

Celebrating 90 years of faith and family, Tolstoi, Manitoba

Tolstoi Holy Ghost Ukrainian Orthodox Church held a very special service June 11 to mark the 90th anniversary of the first service held in the church and to remember the founding families. The day began with president Dianne Lazaruk greeting His Eminence Metropolitan Yuriy with traditional bread and salt. Fr. Miron Pozniak welcomed his Eminence to the church.

The traditional vesting of the Metropolitan, by the theology students of

St. Andrew's College with Fr. Roman Bozyk, dean of St. Andrew's reading the prayers, preceded the divine liturgy. His Eminence lead the divine liturgy assisted by Frs. Pozniak and Bozyk. The responses were sung by cantor Martin Chobotar, assisted by Fr. Naherniak and Dobr. Rose and the local singers. The resounding voices could be heard at the cemetery where many of the founding members lay in eternal rest. The service concluded with an outdoor *Panahyda* and blessing of a plaque dedicated to

the founding families of the church.

A dinner and program was held at the Ukrainian National Home. President, Dianne Lazaruk welcomed all the guests. Present were descendents of 16 of the 64 founding families. Guests travelled from California, North Carolina, Ontario, Alberta and Winnipeg.

Wayne Arseny recounted the events of 1927 that lead to the construction of the church. Land was purchased, 2 acres to ensure that the cemetery was next to the church; building materials were donated; 5 days labor donated per member or pay \$2/day in lieu of labor; church designed by S. Kovbly of Winnipeg, head carpenter Wasyly Arseny; fund raising bazaars. The first executive was president Nick Yarmie, secretary Peter Kalushka, treasurer Nick Dolynchuk.

The strong faith and dedicated work of these early pioneer families was recognized by the presentation of plaques by Hon. Ted Falk, MP Provencher, MLA Cliff Graydon, Emerson (absent) and Councillor Orest Kuryk, RM Emerson Franklin. President Alec Bachynski brought greetings from the Vita and District Parish.



Susydka Ukrainian Dancers provided the closing entertainment. This was truly a memorable day. For many, it was their first time observing the traditions of the Orthodox faith that kept our ancestors strong while they established themselves and their church in a new land.

photo credit: Wendy Lazaruk

