

Ukraine Welcome Circle Update
Another Historic Event for the Kushnyrs

On Sunday, June 18th, at 10 a.m. Mass, in the presence of our parish community, Fr. Tim baptized 14 month old Aniela Kushnyr. The request was made by the parents, Dmytro and Valeriia, not long after their arrival. She was the only family member not yet baptized. It is a unique honor to witness young Aniela being brought into the Catholic Church. As in most situations that involve young children, it was also entertaining. Aniela has an engaging personality (readily offered her bib to Fr. Tim); she also smiles and laughs easily (especially if Mama is around). She was angelic in her Baptismal gown; she is playful and cuddly *most* of the time. She is also quick to employ her piercing vocal cords to make her preference known. Aniela and her family were filled with joy in the midst of our St. Christopher community and in the presence of the Holy Spirit. The family, along with Godparents Mary Joan and Ron Papajcik (parishioners and UWC members), processed in with Fr. Tim and the ministers. After Aniela was baptized, the Ukrainian National Anthem was played by Bob McMurray, which brought Valeriia to tears and stirred emotion in those who were present. In the couple's own words: "We could not have imagined that completely unfamiliar people on another continent would extend their hands and become so close to us. Fr. Tim's words penetrated our hearts and the playing of our national anthem brought tears to our eyes. We will always be grateful to all of you." The group also brought up the gifts. After the Mass, they celebrated at the Papajcik home.

As we continue to embrace the privilege of assisting the Kushnyr family, this Sunday's Gospel reading reminds us that we, too, are disciples, shepherds and laborers for Christ. "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few," so we are to minister to each other without ceasing, especially to those in greatest need. Dmytro and Valeriia have demonstrated the kind of resilience, gratitude and hope that refresh and revive us. They are aware that it was by the grace of God and the non-stop efforts of countless individuals that they are here. Their financial and educational support continues to come through the generosity of Catholic Charities, parishioners and community members. All donations received are used for the direct support of the Kushnyrs to cover living expenses (rent, utilities, groceries, etc.), educational/social needs (clothing, supplies, summer camps, sports, etc.), and emergency medical attention. The resounding response to the call for all forms of assistance has restored the family's hope in humanity.

****NOTE: Currently we are in need of childcare volunteers while parents attend school (must undergo background check).*** In the words of American anthropologist Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world." To get involved, please reach us at stchrisparish.com/uwc.