

22. Elk Point

Saint Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The establishment of a Ukrainian Orthodox parish in Elk Point began in early 1945, initiated by Fr. W. Senishen. The need for an Orthodox Church became evident that spring when Fr. Senishen officiated a wedding at the old United Church alongside Rev. Pringle. Soon after, several Divine Liturgies were celebrated at the Andrishak Hall before services moved to the Fred Shpeley Building.

After a 1946 liturgy in the Shpeley Building, an organizational meeting was held. William Andrishak was elected as the executive leader. Two years later, the congregation adopted St. Volodymyr as its patron. Members began raising funds to build a church and establish a cemetery.

Initially, two lots behind Markstead's garage were purchased for the church site. In the winter of 1949, volunteers harvested timber from J. Borutsky's land for construction. However, the lots were deemed unsuitable. W. Andrishak then generously donated the property where St. Vladimir's Church now stands. The site was blessed in 1950 by Rev. Wasyl Boychuk, and construction progressed in stages as funds became available.

Around 40 families formed the congregation during these early years. Priests often traveled by train to conduct services, enduring overnight stays and long connections. Clergy received offerings from the collection plate, which typically amounted to about \$7.00 after covering travel expenses.

In 1950, J. Zacharuk excavated a basement with a tractor and frezno, aided by volunteers using picks and shovels. A partial foundation was poured, and by 1952, walls were raised under J. Borutsky's supervision. A roof was added, but construction paused for two years. Work resumed in 1955. The exterior was stuccoed, and



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occasional services were held in the unfinished sanctuary. In 1956-57, the building was leased to the County of St. Paul for use as a classroom. By 1958, the interior was completed with plasterboard walls, a second floor, an altar, pews, and fixtures donated by members. B. Eaton and volunteers painted the interior, and religious pictures were installed.

In 1959, the congregation determined that the church property could not accommodate a cemetery. Mr. and Mrs. F. Shewchuk donated land at another location, where the cemetery was established. In 1961, Bishop Andrew blessed the cornerstone of St. Vladimir's Church during a hierarchical liturgy with Frs. Greschuk and Dorosh. In 1964, parishioners helped purchase a manse in Bonnyville, paying it off within six months through donations and bingo proceeds. St. Vladimir's members also supported the creation of the Kiev-Ski-Hi church camp at Moose Lake, a retreat for cultural, educational, and spiritual programs.

Over the years, the congregation engaged in various community initiatives. In 1967, members participated in forming a joint Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox all-male Centennial Choir and contributed funds to construct the Elk Point Elk's Hall. The church promoted Ukrainian culture by offering language instruction, singing courses, and other educational programs. Despite financial challenges, including a period in 1974 when the parish considered reducing services, the congregation persevered.

In the summer of 1986, the church underwent extensive renovations. Three domes salvaged from the old St. Vladimir's Church in Calgary were restored and installed atop the Elk Point sanctuary. Bishop John blessed the new domes, cross, and candleholders — donated by the Sharuga family in memory of Anna Yacyna—on September 26, 1986. He was accompanied by the All-Edmonton Millennium Choir.



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Priests

W. Senishen (1943–49)
W. Boychuk (1949–50)
P. Satsevich (1950–51, 1953–57)
Io. Skakalsky (1951–53)
I. Magas (1953)
E. Trufyn (1956–58)
P. Dorosh-Zmiyiwksy (1958–61)
I. Kulish (1961–62)
P. Zubritsky and J. Vitenko (1962–63)
O. Sorochuk (1964–72)
S. Semotiuk (1972–74)
A. Chrustawka (1974–78)
D. Hohol (1985–94)
J. Lipinski (1994 –)

Location and Feast Day

East side of Highway 41, in the town of Elk Point, County of St. Paul. GPS Coordinates: 53.585768, -113.526971 | Their *Feast Day* is July 28.

Founding Members

W. Andrishak
J. Libich
A. Polinchuk
F. Shpeley
O. Woytowich
Z. Yacyna

