

**ST. ANDREW'S
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX SOBOR PARISH**

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EDMONTON, ALBERTA
CANADA T6A 2Y8



Христос Народився! Славимо Його! Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!

Христос Хрещається! В Річці Йордані! Christ is baptized! In the river Jordan!

January 19, 2022

Dear Honorary Members, Members, and Associate Members,

On behalf of the Board of Management, I pray that you and your families experienced prayerful joy and celebrations of the birth of Jesus Christ and that you experience good health and prosperity in this new year! It is indeed a privilege to communicate this update of our parish.

His Grace Bishop Ilarion and Fr. Yuriy continue to pray for the safety and health of you and your families. It is asked that you pray for their health and safety, too.

COVID-19 and its variants remain in our community and can still make us sick. It is also reported that the omicron variant of COVID-19 is more transmittable than previous variants. Therefore, precautions continue to be necessary for all of us at St. Andrew's Sobor Parish.

We ask and strongly urge you – if you are feeling sick, have any of the symptoms of COVID-19, or have come in contact with a COVID-19 or a variant case (regardless of vaccination status), that you do not attend worship services or come to any other function at the parish.

You must follow the AB Government's isolation and quarantining protocols.

Furthermore, regardless if you have taken a rapid test at home and it shows you to not have COVID-19, we ask you to remain away from the parish. It is reported that the results of those tests can be wrong because of the nature of the test and that the procedures to implement a rapid test are specific – any individual who incorrectly performs those procedures can easily and inadvertently affect the test result.

With this communication we provide information regarding:

1. A change in the COVID-19 Protocol at St. Andrew's?
2. Congregational singing at St. Andrew's?
3. Reservations are still required to attend worship services
4. A call for volunteers to greet and usher worshippers
5. The Board of Management and the whole parish needs your help!
6. 2021 Year End Contribution Statement
7. St. Andrew's Sobor Parish Annual General Meeting 2022
8. February Worship Services other than Sunday Divine Liturgy services

A change in the COVID-19 Protocol at St. Andrew's?

As mentioned above, the COVID-19 variant omicron is reportedly more transmittable than previous variants of the virus. It is causing case numbers within Alberta to rise at rates unseen before in this pandemic. The restrictions regarding COVID-19 published by the Province of Alberta as they apply to places of worship have not changed all that much in this past little while.

Shortly, the Parish Reopening Plan will be updated and emailed to all members with email addresses and placed on the parish's webpage, but there will likely be minimal changes from what is published now. For those without email addresses and who do not have access to the internet and want a hardcopy of the Plan, please contact me using the contact information listed toward the end of this letter.

Congregational singing at St. Andrew's?

Congregational singing – especially during the Christmas, Malanka, and Theophany celebrations and our great tradition of singing carols and other songs, is it allowed? At one time the government of Alberta published words discouraging congregational singing because the exhaled breath could easily carry droplets containing COVID virus. Together with that discouragement were procedures disallowing continuous singing requiring 15 minute breaks for ventilation systems to circulate air. However, that written discouragement and procedure has since disappeared.

Regardless, because omicron is more transmittable, limiting the possibility of expelled virus is still of paramount concern. Therefore, in order to have an atmosphere as safe as it can be for all attending worshippers, congregational singing will remain as “strongly discouraged” in the parish's reopening plan.

Reservations are still required to attend worship services

Because all places of worship have reduced capacity as mandated by the Alberta government in their published restrictions, a reservation is necessary if you wish to ensure the opportunity to attend Sunday Divine Liturgy services.

Please contact Ernest Skakun (780-434-0543; BLUEMALVA@shaw.ca) no later than Thursday prior to the Sunday Divine Liturgy service you want to attend. By making a reservation, you ensure the best opportunity to attend the service. Without a reservation, a spot may not be available for you; so you really only hurt yourself without making the reservation.

A call for volunteers to greet and usher worshippers

If you are prepared to serve as a Greeter or an Usher for Sunday Divine Liturgy service, please contact Ernie Skakun at 780-434-0543 or email at BLUEMALVA@shaw.ca.

Since our last letter to the membership the roles of each of these positions has evolved a bit as we ourselves adapt to the ever changing environment of COVID.

The duty of the Greeter when an Usher is also present is simple – welcome worshippers to St. Andrew's. That's it. The Greeter is completing the same welcoming task that was practiced at

St. Andrew's prior to COVID. However, because of the pandemic, a Greeter cannot be alone without an Usher.

The duties of the Usher are a little more complex and are only necessary because of COVID. The Usher:

- Reminds attending worshippers to always wear a mask, and maintain physical distancing to a different cohort,
- Explains the present COVID protocol to those attending worshippers who have questions OR obtains the worshipper's contact information so a member of the Board can contact them
- And, assists worshippers in finding a seat in the nave during services with many worshippers.

Often, one experienced person can do both roles as most attending worshippers do so often and "know the routine."

If you are new to the Greeter and Usher role, do not fret! You will not be sent by yourself, rather you will be paired with someone with more experience to EASE your way into the role.

Please consider volunteering!

The Board of Management and the whole parish needs your help

This section of the letter is a repeat from the previous letter to the membership due to its extreme importance. Please consider volunteering!

At the Annual General Meeting, all positions on the Board of Management were not filled. And, most of this year's Board members have been on the Board for two terms. Consequently, the following issues exist:

1. Some activities within the parish are not being completed as thoroughly as they should, as some Board members are pulling "double duty" and completing their usual and additional duties. This is not healthy for the organization as perhaps some activities are not being completed and volunteer burnout can occur.
2. Decisions requiring broad debate by the Board may only see limited debate because the number of "opinions" is reduced with reduced Board size. And, perhaps some differing points of view are not brought forward and discussed. This is indirectly not healthy for the parish members as appropriate stewardship of the parish's assets could be eroded.
3. New Board members are not learning from experience. The existing procedures and items necessary to manage the parish are not being shown to less experienced Board members and new members are not learning from the mistakes that undoubtedly occur regardless of Board experience.

Without a full complement of Board members, the whole health of the Parish is not only directly and immediately affected, but the longevity of OUR parish is reduced.

Please talk to any of the existing Board members about volunteering to serve on the Board of Management. The parish will only benefit.

2021 Year End Contribution Statement

This letter is mailed with a receipt suitable for income tax purposes for those of you who have made a financial contribution in excess of \$20 to St. Andrew's Sobor Parish in 2021. Please read the short message from the Treasurer on that receipt.

Thank-you for your contribution.

St. Andrew's Sobor Parish Annual General Meeting 2022

The St. Andrew's Sobor Parish Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2022 will be held likely on March 20, 2022. This sentence is not your official notice of that meeting but gives you an indication of when it will likely occur. Due to the pandemic, it will likely be a virtual meeting using the TEAMS application – similar to last year.

Stay tuned for more details.

February worship services other than Sunday Divine Liturgy services

Notification of February worship services other than Sunday was not available in time for this letter as it was sent out. Once those additional services are known, an email containing that information will be sent to the membership, a hard copy pamphlets will be made available at the church for those who do not have email, and they will appear on the parish's webpage "Events" tab.

If you have any questions regarding this update or otherwise, please call me on my cell (780) 660-0789 or email me at president@uocc-standrew.ca.

Yours truly,

St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Sobor Parish Board of Management President

Michael Zukiwsky