



FATHER HARRIS

Orthodox Church for Interior Ak.

Continuing a tradition of missionary effort begun in 1794, the Russian Orthodox Church has taken the first steps towards establishing a parish in Fairbanks. Father Nicholas Harris, Pastor of the St. Innocent Orthodox Church of Anchorage, visited Fairbanks April 11-13 to hold services and meet with local Orthodox people.

Father Harris said the group discussed the organizational state of the church, a temporary meeting place, the naming of the church, and a temporary structure for the parish. A parish council will begin evaluating the immediate potential for the church. Although there is no accurate estimate on the number of Orthodox people in Fairbanks, Father Harris said the number was "significant."

In addition to regular services, the church will hold church school for children. They also hope to start a newsletter.

The new mission has been authorized by the Bishop of the Orthodox Church in Alaska, His Grace, the Right Reverend Bishop Gregory.

Until a priest is permanently established in Fairbanks, monthly services will be held by a visiting priest. Father Harris said when there is a resident priest, there are plans to have him travel to villages in Interior Alaska on a regular basis.

Until a church building is constructed, services will be held in private homes. Father Harris said this would foster a family spirit which is a basic Orthodox concept.

Father Harris stressed that all Orthodox people regardless of cultural background, would be welcome to join the church.

Anyone interested in further information about the new Orthodox Church should call Mrs. Helen Adkins at 479-3504, or Angela Purkey at 456-5447. Both women will serve on the newly-formed parish council.