

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 23, Issue 12

December 2023

November Council Highlights

- ✘ October Operating Income was \$17,324.62 and Operating Expenses were \$17,152.33, resulting in a net income of \$127.29 for the month, which brings us to \$1,103.30 YTD.
- ✘ Parish Annual Meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2024 following Divine Liturgy.
- ✘ Proceeds from the Parish Christmas Card will go to the nuns at St. Macarius Monastery for their building fund.



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The Nativity Sermon of St. John Chrysostom

Behold a new and wondrous mystery.

My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side, the Sun of justice. And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed; He had the power; He descended; He redeemed; all things yielded in obedience to God. This day He Who is, is Born; and He Who is, becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the

Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassability, remaining unchanged.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominations, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Since this heavenly birth cannot be described, neither does His coming amongst us in these days permit of too curious scrutiny. Though I know that a Virgin this day gave birth, and I believe that God was begotten before all time, yet the manner of this generation I have learned to venerate in silence and I accept that this is not to be probed too curiously with wordy speech.

For with God we look not for the order of nature, but rest our faith in the power of Him who works.

What shall I say to you; what shall I tell you? I behold a Mother who has brought forth; I see a Child come to this light by birth. The manner of His conception I cannot comprehend.

Nature here rested, while the Will of God labored. O ineffable grace! The Only Begotten, Who is before all ages, Who cannot be touched or be perceived, Who is simple, without body, has now put on my body, that is visible and liable to corruption. For what reason? That coming amongst us he may teach us, and teaching, lead us by the hand to the things that men cannot see. For since men believe that the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears, they doubt of that which they do not see, and so He has deigned to show Himself in bodily presence, that He may remove all doubt.

Christ, finding the holy body and soul of the Virgin, builds for Himself a living temple, and as He had willed, formed there a man from the Virgin; and, putting Him on, this day came forth; unashamed of the lowliness of our nature.

For it was to Him no lowering to put on what He Himself had made. Let that handiwork be forever glorified, which became the cloak of its own Creator. For as in the first creation of flesh, man could not be made before the clay had come into His hand, so neither could this cor-

(Continued on page 2)

Message From Our Rector



Greetings to all in the name of the Lord!

I pray that the Nativity Fast is going well for everyone. We should remember that the fast is not just about food, but about putting away all evil and sin, preparing ourselves for the birth of Christ. In this way, we can go through this Fast remembering that it is the birth of our Lord and Saviour that we will be celebrating, and that we should not get so caught up in the trappings of the season that we forget why we are fasting.

Christ tells us that He was born to suffer, die and resurrect, to save us from hell and



eternal torment to give us the path to the heavenly Kingdom. We should take this time of the fast to briefly pause to reflect on our life, our judgment to come, eternity, and what answer we will give to God for our life. 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. 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 that one cannot help but be humbled that our Good God would come to earth to show us the path to the kingdom!

Shortly after the Nativity we will bring in a new civil year where most people make New Year's resolutions. We should not wait until then, but resolve during the Nativity Fast to pray more, read Holy Scripture more, and live our life according to the way Christ asks us to live, as humble, obedient servants of His.

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, and that we may begin the New Year in peace.

May we all have a blessed fast.

Fr. Mikel



The Nativity Sermon of St. John Chrysostom

(Continued from page 1)

ruptible body be glorified, until it had first become the garment of its Maker.

What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He Who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He Who cannot be touched, Who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He Who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infants bands. But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation the measure of His Goodness.


For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my

flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit that He may save me.

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been in planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels.

Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all

things commingle. He became Flesh. He did not become God. He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive. He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infants food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

To Him, then, Who out of confusion has wrought a clear path, to Christ, to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, we offer all praise, now and forever. Amen. 

The Nativity of Christ: What's in a Greeting?

Fr. Basil Zebrun
“Christ is Born, glorify Him. Christ is from Heaven, receive ye Him. Christ is on earth, be ye exalted. O all the earth, sing unto the Lord...” (Ode 1, Nativity Canon).

These words begin the Nativity Canon sung during Matins on December 24 and at each major Vigil Service during Advent. They are found as well, at the start of a Nativity (*Theophany*) sermon by St. Gregory the Theologian (4th century, *Oration 38*) and were given a prominent place over time in the Orthodox celebration of Christmas.

The exclamation, “Christ is Born! Glorify Him!” also constitutes a traditional Orthodox greeting during the holiday season. In this brief affirmation of joy, is presented both a great mystery of grace and the human response: *Christ is*

“So, when Orthodox Christians greet one another with “Christ is Born,” we should maybe pause briefly, giving ourselves an opportunity to think about what is being declared...”

Born, a mystery past all understanding; *Glorify Him*, the most appropriate reaction to God's offering of love.

During the Nativity season when Orthodox Christians greet one another with, “*Christ is Born!*” they are affirming through the eyes of faith that in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, *the Christ*, the anointed and promised Savior of the world has come (*John 1:40-41; 4:25-26*). The Man Jesus—born in Bethlehem—is the only begotten Son of the one, true God (*John 3:16*). He is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, equal in honor and divinity with God the Father and

the Holy Spirit (*John 5:21-23; John 10:30; Matthew 28:18-20*). He is the Creator and Lord over all that exists (*John 1:1-4; Philippians 2:9-11*). At the same time however, Jesus is completely and perfectly Man (*Hebrews 2:14-18*). He is God, but He is also our brother, and through Him we become sons of God by adoption (*Galatians 4:4-7, the Nativity Epistle; John 1:12-13*).

Furthermore, Orthodox Christians insist that Jesus of Nazareth as *the Christ*, is the Light of the world Who comes to enlighten all men (*John 1:7-9; John 8:12*). He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life of man (*John 14:6*). He is the Teacher (*John 3:1-*

2), the Shepherd (*John 10:11,14*), the Physician of souls and bodies (*Matthew 11:4-6; Mark 2:17*). Jesus is the *I AM* of the Old Testament—the only truly existing One—a self-affirmation for which He was unjustly condemned (*John 8:58-59; Exodus 3:14*). Jesus is the

perfect, blameless sacrifice offered for the sins of the world, and having risen from the dead, He becomes the first born of the dead (*John 1:29; 1 John 2:1-2; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 2:17*). Jesus has power over both life and death (*John 5:26*) and raises sinners with Himself to a new and eternal life, from corruption to incorruption. Furthermore, while granting immortality to believers, He gives them the possibility on earth, to experience victory over sin, the devil and over the fallen passions of the flesh (*Romans 6; Hebrews 2:14-15; Leviticus 11:44, 1 Peter 1:13-16*).

On the day of His Nativity this same Di-

vine Person entered the world in a most humble fashion, providing His followers lessons in both humility and love. The manner of His appearing in fact, was a revelation of God's Divine Humility. The Son of God, “*not counting equality with God a thing to be grasped...emptied Himself, (took) the form of a servant, (and was) born in the likeness of men...*” (*Philippians 2:7*).

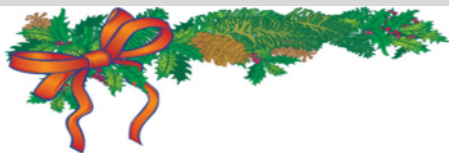
At Christ's birth there were no trumpets, no fanfare for the masses to announce His arrival. Even when the angels and star presented themselves, they did so only to those whose hearts were open: the simple shepherds and the wise men, representing both Jews and Gentiles, people of all nations for whom Christ came. Similarly, our Lord continues to come in our day to those whose hearts are prepared and purified for His Self-revelation (*John 14:23*).

So, when Orthodox Christians greet one another with “*Christ is Born*,” we should maybe pause briefly, giving ourselves an opportunity to think about *what* is being declared, the identity of the One, “*Who was born in a cavern and lay in a manger*” (*Festal Dismissal Prayer*). We can then perhaps more fully appreciate that the most appropriate human response to our Lord's Birth is indeed one of simple yet sincere gratitude and glorification. This Mystery, this gift of Christ is certainly unmerited, as well as incomprehensible in its greatness. In light of it we can only say most humbly: *Thank You God, for Your great loving kindness. Thank You God, for the gift of adoption to sonship, in Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Reprinted from <https://www.saintbarbarafw.org/blog/2017/12/1/the-nativity-of-christ-whats-in-a-greeting> 

Nativity Icon Explained



The following was written by Fr. Jeremy McKemy, an OCA priest in Texas. It is edited for space and clarity.

The image [to the right] is the nativity icon of the Orthodox Church, which is full of beautiful symbolism. In this article, I will explain the meaning of the icon. Several features from it can be found in the extra-biblical book called the Protoevangelium of James, which I highly recommend. The Protoevangelium is a second century document (written in the 100s) that contains some of the oldest verbal tradition that was passed down in the first two or three generations of the Church. Something to bear in mind is that icons are images of reality – they show us how the world exists through symbol. They are not still life portraits. While they depict historical events, they frequently emphasize theology over literalness, which will become apparent as you read on.

CENTER

In the center is the infant Christ lying in a manger. The Virgin Mary (Theotokos) is beside Him, and an ox and an ass are behind Him. Christ being born in a cave is not in the Bible, but it is an ancient tradition, dating back to the first and second centuries. He is dressed in burial clothes to foreshadow His death. His location in a cave also foreshadows the grave in which He would be buried and where He would resurrect.

When Adam and Even were first created, they were clothed in the glory of God. That was their natural state. But when they fell into sin, they lost this clothing of glory and became aware of their nakedness. Clothed in animals skins (which represent death), they went into exile outside of the Garden. Christ likewise condescended from His state of glory to become one of us, which in some sense meant He was exiling Himself



from heaven. He wrapped Himself in the mortal flesh's sin and death, as Scripture states, *God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ* (2 Cor. 5:21).

BOTTOM LEFT

Unlike most icons that feature both Christ and the Virgin Mary, she is not looking at Him. Instead, she is looking at her betrothed, Joseph, interceding for him. The *Protoevangelium* tells us that after the birth of Jesus, he walked out of the cave, battling doubts. The old man next to him is supposed to be the devil who is, of course, filling his mind with all sorts of doubts and angry thoughts.

We may sing "*What Child is This?*" but Joseph's question was "*Whose child is this?!*" since he knew he was certainly not the father. Yet Joseph has a halo, which indicates his sanctity.

Sometimes when God shows up in our lives, it raises questions and doubts. God bestows His grace upon us, but then He seems to withdraw a little bit, allowing difficulties to test and deepen our faith. We may wonder why things happen the

way they do. But if we persevere, then things will gradually become clear.

TOP & MIDDLE

At the very top is a blue shape sometimes called a *mandorla*. It signifies the presence and the glory of God. It beams from the heavens, pointing to the Christ child, which shows His descent from heaven to the earth.

On the left, the three kings (magi) are traveling from afar, following the star in the sky.


Angels appear in the heavens above and tell the good news to the shepherds (on the right) in the field so that they can see this divine child born in the little town of Bethlehem.

I sometimes wonder if the shepherds and angelic chorus appeared after Jesus' birth more for Joseph's sake than anything else. These divine interventions affirmed the dream that God granted Joseph, and helped Him to trust God. Our Church's hymns mention this struggle and Joseph's victory over doubt:

Joseph, when he beheld the greatness of this wonder, thought that he saw a mortal wrapped as a babe in swaddling clothes; but from all that came to pass he understood that it was the true God, who grants the world great mercy. (Vespers of the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ)

May we be comforted in the fact that our Savior has come into this world to heal every messy, doubting, sinful part of us. There is nothing a repentant heart has done that will permanently push God away from it. And there is nothing that you have done that he has not already helped someone else through, someone else who is considered a saint.

BOTTOM RIGHT

The women at the bottom right are midwives who display that the Son of God was truly born as a human, and did not merely appear to be human as some early heretics claimed. There is a fountain that they are about to wash the Christ child in because He had, in some sense, an ordinary, messy birth. 

Youth Corner: St. Alexander Hotovitsky

NEW HIEROMARTYR OF RUSSIA, MISSIONARY TO AMERICA

COMMEMORATION DATE: DECEMBER 4TH

On February 11, 1872, in the city of Kremenezh, Russia, St. Alexander was born. His father, Alexander, was an archpriest and the rector of the Volhynia Seminary. As a child, his parents taught him the importance of loving everyone and, especially, the Orthodox Church.


After his graduation from St. Petersburg Theological Academy, he began his missionary work in the Diocese of the Aleutians and North America. At that time this was the only diocese which covered all of North America. His first assignment was at St. Nicholas Church in New York City, where he was tonsured a reader.

At the age of twenty-four, following his marriage to Maria Scherbuhina, he was ordained to the diaconate. He was ordained to the priesthood on February 25, 1896 by Bishop Nicholas at the Diocesan Cathedral in San Francisco, California. Only a week after his ordination, he returned to St. Nicholas Church in New York where he accepted the assignment as the parish priest.

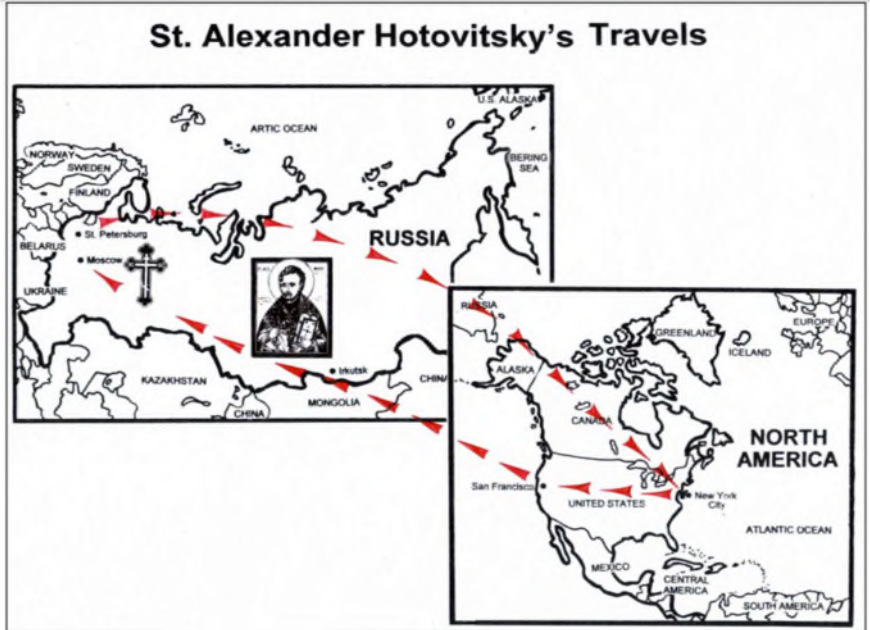
St. Alexander was a very successful missionary priest. He loved the people he met while traveling to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and to the many other towns and cities throughout North America. His missionary work was very dangerous. At times he was beaten and jailed because of his love for God, the Church, and for teaching young children religion.

On February 26, 1914, he said good-bye to the Orthodox Churches in North America and traveled to Helsinki, Finland. Three and half years later, he was assigned to Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow, Russia. While in Russia, a revolution occurred and the church was in danger. St. Alexander had to help the poor and save the sacred, religious items that were being taken from the churches and given to the government.

St. Alexander continued to fight for the Orthodox Church and in 1937 he was arrested for the last time because of his belief in God. Since his life ended due to his suffering for Christ, many people consider him a martyr.

He died at the age of 65 on August 19, 1937. The glorification services for Saint Alexander were held on December 4, 1994 in Moscow, Russia. 

Reprinted from <https://dce.oca.org/files/activity-books/american-saints.pdf>



Elimination Game

St. Alexander Hotovitsky

For this activity, follow the directions below. After you are finished, place the remaining words in order on the lines below the instructions to complete the Epistle verse for the Feast of Hieromartyr Alexander.

	A	B	C	D
1	red	let	pizza	green
2	get	are	Philip	giraffe
3	wicked	Peter	banana	met
4	five	dog	John	pleasing
5	sinful	apple	lion	Andrew
6	cat	to	evil	seven
7	set	wrong	James	pasta
8	purple	eleven	God	blue

1. Cross off the colors in each corner.
2. Cross off the odd numbers in rows 4, 6, and 8.
3. Cross off all the animals.
4. Cross off all of the foods.
5. Cross off the 3-letter words that rhyme and end with "et".
6. Cross off the names of some of Jesus' disciples.
7. Cross off the words opposite of "good".

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices

Hebrews 13:16

Bits . . .



MBAS HOLIDAY BAKE SALE AND PRIZE RAFFLE

The Myrrh Bearers Altar Society will be holding a holiday bake sale and prize raffle drawing on December 17th. Pick out some treats to have on Nativity. The prize drawing will be held during coffee hour. Tickets are 1 for \$1, 6 for \$5, or 12 for \$10.

HOLY SUPPER ON THE EVE OF NATIVITY

After Vespers on the Eve of Nativity, a lenten supper will be held in the Church hall. Please see Marty Gala if you would like to sign-up to bring anything or donate toward the purchase of items.

Holy Supper is a tradition that commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ 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 in.

The Supper usually consists of 12 courses, symbolic of the 12 Apostles. The 12 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 SAID FAREWELL to Elizabeth Michel, a dedicated, longtime member of our parish. A member and former president of the MBAS, Elizabeth was also a member of the Parish Council

for many years and sang in the choir. Her love for her faith and our parish was apparent in all she did. She will be greatly missed. May God grant her Many Years!

Elizabeth's new address is:

Elizabeth Michel
c/o Andrea Robel
240 Erwin Hill Rd
Asheville, NC 28806



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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND MANY YEARS

To Fr. David (Nov. 11) and Marie Lobb (Nov 12), who celebrated their birthdays last month. Marie celebrated her 90th birthday. May God grant them both Many Years!



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:

*Matushka Lisa Bock
Bill Osolinsky
Marie Lobb
Ann Carroll
Antonia Adams-Clement
John Adams-Clement
Walter Booriakin
Jamie Arango
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 10th. 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.



NEW YEAR'S DAY We begin the New Year by invoking God's blessing upon our families, our parish, the Church, and the world. On December 31st, immediately following the Divine Liturgy, there will be a Molieben for the New Year. Divine Liturgy (Feast of the Circumcision of Christ and

Commemoration of Saint Basil the Great) begins at 9:00 am (Hours at 8:40am) on Monday, January 1, 2024.

PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD The deadline to have your name included in the Parish Christmas Card is December 10th. 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.

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.



THEOPHANY HOUSE BLESSINGS After the celebration of the Feast of Theophany and the Blessing of Water (January 6), it is customary for the priest to visit parishioners' homes, bringing with him the newly blessed Holy Water to sprinkle and thereby bless the home. To arrange for having your home blessed, please contact Fr. Mikel.

FROM THE CHURCH TREASURER The last month of the year is now upon us. Now is your chance to make sure your 2023 church pledge and contributions are in and accounted for within this year. Most everyone has received a Y-T-D contributions summary in the beginning of November. Please consider your church in your year-end financial planning, especially for tax purposes. Year-to-date contribution statements will again 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 2023 on or prior to December 25th or contact the Financial Secretary, John Hecht, if the church's expected receipt is a little later. Otherwise, contributions received afterward may/will be attributed to 2024.

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. Qualified Charitable, RMD, and 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. If you are 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 donor(s) specify tax-free recipients, such as your church, in some later year(s). 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.

CHURCH DECORATING Please mark your calendars and plan on joining in decorating our church on Friday, December 22nd following Royal Hours. Plan on being a part of the joy as we come together to adorn the church for our celebration of the Lord's Birth.

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH—ANOTHER PARISH SUCCESS All the gifts for our 50 students will be delivered to Whittier Elementary next week December 5th-7th. Hopefully you have picked up one of the prayer lists of the kids, and can make this part of your prayers to pray for all these students and their families. Thank you for all your care - the donations, shopping, wrapping, labeling - in this outreach program. The staff of Whittier are very moved and grateful for our support. Thanks to all who contributed or helped.

Mary Flynn, David and Sue Bieber

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. Confessions are heard after Vespers or by appointment. An appointment can be made before Vespers or anytime during the week.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA (FOCA) would like to thank you for continuous and generous of our projects. Many Years to those celebrating birthdays this month.

We are currently in the final stages of the book drive and making treat bags for each child at Whittier School. We also have rum balls available for sale. Wishing you and your families a glorious and blessed Christmas. Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p>HOLY SUPPER Sunday, December 24, 2023 following Vespers Please see Marty Gala to sign-up.</p>					1	2
3 Prophet Zephaniah 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL FOCA MEETING	4 St. Alexander Holovitsky Great Martyr Barbara	5 Ven. Sabbas the Sanctified 6:00pm Vespers	6 St. Nicholas the Wonderworker 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy 6:00pm Bible Study	7	8	9 Icon "Unexpected Joy" Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos 5:00pm Vespers
10 Holy Forefathers Martyrs Menas, Hermogene, & Eugraphus 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS MBAS MEETING	11	12 St. Spiridon the Wonderworker 5:00pm Vespers 6:00pm Council Meeting	13 Repose of St. Herman of Alaska 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy 6:00pm Bible Study	14 15 16 Parish Nativity Card To have your name included in the Parish Nativity Card, please complete the form available in the narthex and hall. Deadline is December 10, 2023.		16 5:00pm Vespers
17 Sunday Before Nativity Holy Forefathers 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL MBAS CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE & PRIZE	18 19 20 MBAS CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE AND PRIZE DRAWING Sunday, December 17, 2023 		20 6:00pm Bible Study	21	22 9:00am Royal Hours	23 Sat. Before Nativity 5:00pm Vespers
24 Eve of the Nativity 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Vespers <i>Holy Supper</i> 	25 NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!	26 Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos 6:00pm Vespers	27 First Martyr Stephen 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy NO CLASS	28	29	30 5:00pm Vespers
31 Leavetaking Nativity Sun. before Theophany 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Molieben for the New Year</i> NO CHURCH SCHOOL	1 Circumcision of Christ St. Basil the Great 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	2 Repose of St. Seraphim of Sarov	3 6:00pm Bible Study	4	5 Eve of Theophany 8:00am Royal Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Water</i> 6:00pm Matins	6 THEOPHANY 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Vespers