



A brief history of  
ST VOLODYMYR  
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Over a thousand years ago our ancestors in Ukraine-Rus embraced the Orthodox Christian Faith. Even before accepting Christianity under Volodymyr the Great, an Orthodox Church honoring St. Basil was built in the capital of Kyiv during the time of Princess Ol'ha.

In the course of her thousand-year history, Ukraine has had many glorious and magnificent moments of national sovereignty; she was tested and defended herself. Many of the enemies of our God-fearing Nation have vanished. Today she faces new challenges to her sovereignty but Ukraine lives and will live.

Although we are separated from Ukraine by thousands of miles and oceans, neither our glorious pioneer forefathers, nor we, nor our descendants forgot or will ever forget that beloved Mother country. And, this was not forgotten by the immigrants who came from the various parts of Ukraine and who lived in Pittsburgh in the 1920-1930's. St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Orthodox Church in South Side Pittsburgh, was organized in 1926 by a group of enlightened Ukrainians. Before we had our own Church, services were held in various rented halls.

In October, 1926, the Church Committee, was able to obtain property in a section of Pittsburgh from an Episcopal congregation. It consisted of a quaint old church, a hall and a two-story building for a Parish House. Over two thousand dollars was donated by Parish members; others gave loans including the Ukrainian National Aid Association and the bank.

Our pioneers recognized and were very conscious of the need to perpetuate their Ukrainian culture and heritage so that the generations to come would not lose their Ukrainian identity. Therefore, they established a "Ridna Shkola" where the children of the Parish were taught the Ukrainian language, religion, the history of Ukraine, and Ukrainian dancing. They also founded a marvelous choir. During the Depression of the Thirties, the Parish suffered many hardships. Our Church was so hard-pressed in 1936, that the Hall was sold to save the Church building and Parish house from public sale. At the most critical time in our history, the Parish was saved with the help of church benefactors. With the future of the Parish assured, the exterior and interior of the Church was renovated.

In 1946, loans were gathered from the Parishioners and the Parish was able to buy back the Hall which had been sold during the Depression. In 1942, the Church was able to buy five acres for a cemetery. It was consecrated in 1943. During this time, many active organizations existed as part of the Parish: the Sisterhood of St. Ol'ha, the Church Choir, the Sunday School, "Ridna Shkola," a youth club, and Branch 158 of the UNAA (Petro Mohila Branch). Some of these exist to date.

In 1958, the Parish took out a mortgage of \$60,000 from the Ukrainian National Aid Association to build a new Church Hall.

In 1959, faced with this seemingly insurmountable mortgage and no finances to make payments, the Church Committee organized the Pierogi Committee, under St. Ol'ha's Sisterhood. It was through the hard work and efforts of the Sisterhood in making and selling pierogies that a debt of nearly \$75,000 was repaid. During this time, they also had the roads constructed and the fence installed at the cemetery. In addition, they paved all of the sidewalks surrounding the church hall and rectory.

In 1976 the Sisterhood, through Pierogi sales donated considerable amounts for the improvement of Parish facilities. renovation of the interior of the Church; renewal of the floor and protective storm windows in the Church. In 1974, the repair and remodeling of the Parish home was accomplished.

We have always had a church choir. Customarily, the choir sang the Divine Liturgy; occasionally they gave Christmas Carols and Shchedrivsky Concerts; from time-to-time performed for various holidays, and performed on weekly radio programs on stations KDKA and WWSW.

A deep faith in the Almighty and sincere prayers of our Orthodox people have brought about numerous miracles in the continued history of St. Volodymyr Church in Pittsburgh. For example, more than fifty young men served in the Armed Forces during World War II -- all returned home safely. After World War II, the good Lord blessed our Parish further by enabling us to help our Ukrainian brothers and sisters; our Church social hall overflowed with Ukrainian refugees and 1949, immigrants, who had escaped the tyranny of Red Communism.

Our Church is very proud that the first American born Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America was born here, christened and nurtured in this parish. He was Rev. Theodore Buggan (tonsured with the monastic name "Constantine") and was elected the Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA in 1993 and served until 2012.