

A person with their arms raised in a field of tall grass, with a large rainbow arching over them. The scene is bathed in the warm light of a sunset or sunrise.

Views from the Pews

St. Stephen Protomartyr Ukrainian Catholic

CALGARY UKRAINIAN EVACUEE WELCOME COMMITTEE EDITION | AUGUST 2022

Calgary Ukrainian Evacuee Welcome Committee

On behalf of the Calgary Ukrainian Evacuee Welcome Committee (UCC-AB), we would like to tell you how much we appreciate St. Stephen's support for our work with Ukrainian evacuee newcomers.

Since the Russia – Ukraine war began in February 2022, the Committee's goal has been to engage local settlement agencies in their efforts to best support the unexpected influx of Ukrainian evacuees to Calgary. Our committee's goal is to make sure that Ukrainian evacuees receive the best possible assistance to aid with the successful transition into the Calgary community. Our eight-pillar strategy includes the main 'essential' focus areas, one of which is the acquisition of English language skills, without which obtaining even a survival job becomes impossible for newcomers.

In July and August 2022, your generous donation of \$ 11,500.00 has ensured the creation of eight English language classes and 8 teaching positions staffed by Ukrainian evacuee professionals. In fact, with your gift, we have been able to provide over 200 Ukrainian evacuees with access to intensive survival English classes, and an increased hope for securing employment and independence in their new lives.

Thank you! St. Stephen's has made a real difference in the lives of the evacuees we serve. We look forward to working with your organization on future initiatives, and welcome your continued presence at our Committee meetings. Please do not hesitate to reach out to either one of us directly.

Regards,

Yulia Gorbach
Committee Co-Chair

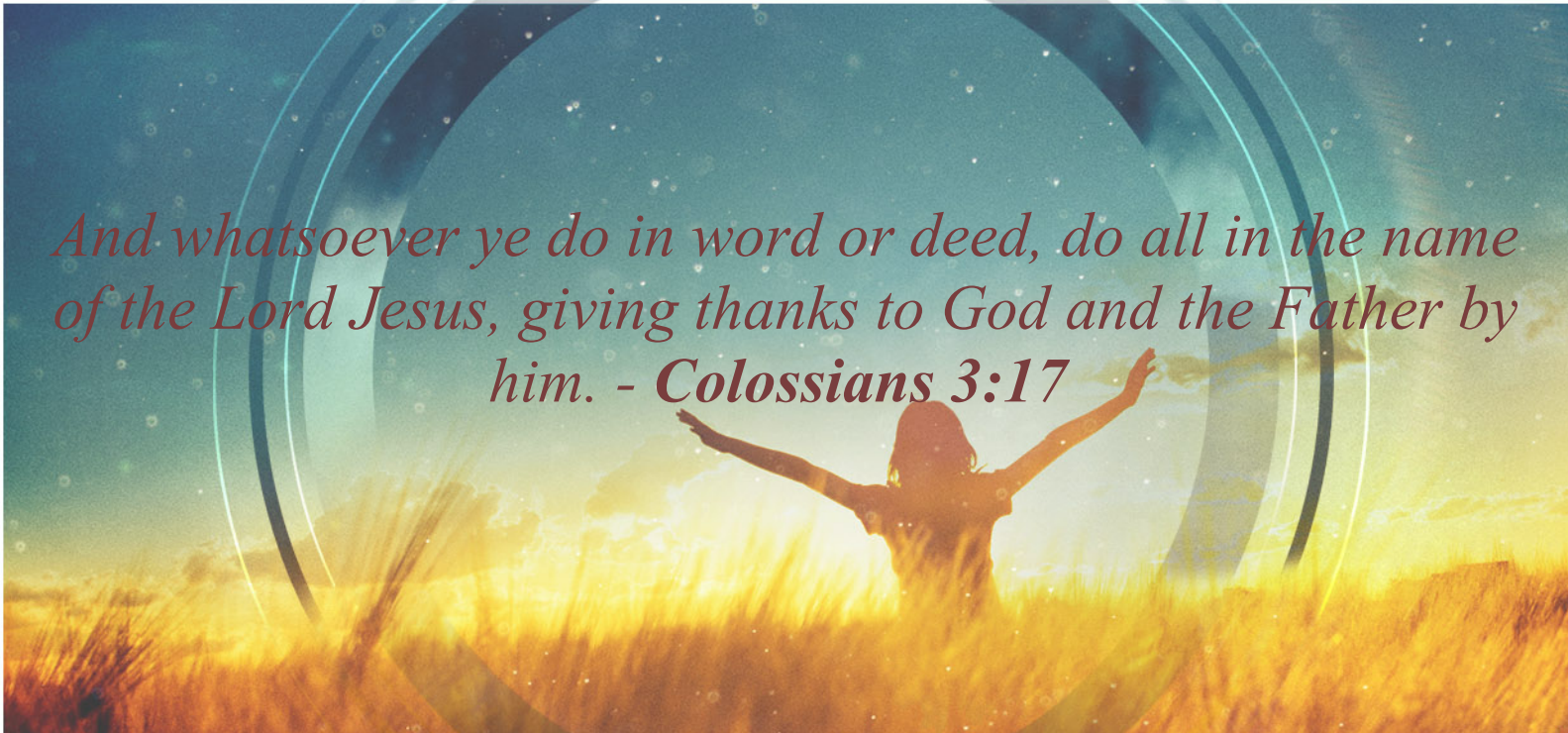
Christine Kuzyk
Committee Co-Chair

Survival English Student Testimonials (August 2022)

'Very strong courses, they helped me feel free to speak English, use new words, and communicate with people directly. If we were taught this way at school, everyone would know English.' - Kate Kotkiva

'Today I passed my Language Benchmark Test. The crash course helped me to get better results. Reading and Listening – 5; Speaking and Writing – 4' - Nataliia Shashnieva)

'In my opinion the course is excellent...I often use what we just learned in class, such as making an appointment with a doctor, looking for housing or finding a job.'
- Dimitry



And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. - Colossians 3:17

'I have a lot of useful information and documents that I now use in everyday life...This is a very big help in the adaptation of Ukrainians in Canada.'
- Alena Gladkaja

'I want to thank you for organizing this English language course. It was useful for me and increased my chances of finding a job.' - Ira M.

'My level of English has become better. It is also very helpful for newcomers as it gives an opportunity to get to know each other, which is very important when you are in a new country.' - Ruslana

About CUEWC and English Language

The St Stephen Ukraine Support Committee (USC) has aligned its work with the CUEWC.

The CUEWC is a Calgary-wide committee with representatives from all 3 Ukrainian churches, some non-Ukrainian churches, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) and other volunteers. Several parishioners from St Stephens are involved. The committee's goal has been to aid Settlement agencies in their efforts to best support an unexpected influx of Ukrainian evacuees to Calgary, so that this is done in an organized, integrated fashion across the Ukrainian community and city.

The CUEWC has several focus areas, including: Welcoming & Onboarding, Housing, Employment & Jobs, Education, Fundraising & Financial Support, Cultural & Social Integration, and Health. The main essential focus areas are English language skills, employment and housing. Simply put, to get permanent housing newcomers need a job. And to get a job, they need basic English.

LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers/Refugees) and CLARC (the language assessment needed for a LINC program placement) has been extended to CUAET visa holders at no cost. However, the system needed time to catch up to the numbers.

The waiting times are long and the wait lists are long. The CLARC assessment process is taking over one month from intake to placement. CLARC is short-staffed. There are not enough language assessors and the training is vigorous. Settlement agencies are receiving funding to increase classes and staffing, but again this takes time. LINC placement is also dependent on the student's needs (for example location, daycare) and ability to commit to classes. (80% attendance is mandatory). With extremely limited income support, newcomers need to prioritize employment over language classes – and without basic English, newcomers are not employable or are forced into minimum wage jobs on which basic needs (food, shelter) cannot be met.

To meet the tremendous demand and necessity for English, the CUEWC has worked to fill the gap and organize as many English classes as possible. These are not replacing federally funded LINC classes; there are no credentials or testing. This is survival English, offered in short time blocks, so that Ukrainian newcomers can secure jobs and attain a sustainable level of income. The CUEWC secured the teachers. Center For Newcomers provides classroom space in their old location at no charge. The funding is provided by St Stephens, the Rotary Club, and UCC. St Stephens pays the teachers.

