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Solidarity with Ukraine

by Karen Kraco

About one hundred people gathered at St. Constantine Ukrainian Catholic Church on the first day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Feb. 24, to express solidarity with Ukraine and advocate for political action.

The event, billed as an “emergency rally” and organized by the Minnesota Ukrainian American Advocacy Committee, drew Ukrainian immigrants, people of Ukrainian descent, some of whom had family in Ukraine, and people from the neighborhood and beyond with no ties to Ukraine who wanted to show their support.

Prayers led by priests from St. Constantine, and St. Michael and St. George Ukrainian Orthodox Church, both in Northeast, and St. Katherine Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Arden Hills opened the rally, and a prayer service was held in St. Constatine at the end of the event.

Before introducing the other speakers, Luda Anastazievsky talked about how the situation in Ukraine has touched her per-

sonally. In 2015, 30 civilians were killed and nearly 100 wounded by Russian shelling in her native town of Mariupol, a port city in southeastern Ukraine. Now, her friends and family in that area are again under siege, she said.

Anastazievsky, the chair of the Advocacy Committee and a board member of the Ukrainian American Community Center, encouraged Minnesotans to donate to the humanitarian aid fund set up by the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (ucca.org) and contact their elected representatives in support of U.S. aid to Ukraine.

Speaker Paul Gavriyuk, who was born and raised in Kyiv, also encouraged those gathered to press politicians specifically to supply Ukraine with Patriot missiles and to help shore up the defense systems needed to mount significant resistance to what he called “an all-out war,” and “the biggest military aggression after the Second World War in Europe.”

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Julian Pishko, a board member of the Ukrainian American Community Center, listens to fellow board member Stephen Vitvitsky address the crowd at the February 24 emergency rally in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. For more Ukraine response coverage, see page 14.

(Photo by Karen Kraco)



As work on the Third Avenue Bridge (foreground) winds down this summer, reconstruction of the Stone Arch Bridge (back) will begin. (Photo by Mike Madison)

Along Main Street this summer Bridge rebuilding coming

by Cynthia Sowden

Get ready for a construction zone down along Main Street this summer. The Stone Arch Bridge and Father Hennepin Bluff Park are about to undergo a makeover.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will begin its long-planned restoration of the Stone Arch Bridge this year. The \$15 million project will be put out for bids in June and construction would begin in the fall, continuing through the spring of 2024.

Built between 1881 and 1883 by rail baron James J. Hill for his Great Northern Railroad, the last passenger train crossed it in 1977. It became a pedestrian/bicycle bridge in the 1990s.

The river has eroded some of the bridge’s base in the nearly 140 years since it was built. Some of the stones in the pilings will be repaired, others replaced. All of the mortar between the stones will be re-pointed.

MnDOT said it plans to keep the bridge open to pedestrian and bicycle traffic, but may need to shut down lanes on occasion to work.

MnDOT said the Third Avenue Bridge is scheduled to reopen in November, about the time work will begin on the Stone Arch Bridge.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) approved a construction contract for Father Hennepin Bluff Park at its Jan. 19 meeting.

Renovations include a new bandshell with attached seasonal restrooms. Park entry plazas will be upgraded, walking paths will be outfitted with new lighting, wayfinding signs and path connections. Improvements will also be made to the stormwater management system, to reduce the flow of untreated water runoff to the Mississippi River.

Construction preparation has begun. Renovations are expected to be complete by fall.

Construction continues between Merriam Street and Third Avenue SE. Metropolitan Council Environmental Services is rehabilitating their Minneapolis East Interceptor (MEI) system there. Two parallel pipes connected by six control gates help control and direct sewer flow through the system. The system requires rehabilitation to manage flow and to minimize the risk of spills and other environmental impacts. The project began in 2021 and is scheduled for completion in 2023.

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