

2020 ANNUAL PASTORAL REPORT

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,
Glory to Jesus Christ!

Christ said to His disciples: “In the world, you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world!” (John 16:33)

With an incredible optimistic energy your beloved parish was hard at work, during last year, time when most of our people couldn't come to church.

From hundreds of emails, phone calls and texts we know that our people can't wait to get back to be assembled once again in our beautiful church for the Divine Services, so inspirationally sung by our great choir.

We would like to highlight the continued work of your parish, during 2020, when it seems that the whole world came to a halt, due to corona virus. WE HAVE NOT!

Most importantly, our liturgical services not only continued, they have increased! We have served Divine Services 7 days a week, “on behalf of all and for all” during Great Lent and Paschal seasons. We added healing services on weekdays (with “skeletal crew”), where we prayed for the health and well-being of all of our parishioners, loved ones and friends, with special prayers for protection from corona virus and healing, written by our Archbishop Michael.

Our catechetical and adult education, as well as our Bible Studies have continued, though not always in person, but by emails, videoconference and telephone, thanks to our Reader John Koch, and individually with Fr. Alexey. We're truly blessed and are appreciative of wonderful inspirational messages, especially during this difficult time.

As Reader John pointed out numerous times, this is a time for solidarity and self-sacrifice. These hard times will give us each an opportunity to grow and put into practice the way of life which Christ taught us to live, seeding the ground for the new life that accompanies His grace into the world. If we take these steps – staying connected to one another and staying committed to our Lord – then we will rejoice together when everyone will be back in our beloved church, once again.

Thanks to our parish council and volunteers, we have undertaken major renovation projects this past year.

The entire church was washed by professional contractors in preparation for repainting our beautiful temple.

Repainting of the whole church was professionally done by another General Contractors company, with experience in repainting churches. That project involved a lot of work on our part – unfastening and removing all the pews, removing all icons from walls, moving all analogions, tetrapod, icon shrines, altar table and table of oblation, not to mention smaller items throughout the church. Special thanks to Dick Sura, Mike Pylypciw and all the volunteers who helped during this tremendous undertaking.

This major renovation project was completed and church was put back in order. What an incredible difference! We thank all who helped and generously contributed to this major project and ask God's blessing on them. As we pray at the Divine Liturgy, in a prayer of Ambo: “Bless O Lord, those who love the beauty of Thy house!”

Upon completion of repainting of the church proper, and by the unanimous decision of our parish council, we have undertaken and completed repainting of our social hall. That also involved a lot of moving of tables and chairs, removing icons from the walls, and other items, such as bookstore and icon displays, as well as baking racks and machinery. We are truly grateful and blessed to have such great people in our parish family!

After repainting of the hall, the entire facility downstairs was scrubbed, washed and waxed. That included the hall, the kitchen, Sunday school classroom, stairs, landings, bathrooms, and common-use surfaces. Tables and chairs were reset in usual Paschal setting, and the entire facility was disinfected with high grade professional MPC A2Z disinfectant cleaner, as recommended by CDC.

The long overdue project of beautification and repairs in our Parish Cemetery was completed, as it was approved at our May council meeting, by unanimous vote. This included fixing and repairs of multiple monuments and tombstones, some of which were lopsided, some broken, and some fallen over. Some of those stones are from 1800's, and we know that it is our responsibility, as a parish family, to show our love to fathers and mothers, children and even grandchildren who fell asleep in the Lord, and to keep their resting place beautiful, sacred and consecrated by the prayers of the faithful.

Concurrently, as soon as our region of the State has moved to the next stage of reopening businesses, your parish council finalized the scope of the work and solicited several bids (minimum 3) for our next major project – replacement of our old and inefficient air-conditioning system, with new and energy efficient Mitsubishi System, that is whisper quiet and Eco-friendly, capable of cooling the square footage of the church proper. Because of the Emergency nature of this project, inability to hold special parish meeting due to county and state restrictions at the time, and because the cost of the entire project was generously donated by Dave and Bill Dranchak (around \$25,000.00), our Parish Council unanimously approved and authorized to begin and to complete this project.

In addition to air-conditioning, new system removes humidity and dust and dirt particles, soot and pollen, and makes air healthy to breathe. This project, in addition to making our air in the church healthier and temperatures comfortable, will also help to preserve the beauty and cleanliness of our newly repainted church, iconostas, shrines, mosaics, icons and other sacred articles, so generously and lovingly donated by our people.

While maintaining all of the Liturgical Services of our parish with limited attendance, we have redoubled our efforts in cleaning and disinfecting our Sacred Items, church, pews, hall, Sunday school classrooms, and all publicly used areas. All of those were continually cleaned and disinfected before and after all the services.

Thanks to our younger parishioners, we were able to get some palms and pussy willows and decorated our tetrapod in the middle of the church, for the Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Paschal, Bright Week and Christmas Services, coordinated by Paul Farbanish and our R Club. Those flowers were lovingly offered in memory of the departed members of our parish families, and for the health and healing of our loved ones. Great Job!

Our parish council and bake sale committee have carefully reviewed our Easter and Christmas Bake Sales and determined that it would not be feasible to conduct our bake sales as usual, while maintaining proper social distancing. After multiple (email) discussions, parish council (by formal vote) has decided to conduct our bake sales by “drive-through pick up” method. The entire process was redesigned and customers were instructed to pick up their baked goods orders, while remaining in their cars.

Our parking lot was reconfigured with red traffic cones and yellow “caution” tape, as well as large signs for entrance and exit, to ensure safety and smooth flow of cars. Names of customers (who remained in their cars) were taken, transmitted to our hall by 2-way radios, processed downstairs and taken up to the cars by “runners”, payments were received and recorded by designated (2) cashiers in the foyer by the elevator. Moneys were double counted and recorded at the end of the day, and were reconciled by computer entry following day, and deposited in the bank. Although, it was an entirely new process, that was developed in record time, it worked out excellently. Our thanks to all volunteers (especially young “runners”) who made these important events possible. Some deliveries to home bound and nursing home residents were made. Thank you to our drivers! Special thanks go to our president, vice – president and treasurer for tremendous efforts in planning, executing and inspiring our “drive-through” bake sales, and to all the volunteers who worked at the bake sessions!

We would like to note and share with all of you an incredible increase in the acts of kindness and generosity within our parish family, especially among younger adults and financially supporting members. In addition to communing our shut-ins, the younger generation of our parishioners and out-of-college students assisted our older (stay-at-home) parishioners and community members with grocery shopping and deliveries, and other help for those who are struggling in any way, during this crisis.

In addition, by the initiative of our youngsters and parishioners with craft talents, substantial number of face masks were produced, collected and donated to the local nursing homes for nurses, healthcare workers and first responders. This is truly a community outreach and faith in action!

An incredible logistics and liturgical support (on limited and rotating basis) were provided for the last year by our wonderful choir members, readers and altar servers, who made all the services offered to the glory of God to sound and look as beautiful and meaningful as in any great cathedral in the orthodox world, during this crisis.

We are profoundly grateful to our parishioners and friends for their generosity and continued financial commitment to our parish, as stewards of our church. An incredible amount of good works during these difficult times is only possible due to your continued and faithful generosity. It is my belief that we will come out of this crisis stronger and more united than ever before, as a Bride of Christ – His Holy Church!

Please know that your parish is praying for you and your loved ones daily in all the Divine Services. Please continue to pray for one another, support one another, and love one another. This pandemic too shall pass. Remember that the Lord is our refuge and protector. May our good God watch over us until we all can once again gather to sing His praises, side by side, as a reunited parish family.

I would like to thank for their selfless and sacrificial service Fr. Timm Holowatch, Fr. Nikolay Khalimonov, all of our Subdeacons, Readers and altar servers who enable us to expand our services and outreach ministries in our parish and beyond. Thank you and God bless you for your love and service to our people!

Thanks to our Sunday school coordinators, volunteer teachers and staff, as well as parents, for being responsible and active, and all parishioners that truly make our youth a priority in the church! May God bless you and reward you with manifold riches for your love for our kids, especially during pandemic!

Thanks to our choir who make all our services so beautiful, to our Sr. R Club chapter, whose involvement in the church life and outreach ministries is growing every year, to our maintenance committee under direction of Dick Sura and volunteers, that keep our church functional, clean and beautiful, to our Ladies Altar Society for their labors of love, to our hard workers of bake sales, dinners, and other fundraisers that throughout the year work with outstanding commitment and love, to all volunteers of our outreach ministries - God sees your love and giving - you will hear the promised words of our Lord: "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

And finally, I express our gratitude to our parish council and its outgoing president Subdeacon Michael Pylypsiw for their faithfulness, love, kindness, stewardship, and for enabling and facilitating proper Christian functioning of our parish on day-to-day basis, and for their labors of love during past and extremely challenging year, and to all of our beloved parishioners and friends for your generosity, faithfulness and support! May God grant you all Many Years!

Be assured of my prayer that the Lord will bless you, your families, and your loved ones with the light of His presence during this holy season and throughout the New Year.

With love in Christ,

Fr. Alexey