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Seeking new ways to serve — Communities have changed, and churches must change with them, believes Rev. Ruth Draffin, a young minister with a mission — to keep the century-old Lakeport church alive. Photo by Eileen Argyris

# Historic Lakeport church reaches 'fork in the road'

By Eileen Argyris

Churches used to be the centres of their communities, and Rev. Ruth Draffin believes they can be again — if the churches change as the communities have changed.

Rev. Draffin is the minister in charge of Presbyterian churches in Colborne, Brighton and Lakeport.

St. Paul's, Lakeport, is the subject of her concern at the moment, since the Sunday congregation is down to about three or four adult regulars.

If something cannot be done to show that the church is filling a need in the community, the historic (1884) building is in danger of being deconsecrated and sold.

## FORK IN THE ROAD

"The church has hit the fork in the road," Rev. Draffin told the *Colborne Chronicle*.

"Basically the original, traditional congregation no longer exists.

"We want to use the church and get the community to use the church in the way they want to," she says.

On Tuesday, March 19, there will be a meeting in the church basement at St. Paul's, beginning at 7 p.m., for "everyone who's interested in saving the little church," regardless of church affiliation, says Rev. Draffin.

She is thinking that contemporary worship services, not necessarily in the traditional Sunday

morning time slot, could be part of the answer.

"Modern families have different needs," she admits, "and the church needs to recognize this."

## ANSWERING MODERN NEEDS

Maybe, Rev. Draffin suggests, what families want is a different service time, say early Wednesday evening, or Sunday night, so mom and dad can bundle the kids off to church by 6:30 or 7 p.m., getting them home in time for an early bedtime.

At that service, contemporary guitar music, stories and drama could take the place of the traditional choir, organ and sermon, she suggests.

"We could have children's skits, and young people singing," she adds.

## 'Quick-change' scam

Two fast-talking "quick change artists" are being sought by police in connection with a fraud complaint from Colborne's Fox IGA.

Police say the pair, a man and a woman, approached an IGA cashier with a small-item purchase and offered to pay with a large bill.

While change was being made, the pair were able to deceive the clerk into giving them a large amount of money to which they were not entitled.

The male suspect is described as white, about

28 years old, 5'10", thinning dark hair, slim build, green coat, blue jeans, earring in left ear.

The female is said to be about the same age, also white, about 5'5" with bleached blonde hair in a ponytail, slim, with a diamond stud nose ring.

The loss of money was not discovered until the suspects had left the store.

Police are cautioning merchants to beware of the couple and advise their employees, as well.

Brighton OPP are asking anyone who has information to call the detachment office at 475-1313.

See *Church*, page 5