



# Celebrating



**On a beautiful summer's day, hundreds of people gathered at Stanley Mission to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Holy Trinity Anglican Church, the oldest standing building in Saskatchewan and the oldest church west of the Red River.**

**T**HE ANGLICAN MISSION, almost 500 kilometres north of Saskatoon, was established by James Settee, one of the first native clergymen of the diocese. He was joined by the Reverend Robert Hunt and his wife Georgianna in 1850.

Holy Trinity Church was constructed under the supervision of Hunt using timber from Lac La Ronge and hardware, stained-glass windows, hinges, latches, locks and other interior wood features that he had brought with him from England.

Construction of the church began in 1854 and was completed in 1860.

This summer the Churchill River was buzzing all day with boats ferrying people across to the mainland as well as providing special tours of nearby rapids.

The Stanley Mission Band hosted a fish fry, cooked on site. Dancers and musicians entertained the growing crowd in the morning. Craftspeople demonstrated how to carve canoe paddles, make birch bark baskets and smoke fish.

The main event took place after the fish fry lunch beginning with a

grand procession to the church. A flag-raising ceremony took place with an honour guard of First Nations veterans who served from World War II to Afghanistan.

The church service, conducted by four clergy who had served in the community, was celebrated in Cree and English. The service theme focused on the value and importance of the church to the community in the past and today. Loudspeakers were set up outside so the overflow crowd could share in the moving experience.

“It made many people think about



# 150 Years in Stanley Mission



Mission founder James Sette left, and Reverend Robert Hunt. Hunt moved the mission to its current location and oversaw the construction of Holy Trinity Anglican Church between 1854 and 1860

those who attended services 150 years ago,” said Janette Hamilton, Head of Interpretation and Cultural Resources with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

“Building the church was a major accomplishment that reflected the dedication and determination of

those involved. I am sure the builders and parishioners could not have imagined that 150 years later we would be sitting in the same place, thinking of them.”

The newly restored pump organ played for the first time since it had been removed for repairs a year ago.

Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of the Lac La Ronge Band recognized the hard work and effort the Stanley Mission Band had undertaken in ensuring the preservation of the church.

“The church was always a place for the community to gather to celebrate and was an important to the heart of the community,” the chief said.



Elder Joe Roberts spoke about how he has been involved with the church and maintenance of it and the grounds since 1974 and how the day was very special to him.

He praised Rhoda Hardlotte, a past community leader, whose foresight and concern lead to the protection and restoration of the church.

She felt that the church was the community's connection to the past and by protecting the church they would maintain that connection, Elder Robert recalled.

He wished that she would be there to see all the people that came to the event and they were able to celebrate such a milestone. ❧

Photos Courtesy Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport – Parks Services