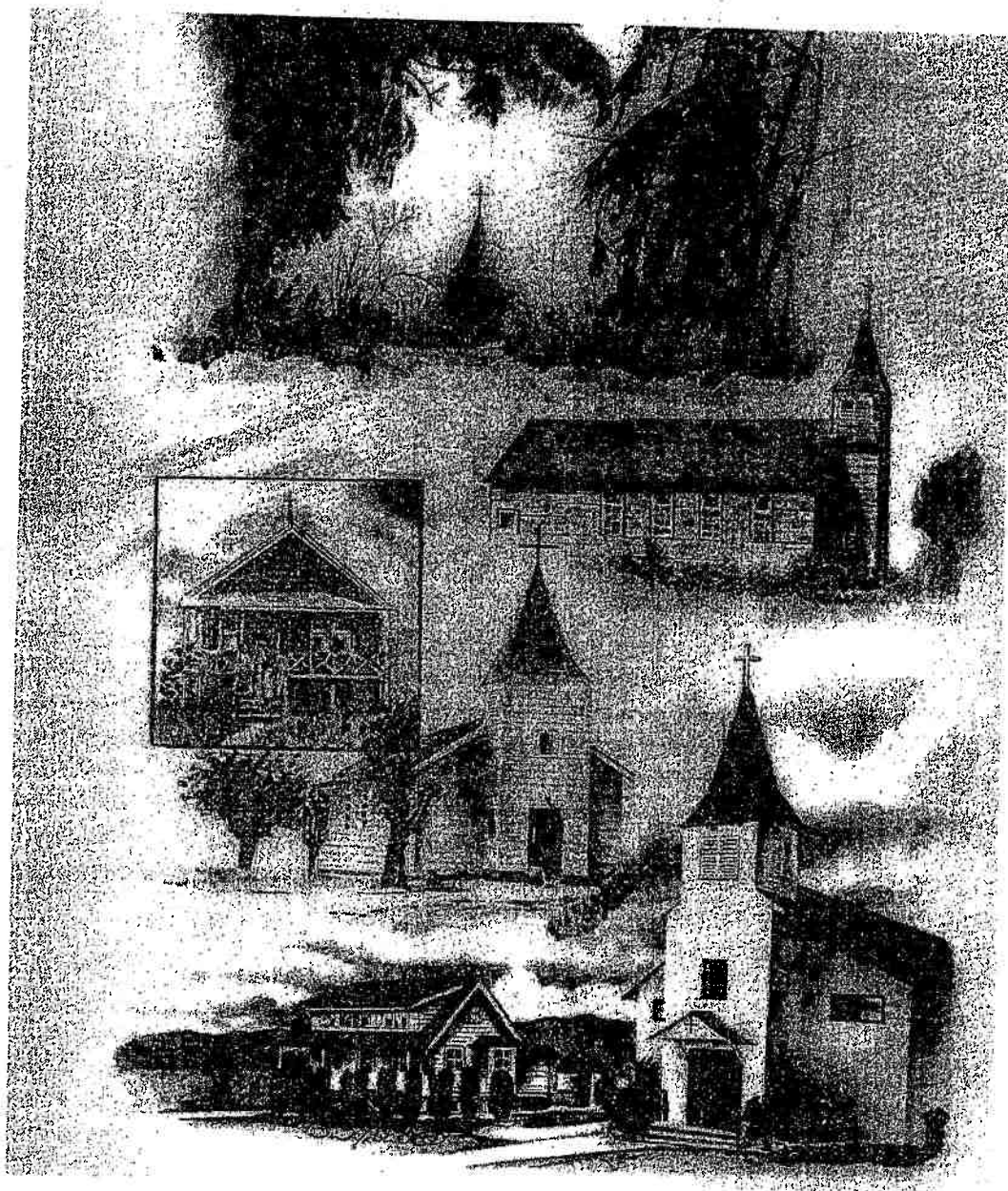


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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAINT LUKE'S PARISH



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*Today Salvation has come to this house.*

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# **CELEBRATING 75 YEARS**

**1944 - 2019**

## **ST. LUKE'S PARISH**

20285 Dewdney Trunk Rd., Maple Ridge, B. C. V2X 3C9

Tel. 604-465-5383

### **Early Beginnings – Transcribed Minutes Beginning with the First Recorded Meeting September 29, 1943**

His Excellency granted permission to install a Catholic Mission church in Port Hammond.

This was greatly appreciated by the Hammond Catholics who for many years had walked the three miles to St. Patrick's Church in Haney for mass.

Reverend Thomas Finnigan had already built many churches.

A meeting of Catholic men in Hammond was called, officers selected, and a suitable lot was selected on a lot on Westfield St. The clinic room at the Hammond Hall was rented for mass. The next item was to raise funds to pay for the church. The secretary was instructed to head a subscription list for the building fund of Our Lady of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Church.

In Jan. 1944 our financial report showed \$150 promised \$47 collected. Pres. W. Dunbar reported a successful interview with W.D. Hartnell head of the Hammond Cedar Co. and also donated a Chinese bunk house 60 ft. long, 25 ft. wide, the building was soon dismantled and lumber removed to church property.

Many hours were spent straightening nails and the building committee with Rev. F.F. as architect, voluntary labor by the men of the Parish. The cement was laid. The Church started.

In the gift from the Hammond Cedar Co. was a second shed which was cut in half and moved in two sections, joined together again to make a wood shed—later to be rebuilt into the church hall.

Mr. Rowley offered his garage for mass to save expenses and on March 17 mass was said for the first time in the church without windows or doors.

All the beautiful windows were presented by the congregation in memorial. Mr. Gilbert Brown donated \$20 for a window in memory of his mother. One window was to a beloved priest—Rev. Fr. Micheal who built St. Patrick's Church at Haney.

Day by day the work proceeded—the C.W.L. supplied warm tea etc. in the cold weather.

Oct. 1, 1944 Archbishop Duke dedicated the church to the Most Pure Heart of Mary and all were ministered the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Voluntary labor of finishing the Church continued at intervals. In Sept. 1945 Father Carrol was appointed parish priest of Port Hammond and auxiliary Church of Pitt Meadows, the property recently purchased by Archbishop Duke.

It was in 1875 that the Oblates of Mary Immaculate from St. Peter's Parish, New Westminster, first started coming out to Maple Ridge to celebrate Holy Mass at the home of pioneer Thomas Haney. The priest came every three months. The Catholic community growing from that humble beginning was established as St. Patrick's Parish in 1926. The original St. Patrick's Parish included all of the present day St. Luke's. In the earliest days everyone went to Haney for Sunday Mass.



By the late 1920's, enough Catholics had moved to Pitt Meadows to warrant the opening of a mission chapel on No. 2 Dyke under the patronage of Our Lady of Grace. The building was intended to be the residence for a priest but was never completed as such. Father Ronayne was the first to say Mass in Pitt Meadows on a weekly basis (at Christmas and Easter the people still had to go to Haney for Mass). In October 1937 Archbishop William Mark Duke wrote to Father McEvoy, then priest at St. Patrick's, encouraging him to try to obtain more land in Pitt Meadows. At the priest's retreat of 1941 Father Claessen reported to the Archbishop on the pastoral situation in the territory which was to become St. Luke's Parish. Father Claessen suggested that there be a church in central Pitt Meadows with Mass celebrated there each Sunday, with other facilities in Pitt Meadows East and Hammond (which by now had fifteen Catholic families) where catechism could be taught and Mass celebrated occasionally. He also suggested the establishment of a Japanese

Mission in the area (the Japanese missions in Richmond and on Cordova Street, Vancouver, had begun a few years previously). As it turned out, the need for a Japanese Mission was shortlived. A year later, 1942, the Japanese were evacuated to internment centres. Soon afterwards, the Pitt Meadows mission congregation of Our Lady of Grace, moved from the chapel on No. 2 Dyke to the newly vacated Japanese Hall on Advent Road. The No. 2 Dyke property was sold to Raymond Frank, who in turn, sold a half lot for the church site in Hammond (1943) and lent the money to buy the Hammond rectory in 1946.

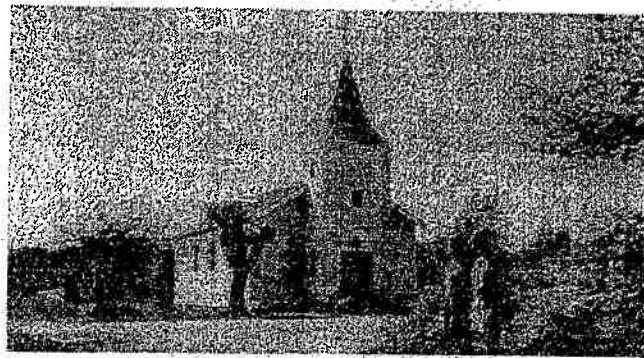
Soon after the Japanese left, Father Claessen applied to the "Japanese Evacuation Section of the Custodian of Enemy Property" in Vancouver for permission to use the hall as a church. Permission was granted (1942) but the parish was not allowed to buy the property until July 1946, when the price was \$2750.00. The hall had almost been sold to be used as a dance hall, although it had been in constant use as a chapel since 1942. When the parish was established in 1945 (with the arrival of the first pastor), the Hammond church was designated the parish church with Our Lady of Grace, Advent Road, remaining a mission church. With the parish plant moving to our present location, the Advent Road property and chapel were sold to the Christian Reformed Church (June 1962, for \$5694.00. although half the property had been let go in the early 1950's to help pay off the parish debt).

Although parish development began in Pitt Meadows, it soon became centred in Hammond, where a number of Catholics had arrived to work at the lumber mill. Many had to walk the two miles to the church in Haney. When the weather was bad, they had to miss Mass. Things changed with the arrival of Father Thomas Stephen Finnigan as a pastor of St. Patrick's at the end of June 1943. Father Finnigan was an energetic, outgoing Irishman who had already built some dozen churches throughout B.C., including St. Michael's, Sapperton, and Our Lady of the Assumption, Port Coquitlam. He soon wrote to Archbishop Duke for permission to open a mission church in Port Hammond

The letter of permission from the Archbishop was dated September 29, 1943, the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel. By November an unsuccessful attempt had been made to purchase an old Presbyterian church in Hammond to accomodate the new congregation which by now had grown to some 35 families. Not being able to buy the old Presbyterian church (although Archbishop Duke had already authorized the deal) Father Finnigan decided to build a church.

A building committee was formed to oversee the project. Property was purchased at Second Avenue (now 207th) and Westfield: a lot from the municipality for \$75.00 and another half-lot from the Frank family for \$50.00. Mass began in the clinic room of the community hall which also served as headquarters for the local Orange Lodge, and so a portrait of King William in full regalia, white horse and all, graced the wall of the makeshift Mass chapel. By January 1944 the finances were "in order", with a \$150.00 grant from the Church Extension Society and \$47.00 collected from the parishioners. A bank loan from the Bank of Montreal amounted to \$400.00, exactly one thousandth of the approved bank loan for the 1990 construction.

Bill Dunbar, a parishioner and foreman to the Hammond Cedar Company, led a delegation to the mill manager who gave them an old bunkhouse on the condition that they move it themselves, cleaning up the site afterwards. The men gladly agreed and patiently dismantled the shed, careful to save the nails which were then straighten out at the "nails-bees" in George Rowley's garage, which was also used for Sunday Mass to avoid paying rent for the clinic room. A second shed, the old cookhouse, also came from the mill. It was cut in two, moved to the church site, and reassembled to serve as woodshed and, later, as parish hall.



The church, which measured 60' x 28', the same as the old bunkhouse, was built entirely by volunteers, including some non-Catholics. Led by Father Finnigan himself, who also served as architect, the men put in nearly two thousand hours of voluntary labour, the ladies providing sandwiches, sweets, and tea. The church was "finished", minus doors, windows and heat, in time for Mass on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1944, the target set by Father Finnigan. On October 1, 1944, Archbishop Duke came to bless the church. The Church was named "Most Pure Heart of Mary" which was requested by Archbishop Duke himself who preferred that the

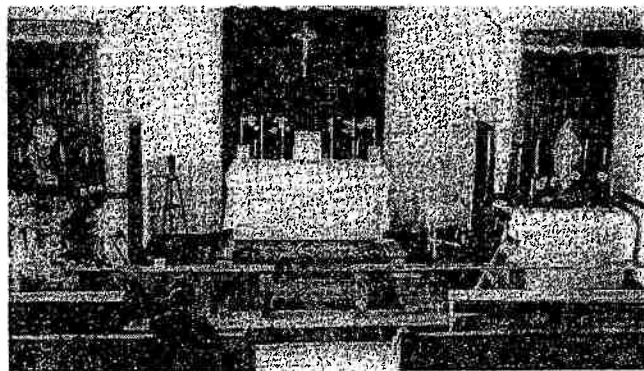
title of our Lady be one in liturgical usage, the "Most Pure Heart" being particularly desirable since Pope Pius XII had just that year consecrated the world to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart. The building committee had previously voted for the name "Our Lady of

the Valley" but quickly acceded to the Archbishop's choice. The Church was painted white with green trim and had eight memorial windows including one in honour of Father Michel, O.M.I., pioneer priest in the area and founder of the Haney Catholic community.

Early in the project Father Finnigan had set Laity Street (then called Third Avenue) as the eastern boundary of the future parish, since Laity is central between the two parish sites (Haney and Hammond). Even before the new parish was formed Catholics west of this boundary were asked to go to Hammond for Mass; those east of the boundary continued to go to St. Patrick's, Haney. For over a year after it was built, however, the church in Hammond remained, along with the church in Pitt Meadows, part of St. Patrick's Parish, Haney, although sacramental registers were begun at both locations in November 1943.

In September 1945, Father R.J. Carroll was appointed the first pastor and the Parish of the Most Pure Heart of Mary officially

The first entry in the parish accounts book is dated September 16, 1945. Bank authorization for Father Carroll as pastor came on October 24, 1945. The parish boundaries remained as Father Finnigan had fixed them (Third Avenue – now Laity – as the dividing line). Six months later – March 16, 1946 – a group of eight Hammond parish trustees appealed to Archbishop Duke to extend the eastern boundary to Fifth Avenue (now 216th). After consultation with Father Finnigan, who was still pastor in Haney, the Archbishop replied to Father Carroll – not to the lay trustees – that the boundary would remain as it was set by Father Finnigan in 1943, and so it has to the present day. Father Finnigan, when consulted by the Archbishop, insisted that Third Avenue (Laity) was originally chosen because it was “dead center” between the two sites and that Father Carroll’s real aim was “to get his hands on” the eight and a half dollars donated weekly to St. Patrick’s by those who lived “between Third and Fifth”, an amount “essential to the survival of the Haney parish”



When Father Carroll arrived, there was no parish house. On October 24, 1945, he went to see Archbishop Duke about building a rectory and the Archbishop kindly offered one thousand dollars toward the building costs. On Christmas Day (!) Father Carroll wrote to the Archbishop to request permission to buy a house, one block south of the church, at the corner of Dartford and Westfield. Archbishop Duke came out three days later to see the house and approve its purchase. The house was bought in January for \$2500.00, a thousand dollars toward the cost coming as a gift from the Archdiocese and the remaining borrowed from Raymond Frank (who was not paid back until the insurance money came after the 1947 fire).

July 2-14, 1946, a Vacation Religion Class was conducted by the Sisters of St. Ann, Sister Mary Celsus and Sister Mary Stella. Thirty-two children attended; of these, nine made their First Holy Communion. There had been previous First Communions and Confirmations.

By the winter of 1946 Father T. Przybylek had replaced Father Carroll as parish priest. He was to stay until July 8, 1950, when he left the parish to take up duties as chaplain at St. Paul’s Hospital.

At 8:30 p.m. on Ascension Thursday, May 22, 1947, disaster struck as the parish church caught fire. Everything was destroyed in flames except the small concrete statue of the parish Patroness, Our Lady, the Most Pure Heart of Mary. This statue later re-claimed its place in the bell-tower of the rebuilt

church in Hammond, but has now been relocated above the porch of the third parish church, having been placed there in time for the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1990, and thus linking the three church buildings in the Immaculate Heart of our Blessed Mother.

Within days of the fire, Father Przybylek had formed a new building committee of “five experts” as he described them to Archbishop Duke. An immediate decision was made to add ten feet to the old wood shed so that it could be used as a chapel until the parish church was rebuilt. Hammond Forest Products donated \$102.00 of material for the purpose. Mass was celebrated in this shed for over a year.

The frame of the new church was raised August 22, 1947 (then the Feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary). The decision was made to rebuild eight feet longer, although some complained that so much room was unnecessary. Father Przybylek himself carved the altar, . . .

communion rail, and the woodwork at the front of the choir loft and around the alcoves for the statues. The new church was blessed by Archbishop Duke on September 11, 1949.

The cost of rebuilding was covered by \$5000.00 from the fire insurance company and a gift of \$948.00 from the Church Extension Society. Twelve hundred dollars of the insurance money went to pay off the loan made by Raymond Frank in 1946 to buy the rectory. Father Przybylek wanted to enter the rebuilding project debt free. In April, 1949, Father Przybylek requested permission to borrow nine hundred dollars to put stucco on the exterior of the church as measure of fire protection. At the same time, he made a financial statement: the doors and windows for the new building cost \$629.30; the roofing \$435.00; electric lights \$251.10; the sanding of the floor, \$125.00; lumber, cement/sand, nails, locks, hinges and paint, \$3249.60, not quite in the same league as 1990 construction figures!

Father T.J. Reidy arrived as Pastor on July 8, 1950 and served until January 18, 1953. He returned for a second term as pastor in the summer of 1976 and remained until failing health required him to retire on June 30, 1981.



Father Victor Gallo arrived in January 1953 as the fourth parish priest. He inherited the almost untouched debt for the Pitt Meadows mission church of Our Lady of Grace. Archbishop Duke himself had sent two hundred dollars in February 1951 to help reduce the debt, but by 1954 he was suggesting that Father Gallo concentrate on paying off the Pitt Meadows

debt. The Archbishop suggested that the parish run a raffle toward that end and even offered to donate some prizes. Father Gallo received permission to sell part of the Advent Road property to help reduce the debt.

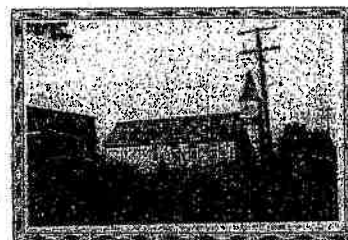
Father Francis J. Nash succeeded Father Gallo on September 25, 1955. His eight years as pastor would be busy. The parish had begun to grow and plans had to be made for future developments.

By 1960, the parish had grown to 117 families practicing the Faith; fifty-seven were in Hammond and the other sixty families were in Pitt Meadows. The two church buildings were already 'showing signs of becoming inadequate.' The need for having two Mass centres had decreased with the increased mobility of the population. As Father Nash

put it in a letter to Archbishop Duke: "Everyone in the parish now attending Mass has a car. The husbands drive the cars, the wives drive the cars, the older sons and daughters drive the cars."

On January 12, 1960, Father Nash wrote a seven page, closely tied letter to Archbishop Duke proposing the purchase of the present property on Dewdney Trunk Road (then called Powerline Road). The 4.13 acres, owned by J. Solodki (who had bought it from the displaced Japanese in 1942 for \$4000.00) was for sale at

\$25,725.00, including the large frame house (present rectory), a "small barn" (the hall), and a double garage. On March 30, 1960, members of the Archdiocesan



Building Commission led by the chairman Rev. P. Smeets, visited and found the "location and

actual property most attractive" the buildings all "in excellent condition", and recommended the purchase. The sale was completed by June. With no immediate plans to move the parish site, the newly bought house was rented out (\$100/month) to the Anglican Canon S.E. Higgs, chaplain at Haney Correctional Institution.

In the meantime the parish began making arrangements to move to the new site. It soon became evident that a new church was out of the question at the time, since the small number of families could not build an adequate building for future use. On August 31, 1962, Father Nash wrote for permission to move the Hammond church to the new site, foreseeing that a future addition to it (never made) might be able to tide the parish over until a large, permanent church could be built. "Even when a permanent Church is built, it could serve as a hall..." On September 12, the Building Commission recommended approval of the move at the estimated cost of \$6000.00, and the Archbishop granted the approval on September 18. The move took place on March 21, 1963, under the direction of Nickel Brothers House Movers, Surrey.

Father Nash was replaced on August 28, 1963, by Father Karl Bohnenberger who served as Pastor twelve years, until September 1975, when he returned to his home diocese of Mainz, Germany.

Father Bohnenberger is remembered for his discipline, his liturgical sense, his keen theological mind, his enthusiasm for an informed and active laity. Among His earliest projects was the changing of the parish name from "Most

Pure Heart of Mary" to "St. Luke's". The parish voted on the change at Sunday Mass and the Archbishop's approval was sought. Father Bohnenberger suggested some alternatives: St.



Matthew's, St. Mark's, St. Mary's. "Personally I would like very much St. Luke, especially since that name would somehow express a continuity to the present name of the Church" (Letter to Archbishop Johnson, April 21, 1964). On May 21 1964, Archbishop Johnson approved the new name for the parish.

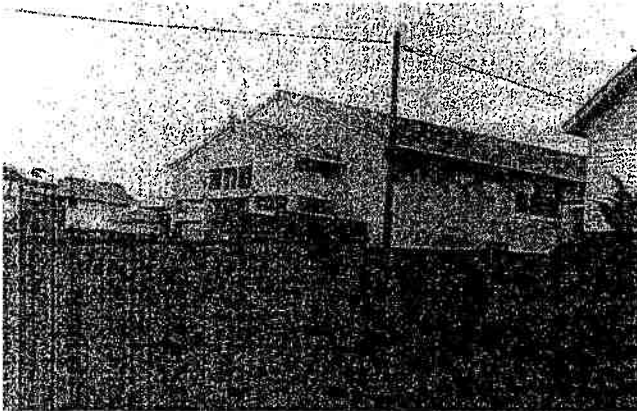
Father Bohnenberger was followed by Father E.G. Lehner who served as parish priest just under a year, when he was replaced by Father T. Reidy who began his second term as pastor, which lasted until June 30, 1981.

It would be two months until the Pastor arrived on August 30, 1981, in the person of Father Joseph Franks, who came from St. Mary's, Chilliwack. Father Franks had served the parish just under two years, when ill health forced his retirement. A kind and humble man, Father Franks loved the outdoors. He foresaw the coming need for a larger church and started the "Building Fund".

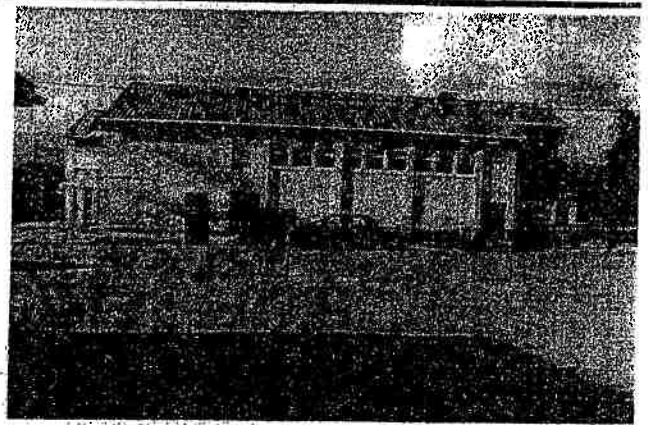
Father Henry Ignatius Bader arrived in the summer of 1983. A former editor of "The B.C. Catholic", Father Bader was also chaplain of Okalla Correctional Centre. With the parish population nearly doubling during his pastorate, he felt the urgency of the need for a larger church. He added an extra Sunday Mass, but knew that a more permanent solution had to be found. With energy, enthusiasm, generosity, patience, and even great personal sacrifice and suffering, he dedicated himself to the new church building project. Throat cancer robbed him of the satisfaction of seeing the project brought to completion. He last celebrated Mass in the parish on April 16, 1989 and submitted his resignation as pastor a month later. Father Bader died on July 6, 1989. May he rest in peace.

Father D. Neumann was installed as the eleventh parish priest on June 12, 1989.

On August 15, 1989, Archbishop James



Francis Carney granted "approval in principle" to build the new church, with an overall budget of \$840,000.00, and permission to borrow up to four hundred thousand dollars. On October 3, 1989, permission was received to engage G.R. Graham of Chilliwack as architect and on November 3 the revised Site Plan was approved. The preliminary design sketches were approved on December 20, 1989. The construction contract was signed with Alfred Horie Construction Company, Ltd., on April 30, 1990. The ground-breaking ceremony took place on Sun-



day, May 6, 1990, and construction began a month later.

Now will I praise those illustrious ones,  
our ancestors in their successive generations...  
whose virtues have not been forgotten;  
...Their bodies are peacefully laid away,  
but their name lives on and on.  
At gatherings their wisdom is retold,  
and the assembly proclaims their praise.

-The Book of Sirach, chapter 44

D.W.N., November 1990  
with acknowledgements to  
(Mrs.) Al Mackintosh, the Parish Historian,  
(Mrs.) Margaret Frank, and to Sister Diana  
Harsch, S.C.I.C., of the Archdiocese of  
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