



# Views from the Pews

*St. Stephen Protomartyr Ukrainian Catholic Church*

SPECIAL EDITION |  
MAY 1, 2022

## UKRAINE SUPPORT COMMITTEE

*We are all aware of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Millions of Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homeland with nothing. The humanitarian needs driven by the conflict are immense and growing daily.*

St. Stephen's Parish has responded in several ways. In March, a food and clothing drive was held to send humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Over 250 boxes were collected, packed and sent first to Edmonton and then by plane to Lviv for further distribution.

At the parish AGM, the Ukraine Support Committee was established. The committee's objective is to lead St. Stephen's humanitarian support for Ukrainian nationals by providing a coordinated means for parishioners to volunteer their time, treasure and talent.

The committee has met several times and is currently focusing its efforts on two initiatives. Both initiatives are focused on helping those coming to Calgary. Additional projects may be added as events unfold.

Over 350 family units are expected to come to Calgary, most of whom are travelling under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET). Of those that have arrived to-date, 70% do not have relatives or close connections and 60% have no place to stay.

## PRAY FOR UKRAINE

**Mathew 5:9**  
*"Blessed are the  
peacemakers, for they  
shall be called the children  
of God"*

# MENTORSHIP

*The first initiative is to provide important social support to any Ukrainian nationals coming to Calgary who may turn to us for assistance.*

Social support, or mentorship, will be necessary for those, mainly women often with children, who find themselves in a strange country and culture having lost all their support mechanisms and incurred personal trauma. Husbands, fathers and extended family members may have been left behind.

Social support is a ministry of accompaniment. It can be someone to turn to for advice or just to have a contact to talk to. It may involve assisting with transportation to appointments, or grocery shopping. It may be just having a friend.

We look to develop a roster of volunteers who can help in this very important function. Ukrainian language skills may be helpful but are not essential and should not hinder participation.

**Please contact Alan Oryschak at [aoryschak@gmail.com](mailto:aoryschak@gmail.com) (or 403-242-5105) if interested in helping.**

# FINANCIAL SUPPORT

*The second initiative is a major fundraising project.*

We have recently established the **Ukraine Refugee Support Project (URSP)**. The purpose of the project is to support Ukrainian nationals coming to Calgary and Alberta. The needs will be great, including shelter, food, clothing, transportation, medical care, mental health care and opportunities to find reasonable work. We envision the URSP to be a multi-year project, with multiple fundraising events by any organizations in the parish.

To date we have received over \$110,000 in donations for the URSP. Future fundraising events include the parish dinner on May 15<sup>th</sup> and the Men's Dinner on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. We are also working with parishioners from Odyssey Towers on a potential event. We call on all organizations to help contribute with events, big or small. The fundraising committee will also be approaching businesses and others outside the parish.

**Please contact Ed Koshka at [edkoshka@yahoo.com](mailto:edkoshka@yahoo.com) (or 403-975-5244) if interested in helping.**

*With all initiatives we are working with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC Calgary), the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) and other parishes and agencies to prepare Calgary and Alberta to welcome Ukrainians into our homes and communities.*







# THANK YOU!

Thank you to all the volunteers and donors for their generous support of our Humanitarian Aid to Ukraine. In total St Stephen's, along with the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, packaged and shipped over 250 boxes of aid. Our prayers continue to support the people that remain in Ukraine fighting for their country.

Slava Ukraini!

