

A Brief History of Sts. Cyril and Methody Eastern Orthodox Church

The beginning of the church as a parish originated late in 1978 and early 1979 with a contingent of Macedonian-Bulgarian Orthodox worshippers. They turned to His Grace Bishop KYRILL, who on May 15, 1979, as Bishop of the Bulgarian Diocese of Toledo, Ohio, accepted the parish under the spiritual guidance of the Toledo Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America.

This church has the same name as the first Macedonian-Bulgarian Orthodox Church built in Granite City which was also the first Macedonian-Bulgarian Orthodox Church built in the United States. The present church was started and built by the offspring of many of the organizers of the original Sts. Cyril and Methody Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

The present day Sts. Cyril and Methody Eastern Orthodox Church situated at 4770 Maryville Road in Granite City, Illinois, held its official groundbreaking at this site on October 5, 1980. The day was shared by parishioners and friends and Mr. Philip



Morrison, who donated four acres of his farmland for the purpose of erecting a church,

Both before the groundbreaking and afterwards, Father Kiril Antonoff was with us serving as adviser and conducting liturgical services as often as possible.

Father Kyril, who served the Madison and Granite City community for many years as rector and supply priest to the Orthodox parishes in the area and especially to Sts. Cyril and Methody and the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Churches. Father Kyril, of Blessed Memory, departed from this life in 2013 will always be remembered for his service to the Church and his kindness and unending love to this parish.

Services during this early time were celebrated in an office at the Levee Board Building whenever priests were available. During April 1979, Father Joseph Miller conducted a full cycle of services for Holy Week and Pascha. On May 6, 1979, Father Daniel Gurovich celebrated the Divine Liturgy. He became the first parish priest and served through November 1980 in the second home which was in the Trattler Building. The third home was the Granite City Army Depot Chapel where the liturgy was conducted each Sunday by Father Michael Margitich, the Orthodox Chaplain attached to Scott Air Base in Belleville, Illinois.

On Palm Sunday 1981, the first Divine Liturgy was conducted by Father Margitich in the yet to be completed interior of Sts. Cyril and Methody Eastern Orthodox Church.

There were many first events in the new church. The first wedding ceremony was celebrated by Bishop KYRILL on June 21, 1981. The first priest of the new church building was Father Steven Kostoff, assigned to the parish from July 1981 to September 1985. Father George Hretz served as priest from October 1985 to August 1986. From September 1986 to August 1987, parishioners conducted Reader Services one Sunday while the Divine Liturgy was conducted by a visiting priest on the alternate Sunday. Visiting priests included Father Bogdan Djurdjilov from Chicago and Father Thomas Succarotte from the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Eastern Orthodox Church in Madison, Illinois. Father Andrew Moulton became the church priest in August 1987 and continues as spiritual leader of the church.

The church has grown during these years in many ways. The Sisterhood, which has many activities to raise funds for the Church such as making baked goods for sale to parishioners and at local festivals and sponsors a retreat during Lent.

Church parishioners also serve as Epitropes which includes taking care of candles and counting all church monies at every church service, serving as ushers, and greeting people as they enter the church.

The Church School encompasses several different age groups: pre-school, elementary, junior high, high school, and adult study. These groups meet prior to Sunday Morning Liturgy Services.

Prayer Group meets the last Saturday of the month after Vespers. The monthly meeting includes a review of those prayed for good health, anniversaries, birthdays, passages and a study of religious books.

Bible Study for parishioners and the public follows Vespers on Wednesday evenings.

The Youth Group includes junior high, senior high, and university students. The group participates in community ministry and service to spread the Orthodox Faith throughout the community. Examples of activities are a baby shower benefit for the Phoenix Crisis Center, a women and children shelter house, a letter writing campaign for troops overseas, a yearly ice cream social to benefit the OCA Christmas Stocking Project, and a yearly Adopt-a-School project which donates school supplies throughout the year and a Giving Tree Gift Campaign at Christmas. Members also prepared breakfast and served it to residents of the McDonald House in St. Louis. A fundraiser includes selling desserts at the yearly Church Homecoming and Picnic. Another yearly event is the Sunday Night Christmas Movie night with snacks.

Guided always by the Holy Spirit, the devoted parishioners of Sts. Cyril and Methody parish have generously given of their time, talent, and resources to make possible the building of our Temple and all that we have accomplished during these past thirty-eight years. We humbly pray that, by the grace of God, we and those who come after us will continue to build on the good foundation which has been laid.