

Published July 19, 2013

LOCAL NEWS

St. Mary's Church to be demolished

Gibsons Christine Wood/Staff Writer

A landmark in Gibsons since 1963, St. Mary's Catholic Church is being torn down this week to make way for a new church building to house the 200-plus parishioners who congregate there weekly.

The church along Gibsons Way at Park Road was actually built in 1945 on Crucil Road, and was moved to its current location in 1963. At that time two wings were added to the structure to house the growing congregation.

In 1995, parishioners celebrated the building's 50th anniversary with the Archbishop of Vancouver at the time, Rev. Adam Exner.

In the years that followed, the building started to show its age.

The church developed a "leaking roof, sad windows and mould creeping out of the walls," said St. Mary's Catholic Church sacristan Paulette Sheldon.

Seeing the need for action, members of the church set up a building committee under chair Kenan MacKenzie and work got underway to fundraise for a new building estimated to cost about \$1.2 million.

"To date parishioners and local people have raised \$740,000 in funds for the new church," Sheldon said.

The current building is actually owned by the archdiocese of Vancouver, Sheldon noted, adding the archdiocese will likely give some funds to the build.

St. Mary's Catholic Church is continuing to take donations from local people who would like to help with construction costs. If you would like to donate, call 604-886-2447.

The entire community is invited to take part in a ground-breaking ceremony for the new church building at noon on Saturday, Aug. 3, at the site.

The ceremony will follow a special holy mass at 11 a.m. to be held in the church hall with Archbishop of Vancouver Rev. J. Michael Miller, Pastor Vincent Nguyen and Assistant Pastor Kiran Thumma.

The congregation will meet in the church hall every Sunday until the new building is complete.

Sheldon said construction should take nine to 10 months.

© Copyright 2013, Coast Reporter

Story URL: <http://www.coastreporter.net/article/20130719/SECHELT0101/307199979/-1/SECHELT/st-mary-s-church-to-be-demolished>