

**UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

PRESS RELEASE

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ORTHODOX CANADIAN FORCES CHAPLAIN SERVES FIRST DIVINE LITURGY IN 50 YEARS

On Saturday, 6 November 2010, CFB/ASU Wainwright's Chapel was the site of the first (in over 50 years) Orthodox Divine Liturgy to be conducted by an active duty regular force Canadian Forces Chaplain who is an Orthodox Priest. Captain (Father) Charles Baxter, a Ukrainian Orthodox priest and one of the Base Chaplains at CFB/ASU Wainwright, served the Divine Liturgy with



the assistance of Father John Lipinski and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada's (UOCC) Bonnyville Alberta District's faithful and choir. Following the Divine Liturgy, a brief Memorial Service was held to honour the fallen service members who gave their lives in defence of Canada.

Captain Baxter, a priest in the UOCC's Western Eparchy, is the first Orthodox Canadian Forces Chaplain to serve in Her Majesty's Canadian Forces since the conclusion of the Second World War. "We make a proud beginning this day," Captain Baxter said at the conclusion of services, "by praying for all of our service members and their families who serve both in Canada and around the world. We do this today with prayers for them. We also pray for the souls of the honoured dead. My prayer is that God will continue to bless our ministry in Wainwright and to be able to witness and serve for all of our brother and sister CF members and families who are Orthodox Christians."



Padre Baxter began his military service with Basic Officer Training at CFB Borden in September 2009. After a rigorous and challenging course that ended with graduation in mid-December, he was posted to CFB/ASU Wainwright where he serves as one of the Base Chaplains.

On the Sundays when he is not serving in the CFB Wainwright Chapel, Padre Baxter assists the nearby UOCC parish communities in Vegreville, St. Paul, Bonnyville, Camrose and elsewhere in Alberta. Padre Baxter is also assisting the UOCC's ongoing rural parish projects. This includes locating prairie Orthodox

church buildings that are not on the diocesan registry. Many of these buildings have not been used for services for many years. Some may, with the support and help of local communities and families, remain in good repair. Padre Baxter works with his eparchial Bishop in Edmonton in support of the church's effort to locate and to reach out to these forgotten prairie churches.

The Canadian Forces Chaplains (also known as "Padres") come from a wide variety of faith traditions and backgrounds from all across the country. All major Christian denominations now have active duty full-time regular force Chaplains to meet their spiritual needs. The chaplain exercises a specialized ministry within the Canadian Forces, aimed at promoting religious, spiritual, moral and ethical values, and providing spiritual care and nurture to military members and their families. The Chaplain functions both as a specialist staff officer and as a religious leader. The Chaplain advises the commander and other staff on matters of spirituality, ethics, morale and religious accommodation.

As a staff officer, the Chaplain functions as a specialist advisor and has direct access to the commander. The Chaplain is responsible to the commander for planning and implementing religious support programs and ministry activities within the commander's area of responsibility.

Canadian Forces Chaplains perform religious rites and ceremonies, such as The Divine Liturgy and other services for Orthodox service members, and administers sacraments and ordinances in accordance with the traditions of their own faith tradition. In so far as it is possible, the Chaplain offers appropriate spiritual support and care to all soldiers and their families, regardless of their religious faith expression. If a chaplain is unable to personally provide specific religious support, the chaplain will seek to have such support provided by another chaplain, or where possible, by appropriate civilian religious leaders.

How You Can Help:

If you have a family member, friend or neighbour who is currently serving in the Canadian Forces (regular force or reserves) who is Orthodox please send their contact information to Father Charles Baxter at: padrebaxter@me.com

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