



Saint Mary the Protectress Newsletter

February 2026 Volume 17 Issue 2

Find us on Facebook at:
"St. Mary's the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church"

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From the Pastor:

HOW TO PRAY... AND HOW NOT TO PRAY

JESUS LOVES TO TELL STORIES, which we call parables. He told them not to entertain, but to teach. One of the best known of these is the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, the Gospel lesson for this Sunday which designed to prepare us spiritually for the coming Great Fast.

The Gospel begins with the words: "**Two men went into the temple to pray...**" There are many reasons why people go to church on a Sunday morning. Some go to sing, to hear the sermon, to listen to the choir, to expose themselves and their children to moral and ethical teaching, some go out of habit. But these two men went to pray. Now, it's possible to pray anywhere, anytime; but the church is preeminently a play of prayer. This is so especially on the Lord's Day as the Lord's People gather for worship. Jesus Himself said: "**Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I amongst them...**"

It is instructive to compare the two prayers: the prayer of the Publican was brief, humble, saving; while the prayer of the Pharisee, if it could be called that, was long, proud, and not-saving. One felt a need for God, while the other felt no such need, being more than satisfied with himself.

In His introduction to the parable, Christ gave this reason for telling it: some people trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Then Jesus ended the story with this exhortation: "**For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.**"

God grant that we might pray with the humility and sincerity of the Publican: "**God, be merciful to me a sinner!**"

With love in Christ our Lord,
Father Roman

President's Message: Results of the Annual General Meeting

Today I am reporting to you on the results of our Annual General Meeting that was held at the church on January 24th. I would like to thank our membership for electing me as President of our Church Council for the coming year. The following individuals have been elected to serve on the Church Council this year:

Past President: Colleen Sokyrka, Vice-President: Debbie Provencher, Secretary: Adrienne Martel, Treasurer: Joy Lockhart, Property Manager: Caleb Gleadow, Director at Large: Volodymyr Antonets. I would like to thank all of them for agreeing to serve on the Council to support the governance and administration of our church. I look forward to working with them throughout the year. I would also like at this time to thank Vic Blasco for his many years of dedicated service as Property Manager since we acquired our church property in 2009.

It seems hard to believe, but on February 24th we will mark the fourth-year anniversary of Russia's genocidal invasion of Ukraine. We will gather again this year at the church on the evening of February 27th at 7:00pm and have a vigil service to honour those who have lost so much in this conflict and to pray for victory and peace in Ukraine. Please join us to mark this solemn occasion.

Slava Ukraini!

Fred MacDonald,
Parish President

St. Andrews College

The University of Manitoba in Winnipeg and The Orthodox Church of Canada are associated with St. Andrews College, where most of our priests receive their Theology training. Students attending a school in Winnipeg are encouraged to apply to St. Andrews College Residence for food and lodging. The residence is usually full in the summer so apply early if you are considering a summer stay.

St. Andrews offers full and part time study for priests and laity, full and part-time. Many courses are offered online since COVID so the course you choose might have that offering. The Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies at the U of M is associated with St. Andrews. Check the website for offerings. They have programs and information on YouTube as well. A program that has been very popular is their Reading Club on ZOOM and is open to the public.

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Submitted by Joy Lockhart



Scripture Readings

Saturday, February 14th

- [1 Thessalonians 4:13-17](#)
- [John 5:24-30](#)

Saturday, February 28th

- [2 Timothy 2:1-10](#)
- [John 15:17-16:2](#)

Children's Corner

Saint Zacchaeus



TREE
ATONE
COLLECTOR
CLIMBED
EXAMPLE
GROWTH
VIRTUES
SALVATION
TAX
REPENTANCE
SORROW
SPIRITUAL
RESTITUTION
SINS

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/7992622/>



February Birthdays

Adrienne	Feb 1st
Vasyl	Feb 9th
Luba	Feb 10th
Metropolitan Ilarion	Feb 14th
Ewan	Feb 20th
Marika	Feb 22nd
Let me know if you have been missed	

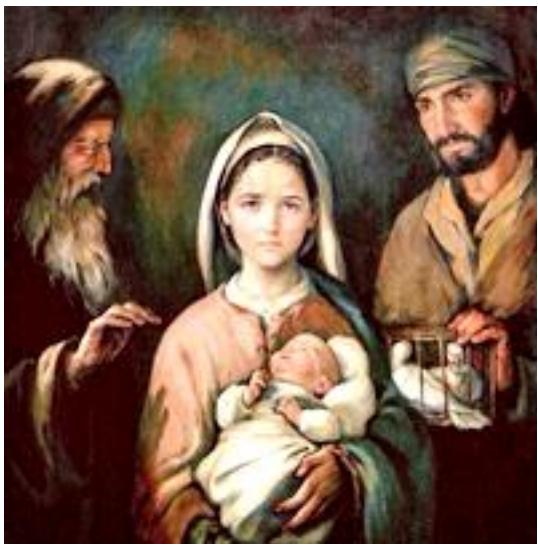
Find us on FACEBOOK

We have a Facebook page for St. Mary's. Please follow and like our page. New information is posted on that site as well as notices of online sessions, educational information and even humor!
Go to St. Mary the Protectress Parksville.



Income tax Receipts

Income Tax Receipts for 2024 are ready for you to pick up, at the next Church service.



February 2nd The Meeting of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ

When the ever-virgin Mary's forty days of purification were passed, according to the Law of Moses she took her son Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem, to dedicate him to God as her first-born son. At the temple the Lord's parents offered the sacrifice of a pair of doves (Luke 2:22-23), from which we learn that they were poor, since those who were able were required to offer a lamb. At the Temple, the Lord was met by Zacharias, father of St John the Baptist, and by the aged, righteous Simeon, who had awaited the salvation of God for many years. (Sts Simeon and Anna are commemorated tomorrow.) We are told that some

Pharisees, seeing the child Jesus recognized as the Messiah of Israel, were enraged, and went to tell King Herod. Realizing that this must be the child of whom he had been warned, Herod immediately sent soldiers to kill Him. But the righteous Joseph, warned in dream, fled with the child and his wife, the most holy Theotokos, into Egypt, and they were preserved.

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord was observed in Jerusalem at least from the fourth century. Its observance was brought to Constantinople by the Emperor Justinian in 542. In the West it is called the Feast of the Purification of the Mother of God, or Candlemas Day.

<http://www.abbamoses.com/months/Feb.ruary.html>

Allergy Alert



St Mary's church has a number of parishioners with peanut or nut allergies. These allergic reactions to peanuts and nuts can be produced by the mere smell and/or peanut/nut residue on the table, door knob or water taps by people who have eaten food with nuts and/or peanuts. An allergic reaction for a person with anaphylaxis can occur very quickly and be life threatening. Our church community needs to ensure the safety of all of its parishioners and provide the people with this severe allergy a safe environment. As such, people are to ensure that they do not bring any food item containing peanuts / nuts to church for lunches.

We greatly appreciate your co-operation.

Virtual and In-Person House Blessing

Father Roman will be doing house Blessings a bit differently. He has a proposed schedule of Virtual House Blessing and In Person House Blessing. Both of these opportunities are done by appointment only, through Debbie (250-729-6143). Please call to book your spot. First come first served

Debbie Provencher

NOTICES

February Services

Sat. Feb. 14th	at 10:00 am	Divine Liturgy
Fri. Feb. 27th	at 7:00 pm	Candlelight Vigil
Sat. Feb. 28th	at 10:00 am	Divine Liturgy

All Services will be conducted by Father Roman and are on Zoom.



Prayers for those in our Community

Dobr. Katherine
Uli
Iris
Vic



Michelle
Elain H
Simon

Things to think about

Each of us has been gifted by God and being part of our congregation gives all of us the opportunity to:

- live our faith;
- be part of helping the Church operate;
- share responsibilities and lighten the labour for others;
- demonstrate and teach our children and grandchildren the value of serving; and
- forge deeper and more meaningful relationships with our Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

please take time to call someone when you think of them -remember our congregation is here for all of us. Belonging and feeling included takes time, a personal commitment, financial support and taking responsibility to participate fully.



Candlelight Vigil

As we acknowledge the war in Ukraine this year, we will pray for the Children who have been abducted by Russian soldiers. Although my research has different numbers it seems the most accurate account is

19,546 children who have been abducted of which 1,026 who have been rescued Also, because of the cold winter and power restrictions our fundraising focuses this year is to buy a generator. We are working with Harvest Church who are filling a cargo container with cars and goods.

Candlelight Vigil

February 24th, 2022 marks the first day of the war against Ukraine started by Russia. In acknowledging this we will be hosting a candle light vigil on **Friday February 27th at 7:00pm** in our parking lot like we did last year. Father Roman will be here to officiate the occasion. Please come and say a prayer with us.



ПРОХАННЯ ПРО ЗАХИСТ УКРАЇНИ ПРОТИ АГРЕСІЙ

Ще молимось Господу Богу нашому, щоб вислухав голос моління нас, грішних, і охоронив Боголюбову матір нашу, Україну, та ввесь благочестивий народ її в час тяжких випробувань та помилував рабів Своїх, захисників держави України та її громадянинів, щоб зберіг їх від смертоносної рани і всякої хвороби душевної і тілесної, щоб охоронив від всякої скорботи, лиха, гніву і недолі та дав їм повернутися здоровими і щастивими, Всемилостивий Господи, вислухай і помилуй.

PETITION FOR UKRAINE'S PROTECTION AGAINST AGGRESSION

Again, we pray to the Lord, our God, to hear the voice of the prayer of us, sinners, and protect our God-loving ancestral homeland, Ukraine, and all her pious people during this time of severe trials, and have mercy upon your servants, the defenders of the Ukrainian state and her citizens. Preserve them from fatal wounds and any spiritual or physical infirmity, protect them from all sorrow, evil, wrath, and necessity, and grant them healthy and joyous returns, All-Merciful Lord, hear us and have mercy.

Canadians Killed During the Russian War on Ukraine

At least 22 Canadian citizens have been confirmed to have been killed during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Canada has the world's third-largest Ukrainian population behind Ukraine itself and Russia.[\[1\]](#)



List of fatalities

The following list contains 12 servicemen listed as killed among the Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as one aid worker who was part of the International Legion but was in a non-combat role:

Canadian nationals in the Armed Forces of Ukraine

Date of death	Name	Age	Location of death
July 23, 2022	Émile-Antoine Roy-Sirois	31	Siversk, Donetsk Oblast [2]
November 8, 2022	Joseph Hildebrand	33	Bakhmut, Donetsk Oblast [3]
January 16, 2023	Grygorii Tsekhmistrenko	28	Bakhmut, Donetsk Oblast [4]
April 26, 2023	Kyle Ronald Porter	27	Bakhmut, Donetsk Oblast [5]
April 26, 2023	Cole Zelenko	21	Bakhmut, Donetsk Oblast [6]
November 10, 2023	Joshua Mayers	34	Klishchiivka, Donetsk Oblast [7]
November 13, 2023	Austin Lathlin-Bercier	25	near Bakhmut, Donetsk Oblast [8] [9]
November 21, 2023	Brad Stratford	50	Avdiivka, Donetsk Oblast [9] [10]
February 27, 2024	Alain Derasp	50	Unknown [11] [12]
March 14, 2024	Jean-François Ratel	36	Unknown [13] [14]
June 10, 2024	Malick Wedrel Joseph	29	Unknown [15] [16]
June 10, 2024	Winton "Bud" Hardy	41	Unknown [17]
October 27, 2024	Mandeep Singh	27	Bryansk Oblast, Russia
May 24, 2025	Benjamin Aser	21	Undisclosed

Volunteers

Date of death	Name	Age	Location of death
September 10, 2023	Anthony 'Tonko' Ihnat	58	Bakhmut, Donetsk Oblast [18] [19]

An Outline of the Liturgy

1. Litany: Here we pray for the whole world. Who else do we pray for? (travelers, prisoners, leaders of our country, bishops, priests, deacons, rain and sun, food to eat, and we especially remember Mary the Theotokos) What do we respond? **Lord have mercy. Grant it, O Lord.**
2. Hymns of worship: 1st and 2nd antiphons, troparia and kontakia, Trisagion -- review the words. Sing the antiphons we use each Sunday.
3. Epistle and Gospel: Here we hear God's word from the Bible. The priest carries out the Gospel and tells us to pay attention to God's word.

4. Cherubic Hymn: God makes us His special guests, along with the seraphim and cherubim, His angels in heaven. The priest uses incense as he prays, reminding us that the prayers go up to God the same way the smoke rises. The priest carries the chalice and discos in the Great Entrance, while praying for us all.

5. Creed: We all recite the creed –by the Fathers of the Church in Nicaea under Constantine the Great.

6. Preparation for Communion: Commemorating the Last Supper. Here the priest prays for the bread and wine to become the true body and blood of Jesus-a great Mystery.

7. The Megalynarion: We honor Mary the Theotokos with a special hymn.

8. The Lord's Prayer: Jesus gave us this prayer himself.

9. Holy Communion: We receive the body and blood of Christ.

10. Benediction: The priest blesses us and dismisses us. We all venerate the Cross.



Photos

Thank You to Fr Taras Makowski and the Holy Trinity Church, Saskatoon, for donating vestments for our Altar Servers



Our Altar Servers with blue and gold vestments that do not fit



Blessing of Holy Water



Why do we Bless candles?

The Lord's Supper is a great holiday of the Orthodox Church, which is celebrated every year on the same day - February 2. Then Christians solemnly commemorate the bringing of the Infant Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem on the fortieth day after his birth.

...

In the prayer of consecration, the priest asks Christ the Savior to "consecrate the candles with the light of grace, so that as the light of the visible fire banishes the darkness of night, so that our hearts are enlightened by the invisible fire, that is, enlightened by the Holy Spirit." That we may be able to see with the purified eye of the soul what is pleasing to God and what is needed for our salvation. And to please us to overcome the dark dangers of this world and reach the light of unceasing... »



... "A candle burning in front of an icon is a sign of our faith and hope for gracious help God, who is always generously sent to all who turn to him in faith and prayer of the Lord and His saints. A lighted candle is a symbol of our ardent and grateful love for God."

As Saint Filaret (Drozdov) wrote: "candlelight means reverence for the holy icon and gives the convenience of seeing it in the dark." Of course, from this we can conclude that there are no more graceful or less graceful candles.

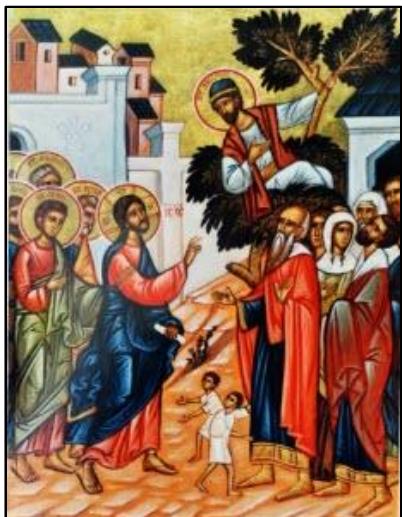
The day of the Lord's Supper - February 15 - is one of the biggest holidays of the Orthodox Church. On this day, not "winter meets spring" (as the church belief says) but remembers one of the key events in the history of the relationship between God and man: Jesus Christ, who was

brought to the Temple in Jerusalem on the 40th day after his birth, meets the righteous Simeon. In this event, the Church sees the meeting of two Testaments: the Old Testament, represented by Elder Simeon, is replaced by the New Testament, which will establish with people the incarnate Messiah-Christ.

On the day of the Lord's Supper, candles are traditionally consecrated in churches before the liturgy. This tradition originates from the ancient custom of making a procession on the day of Strytenia through the city with lighted lamps (like a procession). Then came the belief that these candles allegedly protected the home from "thunder", i.e. lightning damage. In fact, in the prayers for the blessing of the candles at the Meeting, a request is made to God that, just as lighted candles dispel the darkness of night with their own light, so our souls, are enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

Sunday of Zacchaeus

January 25th



The paschal season of the Church is preceded by the season of Great Lent, which is also preceded by its own liturgical preparation. The first sign of the approach of Great Lent comes five Sundays before its beginning. On this Sunday the Gospel reading is about Zacchaeus the tax-collector. It tells how Christ brought salvation to the sinful man, and how his life was changed simply because he “sought to see who Jesus was” (Luke 19:3). The desire and effort to see Jesus begins the entire movement through Lent towards Pascha. It is the first movement of salvation.

Our Lenten journey begins with a recognition of our own sinfulness, just as Zacchaeus recognized his. He promised to make restitution by giving half of his wealth to the poor, and by paying to those he had falsely accused, four times as much as they had lost. In this, he went beyond the requirements of the Law (Ex. 22:3-12).

The example of Zacchaeus teaches us that we should turn away from our sins and atone for them. The real proof of our sorrow and repentance is not just a verbal apology, but when we correct ourselves and try to make amends for the consequences of our evil actions.

We are also assured of God’s mercy and compassion by Christ’s words to Zacchaeus, “Today salvation has come to this house” (Luke 19:9). After the Great Doxology and Trisagion at Sunday Matins (when the Tone of the week is in Tone 1, 3, 5, or 7) we sing the Troparion of the Resurrection: “Today salvation is come to the world, let us sing praises to Him Who arose from the tomb, and is the Author of our life. For having destroyed death by death, He has given us the victory and great mercy.”

Zacchaeus was short, so he climbed a tree in order to see the Lord. All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). We are also short in our spiritual stature, therefore we must climb the ladder of the virtues. In other words, we must prepare for spiritual effort and growth.

Our new Council and attendees of the AGM

We had a very successful AGM on Saturday January 25, 2025. The following members of the our community have pledged to make decisions in the best interest of our congregation. Their voices are not the only ones, as members who attend our Divine Liturgy, you need to be members as well, so that your voice is also heard regarding important decisions in the operation of our Church. This includes managing and maintaining the building and the property and running the Church. So, it is important to have a voice. Please consider paying your membership. If you have any questions, please talk to Fred. The photo below includes individuals who attended the AGM and our new council. Cameos are of members of the new council who were not present at the time the photo was taken.

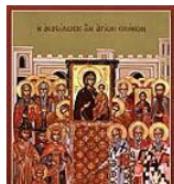
President	Fred MacDonald
Past President	Colleen Sokyrka
Vice President	Deborah Provencher
Secretary	Adrienne Martel
Treasurer/Bookkeeper	Joy Lockhart, Gordon Lockhart
Property Manager	Calab Gleadow
Director At Large	Volodymyr Antonets
Youth Member At Large	Adrian Antonets
Church Trustees	Michael Sokryka Debbie Provencher Fred MacDonald



The Sundays of the Great Lent are:

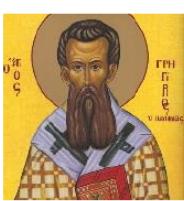
1. First Sunday (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

Mar 1



The First Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to the final triumph of the Church over the iconoclasts and the restoration of the Holy Icons to the churches, which took place on the First Sunday of Lent, March 11, 843.

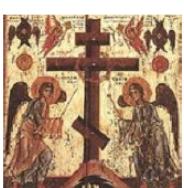
Mar 8



2. Second Sunday (St. Gregory Palamas)

The Second Sunday of Lent is the commemoration of Saint Gregory Palamas. It was Saint Gregory (d.1359) who bore living witness that men can become divine through the grace of God in the Holy Spirit; and that even in this life, by prayer and fasting, human beings can become participants of the uncreated light of God's divine glory. Also, the theme of this Sunday is that of the Prodigal Son as a model of repentance.

Mar 15



3. Third Sunday (Adoration of Cross)

The Third Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to the Cross and the bringing-out of the Precious Cross, which closely parallels the ceremonies of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross on Sept. 14. At this time, we are reminded of the upcoming crucifixion of the Lord and strengthened to persevere in our Lenten struggles.

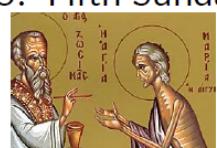
Mar 22



4. Fourth Sunday (St. John of Climacus of the Ladder)

The Fourth Sunday is dedicated to St. John Climacus (of The Ladder), Abbot of Sinai, who, because of his ascetical writing (The Ladder) serves as a model of a true Christian ascetic. St John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, according to the Lord, only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt 24.13).

Mar 29



5. Fifth Sunday (St. Mary of Egypt)

The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent is dedicated to St. Mary of Egypt. St. Mary was a harlot living in the Egyptian city of Alexandria who later repented and lived the rest of her life in solitude in the Egyptian desert, serving as a model of repentance to all Christians..

Apr 5



6. Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday

Immediately after the end of the forty days of penitence & before the days of darkness and mourning of Passion Week, the Holy Church celebrates the bright festivals of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. Lazarus Saturday commemorates the raising of Lazarus from the dead and serves as a reminder that Jesus is the Master of life and death and foreshadows the Lord's glorious Resurrection eight days later. Palm Sunday, of course, commemorates Our Lord's glorious entrance into Jerusalem. On this day Palm/pussy-willow branches are blessed and held by the faithful.

The Jesus Prayer explained



 **BASILICA.RO**



Lord

by calling Jesus Lord, we place
our lives in His hands

**'No one can say Jesus is Lord,
except by the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor 12:3)**

Jesus

means 'God is my Saviour'
the meaning of His name
encompasses His role as our Redeemer

Christ

means the Anointed One or Messiah in Hebrew
the name is mentioned by St Peter (Matt. 16:16-18)

Son of God

Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father (John 3:16)

have mercy on me a sinner

we invoke God's mercy to help us overcome our passions
to fulfill His will and, in the same time, to forgive us
for trespassing His commandments



**Four Years of Strength
Four Years of Resilience
Ukraine
fights against
full-scale aggression**

Stand with us

HARVEST CHURCH

(6553 Portsmouth Rd. Nanaimo)

21.02.2026 at 6 pm

Concert, Food, Exhibition