



16. Edmonton

Saint Anthony Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The foundation of St. Anthony's Ukrainian Orthodox Church dates back to a meeting held on September 25, 1974. The following day, incorporation papers were filed with the Provincial Registry of Alberta. Stephan Maslo led the interim board, with Nestor Chumer as Secretary and Alex Zwozdesky as Treasurer. The Right Reverend Hryhoriy Wasyliw was appointed Acting Pastor. Archbishop Andrew, Mrs. Tillie (Teklia) Kurysh, and Russell Dzenick served on the advisory committee. Official certification from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's Consistory was granted on December 3, 1974.

Mrs. Kurysh pledged to donate land for the church, contingent upon the parish attaining charitable status. This was granted shortly thereafter. Her donation underscored her ongoing philanthropy, as she had previously donated land for St. Andrew's Church. By 1979, the 2.4-acre property she donated was valued at \$600,000, despite her continuing to pay \$6,500 in city taxes.

Initial plans to erect the church at an unspecified location were revised. A site at the corner of 172 Street and Callingwood Road (62 Avenue) was selected. This location, in Edmonton's growing Meadowlark district, was ideal for serving the Ukrainian community, particularly young families and inter-denominational couples.

On February 25, 1979, the interim board transitioned to an official executive committee. Key leaders, including Maslo, Chumer, and Zwozdesky, remained in their roles. They were joined by Dr. Alex Omelchuk as Vice President, Walter Hrynychuk as Vice Secretary, Roy Boyko as Vice Treasurer, and Tom Hnatiuk as Auditor.



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Russell Dzenick continued as Legal Counsel. Membership fees were set at \$10 annually.

Monthly Divine Liturgies began on March 18, 1979, at Hillcrest Junior High School. Reverend Wasyliv and Reverend Lakusta officiated the first service, which was attended by 115 people. The congregation included families, students, and pensioners. Services alternated between the two clergymen. Although construction was initially expected to begin within a year, delays prolonged the process for over a decade.

During its early years, St. Anthony's parish held services at various locations, including St. John's Institute Chapel, St. Mary Elementary School, and Our Lady of the Prairies Catholic Elementary School. By 1984, financial difficulties and slow growth prompted parish president Terry Tymchuk to request that the Consistory appoint Reverend Lakusta as a full-time pastor. This request was approved, and

Reverend Lakusta also served the Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Parish in Calmar, Alberta.

The mid-1980s were challenging. Financial strain and slow membership growth, exacerbated by the economic downturn following Alberta's oil boom, made operations difficult. By mid-1986, the congregation faced a small deficit, necessitating budget cuts and cost-free service locations. St. John's Institute became a viable option despite initial concerns about renovations. Fundraising efforts were contentious, with debates over the use of Bingos and Casinos as revenue sources. Ultimately, these challenges were overcome, stabilizing the parish's finances.

The appointment of Reverend Hupka in 1988 reinvigorated the parish. His arrival coincided with the millennium celebration of Christianity in Ukraine. By 1990, the congregation had raised \$200,000 toward the estimated \$700,000 construction cost of the church. The sanctuary was completed in early 1991 and consecrated in a solemn dedication ceremony on June 2, 1991.



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Priests

- H. Wasyliw (1974–1979)
- H. Wasyliw and V. Lakusta (1979 –1984)
- V. Lakusta (1985 –1988)
- A. Hupka (1988 –1992)
- A. Jarmus (1992 –1998)
- P. Yamniuk (1998 –)

Location and Feast Day

6103-172 Street, Meadowlark District,
Edmonton *GPS Coordinates:* 53.497172,
-113.620639

Founding Members

The organizational or mission committee worked from 1966-1974 and consisted of:

- Very Rev. Hryhorij Wasyliw
- Dobr. Maria Wasyliw
- Tillie Kurysh, land owner
- Peter and Polly Germaniuk
- Filmon Chalupa.

The planning committee consisted of:

- President Stephan Maslo from St. John's
- Secretary Nestor Chumik from St. John's
- Treasurer Alex Zwozdesky from St. Michael's
- Legal adviser Russell Dzenick from St. Andrew's
- Fr.Hryhorji Wasyliw, semi-retired, acting priest
- Archbishop Andrew Metiuk
- Land owner, Tillie Kurysh.

