

Chapel of the Nativity of the Mother of God and Holy Cross
Hairy Hill, Alberta
- short history -

The historical parish was officially organized on February 13, 1911, when members of the Romanian community in the Hairy Hill area established the *Nativity of the Mother of God Romanian Orthodox* Parish of Hairy Hill, Alberta. The creation of the parish followed disagreements in the earlier Boian community concerning language of worship and ecclesiastical administration. Romanian settlers wanted worship in Romanian and Romanian Orthodox clergy

A church was subsequently built on three acres donated by Vasile Moroz. After approximately two years of work and sacrifice by the community, the church was completed and was consecrated on August 14, 1914, by Archimandrite Silvestru Ionescu, under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Bukovina.

The parish became an important center of Romanian religious, cultural and community life in the Hairy Hill–Boian region. Over time, the members of the Hairy Hill parish and the Saint Mary parish in nearby Boian united into one community, with regular liturgical services taking place at the Boian church.

Connection with Boian

Hairy Hill is only about 4 km from Boian, one of the most important historic Romanian settlements in Canada. The Boian/Hairy Hill area is considered the birthplace of the oldest Romanian community in Canada, established by immigrants from Bukovina in the late 19th century.

The historic Boian church, dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God and St. Dimitrios the Myrrh-Streamer, was completed in 1905. The Hairy Hill parish emerged a few years later, partly as a result of the desire of Romanian settlers to have Romanian-language Orthodox worship and Romanian ecclesiastical leadership.

What happened to the Hairy Hill church?

In October 1972, the Hairy Hill church and cemetery were donated to the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Diocese of America, under His Grace Bishop Victorin Ursache, with the hope that the property would eventually become a monastery and continue the spiritual legacy of the Romanian pioneers.

In later decades, the historic church building deteriorated and regular services ceased. However, special services continued at the site, particularly around the feast of the parish and commemorations for those buried in the cemetery.

At the beginning of 2025, the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada took the necessary steps to take possession of the church property and land, opening a new chapter in the history of the site.

The new project: St. Metropolitan Dosoftei Centre

In 2025, the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada launched the *New Generations, Same Roots* project at the Hairy Hill property. The goal is to establish the *St. Metropolitan Dosoftei Centre*, envisioned as a diocesan metochion and a religious, cultural, missionary and educational center for Alberta and Western Canada. It should be a source of support for ensuring the continuity of the community and the preservation of the religious, historical, and cultural heritage of the Boian area for generations to come.

On May 31, 2025, His Grace Bishop Ioan Casian celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Hairy Hill, followed by a memorial service and the laying of the cornerstone for the future church and center. Clergy and faithful from Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan participated.

The project is intended to preserve and transmit:

- Romanian Orthodox faith
- Romanian language and traditions
- the history of the Romanian pioneers
- cultural identity among younger generations
- pilgrimage and prayer at this historic site
- religious and cultural activities for Romanians throughout Western Canada.

The historic site today

The Hairy Hill property is associated with the historic Romanian Orthodox church and cemetery on Range Road 143.

The Canadian Orthodox History Project lists the Hairy Hill parish as belonging to the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada, under the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of the Americas and the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Its patronal feasts days is the *Nativity of the Mother of God and Holy Cross*, September 8 / September 14.