



## St. Stephen Protomartyr Ukrainian Catholic Church

### views from the pews

*How it all began . . .*

October 7, 2018

#### THE RESIDENCE – memories shared by Ed Demchuk

In 1996 St. Stephen's Parish decided to complete the church complex by constructing a new "for our children" Cultural Centre with an adjoining office and residence. A company was chosen to do the construction and Ron Josephs was chosen by council to chair the building committee. The debt was significant, and I had read an article in the Columbia magazine, "Knights in Action" where the K of C volunteers had built a chapel in New Mexico (US). I approached the building committee and proposed that we would recruit volunteers to do the construction if the parish would provide the materials.

Once the project was approved (a huge money saving idea!), there were a few conditions that had to be met:

- these 3 complexes must be constructed simultaneously to pass City of Calgary inspection
- if above failed Centron Construction would take over and we would incur huge costs
- worker compensation and insurance would be the responsibility of St. Stephen's



Construction began in September. We recruited retired volunteers with building experience: Nestor Shular, Joe Sudeyko, Walter Gardzilewich, Lloyd Crozier and myself as the core group. Other part time volunteers (they were still working full time jobs) included: Ambrose Comchi, John Kowal, Ed

Sakundiak, Joe Sakundiak, Ed Samoil, Emil Petoroka and Grandpa Harry Shular – all who would help on weekends, days off and holidays. I called upon several trades people from the parish as well as other connections for expertise, these included Steve Fedkiw (electrician), John Andrusak (plumbing and heating), Bill Lewchuk (cupboards etc.), Ernie Slipetz (truck, lowbed, crane), Steve Groch (generator, paint, sump pump etc.) and others.

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Construction proceeded under difficult conditions with lots of snow and freezing temperatures. Some days it was even too cold to work outside but we persisted. The rafters and roofing presented a problem because of the height – only John Kowal and I would venture to the upper roof area. Everything worked out with God's help and many prayers.



By the end of May 1997 most of the work was completed. John Siroishka was manager of the Bay Deerfoot at the time and salvaged beams, furniture, display cases, kitchen items and more due to renovations in his store. Don Bobyn along with Linda and Clayton Woitas attended sales and donated furniture. This was truly a team effort by so many, ALL VOLUNTEERS who gave their time whether working directly on the project or looking after their families while their husbands worked. This project was so successful it led to the volunteer K of C doing other projects – The Sister's Residence by Assumption Parish, completing the Knight's Room and renovating the 2<sup>nd</sup> residence condo by St. Stephen's.

*"I am very grateful I was given the opportunity to participate."*

Ed Demchuk

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- ❖ Please continue to share your memories as they are important to our parish family.
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