

HISTORY OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

The establishment of the rural Clayton parish in the town of Vance Creek, Barron County was begun by Carpatho-Russian Orthodox people who came to America for a permanent life from Carpathian and Galician Russia, from the former Austro Hungarian Monarchy, present day Czechoslovakia. The old Austrian Empire suffered from severe economic changes and was shaken by national and religious controversies. These emigrating people's primary motives in moving were to escape from constricted conditions to the open opportunities of America.

Tilling and working the soil in the old country, these people came to the United States of America to make a better living. As usual with immigrants who came only with their passports and bare necessities, they settled in the east, doing manual labor in large cities. But soon this became very burdensome and they began thinking and talking about how to acquire some farm land and work for themselves. To obtain farm land they ventured further westward in America.

About the year 1896 these people started to form that new life for themselves near Clayton in Barron County, Wisconsin. At the time this area was in the last days of the logging era. The land was being sold for six to seven dollars per acre on installment and on easy terms to anyone who wanted to buy it. This land was mostly forest and heavy woods with very little means of transportation and communication. Railroads connected this place with large industrial cities. Anyone who came here had to work hard to make a living. The people that did come had to open new land for farming. A community grew around the original settlers.

In the Church Cemetery one of the tombstones reads, "Steven Vasvary Sr., first Russian settler in Vance Creek, Barron County." Born in 1825 and died in 1901.

The other first families to settle near Clayton were the Gregory Lentzisin, Peter Legus, Mike Simko, George Kuchman, Peter Glushyn, John Moskal Sr., and George Kupetz.

When they had cleared some land and built homes for themselves they began to think of building a church in order to have a place to worship on Sundays and Holidays and pray to the Lord for His Blessings, as they all believed that one cannot live right without God. This small group of people received 40 acres of land for the Church, rectory and cemetery.

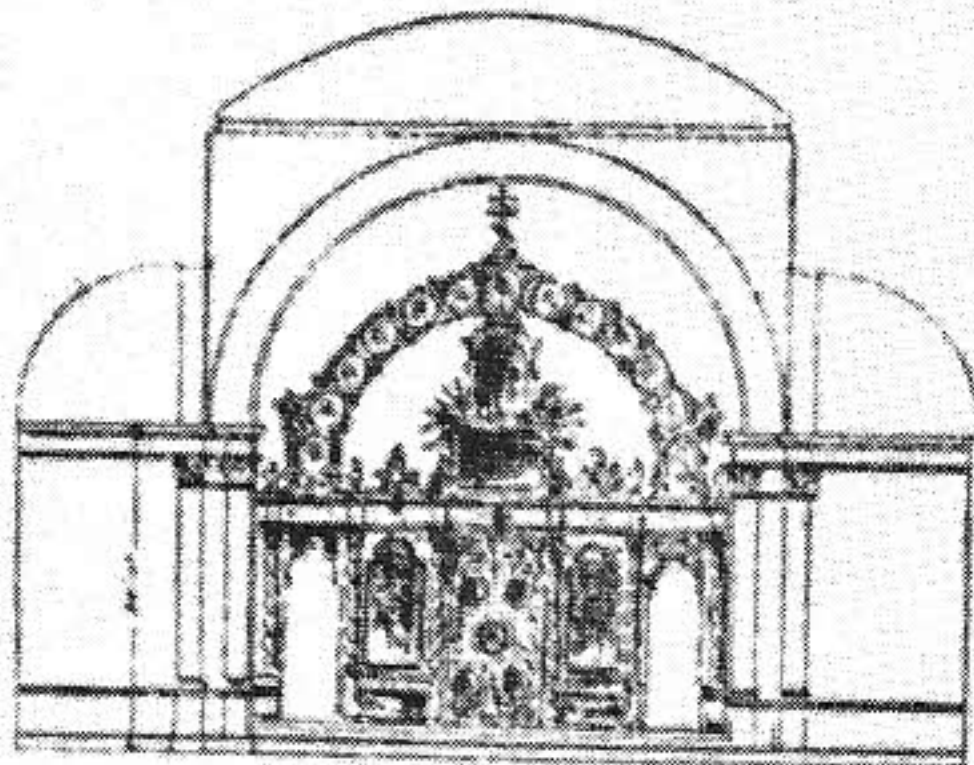
Lohrbauer Land Company had a Russian speaking agent, Ivan Ognitch, to sell land to Russian people and bring them into the area. Harold J. Lohrbauer sold the property on December 10, 1896 to Nicholas, Bishop of Russian Orthodox Church in the United States of America, of San Francisco, State of California, for church purposes. Warranty Deed in the amount of \$1.00 was to be void unless church was erected within two years.

The 1897 Russian-American Orthodox Messenger, June to September issue, advertised a new Russian colony, "60 miles east of the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, State of Minnesota, a fine location, well supplied with good timber and pure water. The soil is rich, in great part black-mould, and the land has a gently rolling surface," to encourage people to come to this location and settle.

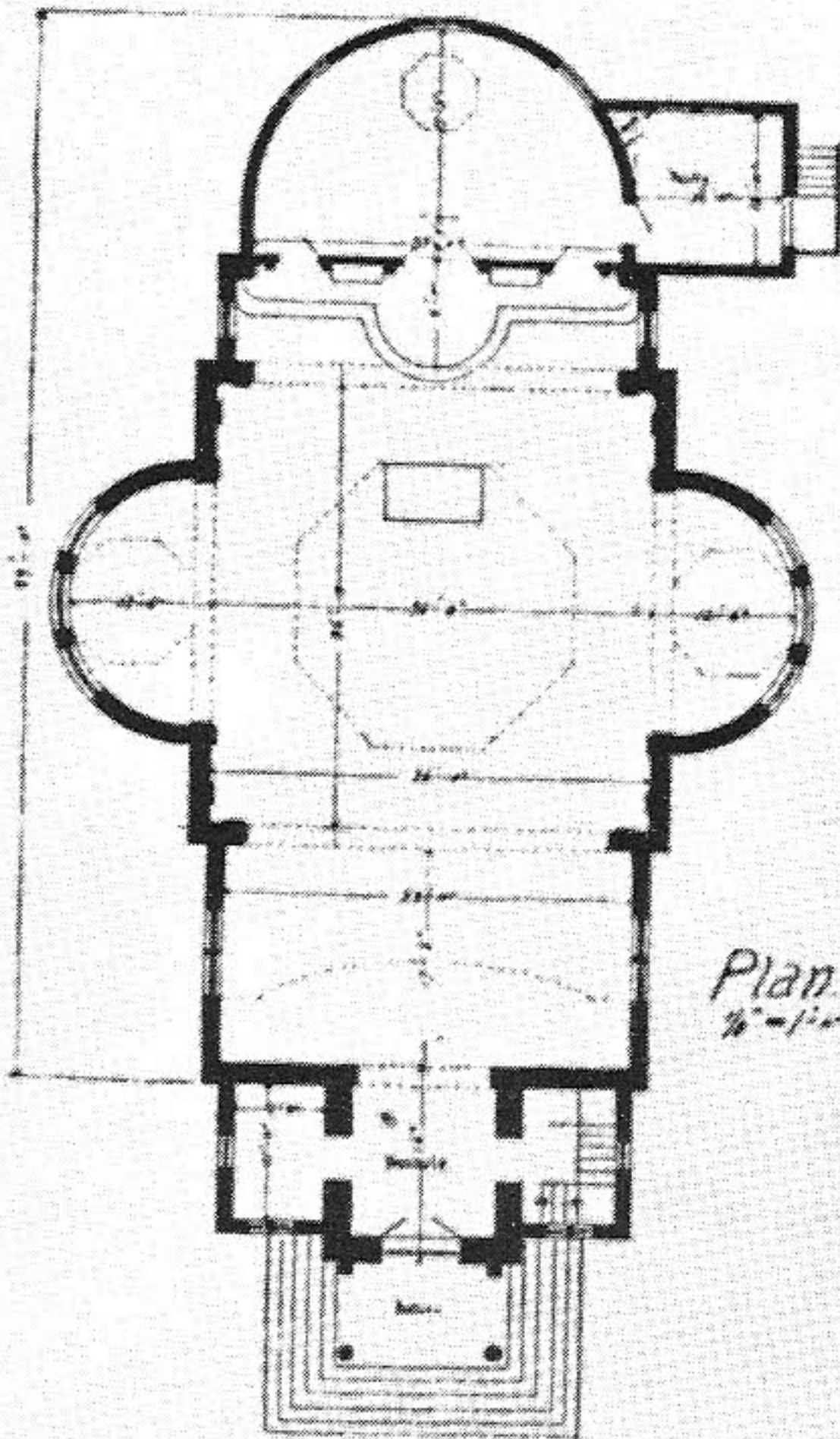
The John Hornick family came out here in the year 1898 from St. Paul. They had previously been living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Roslin, Washington, and Montana.

Max Ziwisky left Austria-Hungary and came to Chicago first. He married and several years later, 1898 or 1899, he brought his family to the Clayton area where he engaged in farming.

In another issue of the Russian-American Orthodox Messenger the building committee, composed of Ivan Ognitch, Ivan Mlinar, George Kupetz and Peter Liguz, published an appeal for funds towards the building of a church, a sketch of which reveals an exceptionally large and ornate structure that contrasts sharply with the building now existing on the land.



Cross Section
1/8" = 1'-0"



Plan
1/8" = 1'-0"



*Preliminary Sketch
of Russian Church proposed
at Luzon Co Wis
V. Cordella Archt.
Milwaukee Wis*

Sketch of Perspective View
1/8" = 1'-0"

отъ скудости своей,—каждый по достоя-
нію и силѣ своей.

Христосъ Спаситель Своими небесны-
ми милостями благословитъ и вознагра-
дитъ добрыхъ и милосердыхъ даителей, —
по горячимъ молитвамъ православныхъ лю-
дей, въ пользу которыхъ идетъ сія жертва
и которымъ суждено будетъ счастье воз-

сылать въ новомъ храмѣ къ Всеблагому
Промыслителю моленія, прошенія и благо-
даренія за создателей и благотворителей
этого святаго храма.

Члены строительнаго Комитета:

Иванъ Огничъ,	Иванъ Млишарь,
Георгій Купецъ,	Петръ Лигузъ.

They hired a carpenter living among them at that time, Joseph Fall, who had immigrated from Europe and found employment in the southern states. He then brought his family to the Boyceville and Frederic, Wisconsin, area where he was a millwright in the lumber camps and sawmills. Later they came to this area.

Construction began on the Church building with the help of a few of the other men, however, later on not having sufficient funds, they had to discontinue the work for some time.

Then in 1902 the Church was finished and dedicated in the name of Saint Michael Russian Orthodox Church. The first building was just a white frame shell, walls and roof; a steeple was built on to it four years later. The walls were covered with wainscoting on the inside and the source of heat was from a black iron heater which stood near the altar.

At this time other families were coming to this area and joining the colony. Nicholas Ketz came to America from Galicia, Austria and was employed in Minneapolis for several years. He helped begin organizing this Church through the Minneapolis parish. He wanted to purchase land and return to his former occupation of farming. On April 23, 1903 the family arrived by train in Richardson to put down roots here.

George Moskal Sr. left Miholovets, Austria-Hungary in 1896 to pursue his boyhood dream of going to wonderful America which he had heard so much about. He worked in Minneapolis for a while and in 1899 he secured 40 acres of land in Section 9, Vance Creek Township and later worked at building a house. He was married and a son George was born before they left Minneapolis on July 4, 1903 and made this their permanent home.

Other families arriving at this time were John Dzubay, Steven Dzubay, William Glushyn, George Kapitola and John Potosnak. The Ignaty Sura, George McKulla and John Margitan families came from Pennsylvania. Joe Prusak Sr. came from Brezivka, Hungary and in 1897 purchased land in Vance Creek. They came to live here in the year 1903.

Before a permanent priest was assigned to serve here the people had regular services, read the Hours, some Hosподi Pomilui's and the Epistle reading. A priest from Minneapolis was appointed to come and serve in the Church from time to time when it was necessary. Fr. Leonid Turkevich, future Metropolitan Leonty, of blessed memory, and his family moved out here during the summer and lived in Kupets's house. The Matt Fall family presently lives where the Kupets's formerly resided.

At Christmas time, George Ketz, Steve Dzubay, Steve Kupets and several more young people went Christmas caroling. Nicholas Ketz would drive them, and then they would go to Clear Lake to meet the Priest arriving by train from Minneapolis. Epiphany Services used to be held at a nearby creek with a priest from Minneapolis serving. George Ketz remembers his father, Nicholas, and Mr. Ziwisky went to the creek and chopped a hole in the ice before the service.

In 1907, after the first Church was built, the Holy Trinity Lodge was organized which belonged to the Russian Orthodox Catholic Mutual Aid Society of America. By 1923 it had grown to twenty-two members.

A school was run by Russian teachers, who taught regular classes, plus religion and church music. One teacher was John Moros and another Taras Danchenko. Some were seminarians from the Minneapolis Seminary who came and stayed all winter. No one in the area spoke English. The people rejoiced that now they had a Church to go to and could hear the service in their own language.

In June of 1910 the parishioners celebrated the blessing of the Church. The Society of Saints Peter and Paul organization connected with St. Mary's Russian Orthodox Church in Minneapolis sent a male delegation for the blessing.

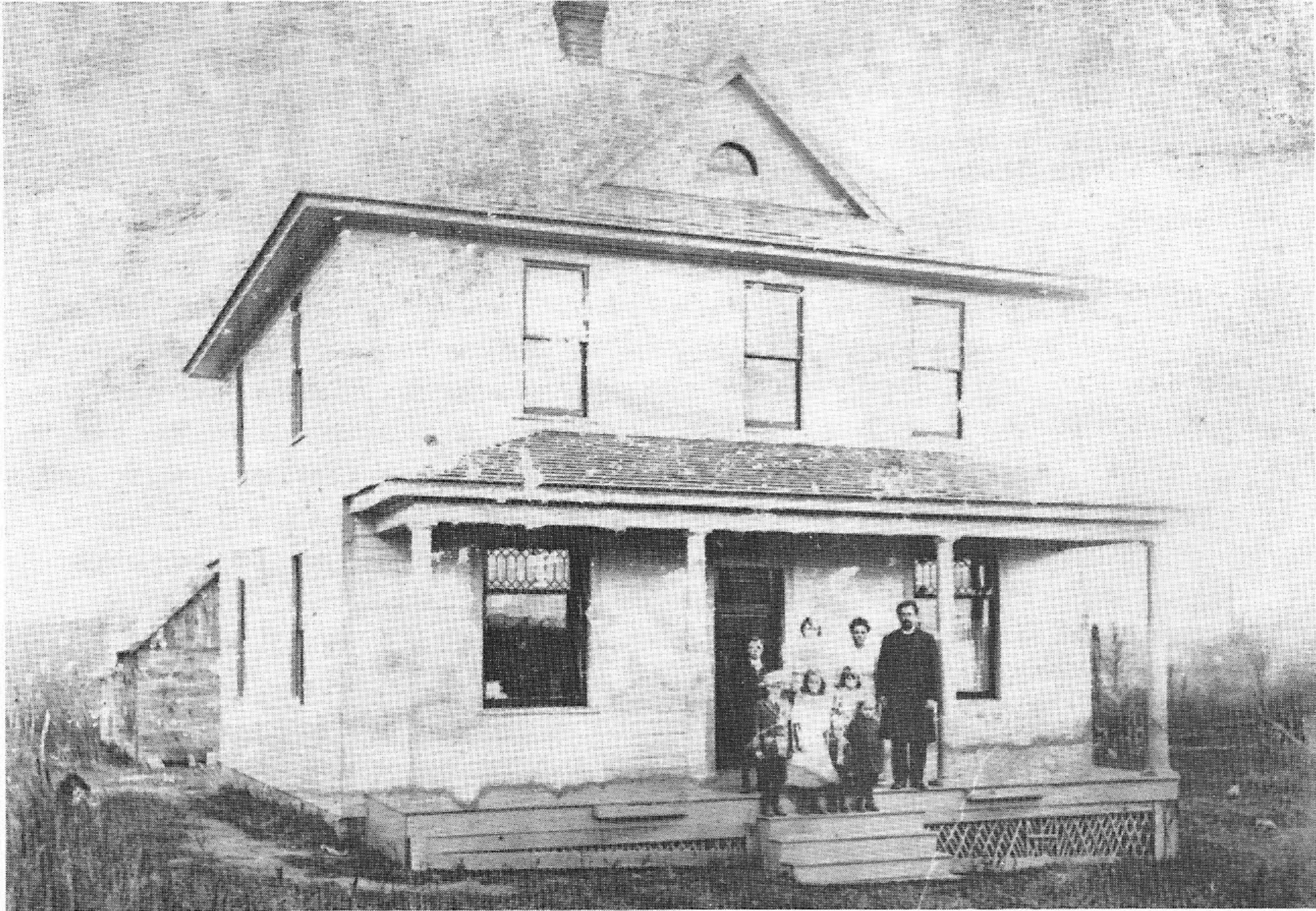
A Minneapolis businessman and fellow Lodge member, Paul Podany, chartered a special train to carry the members to Clayton. A Church band lead by Mr. John Jalma, who also was band director at the University of Minnesota, came on this special train. Upon arrival into Clayton, everyone entered the hotel and the band played. The hotel keeper treated them all and said, "now everyone will know where Clayton is." In the mean time people from the parish came with horses and hay wagons to bring the group out to the Church. After the service a dinner was held at a nearby farm (Kupets' or Prusak's) with Clayton's saloon providing the refreshments. Later it was back to Clayton on the old logging roads, as the roads we know today were not here, and then the train back to Minneapolis.

This area was still all woods and the only roads were logging roads, which were really just paths. There were many tree stumps left from the logging days, some even seven to eight feet across. Buildings were sometimes built with the logs left behind by the logging camps. About this time road surveying took place and bridges were built across the creeks so it would no longer be necessary to ford the creeks.

During this time Nicholas Ketz and others wrote advertisements in the Church newspapers, such as Svit (The Light) to bring more people out here. And people did come on the farms to live and joined the church. George Prusak Sr. came from Czeckoslovakia, to Minneapolis in 1909 and then to Clayton. Some were Galicians as the Skapyaks, Kostics, Basil Luconic, Peter Luconic and the Fall family who arrived in 1910 and the Moriak's who arrived in 1913. The John Stevonek family moved into the Clayton community in 1911 from southern Minnesota. At the age of six, son Mike was left motherless and was taken into the Joseph Fall family where he lived until he reached young manhood.

Others came from Czeckoslovakia and spoke a little different dialect. The Grivna family came from Presho, Czeckoslovakia, to Pennsylvania, to Minneapolis, and then to Clayton in 1914. Mr. Grivna had worked in lumber camps and for the Soo Line Railroad. Other families arriving about this time were the Masley's, Kitcha's, Tima's, Leschisin's, Franko's, Mike Zadrus, and the Steve Cuper Sr. family who came from Czeckoslovakia to farm in Vance Creek. John Cotch Sr. came from Europe and was in Alabama first, then to Hartshorne, Oklahoma where he was a soft coal miner. He came to Minneapolis and then Clayton in 1914. Sam Dado came from Europe and was a hard coal miner in Shepton, Pennsylvania. Finding mining to be a hazardous occupation he left and came to Minneapolis in 1907 and to the Clayton area in 1914. Peter Dennis came to this country in 1895 and worked in Minneapolis until 1915 at which time he brought his family to the Clayton area to live. Nicholas Peroff came to this country from Galicia, Poland, with his family when he was four years old, about the year 1900. They lived in Oklahoma where his father worked in the coal mines. In 1913 the family moved to Cornucopia, Wisconsin and later he married and lived in Ironwood, Michigan, before buying a farm in this area in 1929. It seems everyone lived with in their own little nationality settlements - like the German's, Norwegians, etc.

In 1913 the Bishop from New York sent to this parish their first priest to live with them and serve in the Church for them, Fr. Nikita Gress. He arrived with his wife Mary and lovely family of three boys and three girls. There was no parish home at that time so they lived in a house where Matt Fall presently lives. At that time there were a number of young men in the parish and Fr. Gress offered his supervision in building a parish house. John Hornick worked on the foundation of the house. After they staked out the boundary lines, somebody took into consideration the size of Fr. Gress's family and decided the house should be larger, so they moved the stakes out further. Extensively remodeled over the years, the house still serves as the pastor's residence.



The following year Fr. Gress and his family moved into the house and he painted beautiful murals on the walls in almost every room. He also painted the inside church of icons and an iconostas giving it a marbelizing effect. Some of his painting is still existing in Wilmington, Delaware; Benld Illinois; Chistes, Pennsylvania; Mayfield, Pennsylvania; and Elmira, New York.

Katherine, Fr. Gress's third oldest daughter, remembers her Dad tried his best to organize a youth club, and he also collected a choir which she lead, reading the Apostle as young as she was at that time. The church books were written in the old Slavonic language and many did not know how to read it. In 1915, at the age of sixteen, Katherine left Clayton to enter at that time The Russian College for Girls, St. Mary's College as it was called by Bishop Evdokim; it does not exist any longer. She recalls that the members of the Church were very cooperative. The parish paid a salary of \$25.00 a month to Fr. Gress, he was also getting some salary from New York with the money coming from the Holy Synod of the Church of Russia. Just during the year 1916 alone, one million dollars was sent to the Russian Orthodox Church's in America from the Church of Russia. This ceased, after the Russian Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

In the year 1918 Fr. Gress was transfered to Wilmington, Delaware. If you ever visit the South Canaan Monastery, Fr. Nikita Gress and Mary Gress are buried there.

After Fr. Gress left, Fr. Nikifor Besmertniuk, his wife and young son Sasha spent about a year here. The next priest to serve here was Fr. John Handziuk arriving in 1919. He had escaped from Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution, but his wife and four year old daughter were left behind. During his stay, tragedy struck one Sunday afternoon in January 1920. The white frame Church caught fire from an un-extinguished candle and burned to the ground.

Emily Prusak Solberg remembers the fire clearly. Anne Prusak and Mary Margitan saw fire coming out of the bell tower and reported it to the Prusak's. Joseph Prusak ran to get Fr. Handziuk and they both went to the Church and opened the door and fire shot out of the door. The entire Church was in flames and nothing was saved from the inferno.

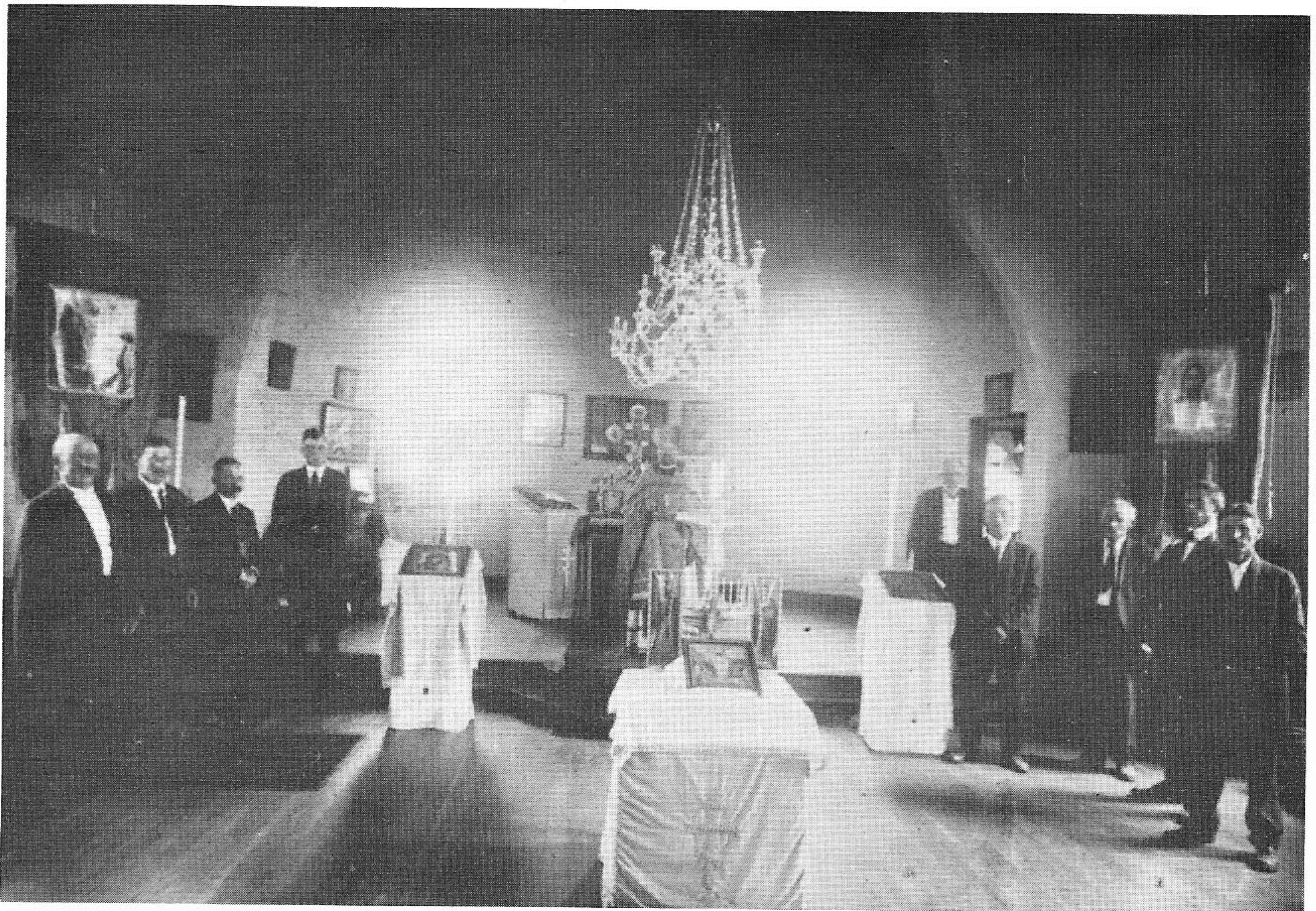
Each family in the parish was assessed \$100.00 and donations came from parishioners from St. Mary's Church in Minneapolis to rebuild. The Prusak family raised the money for their assessment by planting and selling small cucumbers for the Pickle Canning Company in Clayton.

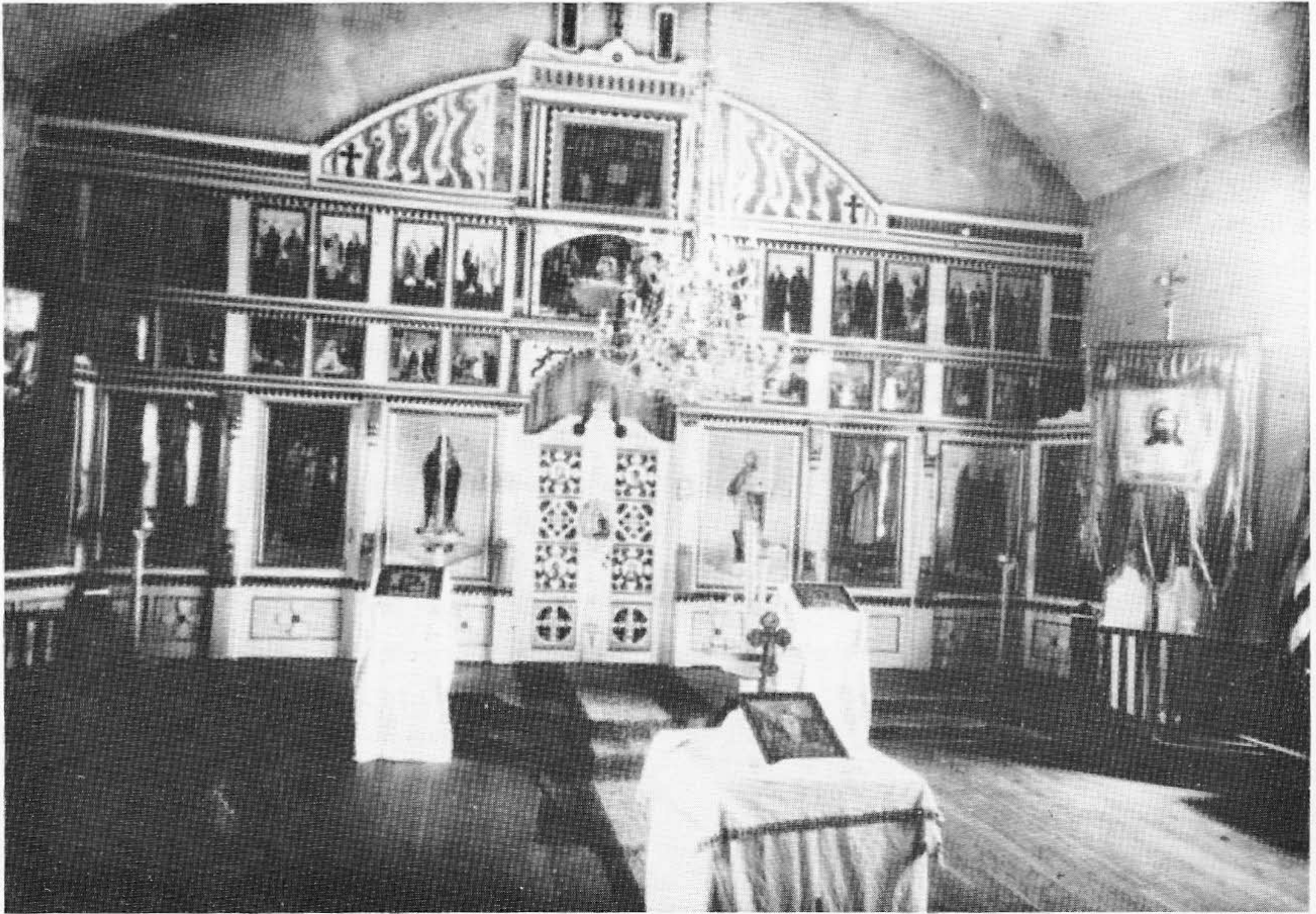
A contractor from St. Paul built the new brick Church with men from the parish helping. Emily remembers that the men from St. Paul working on the Church had tents pitched where the cars now park. Mr. Prusak donated the gravel, sand, and water for the new building.

During the time we were without a Church, services were held in the living and dining rooms of the parish house. For the times, it was a large modern home provided for the priests. There was a well close by for water, not yet piped into the house. Kerosene lamps were used for lighting and the house was heated by a simple iron stove.

The children had religious classes during the summer at the parish house in a room that was later made into a bedroom. If someone misbehaved during the classes, and every day someone did, the priest would visit the parents, always at supper time, and the children would get a scolding from their parents in front of the priest.

The lovely iconostas in the new Church was built by Joseph Fall with the help of Mike Stevonik. The Dzubay men made the stands and tables, and all the parishioners contributed in which ever way they could. The new Church was completed in 1921.





People always walked to Church, even in the winter. Dzubay's and Masley's used the old logging road through the woods to get to Church. Matt Fall remembers seeing Mrs. Margitan walking through the woods to Church, smoking a pipe. She was a short lady, but very active. He remembers also so many of the men with their beards and mustaches, this was unusual to him because the men in his family were clean shaven.

Sometimes Romanian and Serbian families would bring their babies to be baptized at our Church. They lived in the Cumberland area and would start from their homes at four o'clock in the morning with horse and buggy and would arrive in Church at ten o'clock. The trips were always made in the summer so the babies would often be five or six months old before they were baptized. Someone from the parish would be the sponsors. After Liturgy Mrs. Prusak would have the visitors for dinner, then the long trip back to Cumberland was made all the same day.

According to the Minneapolis priest, (Archpriest Vasily Kuvshinov) in the Dean's annual report to his Bishop on March 9, 1923, Hieromonk Sevastion Karpenko was here for six months in 1921. The report goes on stating Hieromonk Varnava Luchko had been a priest for five years when he came to Clayton at the age of 43, in 1922. He was in Clayton for three months and evidently had not yet reported to the Dean, for he says, "I have never had the chance to see his face."

Financial records show, for the year 1922, the income for the year to be \$1,845.21 and the expenses were \$1,365.73. The value of the Church properties was \$14,000.00, current debts \$5,000.00, and insurance on property \$8,000.00. The clergy's monthly wage was \$40.00 or \$480.00 per year.

A 1923 census of the parishioners of our Church showed there were 76 men, 76 women, and 52 children in 36 families. The back grounds of the adults showed 4 were Russians, 40 Galician, and 108 Uhorsky or Carpatho-Russians.

When Fr. Luchko left in 1927 then Fr. Michael Zeykon arrived and served for about a year. Fr. Pachomy Deliman came in 1928 and was the first priest to speak English. He was American born and had been serving in Milwaukee before coming to Clayton. He preferred not to ride in a sleigh in the winter because he would get too cold so he would walk. In 1929 he left here and went to Seattle, Washington.

The parishioners would supply wood for the Church and parish house for heating and cooking. In the autumn time of year the parish house basement would be filled with vegetables and when hogs or beef were butchered some meat would always be given to the priest.

The telephone calls for the priests always came to the Prusak residence and one of the children would have to go to the parish house with the message. It may have been in the 1930's when the first telephone was installed at the parish house. Neither did the priests have any means of transportation, so the parishioners would have to take them wherever they had to go, by horse and sleigh in the winter, and by horse and buggy in the summer. Mr. Prusak was kept quite busy as he was the closest, it was usually his duty to ring the Church bell three times a day when there was a death in the parish and when we were without a parish priest. He also started the fire in the wood furnace in Church early Sunday mornings and on holidays during the cold season.

In 1930 Fr. Nicholas Kovalchukoff came to this parish. He had been in the Army and ran the Church like a regiment of soldiers.

The parishioners decided it would be preferable to observe a warm weather festival day rather than the November 21st festival day, so the name of the Church was changed to Holy Trinity Orthodox Church.

On June 30, 1930 Bishop Appolinary came to consecrate the Church. For this occasion a large tent was rented and set up. A dance floor was constructed inside the tent with lumber donated by a local lumber yard. Saturday night before the celebration a wind storm came and blew the tent over. Peter Grivna, who had been working with others to put the tent back up Sunday morning, was hurrying home to get dressed for Church. On their way to Church, Mike and Paul Dzubay, driving an old Durant car, came around the old Clubhouse corner and collided with Peter's car. Both cars wound up in the ditch.

After Liturgy a dinner was held for the large group of visitors from the other Orthodox parishes including Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota and Cornucopia, Huron, and Lublin, Wisconsin. A dance was held Sunday night in the tent and after everything was over a storm came and blew the tent over again.

Fr. Kovalchukoff left in 1931 and at a later time served in the Columbia Heights parish.

During Church services someone used to carry a box of candles around selling them to the worshippers.

Choir directors over the years include Bill Masley, Mike Dzubay and for many years John Leschisin.

The choir was reorganized by Rev. Deacon Nicholas Dzubay, the present choir director and Mr. Leschisin's successor, with the help of Fr. Leonid Soroka.

Other parish organizations include the Sisters of Holy Trinity (popularly called the Mother's Club), founded in 1930, which engages in social, educational, and philanthropic activities.

In the early 1930's the younger men from the parish, along with some other local young men formed a club called "Shepherds". They built a clubhouse furnishing it with two pool tables. A ball club was also formed including Joe Hornick, Pete Dzubay, Andy and John Moskal and several more. They called themselves the "Long Lakers."



**Mothers Club
September 12, 1937**



**Before the Clubhouse was sold
and moved away in 1974.**

Fr. Peter Grachoff was the pastor here from 1931 to 1934 and after he left Fr. Gregory Gleboff served from 1934 to 1937. Both priests conducted a Russian School at the Clubhouse for a month a year. Fr. Gleboff spoke only a little English. Students memorized The Creed and the five or so students who learned it best received a candy bar as a prize. Matt Fall remembers the parish garage burned down with Fr. Gleboff's car inside. There also was a series of chimney fires at the parish house in the late 1930's.

Fr. Gleboff passed away on September 25, 1956 and is buried in the parish cemetery.

It is recalled by Andrew Hornick that Simon Ketz was the grave digger in the 1930's and his charge for digging a grave, by hand through poison ivy roots, was \$5.00 per grave.

In 1951 Mike Hornick and Steve Cuper Sr. with the help of others worked very hard to eradicate the poison ivy that once covered the cemetery.

Bishop Turkervich visited our parish on August 5, 1934. Below is a picture of Mrs. Glushyn, who was the president of the Mothers Club at that time and Sophie Fall, Jean Kostic, Olga Fall, and Pearlie Moriak were the flower girls for the Bishop's visit.



For a time the parish was without a priest and in 1938 Fr. Nicholas Zacharkoff arrived and served until 1943.

The mortgage note for building the Church in the amount of \$4,000.00 was paid up on May 7, 1940 to Citizen's State Bank of Clayton, Wisconsin.

Parish picnics used to be held every year at Bass Lake where Frank Kostick's lived at that time. In later years picnics have been held at Horseshoe Lake, Poskin and Clear Lake.

In 1943 Fr. Theodore Pendzenik came here and he kept goats for milk. His stay was short and he left the following year. JoAnn (Prusak) Schramski recollects milking the goats when Father had to be away.

Fr. John Krutchek came here in 1945 with his wife Nina, and two sons Alec and John. While he was here he took it upon himself to paint the steeple of the Church. He tied one end of a rope to the Cross on top of the steeple and the other end of the rope he tied securely around his waist.

When Fr. Krutchek left here in 1947 he went to serve in the St. Paul Parish and is still presently serving there.

About this time the Clubhouse was moved from its original site near the ball diamond, to the corner of the two roads where it stood until the dining room and kitchen addition to the Church was completed in 1974.

For a time we were again without a parish priest and then in 1948 Fr. Karp Pateyuk came with his wife, Matushka Anna, and nine year old son Gerald.

Fr. Karp was born in Lahovtzy, Russia on October 28, 1911 and was ordained a priest in Poland on January 19, 1942. During World War II, he and his family suffered hardship and cruelty in the German concentration camp until the American occupation and liberation. He knew of the life in European countries where the Church and Christianity were facing trying times. He arrived in America and our church was his first parish in his newly adopted country.

Immediately upon his arrival, it was Fr. Karp's strong desire to learn to speak and write the English language fluently. This required a great deal of self discipline, concentration and patience. Sophie (Fall) Dennis remembers him coming to her parents home once or twice a week where she tutored him in the art of speaking, reading and writing English for several hours each time. He was so determined to learn that it was only a short time before he started to use English in the church services for the benefit of the younger generation. It was during Fr. Karp's time that the language of the church went from less Slavonic to mostly English.

Fr. Karp sewed beautiful vestments for himself and also altar server robes. Under his guidance, Church School classes were held on Sunday mornings at the clubhouse during the summer, with lessons assigned by him and taught by Sophie (Fall) Dennis and JoAnn (Prusak) Schramski. Later Fr. Karp organized a Sunday School with the help of Dr. N. S. Dzubay and Allene (Skapyak) Friemuth.

In the summer of 1948, he also organized a youth dance group. Under the guidance of Mrs. Arcady Imnadze, a parishioner, this group learned some Russian folk dances. In celebration of the Wisconsin Centennial, they were invited to perform their ethnic dances at the Barron and Polk County Fairs to which they traveled by bus with other people from our church.



At Christmas time all of the young people of the parish, from tiny tots to those approaching adulthood, were involved in a beautiful Christmas pageant which Fr. Karp directed. The pageant was presented from a temporary stage constructed at one end of the clubhouse. Fr. Karp sewed elaborate costumes for the portrayal of the Nativity story and some are still used today. He also designed and painted beautiful settings and props used in the pageant.

On Christmas Day the young people, directed by Fr. Karp, called at each parishioners home Christmas caroling.



On Sunday, June 22, 1952, the 50th Anniversary of the church was celebrated. The parish marked the occasion with an archpastoral visit from His Grace, Bishop Dionysius of Chicago and Minneapolis conducting the Divine Liturgy. Assisting at Liturgy were Rev. Karp Pateyuk and guest priests, Rev. L. Soroka of Minneapolis, Very Rev. J. Krutchek of St. Paul, Very Rev. G. Gleboff of Huron, Rev. M. Chervinsky of Holdingford, Minnesota, and Rev. A. Lukashevick of Chisholm, Minnesota.

Immediately following Liturgy, a Golden Jubilee Banquet was held at the clubhouse with friends of the church, as well as members, attending.

Two days after the celebration, on the evening of June 24, 1952, a ravaging tornado ripped through this area. Bishop Dionysius was spending a few days with the Pateyuk's at the parish house at the time and he would not take underground shelter from the storm. Many barns in the immediate area were demolished and the woods on the north side of the cemetery almost leveled as the tornado dipped to the ground and lifted at various locations. The line of trees along the south side of the church driveway were also destroyed. The barn on the Simon Ketz farm was destroyed and the next day Fr. Karp brought Bishop Dionysius to the scene to offer a blessing.

Fr. Karp and his family left this parish for a time during his tenure and went to serve a parish in Rockford, Illinois, returning after about a year's absence.

In November, 1959, Fr. Karp transferred to St. Mary's in Minneapolis and served there until his untimely death on Sunday, July 11, 1976.

We were again without a priest for a few months until the spring of 1960 when Fr. Leonid Soroka transferred here from Minneapolis. His family did not come.

Fr. Soroka was very talented musically and during his short stay of two years, he re-organized the church choir. Members met at the parish house weekly and learned all the various hymns in English. Remodeling of the church basement for Sunday School classes was carried out at this time.

Fr. Soroka held Russian school classes once a week at the church to try to teach the young people the language. He also continued the wonderful Christmas program. He didn't use a gas or electric stove, only wood because he liked it better. Every fall the men of the parish would spend a whole day making wood for the church and parish house until the installation of the oil burning furnaces about this time.

Fr. Soroka left our parish in 1962 after Easter and transferred to Detroit, Michigan. He was planning to return when serious illness struck and he passed away on October 13, 1962.

The next priest to arrive to serve our parish was Fr. Peter Haskell in 1963 with his wife, Peggy, and son, Steve. Later that fall, a daughter, Alexandra, was born.

Fr. Haskell was deeply concerned about the spiritual life of the parish and it was during his stay that members returned to more frequent participation in the Sacraments. He also began what was known as "Bible Camp" for all school age children for 2 weeks during the summer which has been continued. After a stay of about 2½ years, Fr. Haskell left to become a chaplain in the U.S. Navy.



After a few short months, Fr. Michael Hurley arrived from Oklahoma in June 1966 with his wife Terry and 3 small sons. Some redecorating of the parish house was done at this time by the Mothers Club.

A story is remembered about Fr. Hurley during a winter rain storm. He had stopped at Reeve to get some eggs and was going on to Ellen Godfrey's house in Clear Lake to do some cooking with Paul (Fr. loved to cook - and eat!) On Highway A, west of Reeve, he spun around on the ice, went through the ditch, the barbed wire fence, and landed in the field. Fr. Hurley ended up in the back seat of the car and the dozen eggs remained unbroken.

It was during Fr. Hurley's time that the church calendar was changed from old to new and the church feasts are celebrated according to the new calendar.

Fr. Hurley left here in 1968. Cancer surgery before he left did not halt the disease and a few months later he passed away in the prime of his life.

About this time, water works, bathrooms and plumbing were installed in the church basement. The Mothers Club also bought carpeting for the church and had it installed in time for Easter 1969 when Fr. Anastasy Tsonis arrived with his wife Dorothy and two children, Andrew and Maria. He soon became a familiar figure of the Orthodox community and the surrounding area. Everyone came to know his quick, hearty laughter and jovial nature. Like Fr. Hurley, he also loved to cook. For a time while serving as priest here, he was a chef at the Holiday Inn in Minneapolis. During his stay, an addition was built onto the south side of the church with a kitchen and combination church school and parish hall.

In October, 1972, Dr. N. S. Dzubay was ordained a Deacon by Archbishop John at a special service at St. Mary's Church in Minneapolis.

Fr. Tsonis left our parish in October 1974 and went to Mt. Prospect, Illinois. Fr. Dimitri Cozby of Mt. Prospect transferred here with his wife, Sue and baby John. Another child, Chrysa, was born in 1976.

Fr. Cozby is carrying on most of the traditions begun by earlier priests, one of which is holding weekly discussion classes in the homes of parishioners, mostly through the winter months. He also publishes a weekly church bulletin which was begun by Fr. Hurley. Another of the old traditions is serving the church in Cornucopia once a month. Fr. Cozby also instituted council meetings on a regular basis.

Fr. Jerome Newville returned to the community that he had left for many years as a non-Orthodox while Fr. Tsonis was here. He returned as a convert to the Orthodox faith to live as a Priestmonk. He was parish priest for a month between Fr. Tsonis and Fr. Cozby. He celebrates the Liturgy when Fr. Cozby is in Cornucopia or on vacation and assists him regularly. He has taught vacation church school in summer. He is with the Roumanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate.

The 75th Anniversary of the church was celebrated throughout the year of 1977. A church history book is being published. Each family made a 12 inch square and these were all sewed together for a large wall hanging which hangs in the church basement for all to see. A Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Archbishop John and visiting priest, Fr. A. Tsonis in addition to Fr. Cozby, Fr. Jerome and Deacon Dzubay. Later a dinner was enjoyed by members and former members in the parish hall, and a tree was planted on the Church grounds in memory of the parish's departed priests and members.



GLORY TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS!