

22. Fedorah

Saint John the Baptist Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The Fedorah area saw significant Ukrainian settlement in the early 20th century. Orthodox settlers initially traveled to Edmonton for services, as the nearest church was the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Waugh, built in 1904. The first Orthodox liturgy in Fedorah was celebrated in 1928 by Rev. E. Olendy. Later services were held irregularly at the Ivan Franko Prosvita Society's National Home. This hall, constructed in 1917-1918, served cultural and educational purposes, welcoming Orthodox, Catholic, and socialist members.

In 1933, a formal Orthodox congregation was established. M.S. Ferbey was elected as the first executive leader. At a subsequent meeting at Wasyl Kostiw's home, members resolved to acquire land for a church and cemetery. By April 1934, the congregation purchased two acres for a cemetery at NE 31-57-23 W4, three miles north of the current church site. Wasyl Kostiw also offered to donate an adjacent acre for a sanctuary. However, due to the land's rocky terrain and distance from the Prosvita Hall, it was abandoned as a church site.

In 1935, a fire destroyed the original Fedorah hall. This was widely suspected to be arson amidst ideological tensions between nationalist and pro-Communist factions. Despite the Great Depression, the community rallied and rebuilt the hall within months, supported by insurance funds and local volunteers. By the mid-1940s, religious divisions led Ukrainian Catholics to establish their own church across from the rebuilt hall, leaving the Prosvita Hall primarily for Orthodox use.

The congregation persevered and constructed a modest tripartite church in 1947 on land acquired with the assistance of Mike Kuzyk.



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Dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the church featured a medium-sized dome over the entryway and two smaller domes flanking the facade. Founding members, including Joseph Kryschuk and Nick Boyko, formalized the church's incorporation in 1946.

The first burial at the original cemetery occurred in 1935. However, dissatisfaction with its location led to the establishment of a new cemetery adjacent to the church. On October 26, 1966, remains from the old cemetery were reinterred at the new site, that had been consecrated earlier that year by Fr. I. Kulish.

Notable events include the 1940 visitation by Archbishop Ioan Theodorovich. He

celebrated a liturgy at the Prosvita Hall, attracting worshippers from across Alberta. In 1958, Fedorah native Meroslaw Kryschuk was ordained into the priesthood at his home church by Metropolitan Ilarion. That same year, the church property was fenced, and interior woodworking was completed by Edmonton cabinetmaker Koss.

By the 1980s, declining membership led to the congregation's reassignment to the Edmonton district. In 1993, only seven families remained active in the parish. Despite this, St. John the Baptist Church remains a cherished spiritual home, with services provided by Fr. Kryschuk, who commutes from Edmonton.



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Priests

- E. Olendy (c. 1928-29)
- T. Volokhatiuk (1927-29)
- T. Kisiliuk (1933-38)
- M. Fyk (1938-43, 1945-51)
- H. Wasyliw (1943-45, 1951-55, 1956-58, 1980-83, 1983-93)
- W. Senishen (1955-56)
- M. Flak (1958-61)
- D. Stratyuk (1961-65)
- I. Kulish (1965-71)
- A. Scherban (1971-74)
- H. Fil (1974-75)
- M. Sawchenko (1975-79)
- A. Palamarchuk (1983)
- Y. Turzansky (1993-2000)
- M. Kryschuk (2000-present)

Location and Feast Day

North of Bon Accord, east side of Lily Lake Road (Range Road 235), at SW 20-57-23 W4, County of Sturgeon. *GPS Coordinates:* 53.936129, -113.396998 | Their *Feast Day* is July 7.

Founding Members

- Wasył Belziuk
- Nick Boyko
- Steve Draginda
- Mike S. Ferbey
- Joseph Kryschuk
- Mike Kuzyk
- Paul Kuzyk
- Peter Magera

Cemetery

Originally located at NE 31-57-23 W4, the cemetery was moved to the church property in 1966. The new cemetery was consecrated on August 14, and a cross was dedicated by Fr. I. Kulish.



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