

Msgr. Gacquin Youth and Religious Education Center dedicated in Sandyston

SANDYSTON — What once was a church is being used again for religious purposes. Dedicated on Dec. 11, 1855 as the North Dutch Church of Sandyston, it was shared by the Reformed Dutch and the Methodist congregations and later became known as Union Church.

In 1953, after being left vacant for a number of years, the ownership of the building was transferred to the Sandyston Township Volunteer Fire Department. The building housed the volunteer fire department and a community center until the fire department transferred to the new Sandyston municipal building in 2003.

The building was purchased by St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Sandyston. Under the direction of Marc Cunico, a parishioner,

the building was renovated into a Youth and Religious Education Center for the parishes of St. Thomas the Apostle and St. James the Greater, Montague.

The building was dedicated and blessed Jan. 1 by retired Bishop Rodimer and was named in honor of Msgr. James Gacquin who served both parishes as pastor from 1979 until his death on March 31, 1996. The building consists of four classrooms, an office for the coordinator of religious education and the youth minister, a youth center and a prayer space. The project was funded through the generosity of the late Joan Spoolstra, a longtime parishioner of St. Thomas the Apostle until her death in 2004.

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