

# 44. Radway

## Holy Ascension Ukrainian Orthodox Church

Religious life in the Radway district began to take shape after the establishment of a Ukrainian National Home in 1917, which became a hub for community discussions and cultural activities. The Ukrainian settlers, who had arrived in the area from 1907 onwards, held diverse religious views, including Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and even Communist affiliations.

Early visits by missionary priests from the Redemptorist Order, intended to serve the Catholic Ukrainians, inadvertently alienated some of the faithful. These “foreign” clerics often had poor command of the Ukrainian language, heavily accented and difficult to understand, which reminded many immigrants of the Polish clergy in Galicia. Tensions escalated when a Polish Catholic priest celebrated Mass in Latin for the Polish community in Radway, making tactless remarks about the Ukrainian attendees during his sermon.

Simultaneously, pro-Orthodox sentiment was on the rise, bolstered by the recent establishment of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada (UGOC). By 1920, sympathizers had successfully petitioned to name the Radway burial ground the “Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Cemetery.”

The Orthodox cause gained significant momentum on December 19, 1920, when Reverend Ivan Kusey celebrated a St. Nicholas Day liturgy at the newly built Mazepa School. A large number of residents attended despite efforts by Father Philip Ruh, a French Oblate priest trained in Galicia, to prevent the service. This event marked the formalization of Orthodox activities in Radway, leading to the organization of a Brotherhood of Orthodox Ukrainians the following year. The establishment of the Orthodox





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faction sparked controversy and heated debates within the community, even reaching the pages of *Ukrains'kyi Holos*.

Initially, services were held at the homes of local supporters, with Andrew Kowal's residence frequently hosting religious gatherings and weddings. The Mazepa School later became a more formal venue for services. Visiting priests typically arrived by train and stayed overnight with community members.

Construction of the Holy Ascension sanctuary began in 1924. Although incomplete, Archbishop Ioan Theodorovich conducted a service there on September 21, 1924, during his fall tour of Alberta congregations. (Some sources suggest this

service may have been held at Mazepa School.) Theodorovich returned on October 25, 1925, further inspiring the congregation. The completed church featured a tripartite structure with a large central dome on an octagonal base.

By 1937, the congregation had twelve members and celebrated nine liturgies annually. A manse was constructed in 1938 to accommodate a resident priest serving the Radway district. In the 1950s or early 1960s, a two-tiered iconostasis, painted by renowned artist Wadym Dobrolige (1913-1973) after his emigration to Canada, was installed in the church.



## Priests

I. Kusey (1920-1924)  
D. Seneta (1924-1926)  
T. Horbay (1926-1932)  
E. Olendy (1928-1929?)  
I. Mayba (1932-1936)  
P. Sametz (1936-1938)  
M. Fyk (1938-1943)  
H. Wasyliw (1943-1955)  
W. Senishen (1955-1956)  
O. Flak (1956-1961)  
D. Stratychuk (1961-?)  
I. Kulish (1966-1971)  
O. Shcherban (1971-1974?)  
H. Fil (1974-1975?)  
N. Sawchenko (1976-1979)  
L. Kubin (1979-1980?)  
H. Wasyliw (1980)  
A. Palamarchuk



## Location and Feast Day

In the town of Radway, at 32-58-20 W4, County of Thorhild. *GPS Coordinates:* 54.058674, -112.948718 | Their *Feast Day* is celebrated on the Thursday of the fifth week after Easter.

## Founding Members

John Semeniuk	John Pryma
Hnat Pawuk	Mike Meleshko
John Rudyk	John Tataryn
Fred Yurkiw	

## Cemetery

The cemetery is situated at NW 29-58-20 W4, half a mile south of the Village of Radway. It was established in 1927, with the first burial being that of Mildred Pysmenny in the spring of 1928. *Cemetery Coordinates:* 54.049941, -112.951009



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