

responsible for teaching and assisting in your preparation, and ultimately, answerable to God as I offer the Chalice to you. Without a doubt, I am confident that all of you are profoundly grateful to God, that in His great mercy He has given us these Holy Mysteries for the healing and salvation of our souls, and for union with Him, Who is the “head of the body, the church...” (Col. 1:18) and for union with each other. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• INVITING FRIENDS TO CHURCH:

Did you know that 82% of the unchurched say that they would come if invited? Did you know that only 2% of church members invite someone to church in a given year? If your parish is dying (and many Orthodox parishes in the US, especially in the Northeast, are indeed dying), don't you think it's time you invited someone to church? If your parish is healthy, don't you think it's time it gave birth to another healthy one? Do you really believe that you've found the true faith, seen the true light and received the heavenly Spirit, like you sing near the end of the Liturgy? Then why are you keeping it to yourself? Think of at least one person you know who isn't in church. Make him or her a spiritual priority this year. Pray every day for that person. And when the time is right, give the invitation. Statistically speaking, they are probably going to say yes. And when you make the invitation, don't say, “You should come to church with me sometime.” “Sometime” is no time. Say, “We're celebrating the Divine Liturgy this Sunday at 10 AM at my church. Can I pick you up and bring you with me?” —*Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick, St. Paul Orthodox Church, Emmaus, PA*

• TITHING:

There are...cases in which an individual truly has nothing left after necessities provided for himself and for those dependent upon him. He should then offer, like the trusting Widow of the gospel, his token “mite” and trust that by God's grace he will “reap abundantly.” Besides, it is for the sake of such as these that the rest of us are commanded to be diligent in our giving—that from the abundance given us, others may not do without. Indeed, even the rare person who can make only a “token” offering, if he has first given himself to the Lord, will find ways to contribute to the work of the Lord in ways which are sometimes far more constructive than money itself. He can labor in God's Temple, work for the relief and comfort of the sick and lonely, and finally, when there is nothing left to give, offer his own prayers and sufferings as prayers and petitions of incense before the face of God for the sins of all mankind. —*borrowed*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 6, 2015 ~ St. Nicholas of Myra

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• TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Two:

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life-Immortal, Thou didst slay hades with the splendor of Thy Godhead; and when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to Thee.

• TROPARION OF ST. NICHOLAS, Tone Four:

The Truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, an icon of meekness and a teacher of temperance; for this cause, thou hast achieved the heights by humility, riches by poverty. O Father and Hierarch Nicholas, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

• KONTAKION OF ST. NICHOLAS, Tone Three:

Thou, O righteous Nicholas, in Myra truly wast shown forth as a sacred minister fulfilling Christ's holy Gospel; for thou didst lay down thy life for thy flock and people and, O Saint, didst save the innocent from unjust death. Wherefore, thou wast sanctified as a great initiate of the divine grace of God.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Dec. 5: 3:30 PM, Catechism, *Jesus the Savior*  
5 PM, Great Vespers for St. Nicholas
- Sunday, Dec. 6: 8:45 AM, Matins  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
11:45 AM, Church School  
Noon, Agape Meal
- Wednesday, Dec. 9: 7 AM, Divine Liturgy, *Conception of the Theotokos*  
5:30 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank  
6 PM, Vespers

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• Thursday, Dec. 10:

**Noon, Senior/Retired Lunch Fellowship**

7 PM, Master Planning Meeting

• FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS:

The name “Nicholas” means “victory of the people,” or “namesake of victory.” This meaning is mentioned in some of the hymns of Vespers for St. Nicholas: *...truly being the namesake of victory, thou art a precious triumph to thy people in their distress: from all the ends of the earth they seek thy faithful protection by day and by night, and thou dost make haste to help them, delivering them from trials and tribulations.* At the end of the Liturgy we will have a “Lity Service” which involves a short litany, the singing of the festal troparion, and the blessing of five loaves, wheat, wine and oil, in honor of the saint and to request his holy prayers.

• MASTER PLANNING:

Our *Master Planning Committee*, led by Sean Esbjorn-Hargens, will meet on Thursday, December 10 at 7 PM, to organize a presentation for the Annual Meeting on February 7, 2016. All are welcome.

• BAPTISM:

The baptism of Blaise Inlow has been postponed from Saturday, December 5, to Saturday, December 12, 10 AM.

• UPCOMING VISIT

Hieromonk Innocent, the Superior of the Monastery of St. John in Manton, CA., will visit our parish for the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, December 13**, which is the Feast of St. Herman of Alaska. Fr. Innocent will preach at the Divine Liturgy, and also give a talk in the Parish Hall during the Agape Meal—I encourage all of you to stay for this. Of course, we will not let him leave here emptied-handed, but will make an offering for the Monastery. —*Fr. Lawrence*

• CHRISTMAS PLAY ~ SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20:

The Church School children and staff are very excited to be presenting a Christmas play, **THE HOLY FAMILY**, written and directed by Carmen Anderson, on Sunday, December 20. The schedule for the evening includes a short Vespers for the Prefeast of Nativity, served at 4 PM, followed by a potluck meal, a visit from St. Nicholas and the play. For more information call Gloria Collins at 849-6135 or email her at [gypsybootsie@att.net](mailto:gypsybootsie@att.net).

• MISSION OPPORTUNITY:

On **Saturday December 19**, after Vespers (about 6 PM or so), we will welcome Mr. Taylor Hostetter from Atlanta, who will speak on two subjects: first, “Living and Sharing the Fulness of the Gospel as Orthodox.” The second talk will introduce us to a mission trip to Serbia, called “Cooperative Training Mission to Serbia with The Navigators” (blessed by the Serbian Orthodox Church and our Diocese of the West). The first talk will focus on evangelism and mission, in general; the second talk on the Serbia trip. Mr. Hostetter is coming not to raise funds for this mission trip but rather to share with us thoughts about Orthodox evangelism, and to find interested people to join the trip. Regarding Serbia, while the Orthodox Church there continues to grow, it faces the problem of Protestants proselytizing the Orthodox away from their Mother Church. “The Orthodox/Navigator Summer Mission” aims to combat that by taking dedicated Orthodox Christians from outside to Serbia to witness to the Orthodox Faith and give support to our Orthodox brothers and sisters. Team members will participate in informational training during the year leading up to the Summer Program. The Orthodox/Navigator Team will live in Belgrade, Serbia from **June 5-August 1, 2016**. Working with local priests and lay people, members will help lead evangelistic studies at the great Cathedral of St. Sava. The cost for the summer program, including airfare, accommodations, food, local travel, and a history course at the University of Belgrade will be approximately \$4,000 per person. Members will work together on raising the needed money doing fundraising projects and finding sponsors. Please join our Parish Young Adult Group and friends on **Saturday, December 19 at 6 PM**, for what promises to be a very engaging evening.

• PREPARING FOR NATIVITY ~ CONFESSION:

In preparation for receiving Holy Communion on the Feast of Nativity (December 24 and 25) please make your confession in the weeks or days prior. Confessions are heard on the weekend, as usual, weekdays by appointment, and in the days before Nativity, per the Calendar. In general, ***those who commune each week should be making a confession at least once a month.*** As your priest I don’t regulate the frequency of your confession and communion, or check whether you’re prepared for Holy Communion. It’s on the “honor system” and must be that way. There’s freedom in Christ, and I respect the freedom of each person. However, I am