

RESTORATION OF HOLY RESURRECTION CHURCH, SIFTON THE CANADIAN ORTHODOX PIONEER MUSEUM

The restoration of Holy Resurrection Church at Sifton, a four year project, is drawing to a successful conclusion. The Church now stands on a new foundation; its domes and siding have been refurbished and new exterior steps constructed. Re-painting of the interior and caulking of windows remain to be done, but otherwise, the project is nearly complete.

The Archdiocese of Canada (OCA) personal and memorial donations have helped a great deal in making this restoration a reality. The Kaplan Fund of New York City provided strong support through its "Prairie Churches Restoration Project," together with the Thomas Sill Foundation of Manitoba (\$40,000 in total). The Dauphin and District Community Foundation, Manitoba Community Places and Manitoba Heritage Programs provided another \$58,000. The remaining \$32,000 was provided by the Sifton Historical Society fund-raising efforts, local donations and gifts from persons within our Archdiocese.

The renewal of an annual Sifton Pilgrimage has been spiritually uplifting to the area, bringing persons largely from Dauphin, Ethelbert, Yorkton, Sandy Lake and Winnipeg. Clergy travel great distances to take part in it. For this year's Pilgrimage, Vladyka Seraphim was able to be with us, and last year, Vladyka Lazar. Donations from the Pilgrimage go toward the Church's ongoing restoration.

With the help of a \$2,000 grant from the Virginia Farah Foundation, the Canadian Orthodox Pioneer Museum was opened as a seasonal museum in the Church, operating from June 23 until mid-August this year. The story of a 1927 wedding is told in narrative and artifact. Displays of vestments, liturgical articles, incense making, and opportunities to hear chants and to buy candles, books, embroideries and icons from the entrance kiosk allow the visitor to become acquainted with the beauty of our faith. Central to the Museum is the life of St. Arseny, with a large icon of him written by Matushka Jennie Hainsworth. The icon is surrounded by an embroidered runner (rushnyk) from Vladyka Arseny's home village of Derhachi. Reader Michael Luciuk of Yorkton is employed as the Museum guide and he has been blessed to offer Reader's Services at the Church on Sundays and major holidays. So far, he has had a slow but steady flow of Museum visitors, with persons from as far away as Pennsylvania and Sault Ste. Marie.

A special Sifton project is a Retreat Cabin on the old Monastery land nearby. We have a small cabin replica and invite visitors to buy a packet of shingles, a bag of cement, a log or a window for a future Retreat House. The House would be useful for the summer student to live in, and allow visiting hierarchs and clergy to stay there for retreats or while serving there. A documentary featuring the Church as part of the "Prairie Churches' Project" will be shown on Prairie Public Television in December.

Many good things have happened at Sifton, by the prayers of St. Arseny and by your prayers. Please keep remembering this central holy place of our Archdiocese often.

Respectfully submitted,

Katya Szalasznyj
Archivist and Acting Museum Curator