

# St. Mary's Newsletter

St Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Parish  
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## Divine Liturgies

Sundays: 8:30am English (spoken)

10:30am Ukrainian (sung)

Mon-Sat: 7:30am (Chapel)

Holy Days: 10:00am

Fr Joseph Pidskalny OSBM (Admin)

## The House of God (2)

The entrance into a church is almost always from the west. One door serves as a reminder that there is only one narrow gate that leads to God and His Kingdom. Baptism is essential for salvation. We enter the Kingdom not on our own terms, but on God's terms. "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which lead to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

An entrance with three doors points to the Mystery of the Holy Trinity. In Baptism, we enter and participate in the very life, the Divine Life of the Most Holy Trinity.

The church itself is almost always oriented towards the east. Christian prayer takes place towards the east, in expectation of Christ's return in glory at the end of this age. "For as lightning comes for the east and flashes to the west, so also will be coming of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:27). Traditionally, the East is a symbol of light, goodness and truth, because the sun rises in the east and the light dispels all darkness. The West is a symbol of darkness, evil and error, because the sun sets in the east, and darkness overcomes.



## The Three Trees

*a short story*



### The Three Trees

Once upon a hilltop, three young trees dreamed of what they would become when they grew tall and strong.

The first tree said, "I want to hold treasure. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world, carved with intricate designs and filled with gold."

The second tree said, "I want to be a mighty ship. I'll carry kings and queens across vast seas, and everyone will feel safe in my strength."

The third tree said, "I want to grow so tall, people look up to me and think of heaven. I want to be the tallest tree in the forest."

Years passed. One day, woodcutters came.

The first tree was made into a humble feed box for animals—placed in a stable. But it held the greatest treasure of all: a newborn child, laid in the manger.

The second tree became a small fishing boat—tired, creaky, nothing like it dreamed. But one night, a man calmed a raging storm while aboard. The tree knew it carried a king.

The third tree was chopped into beams and left forgotten—until it became the rugged cross where that same man was nailed. People now look to it and remember heaven.

**Sometimes our dreams are fulfilled in ways we never expected. And they may turn out far more meaningful than we ever imagined**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Ukrainian TV Network

Ukrainian Kontakt on OMNI TV:  
SUN 7:00 AM (new) SUN 9:00 pm  
TUE 9:00 am THUR 2:00 pm

Vopli Vidoplyassova (VV) Concert

**Wednesday July 2 7pm**

The Pearl Vancouver

Khatsahlano Street Party

**Saturday July 9 11-9pm**

West 4<sup>th</sup> -Burrard to Macdonald

Vancouver Craft Beer and Music

**Saturday July 12 12-9pm**

PNE Fairgrounds Vancouver

Oleksandr Usyk vs Daniel Dobs (boxing)

**Saturday July 19**

Wembley Stadium live stream

Perogy Party

**Wednesday July 23 6:30pm til late**

Belgard Kitchen Vancouver

A Garden of Ukrainian Stories

**Sunday Aug 3 12-8pm**

London Heritage Farm Richmond BC

Ukrainian Independence Day

**Sunday August 24**

Various locations

Ukrainian Day

**Sunday August 24 5-11:30pm**

Otter Trail Winery Langley BC

Ukrainian New West Fest

**Saturday September 22 10am-10pm**

Holy Eucharist Cathedral New West

Check with the venue for details or updates



## Zeleni Sviata, "Green Holidays"

According to the folk calendar, the first in a series of summer feasts and holidays is the Zeleni Sviata, or "Green Holidays," which were celebrated in May (edit: or June) during a period consisting of the last three days of the week before the Feast of the Trinity and the first three days of the following week.

The origins of the Zeleni Sviata date back to pagan times in Ukraine when our early ancestors worshipped trees and other images as their deities. The first written accounts of the festival appear in the Old Ukrainian chronicles and sermons from as early as the 11th century. The Zeleni Sviata are marked with the ancient rite of the worship of trees and flowers. According to custom, houses would be decorated with green branches and boughs of oak, linden, maple, and birch, called *klechannya* in Ukrainian. This would usually be done on the day before the festival or at dawn on the first day. In addition to the branches and boughs which would be placed around windows, doors and religious pictures, fragrant herbs and grasses would be scattered on the floor.

It was believed that during the Zeleni Sviata the spirits of deceased ancestors would come to the house and hide in the leaves and branches, and to fail to observe the tradition of decorating the house with greenery would be considered a sin. It was also a folk belief that during the Zeleni Sviata the spirits of

deceased ancestors would come out of the rivers and streams where they had stayed during the winter months. The spirits would then settle in the grain fields where they would remain for the summer. According to ancient tradition, the rye flowers, which would begin to bloom during the Zeleni Sviata, had the magical power to awaken the souls of deceased family members.

On the first day of the Zeleni Sviata, it was a custom for young women to hold a *skladka* — a joint dinner in an orchard or field with the young men of the village. After the meal, ritual songs would be sung and the women would braid wreaths from green branches and field grasses. It was also a custom for the young girls to go out into the fields and forests where they would braid special wreaths from *konvalia* (lily of the valley), *nezabudka* (forget-me-not), *vasyлька* (basil), *chebrets* (thyme), *polyn* (wormwood), and *romashka* (chamomile). These would be saved until after the Zeleni Sviata when the girls would return to the fields or forests with the wreaths in order to tell their fortunes as in this verse from a ritual summer song:

"Pusty mene, maty,  
 U hayu pohulyaty,  
 Do biloyi berezonky.  
 Pro shchastya spytyaty."  
 Let me go, mother.  
 To the grove.  
 To the white birch tree,  
 To foretell my fate.

Games and rituals of fortune-telling are a popular part of the traditions of the Zeleni Sviata. For example, at dusk on *Zelena Subota*, or "Green Saturday," an aspen sapling would be cut and brought into the house. If the leaves remained green and fresh until morning, it foretold the protection and well-being of the family until the following Zeleni Sviata. However, if the leaves blackened and dried overnight, it predicted a death in the family.

On Trinity Sunday similar rituals would be continued. Young girls would make special wreaths for their parents, brothers and sisters, or their betrothed which would be used in another fortune-telling ritual. In a separate ceremony, each of the wreaths would be taken to a river or stream and tossed into the water. If the wreath remained afloat, it foretold good luck; however, if the wreath sank or became unbraided, it would predict disaster. This ritual would be repeated for each of the wreaths made for the family members.

Trinity Sunday was also a day to remember deceased ancestors and prayers would be said at the graves of family members. In some regions of Ukraine (Volyn), a memorial dinner of seven ritual dishes would be held in honor of deceased ancestors. Though many of the rites and customs are now practised to a lesser extent, the Zeleni Sviata are still observed in contemporary times in Ukraine, and among Ukrainians — both Catholic and Orthodox - in the West.

Painting by Olesya Vakulenko From an article about the summer cycle of holidays published in the 1988 Ukrainian Weekly. written by Jeff Picknicki-Morski