

Priest pinches perogies for church

A line snaking down the block is testament to the tasty meals

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Vancouver Sun

Thursday, February 14, 2008

It might seem bizarre for an orthodox priest (Ukrainian) to be talking about pinching perogies for the glory of god, but Father Roman Tsaplan is not someone you'd call flakey.

Tsaplan is referring to the hugely successful Ukrainian dinner the church hosts on the first Friday of each month. It's an important fundraiser. "We don't have a tithe," he explains. "Without perogies it would be difficult to run the church."

So twice a month, if he hasn't other commitments, he sits down with the "ladies" to pinch perogies for the dinner. And they've got a lot of pinching to do, considering there are lineups out the door, especially in cold weather as perogies (or varenyky), sauerkraut (kapusta), cabbage rolls (holubsti) and Ukrainian sausage (kolbasa) is bracing cold-weather food. When he has time, Tsaplan helps the ladies make cabbage rolls, too.



CREDIT: Steve Bosch, Vancouver Sun
Ukrainian dinner at the Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church is served on the first Friday of each month. Rev. Father Roman Tsaplan (right) -- with his family -- says it's an important fundraiser for the church.

I'd call it one of the secrets of our city, but judging by the lineups, the once-a-month Ukrainian dinners are no secret. The success is partly because of the \$11 price tag for a meal of six perogies, two cabbage rolls, sauerkraut, sausage and beverage; for a real she-woman platter with bigger servings, make that \$14.

If you get in a line-up to the right of the long one snaking, sometimes, down to Main Street it leads to the take-out order window where you'll get to food much quicker and with even less expense (\$4 for a dozen perogies; \$6 for a dozen vegetarian cabbage rolls or \$8 for meat cabbage rolls; \$7 for a ring of sausage).

But part of the fun is in joining the multitudes (all 200 seats are filled) in the church hall with Ukrainian music in the background and feeling like an old-fashioned community, convening over a simple supper with perogies made by ladies and a priest.

"Quite often they won't take my money at the cashier but my wife says 'No! We have to pay like everyone else!,'" he says.

Tsaplan came from Kamloops where he also pinched perogies with the ladies -- only differently. "They bend the corners when they pinch them," he says. "That was

Kamloops ladies' style. I said to my parish, this is the way and they didn't say anything so I thought I better learn Vancouver style."

Still, if you're eating cabbage rolls and the ends aren't tucked in, you'll know it was Father Tsaplan who rolled it. "I like to have tomato paste circulate all over. I don't close both sides for a simple reason. It is like Ukrainian sushi."

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HOLY TRINITY UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

154 East 10th Ave., 604-876-4747. www.uocvancouver.com. Ukrainian dinner, first Friday of every month.

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