

32. Kaleland

Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church

Kaleland holds the unique distinction of being the first community in Canada to organize a specifically Ukrainian Orthodox congregation. The establishment of Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Two Hills district predates the founding of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada by seventeen months. On February 19, 1917, area residents unanimously adopted the name “Ukrainian Congregation of the Greek Eastern Orthodox Church” for their new parish. Prior to this, Orthodox churches built in Canada by Ukrainian immigrants identified themselves as “Ruthenian,” “Russo,” or “Russian” Orthodox. The use of “Ukrainian” by the Kaleland community reflects the strong national consciousness that had developed in this rural settlement, paralleling the rise of the Ukrainian national movement in Austro-Hungarian and Tsarist Ukraine.

The impetus behind the congregation’s formation was the destruction of the nearby Szypenitz Russo Greek-Orthodox Church by fire in 1916—the second such incident in seven years. Tensions had been growing between loyal Russian Orthodox and increasingly pro-Ukrainian members of the parish. Following the 1916 fire, some parishioners from the pro-Ukrainian camp, joined by patriotically minded Greek Catholics disillusioned with their own formation, discussed organizing a specifically Ukrainian Orthodox Church that would use the Ukrainian language in worship rather than Church Slavonic.

In July 1916, at the suggestion of V. Melnychuk, two acres of land for the future church and adjacent cemetery were donated by Nickolai Olynik and Michael Grekul. To prevent future fires, it was decided to build the new church from fieldstone, utilizing local rocks. That winter, stones were gathered from John Orleski’s



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nearby farm. Stonemasons John Shandro and Herbert Lefe began work on the two-foot-thick sanctuary walls in April 1917, followed by Nick Hrehirchuk constructing the roof. Harry Osietski, a renowned church builder, completed the edifice by crafting four domes.

On June 20, 1917, the church was registered under the Alberta Societies Act as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Saints Peter and Paul, legally enshrining the name. The first service was held on the feast day of the patron saints, July 12, 1917, with Reverend Gregory Soroka of New York officiating at the dedication. The first wedding took place on July 25, 1917, and the first funeral and interment occurred in the spring of 1918 with the death of Ivan Lakusta.

Growth and Development

In 1920, Kaleland became the third church in Alberta to host a service officiated by Rev. D. Stratyckuk of the newly established Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, making it one of the founding congregations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Alberta. During the mid-1920s, Kaleland benefited from the full-time services of Father Ivan Kusey, who used the district as the base for his successful missionary endeavors in the region.

On August 19, 1940, Kaleland hosted Metropolitan Ioan Theodorovich of New York. At that time, the congregation had twelve members and was reportedly wavering in its loyalty to the UGOC, likely due to the influence of Fr. Ambrose Chrustawka, the priest at nearby Szypenitz. Fr. Stratyckuk had informed the Consistory that the local Narodnyi Dim was dominated by adherents of the Russian Orthodox Church loyal to Fr. Chrustawka. However, this issue was resolved when Fr. Chrustawka joined the UGOC in the fall of 1941.

In 1956, a lightning strike dislodged the dome from the church. By 1960, Kaleland had come under the jurisdiction of the Two Hills Parish. In 1965, a new iconostasis was built by Mike J. Chrapko and painted by Wadym Dobrolige. Archbishop Andrew blessed it during the congregation's feast day.

In 1982, the church underwent renovations by Zupet Construction of Edmonton. In 1988, to commemorate the millennium of Ukraine's acceptance of Christianity, parishioner Olga Oreleski painted full-sized portraits of Saints Volodymyr and Olha, that were hung behind the altar.



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Priests

Gregory Soroka (ROC?, 1917-)
Pavlenko, I. Triska, L. Gherman (1918, RomOC/EOC)
I. Kusey (1924-1928)
I. Mayba (1928-1932)
T. M. Kisiliuk (1929-1933)
T. Horbay (1933-1938)
D. Stratyчук (1932-1938)
I. Hykawy (1936-1938)
L. Berezitsky (1938-1941)
A. Sarmatiuk (1941-1942)
O. Ivaniuk
S. Symchych (1940-1943)
L. Diachina (1942-1946)
A. Chrystawka (1941-1949)
W. Melnychuk
M. Kryshchanowich
A. Teterenko (1957-1965)
P. Zubritsky
M. Sawchenko (1985-1994)
W. Sapiha (1994-present)

Cemetery

A cemetery adjoins the church.



Location and Feast Day

East of Hairy Hill, south of Highway 45 near the junction with Secondary Highway 645, at W 16-55-13 W4, County of Two Hills. *GPS Coordinates: 53.751410, -111.885429* | Their *Feast Day* is celebrated on July 12.

Founding Members

M. Tkachuk
S. Eliuk
I. Lakusta
O. Ewasiuk
A. Slevinsky
V. Meroniuk
T. Grekul



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