

# 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 Nave (body of the church) symbolizes the body of believers. Here the people gather for worship. They are surrounded by icons on the walls of saints of past ages. This reminds us that we are one with all the believers of every age who make up the Body of Christ.

We gather in the center of the church facing east; the rising sun; which gave us the light of the world: the Son of God.

It is here, in the middle of the church, under the watchful eye of Christ Pantocrator, that the main sacramental things take place - here the Gospel is proclaimed, communion is given, the oath of fidelity in marriage is given, children are baptized, funeral services and other important rites are held.

In the nave we see icons of saints, prophets, apostles and martyrs. Here a person feels as if he is surrounded by God and many saints. Even if there are not many people in the church, it is still full. The anticipation of heaven is important because it gives us the energy to continue our daily spiritual journey.

In the nave, where we are mystically transformed into the Body of Christ, where we strengthen our strength for the spiritual journey, thanks to the icons, the community, the word of God and the Eucharist.



## Fr Bohdan's does the Hopak

At a Ukrainian Catholic Church on the prairies, Father Bohdan was more than a spiritual guide—he was a secret dancing legend. While known for heartfelt sermons, his true flair appeared at the annual “Faith and Fun” parish picnic.

One year, the sound system broke mid-performance. Rather than panic, Father Bohdan stood up, cracked a grin, and shouted, “Divine improvisation time!”

To the beat of clapping hands, he launched into a solo hopak, threw in a moonwalk, and somehow summoned a conga line. Babas waved embroidered scarves, kids twirled like dervishes, and even the usually stone-faced deacon smiled.

The liturgical grass party ended with Father Bohdan reciting a rhyming blessing that made the whole crowd chuckle and tear up. From then on, every picnic started with his sacred shuffle.

**His motto: “Faith should move the soul—and sometimes the feet.”**

## 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  
Ukrainian Food Sales

### Saturdays 10-2

Ivan Franko Society Richmond

Garden of Ukrainian History

### Sunday August 3 12-8pm

London Heritage Farm Richmond BC

Ukr. Independence Day Rally/Picnic

### Saturday August 23 1pm

Abbotsford BC - RiyVancouver/UCC

Ukrainian Independence Day

### Sunday August 24 5pm- late

Otter Trail Winery Langley BC

Ukrainian Independence Day Picnic

### Sunday August 24 1pm-5pm

Sunset Beach Vancouver UCCBC

Hromada Student Night Ukrainian Party

Friday September 12 10pm

Bar None Night Club Vancouver BC

Ukrainian Golf Tournament

### Sunday September 14

Ivan Franco Society Richmond

Malevich (Film)

### Wednesday September 17 6pm

Rio Theatre Vancouver

Ukrainian New West Fest

### Saturday September 27 12-8pm

Holy Eucharist Cathedral New West

Ukrainian Christmas Fair

### Saturday November 29 11-4pm

St Mary's Ukrainian Centre Vancouver

Check with the venue for details or updates

## Ivana Kupala: A Christian Reflection on an Ancient Rite

Originally rooted in ancient Slavic traditions, Kupalo Night (or Sobitka in some Ukrainian regions) was a midsummer celebration held on June 23rd—the eve of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist. It marked the summer solstice, a turning point when light began to wane and night grew longer. Over time, this deeply symbolic celebration was infused with Christian meaning and became known as Ivana Kupala.

Though once centered on honoring Kupalo, the pagan god of love and harvest, the festival gradually transformed into a Christian observance. Folk rituals—bathing in water for purification, dancing near sacred fires, and gathering healing herbs—took on new significance through the lens of Christian spiritual renewal.

Girls gathered dew from the eve to seek blessings for love and healing. Herbs believed to have protective powers were later brought to church to be blessed. Burning effigies and wreaths symbolized letting go of sin and inviting spiritual rebirth.

While the Church worked to redirect the celebration toward Christian values, Ivana Kupala remains a powerful example of faith embracing cultural heritage. The joy, unity, and symbolism of light overcoming darkness persist—not as a pagan echo, but as a call to renewal, healing, and divine grace.

