



May 4, 2011

N.S. church floats on water toward winery

By CBC News
CBC News

A rare sight occurred in Walton, N.S., on Wednesday as a century-old church was ferried down the Minas Basin on a vessel captained by a man named Lord.

A rare sight occurred in Walton, N.S., on Wednesday as a century-old church was ferried down the Minas Basin on a vessel captained by a man named Lord.

The building - formerly St. Matthew's Anglican Church - is being moved to Avondale to become part of the new Avondale Sky Winery, owned by Stewart Creaser and his wife, Lorraine Vassalo.

"We needed a building to make our wine in and to sell our wine in. We've moved an old barn to our property to make the wine in and this building will be used to sell our wine," Creaser told CBC News on Wednesday.

St. Matthew's Anglican Church was built in 1844 and deconsecrated in 2008. Creaser and Vassalo bought the building for \$1.67 - the same price the congregation paid for the church in 1844.

While transporting the former church to the new site will cost thousands of dollars, Creaser said he fell in love with the building as soon as he saw it.

"When you're in there it has this amazing, peaceful ambience," he said.

"We really weren't looking for a church in particular but when we were shown it, we just really believed it was the right thing to do. It was a great old building, it's got a lot of history and it deserves to be able to live on."

The journey of the nearly 30-tonne building is a complicated one that has already experienced delays. The building spent the winter on the Walton waterfront after poor weather conditions delayed attempts to move it last year.

On Wednesday, a truck successfully drove the church on to a converted ferry that arrived in Walton for the day's high tide at 2:25 p.m.

The church will now travel more than 45 kilometres down the Bay of Fundy to Newport Landing, then up the Avon River where it will sit overnight, just off Hantsport. It will be unloaded off the ferry at Thursday afternoon's high tide.

Next week, it will be driven up a hill toward Avondale Sky Winery as nearby phone, power and cable lines are carefully disconnected.

Creaser said he was originally hoping to transport the church on a truck for its entire journey.

"There's a problem with the power lines between here and our location that there's major power lines and Nova Scotia Power would have to put power or turn the power off for a significant part of the whole county, which they just can't do," he said.

Armed with cameras and chairs, dozens of people in the village of Walton came to the waterfront to witness the church's move.

"Makes it a little exciting, just look around. I've never seen this many cars in Walton in my life," said one man.

"I think it's just short of a miracle," said another.

The captain of the ferry - named Stan Lord - said he had never experienced anything of this magnitude and was surprised to see so many members of the village show up for the occasion.

"I said, 'Holy crap,'" Lord said, laughing.

The crowd broke into cheers and applause as Lord pulled the ferry away from the waterfront.

"Went to church there and there it goes now, right out to sea," said one woman.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation



CBC News 2011. Permission granted for up to 5 copies. All rights reserved.

You may forward this article or get additional permissions by typing http://license.icopyright.net/3.8471?icx_id=/2011/05/04/ns-walton-church-floats.html into any web browser. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and CBC logos are registered trademarks of Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The iCopyright logo is a registered trademark of iCopyright, Inc.