

35. Luzan-Toporiwtsi

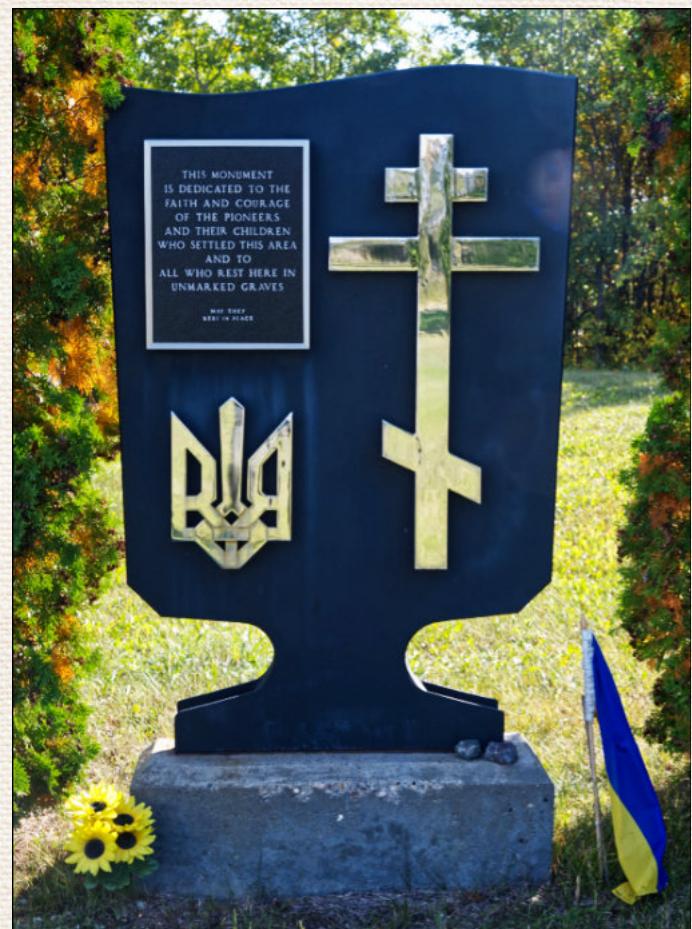
Saint Elias Ukrainian Orthodox Church

Luzhany is a town in Kitsman Raion, Chernivtsi Oblast, Bukovyna, while Toporiwtsi is another Bukovynian village now located in Novoseltsi Raion, Chernivtsi Oblast. These two places lent their names to the Saint Elias Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Luzan-Toporiwtsi, reflecting the origins of many settlers in the area.

Congregational life began in 1904, when funds were first collected for the construction of a church. In 1910, George Ponich donated land for the church and cemetery on the crest of a hill. Logs were hauled to the site from the Rannock area, seven miles to the east. While construction was underway, occasional services were held at the nearby Luzan school grounds, conducted by priests from the Russian Orthodox Mission.

Carpenter Eli Antoniuk oversaw the building project, assisted by Demenky Kroytor and volunteer labor from congregation members. The work progressed slowly, and by the following year, the sanctuary was only partially completed. However, once the roof was in place, a service was held, followed by a celebration to commemorate this milestone.

Many settlers came from the Bukovynian village of Toporiwtsi, leading to the informal name "Toporiwtsi Church." However, with the establishment of Luzan School District No. 2113 on February 8, 1910, the area became more commonly known as Luzan (in Ukrainian, "Luzhany"). Upon construction, St. Elias was adopted as the patron saint, and the church became formally identified as the Russo-Greek Orthodox Church of St. Elias, Luzan-Toporiwtsi.



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Transition and Growth

For over a decade, only one or two liturgies were celebrated annually by Russian Orthodox priests. In 1926, Rev. Ambrose Chrustawka began holding services more regularly, becoming the community's pastor for the next nineteen years. During his tenure, the interior woodwork was completed by Elzear Moisin. In 1939, Mr. Lysakowski was commissioned to paint and create ornamental artwork, and icons were ordered from Greece to adorn the church walls.

When Rev. Chrustawka joined the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada (UGOC) in 1945, his congregation followed. From that point, the Luzan-Toporiwtsi Church fell under the jurisdiction of the Consistory in Winnipeg.

Priests

A. Pohrebniak (Russian Orthodox Church, 1916)

Gregory Soroka (Russian Orthodox Church, 1918 –1921)

L. Diachina (Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, 1942 –1946)

S. Hredil (UGOC, 1952 –1958)



The 1950s marked a high point in church activity, with monthly liturgies replacing the previously sporadic services. To accommodate the growing needs of the community, members acquired the old Luzan school (closed in 1948 due to centralization) and converted it into a parish hall. Various improvements followed. Andrew Galichowski was contracted to reshingle the roof and replace the original stone foundation with concrete. A porch and two small sacristies were added to the building. In 1960, Metro Logozar replaced the steeple with two domes and constructed a balcony (likely serving as a choir loft). The women of the church purchased and laid a rug in the altar area, further enhancing the sanctuary's interior.

Originally part of the Myrnam Parochial District, the church was transferred to the Two Hills Parish in 1972.

Location and Feast Day

North of Musidora, east of Highway 36, at NW 16-55-11 W4, County of Two Hills. *GPS Coordinates:* 53.755823, -111.588460 Their *Feast Day* is August 2.

Cemetery

The cemetery is located on the same parcel of land as the church.

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