

Les Ami(e)s de Grand-Pré

A day of Acadian deportation reflection

By PAUL PICKREM

Sat. Jul 26 - 4:32 AM



Susan Surette-Draper and Betty Curry stand in front of the historic Covenanter Church in Grand Pré, where a special service will be held Monday to commemorate the deportation of the Acadians and to pray for peace and reconciliation. (Paul Pickrem)

A special service will be held Monday commemorating the expulsion and deportation of the Acadians from the Annapolis Valley and other areas and to pray for peace and reconciliation throughout the world.

A bell will toll at 5:55 p.m. at the historic Covenanter Church, built in 1804 in Grand Pré, in recognition of the signing of the order calling for the deportation on July 28, 1755, by Nova Scotia Lt.-Gov. Charles Lawrence.

The United Church of Canada has held similar services since 2005.

The event will be attended by representatives of the aboriginal community and descendants of the Acadians and British Loyalists known as the Planters.

Betty Curry, a member of St. Andrew's United Church in Wolfville, which maintains the registered heritage site, said in a recent interview the service will include the lighting of a peace candle, music and prayer for peace and harmony among nations worldwide.

"This is an ideal place," she said. "It is near Blomidon, which is the land of the Glooscap legend of the Mi'kmaq. It is also near the dykes

constructed by the Acadians and the areas settled after the deportation by the British."

She said the bilingual and ecumenical service will be followed by a walk of solidarity to the national park in Grande Pré to commemorate the deportation, which has become known as the Great Upheaval.

"The theme is peace and reconciliation," Ms. Curry said.

"With forgiveness there is hope that nations around the world will live in peace."

Susan Surette-Draper of Les Amis de Grand-Pré, a grassroots organization that promotes Acadian history and language, said the service is an opportunity to reflect on the history of the deportation and consider what it means to be Acadian today.

"As an Acadian living here, I want to support this effort of the United Church to reach out in friendship and reconciliation as we take some time to be friendly and get to know each other," she said.

There will also be a wreath-laying ceremony at noon Monday at the Deportation Cross monument in Horton Landing. Lt.-Gov. Mayann Francis will lay a wreath on behalf of the province.

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extracted from the Halifax Chronicle Herald, 26 July 2008