

# Ukrainian Orthodox Church of St. George

Українська Православна Церква Св. Юрія

1100 Colville Road, Victoria, BC, V9A 4P7  
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**NEWSLETTER**

**February 2012 - March 2012**

## Pastoral Message

### **Христос посеред нас!      Christ is amongst us!**

I want to talk a little about Orthodox saints in this month's article because I am often approached with questions about who our saints are and why they are so important. Orthodox saints can be found in many different cultures, areas, and times. The one thing that unites them all is that every saint achieves a lifestyle that is a reflection of Christ's teachings. What makes them so special is that while achieving this they remain unique individuals. Following Christ does not mean that we lose our free will, and the saints of our church understood this and gave themselves up freely.

#### Veneration of the Saints

Technically, we are all saints because we have entered into participation with the Eucharist being the Body and Blood of Christ, a life which is sanctified by Christ. Although today we no longer refer to everyone that way, we reserve that name for those who have been canonized by the Church. Different types of saints are:

- Hermitic Saints – those who fought passions and evil spirits in isolation where they meditated.
- Clergy Saints - those saints who were ordained deacon, priest, or bishop.
- Lay Saints - those who lived simple lives among the laity,
- Martyrs - the sufferers and martyrs of the Church who were persecuted and killed for professing their love and faith in Christ.

Icons play a very important part in remembering the importance of the saints and to remind us of the lives which they led. They show us that we are all part of the saintly community. The clergy cense them during most services to honour them, but also to show that the faithful alive today have also been called to a saintly life and to unite us with the saints in that love and faith in Christ.

For the Orthodox Church to function properly it needs to operate in unity within the people of the physical world, as well as unity between the physical world and the invisible world. This unity and oneness that we are called to is also displayed and portrayed within the Divine Liturgy where prayer rituals, Icons, man, and the angels unite harmoniously to worship God. During the *Proskomedie*, the priest begins by commemorating Christ, then the saints. He starts with a cube of *Prospophora* which is the LAMB, then a triangle of *Prospophora*, which is the Theotokos, is placed to the right of the

LAMB, and nine smaller triangles of *Prospora* in memory of the nine ranks of saints, those being: John the Baptist, the Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Teachers, Healers, and then all the saints known and unknown, respectively. Next he commemorates the living, then the dead. All of which are placed at the foot of the LAMB. We clearly see then that the words within our Liturgy “Your own, of Your own, we offer unto you on behalf of all and for all.” are the offering of the Eucharist is as well an offering of the church. The Church recognizes the importance of praying for those not just living but for those saints who have departed from this life, which is why it is so important to pray to saints.

Within the Divine Liturgy we see perfect examples of how this unity with the saints is experienced and how we participate together in the Eucharist. Orthodox Liturgies are timeless, in the sense that we believe that the celebrations that take place are not re-enactments, but they are representations. Whether it is the birth, baptism, death, burial, or resurrection of Christ, when we celebrate these events through the liturgy we are in that moment actually participating in whatever event is being commemorated. When we celebrate our liturgies, in the same way that they are timeless, we believe that in that same moment we are joined with the angels that are celebrating Divine Liturgies in heaven and that in that act we are all celebrating the same liturgy. Through the prayers in the Liturgy the whole church is remembered and all are present to celebrate it.

We can learn much from studying the lives of the various saints throughout history. From studying their lives, not only do we learn about the struggles of our Church and of the saints, but we can also gain insight into our own struggles and our own Christian life.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Peter Haugen

#### **Personal Message**

Please make a note on your calendars that following the 19<sup>th</sup> I will be doing house blessings during my regular office hours and into evenings. I will be contacting all the people on our contact lists after the Nativity feast to arrange times, however, if you have a preferred time that you would like me to visit and bless your home please call anytime. As well if you have not heard from me by the 20<sup>th</sup> and January and would like a house blessing please call my cell (250) 667-5293 to ensure a visit.

The Great Lenten schedule will be ready in time for next month’s newsletter. I am waiting for the arrival of our new child (which at the time of printing is unknown) before setting a concrete schedule. The reason for this delay is because the Executives have allowed me to take my final week of holidays for the year in early March to allow for the Baptism of our Child in Edmonton. I will be trying to coordinate this week with the Annual Clergy retreat to minimize time away from the parishes.

IPC Canada, a photography company, has approached our parishes and is willing to put together a parish directory at no cost (for their services - there will be a cost for the product). Many of the UOCC parishes have used this company and they make truly beautiful and comprehensive directories. What this would mean is that they would schedule members over the course of a weekend to take family or individual pictures

which would then be collected and placed in a Photo Directory. The proposal that Fr. Peter has made to both Executives is instead of having a parish directory, we join the two parishes and have a Parochial District directory. Please give this some thought to this over the next few weeks as this will be added as an agenda item at our next AGM.

If you need to contact me please either leave a message for me at St. George's (250-381-1352) or email me at pmthaugen@hotmail.com and I will respond on the next office day. However, if there is an emergency or a matter that needs to be discussed with urgency, I have my cell phone (1-250-667-5293) for this use.

If anyone you know is in the hospital, or is at home ill and would like a visitation from me, please contact me and I will make immediate arrangements to meet with them.

**Fr. Peter Haugen's Contact Information:**

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Cell- 250-667-5293  
Email- pmthaugen@hotmail.com

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**Message from the President**

Our February - March Newsletter comes to you just after our first taste of winter which unfortunately caused the postponing of our Blessing of the Water Service. I waited as long as I could before notifying people of the cancellation of this service on the evening of Wednesday, January 18th, in the hope that the weather and driving conditions would improve sufficiently for it to go ahead. Eventually, however, in consultation with Fr. Peter, the Executive decided to postpone the Blessing of the Water until after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, January 22nd, followed by the potluck lunch. Thank you to all the volunteers who worked so hard in preparing for the potluck lunch and all those who brought their food specialities to share with others. I am very sorry for any inconvenience the change of date may have caused you, but one cannot argue with the forces of nature.

The month of January was particularly memorable for a group of sixteen carollers who carolled on January 7th. It was a pleasure for our regular group of singers to be joined by two faculty members from the Music Department at the University of Victoria, a parishioner from St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, and six young women from Ukraine who are here on a Ukraine - Canada World Youth Program. We divided into two groups and each group was welcomed with great warmth and hospitality. An unforgettable experience for us all and a treasured memory for the Ukrainian youth to take home.

On Sunday, February 12, after lunch and Divine Liturgy we will have our Annual General Meeting (AGM), when our Long Range Plan will be presented. This will require a formal motion of acceptance from the parishioners present. The election of officers for 2012/13 will also take place (see under Upcoming Events). In his message below, **Martin Zip**, Chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee, gives you a more

detailed account of what to expect. I urge you to attend this very important meeting. We want to hear what you have to say, and if my appeal for your attendance is not persuasive enough, perhaps the promise of a baked turkey hot lunch, a gift from **Eikaterini Georgiades**, will be.

For my upcoming birthday, my husband surprised me with a trip to France to visit our son and family as well as family in England. I will therefore be away from February 20th to March 5th but you will remain in my thoughts and prayers.

Ludmilla Weaver

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### **Planning Committee Update**

In the last newsletter it was reported that there was a remarkable response to our Parish Survey. A total of 38 surveys were received and tabulated. This is very uplifting and better than average as far as surveys go. Encouraged by this response, the Planning Committee has used the Parish Survey results and formulated the following:

1. A Three Year Long Range Plan
2. October, 2011 Parish Survey Report

The Plan and Report will be available at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled for Sunday, February 12. The 2012-15 Long Range Plan will have a formal motion for acceptance as it commits the parish to a course of action. The report outlining the results of the parish survey will be presented as an information-only item followed by questions and discussion. The plan and report should make this year's AGM a very interesting one. Your attendance and input will be appreciated.

Given the results of the Parish Survey, the planning committee is recommending that over the next three years, St. George focus all resources on the following primary goals:

- To undertake an immediate program of educating members and adherents on the need for financial commitment to be launched by April, 2012.
- To increase the number of members who are active in the spiritual life of the parish and in social outreach over the next three years.

At the present time the Planning Committee is working on a brief PowerPoint presentation of the Long Range Plan for the AGM. The presentation will give an overview of the plan that is both concise and visual. Hopefully, this will be helpful in giving everyone a clear idea of where we want to go as a parish over the next three years. The Long Range Committee is looking forward to the AGM and your input.

Report submitted by **Martin Zip**, Chairman, Long Range Planning Committee.

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## Past Celebrations



**Group of 16 carollers (Gloria Zip missing from the picture) heading off to carol**

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## Monthly Financial Report for December

Collections.....	.\$ 1240.00	Candles.....	– 809.10
Donations.....	430.00	Lunch.....	34.00

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## Parish News

### Prayers for the sick

We extend our prayers for healing and spiritual strength to **Marion** and **Maxim**.

### Births

Congratulations to **Greg** and **Samantha Horonwitsch** on the birth of **Olivia Clara**, born 23 December 2011.

Congratulations to **Fr. Peter** and **Dobr. Erin Haugen** on the birth of **Finn William Thomas**, born 13 January 2012.



**Proud 'Tato' with Noah and Finn**

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## **Upcoming Events**

### **Looking Ahead - AGM**

Our **Annual General Meeting** will be held on **Sunday, February 12, 2012**, following the Divine Liturgy. In preparation for it, we extend a call for nominations to the Parish Council. If you wish to propose someone, or if you yourself would like to stand for any of the following positions (i) President (ii) Vice-President (iii) Secretary (iv) Treasurer (v) Building Maintenance (vi) Outreach (vii) Board of Directors (four positions), please do not hesitate to contact either **Betty Faryna** or **Pat Sembaliuk**.

Membership fees will be determined at the AGM and official tax-deductible receipts for 2011 will be issued for all donations in that year. If you are unable to attend, the receipts will be mailed to your last-known address in February.

### **Church Wall Calendars for 2012**

The church wall calendars are now available. They are in the same format as last year's and just as striking. They are a bargain at a price of \$5.00.

## Perogy Supper

Our Perogy Supper is on **Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>** from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Ukrainian Cultural Centre. We are looking for volunteers prior to the dinner as well as on the day itself. If you can help in any way, or if you know of somebody who is willing to help, please let **Marlyn Freibergs** know (250-656-5618).

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## A Story to Ponder after Christmas

### What to Do with Toilet Seat Gifts

An intriguing package under the Christmas tree teased me. Red and green wrapping paper. Obvious oval shape. My name on the gift tag. What was my creative husband up to now?

It was the year we were building a new house, so I began to suspect that the curiously wrapped package was an oval picture frame. I imagined opening the present and finding an oak frame encircling a photo of our family. I envisioned it hanging in the living room of our new home.

As our family sat around the twinkling tree taking turns opening presents, I grabbed the oval package, flashed a knowing smile at my husband, ripped off the Christmas paper and discovered ... a toilet seat!

My silence told my disappointment. Certainly a toilet seat was a necessary item for the new house, but I couldn't hang it in my living room, could I? It was made of oak, but wasn't designed to hold a family photo. Although the packaging announced it was a "deluxe model," a toilet seat was not my idea of a deluxe Christmas present.

My husband broke the silence with laughter at my confused face and said, "It's a *joke*."

I responded with an anemic, "Ha-ha." Then I mumbled, "Thanks," and we moved on to the next present.

Just as I didn't know how to react when I received that Christmas joke present, I often don't know how to respond when life sends me toilet-seat-gifts. When I receive something totally unexpected, something definitely not on my wish list, I want to ask God, "Are you kidding? Is this some kind of joke? Do you expect me to be thankful for this?"

Like everyone else, I've had experiences I wish God had edited out of my life: deaths of loved ones, challenging relationships, children with serious illnesses. One day when one of these toilet-seat-gifts dropped in my lap, I was reading ([1 Thessalonians 5](#)). The words there made me cringe, "Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus" (vs. 18).

I wanted to yell, "God, how can you expect me to thank you for this!" But then I noticed that Paul didn't instruct me to give thanks *for* all circumstances, he said, "Be thankful *in* all circumstances." Even when I couldn't bring myself to thank God *for* the hard times, I could be grateful for his love, his comfort, and his peace *in* those painful situations.

Toilet-seat-gifts come into my life more often than Christmas Eve. But now I'm trying to receive them with a different attitude. While my initial feelings still may be anything but gratefulness, I search for things I *can* thank God for. When experiencing a difficult relationship with someone I can't avoid, I thank God for the good friends I do have. When personal finances seem to be dwindling, I thank my Provider that he has always taken care of me. When an illness knocks me flat for a couple of days, I try to remember to be grateful for my overall good health.

When I received that original toilet seat gift, I wasn't too sure I liked it—even as a joke. But that gift led to a yearly tradition of Christmas joke presents and an annual abundance of laughter. My sarcastic "thanks" to my husband that Christmas has become a heartfelt expression of gratitude for adding so much hilarity to our lives.

And now when life gives me a toilet-seat-gift and I want to yell, "Are you kidding? Be grateful for this?" I try to remember to give thanks *in* all circumstances. This gratitude adds perspective to my life. Gratefulness changes my attitude from a "poor me" mindset to a "praise God" attitude. Thanksgiving in the tough times reminds me I have a God who understands my pain. Gratitude grows my trust in my heavenly Father's wisdom and providence. When toilet-seat-gifts appear in my life, heartfelt gratitude changes me.

An abridged copy of an article by Sharla Fritz, who is a freelance writer from Illinois.

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### Schedule of Services in Victoria for February and March

<b>Saturday</b>	<b>11 February</b>	<b>Great Vespers</b>	<b>4:00 pm</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>12 February</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>
		<b>AGM Meeting following lunch</b>	
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>25 February</b>	<b>Great Vespers</b>	<b>4:00 pm</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>26 February</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>
		<b>(Great Lent begins the following day)</b>	
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>10 March</b>	<b>Great Vespers</b>	<b>4:00 pm</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>11 March</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>
		<b>The two dates above to be confirmed</b>	
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>24 March</b>	<b>Great Vespers</b>	<b>4:00 pm</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>25 March</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>10:00 am</b>

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