



## **Hillcrest United Church, Fort Nelson, British Columbia.**

### *Our beginnings....*

- 1960 - The groundwork for a United Church congregation was laid by Peace River Presbytery members.
- January 8, 1961 - An interim Board was set up; lots were chosen and applied for, minister's housing was arranged.
- January 22, 1961 - Arrangements were made to constitute the congregation as a United Church, and to induct the Rev. Arthur Kloepper.
- February 10, 1961 - Friday, at 8:00 pm at the Legion Hall, the congregation was constituted and Rev. A. Kloepper was inducted.
- June 18, 1961 - The Air Base Chapel was bought for \$ 1001. - Another building at the airport was taken apart for lumber to help with the construction of the basement.
- September 17, 1961 - Minutes record that the cement had been poured on the 16<sup>th</sup>, and "the church lots, building, and large foundation are now a reality. Thanks be to God."
- November 19, 1961 - Four elders and eight stewards were elected.
- December 10, 1961 - The first service was held in the church.
- January 21, 1962 - At a meeting of the Official Board, it was recorded that the Sunday School had 65 on the roll, with an average attendance of 45 and 6 regular teachers. There was an active Women's Association, a

Canadian Girls in Training Group and the congregation was a member of the "Every Family Plan" of the Observer.

*and our continuing story...*

Fort Nelson's resource-based economy has seen its share of boom and bust over the years, mostly in the lumber and natural gas industry. (It was once home to the world's largest chopstick factory until the plant shut down in 1997) The community is also fairly isolated. The nearest United Church is a four-hour drive to the south.

Today's vibrant congregation of 20 families is committed to minister to the whole town, whether that is at Sunday morning worship, at the post office or grocery store. The picture-perfect little church, shared now with the Anglican congregation, continues to hold a special place in the heart of the community; and whether over coffee and goodies or potluck supper people are ready to tell their stories. One favourite recalls the time when a real and very lively Palm Sunday donkey dropped something not so holy, and slightly smelly right in front of the communion table. Another tells how at one minister's farewell party the youth used whipping cream and toilet paper to decorate said minister's car.

At time of this writing Hillcrest United is looking forward to host the members of Presbytery on their way to Whitehorse. But not only then - any time of the year 'the little white church on the hill' extends a warm, northern welcome to all!