

The Gracefield property was donated to the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario by the Billings family in 1962. This brief overview of the St. Giles involvement in the support and use of this valuable asset is covering the period from the early 1980s to the present.

The 1980s saw a revival of the St. Giles Sunday School which started from a Vacation Bible School which attracted a fair number of children from families who lived close by and would join the Sunday Sunday. George Lee organized a one-day bus trip to Gracefield which included both adults and children. The Currie family with their four children had already spent one week at Gracefield by renting a campsite for a week.

The second phase of bringing adults and children to Gracefield was to book the camp for a whole week when regular summer camps were not scheduled. The success of this event resulted in Gracefield instituting a family camp in midsummer which has proven to be successful.

The two older Currie girls subsequently worked at Gracefield. Fiona as a lifeguard and Amanda as assistant cook.

In 1986, Stan Currie became a member of the Gracefield Operating Committee (GOC) which had oversight of the camp on behalf of the Synod. For a number of years, the GOC held its monthly meetings at St. Giles. Stan served as GOC chairperson in his last two years of a six-year term. In his last year, 1992, the Synod meeting was held at Gracefield which was celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Given the earlier positive experiences at Gracefield, St. Giles people booked weekends at the camp, specifically the long weekend in May and Thanksgiving in October. Initially, attendance was near to 20 people with most staying in the two lodge buildings, Beaver and Jolly Roger. They brought their food and did any required cooking on site. A core group attended regularly and others were invited to join. Over time the numbers declined somewhat and the frequency was reduced by dropping the May weekend which was less popular because of the start of the black-fly season.

One aspect of these weekends was that St. Giles leaders conducted a Sunday worship service in the outdoor chapel to which other people at camp, e.g. T&T folks were invited to attend. Thus lay leadership had an opportunity to be a small part of the ministry at Gracefield. The offerings at these services went to support the ministry of Gracefield.

The people of St. Giles are fortunate that our current minister, Paul Wu, immediately grasped the importance of the ministry of Gracefield. He has spent a week of his holidays each year serving as Chaplain at Gracefield.

(by Stan Currie)