



St. Stephen Protomartyr Ukrainian Catholic Church

views from the pews

How it all began . . .

May 20, 2018

Founding Families ... Pat and John Siroishka



Imagine being a young parent with young children and wanting to educate them about their Ukrainian background but not being able to do so because of language barriers. That's how it was for young Pat and John Siroishka in the late 60's. They moved to Calgary from Saskatchewan in 1961. They had no family here and began attending the only Ukrainian church - the Assumption Parish. Unfortunately for them, everything at Assumption was in Ukrainian. Pat and John wanted to teach their children the Ukrainian religion, culture and customs in English so Pat strongly supported John when he and some other Assumption parishioners founded the new parish of St. Stephens.

A lot of fundraising was needed to build a new church and Pat and John were very involved. John was a major creator for many successful fundraising events including

Christmas tree sales, bingos and the "Pop Stomp". Pat quickly made friends with the other founding ladies and mothers. The ladies organized and participated in all the socials and fundraisers. Kitchen preparations for these events were themselves "social events" for the volunteers and they enjoyed sharing recipes and learning new cooking ideas from each other. Imagine the number of perogies that have been made over the past 50 years!!! Pat still recalls how Lesia Sachkiw was sometimes like their "Mother". Lesia had successful ways how to make things and her common saying was "if you're going to do something, do it right!" At these work bees, many Moms brought their young children and they loved that all the kids could hang out together. Many of these "young ones" are still great friends fifty years later!

Being a new parish created a very social time for the parishioners. Because many of them were new to Calgary, they had no family here so the parish became their family. They'd often go to each other's homes for lunch after Sunday Liturgy and hang out together and play lots of cards. Many remain close friends who love playing "Troika" together!

The new parish also needed a choir, so Pat and John joined and they have been members since the choir started. Choir members rarely sat with their children. When the first church hall was built, the choir was placed at the back of the hall and the children were put in the front seats during Liturgy, with the hope that the kids wouldn't fool around right in front of the priest. It worked (most of the time)!

St. Stephen's is still a major part of Pat and John's life and over the last fifty years they've been involved with almost every committee, fundraiser and social event, and they remain very active parishioners and great role models.

THANK YOU MOM AND DAD for helping create such a wonderful parish that has so many new generations attending, and that your family and so many, many others love!

Your loving children, Sheryl, Michael, Cathy, Joann and John.

Please continue to share these memories: Please contact: laurie.kindrachuk@shaw.ca Cell: 403-614-5581



Please join us for the entire 50th Anniversary weekend festivities:

Friday, June 1: **Ain't Your Baba's Zabava—Back to the 80's** - Join the young adults as they step into the 80's with their version of the good old fashioned Zabava! Checkout their Facebook Events page for details and tickets.

Saturday, June 2: **11:00 am - Divine Liturgy**

1:00 pm - Champagne Reception—a time to gather to reminisce with old friends and meet new ones as we give thanks and acknowledge our blessings while enjoying delicious food and refreshments.

Tickets available until Sunday, May 27th in the atrium after liturgies, the parish office 403-249-4818, Don Bobyn 403-830-3215, Andy Sakundiak 403-923-6344 or Ambrose Comchi 403-862-3269.

Sunday, June 3: **11:00 am - Trilingual Divine Liturgy-** St. Stephen's and St. Basil's join together for a single Divine Liturgy of the day celebrating in English, Ukrainian and Arabic.

12:30 pm - Farewell to Fr. Bo—St. Basil's will be providing a simple picnic style lunch after liturgy either inside or out, weather permitting, as we gather together in thanksgiving. Proceeds from the lunch will go to St. Basil's as a fundraiser.

We hope to see you all weekend long!

