

53. Spedden

Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The first Orthodox liturgies in Spedden were celebrated in the late 1920s at the homes of Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada (UGOCC) supporters and at the Spedden *Narodnyi Dim* (National Home). Rev. T. Horbay began visiting the settlement in 1927, laying the groundwork for the eventual establishment of Holy Trinity Church. However, it was not until April 17, 1932 (another source cites January 9, 1932) that a formal founding meeting was held, with sixteen members petitioning the Consistory in Winnipeg for official recognition.

In 1934, lots were purchased from the Canadian National Railway (CNR), though it took another eight years before the congregation was ready to construct a sanctuary. Work began in 1942, with volunteers building under the supervision of John Krusckow and Nick Nickolywich. In 1943, Mike Muzyka took over as head carpenter, leading the congregation as they gradually completed the structure. By July 1943, the crosses and domes were ready to be blessed, indicating the sanctuary was sufficiently completed for use at that time.

From its inception, the Spedden congregation was served by priests based in Smoky Lake, fostering strong ties between the two communities. In 1950, the Consistory attempted to transfer Spedden to the Glendon district to strengthen the latter's parish. This move provoked an immediate revolt among Spedden members, who, along with Smoky Lake leader Nick Gavinchuk, protested the decision. The Spedden faithful threatened to suspend church activities and block the Glendon priest from using their sanctuary—despite holding no ill feelings toward him personally. Ultimately, the Consistory relented, restoring Spedden's original parish alignment.



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Destruction by Fire and Reconstruction

Tragedy struck on Easter Sunday, April 21, 1957, when the original Holy Trinity Church was destroyed by fire. It is believed that the *kadylo* (incensory) was emptied outside the church, igniting nearby grass and sparking a fire that engulfed the sanctuary. Village members watched helplessly, as no fire department was available to intervene. The only relic saved from the flames was the original *kadylo*.

Determined to rebuild, parishioners initiated reconstruction the following year. Head carpenter Mike Panas, assisted by John and Metro Bodnar, led a team of volunteers in erecting a new cruciform sanctuary. The structure featured a large central dome with two smaller domes over the towers flanking the façade. The new church was formally consecrated in 1962 during a hierarchical service officiated by Bishop Andrew of the Western Diocese.

Cultural and Artistic Enhancements

In 1981, Father Lorne Kubin, with artistic contributions from Larry Wowk, decorated the interior of Holy Trinity Church with traditional *rozpys* (ornamental painting). Inspired by the mission church at Saddle Lake First Nation,

Kubin incorporated a rose motif, while Wowk painted the six-winged cherubim adorning the sanctuary.

In 2000, fundraising efforts commenced to acquire an iconostasis. Deacon Nazari Polataiko, then managing the UOCC church store at the Consistory, and his father Yaremi in Chernivtsi were commissioned to produce the structure. The elaborate iconostasis, featuring gold leaf detailing and icons painted by Tatiana Polataiko, was crafted in Chernivtsi before being shipped to Spedden.

Attempted Arson and Present-Day Status

In late summer 2015, Spedden's Holy Trinity Church narrowly escaped destruction for a second time. On August 27, 2015, the nearby Ukrainian Catholic Church on Highway 28 was struck by lightning and completely destroyed. The following night, at approximately midnight, an arsonist attempted to set fire to Holy Trinity. Miraculously, the fire failed to spread, leaving only the back windows of the sanctuary scorched.

As of 2016, the congregation hosted eight liturgies annually, continuing its long-standing role in the religious and cultural life of Spedden.



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Priests

T. Horbay (1927–1932)
I. Mayba (1932–1936)
H. Wasyliv (1936–1943)
W. Senishen (1944–1948)
[Kapindor? Rider?]
Y. Rybalka
S. Hredil
Sorochuk
P. Satsevich
M. Fyk
F. Kulchitsky
L. Diachina
Y. Turzhansky
L. Kubin
Y. Puk
O. Hudyma (1988–1991)
T. Udod (1991)
P. Kosacki (1992)
T. Udod (1992–)
J. Plewa (1995–)
B. Ambrosie (2000–).

Cemetery

Located on two acres of land donated by John Lobay, at SW 5-60-12 W4.
Cemetery coordinates: 54.151921, -111.766923



Location and Feast Day

Northeast corner of 50 Avenue and 49 Street in the village of Spedden (Block 2, Lots 6, 7, and 8), at 5007-49 Street.
GPS Coordinates: 54.140118, -111.725308
Their *Feast Day* is celebrated at Pentecost, the seventh Sunday after Easter.

The *Narodnyi Dim* across the street from the church continues to serve the congregation as a gathering place for religious and community events.

Founding Members

D. Komchyr	S. Leskiw
J. Baron	J. Lobay
M. Krokosh	A. Matwychuk
J. Stelmaschuk	W. Syroid
B. Gordey	A. Galas
J. Huk	D. Prokopiuk
M. Kapicki	O. Ostapiw
Z. Kruk	R. Kuzma
J. Leskiw	J. Tchir
M. Leskiw	M. Shemeluck
P. Leskiw	



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