

24. Gifford

Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The district now known as Beacon Corner was originally called “Nova Bukovyna” (New Bukovina) by Ukrainian pioneers who settled there in the early 1900s. In 1921, it was renamed Gifford following the creation of a school district. Congregational life began in 1914 when 43 residents registered as members of the Nova Bukovina, St. Peter and St. Paul Russo Orthodox Church, paying a 50-cent annual fee.

Around the same time, a cemetery was established on land filed by Paul Olenick at NW 15-60-8 W4. However, seepage issues led to the creation of a second, four-acre cemetery on higher ground at SW 23-60-8 W4, on land belonging to William Apostoluk, a founding member.

Occasional services were held in private homes, with Fr. P. Dohanko traveling by wagon from Szypenitz, near Two Hills, to minister to the community. Parishioners often waited for these visits to hold weddings and baptisms, though some traveled to Szypenitz or sought the assistance of Roman Catholic clergy in St. Vincent during emergencies.

By 1917, sufficient timber had been prepared for church construction. Under the direction of Tom Onyshko and Metro Morie, the log structure with a small central dome was completed in 1919 and became known locally as “the church on the hill.” The first service, delayed by muddy roads, was celebrated by Fr. Elkowich on Pentecost, marking the church’s initial use. It was officially blessed and dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul on July 12, 1920, followed by a celebratory khram (feast day).

In 1926, the congregation affiliated with the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada (UGOC). As the first Orthodox church in the Glendon-Bonnyville area, it served as a spiritual center for surrounding communities until they

established their own churches. Over time, the original log church was extensively renovated, with painted siding, a vestibule, a wooden bell tower housing a bell donated by the Kostiniuk family, and a concrete floor. In 1960, a hall was added for community functions, and a new access road replaced the original winding trail.

In 1953, the congregation reported only four members and infrequent services, as many local residents attended Holy Trinity Church in Glendon. The situation improved after the congregation formally joined the UGOC in 1959, receiving a certificate of admission. By 1960, Sts. Peter and Paul had 15 families and hosted regular liturgies. Despite a gradual decline in the following decades, the church remained active, hosting events such as a hierarchical liturgy celebrated by Bishop John on July 12, 1986, to commemorate over 60 years of history.



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Priests

(ROC) Dohanko, P. Dovheiko, Falovski,
Elkowich Levko (1914–1926)
(UGOC) T. Horbay (1926–32)
I. Mayba (1932–36)
H. Wasyliw (1936–43)
W. Woytowich (1943–44)
W. Senishen (1945–49)
W. Boychuk (1949–50)
P. Satsevich (1950–51)
Iov Skakalsky (1952–53)
S. Hredil' (1954)
I. Kulish (1955)
E. Trufyn (1956–58)
P. Dorosh-Zmiyiwsky (1958–61)
J. Vitenko (1961–62)
P. Zubrytsky (1962–63)
E. Stefaniuk (1963–64)
O. Sorochuk (1964–70)
L. Kubin (1970–72)
S. Semotiuk (1972–74)
A. Shcherban (1972–75)
A. Chrustawka (1975–78)
M. Sawchenko (1979–85)
D. Hohol (1985–94)
J. Lipinski (1994 –)

Location and Feast Day

Situated at SW 23-60-8 W4, south of Glendon, in the Municipal District of Bonnyville. *GPS Coordinates:* 54.20080, -111.10400 | Their *Feast Day* is July 12.

Founding Members

W. Apostoliuk	P. Lebediuk
N. Beryshan	W. Mack
A. Bodnar	Manolchan
W. Bordeniuk	M. Matichuk
S. Boychuk	K. Morie
Boyko	M. Morie
G. Garichuk	M. Nesimiuk
W. Derkach	T. Onyshko
A. Drapaka	A. Odowichuk
N. Eliuk	T. Onuferchuk
G. Filipchuk	Skhlany
M. Filipchuk	Shymanski
N. Filipchuk	A. Sorowich
N. Gregorchuk	H. Spasiuk
S. Grekul	P. Tkachuk
G. Guzyk	Tuberowich
J. Hyshka	Welychka
M. Janiski	W. Welychka
G. Kostiniuk	M. Werstiuk
N. Kostiniuk	W. Wynychuk
J. Kostura	W. Zebzu
M. Kryzanowski	

Cemetery

The first cemetery, established at NW 15-60-8 W4 around 1911, suffered from water seepage but remained in use until 1926. A second cemetery was created in 1915 at SW 23-60-8 W4, where the first recorded interment was Mrs. Hostiuk. Saints Peter and Paul Church was built on the same parcel of land as this second cemetery.

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