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## **Greek orthodox church in Traverse City raises 42,000 pound dome (VIDEO)**



The Archangel Gabriel Greek Orthodox Church off of US-31 in Williamsburg is still a work in progress, but on Thursday, a large dome was placed on top of what will be the first orthodox church in northern Michigan.

“Today we witnessed a historic day, not only for the parish but the local community in Traverse City,” said Father Ciprian Streza of Archangel Gabriel Greek Orthodox Church. “This is the first full-time orthodox church, and they say orthodoxy is the best-kept secret in the United States, and we plan to change that.”

A signature piece of the building was lifted into place early Thursday morning.

“This is a terrific day, something we’ve been looking forward to for many, many years and it’s a glorious thing that this happened so nicely,” said Robert Underwood who founded the parish.

The dome weighs 42,000 pounds and is 92-feet wide.

It had to be lifted 55-feet in the air and gently placed down on its resting place atop the church.

“We decided to build on the ground for safety reasons and logistics so that it was more efficient to construct and the crew here today lifting the dome, they’re experienced, they’re local people racking anything,” said Tom Comstock the owner of Comstock construction. “You have to calculate the different slings and straps and shackles, and the method, first the crane.”

“It was great to see the foreman go up there and welder up there and how they gave them the signals to say ‘ok, go lift the crane,” said Kathleen Ducharme who lives in Elk Rapids and came to the dome raising. “The way they just slowly rotated it to get it in position and then the sun gleaming on the copper, it was just beautiful.”

It was a moment that many will not forget.

“When we realized they were putting up the dome, we thought jeez, we got to see this because it’s a once in a lifetime thing and the structure is going to be here for hundreds of years,” said Ducharme.

In 2012, the parish bought the five-acre land parcel here on US-31 overlooking East Grand Traverse Bay.

“With any kind of project like this, it takes a lot of people and we’ve been blessed with many talented people who’ve come together, made a plan, and made this happen,” said Nikki Sobkowski the parish council president.

The church is expected to be completed by the end of October with doors opening in early November of 2019.

– Source: [upnorthlive.com](http://upnorthlive.com)