

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Parish Website: www.ssppoc.org Diocese of NY-NJ: www.nynjoca.org

Face book: Friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 22, 2013

SUNDAY / DECEMBER 22

St. Anastasia

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Church School

5:30p.m. Compline; Confessions

MONDAY / DECEMBER 23

7:00p.m. Compline; Confessions

TUESDAY / DECEMBER 24

Eve of the Nativity

9:30a.m. Royal Hours

4:00p.m. Vigil

WEDNESDAY / DECEMBER 25

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

(One of "the 12 Great Feasts")

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

6:30p.m. Vespers

THURSDAY / DECEMBER 26

Synaxis of the Theotokos

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY / DECEMBER 28

9:30a.m. Akathist to Nativity; Confessions

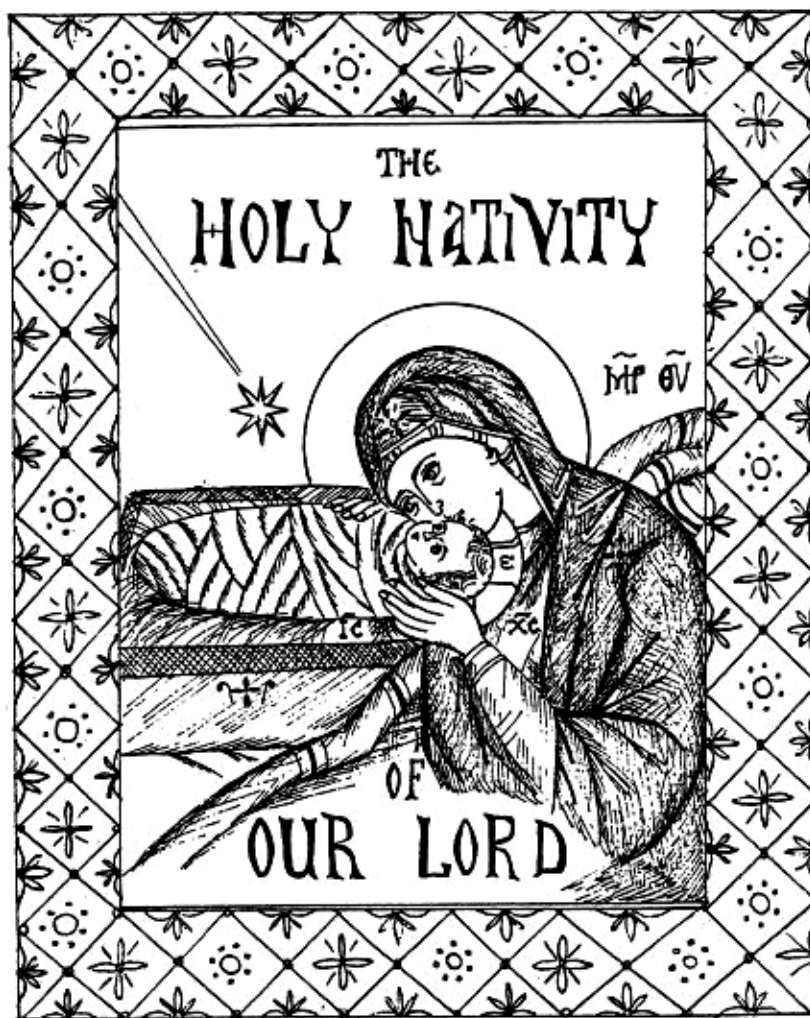
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY / DECEMBER 29

Sunday After the Nativity

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour and Christmas Carols



Extending to all, the
rich blessings of this
holy feast! With love
in the Lord Jesus,

Father Jara

Offerings Week of December 22

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, Justina, Rosalia, Anna and Anastasia; in memory of Vaschen and Emilia; for the health of John and Liam (birthdays); in memory of ZGabriela, Floarea, Gheorghe, Eelna, Petre, Elena, Valeria, and Alexandru.

Wine: in thanksgiving to God and for remission of sins, Mariana, Simon and Gabriel.

Flowers: in honor of the Nativity of our Lord; for the health of Bartushak and Nevitt families.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Dec. 23, 1950 Gregory Persurance
Dec. 23, 1989 Peter Kozura
Dec. 23, 1991 Olga Barna
Dec. 24, 1946 Steven Holovach
Dec. 24, 1947 Catherine Hriniaik
Dec. 24, 1978 Anna Martinchuk
Dec. 25, 1990 Alexander Kuntzevich
Dec. 25, 1991 Helen Wislosky
Dec. 26, 1980 Jerry Russo
Dec. 26, 2004 Douglas Rose
Dec. 27, 1989 Mary George
Dec. 28, 1927 Joseph Ribsky
Dec. 28, 1927 Olga Solodiuk
Dec. 28, 1983 John Greshkevitz
Dec. 28, 1987 Edmund Kornacki

Coffee Hour Hosting

Dec. 22 (fast) Inga, Eka, Marina & Nona
Dec. 29 Motoviloff, Torrisi, Kachek & Stone
Jan. 05 (fast day) TBD

Ushers Schedule

Dec. 22 E. Sarchisian & A. Moldoveanu
Dec. 29 E. Sarchisian & A. Moldoveanu
Jan. 05 T. Smith & P. Bakaletz

Javier Available – Work Projects

Speak with Fr. James.

2014 Wall Calendars

Each household be sure to secure one calendar on the table in church. Thanks.

The Great Blessing of Waters

Sunday, January 5th (a fast day). Divine Liturgy at 9:30a.m., followed by Great Blessing of Waters.

Forth-Coming Calendar

On our Parish Website, the 2014 calendar for the year is now posted – subject to changes. Please consult it as you arrange your own calendar.

Jan. 06 Theophany of Our Lord
Jan. 12 Christmas Yolka after Divine Liturgy
Jan. 23 Parish Council
Feb. 02 Meeting of our Lord (blessing of candles)
Feb. 09 Annual Parish Meeting
Feb. 22 Parish Workshop on Church Growth
Mar. 02 Beginning of Great Lent

Winter Weather Alerts

If it is necessary to change services, classes or events that are scheduled, due to weather, the information will be posted at least 1 hour prior to the event 1) on the parish website 2) on Face Book, "Friends of Ss. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church," and 3) by Parish Listing Group E-Mail. Although the roads may be good, concern must also be given to freezing-up on the church grounds. Before setting out, check for any posted changes.

2014 Coffee Hour Hosting In Preparation

Please speak asap with Jill Peterson (908-541-9586) (jap2002@optonline.net) in regard to changes in the scheduled team listings. We are seeking some new members to join or form teams. Our Coffee Hours are delightful! Please be part of this important ministry Many thanks to all our present team hosts!

Names Day: Many Blessed Years!

St. Anastasia/Dec. 22: Anastasia Mickel and Anastasia Kita;
St. Eugenia/Dec. 24: Joan Bongiorno;
St. Stephen/Dec. 27: Stephanie Kachek;
Sunday After Nativity/Dec. 29: David Peterson

The Blessing of Homes: Jan. 7 – Feb. 9

The season of blessing of homes is shorter this year (2014) due to the earlier date of Pascha. You are asked to arrange for your home blessing asap. On Sunday, January 12th (after the Yolka) home blessing will take place only in Manville (2-7p.m.). Manville homes may of course, be blessed at any other time as well.

ON THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

By Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos

The Birth of Christ is a historical event, because it took place at a specific moment in history, when Caesar Augustus was Emperor in Rome and Herod was ruler of Judea. The Evangelists insist on emphasizing the historicity of the event, because they want to say that Christ is a historical person. This means that Christ assumed real human flesh, and the Incarnation was not merely seeming or imagined.

In spite of its historicity, this event remains a mystery. We know that the Godman, perfect

God and perfect man, exists, but it remains a mystery how the divine nature united with human nature in the person of the Logos. Moreover, what happened to the person of Christ, that the divine nature was united hypostatically with human nature, happened just once. Therefore St. John of Damascus said that Christ is "the only new thing under the sun." This means that since the creation of the world and man, nothing new has happened in the world. Everything is repeated [according to the natural order and rules which govern the universe]. The [successive] birth of human beings is a consequence and result of God's words: "Let us make man in our image and likeness", and "Be fruitful and multiple; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:26-28). The only new thing is the Godman Christ.

Thus the fact that the event is historical does not remove the mystery, but also the mystery does not do away with the historicity. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Christ, but at the same time we experience mysteriously in our hearts all the events connected with it, for when we are alive in the Church, we are participating in and experiencing all the stages of the divine Incarnation.



Troparion (Tone 4)

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!

Kontakion (Tone 3)

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 a star! Since for our sake the Eternal God was born as a Little Child!

A MEDITATION: YEAR OF THE LORD, VOLUME 2

During the Christmas season God's love and His message of new hope comes to us through the beauty and peace of the incarnate Christ. Yet the Good News of God's love may be entirely missed, and Christmas may be an unfulfilled dream, amidst the hectic bustle of cleaning, shopping, writing, calling, decorating, banking and visiting. The basic reason for an unfulfilled Christmas is that we focus on ourselves, how to please each other, how to feel good and how to secure happiness with all the things we regard necessary. Yet only Christ can give us a true Christmas. Only His presence in our hearts can bring happiness, peace, joy, warmth and security. Cling to Christ ever more closely during the Christmas season. Take time to pray and to establish your spiritual and practical priorities. Let Christ come with you from home to school, from kitchen to shopping center, from Church to business office.



**ADDRESS OF BISHOP MICHAEL
TO THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY
NOVEMBER 12, 2013
(Part Two)**

The Diocese – The Extended Family

This model of “family” has one final component – the “Diocese” – the Diocese. For too long the Diocese and the Central Church have been looked upon as always wanting from the faithful ... taking from the parishes. The real model, and the one I hope to build upon, is where the Diocese gives, provides, and cares for the whole family – like a parent, or better, a Godparent. I would like the bishop to be seen as an elder, not only because of age but hopefully also because of wisdom, and servanthood, and sacrificing, and love. The Diocese, in the person of the bishop, is there to lovingly and carefully oversee the work of the local Vineyard of Christ, where all the parishes and all their clergy and faithful are working hard to serve the Lord and provide for a harvest for the Savior and His Church, bearing fruit unto salvation.

That is why we have been promoting vocations to the Priesthood and the Diaconate among the members of our Diocesan Family. That is why we are providing scholarships for those who are attending Seminary – right now, we have two full-time students – and helping some of the eight diaconal students we have in total in Endicott and in Philadelphia. This valuable support has resulted in two priestly Ordinations for the Diocese over the past year, Fr. Matthew Markewich and Fr. Matthew Brown, and four Ordinations to the Diaconate since our Assembly last December: Dn. Theodore Gregory, Dn. Gregory Aidinov, Dn. Demetrios Richards and Dn. Mark Hoepfner.

This is why we are working on establishing new communities in New York and New Jersey ... with financial assistance from the Diocese. Our mission in Lansing, NY, has received a renewal of its grant from the national Church ... the Worthington family has moved into a new rental rectory ... and the parish will have its new Icon Screen blessed, the day after tomorrow! Earlier this fall I visited Potsdam, NY, for the first time, where more than 30 people welcomed me, individuals who before we opened this mission station had to travel to Canada for divine services. I was encouraged by their zeal to have a church in that far northern outpost of NY State, and I will be visiting there again the evening of December 6, with the miraculous Icon of Saint Anna, for a healing service.

This is why we have worked to help our established parishes that have run into difficulties ... We had “Operation: Buffalo” which has helped put SS. Peter and Paul Church back on its feet; the young priest and his wife there have been raising funds through their culinary skills and have opened a Soup Kitchen for the less fortunate. Just yesterday I was told that Fr. Vlad got a call from the Food Channel’s program, “Chopped” – they want to film him making his famous sourdough bread, with a chance to win \$10,000 for the parish in their competition!

This year we had "Operation: Princeton" in which some 100 persons from across New Jersey came out to literally "move a mountain" of 100 tons of rock and build a retaining wall for the new temple. The work on this, the only new church building being built in the Diocese in a number of years, needs our continued assistance both labor wise and financially ... And we continue to bask in the progress of "Operation: Oneonta" where Fr. David has now moved into the community full time, and more and more services and outreach programs are being held in the chapel we renovated in the city's Episcopal Church ... And we continue to assist Fr. Herman Schick, no longer able to serve as a rector, as he still awaits a heart transplant. The Diocese is a family of parishes ... helping each other ... in the love of Christ Jesus.

Helping Each Other

This year our Diocese has again shared experience and resources in helping our parishes grow stronger. The Parish Council conferences this year focused on Mission and Evangelism, with Fr. Constantine Nasr, hugely successful in growing his parish, sharing his wisdom and experience, teaching us to do things in our communities to renew the commitment of our own members and to reach out to others and invite them to our services. Earlier this fall, Fr. Andrew Damick, who has doubled the size of his parish, explained how to approach non-Orthodox and to speak to them about our faith, with confidence, but not with criticism. And today we will also hear from Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, who has shepherded the phenomenal growth of his parish – an OCA church, in eastern Pennsylvania. Why are we seeking the wisdom and the insights of these successful pastors? Because we care.

We have continued to share information with one another about stewardship – a Biblical, and more successful method of funding the Church. I am happy to report that a number of parishes have established Stewardship Committees to work on this transition – and already at least five parishes that I know of have successfully begun that step of commitment. I of course have heard genuinely sincere people express their concern: "we didn't do it that way before ... we keep the church going through food sales!" But when the parish runs out of people to run the pirogi sale, what then? It is not the job of our neighbors, or our visitors, or our "customers" to sustain our Church. It is the job of our parish family. It is our job. We need to grow our parishes ... and encourage our faithful to give according to the family model.

We know that the future of our Church is our children. That is why the Diocese continues to hold youth retreats, in upstate New York and in New Jersey ... the altar servers' retreat at St. Basil's Academy in Garrison, NY ... and Orthodox Youth Day in Jackson and Six Flags. That is why this year we introduced Children's Choir Workshops to train our future choir directors and choir singers – at the youngest of ages – to learn and to love to sing – from the simple "Alleluias" to the joyous "Christ is Risen!" to the troparia for the first Saint of America, Herman of Alaska, and the beloved Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker. Would that all of us had the joy and the zeal of these children in offering praises to God! And that is why, continuing that effort, our Commission on Liturgical Music also hosts conferences and workshops for adult choir masters and singers – in an attempt to fill a desperate need in several parishes ... to prepare the leaders of our liturgical music – and to hone the God-given talents of those who have accepted such a call to "make a joyful sound unto the Lord."

That is why we have held Church School Teachers Conferences this year again in every Deanery to help our teachers and parents "think out of the box" and re-tailor our education program to keep our young people engaged and in the Church through the high school years ... And we are also working to strengthen the OCF's in colleges throughout the Diocese – so that these young people are not lost to the faith in the busy-ness of college life – to connect them to a local OCF chapter and a local Orthodox parish, where they can continue to learn about and live the Orthodox Christian life ... so that they remain secure in our faith and in our Church.

As I have said, so many times before, our councils need to have one person in charge of making that connection for high school graduates in the parish. Why? Because through Baptism, Chrismation, and the Eucharist, every child in our parish is our son and our daughter. We need to care for them because they are our family ... and we love them all.

Finally, this year we have had seminars to protect our parishes from possible tragedy and legal consequences ... with guidance on Sexual Misconduct Prevention, first offered in each Deanery by Michael Herzak, whose company insures many of our churches ... and now today by Cindy Davis, the Director of the Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations for our OCA, who is here to answer questions about the new PSPs and the procedure for getting background checks for parish personnel. Why? Because we care.

Most of this work of the Diocesan Family has been funded by the generosity of the Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors Program – which provides resources for the ministries of our Diocese and our Vision for the Future – through the generosity of hundreds of faithful across New York and New Jersey who have shared their blessings from God as stewards of our Diocese. Why? Because they care for our parishes and for the faithful of our Diocesan Family. I thank God for them and their gifts, and I encourage others to join this stewardship of love. Why? Because it is the right thing to do, and because there is so much more work yet to be done.

A Final Note

In the few years that I have as your Bishop, I hope to re-build our understanding of “diocese,” “parish,” and “church.” I would like them to be seen as one family – united in love – the love of the Holy Trinity ... the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ... and our love for one another ... because WE ARE FAMILY.

Love ... is the greatest force in the universe ... they tried to nail Love to a Cross ... they tried to bury Love in a tomb ... but Love rose from the dead, and through the Cross brought joy to all the world. That is the Love of God Incarnate ... the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let us all try to embrace this model – of selfless giving and caring, loving and sharing – out of love – and in imitation of our Savior.

The Scripture is steeped in that love: “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

“Greater love than this has no one ... that he lay down His life for His friends ... and you are My friends” (John 15:13).

“A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

To the God Who loves us more than we love ourselves, be all glory, honor and worship – to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

-- Bishop Michael of New York

SS. PETER AND PAUL – PARISH WORKSHOP – DECEMBER 15, 2013

In preparing for our 99th and 100th Parish Anniversaries, a group of parishioners gathered together to examine the course of our Parish Life.

- What is our Parish Message
- What Kind of Parish Will We Be in 3, 5, 7 Years
- What Outreach Ministries Will We Have
- What is Our Personal Involvement in the Parish

The groups spent just over 60 minutes discussing the above and presented a large list of ideas, suggestions and recommendations. The list below is the result of today's workshop.

- Our message should be that we are the True, Historical Church. The message should not deviate from our forefathers but how do we put it into easy to understand language for all of our Parishioners to understand and easily communicate to others. This will help all Parishioners to embrace our Faith stronger and with more passion and conviction.
- We need to gain more exposure to the Public. Many people do not know about SS Peter and Paul, let alone know that we exist in Manville/Somerset County.
- What type of advertising should we do (ie, Billboards, Diner Placemat, Social Media, SSPPOC wallet size, trifold, information pamphlet).
- What is Bishop Michael's message and how do we ensure it is getting communicated to all Parishioners. How do our Youth fit into the message.
- Can we run an event "Return to SS Peter and Paul" where Parishioners bring a Guest or Former Parishioner.
- We need a Welcoming Committee for Guest. Orthodox churches can be intimidating to a visitor. How do we open our doors and welcome someone with a warm family feeling. We need to have our children welcome children that are part of a Guest family.
- Can we have handouts at Sunday's liturgy (ie, Guest copy of Liturgy book, Copies of Troparia, Kontakia for the day). Do we include this information in the bulletin.
- Can we conduct a survey of all Parishioners asking several questions:
 - o What are the talents/skills/hobbies of each Parishioner
 - o What ideas, suggestions, and recommendations do Parishioners have.
 - o What works well, what changes need to be made, what do we need to start doing, stop doing, continue doing.
- We need to build up our Youth Group. Our current youth and new youths to join will be the future of our Parish.
- Can we research what other Parishes are doing with Ministries (ie, Holy Trinity at Penn State – Matthew 25-Helping out disadvantaged and underprivileged persons outside of Parish, Homeless Shelter Ministry, Orthodoxy 101, Vacation Bible School, Men's Fellowship, Orthodox Youth Assoc, Women's Ministry, Tender Loving Care).

- Can we schedule monthly social events where Parishioners get together. The event can be adults only and / or youth only.
- We have a group of Youths who have no role in the Church. They are not Altar Boys and they do not sing. How can they get involved (ie, can they take over some of the adult roles-take care of candles, lighting candles for others, wrapping up Prospora). Can we get them involved before, during and after Liturgy.
- Can we build a section on the Church Website to address Life Issues. This can be Orthodox answers to common challenges faced by people today.
- We need to schedule more Youth activities. Events that will bring our youth together more often than just on Sunday's.
- Can we schedule social events outside of church/coffee hour with the Parishioners. Many Parishioners do not socialize/keep in touch with one another other than on Sundays.
- We need to build stronger relationships amongst one another. Our current relationships are Sunday's only and are weak. We need to love one another as a Family.
- Can we have 'Name Tag' Sunday. Many Parishioners do not know the names of other Parishioners. How can we educate everyone on the Family names. Do we make a game out of it (ie, speed networking at a coffee hour).
- Can we have 'Congregational Singing' that gets the Parishioners more involved in singing the hymns. The choir can stand amongst the Parishioners and help everyone to sing along.
- How do Parishioners recognize the challenges of life today and know there's help available.
- Can we create an Outreach Committee that meets the needs of the community (ie, following up with Parishioners that are sick at home/hospital, parishioners that need a ride due to weather, darkness, etc, following up when Parishioners missed Liturgy).
- How do we get Parishioners to attend weekday services more often. What prevents Parishioners from attending a Vespers, Compline or Akathist service on Monday through Saturday.
- We should run this type of workshop each month to continue the process of discussing the challenges of our Parish and what we can do to bring more people to the faith while building a stronger family.

Appreciation is expressed to all for your participation and input!