

# SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 22, Issue 12

December 2022

## November Council Highlights

- ✘ October Operating Income was \$14,411.54 and Operating Expenses were \$18,168.05, resulting in a deficit of **\$3,756.51** for the month.
- ✘ Fr Mikel requested the Parish purchase a Holy Water dispenser and additional copies of the Book of Needs.
- ✘ Father Mikel would like to update our visitor's package.
- ✘ FOCA, Myrrh Bearers and Sunday School are all working on various Christmas projects.



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## Christ is Born and the Wise Men Worship

One of the ways we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ is to sing the Troparion of the Feast. The words of the hymn describe Jesus Christ as the light of the world, the Sun of Righteousness and the Orient from on high. The hymn also refers to the wise men from the East who followed a star to find this newborn King.



Depictions and descriptions of the wise men differ. They are sometimes called Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, but have also been given other names. In Western art they are often shown riding camels, presumably to indicate that they come from the East, but in icons they ride horses, a way of showing that they wanted to get to the Savior as quickly as possible. Swift horses can certainly maintain a different pace from that of plodding camels, though the ride was arduous no matter what animals they rode.

While in many representations all three men look to be approxi-

mately the same age, icons show one as distinctly older than the other two, emphasizing that the urgent work of seeking salvation is for people of all ages, just as it is for people of every background and origin.

One word that is used by most traditions to identify the three travelers is "magi." This word brings to mind images of men who watched the stars closely and tried to derive wisdom from them, or who "worshipped the stars," as the Troparion states.

The wise men are not the only ones to whom this word is applied. In Acts 8: 9-24 we meet a "magus" (the singular of "magi") named Simon, who says of himself that he is "something great." He is popular and is

listened to because he has amazed the people with magic. But Simon's response to the truly great things he sees the apostles doing is all wrong. He hopes to buy the power they have, so that "anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the

Holy Spirit." Peter rebukes him and urges him to repent.

The magi who come to worship Jesus in the cave are quite different. They are ready to humble themselves before this Child. They are willing to be "taught by a star to adore" Him, as the Troparion puts it, not seeking to share His power but just to offer Him gifts. They are ready to accept what God is showing them by means of a star that is different from all the stars they have studied so attentively.

In his poem "Journey of the Magi" T.S. Eliot writes that the men returned to their kingdom homes but were "no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation, With an alien people clutching their gods." The mag-

**Troparion - Tone 4**  
*Your 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 You,  
 The Sun of Righteousness,  
 And to know You, the Orient from on High.  
 O Lord, glory to You!*

is' lives were changed, and perhaps they would never again be comfortable. God had shown them something entirely new in the stars, and the only possible response was the one we sing in the Troparion: "O Lord, glory to Thee."

# Message From Our Rector



Greetings in the name of the Lord!

I pray that the Nativity Fast is going well for everyone. As we go through this Fast in the month of December, let us not get so caught up in the trappings of the season that we forget why we are fasting, and that is in anticipation and preparation of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. He is the Word which became flesh; that is, the Son of God, Who is co-eternal with God the Father and with the Holy Spirit, He became human, having become incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. And we recite and remember this every time we say the Creed in our personal prayers and in the Divine Liturgy. This is such a wondrous, awesome and saving mystery one cannot help but be humbled that our Good God would come to earth to show us the path to the kingdom! Christ, Who had no beginning, took on a beginning according to humanity; the One without flesh assumed flesh. God became man without ceasing to be God. The Unapproachable One became approachable to all of us, in the form of a humble servant. Why, and for what reason, does our Creator, lower Himself to come to earth and help His transgressing creatures, who, because of their own actions and will, have fallen away from God, its Creator? We can see that God our creator did not leave us to perish in our own fallenness, He did



not ignore that which He created. He instead sent His Son to show us the path to eternal salvation. The Archangel Gabriel appears to Mary to let her know that she had found favor with God and that the Holy Spirit will come upon her and that the Eternal God is born as a little Child. It is sometimes difficult to understand the magnitude of what God has done for us. Giving us the way out of this sinful world. We are able these days to see all the sinful things that are taking place around the world, but because our Lord became flesh, we have the consolation that those who keep His commandments will have everlasting peace. Christ says in John's Gospel *"Do you now believe? 32 Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. 33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* Let us take some time to be at peace with everyone, to forgive those who have hurt or offended us. So that as we go through the rest of the fast we can take time to contemplate on all that God has done for mankind and for us personally, and then we can joyfully welcome the Christ-Child into the world. May we all have a blessed fast.



**HOLY SUPPER** Following 40 days of Nativity Lent, the birth of Jesus Christ is commemorated with a final Lenten feast on the eve of Nativity. There are several symbolic features to the dinner table, including the placing of hay on or under the tablecloth in memory of the manger in which the Holy Child was placed by His Mother at His birth. The linen tablecloth represents the birth clothes Christ was wrapped.

The Supper usually consists of 12 courses, symbolic of the 12 Apostles. The twelve fasting foods usually served are: barley, honey, stewed prunes, pierogi, sauerkraut, potatoes, lima beans, garlic, Lenten bread, mushroom soup and salt. The foods are also reminders that life is both bitter and sweet, and that the work of each day throughout the current year was required to truly celebrate Christ's Coming.

SS Peter & Paul will gather for Holy Supper after Matins on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Please see Marty Gala if you would like to bring an item for Holy Supper or would like to donate toward the purchase of some of the items.

### Troparion

*Mary was of David's seed,  
So she went with Joseph to register in Bethlehem.  
She bore in her womb the Fruit not sown by man.  
The time for the birth was at hand.  
Since there was no room at the inn,  
The cave became a beautiful palace for the Queen.  
Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of old.*

### Kontakion

*Today the Virgin comes to the cave  
To give birth to the Eternal Word.  
Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!  
Glorify with the angels and the shepherds  
The Eternal God, who is willing to appear  
as a little child!*

# Snoopy's Christmas: A Seasonal Meditation

Fr. Lawrence Farley

Each year one of my favourite Christmas songs is an old novelty song called Snoopy's Christmas, released in 1967 by the Royal Guardsmen as a follow-up to their previous hit *Snoopy vs. the Red Baron*. The song was inspired by actual events. During the First World War troops on either side of the front line crossed over into No Man's Land on Christmas Day to celebrate the holiday together. Soldiers who were previously trying to kill each other on December 24 stopped trying to do that and met together to talk, share cigarettes, show each other photos of their wives, sweethearts, and families, drink together, and even play a game of football. It was initiated entirely by the soldiers themselves (beginning with the Germans). The military leadership was utterly opposed to the whole thing, and was emphatically not amused. Like Christmas, the astonishing and undeclared truce lasted one day.

The Royal Guardsmen's song commemorating the event was as follows:

*"The news had come out in the First World War:*

*The bloody Red Baron was flying once more.  
The Allied command ignored all of its men,  
And called on Snoopy to do it again.*

*'Twas the night before Christmas, 40 below,  
When Snoopy went up in search of his foe.  
He spied the Red Baron; fiercely they fought;  
With ice on his wings Snoopy knew he was caught.*

*(Refrain:) Christmas bells those Christmas bells  
Ring out from the land!  
Asking peace of all the world,  
And good will to man!*

*The Baron had Snoopy dead in his sights.  
He reached for the trigger to pull it up tight.  
Why he didn't shoot, well, we'll never know,  
Or was it the bells from the village below?*

*The Baron made Snoopy fly to the Rhine,  
And forced him to land behind the enemy lines.*

*Snoopy was certain that this was the end,  
When the Baron cried out, "Merry Christmas,  
my friend!"*

*The Baron then offered a holiday toast,  
And Snoopy, our hero, saluted his host.  
And then with a roar they were both on their way,  
Each knowing they'd meet on some other day."*

I can't help comparing it to another seasonal song, John Lennon's *Imagine*, released four years later in 1971. It also was an anti-war song, but came from a very different place. In Lennon's imaginary world (excuse the pun), wars could be eliminated by eliminating religion: "Imagine there's no countries. It isn't hard to do. Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion too. Imagine all the people living life in peace." The idea seemed to be that war could be eliminated by eliminating religion and national borders. That was consistent with the billboards Lennon and his muse Yoko Ono sponsored, saying, "War is Over—If You Want It". The scenario of evil men not wanting it seems not to have entered his brain.

Of course that's just the problem—there are evil men who don't want war to be over. Hitler was one of them. In theological terms, mankind is fallen (or, as the Lord put it, men were evil; see Matthew 7:11). The only thing that could possibly eliminate war is a change in the human heart, the operation where our stony heart is removed and replaced with a heart of flesh (see Ezekiel 36:26). In other words, war can only be eliminated by the change in men that comes only through Jesus Christ. It is tempting to conclude by saying that this was the true message of *Snoopy's Christmas*—that Christianity is the answer to war and to all of mankind's problems.

But the issue is not quite so simple. For one thing, it is fatally easy to apply a thin varnish of Christianity over the human heart and to imagine that this thin veneer is all that is needed. It is not so. Byzantium

fought wars, for all of their love of icons, and the Generals of the First World War who were opposed to that brief and blessed Christmas truce were Christians too.

We can even see this in the song *Snoopy's Christmas* itself. The endearing truce between Snoopy and the Red Baron warms the heart. But take a closer look at the last lines of the song: "And then with a roar they were both on their way, each knowing they'd meet on some other day." That is, on Boxing Day or later, they would both mount up into the sky once more and try to kill each other all over again.

Christmas Day is wonderful, and culturally speaking, it is the time when the Kingdom of God intersects with this world. For those alive to this intersection, it is indeed unthinkable that one could kill a man on Christmas and then go home to celebrate the birth of Christ with one's family by the family Christmas tree. But the cultural intersection ends soon enough.

What does this mean? It means that though *individuals* might allow Christ to transform them, to take out their heart of stone and replace it with a heart of flesh, *cultures* mostly resist this operation. They may allow a thin veneer of Christianity to be slopped on top, but that's about it. Or, in the aphorism of G. K. Chesterton, Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried. That explains both the wars of Byzantium and the chagrin of the World War One Generals.

Depend upon it: virtue in this age is always martyric, and a price will be paid for consistent Christianity by those determined to live their lives within that blessed intersection of the Christmas Kingdom and this world. Christmas offers challenge as well as solace. And that (as Linus might say) is the true meaning of Christmas, Charlie Brown.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://www.oca.org/reflections/fr.-lawrence-farley/snoopys-christmas-a-seasonal-meditation>



# Eternal God: a Little Child



Fr. John Beck

Thanksgiving is over and we are moving toward what one of our wise and dedicated priests refers to as “Getmas.” He is as frustrated and dismayed at what exuberant commercialism and American popular religion have done to Christmas as I am with the relentless efforts to transform our national feast of Thanksgiving into “Turkey Day.” These campaigns are insidious and they’ve been highly effective: God—the true God who reveals Himself in Scripture and in the lives of those who strive to know Him—has been all but eliminated from our collective civil conscience.

This might not be a totally bad thing, though, if it leads us to reflect again at this time of year on our response to God’s wonderful if incomprehensible gift of Life, bestowed on us through the “coming in the flesh” of His eternal Son. In fact, there may be no better way to experience genuine gratitude, and respond to it with thanksgiving, than by focusing mind and heart on the Incarnation. Jesus’ Conception and Nativity enabled Him to share fully in our humble, broken and sinful nature, our earthly existence, with the single purpose of offering to us the possibility to share eternally—in this life and beyond—in His own life, His own glorified existence. This is the Church’s most fundamental conviction, grounded in the experience of multitudes of witnesses, from the Disciples and early Church martyrs down to the present time, where discipleship still often means martyrdom. It is this conviction that gives transcendent meaning and purpose to our daily life, while it preserves us from the temptation to reject the world around us as the world has rejected Christ.

A striking feature of the Nativity feast is the reciprocity between God’s work on our

behalf and our reply. Liturgical verses from the feast stress the point that our response to that work is precisely to give thanks, to express our boundless gratitude for the free gift of divine Life.

*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.*

(from Vespers stichira)

God offers the gift of life to angels as well as to us. Every aspect of creation is involved: the visible and the invisible, things in heaven and things on earth. They are all the objects of God’s gift in Christ. That gift elicits in return a response of thanksgiving that takes the form of other gifts, reciprocal offerings of our own treasures. Chief among those treasures is what we, as bearers of the divine image, offer in return: the Virgin Mother, the God-bearer or *Theotokos*. Yet like every treasure we possess and can offer up in thanksgiving, she is first given to us by God. We can only offer what He has already bestowed upon us, “Thine own of Thine own....”

The most striking and significant feature of the Nativity feast, though, is its celebration of paradox. Repeatedly, liturgical verses hymn elements of the mystery of Christ’s birth that defy human reason.

*“A strange and most wonderful mystery do I see. The cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger a room, in which Christ, the God whom nothing can contain, is laid. Him do we praise and magnify!”* (Irmos, 9<sup>th</sup> Ode of Matins)

No traditional creche scene can capture the wonder expressed in these lines. Here in a cave a newborn child is laid in a manger by his devoted mother. It is a scene repeated countless times throughout history. This time, however, everything is different, changed. For here the cave, a dark hole carved into the earth, is filled with radiant glory. The Virgin appears as a Mother, “more honorable than the cherubim” enthroned upon her. And the humble manger contains the Agent of Creation, the Word of God who called all things into being, and whom no created thing can contain.

The ultimate expression of the Nativity mystery, the unfathomable paradox of God’s appearance in the flesh, is found in the Kontakion of the feast:

*Today the Virgin gives birth to 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!*

*Today* the birth occurs. *Today*, in our immediate experience, in our own time and space, a virgin becomes a mother and gives birth to God. *Today* the earth offers to its Creator a simple cave, while angels, shepherds and wise men offer their praise and adoration. *Today* the entire cosmos enters into the celebration with ineffable joy and exultation. Because *for our sake*, for ourselves and our loved ones, for every person who has ever longed for eternal life in the joy, peace and beauty of the heavenly Kingdom—for us all, and for our salvation, the eternal God is born as a little child.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web site, <https://www.oca.org/reflections/fr.-john-breck/eternal-god-a-little-child>



# The Sufferings of Saint Nicholas

December 6 is the feast day of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of everyone from long-shoremen to embalmers, and of places from New York City to Argentina. In fact he is the patron of more occupations, causes, people and places than any other saint we know of.

The stories of his humility and compassion are well-known. He had no ambition to become a bishop, but accepted the office in obedience. When he saved three marriageable and impoverished girls from disaster by providing money, he planned to do it secretly. There are stories of sailors caught on stormy seas, defenseless peasants wrongly accused of crimes, and countless others in need or in danger who were saved by his intercession. His kindness to children helped them to see Christ in him, so that even if their life circumstances were harsh, they knew a Savior cared for them.

But additional aspects of his life give even more luster to his example. Though he was not a martyr, Saint Nicholas suffered greatly in his life, and had to stand up to powerful forces that could have undermined the Church.

He became a bishop at the beginning of the fourth century and during the reign of Diocletian, a Roman emperor who detested Christianity as an enemy of Rome's glory. Nicholas, having become a publicly visible leader of the Christians, was imprisoned and tortured. The incarceration was not brief, either. Not until Constantine ascended the throne were the Christian prisoners released.

It was not only outward threats that faced the Church during Nicholas' time as bishop. Within the Church the Arian heresy, denying that Christ was truly the Son of God, was widely popular. Bishop Nicholas had to work against its falsehoods, and defend his people against its influence.


At the Council of Nicaea the threat of Arian-

ism was made physically present. Arius had eloquence enough to make his "reasonable" version of the faith appealing to listeners and did so at the Council, speaking to those in attendance in his intelligent and engaging manner. How painful it must have been for Nicholas to hear this smooth talker distort everything for which Christ had died and risen. His memories of his own imprisonment and that of so many others who would not compromise the faith only added to the pain.

So Saint Nicholas exemplifies more than loving benevolence. He also shares our experience of suffering, and shows how to carry on without flinching from it. The words of Jesus Christ in Luke 21: 12-19,

which are read on this day, apply to Nicholas' life: "...they will lay their hands on you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors...some of you will be put to death; you will be hated by all for my name's sake."

But Christ's final words in this passage are the ones Nicholas would encourage us to remember: "By your endurance you will gain your lives."

*This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.* 

## Saint Paisius Monastery trip, Safford AZ


**Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 7:15am-9:30pm**

### Monastery Itinerary

- 11:30am lunch trapeza at monastery
- Bookstore, grounds tour, and personal time
- 4pm vespers, dinner
- 6:30pm departure

### Carpool Arrival: 7:15am

**Departure: 7:40am, promptly.** (We want to leave enough time for a rest stop and still arrive in good time to respect the sister's schedule.)

 [16864 S 40th St, Phoenix, AZ 85048](#)

Carpool meet up at NW corner of 40th St /202 at the Park-and-Ride, near I-10, right on our route to the monastery.

Here, cars can park under covered parking, in safe, well-lit departure location. Please let us know if you're willing to drive and how many passengers you can take.



Sign up via text or call to **Antonia Adams-Clement @ (602)796-2630**, or through **signup sheets at coffee hour**, with Antonia or Anne Ferbrache. Please provide

- name
- cell phone number
- number of passengers
- carpool driver availability

### CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WELCOME!

**Proper attire and monastery guidelines**  
**Please, read carefully! Closed-toes shoes and socks required.**

Men/boys are kindly asked to wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Please, no baseball caps or clothing with inappropriate words or images. Men are asked to keep their heads uncovered. Please remove any visible piercing or jewelry.

Women/girls are kindly asked to wear long-sleeved, loose-fitting shirts that fully cover the chest up to the neck; long skirts (or dresses) without deep slits; scarves that cover the head and wrap under the chin and around the neck, so that the neck is also covered. Please refrain from wearing lipstick when venerating icons and receiving Holy Communion. Please remove any visible piercings or jewelry.

# Bits...



**MBAS HOLIDAY BAKE SALE AND PRIZE DRAWING** The Myrrh Bearers Altar Society will be holding our annual bake sale and holiday prize drawing on December 18<sup>th</sup> during coffee hour. Feed your sweet tooth with holiday treats such as cookies, candies and holiday breads at the bake sale. The prize drawing will have a selection of personal and household items with tickets selling for \$1 each or 6 for \$5.

**HOST A COFFEE HOUR** If you are interested in hosting a coffee hour, the sign-up sheets are now located on a clipboard next to the kitchen pass-through in the hall. Please make sure to keep this separate from the cleanup form located next to it. MBAS provides bagels and coffee throughout the year, but many families and groups like to host a coffee hour for special occasions, such as in celebration

of a family event, in memory of a loved one, or just because they like to cook. If you are interested, please place your name on the date of your choice. If you would like more information about how to host a coffee hour, please speak to a member of MBAS. If you host a coffee hour, it is asked that you help with the cleanup on that day. Also, please be aware of fasting seasons when you sign-up to host coffee hour and make sure you bring lenten items during fasting periods.

### HELP NEEDED FOR COFFEE HOUR CLEANUP

Your help is needed to keep our church hall clean on Sundays after coffee hour. Each week, volunteers help remove the coffee hour food and beverages from the hall, wash the dishes, put away extra plates/cups/silverware/food items/etc., wipe down tables, tidy up the kitchen, put items back in the pantry, take out the trash, and

take the wash cloths/towels home to wash. The first three Sundays are covered by MBAS, FOCA, and the church board; however, volunteers are needed for the remaining Sundays. A clipboard has been hung by the kitchen pass-through window with a sign-up sheet for the coffee hour cleanup. If you are able to stay and help, please sign up. If you have questions about coffee hour cleanup, please see one of the MBAS ladies.

**FOCA** The FOCA wishes you a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year. Those

who are celebrating birthdays in December may God grant you many years.

We will be selling rum balls for \$12.00/doz. Please see order form in the church hall.



FOCA members assemble activity kits for Whittier students and make rum balls for fundraiser.

## Around SS Peter & Paul

### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

December 1 Andrew Blischak  
 3 Grace Weiss  
 5 Natalya Delsante  
 6 Philip Mauskopf  
 7 Roman Gabriel Mauskopf  
 11 Isolda Akhba  
 Culey Mebrahtu  
 12 Walter Moschowsky  
 Yuliya Keck  
 15 Svetlana & John Tanner  
 16 Dasha O'Brien  
 22 Eva Helena Mauskopf  
 24 Maria Dastakyan  
 26 Joseph Gala  
 Irina Zaremba  
 28 David & Stephanie Homyak  
 Svetlana Tanner  
 29 Larry & Teddi Gardner  
 John Bushko  
 31 Tristan Sourk  
 Christian Tellez  
 Christopher Tellez

### CONGRATULATIONS AND MANY YEARS

To the newly Chrismated Demi Jensen. Demi was Chrismated on Saturday, October 22nd. Congratulations to Demi, her family, and her sponsor, Antonia Adams-Clement.



### 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:

*Monya Bock*

*Pam Bolton*

*Elizabeth Michel*

*Walter Booriakin*

*Elena Kerr*

*Jamie Arango*

*Antonia Adams-Clement*

*Tammy Horton*

*The suffering people of Ukraine*

*If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Fr. Mikel Bock.*

# ... and Pieces

## SAINT NICHOLAS CELEBRATION

Our annual visit from Saint Nicholas will take place after Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. 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.



## CHRISTMAS OUTREACH—ANOTHER PARISH SUCCESS

Once again our generous parishioners drove another successful community outreach. We had sufficient donations and student adoptions (buying and wrapping gifts) to support 50 of the neediest students at Whittier Elementary school. This is the most children we have cared for since this outreach began in 2015. Each student will receive a gift (or gifts) worth \$50 or more, plus a \$60 gift card to Food City grocery stores. Parishioners donated or spent more than \$5,500 on this important outreach. Thanks to all who contributed or helped.

**PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD** The deadline to have your name included in the Parish Christmas Card is December 11<sup>th</sup>. Forms are available in the narthex and in the church hall. Contact Stephanie Homyak with any questions: 602.432.7473 (cell) or [stephanie\\_homyak@yahoo.com](mailto:stephanie_homyak@yahoo.com).

**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 take the time to 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. Vespers are heard after Vespers or by appointment. An appointment can be made before Vespers or anytime during the week.

**CHURCH DECORATING** Please mark your calendars and plan on joining in decorating our church on Tuesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 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!

**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.

**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.

**BOOKSTORE** The bookstore will be carrying a small but beautiful collection of crosses in a variety of styles, sizes and prices. Also, look for an extended selection of icons! Both crosses and icons make for very thoughtful gifts for the holidays or any special occasion.

**UKRAINE RELIEF FUND** Bishop Spiridon is the Ukrainian bishop that our church has been working with to support our Ukraine relief efforts. In addition to the procurement and distribution of generators, fuel, food, blankets, and personal hygiene goods for those in immediate need, our funding support



has resulted in the purchase and distribution of 100 mattresses for Holy Dormition Lavra in Svyatogorsk, in the Donetsk region. There is still much that is needed. Please look into your hearts to remember those who are in need with your prayers and continuing support. Anyone who is able, please continue your humanitarian support to the Ukrainian people with your designated contributions via our church. God Bless.





**FROM THE CHURCH TREASURER** The last month of the year is now upon us. Now is your chance to make sure your 2022 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 emailed 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 2022 **on or prior to December 25th** or contact the Financial Secretary, John Hecht. Otherwise, contributions received afterward may/will be attributed to 2023.

## 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. 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 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 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.

# December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p><b>HOLY SUPPER</b> Saturday, December 24, 2022 following Matins Please see Marty Gala to sign-up.</p>				1	2	3 5:00pm Vespers
<p><b>4 St. Alexander Holovitsky</b> Great Martyr Barbara 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>CHURCH SCHOOL</b> <b>FOCA MEETING</b></p>	<p><b>5 Ven. Sabbas the Sanctified</b>  6:00pm Vespers</p>	<p><b>6 St. Nicholas the Wonderworker</b> 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p><b>7</b>  <b>Annual Visit from St. Nicholas</b> Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>9 Icon "Unexpected Joy"</b> Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos</p>	<p><b>10</b>  5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p><b>11 Holy Forefathers</b> 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>CHURCH SCHOOL</b> VISIT FROM <b>ST. NICHOLAS</b> <b>MBAS MEETING</b></p>	<p><b>12 St. Spiridon the Wonderworker</b>  6:00pm Vespers</p>	<p><b>13 Repose of St. Herman of Alaska</b> 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy  6:00pm Council Meeting</p>	<p><b>14 15 16 Parish Nativity Card</b> 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 and hall. Deadline is December 11, 2022.</p>			<p><b>17 Sat. Before Nativity</b>  <b>SAINT PAISIUS MONASTERY TRIP</b></p>
<p><b>19 Sunday Before Nativity</b> 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>CHURCH SCHOOL</b> <b>MBAS CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE &amp; PRIZE DRAWING</b></p>	<p><b>19 20 21 MBAS CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE AND PRIZE DRAWING</b> Sunday, December 19, 2022 </p>			<p><b>22</b>  6:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p><b>23</b> 9:00am Royal Hours Typica </p>	<p><b>24 Eve of the Nativity</b> 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy  5:00pm Matins 6:15pm Holy Supper</p>
<p><b>25 NATIVITY OF OUR LORD</b> 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <b>CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!</b></p>	<p><b>26 Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos</b>  6:00pm Vespers</p>	<p><b>27 First Martyr Stephen</b> 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p><b>28</b>  6:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p><b>29</b></p>	<p><b>30</b></p>	<p><b>31 Leavetaking Nativity</b>  5:00pm Vespers</p>
<p><b>1 Sun. before Theophany</b> Circumcision of Christ St. Basil the Great 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Molieben for the Civil New Year <b>NO CHURCH SCHOOL</b></p>	<p><b>2 Repose of St. Seraphim of Sarov</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b>  6:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p><b>5 Eve of Theophany</b> 8:00am Royal Hours 9:00am Vesperal Divine Liturgy <i>Great Blessing of Water Inside</i></p>	<p><b>6 THEOPHANY</b> 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Great Blessing of Water Outside</i></p>	<p><b>7 Synaxis of St. John the Baptist</b>  5:00pm Vespers</p>