

# 25. Glendon

## Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The Glendon area was heavily settled in the early 1900s by Ukrainian immigrants from Galicia, Bukovyna, and Volhynia. The origins of Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church are somewhat unclear. Some sources mistakenly claim that the congregation was founded by Fr. T. Horbay in 1920. However, since Fr. Horbay was only ordained in the Old Catholic Church that year, it is more likely that he began providing services to Glendon shortly after his ordination as a Ukrainian Orthodox priest in August 1926. His 1938 memoirs mention that Fr. Mayba had entrusted him with organizing Ukrainian Orthodox supporters in Glendon upon settling in Hamlin.

A 1968 issue of *Ridna Nyva* states that a small church dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul was built after homesteaders had established themselves. A letter from May 16, 1936, by congregation secretary-treasurer Nykolai Kostyshyn, suggests this church existed by the mid-1930s. The letter lamented the congregation's small size, financial struggles, and the unfinished state of the church, that allowed for only seven services per year. The fate of this early church remains unclear. During these formative years, Orthodox faithful from Glendon also attended services in Gifford, where Fr. Horbay had taken over pastoral duties from the Russian Orthodox clergy. Consequently, Glendon settlers played a role in the history of the Nova Bukovyna congregation and its integration into the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada (UGOC).

In 1928, the railway line through Therien and Glendon spurred growth in both communities. As Glendon developed into a vibrant trading center, Orthodox residents found it increasingly inconvenient to travel to Gifford for services. However, constructing their own church took time. Initially, they opted to build a *Narodnyi Dim*



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(People's Home) for both community events and religious services until a proper church could be constructed.

In 1935, trees were harvested from Orthodox church supporters' lands in the Truman district, north of Glendon. The logs were milled into lumber and transported across rough terrain by horse teams. The following year, a frame structure was completed on Lot 3, Block 4, and a blessing was scheduled for October. Tragically, the hall burned down just hours before the ceremony, likely due to arson, though no charges were ever filed. A hastily relocated Divine Liturgy took place in Gifford, after which a somber meal was held at another community hall.

Undeterred, the congregation spent another winter harvesting and transporting timber to rebuild. Under the supervision of *Narodnyi Dim* president Harry Guzyk, volunteers completed the new hall in 1937. The hall was then used for religious services until a separate church could be built.

## Building the Church and Cemetery

**I**n the fall of 1939, the congregation negotiated the purchase of a 210' x 420' parcel of land at NW 4-61-8 W4 for \$70. However, legal complications delayed the registration process. In 1940, Rev. Semen Sawchuk, UGOC administrator, visited Glendon and encouraged the congregation's efforts to build a church. Despite these setbacks, the community remained determined.

In 1941, the congregation purchased a one-acre parcel from Olaf Wiste at SW 4-61-8 W4 for \$40. The land was cleared, plowed, and seeded for use as a cemetery. Plans to construct a church gained momentum in 1944. The congregation faced yet another tragedy when their priest, Fr. Woytowich, died of pneumonia in Bonnyville. He was buried in the newly consecrated Glendon cemetery.

In 1945, the congregation began raising funds for a church. Members were asked to contribute \$25 each. Lumber was procured from Louis Krekoski of St. Paul. That February, the congregation requested the Consistory to assign a permanent priest to serve Glendon, Gifford, Therien, Sandy Rapids, and Lessard. They also rented a house in Glendon as a temporary rectory. By fall, the church was sufficiently completed for Fr. Senishen to bless the sanctuary. Initially, it was dedicated to the Descent of the Holy Ghost, as referenced in Consistory correspondence. The first service likely took place around October 14, 1945.

In a devastating turn, the second *Narodnyi Dim* burned down in November 1945, forcing services to be temporarily held at the local Lutheran Church. Again, arson was suspected but unproven. Despite these hardships, the congregation focused on completing their church, a cruciform structure with a large central dome and two smaller domes on the façade.

## Challenges and Growth

**I**n 1946, the Smoky Lake congregation, that had lost its resident priest, was assigned to the Glendon parish. However, Glendon was 70 miles away by rail, and Smoky Lake was only accessible via an arduous 100-mile journey by car. Frustrated by the arrangement, Smoky Lake congregants built a rectory, hoping to relocate Fr. Senishen. In response, Glendon members petitioned the Consistory, arguing that a resident priest was essential due to competing religious groups in the area, including Greek Catholics, Evangelicals, and Baptists. The Consistory advised against rushing to build a rectory, given the congregation's financial obligations. Ultimately, Fr. Senishen chose to remain in Glendon.

By 1947, the congregation rebuilt the *Narodnyi Dim* once again, this time using brick

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with a full basement. In 1948, they purchased and relocated a house from Maloy to serve as a rectory. It was placed on a foundation in 1950 and was used intermittently until 1963.

By the 1950s, rural depopulation and financial constraints led to instability. The postwar period saw an exodus from farming communities to urban centers. By 1950, Glendon reported only 25 active members. The entire parish district, including Elk Point, Therien, Sandy Rapids, and Lessard, totaled just 58 members.

## Location and Feast Day

**S**outheast corner of 2nd Avenue S, west side of Pyrogy Drive, Village of Glendon, Municipal District of Bonnyville.

*GPS Coordinates: 54.248556, -111.153381*

## Founding Members

O. Bodnar	I. Oszust
I. Hyshka	H. Osoba
A. Kindrakewich	H. Spasiuk
V. Kostura	O. Stasyk
P. Luklan	I. Wolanski
D. Mycak	



## Decline and Continuation

**B**y 1960, Glendon's membership had dwindled to 16. By 1963, financial constraints made it impossible to support a priest or meet diocesan dues. In 1964, Bonnyville became the base for priests serving the district, further diminishing Glendon's role. The manse was sold in 1965. Membership continued to decline, dropping to just eight by 1973. In 1974, financial difficulties forced the congregation to reduce Divine Liturgies from twelve to six per year.

By 1986, the congregation formally incorporated under the UGOC as *Descent of the Holy Spirit*. Membership rose slightly in the 1990s, reaching 24 members in 1994.

Today, Holy Trinity remains active and is served by Fr. Lipinski. The congregation continues to celebrate its Feast Day on Pentecost, the seventh Sunday after Easter.

## Cemetery

Located 9 km south of the church at SW 4-61-8 W4. *GPS coordinates: 54.24010, -111.15389*



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