

4. Bellis

All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The origins of the Bellis Orthodox community date back to the pioneer era, preceding the 1918 establishment of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada. During this period, a cemetery was established on the North Bellis farm of Andrew Klymchuk, who later became a founding member of the *All Saints* congregation. By November 25, 1927, this cemetery had been legally incorporated as the property of St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, marking the development of a formal congregation.

From 1926 to 1932, Reverend Timotei Horbay occasionally served the community, conducting services in the hall of the Ivan Franko Educational Society of Bellis. This hall, built in 1926, became a focal point for Ukrainian cultural, political, and spiritual life in the district. Before 1926, some liturgies were likely held in residents' homes. Historical records also indicate that Reverend Ivan Kusy visited Bellis as early as 1923.

The first documented election of a congregational president occurred on January 25, 1931, during a meeting following a church service. However, correspondence with the consistory in March of that year suggested that Krizon Chornovliuk headed a different executive committee. Regardless, by this time, the Bellis congregation had established communication with the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox administration in Winnipeg.

On January 5, 1932, the Bellis congregation purchased land for a church from the Canadian National Railway (CNR) for \$100. This left only five cents in its bank account. Undeterred by the economic challenges of the Great Depression, the community began constructing their sanctuary the following year. The church was consecrated on May 5, 1933, by Reverend Ivan Mayba, who



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had succeeded Father Horbay as pastor. The date of consecration is inscribed on a cross that still stands in front of the church's eastern wall. Initially dedicated to St. John of Suchava, a popular Bukovynian saint, the church's feast day was celebrated annually on June 15.

The congregation faced significant hardships during the Depression. Services were briefly suspended in 1936 due to financial struggles. A severe snowstorm on September 12, 1936, further complicated matters by damaging crops still in the fields. Despite these challenges, the community experienced a moment of pride when Hryhory Wasyliw was ordained as a deacon on September 27, 1936. Two weeks later, he was consecrated as a priest in Smoky Lake and

went on to serve the district for nearly a decade.

In the late 1940s, the congregation adopted St. Demetrius as its patron saint, though records suggest earlier designations may have varied. On January 25, 1956, the Bellis Ukrainian Orthodox Church formally requested to be renamed All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church. This change was approved by Metropolitan Ilarion, primate of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada.

The Bellis congregation also produced a notable figure in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. Father Ihor Kutash, the



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Priests

T. Horbay (1926–1932)
I. Mayba (1932–1936)
H. Wasyliw (1936–1945)
W. Senishen (1945–1949)
D. Foty (1949–1950)
F. Kulchynsky (1950–1951)
P. Satsevich (1951–1961)
S. Hrebenuk (1961–1962)
J. Rybalka (1962–1965)
Y. Turzansky (1965–1969)
W. Melnychuk (1969–1970)
S. Hredil (1970–1973)
L. Diachina (1973–1975)
L. Kubin (1975–1987)
J. Puk (1987–1988: supply)
V. Lakusta (1987–1988: supply)
O. Hudema (1988–1991)
G. Turzansky (1991–1992: supply)
P. Kosacki (1992)
T. Udod (1992–1995)
J. Plewa (1995–2003)
B. Ambrosie (2003 to present)

Cemetery

Established on the North Bellis farm of Andrew Klymchuk (NE 9-60-15 W4), the cemetery was legally registered on November 25, 1927, as belonging to St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Later, a second cemetery was registered as belonging to All Saints Ukrainian Orthodox Church at SE 3-60-15 W4, with 39 recorded burials in 1992. A third cemetery is also listed at this site, associated with St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, with 81 recorded burials in 1992.

Cemetery GPS: 54.153133, -112.152434

Location and Feast Day

Northeast corner of 49 Avenue and 49 Street in the town of Bellis, 15174 Township Road 595A, County of Smoky Lake. *GPS Coordinates:* 54.143117, -112.148241 | Their *Feast Day* is November 8 (formerly June 15).

Founding Members

Anani Kovaluk
Teodor Krawchysyn
Michael Sadoway
Peter Repka
Philip Kutash
Oleksa Yaremchuk
Peter Klymok
Antin Clementovich
Myron Lemiskha
Hryhory Repka
Wasyl Zawadiuk
Michael Verbitsky
Peter Dudra
Levko (Leon) Kondratiuk
Andrew Shewchuk
Dmytro (Metro) Cherniwchan
Krizon Chornoluk,
John Taschuk
Peter Ogurian
Andrew Cherniwchan
John Goruk
Wasyl Ogurian
Dmytro (Metro) Lupul
Joseph Yasenchuk
Dmytro Zacharuk
Hrynko Lesiuk
Andrew Klymchuk
Ivan (Omelian?) Danchuk
Sidor Kutash

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