

## St. Aidan Orthodox Church

201 – 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South - 1950



The St. Aidan Orthodox Church is valued by its community as an excellent example of a vernacular “Lemko” style of Church architecture, as a sacred place of Eastern Christian worship and communal life, as well as for its significance as a well-known Cranbrook landmark

Built between 1950 and 1953 by local architect/builder George Nakahara and his son Yosh, St. Aidan Orthodox Church is a fine regional example of the popular Ukrainian Lemko style churches built by the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox communities throughout North America between 1900 and 1960. Typified by a long, tripartite floorplan and one or more cupolas, with the tallest being most commonly set over the narthex. In many circumstances, one cupola would be erected first in this position, and commonly used as a belfry, with additional cupolas added over the nave and altar/sanctuary, as parish communities could afford. With its characteristic metal dome and design, St. Aidan’s exemplifies the principles of Church design favoured by Lemko pioneers, both in their ancestral homeland, as well as across North America.

Originally consecrated as Nativity of the Blessed Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic Church, the Church served as a spiritual home and place of social inclusion for Eastern Christians, at times including more than one hundred families in the Cranbrook area. With their own liturgical

traditions, the Church served not only as a sacred place for worship and essential rites of passage – Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals – but also convivial aspects of Church life, such as monthly perogy suppers, the annual processions around the Church, and the blessing of Paschal baskets at Easter. Stained glass windows in the Church honour the memories of these Ukrainian pioneers.

More recently, the parish of St. Aidan Orthodox Church has continued the legacy of Eastern Christian spiritual life and community within the same historic place, with many common liturgical traditions retained under the auspices of the Orthodox Church in America.

With its distinctive cupola, unique in the community for over 60 years, St. Aidan Orthodox is a well-known landmark in Cranbrook. Commonly used as a local directional-marker, the Church is familiar to many.