



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BROWNSVILLE CHURCH CELEBRATES HISTORIC ANNIVERSARY

Uniontown, PA – A majestic stone church perches on a knoll in Brownsville, the Monongahela River in view a short distance away.

Parishioners of the Historic Church of St. Peter have been enjoying that view for nearly two centuries, as on April 6, the church celebrated its 180th anniversary.

"The reason the church is on that site is because, in 1754, the first Mass west of the Alleghenies was said," church historian Larry Franks III said. "The French forces were on their way to Fort Necessity to meet General George Washington."

The Historic Church of St. Peter was established, according to its Facebook page, to serve the region's growing Catholic population. The original structure was completed on April 6, 1845.

Franks said those are two of the three key years he highlights during the tours he often gives of the historic Roman Catholic church. The third in 1933, "when the church was restored to basically the way it looks now."

Franks noted the time frame between each of those dates is roughly 90 years.

"And 90 years from the restoration is now. It kind of seems like it was meant to be," he added.

Franks said the church boasts 520 registered members, though of course, not all of them attend services all the time. However, he noted many parishioners did attend the anniversary Mass on April 6, along with six visiting pastors, former St. Peter's pastors and partner priests.

Monsignor Raymond E. Riffle of the Diocese of Greensburg also honored the church with a visit. Franks said Bishop Larry J. Kulick could not attend because he was at the Vatican.

Franks said the anniversary celebration encompassed the entire weekend, including the parish's Lenten fish fry on Friday, a Saturday afternoon Mass followed by tours of the church, and Sunday's anniversary Mass.

Memorabilia from the church's history also was available for viewing.

"Everyone said it was just perfect. Everyone was really happy with the way it turned out," he said. "Our normal attendance for Sunday Mass was doubled for the anniversary, and we had a great turnout for the tours on Saturday. It was just the perfect celebration."

Franks said the church is "really something special," and it means a great deal to many of the parishioners, including himself as a third-generation member of the congregation. He noted his grandfather, Larry Franks Sr., and grandmother, Annabelle Franks, attended the church, as did his father, Larry Franks Jr.

"It's family, and it's my community. It's more than just on Sunday, too," he said, explaining numerous activities are held at the church throughout the week as well. "This church is such a big part of my life."

For more information on the Historic Church of St. Peter, visit www.stpeterstcecilia.org or follow the Facebook page by searching "The Historic Church of St. Peter".

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.org.

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