

That FINAL touch

By the Rev. Michael Birch

Forty-four years ago, in September 1954, the cornerstone was laid for the new St. Mark's, Calgary. The new building would replace the original little church that had served the parish since it was founded in 1912.

On Saturday, Aug. 29, 1998, the addition of the steeple to the existing structure finally crowned and finished the work begun so many years ago.

About 130 people – parishioners, friends of St. Mark's, some clergy from neighbouring parishes and some people from the neighbourhood – gathered for prayer and the singing of a hymn as a crane lifted the steeple from where it was constructed in the parking area to its position atop the tower over the main door.

Dozens of cameras clicked and spontaneous clapping swelled as the steeple was gently nudged into place.

Hot dogs, coffee and juice were served out on 33rd Avenue, with donations of coins accepted for the Food Bank. It was sunny, hot, and a perfect day for this unusual and moving event.

The steeple was planned for in the original design of the church, but lack of

funds at the time prevented its being built; and gradually over the years it was simply forgotten about. But the old plans were still lying around. Some people began to look at them again – and wonder why the steeple had not been constructed – and wonder whether it might yet be done.

And now it is built, pretty much in accordance with the original plans and design. Many spires and steeples today are fabricated from lightweight, space-age plastics. But the parish felt that the steeple at St. Mark's should be viewed as a finishing of the church building and be built as it was planned at the beginning.

The steeple, more than 24 feet high and further topped by a six-foot cross, is of wooden frame construction, sheathed in copper. The architect for the project was Gary Milton of BCMP Architects; the builder was Patmar Developments Ltd.

The steeple is given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Robert W. (Bob) Lamb and David Lamb, father and son, by the Lamb family.

The building of St. Mark's has ended. The renewal of St. Mark's has begun.

(Mr. Birch is rector of St. Mark's, Calgary.)

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St. Peter's Calgary will be the first Anglican parish in the diocese to host Project Ploughshare's annual Peace Fair next month.

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