

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 20, Issue 6

December 2020

November Council Highlights

- ✘ October's Operating Income was \$14,931.32 and Operating Expenses were \$13,985.74 resulting in a positive income of \$945.58 for the month.
- ✘ MBAS is selling Holy Supper Kits—order deadline extended to December 6th.
- ✘ Order your rumballs from the FOCA—order date extended to December 6th.



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God's Plan in Jesus

Fr. Vladimir Berzonsky

“So then there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, and fourteen from David to the exile in Babylon, and fourteen from then to the birth of the Messiah” (Matthew 1:17)

On the Sunday before Christmas the Church recalls the ancestry of the Messiah Jesus. Indeed, the whole holy history of salvation, the Old Testament, is completed by the bridge, this recall of humanity's salvation. Here is the reason that His birth divides history. Many come to celebrate this wonder: The shepherds, the wanderers without real estate; angels looking with amazement at what God was doing on behalf of mankind; magi, the scientists and astrologers of the time. That famous nativity scene, our icon, is replicated in western art many times over. It lifts up an ideal, a symbol of perfect union between God and creation—what should develop, and which never did happen.

A. The people chosen to prepare the earth for harmony and peace in the Messiah had another agenda, which Jesus did not fulfill. The hope and change offered by the Lord


was rejected. They hoped that a military leader would conquer the Roman occupiers, and so their historical highlight was a negative event, the Holocaust in the middle of the last century after which they were returned to the Promised Land, and made to defend it ever since;

B. The shepherds, nomads without land of their own, destined to search for fertile land evolved into another Abraham religion—Islam—which has had little to do with peace, and nothing to do with a Messiah sent from God, Son of God to reconcile heaven and earth. Rather, Islam is submission to the deity Allah, imposing by force or conversion that freedom-less faith on any and all, their only vision a return to the triumphant centuries between 8th-19th, and aimed at eradicating Israel and Christians in those nations taking part in the Arab spring;

C. The Magi, scientists of Christ's time who searched the skies for some sign of harmony between heaven and earth, finding it yet as a conquered race having no means of developing their research. Modern scientists with vastly-improved instruments continue the tasks

of the Magi. They discovered neutrinos. By acceleration of atoms, the Higgs boson “God particle,” they are learning about the way particles acquire their masses; however, no angels, no faith, nothing beyond matter, space and black holes.

What of Christianity? What of we who believe in the love of God displayed in the birth of the Son of God, Who so loved the world that He gave the world the witness of victory through suffering, death on the cross and resurrection from the dead, a journey into and through the world, into Hades itself to release mankind from separation, sin and death? Do we believe in the ultimate hope and change introduced by Jesus Christ, promised by politicians but incapable of delivering, or are we caught up in the hope that is economic, continuation of a life style dependent on money, hoping that will not change, looking forward not to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, but rather to a life of pleasure, with death being the end of everything?

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://www.oca.org/reflections/berzonsky/gods-plan-in-jesus> 

Message From Our Rector



Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

"... We have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." (Matthew 2:2)

As the month of December quickly approaches and we begin our annual lenten preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Nativity, our scriptural focus begins to turn to the ancient prophecies concerning the promised Messiah as well as to the first two chapters of the Gospels of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke.

It is within these Gospels that we find the story of the Lord's entrance into our world in the mystery of His Incarnation. We are well aware of the story the first two chapters of these gospels tell: our hymns, carols, iconography, our Christmas traditions, and even our seasonal decorations highlight the very same story.

In the second chapter of the Gospel of Saint Matthew, we read this account of the Wisemen who came from the east, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him.'" These wise men—kings, astrologers, astronomers, magi—had left the comfort and routine of their daily lives to follow a star that would take them on an adventure and eventually lead them to the newborn King of the Jews and Savior of the World.



The star of Bethlehem was a sign sent from heaven, a part of God's creation which played its unique role in the story of our salvation. This is even acknowledged in our liturgical hymns. As we sing in the Troparion of the Nativity: *"Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, Has shone to the world the Light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a Star to adore Thee, The Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on High. O Lord, glory to Thee!"*

Throughout the centuries, men and women have studied the stars, their placement in the skies and their movement, seeking in them something greater, something different, looking, at times, for some source of life's meaning. Even today, scientists look to the skies seeking answers to scientific questions and theories and hobbyists and amateur "star gazers" embrace astronomy as a valued pastime and relaxing diversion. If you have ever tried to use a telescope in a metropolitan area the size of Phoenix, you are well aware of what is known as "light pollution," i.e. artificial light that is produced by street lights, buildings, cars, etc. Light pollution brightens the sky so much that it also dims the brilliance of the stars and makes it more difficult to see and appreciate their intensity, sometime even to locate them. It is only with a high-powered telescope or by traveling out into the desert or to some remote, unpopulated area that the stars can be seen in the intensity of their great numbers.

And so it is in our spiritual lives. We look beyond ourselves seeking the Light of Christ that "illuminates all." However, even

in our seeking, we permit our spiritual vision to be dimmed by our own egos, self-will, lusts and passions, pettiness, and any number of "things" that are not beneficial or helpful to us. Only by going "into the desert" where such tendencies and things can be left behind that we can see the Light that will never dim. Only by riding our lives of the false and artificial lights that distract us can our vision be clearer and more focused. It's my prayer that all of us will use the remainder of the Nativity Fast to leave behind the "artificial light" that distracts us from the true Light of Christ.

In these difficult and seemingly dark days, as we continue to face a pandemic of great proportions, as we strive to live lives of peace and harmony with all our brothers and sisters, and as we seek meaning in our daily lives and experiences, let us all keep our sights on the heavens, looking to Christ, whose Light illumines all. As we recall the Star that led to the Newborn King and imitate the Wise Men on their journey, let us acknowledge that our only true goal is life lived in the Light of Christ—now and in the life of the world to come.

As we soon celebrate the birth in the flesh of the Son of God, be assured of my prayerful best wishes for you, your families and friends, and all your dear ones. Let us pray for one another, for our parish, for this nation, and for all who seek peace on earth.

With love in Christ our Savior,

+ *Bishop Daniel*



Christmas Hymns in the Orthodox Church

Alexander A. Bogolepov

The observance of a special period of preparation before the Feast of the Nativity of Christ has long been an established part of Christian practice. In the Orthodox Church this period is made up of the Christmas Fast and the special days of preparation before Christmas itself, with the week of the Holy Forefathers and the week of the Holy Fathers. The Church services for these days of preparation commemorate the patriarchs, the prophets and all who had lived by faith in the Saviour who was to come and had prophesied about Him long before His coming. The hymns for the Feast of the Nativity are full of the original joyful excitement at the thought of God's appearance on earth. The Christmas canon¹ begins with a joyous declaration, gradually swelling in volume, of the Saviour's birth:

"Christ is born! Glorify Him! Christ descends from the heavens, welcome Him! Christ is now on earth, O be jubilant! Sing to the Lord, the whole earth, And sing praises to Him with joy, O ye people, For He has been exalted!" (1)

In her Christmas hymns, as in her other hymnody, the Orthodox Church does not limit her vision to earthly happenings alone. In these hymns she contemplates the events of Christ's life on earth from a dual perspective. Beyond the birth of a child in the poverty of a squalid cave, beyond the laying of the infant in a manger instead of a child's crib, beyond His poor mother's anxiety and alarm over His fate, supermundane events emerge—events which are outside this world's natural order:

"Today doth Bethlehem receive Him Who sitteth with the Father for ever". (2)

This was not the first birth of the One "who lay in a manger." First He was begotten of His Father "before all ages" as God; moreover He was begotten of the Father alone, without His Mother. In

Bethlehem He was born as men are born, but in contrast to all the sons of earth He was born of His Mother alone, without an earthly father. Having proclaimed "Christ is born!" in the 1st Song of the Christmas canon, the Church next calls upon the faithful to praise

"...the Son who was born of the Father Before all ages, and in this latter day Was made incarnate of the Virgin Without seed; Christ our God". (3)

In the last Song of the Christmas canon the feeling of the human mind's powerlessness to comprehend this union of Divine majesty and human insignificance, this glorious mystery, is expressed even more brilliantly and eloquently.

A dark cave had replaced the resplendent heavens; the earthly Virgin had taken the place of the Cherubim as the "throne" of the Lord of Glory; a little manger had become the receptacle of the omnipresent God Who could never be contained in space:

"I behold a strange but very glorious mystery: Heaven -- the cave; The throne of the Cherubim -- the Virgin. The manger -- the receptacle in which Christ our God, Whom nothing can contain, is lying" (4)

But nowhere does the attitude of reverence before this incomprehensible union of things heavenly and earthly find a more forceful expression than in the Kontakion for Christmas written by the greatest Greek hymn-writer, St. Romanos Melodus. Every word in it is full of meaning and one brilliant image follows another:

"Today the Virgin brings forth the Supersubstantial One And the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One".

Mary gave birth but remained a virgin, and gave existence to the One who is above all that exists in the world. And in the cave the earth provided a sanctuary for the One whom, as a general rule, men

may not even approach. Next, the second part of this kontakion gives us two pictures of events which unfolded simultaneously and harmoniously on earth and in heaven. In heaven the angels glorify God in unison with the shepherds on earth, and the Wise Men move across the earth according to the direction taken by the heavenly star. The meaning of all this is that the Child whose life on earth was as yet only a few hours old is at the same time God, who existed before time itself and yet was born now for our salvation:

"For for our sakes, God, Who is before all the ages, is born a little Child". (5)

What does the coming to earth of the Son of God really mean? Above all it means that people are illumined, that spiritual light is bestowed upon them. This idea is continually being put forward in the Christmas hymnody of the Orthodox Church. The Troparion for the Christmas Feast explains the basic meaning of the Feast, there is this direct statement:

"Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, Has illumined the world like the Light of Wisdom".

God enlightens each of us in the way that is most accessible and understandable to the particular person. And when He wished to enlighten the Wise Men, whose custom it was to observe the stars and their movements, He sent them an unusual star which guided them to the Christ.

"... They who worshipped the stars were through a star, Taught to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, And to know Thee, the Day-Spring from on high".

The star of Bethlehem gave the Wise Men an opportunity to see the rise of the Sun of Righteousness. But the light of Christ's righteousness is not an earthly light. Its motion was not from out of the earth towards the firmament of heaven, but from above downwards. Shining high

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Christmas Hymns in the Orthodox Church

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above the earth, it descended thereon from the heights of heaven and illumined the world with Divine light. It was the Day-Spring from on high. And all who have sat in spiritual darkness and waited for the true light have, like the Wise Men, come to know this extraordinary Day-Spring of the Sun of Righteousness.

*"Our Saviour hath visited us from on high...
And we who were plunged in darkness and shadows
Have found the truth,
For the Lord hath been born of the Virgin". (6)*

The Church addresses this prayer of praise and thanksgiving to the Infant born in Bethlehem:

"Glory and praise to the One born on earth Who hath divinized earthly human nature." (7)

The gifts of grace in the Holy Mysteries which strengthen enfeebled humanity, cure men, and regenerate them to a God-like life, were imparted by Christ in the final, culminating days of His earthly mission and are linked to His death on the cross and Resurrection. But these last things were prepared for by Christ's entire earthly life from Bethlehem to Golgotha. The Coming of Christ was the beginning of the salvation of mankind. And the Orthodox Church sings of Christ's Nativity as the morning of men's salvation, as the dawn after a long and anxious night—the dawn with which the new, shining day in the life of the human race has already started. The triumphal hymn of the Feast of Christmas is the "Gloria" sung by the angels to the Shepherds, to herald the coming of the Messiah.

"Glory in the Highest to God, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 2:14).

It is just as characteristic of Christmas as the hymn "Christ is Risen from the dead" is of Pascha (Easter).

According to the text of the second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel the "good tidings" proclaimed by the angels was not a repetition from the heavens of things that were well-known before. The innumerable heavenly host which appeared suddenly in the wake of the Angel who had stood before the shepherds of Bethlehem confirmed his "tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." (Luke 2:10). They also sang of the new, marvelous act of God's goodwill, His sending the Saviour to this earth. This was the meaning of their good news: "Glory to God in the Highest; salvation had come to a sinful earth with the birth of the Christ Child, the loving-kindness of God had descended upon men."

The extraordinary and wondrous Birth from a Pure Virgin is one of the fundamental themes of Christmas hymnody; at the same time the Mother of God, whom the Orthodox Church venerates with such pious devotion, is given in this hymnody a special place of honour. A number of examples from sacred history are used in these hymns in order to glorify Her perpetual virginity, Her conception by the Holy Spirit and Her "supermundane act of giving birth to God." The most important of these are the prophet Jonah's sojourn in the belly of the sea-monster and the Babylonian fiery furnace." The fiery furnace of Babylon did not burn the young men, who were covered with its flames, likewise:

*"The fire of the Godhead scorched not the Virgin,
When He entered into Her womb". (8)*

Despite the birth Mary was preserved a virgin like the Burning Bush on Mt. Sinai which could not be consumed but remained green in the flames. (9) The Church sings praises to Mary alike for Her virginity and Her touching maternal love. Her tenderness as a mother toward Her wondrous Infant Child, whom as Her son She held in Her arms at Her breast, but before whom She bowed in worship as before "the Son of the Highest," is expressed in the following lullaby which Church hymnody assigns to the lips of the

Lady Most Pure, calling upon us men "to magnify Her without ceasing":

*"O my child, child of sweetness,
How is it that I hold Thee, Almighty?
And how that I feed Thee,
Who givest bread to all men?
How is it that I swaddle Thee,
Who with the clouds encompasseth
the whole earth". (10)*

She who "knew not a man" and yet gave birth to the Incorporeal God is for the Orthodox Church at once mother and virgin.

*"Magnify, O my soul, the Virgin Most Pure,
The God-Bearer, who is more honourable
And more glorious than the heavenly
hosts". (11)*

The best and holiest of earthly creatures, exalted above the angels, the God-Bearer is the pride of this earth, a fitting gift from mankind to the Creator and Saviour:

*"What shall we present unto Thee, O Christ,
For Thy coming to earth for us men?
Each of Thy creatures brings Thee a
thank-offering:
The angels -- singing; the heavens -- a star;
The Wise Men -- treasures; the shepherds
devotion;
The earth -- a cave; the desert -- a manger;
But we offer Thee the Virgin-Mother.
O Eternal God, have mercy upon us". (12)*

In rendering "maternal-virginal glory" to Mary Full-of-Grace the Church venerates Mary because, through Her unspotted purity, She was made worthy to bring the Saviour into this world and Herself became the door of salvation and deliverance from the curse of sin which had weighed upon men:

*"Magnify, O my soul, Her who hath
delivered us from the curse". (13)*

Paradise is now once again opened to us. If sin entered the world through Eve, it is also through the New Eve (the Mother of our God) that victory over sin has come into the world.

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Christmas Hymns in the Orthodox Church

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The Church likewise summons us:

"Let us glorify in song the true God-Bearer

Through who sinners have been reconciled with God". (14)

The Mother of God represents the point at which the Godhead came into direct contact with Old Testament humanity. She is in this respect the living symbol of all the triumphant joy of Christmas, which is the celebration of God's reestablished union with men. God, who had driven our forefathers out of Paradise, had set them far apart from Himself. Now, with the birth of Christ, He has again come to men, just as He once came to them in Paradise. It has become possible again for men to be in communion with God. The barrier between Heaven and earth has fallen and so we sing along with Adam and Eve:

*"The wall of partition is destroyed,
The flaming sword is dropped,
The Cherubim withdraw from the Tree of Life,
And I partake of the fruits of Paradise,
Whence, for my disobedience, I was driven forth". (15)*

The underlying feeling of the Christmas Feast is one of peace. This is a result of the reconciliation and new unity between heaven and earth:

*"Heaven and earth now are united
through Christ's Birth!
Now is God come down to earth
And man arisen to the heaven". (16)*

This unity is the source of general exultation—a note which resounds vigorously in the Christmas hymnody:

*"Today Christ is born in Bethlehem of the Virgin.
Today He who is without a beginning begins,
And the Word is made flesh.
The powers of Heaven rejoice,
The earth and her people are jubilant;
The Wise Men bring gifts to the Lord,
The shepherds marvel at the One who is born;*

And we sing without ceasing:

"Glory to God in the Highest, And on earth peace, (God's) good will toward men". (17)

There is one solitary note, however, which breaks into these hymns of general rejoicing like a forewarning of future lamentations. The Wise Men -- according to the Christmas Eve stichera -- came to worship the Incarnate God and devotedly offered Him their gifts -- gold, because He is the King of ages; frankincense, because He is the God of all men; but then they also brought Him myrrh, with which the Jews were accustomed to anoint their dead, because He was to "lie three days in death."

The heart of the Mother of God must have been seized by a premonition of that which awaited the innocent Child who was sleeping peacefully in the manger. This minor note of sadness is drowned, however, in the general chorus of exultation. Heaven and earth rejoice together and this does not mean simply that the angels' singing harmonises with that of the shepherds. The Church does not even view so-called "inanimate nature" as indifferent to the higher world. The Creator has willed the existence of a special link between them. At an earlier time man's sinfulness had brought general disorder into nature, but now all nature leaps for joy, rejoicing at the over-coming of this sin:

*"Today the whole creation rejoices
and is jubilant,
For Christ is born of the Virgin". (18)*

In the Christmas hymnody the Star is not merely the voice which made known to the world the Saviour's appearance. It is also a sign, a symbol of this appearance, just as the Cross is the symbol of victory over the forces of darkness. Then, too, the Star is a symbol of Christ Himself, "the Star which rose from Jacob". (19)

For more than 19 centuries Christ has been shining down upon mankind as a guiding star, not as a myth or mirage, but as the living God, who has been on earth

and spoken with men. There have been many subsequent attempts to obscure the pure silver light of the Star of Bethlehem in human consciousness. But the centuries of the Christian era have not passed by in vain. And if the Christmas hymns continue to resound each year in churches scattered all over the world and to be sung as they were sung many hundreds of years ago by the grandfathers and forbears of the present generation, this means that the light shed by the Christmas Star is deeply rooted in human hearts and shines on in them undimmed.

From **Orthodox Hymns of Christmas, Holy Week and Easter**,
Published by the Russian Orthodox
Theological Fund Inc

1. Christmas Canon, 1st Song, Irmos
2. Christmas Matins, stichera after the Gospel
3. Christmas Canon, 3rd Song, Irmos
4. Christmas Canon, 9th Song, Irmos
5. Kontakion
6. Christmas Matins, Protagogion
7. Christmas Matins, Sedalen
8. Christmas Canon, 8th song, Irmos
9. 2nd Christmas Canon, 1st song, Troparion
10. Pre-Christmas,, 9th song, Troparion
11. Christmas Canon, 9th song, verse
12. Stichera by Patriarch Anatolios on "O Lord, I have cried unto Thee"
13. Christmas Canon, 9th Song, verse
14. Christmas Canon, 5th Song, Troparion
15. Stichera by Patriarch Hermanos on "O Lord, I have cried unto Thee"
16. Stichera on the Litiya
17. Stichera before the great Doxology
18. Christmas Canon, 9th song, verse
19. Christmas Canon, 6th song, Troparion

Reprinted from http://www.orthodoxchristian.info/pages/Christmas_hymns.html



Bits...



HOLY SUPPER KITS

The deadline to order has been extended to Sunday, December 6th. Order forms for the kits are in the November newsletter and in the narthex. There will be a basket at church where forms can be dropped off. The MBAS will be assembling the non-perishable portions of the Holy Supper Kits on Saturday, December 12th. Since that is the second weekend, we will also be holding our next Myrrh Bearers Meeting on that Saturday. I hope you will all be able to attend.

The kits will be distributed on December 19th and 20th. I would appreciate the help of any ladies who are in attendance on either of those days. On the 19th we will also be adding in the perishable items to the kits.

I want to thank all of the ladies who are helping to order and put together items.

Heather Pfeiffer



Sophia and Victor have prepared their prayer table for the Nativity Fast.



Emma crosses herself as she begins her prayers at her prayer table.

What shall we offer Thee, O
Christ,
Who for our sakes hast appeared
on the earth as a man?
Every creature which Thou hast
made offers Thee thanks.
The angels offer Thee a song;
The heavens, their star;
The wise men, their gifts;
The shepherds, their wonder;
The earth, its cave;
The wilderness; the manger;
And we offer Thee a virgin mother.
O Pre-eternal God, have mercy
on us!

Around SS Peter & Paul

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

- December 1 Andrew Blischak
Thomas McDonald
3 Grace Weiss
5 Natalya Delsante
Frank Bolton
6 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
Irina Zaremba
28 David & Stephanie Homyak
Svetlana Tanner (Fleenor)
29 Larry & Teddi Gardner
John Bushko
31 Tristan Sourk

Memory Eternal

Marilyn Bezkorovainy, beloved wife of Anatoly and member of our parish community, fell asleep in the Lord on November 21 st. Funeral services for will be held at Saints Peter and Paul Church at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, November 30. Burial will be follow at Greenwood Cemetery, 719 North 27th Avenue. May the Lord grant memory eternal to His newly-departed servant Marilyn and consolation to her husband Anatoly and all her family.

May her memory be eternal!

PRAYER LIST

May Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Physician of our souls and bodies, reach out his healing hand and bless these, His servants.

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

Fr. David & Matushka Mary Balmer
Archbishop DAVID
Jerusalem and the child to be born of her
Claire & Bob McNeal
Stephen Bock
Nicholas Schtur
Jamie Arango
Rose Kurowski
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 after Divine Liturgy on Saturday, December 5th **AND** Sunday, December 6th. Saint Nicholas will join us in preparing for our celebration of Christ's Birth and, as he always does, distribute pre-Christmas "treats" to the young and to the young at heart.

After Liturgy, please return to your car. (Greet each other by waving, giving air hugs & kisses, or the thumbs up sign), **but** remain with your vehicles. Once everyone has venerated the icons, St. Nicholas will visit everyone in the parking lot. We ask that you wait patiently by your vehicle until he has had a chance to visit everyone and someone gives the "all clear" sign. You are free to leave once the signal has been given. Please be cautious as you leave to avoid a congested parking lot.

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, Father David or Father Mihai. Social distancing and masks are worn for confessions.

CHURCH DECORATING

Please mark your calendars and plan on joining in decorating our church on Tuesday, December 22, 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! As our usual routine during the pandemic, masks will be worn and social distancing will be observed.

CHURCH SCHOOL

Nativity resources for young children: <https://orthodoxpebbles.com/new-testament/nativity/>.



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 Mihai, Deacon John, all the clergy and faithful of our parish community. May the Lord Himself, He Who is "God with Us," be your reward!

NEW YEAR'S DAY

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

HIGH SCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL

Eli and Anne Ferbrache will be hosting a virtual study of the Gospel of Luke on Saturdays from 7:30-8:30pm. We will go chapter by chapter all the way through Lent. Teenagers ages 14 to 19 are warmly welcomed to join us each week for good questions and conversations. As soon as we can do this in person we will make adjustments. An email will be sent out with the zoom link. Please contact us at eaferbrache@gmail.com if you are new to the high school group. We would love you to join.

PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD

The deadline to have your name included in the Parish Christmas Card is December 13th. Forms are available in the narthex. Proceeds will help people affected by the western wildfires. Contact Stephanie Homyak with any questions: 602.432.7473 (cell) or stephanie_homyak@yahoo.com.

FOCA

Just a reminder FOCA will be selling rum balls. The deadline has been extended to December 6. There are order forms available at the church or you can call Judy Bushko at 480.759.1717. FOCA will also be meeting after church on December 6th.

FROM THE CHURCH TREASURER

The last month of the year is now upon us. Now is your chance to make sure your 2020 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 mailed out in early December. If you do not receive one, see Dave Homyak in the church office. Please be sure to turn in your donations for 2020 **on or prior to December 27th** or contact the Financial Secretary, John Hecht. Otherwise, contributions received afterward will be attributed to 2021.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER DONATION

Please donate toward the (empty) 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 (e.g., IRA/401K/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 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 for further expansion (**parking**) and growth. In order to take advantage of these availabilities when the time comes, the church will need to have the financial reserves available to be able to act. 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.

December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 St. Alexander Holovitsky	5 Ven. Sabbas the Sanctified 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Visit from St. Nicholas 5:00pm Vespers
<div style="background-color: #d4edda; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #c3e6cb;">  <p style="text-align: center;">Eve of Nativity Holy Supper Kits Place your orders by Sunday, December 6th. Kits will be distributed December 19th and 20th. Questions—call Heather Pfeiffer at 602.616.1340</p> </div>						
6 St. Nicholas the Wonderworker 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS FOCA MEETING <i>Last day to order Holy Supper Kit or Rum Balls</i>	7	8 6:00pm Council Meeting	9 Icon “Unexpected Joy”	10 Annual Visit from St. Nicholas Saturday, December 5 th AND Sunday, December 6 th See details on page 7.	11 	12 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy MBAS Holy Supper Kit Assembly and Meeting 5:00pm Vespers
13 Holy Forefathers Ven. Herman of Alaska 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Last Day to sign up for Nativity Card	14	15	16	17	18	19 Sat. Before Nativity 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Vespers
<div style="background-color: #d4edda; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #c3e6cb;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Parish Nativity Card</p> <p style="text-align: center;">To have your name included in the Parish Nativity Card, please complete the form in the November newsletter. Extra forms will be available in the narthex. Deadline is December 13, 2020. Proceeds will be used to help people affected by the western wildfires.</p> </div>						
20 Sunday Before Nativity Forefeast of the Nativity 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	21	22 10:00am Church Decorating	23	24 Eve of the Nativity 5:00pm Vespers Divine Liturgy	25 NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM! 	26 Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos 5:00pm Vespers
27 Sunday After Nativity 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	28	29	30	31 Leavetaking Nativity	1 Circumcision of Christ St. Basil the Great 9:00am Divine Liturgy	2 Sat before Theophany Repose of St. Seraphim of Sarov 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Vespers
<div style="background-color: #f8d7da; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid #f5c6cb;"> <p style="text-align: center;">FOCA RUM BALL SALE \$10/dozen Last day to place orders is Sunday, December 6th. Contact Judy Bushko at 480.759.1717 to place your order.</p> </div>						
3 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	4	5	6 THEOPHANY 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Great Blessing of Water</i>	7 Synaxis of St. John the Baptist	8	9 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Vespers