

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 19, Issue 12

December 2019

November Council Highlights

- ✘ October's Operating Income was \$16,576.53 and Operating Expenses were \$13,270.74 resulting in a positive income of \$3,305.79 for the month.
- ✘ Neighborhood Nativity outreach to be held December 7, 2018 at 10am. See David Bieber for more information.
- ✘ Holy Supper to follow Great Compline starting at 5:30 pm on December 24, 2019.



SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church
 1614 E. Monte Vista Rd.
 Phoenix, AZ 85006
 602.253.9515

www.sspeterpaulaz.org

www.oca.org

www.orthodoxfellowship.org

The Right Reverend DANIEL
Bishop of Santa Rosa
 Rector

480.287.0240 Mobile

frdaniel@sspeterpaulaz.org

Archpriest David Balmer, Attached
 Retired

Deacon John Weiss

Andrew Evans
 Council President
 480.948.7929

Barbara Harp
 Choir Director
bharp@vosymca.org

Stephanie A. Homyak
 Church School Director
 Newsletter Editor
 623.869.0470

Stephanie_Homyak@yahoo.com

Mike Wagner
 Web Master

Mike@sspeterpaulaz.org

Heather Pfeiffer
 Myrrhbearers Altar Society
flagstaffed@gmail.com

Unexpected Joy

The icon of the Mother of God toward the icon and was called "Unexpected Joy" shows the Theotokos holding the child Jesus Christ, and one other figure.

The third figure is a young man kneeling in prayer and turned pleadingly toward the Theotokos. His story is told in the writings of Saint Dimitri of Ros-



to, and in some versions of the icon part of that story appears in words below the figures of the Theotokos and Christ.

This man prayed every day to the icon of the Virgin, and often repeated the memorable words of Gabriel at the time of the Annunciation: "Rejoice, O Virgin Full of Grace!" But despite having the habit of praying regularly, the young man didn't keep himself from sin. It might often happen that after offering his prayer, he would go out and do something that wasn't at all in keeping with the life of a faithful Christian.

One day the young man had a startling experience. As he was planning to go out, he glanced

stunned to see the Theotokos standing in person before him. She was holding her Son, whose body showed the same wounds He had suffered on the cross: His hands and feet were pierced, and blood was flowing from a wound in His side.

The young man fell to his knees, at first so horrified that he was unable to speak. Finally he managed to ask the Theotokos, "O Lady, who has done this terrible thing?"

Her answer came in a soft but firm voice: "You have done it—you and all the others who sin, over and over again. Each time you sin, you crucify Him again."

Realizing the truth of her words, the young man begged forgiveness. But she answered that though he showed her the respect of daily prayer before her icon, he continued to hurt her by continuing to sin.

He cried out, "O holy Lady, may my wrong deeds never outweigh your merciful kind-

ness! Please pray to your Son on my behalf."

The Mother of God, seeing his real repentance, did intercede for the young man, and for the sake of His Mother, Christ forgave him. Having received the unexpected joy of divine forgiveness, he was able to live a God-pleasing life for the rest of his days.

The Church also remembers two mothers: Hannah, the mother of Samuel the Prophet, and Anna the mother of the Theotokos. Both of them wanted children; both suffered through long years of childlessness before conceiving and giving birth.

These two women experienced a different kind of "unexpected joy" when they finally became mothers after waiting so long. But, like the young man in the icon, the thing they wanted most came to them as God's mercy and love.

Whether we hope to be forgiven, hope to have children, or hope for something else that will change our lives, we can be sure that God knows about it, and will respond to our hope in some way. Perhaps it will be with unexpected joy.

Message From Our Rector



Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

This period of the Nativity Fast, the liturgical time which prepares us for Christmas, invites us to lift our gaze and open our hearts to welcome Jesus as we celebrate His birth in the flesh on Christmas Day. During these weeks of preparation, we do not just live in anticipation of Christmas: we are also called to rekindle the anticipation of the glorious return of Christ — when he will return at the end of time — preparing ourselves, with consistent and courageous choices, for the final encounter with him. We remember Christmas, we await the glorious return of Christ, and also our personal encounter: the day in which the Lord will call us to Himself.

During these special grace-filled weeks of preparation, we are called to leave behind an automatic and routine way of life and to go forth into that which is new, nourishing hope and nourishing dreams for a new future. We are called to be *mindful* and to *pray*: this is how to live the time between now and Christmas. To be mindful and to be prayerful is the attitude with which we should approach every day. Unfortunately, during this “holiday season,” we are often weighed down by an inner lethargy comes from always focusing upon ourselves and being distracted by our own life, with its problems, its joy, and suffering, but always turning around ourselves. And this is wearying; this is dull, this closes us off to hope. Here lies



the root of spiritual lethargy and laziness. The Nativity Fast invites us to a commitment to attentiveness, to look beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of our brothers and sisters who find themselves in so many types of need. This is a favorable time to open our hearts, to ask ourselves concrete questions about how and for whom we reach beyond ourselves and focus our lives.

The second attitude to have in order to best experience this time of awaiting the Lord is that of *prayer*. “Look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near,” the Gospel of Luke cautions (Luke 21:28). This special time is about standing up and praying, turning our thoughts and our hearts to Jesus who is about to come. One stands when awaiting something or someone. We await Jesus and we wish to await him in prayer which is closely linked to vigilance. Praying, waiting upon Jesus, opening oneself to others, being mindful, not withdrawn in ourselves. But if we think of Christmas in the light of consumerism, of seeing what I can buy in order to do this and that, if we think of Christmas as a worldly celebration, Jesus will pass by and we will not find him.

In the Scriptures, the voices of the *prophets* are especially revealing to us. The Prophet Jeremiah speaks to the people who had been harshly tried by exile and who risked losing their very identity. We Christians too, who are also the People of God, run the risk of becoming worldly and of losing our identity, indeed of ‘paganizing’ or secularizing the Christian

way of life. Therefore, we need the Word of God through which the prophet proclaims: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made . . . I will cause a righteous branch to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land” (Jeremiah 33:14-15). And that righteous branch is Jesus. It is Jesus who comes and whom we await. May the Virgin Mary, who leads us to Jesus, who is our example of hopeful expectation and prayer, help us to strengthen our hope in the promises of her Son Jesus, in order to enable us to understand that through the ups and downs of history, God always remains steadfast and uses even our own human weakness to manifest his mercy.

As we recall the great mystery of Christ’s birth in the flesh and hear the Gospel stories of Joseph and Mary’s journey to Bethlehem, of the Star, Shepherds, and Angels, let us join the Heavenly Host in singing glories to God, let us imitate the Shepherds who go to Bethlehem to see the promised sign, that newborn child lying in a manger. Let us imitate the Wise Men on their journey, seeking our only true goal: Jesus Christ and life lived in Him.

As we celebrate the Lord’s Nativity and as we enter the New Year, be assured of my prayers and best wishes for you, your families and friends, and all your dear ones.

With love in the Newborn Savior,

+Bishop Daniel



Saint Nicholas: The Image of Giving

Fr. Steven Kostoff

As we celebrate the feast of Saint Nicholas of Myra in Lycia, the Wonderworker, we find that there is a certain unresolved tension that accompanies his person and memory. On the one hand, there are few “hard facts” about his life (to the point where many doubt his actual historical existence), while on the other hand, he is clearly one of the most beloved and universally venerated saints within the Church. A good example of an objective account of the few facts behind the saint’s life can be found in a short introductory biographical note concerning Saint Nicholas in the book, *The Time of the Spirit*: “Little is known for certain about the life of Saint Nicholas, bishop of Myra in Lycia (Asia Minor). It is believed that he suffered imprisonment during the last major persecution of the Church under Diocletian in the early fourth century, and that he attended the first Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325. Christian tradition has come to regard him, in the words of an Orthodox hymn, as ‘an example of faith and an icon of gentleness’” [*The Time of the Spirit*, p. 69].

For those interested in the historical background of Saint Nicholas, the following note found in *The Synaxarion*, Vol. II, edited by Hieromonk Makarios of Simonas Petras, may prove to be of real interest: “Since the medieval period, Saint Nicholas of Myra has been confused with Saint Nicholas of Sion, who founded a monastery not far from Myra at the end of the 5th century. The Vita of the latter has come down to us but the incidents in it have been entirely ascribed to Saint Nicholas of Myra, with the result that Saint Nicholas of Sion has been forgotten in the hagiographical accounts.... See *The Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion*, edited and translated by I. N. P. Sevchenko [Brookline, MA, 1984].”

So, even if we are dealing with a “composite figure” when we venerate Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, we nevertheless are given a glimpse into the

“mind of the Church” when it comes to an image of a true pastor. A powerful and enduring image of a genuine Christian shepherd has remained within the memory of the Church, regardless of the now unrecoverable “facts” behind the actual history of fourth-fifth century Asia Minor. It is this “unerring” intuition of the People of God to which the faithful respond up to the present day that remains as a solid foundation upholding all of the wonderful stories that endear us to Saint Nicholas. The Church always needs bishops of the type embodied by Saint Nicholas, a shepherd who was a “rule of faith and an image of humility” who both protected and interceded for his flock, according to the great Russian Orthodox iconographer, Leonid Uspensky. And he further writes: “This ‘life for others’ is his characteristic feature and is manifested by the great variety of forms of his solicitude for men: his care for their preservation, their protection from the elements, from human injustice, from heresies and so forth. This solicitude was accompanied by numerous miracles both during his life and after his death. Indefatigable intercessor, steadfast, uncompromising fighter for Orthodoxy, he was meek and gentle in character and humble in spirit” [*The Time of the Spirit*, p. 69].

Well known as Saint Nicholas has been, he is perhaps less well known in today’s world. In fact, he may be slowly slipping away from Christian consciousness. Santa Claus, that rather unfortunate caricature of the saintly bishop, clearly has something to do with this. But perhaps the very virtues embodied by this saint are slowly fading from our consciousness. Some time ago, I wrote a meditation that passed on the name our social and secular world has “earned” for itself through its rampant commercialization of Christmas—and that is “Getmas.” The author who coined this new term—I forget his name—claims it came to him based on a conversation he had had with

a good friend about the “spirit of Christmas.” The friend of our author said that Christmas was about “getting things.” When the author countered by saying, “I thought Christmas was about giving,” the friend quickly retorted, “Sure, people are supposed to give me things!” Out of this sad exchange came the unfortunate, but accurate, “Getmas.”

But Saint Nicholas was about the proper understanding of “giving.” Perhaps the most enduring quality of his image is that of giving to children in need. Our children learn that those who already “have” more are those who will yet “get” more. And that is because they are taught this by their parents who yield to their childish demands. So we persist in widening the gap of imbalance between the “haves” and “have nots” without too many pangs of (Christian) conscience. Saint Nicholas wanted to restore a sense of balance, and so he looked first to those who were in need, so that they could also taste some childlike happiness from receiving an unexpected gift. In a simple manner, this imitates the giving of God Who gave us Christ at a time when everyone—rich and poor alike—was impoverished through sin and death. I sometimes fantasize that an ideal celebration of Christmas would find a relatively affluent family making sure that they spent more on those in need than on themselves. If Christianity is indeed the “imitation of the divine nature,” as Saint Gregory of Nyssa once said, then that need not necessarily be such an unrealistic idea. I do not believe that I have ever done that, so I convict myself through the very thought. Yet, I am convinced that our children would respond with an eager spirit of cooperation if properly prepared for some approximation of that ideal. Why should it be otherwise if, according to the Apostle Paul, Christ said that it is more blessed to give than to receive?

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://www.oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/saint-nicholas-the-image-of-giving> ✂

St. Romanos the Melodist and the Kontakion

Fr. Steven Kostoff

According to the patristic scholar, Father Andrew Louth: "Saint Romanos (6th. c) is perhaps the most famous liturgical poet of the Orthodox Church, but his genius is such as to command a place among the highest ranks of poets, religious or secular, so that he has been called by Professor Trepanis 'the greatest poet of the Greek middle ages.'" I begin with this as a brief introduction to a small portion of one of his famous *kontakia* (*singular kontakion*) that I would like to share in preparation for the Great Feast of the Nativity. What we hear today under this title is a mere echo of the original structure of a *kontakion*. Again, citing Father Louth, "The verse form that Romanos raised to the highest perfection was the *kontakion*, a kind of chanted verse sermon, consisting of brief stanzas (each called an *ikos*), all of which end with the same refrain." In other words, the *kontakion* was something of a long and elaborate theological poem that was most likely chanted after the Gospel "with the choir (and doubtless the congregation) joining in the refrain."

The most famous of the many *kontakia* composed by Saint Romanos, was the one now known as the *Nativity Kontakion* that we will hear when the feast is celebrated. A pious tradition relates that the Mother of God appeared to him in a dream and gave him a scroll to swallow (see Ezekiel 2:8-3:3; Revelation 9:10-11). This was on Christmas Eve, and when he awoke he went to the church and chanted his famous *kontakion* in honor of the feast. What we sing in church to this day for the Great Feast of the Nativity is merely the *Prelude* that introduces a poetically structured hymn of 24 stanzas! Yet, brief as it may be, this is truly one of the greatest "Christmas hymns" ever to be composed for its theological depth:

Today the Virgin gives birth the Transcendent One,

And the earth offers a cave to the unapproachable One!

Angels, with shepherds, glorify Him!

The wise men journey with the star!

Since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child!

It is also most likely that Saint Romanos composed the incomparable *Akathistos Hymn to the Theotokos*, perhaps his greatest masterpiece, and a hymn chanted to this day in the church and in personal devotion.

One of the chief characteristics of his *kontakia* is the endlessly creative use of *typology* as a way of reading the Scriptures. Typology allows us to uncover, through persons, places, and even sacred objects, their role as prefigurations for their fulfillment in Christ. (In Romans 5:14, Saint Paul tells us that Adam was a "type" [in Greek, *typos*] of Christ). Through typological exegesis (biblical interpretation), the Burning Bush of Exodus 3 is a "type" of the Theotokos, who will hold within her womb the fiery Word of God, but not be consumed in the process. This is one of Saint Romanos' favorite types from the Old Testament. Therefore, just to pass on a "taste" of the rich poetic theology expressed by Saint Romanos in his *kontakia*, I am offering the *Prelude* and stanzas one and 13 of his *kontakion* on the Mother of God. We do not associate poetry and rich imagery with theology, but this is how some of the early Church Fathers expressed their deepest intuitions into the mystery of Christ. This is especially true of the Syriac tradition. (Saint Romanos was from Syria and journeyed eventually to make his home in Constantinople). Notice the refrain after each stanza. That must have made a strong impression on all of the worshippers present, when the choir or the entire congregation sang/chanted that repeatedly throughout the course of the hymn.

Prelude

At your conceiving without seed, O

Mother of God,

Joseph was struck with wonder as he contemplated what was beyond nature.

And he brought to mind the rain on the fleece (Judges 6:3),

The bush unburned by fire (Exodus 3:2-4),
Aaron's rod which blossomed (Numbers 17:23),

And your betrothed and guardian bore witness and cried to the priests,

Refrain

A Virgin gives birth, and after childbirth remains still a virgin.

1. What I see I cannot understand, for it surpasses the human mind.
How is it that the grass carries fire and it not burned?

A lamb carries a lion, a swallow an eagle and the servant her Master (Isaiah 11:6-8).

In a mortal womb, in a manner uncircumscribed,

Mary carries my Savior as He wills,
So that everyone will say,

Refrain

A Virgin gives birth, and after childbirth remains still a virgin.

13. So, Mary, sing the praise of Christ,
Who is carried below in your bosom
And on high is seated with the Father.
He sucks at your breast and gives mortals divine food from above,
And below He is laid in a cave through love of mortals,

Refrain

A Virgin gives birth, and after childbirth remains still a virgin.

For anyone interested in pursuing these hymns further for their rich theology and use of the Scriptures, perhaps the best collection is in the book compiled and edited by the late Archimandrite Ephraim, considered an excellent translator during his lifetime, in which I believe there are 18 *kontakia*.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://www.oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/st.-romanos-the-melodist-and-the-kontakion> *

Diaconal Ordination of Father Michael

Father Michael, a monk of Saint John the Baptist Monastery here in Phoenix and student at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, was ordained to the Holy Diaconate in Saints Peter and Paul Church on Tuesday, November 26, during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. His Eminence Archbishop BENJAMIN was



here as the ordaining hierarch. This special occasion, two days before the Thanksgiving Day Holiday, gave further cause to offer thanks to the Lord as we express our gratitude for all the blessings God continues to pour out upon our community.

The ordination to the diaconate takes place within the Divine Liturgy. Because the deacon may not perform the Mysteries, it occurs after the Anaphora (when the Gifts are consecrated). Immediately preceding the Litany. Before the Lord's Prayer, the candidate is escorted by clergy from the nave



to the Royal Doors. As he approaches the Royal Doors, the candidate is forced to the ground in a prostration three times. Once in the Altar, the candidate is led around the Holy Table three times. The three hymns that are sung while he is making this triple circuit are symbolic: the martyrs are invoked first because they provide an

example of faith and purity, the second represents the subject of the candidate's teaching, the Holy Trinity, and the third proclaims that the foundation of the priesthood and the



Church was the coming of the Savior, who is magnified whenever the Virgin is blessed. During each circuit he kisses each corner of the Holy Table and the hand, knee and palitza (shield) of the bishop. After this, he kneels on his right

knee before the Holy Table (kneeling on only one knee signifies that the fullness of the sacred ministry is not conferred upon the deacon; when a priest is ordained, he kneels with both knees). The Bishop places his omophorion on the candidate's head and then lays his hands on him, praying the

prayer of ordination. Part of the prayer reads: "Do Thou, O Master of all, fill this Thy servant, whom Thou hast made worthy to enter upon the ministry of a Deacon, with all faith,

and love, and power, and holiness, through the infusion of Thy Holy and Life-giving Spirit (for it is not by the laying-on of my hands, but by the visitation of Thy rich compassions, that grace is given unto them that are worthy of Thee), that he, being without any sin, may stand blameless before Thee in the terrible day of Thy

judgment, and may receive the unfailing reward of Thy promise." The bishop then vests the new deacon in the Royal Doors, facing the congregation. When he presents the deacon with his

oraron, and each cuff, he asks the congregation, "axis?," which means, is the candidate worthy? The congregation, if



they believe that the candidate is worthy of the office, respond, "Axis!"



Bits . . .

FROM THE CHURCH TREASURER

The last month of the year is now upon us. Now is your chance to make sure your 2019 church pledge and contributions are in and accounted for within this year. Please consider the church in your year-end financial planning, especially for tax purposes. Year-to-date contribution statements will be available at the back of the church. If yours is not there, see Dave Homyak in the church office. Please be sure to turn in your donations for 2019 *on or prior* to December 29th or contact the Financial Secretary, John Hecht. Otherwise, contributions received afterward will be attributed to 2020.

CHRISTMAS COOKIE/BAKE SALE AND RAFFLE

The Christmas Bake Sale and Raffle will be held on Sunday, December 22. A variety of Christmas cookies and baked goods will be available along with any extra nut, poppy, and apricot rolls. We will also have two raffles this year, one for adults and one for children. If you would like to do-

nate either baked goods or items to the raffles please see one of the MBAS ladies.

THANK YOU

I would like to thank everyone who helped prepare and bake the nut, poppy, and apricot rolls for the MBAS. This labor of love includes coordinating volunteers, purchasing supplies, preparing the fillings, making the dough, rolling out the dough, baking the rolls, and packaging them all up. Many parishioners dedicated weekdays and Saturdays to bring it all together to bake 392 rolls.

I would also like to thank everyone who supports this fundraiser every year by purchasing the rolls to give out as gifts, to place on holiday tables, or just to enjoy at home throughout the year. Your support makes this fundraiser a success every year and helps MBAS care for and replace the altar cloths, vestments for the altar servers, decorate the church for special feast days, and the many other things we do.

Heather Pfeiffer



HOLY SUPPER

Please join us for Holy Supper on Tuesday, December 24th following Compline.

Please contact Marty Gala to confirm that you will be attending.

We look forward to seeing everyone there to celebrate this joyous feast.

Around SS Peter & Paul

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

- December 1 Andrew Blischak
Thomas McDonald
3 Grace Weiss
5 Natalya Delsante
Frank Bolton
6 Deborah Kossob
Philip Mauskopf
7 Roman Gabriel Mauskopf
11 Isolda Akhba
12 Walter Moschowsky
Nick Ramany
15 Svetlana & John Tanner
16 Nick Stchur
Dasha O'Brien
22 Eva Helena Mauskopf
26 Joseph Gala
28 David & Stephanie Homyak
Svetlana Tanner (Fleenor)
29 Larry & Teddi Gardner
John Bushko
31 Tristan Sourk

CHRISMATION

Congratulations to Tatiana (Leslie) Johnson who was received into the fullness of the Orthodox Faith on the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos in the Temple. May the Lord grant her many years in faithful service as a member of the Holy Orthodox Church!



PRAYER LIST

*"I was sick and you visited me."
Matt 25:36*

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners who are ill or unable to attend services:

Bill Rudolph
Jamie Arango
Ann Garza
Rose Kurowski
Anna Michkofsky
Frank Kulik
Marilyn Bezkorovainy
Pat Starkey
Tammy Horton
Antonia Adams-Clement

If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Bishop Daniel.

... and Pieces

SAINT NICHOLAS CELEBRATION

Our annual visit from Saint Nicholas will take place during coffee hour on Sunday, December 8th. Saint Nicholas will join us in preparing for our celebration of Christ's Birth and, as always, distribute pre-Christmas "treats" to the young and to the young at heart.

TIME FOR THANKS

As we enter the season of the Lord's Nativity, we pause and give thanks for the many blessings we have received throughout the year, especially the blessings received because of the generosity in time, talents, and treasures of our parish community. There are too many people to name individually. The Lord knows you all... But please be assured of the gratitude of Archbishop BENJAMIN, Bishop DANIEL, Father David, Father Thomas, Father Mihai, Father Nicholas, Deacon John, all the clergy and faithful of our parish community. May the Lord Himself, He Who is "God with Us," be your reward!

FOCA

FOCA will be taking orders for rum balls until December 15. Looking for a personalized gift? Please consider our coasters at \$12.00/set of 4. Thank you for your support on our endeavors.

SAINT NICHOLAS COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Parish's annual Christmas Outreach party will be held on Saturday December 7th starting at 10 am. All parishioners are encouraged to attend.

PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD

To have your name included in the Parish Christmas Card, please fill out a form available in the church vestibule or in the hall. Deadline is December 15th.

CHURCH DECORATING

Please mark your calendars and plan on joining in decorating our church on Saturday, December 21, at 10:00 a.m. Plan on being a part of the joy as we come together to adorn the church for our celebration of the Lord's Birth. The more, the merrier!

CONFESSIONS

Everyone seems to be busy at this time of the year: busy traveling, busy working, busy getting ready for Christmas, busy making or purchasing gifts. As the Feast of the Lord's Nativity draws near, do not forget to also prepare yourself spiritually before receiving the Holy Gifts on Christmas morning. An essential part of our spiritual preparation is the confession of our sins and receiving the Lord's forgiveness. Confessions are heard before the Divine Services or by arrangements with Bishop DANIEL or Father David.

HOLY SUPPER

Again this year we look forward to celebrating the Christmas Eve Holy Supper with our parish family. We come together as a family of faith to remember and to celebrate the mysteries surrounding the Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in the City of David. This simple and beautiful celebration also gives us the opportunity to invite our non-Orthodox family and friends to witness the love we share with one another as we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity. The Holy Supper takes place following the evening Compline service (5:30 p.m.) Those who are able are asked to contribute in some way to the festivities, especially by providing a (fasting) dish to share with others. For more information about how you can participate, please see Marty Gala.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

We begin the New Year by invoking God's blessing upon our families, our parish, the Church, and the world. Join us at Divine Liturgy (Feast of the Circumcision of Christ and Commemoration of Saint Basil the Great), 9:00 a.m.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER DONATION

Please donate toward the Christmas Flower fund in order to help beautify our church for the bright and festive celebration of Christ's Birth.

MAKING CHARITABLE GIFTS/DONATIONS

The best value often comes from donating appreciated assets (such as RMDs/stocks), because donors can get a deduction, while skipping capital-gains tax on the asset's capital growth. Cash donations to charities are often deductible up to % of adjusted gross income, while the limit for gifts of other assets is often higher. Possible not allowed portions of the total gift for that particular year can usually be carried over to future years as a future deduction. ***SS Peter and Paul is eligible to receive these types of gifts, contributions, or donations.***

Are you concerned that the charitable deduction could shrink next year? If so, make a large donation to a "donor-advised" fund and thus qualify for a full write-off within the current year. Assets can then grow tax-free in the "donor-advised" fund until the donors specify tax-free recipients, such as your church, in later years. SS Peter and Paul aspires to acquire surrounding property as it becomes available on the market for further expansion (**parking**) and growth. In order to be able to take advantage of these availabilities when the time comes, the church will need to have the financial reserves available so to be able to act when the time comes. Please consider your church in your financial and estate planning.

Please contact the church treasurer for further advisement. Others have taken advantage of this within the parish.

FOOD PANTRY COLLECTIONS

We glorify Christ when we assist those who are less fortunate. In order to glorify Christ the church community is collecting boxes and canned food for the less fortunate, especially at this time of the year. Please feel

free to speak with Bishop Daniel about contributing non-perishables items. Bring your donations and place them in the boxes which are available in the hall. Collected food items will be shared with Saint

Mary's Food Bank.



December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School FOCA Meeting Nut Roll Pick-Up	2	3	4	5 Ven. Sabbas the Sanctified	6 St. Nicholas the Wonderworker 9:00am Divine Liturgy	7 10:00am Neighborhood Christmas Outreach 5:00pm Vespers
 Christmas Bake Sale The Myrrh Bearers will host their annual Christmas Bake Sale on Sunday, December 22, 2019 following Divine Liturgy.						
8 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School Visit from St. Nicholas MBAS Meeting Nut Roll Pick-Up	9 Icon "Unexpected Joy" 	10 6:00pm Council Meeting	11	12 6:00pm Vespers	13 Ven. Herman of Alaska 9:00am Divine Liturgy	14 5:00pm Vespers
HOLY SUPPER Tuesday, December 24, 2019 following Compline at 5:30 pm. See Marty Gala to sign up!						
15 Holy Forefathers 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School Nut Roll Pick-Up Last Fay to Order Rum Balls Last Day to sign up for Nativity Card	16	17	18	19	20 Forefeast of the Nativity	21 Sat. Before Nativity 10:00am Church Decorating 5:00pm Vespers
 Christmas Raffle Jane Evans and Rita Mudrenko will be hosting the Christmas Raffle on Sunday, December 22, 2019. Proceeds will go to SS Peter and Paul. Please see Jane or Rita to purchase tickets or donate items. 						
22 Sunday Before Nativity 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School MBAS Bake Sale and Raffle	23	24 Eve of the Nativity 5:30pm Great Compline Followed by HOLY SUPPER	25 NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM! 	26 Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos	27	28 Sat. After Nativity 5:00pm Vespers
29 Sunday After Nativity 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	30	31 Leavetaking Nativity	1 Circumcision of Christ St. Basil the Great 9:00am Divine Liturgy	2 Repose of St. Seraphim of Sarov	3	4 Saturday before Theophany 5:00pm Vespers
We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.						5:00pm Vespers