



Emergency Services respond to early morning fire at Grace United Brethren Church

Port Colborne, ON (Dec. 8, 2020) – At 3:12 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020, Port Colborne Fire and Emergency Services responded to a fire at Grace United Brethren Church on the corner of Empire Road and Sherkston Road. No one was injured and the cause of fire is currently under investigation.

Emergency services activated mutual aid, bringing in tanker trucks from Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Welland, with Wainfleet Fire Services on stand-by at the Port Colborne Fire Station. At the peak of the fire, there were more than 30 Fire Fighters onsite, two engine and two ladder trucks, and six tanker trucks.

With temperatures just below freezing, Public Works salted the parking lot and surrounding road areas to ensure water didn't freeze as Fire Fighters continued to control the fire. Homes in the surrounding area were minimally impacted.

"This is a sad situation for sure," said Tom Cartwright, Port Colborne Fire Chief. "The Grace United Brethren Church is an important building in this community and it's devastating to see it gone."

At 7:45 a.m. Fire Fighters continued to manage the fire, with more water being brought in. Unfortunately, the fire caused significant damage and what's left of the church will be demolished. Fire Chief Cartwright anticipates a loss of \$1.5 to \$2 million, depending on the contents inside the church. The Office of the Fire Marshal will be attending to assist with the investigation.

"On behalf of City Council and Staff, our thoughts go out to the Grace United Brethren Church community," said Mayor Bill Steele. "This is a devastating loss for the community and we're incredibly sad to see this building gone. Thank you to Port Colborne Fire and Emergency Services for your valiant effort, and to our fellow municipalities, Fort Erie, Welland, Niagara Falls and Wainfleet, for helping today. Port Colborne, please keep the Grace United Brethren Church in your thoughts and prayers."

Port Colborne residents are advised to avoid the area of Empire Road and Sherkston Road today, as emergency crews continue to manage the fire and begin cleaning up the surrounding area.

About City of Port Colborne

Located on the south coast of the scenic Niagara Region, Niagara's Port of Call has found the perfect balance – successful industrial and commercial sectors, comfortable and scenic residential areas, white sand beaches, unique culinary choices, the world class Sugarloaf Marina, fishing, golfing, trails, shopping districts along the historic Welland Canal and an energized festival and entertainment scene that includes live theatre – truly a community that adds to the overall Niagara Experience.

For more information, contact:

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