

St. Mary's Newsletter

St Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Parish
550 West 14th Ave Vancouver BC V5Z 1P6
www.stmarysbc.com 604-879-5830



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Newsletter email: orestbohdan@outlook.com editor: Orest Kernycky

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)

Penitential Seasons

Fasting is an important discipline in the Christian East. Major portions of the Liturgical cycle are taken up by periods of fasting. In the Byzantine tradition observed by Greek Catholics or Byzantine Catholics (and Orthodox Christians) there are four major penitential seasons, these are:

- A. Great Lent also known as the Great Fast (40 days)
 - B. The Apostles Fast also known as the Peter and Paul Fast. (from the Sunday after Pentecost to June 28)
 - C. The Nativity Fast (pre-Christmas) also known as (Pylypywka) (40 days from Nov. 15-Dec. 24)
 - D. The Dormition Fast (Aug 1-Aug 14)
- In addition to these periods of fasting Greek Catholics or Byzantine Catholics are to observe simple fasting on all Fridays throughout the year and strict fasting on the first day of the Great Fast and on Great Friday (Good Friday). The particular law of each jurisdiction is to be observed by the faithful regarding Fasting.
- For more see:

[Periods of Fast during the Liturgical Year | Saints Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church](#)

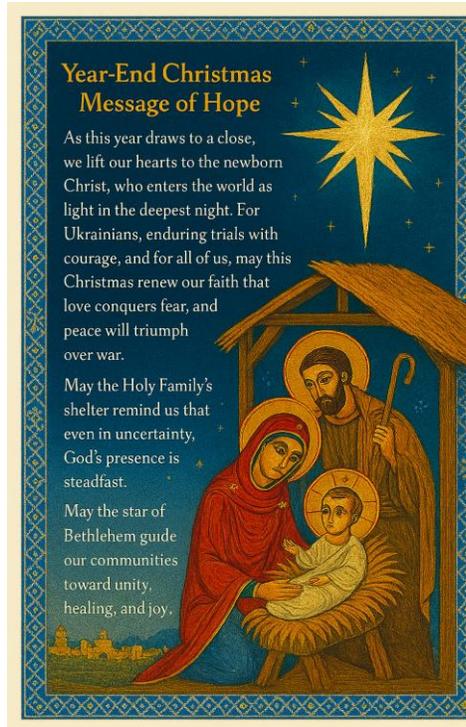


Year-End Christmas Message of Hope

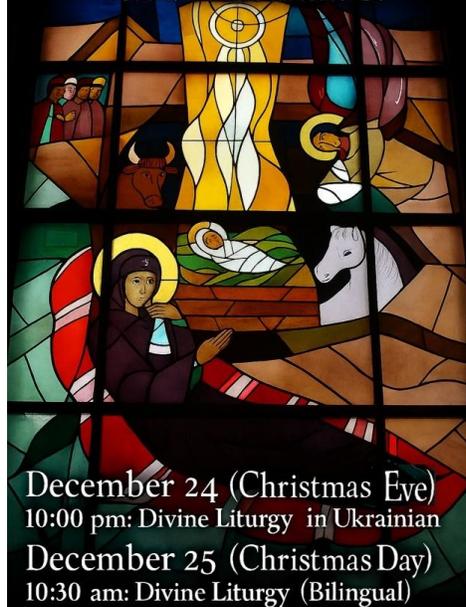
As this year draws to a close, we lift our hearts to the newborn Christ, who enters the world as light in the deepest night. For Ukrainians, enduring trials with courage, and for all of us, may this Christmas renew our faith that love conquers fear, and peace will triumph over war.

May the Holy Family's shelter remind us that even in uncertainty, God's presence is steadfast.

May the star of Bethlehem guide our communities toward unity, healing, and joy.



St Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church
550 W 14th Ave Vancouver BC



December 24 (Christmas Eve)
10:00 pm: Divine Liturgy in Ukrainian
December 25 (Christmas Day)
10:30 am: Divine Liturgy (Bilingual)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ukrainian TV Network

Ukrainian Kontakt on OMNI TV:

Okean Elzy- Stormwatch

Monday December 1 6-8pm

Rio Theatre Vancouver

U are the Universe -Ukrainian Film

Wednesday December 10 7-9pm

Alliance Francaise Vancouver Cinema

DakhaBrakha Music

Thursday December 11 7pm

The Pearl Vancouver BC

Carol of the Bells -Ukrainian Fundraiser

Friday December 12 8pm

The Annex - Vancouver

Ukrainian Winterfest

Saturday December 13 1-9pm

Holy Trinity Cathedral Vancouver

Ukrainian Christmas Market

Saturday December 20 1-5pm

Holy Eucharist Cathedral New West

Ukrainian Vibe Party

Saturday December 20 9pm

Gallery Night Club Vancouver

Ukrainian Christmas for Children

Sunday December 21 1-3pm

Ivan Franko Society Richmond BC

Christmas Eve Liturgy

December 24/25

Malanka

Various venues 2026

Check with the venue for details or updates

Ukrainian Christmas

With the start of December, the spirit of winter holidays usually fills Ukrainian cities, along with Christmas markets, festivals, decorations, and magic lights. Considering the ongoing Russia's war against Ukraine, though, many cities now opt out of the festive activities or tone them down.

Christmas Eve-(Holy Eve) is marked by traditional family gatherings in the evening of December 24 – the so-called Sviata Vecheria ('Holy Dinner'). The festivities start with the appearance of the first star, though all preparations traditionally start from the very dawn.

The table should be served with 12 dishes, which symbolize the twelve apostles. The main dish of the evening is Kutia (boiled wheat mixed with poppy seeds and honey).

Christmas symbols -The main house decoration that you'll see is the didukh (a sheaf of wheat stalks) that symbolizes our ancestors' spirits. It is believed that during these holy days – our ancestors return to spend time with their families. That is also why some Kutia and other dishes should be left on the table – as a treat for deceased relatives.

Celebrations - It all starts calmly and at home. However, street celebrations soon follow. Boys and girls prepare special songs and verses they take from house to house, entertaining their community in exchange for sweet gifts and tips. The more carolers come to the house, the more fortune and wealth will be brought to the family the following year, it is believed.

The morning of December 25 starts with people greeting each other with the phrase "Christ is Born!" and the response "Let us Praise Him!" On this day, people go to the church for Christmas prayer and come together within the family circle to visit relatives. Unlike Christmas Eve, Christmas guests are no longer restricted to fasting.

Vertep-Traditionally, children also prepare and perform so-called vertep performances. Vertep is a portable puppet theatre and drama which presents the nativity scene and other mystery plays. The essential attribute of the vertep is the Christmas star, which is considered a symbol of joy (as it bears the news of the birth of Jesus).

Ukrainian Christmas greeting -As mentioned above, "Christ is Born!" and "Let us Praise Him!" are the traditional Christmas greetings. To wish each other nice winter holidays, Ukrainians also say "Happy New Year and Christmas!", "Happy upcoming holidays!", or simply "Happy holidays!".

Ukrainian Christmas songs-Christmas songs are an integral part of the whole holiday season, too. In Ukraine, we have different types of Christmas songs – koliadky (comes from the word 'calendar', which starts with the birth of Christ) for Christmas and shchedrivky (comes from the Ukrainian word for generosity) for so-called Generous Evening on December 31. In some parts of Ukraine, shchedrivky are sung only on the Feast of Epiphany, the last holiday of the season.

You may think you don't know any Ukrainian Christmas songs. This could be true if you somehow aren't familiar with the world's most famous Christmas melody – "Carol of the Bells". Yes – it is, in fact, originally a Ukrainian carol called **Shchedryk** (composed by Mykola Leontovych at the beginning of the XX century, based on ancient Ukrainian folk songs).

Malanka-No holiday season would be complete without an appropriate carnival. Malanka, a traditional Ukrainian celebration .

