historical value. The Society is particularly interested in preserving the buildings, grounds, and memorial garden of the Church of the Good Shepherd and has worked with the Parish of St. Peter's to continue the use of the Church of the Good Shepherd and the church grounds as a gathering place for the community of South Pender. In recent years, the church and surrounding site have played host to numerous community activities, including historical presentations, Art off the Fence in July, a Growers and Makers Market on the Labour Day weekend, and Christmas Eve carol singing in the church.

Recently, the church property has taken on a heightened cultural value for South Pender Island as a site that offers a place of relationship building between the Tsawout First Nation and the island's non-indigenous population. The Historical Society worked together with the Tsawout Nation to design and install a Thirteen Moon Calendar to recognize and honour the long history of the Tsawout people on South Pender Island.

The continued existence of the Church of the Good Shepherd is of real and personal historic, aesthetic, spiritual, social and cultural value to the community members of South Pender as a physical reminder of our past and as a commitment to future community connection.



The Tsawout Thirteen Moon calendar installation.

Character-Defining Elements

- The rustic style of the church , including its small scale, cedar shingle siding and wooden pews and altar
- The steeply pitched gable roof and modest steeple
- The prominent, gable roof entryway
- The window with the image of the shepherd and lamb
- The memorial garden
- The mature trees on the property, including the oak planted in 1937 from an acorn from Windsor Great Park.
- The lychgate
- The service schedule sign
- The simple wood cabin
- The Tsawout Thirteen Moon calendar installation



The “Prophet’s Chamber,” a small wooden cabin on the church property.

Timeline/Historical Information

- 1906-07** Regular Anglican services begin in the Spalding family home, held by the Rev. Hubert St. John Payne, also known as “Parson Payne” (who had opened a Saturna Island chapel in 1904).
- 1937** Parson Payne offers the South Pender Island community the furnishings of his Saturna Chapel, which he is closing. A “South Pender Church Building Committee” is formed, including the Rev. R. D. Porter, Mrs. A. R. Spalding, Mrs. F.X. Hodgson, Dr. Aldridge, Major Pender, and Mr. G. F. Parkyn. The committee decides on a wood frame building and work begins to identify a building site and to raise funds for the construction.
- 1937** A suitable site on the Richardson property is selected (with help from Claude Conery, whose family resided on the property). The church site is marked out and surveyed.
- 1937-38** The Richardson sisters in England donate the land, a church bell, and a substantial cash amount; Mrs. Crane of Camp Bay arranges donations of altar cloth and communion linen; Miss Lyon of Camp Bay donates the “Good Shepherd” window, which was designed and crafted by her father and brought to Canada; Dr. and Mrs. Aldridge donate most of the lumber required, and the Anglican Church donates \$300. An acorn from Windsor Great Park is planted to commemorate the coronation of King George VI.
- 1938** In March, church construction by South Pender residents begins, with Gerry Parkyn in charge.
- 1938** On May 1, “The Church of the Good Shepherd” opens, free of debt, for use as a community church; the Rev. R. D. Porter holds the “official” opening service.
- 1938** On June 17, Bishop Sexton of Victoria performs the church dedication.



Commemorative plaques in the Church of the Good Shepherd Memorial Garden.



The treed grounds of the Church of the Good Shepherd.

In 1937-38, after three decades of Anglican services on South Pender Island hosted in family homes, Canon Payne of Saturna Island offered the South Pender community the furnishings of his chapel on Saturna Island, as he was closing the chapel. This offer of furnishings demonstrated the close connections between Saturna and South Pender Islands at that time. In response to the offer, a South Pender Building Committee was formed, including Reverend Porter of Mayne Island, who chaired the committee, Mrs. A.R. Spalding, Treasurer, Mrs. F.X. Hodgson, Secretary, Dr. Aldridge, Major Pender, and Mr. Parkyn. The church was designed and built largely through volunteer labour led by Gerry Parkyn on land donated for the cause by the Richardson family.

In the 1940s, the cabin, “the Prophet’s Chamber,” was constructed behind the church for the minister’s use for overnight accommodation on service days. A Roll of Honour hangs in the church to remember those South Pender men who gave their lives in World Wars I and II; four in WWI and three in WWII. In addition, there is a plaque in memory of the three men who died in WWII. The memorial garden on the church property, consecrated in 1983, honours a number of the early settlers who came to the Island and their descendants.

The Church of the Good Shepherd and grounds are of aesthetic value for the connection they provide to the era in which the church was built, and as one of the island’s few community buildings. The rustic style of the church, including its cedar shingle siding, are representative of the materials available to the South Pender population in the 1930s. The mature trees surrounding the church, including an oak tree planted in 1937 from an acorn from England’s Windsor Great Park, contribute to the serene and contemplative ambiance. The lychgate at the front of the property conveys the sense of a entering a special place, while the window above the church altar, depicting a shepherd and lamb, provides a strong focal point within the church

The spiritual and social value of the Church of the Good Shepherd to South Pender Island residents has carried through from the time of its construction to today. The Church of the Good Shepherd is an Anglican Church, but it was built through the volunteer efforts of South Pender residents of many denominations. In 2009 the Anglican Diocese announced that the church was to be disestablished and regular church services were discontinued.



The lychgate and grounds of the Church of the Good Shepherd.



The Church of the Good Shepherd service sign.