

ST. STEPHEN PROTOMARTYR
UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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WEBSITE: WWW.PROTOMARTYR.CA

Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Dear Parishioners,

I am pleased to announce that our Parish is now open and currently operating under the guidelines of the Eparchy of Edmonton in accordance with the Province of Alberta stage 2 re-launch strategy for the COVID-19 pandemic. **The church re-opening is a great first step for our Parish and offers our Parishioners an opportunity to return to prayer in the church and receive the Most Holy Eucharist.**

In an effort to maintain the health and safety of those able to attend, there are conditions that must be kept. These conditions are intended to maximize the safety of all and minimize the risk of spreading the virus. Please read over the requirements as outlined on the Parish website and included with this letter. This changes the way we celebrate from how we remember pre-COVID-19 Liturgies.

I would like to encourage our Parishioners to be well prepared in advance of attending your first Stage Two Divine Liturgy. It will ensure that your expectations are clear in advance on what needs to be done to comply with Eparchial requirements. I would also urge all parishioners to be patient with those ushering and directing us in the church as they will be doing their best to keep us safe.

To attend or not to attend?

I would also like to be transparent in the expectations that have been set by our Eparchy for each parish. Providing a Divine Liturgy to our Faithful is a directive from Bishop David, to prompt Parishes to re-open at this stage in the Pandemic. However, nothing has changed on the dispensation he has granted all the Faithful from our weekly obligation to attend the Sunday Liturgy. Therefore, we are not committing a sin by not attending at this time. It is important to ensure that everyone can make the decision to attend or not according to what works best for each individual or family.

What do I have to do to attend?

First review the attached documents to ensure that you meet the health requirements for attending a Divine Liturgy. Alberta Health Services requires that a list of attendees is

kept for the purpose of tracking in case a fellow attendee tests positive for COVID-19. The information is kept in the Parish office and only shared with Alberta Health if necessary. Please note that each list will be destroyed after three weeks as it would no longer be relevant after that time.

I have the deepest respect for everyone's decision. I recognize that we are still living through a pandemic and appreciate everyone's efforts taken to maintain their personal safety and that of others as well. I am confident that God knows what each of us are discerning when it comes to knowing how to give him praise at such an unprecedented time in recent history.

What else will be different?

For now the only scheduled Sunday Divine Liturgy will be at 10:00 am. The Melkite Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 1:00 pm and we will need extra time to clean and sanitize the church after each Liturgy. Please keep an eye on the Parish website as additional weekday services will slowly be reintroduced.

The only entrance into the church is by the south (office) doors as the north doors will be used as exits only. Please leave the south parking lot for those with a handicap placard or for those who are "mobility challenged" (they will be the only ones allowed to exist through the south doors). Remember to maintain personal distancing (2 meters/6 feet).

When you enter the church you'll notice that only every third pew is open. If you are by yourself, or with your significant other, please choose a seat closest to the isle so another parishioner/couple can be seated on the opposite end. Households of three or more will get their own pew.

All service books and hymnals have been removed from the pews. Please bring your personal Liturgy book if you would like to follow along with the service. You can buy your own a Liturgy book through the office or follow the link on our website with your smartphone or tablet. Please remember not to leave anything behind when you exit.

Congregational singing is not allowed so you will be reminded to remain prayerfully silent during the service. We will be led by a cantor or a trio at most. Therefore, train yourselves to sing loudly in your soul – you won't be disappointed – God will appreciate it!

You will be ushered forward to receive Holy Communion. The Eucharist will be distributed at one station using individual spoons. All precautions will be followed to minimize the risk of transmission of the virus.

There will only be space for 60 persons in the church and an additional 60 persons in the hall. If you pre-register your attendance (on the Parish website, <https://www.saintstephencalgary.ca/> or by phoning the office at 403-249-4818) you will be guaranteed a seat. However, consider arriving early as seating will be first come first serve. You will be welcomed in if you do not register but only up to our maximum Sunday capacity (120 persons). If we are over that number you will be instructed how to register for the next week.

Ushers will dismiss us at the end of the Liturgy. Those seated in the church must exit out the choir loft doors. Those seated in the hall must exit out the hall doors. Those with mobility challenges only will be allowed exit out the south doors.

How long will we be doing this?

These changes to the Liturgy are temporary but to be forthright I cannot predict when things will return to normal. Please do not let these restrictions overshadow your experience of worship. Remember that we are giving glory to God, experiencing heaven and earth at the same time. If we focus on Jesus Christ we will not be distracted by the restrictions imposed.

What can I do to help?

Ushering, registering, and cleaning volunteers will be needed for all Divine Liturgies and we would appreciate any assistance that you are able to offer. If you are able to assist, please contact our Liturgical Director, Darrell Maleski by email at liturgical@protomartyr.ca or the office by phone 403-249-4818.

THANK YOU!

I would like to thank all our Parishioners for your willingness to be flexible during these most interesting days. Thank you to our volunteers and organizations who have helped to reach out to those in isolation. Thank you to members of Parish Pastoral Council who have been working hard together with Fr. Greg to make our reopening safe and prayerful. Thank you to all of you who continued to make donations while the church was closed and for your continued support.

I pray that everyone is doing as best as possible during these times. If you need assistance please do not hesitate to contact Fr. Greg or reach out to your fellow parishioners. I pray that everyone stays as safe and healthy as possible.

Take care, and God bless you all!

Glen Kulak
Parish Pastoral Council Chair,
St. Stephen Protomartyr Parish

Prevent the Spread of Coronavirus

You are not permitted to enter church if...

- You have returned from international travel in the past two weeks
- You have been close to someone infected with COVID-19
- Anyone in your household is quarantined or in isolation
- You have a dry cough, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath, or feel extremely tired
- You did not register previously for a public service or church service
- You do not provide contact information for emergency purposes

Please Practice Physical Distancing...

- Stay 2 meters (6.56 feet) away from others
- Avoid overcrowding common areas
- Follow advice of ushers in regards to maintaining social distancing
- Wash hands after touching communal surfaces
- No coffee socials or socializing after all public services
- Consider wearing PPE including non-medical masks and disposable gloves

You are legally required to self-isolate for:

- 14 days if you returned from international travel or are a close contact of a person with COVID-19
- 10 days if you have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat that is not related to a pre-existing condition

For More Information Visit...

The Alberta Government's website:

<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

The Eparchy of Edmonton's Website:

<http://eeparchy.com/>

Sunday Divine Liturgy

Province of Alberta COVID-19 Stage 2 Protocol

Please note that the Church is open for Sunday worship

Our new Liturgy time

10:00 am

Come early

9:30 am

Prayer of the Holy Rosary

Doors open at 9:00 am

- Online preregistration is recommended but not mandatory. Seating is limited to 60 persons in the church with an additional overflow of 60 persons in the parish hall (hall accessible starting June 21). First come first serve seating.
- Please come early. All must be signed in (*name & phone number will be required*). Be patient and follow the guidance of ushers
- Maintain personal distancing practices at all times (2m or 6'). **Masks must be worn if distancing is not possible**
- Please park in the north or east parking lots
- South parking lot is reserved for those with mobility challenges
- Entrance into the church will be through the SOUTH DOORS only