

SS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 15, 2019

SUNDAY OF HOLY FOREFATHERS/DECEMBER 15

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

11:20a.m. Annual Christmas Cookie Walk

MONDAY/DECEMBER 16

6:30p.m. Memorial for (+) Helen Lapchuk
(first year anniversary)

7:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

TUESDAY/DECEMBER 17

St. Dionysios of Zakynthos (+1622)

8:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

THURSDAY/DECEMBER 19

3:00p.m. Confessions

7:00p.m. Compline; Confessions

FRIDAY/DECEMBER 20

7:00p.m. Compline; Confessions

SATURDAY/DECEMBER 21

9:30a.m. Akathist; Confessions

3:00p.m. Confessions

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/DECEMBER 22

Sunday Before Nativity

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

Church school; Teen Class

6:00p.m. Compline; Confessions



The Church calls the family a *little Church*. The family reflects the Heavenly Fatherhood of God Himself. This world was created as a *family* of God. And sacramental marriage restores this integrity of love. What do we remember from our childhood? Whether it was good or poor or bad, we always remember childhood - and this means home, families, parents. And then we lost that paradise and the world became dark and cold. In marriage, as given by the Church, we are called to create a Christian family...

Liturgy and Life, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

Fasting Modifications:

Sun/Dec. 15: fish, wine & oil

Tue/Dec. 17: wine & oil

Thurs/Dec. 19: wine & oil

Sat/Dec. 21: wine & oil

Sun/Dec. 22: wine & oil

Offerings Week of December 15

Relic Candle: in honor of St. John Maximovitch; for the health of Alexia; in memory of Michael, Justina, Rosalie, Anastasia, Melania and Ivanna; in memory of Constantin, Gabriel, Floarea, Gheorghe, Elena, Petre, Maria-Valeria, Maria, Rozalia, Andrei, Ivan and their families.

Olive Oil: for the health and salvation of Vera and in memory of Jan; for health of Nicholas (birthday); in memory of William; in memory of Nicholas, Eleanore, Ann Marie, John and Jerome.

Flowers: in thanksgiving to God and for protection; for the health of Sarah, Rachael and Rebecca.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Dec. 16, 1933 Vladimir Shultz
Dec. 16, 1993 Ann Warin
Dec. 17, 2018 Helen Lapchuk
Dec. 18, 1980 Joseph Pituck
Dec. 20, 1962 Michael Popko
Dec. 20, 1980 Anna Martin
Dec. 21, 1946 Helen Semoskovich
Dec. 21, 1997 Nadia Marchuk
Dec. 21, 2006 Nicholas Chabra

Coffee Hour Hosting

No meat, no dairy (fish permitted)

Dec. 15 Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu, Vajda
& Sue
Dec. 22 *No meat, dairy or fish*
Dec. 22 Peterson, Bakaletz, Mattei, Stone

Counters Schedule

Dec. 15 Irina S. & Lisa K.
Dec. 22 Larissa M. & Paulina N.

Ushers Schedule

Dec. 15 Dennis F.
Dec. 22 Edward S. & Khaka K.

Readers Schedule

Dec. 15 Ciprian C. / Dec. 22 Daniel T.

2020 Parish Wall Calendars Pick-Up

On the table behind the last pew. One calendar per family.

The 40 Day Nativity Lent: Nov. 15th thru Dec. 24th

This is one of the Four Lents of the year. A fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil. There are days that permit modifications. These are indicated on your parish wall calendar. When does the Nativity Fast end? After the Divine Liturgy, Dec. 25th.

The Mysteries of Holy Confession and Holy Communion Are Essential in Preparing for the Nativity of our Lord, December 25th

Regular communicants must receive these two Mysteries of the Church sometime in the months of November and/or December. Irregular communicants are encouraged to also receive these Holy Mysteries so as to celebrate in grace, the Nativity of Christ.

A Nativity Eve Supper – Dec. 24th

This Last Lenten Meal will be held immediately after the Nativity Vigil Service (The Vigil is 4:00p.m.) and the Supper about 6:30p.m. See Maria Torrisi or Pam Oliver about details.

Appreciation to Volunteers

Your labor of love on the Saturdays of Nov. 30 & Dec. 7 in the cleaning of the church is appreciated!

Names Day Greetings – Many Blessed Years!

Holy Forefathers/Dec. 15: Rebecca Oliver, Sarah Oliver, Sarah Fedechko and Rachael Oliver.

Congratulations and Thanks

The "Life of St. Nicholas" presentation last Sunday was inspiring and well done. Thanks to Maria Torrisi and her crew and cast.

Changes to the Schedule

Due to weather or unforeseen happenings, the calendar schedule may need to be changed. These changes will be posted at least 1 hour before they are to take place. Make reference to 1) the parish website; 2) your parish e-mail list; 3) face book: friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church.

Orthodox Nativity Greeting

Christ Is Born! Glorify Him! This is how we greet each other in the festal season (Dec. 25-Dec. 31).

NATIVITY FAST FREE SEASON

- During this festal time, which begins after the Divine Liturgy on December 25, there is no fasting on any day thru January 4.
- In this period of time, December 25 thru January 4, in keeping the festal character, we do not kneel, make prostrations, permit marriages or serve memorial services.
- The next fasting day, will be a Sunday – January 5, the eve of Holy Theophany. On this day wine and oil are permitted but no meat, dairy or fish.

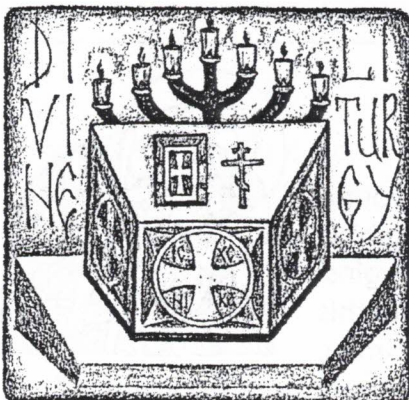
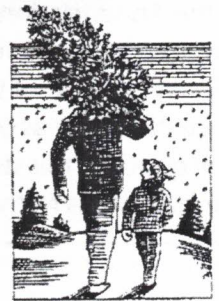
THE FEAST OF HOLY THEOPHANY

- January 5, Sunday – Eve of Theophany: 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy & Blessing of Waters; Coffee Hour
- 6:00p.m. Matins for Theophany
- January 6, Monday – Holy Theophany: 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; 7:00p.m. Compline
- 2020 Blessing of Home Season: January 7 thru February 22. By appointment, now possible.
- Please schedule your home blessing for as early in the home blessing season as possible.

CHRISTMAS TREE TRADITIONS

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Traditionally, Christmas trees were not brought in and decorated until Christmas Eve (24 December), and then removed the day after twelfth night (i.e., 6 January); to have a tree up before or after these dates was even considered bad luck. Modern commercialization of Christmas has resulted in trees being put up much earlier; in shops often as early as late October (in the UK, Selfridge's Christmas department is up by early September, complete with Christmas trees). A common tradition in U.S. homes is to put the tree up right after Thanksgiving (the fourth Thursday in November) and to take it down right after the New Year. Some households in the U.S. do not put up the tree until the second week of December, and leave it up until the 6th of January (Epiphany). In Germany, traditionally the tree is put up 24th of December and taken down 7th of January, though many start one or two weeks earlier. In Australia, the Christmas tree is usually put up on the 1st of December, which occurs about a week before the school summer holidays; except for South Australia, where most people put up their tree after the Adelaide Credit Union Christmas Pageant, which is in early November. Some traditions suggest that Christmas trees may be kept up until no later than the 2nd of February, the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Candlemas), when the Christmas season effectively closes. Superstitions warn of negative consequences if Christmas greenery is not removed by Candlemas Eve.



THE CHURCH, THROUGH THE TEMPLE AND DIVINE SERVICE, ACTS UPON THE ENTIRE MAN

St. John of Kronstadt

Icon of St. John of Kronstadt "The Church, through the temple and Divine service, acts upon the entire man, educates him wholly; acts upon his sight, hearing, smelling, feeling, taste, imagination, mind, and will, by the splendour of the icons and of the whole temple, by the ringing of bells, by the singing of the choir, by the fragrance of the incense, the kissing of the Gospel, of the cross and the holy icons, by the prosporas, the singing, and sweet sound of the readings of the Scriptures."

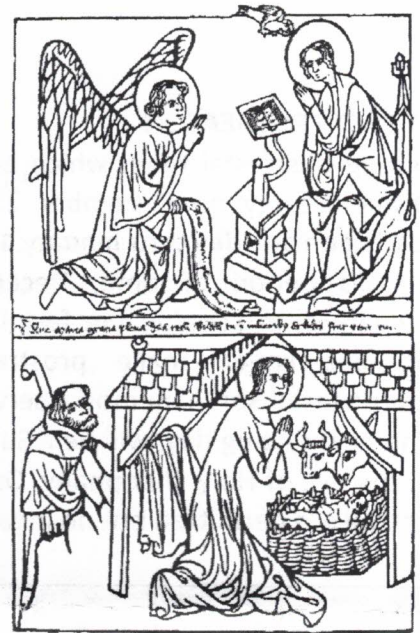
ASK FATHER: 1 QUESTIONS / 1 ANSWERS

Q. Why is the Nativity of Christ celebrated on December 25th?

A. There are two main explanations as to why the Church chose to celebrate the Nativity of Christ on December 25th.

The first says that the day was chosen to oppose the great pagan feast of the sun god, which was celebrated near December 22nd at the Winter Solstice, the time of year when the days started to get longer again (at least in the northern hemisphere). It is believed that the Church chose December 25th, because it ensured that Christians would be fasting during the pagan celebration and would therefore not easily be tempted to participate. And also because it would help the pagan peoples to leave off worshiping the false sun god and instead celebrate the coming of the True God, "the Sun of Righteousness".

The second explanation says that the day was chosen in relation to the feast of the Annunciation, which was celebrated on March 25th commemorating the supernatural conception of the Lord in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Annunciation was celebrated on this day because of the belief in the ancient world that great men died on the same day as they were conceived. Since the Lord was believed to have been crucified on March 25th, it also came to be believed that He was likewise conceived on this day. And since it followed that the Lord's birth would be nine months after His conception, the feast of His Nativity was set on December 25th.



THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

From Parish Publishing, LLC



Let the theme of this Christmas be giving and receiving. Receiving first, the amazing grace of God in Christ Jesus. Then to give. A gift for someone in need. A thank-offering of money for the Lord's work at your church. The gift of ourselves: our souls and bodies, our time and talents. What do we have that we did not receive?

Love is faith in action. Two of the most important questions we ask ourselves are: "Whom do I love?" and "Who loves me?" As Christians we put faith into action by extending our concern for people beyond ourselves. We show our concern for others in our actions and relationships. Is our concern for others Christ-like? Do we reach out to help people in need?

The meaning of stewardship has to do with 100%, rather than 2, 3, or even 10%. All people are stewards. The only uncertainty is what kind. We are stewards of God's gifts to us: our time on this earth, our material resources, our talents, our very life itself. It is the Lord's world in which we live, and it is to God that we are responsible.

ON ISAIAH'S PROPHECY OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

"Behold, the Virgin shall be with child." -- Isaiah 7:14

The Jews say that the prophecy in Hebrew does not say "virgin" but "young woman". However, in Hebrew the word for "young woman" and "virgin" is one and the same; it being understood that young women are to be virgins. Yet, what would be the significance of any young woman giving birth, for this happens all the time. The sign was that a Virgin, one who knew not man, would give birth. This has happened only once, with the birth of Jesus, the Savior, "God with us".



TWO QUESTIONS WE NEED TO ASK ABOUT THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

by St. John of Kronstadt (+1907)

Why did God become Man While Remaining God? The answer to this may be found in the words of the Archangel to Joseph, the betrothed of the Holy Virgin: God became man to save "His people from their sin" (Matthew 1:21). For this reason He is called Jesus, which means "Saviour." And so, it was for our salvation that the Lord came to earth and became man, for the regeneration in us of the image of God which had fallen. The Son of God became the Son of Man in order to make us sons of God who were called the children of wrath and eternal damnation. In the words of the Apostle John the Theologian: that we should be called the sons of God (1 John 3:1); "Now God became man, that He may make Adam a god" (Stichera for the praises of the Annunciation). And so, my brethren, the Feast of the Nativity of Christ reminds us that we are born of God, that we are sons of God, that we have been saved from sin and that we must live for God and not for sin; not for flesh and blood, not for the world which lies in evil (1 John 5:19), not for earthly corruption, but for an inheritance incorruptible reserved in heaven.

What does God's Incarnation require of us?

As we prepare for the feast of the Nativity of Christ, you must ask yourself:

Have you preserved the spiritual birth from God which we each received in Baptism?

Are you always heedful to the divine sonship and the sacred treasure of the Spirit which you acquired in Baptism?

Have you loved one another as befits the children of God?

Have you grown closer to God through faith and love, like His beloved children?

Have you despised evil and all-destructive sin?

Have you loved truth and every virtue?

Have you loved immortal and eternal life prepared in a land which will not pass away and to which we are called by Him Who now has come to our corrupt earth? These are the questions we must ask ourselves now and decide; not only with our minds, but above all, with our hearts and our very deeds. The Nativity of Christ requires of us to remember and hold in sacred honor the fact that we are born of God; and if we have sullied and trampled upon this birthright with our sins; we must restore it by washing it with tears of repentance. The Feast requires of us mutual love, humility, that we may help one another; for how can we not love one another when we see the love of God for us. Like the Wise Men, let us brothers also prepare gifts for the new-born King. Instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh, let us bring Him the Gifts of faith, hope and love.

LIVING IN THE BODY

Going to church for worship is one element in living as a Christian. *Being church* means making an active contribution to the Church's life, being a vital organ in a living body.

The first step in being church is being connected to others in our parish by:

- **Cultivating community** in the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit." Get to know one another in a more than casual way.
- **Treating others as brothers and sisters in the family** of God in Christ. Give others the time and attention we would give to our blood relatives.
- "Above all, **clothing yourselves with love**, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14).



We nurture the relationships in the parish or the eparchy when we:

- ⊠ **Share our lives** – Authentic fellowship calls for more than coffee-hour courtesies. Grow to the stage when you can share your troubles as well.
- ⊠ **Learn together** - Take part in adult formation, retreats, or workshops to encourage others as well as to improve our own spiritual life.
- ⊠ **Work together** - Join in parish projects or committees to support the work of others as well as to make our own contribution. "*So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith*" (Galatians 6:10).
- ⊠ **Encourage each other** – by supporting their efforts, praying for their concerns and building them up in the eyes of others. "*Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor*" (Romans 12:10).
- ⊠ **Bear one another's burdens** – Be accepting of the weaker community members. There is no "perfect" church: every parish is made up of "saints" who are sinners, each with their own weaknesses and infirmities. "*Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ*" (Galatians 6:2).
- ⊠ **Admonish one another** – Do not shrink from confronting "family members" who are hurting others by promoting conflicts, pettiness, or legalism. "*My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted*" (Galatians 6:1).
- ⊠ **Protect the unity of the church** – by avoiding gossip or cliques, and speaking ill of others.
- ⊠ **Restore broken relationships** – when they occur by admitting our faults. No project or program is worth harming the family's inner life. "*If anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive*" (Colossians 3:13).