



NEWSLETTER

December 2025

UKRAINIAN WINTER CELEBRATIONS - STEEPED IN CULTURE AND TRADITION

Didukh - An Ancient Ukrainian Christmas Decoration

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Upcoming Events

Friday Night Suppers—Dine In and Take Out!

- February 20th
- March 20th
- April 17th
- May 15th
- June 19th

All suppers take place from
4:00-6:30 pm.

Saturday Sales

We continue to have Saturday Sales from 10:00 – 2:00 pm. Available for purchase: perogies (varenyky), cabbage rolls (holubsti), borscht, and Ukrainian sausage (kobassa). We will also have beets and horseradish relish (буряк і хрін) available in December. Stock up for the holiday season and for your Christmas Eve dinner / Вечеря напередодні Різдва.

Saturday, December 20th is the last day of sales before we close for the holidays. We will reopen again in the New Year on **Saturday, January 10th**.

Children's Christmas Party

On **Sunday, December 21st**, we are pleased to host a Children's Christmas Party from **1:00 pm to 3:00 pm**. Please contact Svitlana Maksymenko for more information and to **register at lana19031501@gmail.com or by telephone at: 778-288-2247**. Cost is \$15 per child.

Malanka 2026

Join us for a very special evening of celebration. We are pleased to host Malanka 2026 on **Saturday, January 10th**. For ticket information, call **604-274-4119** or email us at **info@ivanfranko.ca**.

A didukh is one of the most cherished symbols of a traditional Ukrainian Christmas, carrying the spirit of the ancestors and the blessings of the year's harvest into the home. Crafted from the first or last ceremonial sheaf of wheat, it is brought into the house on Christmas Eve with reverence as if welcoming a beloved forefather. Its very name—meaning “grandfather's spirit”—recalls the ancient belief that the souls of one's lineage gather with the family during the holy winter nights.



The golden wheat stalks are bound with care and often adorned with modest ribbons, fragrant herbs, or dried flowers, forming a sheaf that radiates warmth, fertility, and God's grace. The didukh is placed in the pokuttia, the honoured corner of the house near the icons where it stands throughout the Christmas season as a guardian of peace, harmony, and plenty. In older times, it connected the family to the rhythms of the land, giving thanks for the harvest and invoking prosperity for the year to come. Even today, the didukh remains a powerful emblem of Ukrainian heritage: a humble sheaf that binds past and present, reminding each generation of its roots, its faith, and the enduring strength of its traditions.

Ukrainian Decorations Today



In addition to traditional decorations, there are also many modern Ukrainian Christmas decorations that have become popular in recent years. These include ornaments, wreaths, and lights that incorporate traditional Ukrainian symbols and motifs, such as the trident and the Ukrainian flag.

Many of these decorations are designed to be used in conjunction with traditional decorations and can be used to add a modern twist to traditional Ukrainian Christmas celebrations. For example, a Christmas tree decorated with traditional Ukrainian ornaments can be used to create a festive atmosphere that combines old and new traditions.

Ukrainian Embroidered Balls, often used as Christmas ornaments, are part of a rich tradition of Ukrainian

folk art that includes intricate embroidery techniques. These decorative items reflect the cultural heritage of Ukraine, showcasing various regional styles and motifs that have been passed down through generations, particularly during festive celebrations. Each ornament tells a story, connecting the past with the present and celebrating the unique heritage of Ukraine.

Ukrainian Christmas embroidered balls are deeply rooted in the country's rich cultural heritage. These decorations are not just festive items; they symbolize the artistic traditions of Ukraine, particularly in embroidery. The practice of embroidery in Ukraine dates back to ancient times, with evidence of its use in clothing and ceremonial items as early as the 1st century AD.

Continued on page 2...

Ukrainian folk art. The vyshyvanka, a traditional embroidered shirt, has influenced the designs seen in Christmas ornaments. Many artisans today create these ornaments by hand, ensuring that traditional methods and designs are passed down through generations.



Malanka Traditions • Маланка • Щедрий Вечір

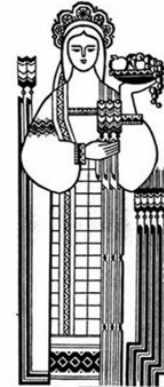
A week after Christmas Eve, Ukrainians celebrate “Malanka” or New Year’s Eve, a cheerful festival that includes delicious food, entertainment, merrymaking, caroling and fortune telling. Malanka is the name of a Ukrainian mythological figure dating back to Ukraine’s pre-Christian pagan days. Malanka is celebrated during the winter solstice cycle on a night called Щедрий Вечір “Shchedry Vechir” (Generous Eve). Traditionally, Malanka was represented as a maiden wreathed in blossoms and fruit and accompanied by her consort, Vasily.

At our Ivan Franko Society, Malanka will be celebrated on January 10th this year including many of the traditions of the Canadian New Year’s Eve celebrations. This event typically occurs a week after Christmas Eve

according to the Julian calendar on a Friday or Saturday closest to January 13 or 14. The event will begin with a delicious dinner including many Ukrainian dishes, entertainment by singers, musicians and dancers. Our evening will continue with a zabava featuring the Mike Sanyshyn Band playing a wide variety music including a коломийка “kolomeyka”. At midnight, the New Year will be brought in with singing, toasting with champagne and wishes of good health and prosperity. For more information and tickets, please email us at info@ivanfranko.ca or call us at 604 274-4119. We look forward to hosting you at this very special event.

Malanka 2026 Маланка Ukrainian New Year’s Celebration

Food, music, dancing and more!



Saturday, January 10, 2026
Ukrainian Community Centre of Ivan Franko
5311 Francis Road, Richmond
6pm – 12:30am

- ★ Doors and bar open at 6:00pm
- 👔 Semi-formal attire
- 🎵 Live Ukrainian music & traditional dance performances
- 🍽️ Deluxe buffet dinner
- 🎶 Dancing to a live band
- 🎁 Lots of door prizes, lots of fun!
- 🎫 Tickets for this limited seating event are \$100 per person (non-refundable) and must be purchased in advance:

By calling: 604-274-4119 or
Emailing:
info@ivanfranko.ca



Bring Light To Ukrainians This Holiday Season



As Canadians ready their homes for the holidays, surrounded by warmth and comfort, millions of Ukrainians are facing

their fourth winter under Russia’s full-scale invasion. Cold and darkness have become deliberate tools in a campaign to break Ukraine’s resilience. Systematic attacks are destroying the country’s critical electrical infrastructure, leaving families to endure prolonged power cuts that last most of the day and night.

Four years of communities refusing to give up despite relentless airstrikes. Four years of families doing everything they can to create moments of normalcy for their children.

This holiday season, as you reflect on what you’re grateful for, extend some warmth to those still fighting for their tomorrow. The Canada-Ukraine Foundation **launches its 2025 Holiday Campaign** which runs until January 12. A donation through the **CUF-UCC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal (UHA)** will bring

light this holiday season and some tangible relief for Ukrainian families in need. Donations will help provide emergency power for hospitals, support water systems that function during outages, establish warming centres, distribute heating equipment, and deliver food and essentials.

If you are able to donate, go to the Canada Ukraine Foundation website at cufoundation.ca and click on the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal project to make your donation.

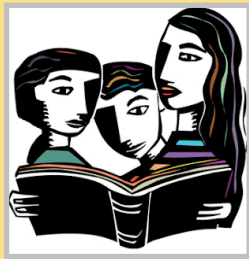
Thank You to Our Volunteers and Employees

A **big thank you** to all our volunteers for their generous gift of time. Our Volunteers are much appreciated for all their contributions. We couldn’t do it without all their help in our kitchen, hall, library and outdoors.

We also very grateful to our employees for all they do for our Society. Thank you to Elsa Marquez, our office Manager, Catherine Duda, our Rental Coordinator, Inna Smachna, our Cook and Mario Velazquez Avila, our Custodian.



Ivan Franko



Library

For information
about our Library and
Book Club contact
Theresa at
books@ivanfranko.ca
or call our Society at
604-274-4119 to
leave a message.

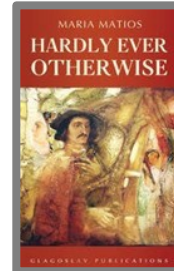
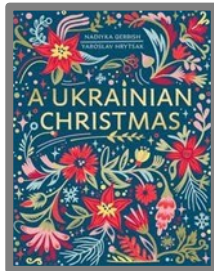
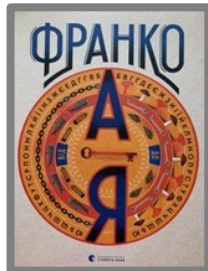
Activities in our Library

English Language classes
are offered to the new
immigrants on Saturdays
from 10:30 am to 12 pm.
This is an opportunity to
learn basic English and
socialize with new friends.

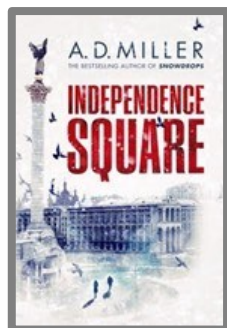
Our library is a warm and inviting place to
spend some time perusing excellent
historical, cultural and literature books and
archival material. Members are invited to
sign out books for a one month period.

Наша бібліотека – це тепле та затишне місце,
де можна провести час переглядаючи чудові
історичні, культурологічні та літературні книги
та архівні матеріали. Члени нашого товариства
пропонується виписати книги на один місяць.

Check out these and other absorbing books in our library.



Book Club



The Ivan Franko Book Club meets
four times a year to discuss excellent
books and view films on Ukrainian
themes and topics. New members are
welcome.

The book club selection for our March
2026 meeting is an
exceptional political
thriller *Independence Square* by
A.D. Miller.

Independence Square takes place
during both the Orange Revolution,
Ukraine 04-05, and several years later
in 2017 when thoroughly disgraced
diplomat Simon obsesses over how
his personal and professional life went
so devastatingly wrong. He is
determined to pinpoint who is to
blame.

Current Cultural Programs At Our Society

“Ukrainian Nest”

Saturday Ukrainian Children’s Class

This class runs every Saturday between 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.
Children are taught Ukrainian language, history and traditions
in a fun interactive way. For more information, please contact
Svitlana Maksymenko via email at iana19031501@gmail.com
or via phone 778-288-2247.

“The Brainchild Studio”

Musical Theatre Group for Children

The musical theatre group has classes on Mondays and
Wednesdays between 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm. Children are taught
songs and dances and will prepare for performances. For more
information, please contact Anna Shylova via email at
brainchildstudiomt@gmail.com.

“Ukraina”

Ukrainian Dance Ensemble for children

“Ukraina” practices at our centre every Saturday morning
between 10:30 am to 11:30 am. Choreographer Yuliia Rychkova
teaches the children Ukrainian traditional dance. For more
information, please email bbravecenter@gmail.com

“Ukrainian Language Classes for Adults”

We continue to offer Ukrainian language classes for adults.
Currently we have a Beginners level that is made up of students
that have some experience and have attended at least one or
two of our lesson sets. We also offer an advanced beginner
level. Students in this class are able to have basic conversations
and have attended several lessons sets with our instructor Alla
Dudka. All classes are offered via zoom. For more information,
please email us at info@ivanfranko.ca.

Membership Renewal

Current, previous, and new members are reminded that their
membership dues for 2026 are now due if your membership
has lapsed. If you are not sure, please email us to ask about the
status of your membership with our Society.

Please complete and return the membership form that has
been mailed OR emailed to you with this newsletter and in-
clude your membership dues as outlined in the application
form. You are also welcome to email our office manager at
info@ivanfranko.ca to update and renew your membership
for 2026 with an e-transfer to info@ivanfranko.ca.

Staying Connected

A reminder to our members to check our website
www.ivanfranko.ca for upcoming events at our Society and in
the Ukrainian Community. We update our website on a regular
basis and information on our homepage is current.

REMINDERS



WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A SAFE
AND HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON!
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!
З Новим роком та Різдовом Христови!



NEXT FRIDAY NIGHT SUPPER IS FEBRUARY 21, 2025 — NO SUPPER IN DECEMBER OR JANUARY.

This newsletter is produced by the Ukrainian Community Centre of Ivan Franko, 5311 Francis Road Richmond, B.C. V7C 1K2
Office: 604-274-4119 || Website: www.ivanfranko.ca || General info: info@ivanfranko.ca || Rental Inquiries: rental@ivanfranko.ca
Book Club and Lending Library: books@ivanfranko.ca