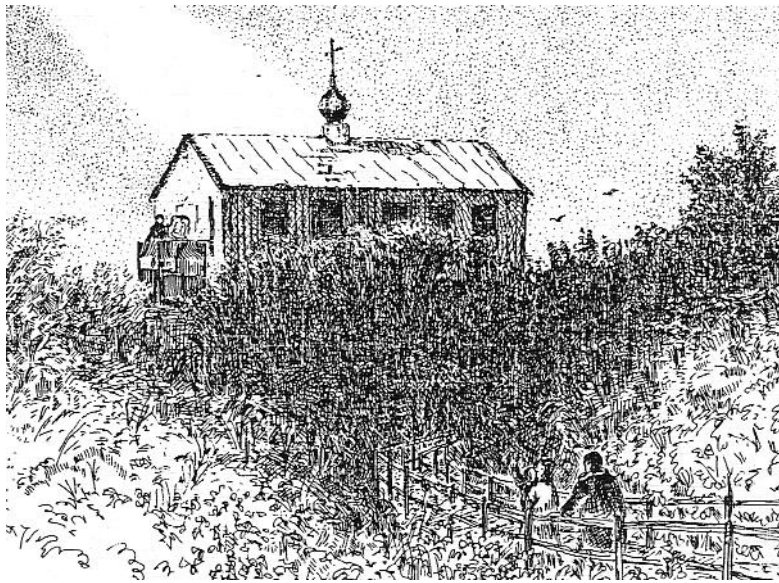


Priority Project – 2009



Building St. Sophia Orthodox Church and Education Center in Bethel, AK.



An artist's rendering of the old St. Sophia Orthodox Church in Bethel, AK

*The parish's vision for a greatly needed new church began in 1999 and was named "St. Sophia Project 2000". This vision has been encouraged by Alaska bishops over the last 10 years and guided by **Outreach Alaska**. Built in the early 1970s from old garage planks, St. Sophia Church had deteriorated and was no longer safe for parishioners to gather in the building. A new location was acquired in 2006 by a negotiated trade with the City of Bethel for the Tundra land where the old church was located. Later that year, the old church was burned and relocated according to Orthodox tradition. The trade for a hill top location was finalized. This new location will make the church seen from all who travel to Bethel from villages on the Kuskokwim River. The parish has raised \$115,000 since 1999 and will begin construction for the new church in July 2009. This will exhaust the current budget and additional funds must be raised for electrical, carpentry, icons, altar, candle holders, etc. **Outreach Alaska** has committed \$3,000 to purchase the new sand pad for the church's base – needed when building in the Tundra. **Outreach Alaska** has received a blessing from Bishop BENJAMIN to request a Building Missionary Team with OCMC to assist the local parishioners and volunteers from "bush" villages to begin the building project. Local and state officials will be asked to join the local parish and OCMC team members for a "Ground Breaking" when the building project begins this summer. You have an opportunity to join us in the building and sponsorship of St. Sophia Orthodox Church in Bethel, AK - by your prayers, expertise, and contributions.*



St. Sophia Orthodox Church – Summer 1999



Worshiping in the rented Moravian Building since February 2000.



**First Sunday School Program developed on the second floor of the Moravian building in 2006.
 “Sister Parish” project of Outreach Alaska – Building on a sure foundation!**



September 2006—Outreach Alaska Coordinator, Mary Ann Khoury, conducting a 2-day workshop for the Parish Council on church development and fundraising for Project 2000.

