

Your Parish Hard At Work

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

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 is hard at work, during this time when most of our people can'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 Divine Services, so inspirationally sung by our great choir.

Once again, we want to update everyone on continued work of your parish, in the last several weeks, 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 continue, they have increased! We serve Divine Services 7 days a week, “on behalf of all and for all.” We added healing services on all weekdays (with “skeletal crew”), where we pray 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 are continuing, though not 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 season 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 a major renovation project – repainting the whole church. That involved a lot of work on our part – unfastening and removing all the pews, removing all icons from walls, moving all of 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 just 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.

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 are and will continue to be 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 and Holy Week Services.

Once again, we are grateful to our younger volunteers, who in spite of closures of all florists and flower shops, were able to locate, purchase and deliver to our church enough Easter flowers to decorate our beautiful Tomb and the Shroud of our Lord, for Great and Holy Friday. 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 bake sale and determined that it would not be feasible to conduct our bake sale as usual, while maintaining proper social distancing. After multiple (email) discussions, parish council (by formal vote) has decided to conduct our bake sale 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 this important event 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 sale!

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 crafts 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) was provided for the last four weeks 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 in this last day before the Pascha celebration 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.

If you have any needs where your parish family might be able to help ... or if, you may be able to offer assistance ... we ask you to share these and any prayer requests, for persons you know who are struggling in this present crisis, with Fr. Alexey or any parish council member.

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

With love in risen Christ,

Fr. Alexey