

## **Ecumenical Prayer Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

An ecumenical prayer service was held in Edmonton, at St. Josaphat Cathedral, Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, to close the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*. This symbolic service of the unity of the Church was adapted from the material prepared and published by the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. The churches and Christian communities in Edmonton which observe the week of prayer through a single common service, whenever possible, strive to experience the liturgical and devotional practice of the Christian denomination hosting the service. Thus, the ecumenical planning committee chose the format of a Ukrainian Catholic Vespers Service, following the theme; *That they may become one in your hand* (Ezek, 37:17) This theme was selected by the churches in Korea. Also, the readings and petitions in the prepared material for the 2009 service were used in the service.

Fr. Gregory Faryna, Chancellor of the Eparchy, was the celebrant for the Vespers Service. He was assisted by St. Josaphat Cathedral Choir, Axios Men's Choir and the Edmonton Korean United Church Choir. Many of the approximately 300 people in attendance sang with the choirs as they followed the service in the order of worship booklets that were provided.

The service began with a procession of church leaders and guests representing a number of Christian Churches. The theme from the prophesy of Ezekiel, read by Archbishop Richard Smith, "joining of two sticks to make all people one", was illustrated by erecting a large wooden cross at the front of the church. This was followed by two young children dressed as Mary and Joseph, presenting the baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling. The swaddling was removed, and draped on the cross to represent the shroud of Jesus.

After a homily given by Bishop David Motiuk, a collection was taken for the, *No Room In The Inn 2008 Campaign*, **E4C's Crossroads Downtown Housing Project**. The proceeds from the collection from each annual ecumenical service for *The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, are forwarded to a preselected housing project.

Fr. Gregory expressed heartfelt thanks to everyone for joining the Edmonton Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy, on this occasion of prayer for Christian Unity. All were then invited to join in fellowship in the Cathedral Parish Hall.