

St. Paul's Celebration

by Bill Hart

Like light through a stained glass window, different messages coloured the Service of Dedication for St. Paul's Anglican Church in south Calgary.

Hoskin and his wife Pauline, diocesan Chancellor Peter Crisfield and former St. Paul's rectors Venerable Bob Griffiths and Rev. Kathleen Ratuski for the event.

mortgage-free and requesting the Bishop to consecrate the building, Bishop Hoskin's equally formal acceptance of that invitation, and the solemnity of the dedication itself, many moments of smiles and laughter truly made it a celebration: the Bishop's hinge-rattling knock on the sanctuary door with his crozier requesting entry. Younger members of the congregation showing how you're really supposed to dance in the aisles. The parish treasurer using flash paper for the actual mortgage-burning, prompting the quip from incumbent Rector Fergus Tyson, "I guess most people didn't know that one of the requirements of being the church's treasurer was also being a magician."

As part of the celebration, the parish presented the Bishop and Pauline Hoskin with a handmade, vibrantly coloured quilt. One of the parish's outreach ministries is creating quilts or shawls as visible signs of comfort for parishioners, friends and neighbours who need comfort, to



A sacred moment in a happy day.

But perhaps the most compelling message to the congregation, marking the burning of their mortgage and dedication of their 10-year-old building, came at the end of Bishop Derek Hoskin's sermon. "Now we need to ask, 'What does God expect of us in the years ahead?' " the Bishop told the gathering of about 150 parishioners, friends and guests. "To sit back on our laurels?"

"Indeed not."

The service was a blend of formality and fun, the celebration of reaching not a destination but a milestone on the 123-year-old parish's journey. The congregation and current clergy team of Rev. Fergus Tyson, Rev. Cyril Haynes and Rev. Norman Knowles welcomed Bishop

Amidst the formality of reading the parish's declaration of being



Doreen Peters leads a dance of celebration. Being debt free, St. Paul's can now be dedicated.



Parish treasurer Cam Cline burns the ceremonial mortgage. The church has to keep the real one tucked away!

celebrate a joyous occasion or in thanksgiving. As the quilts are being made, parishioners pray for the person who will receive them. A deeply touched Pauline took photos of some of the parishioners as they tied the final knots on the quilt and said a prayer for the Hoskins.

A number of former rectors sent their congratulations, and an email from Right Reverend Rodney Andrews, Bishop of Saskatoon, gave the gathering a sense of where the parish has come from. Bishop Andrews served the three-point parish of St. Paul's, St. Peter's Okotoks and St. Barnabas, Sarcee from 1966 – 1973, when the village of Midnapore boasted a population of 180. “During those years St. Patrick’s Roman Catholic Church (directly adjacent to the old St. Paul's chapel at Macleod Trail and 146th Avenue) had a fire,” he wrote. “They used St. Paul’s Church for Mass until they could restore the church. One Sunday morning I was late for service (every week I rushed from Okotoks where the service was at 9:30 a.m. to get to the Midnapore service at 11 a.m.). The Roman Catholic priest was still at St.

Paul’s. My Church Warden, Andy Mitchell, assuming he was an Anglican priest, told him, “Just start the service. Rod should be along soon.” He did just that – he got the Prayer Book out and began the service.”

Bishop Hoskin also talked about the role that we as Christians can play in the world. He spoke of how the acres of vineyards he saw last summer in Alsace, and a Bible study he attended at Lambeth made him

appreciate Christ's words about our abiding in him as the true vine, and so bearing fruit. “Several of the bishops there talked about serving in very hostile regions of the world,” he recounted, “and when they held fast to their belief they were able to do their work.” One bishop told how people from his diocese were first on the scene after a tropical storm devastated a region of their country. Some of the local citizens had been extremely hostile toward Christians, he said, but as the parishioners helped them clean up, rebuild – simply living out their faith – they saw a change in attitude, he said.

“I know many of you are involved with various community and volunteer organizations, but do you see that work as an expression of your Christian faith?” the Bishop asked. “Your actions bear witness to the 'true vine.'”

“You come to St. Paul's because this is where your spiritual batteries are charged for the week.”

The September 7 celebration was a Good News story of God’s grace opening the hearts and minds of so many to give of



In keeping with tradition, Bishop Hoskin uses his crozier to knock on the door to beg entrance to St. Paul’s Sundance in Calgary.

themselves with great generosity, parish rector Fergus Tyson points out. “The parish of St. Paul’s was able to achieve the remarkable feat of paying off its \$350,000 mortgage in only nine years, while continuing throughout to pay its full apportionment, and in the last several years tithing a tenth of parish income to outreach;” he says. “Deepest thanks are offered to everyone who helped make this possible.”



Bishop Derek Hoskin and his wife Pauline Hoskin hold a quilt made by Laura Anne Fink as part of the shawl and quilt ministry of St. Paul’s Sundance. This quilt was presented to the Hoskins at the Consecration of the Church.



Some of the clergy present at the celebration.
Rev. Fergus Tyson, Rev. Martin Hughes (retired), Rev. Cyril Haynes, Venerable Bob Griffiths, Bishop Barry Hoskin, Rev. Kathleen Ratuski and Rev. Norman Knowles