

Українська
Православна Церква
св. Юрія



ST. GEORGE
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH

8 Augusta Ave. St. Catharines, ON L2M 5R2

(905) 937-3636

www.uocofsaintgeorge.org

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I greet you with the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ!

We must remember, each day, and every moment of each day, that Christ has risen from the dead and ascended into Heaven for us and yet has not abandoned us in any way. He has gone to prepare a place for us, but is mystically present with us. We must cling to Him, knowing that as we do so, no one can be against us; no one can destroy the indestructible life of Christ that abides in us as we abide in Him. When we proclaim His Ascension, we proclaim the promise that He will raise us up above all evil and death and everything that drags us down in this world. We proclaim the promise that His love will triumph in the end. Christ is ascended! From earth to Heaven!

I send you this email today with good news, As of Friday June 11, 2021 the province of Ontario enters into Stage 1 of its reopening plan. What does this mean for all of us at St. George's? We are now allowed a maximum of 15% of our 'seating' capacity with distancing. Our doors once again are open for each and every one of you to join us for worship.

All the procedures and protocols which have been in place since July 2020 for in-person worship remain in place, mask wearing, hand sanitation, registration, etc are still in place. If you wish to refresh yourself with the procedures, the document is posted on the parish website. No persons will be asked nor required to reveal their vaccination status, nor will they be treated differently either for choosing to be vaccinated or to remain unvaccinated. All persons will continue to be treated with respect, care, and love as the parish continues to take slow, measured, and prudent steps forward.

These past 16 months have been a most trying time for all of us as we navigate ourselves and our community through the deadly pandemic of Covid-19. This time has put a great strain on all of us, physically, emotionally, financially and most importantly of all spiritually. This has been a time where we have been called to draw privately into contrite personal prayer; to grow our own personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Our faith has been tested repeatedly as we have been asked to celebrate many of the great feasts of the church at home away from our family in Christ at the church. It would appear that the end of this strife is slowly coming to a close. Infection rates are going down, death rates are going down. It is only through our efforts and sacrifices that this is happening. As things open up, we still need to be cautious, to stay safe and healthy.

As our province is reopening, people are called once again to come back to the Church for healing, I welcome all to come and commune with our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ through His sacrifice in the Eucharist.

Behaviourists say that habits (good or bad) are formed from repetition of an act or action. During this last provincial lockdown and more so the last year we have gone periods where we were unable to attend church for weeks on end. Now is the time to commit ourselves once again to making attending church a habit. Come and see for the Lord is good!

Many are still leery of coming to church, to be in larger gatherings at the Sunday Divine Liturgy. For those who still have hesitations, I encourage you to consider transitioning back to in-person worship by attending Saturday evening Vespers, or one of the various feastdays which fall during the middle of the week.

Some other important information of note:

- At the initiative of the Parish Executive from June 21st to September 7th services will be conducted according to a 'new' summer schedule. Sunday Divine Liturgy and Weekday Feastdays will begin at 9:00 a.m.
- During the duration of the 'summer schedule' Saturday Vespers will be suspended.
- I will be on vacation from July 18 – 26. If there are any pastoral emergencies I will still be available.
- While I am on vacation, Reader Services will be held on Sunday, July 18 and Sunday, July 25.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:6-7

If you have any questions, concerns or just want to say “hi” feel free to contact me.

With love in Christ,

Fr. Gregory