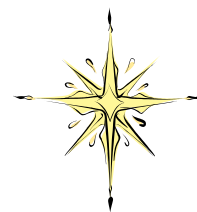


ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2016



- TROPARION OF THE ANCESTORS OF CHRIST, TONE TWO:

By faith, Thou hast justified the ancient forefathers; through them Thou hast betrothed to Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, exult in glory, for from their seed is the noble fruit: she who without seed gave birth to Thee. Through their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us.

- KONTAKION OF THE ANCESTORS OF CHRIST, TONE TWO:

A hand-wrought image ye would not worship, O thrice-blessed ones; but armed with the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire. Standing in the midst of the irresistible flame, ye called upon God: Speed Thou, O Compassionate One, and hasten, as Thou art merciful, to come unto our aid. For Thou art able to do what Thou willest.

- KONTAKION OF THE FOREFEAST, Special Melody: *On this day the Virgin:*

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child, Who before the ages is God.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, Dec. 17: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy, sung in Norwegian. Feast of Prophet Daniel
3:30 PM, Catechism: *On the Church and the Virgin Mary*
5 PM, Great Vespers & Confessions
- Sunday, Dec. 18: 9 AM, Confessions (until 10 AM)
10 AM, Divine Liturgy
11:45 AM, Church School
Noon, Agape Lunch
4 PM, Akathist of the Nativity, Meal (provided) and Children's Play
- Tuesday, Dec. 20: 8 AM, Matins of the Prefeast, Confessions
5 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Vespers for the Prefeast
- Wed., Dec. 21: 8 AM, Matins of the Prefeast, Confessions
5 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Vespers for the Prefeast

- Thurs., Dec. 22: 8 AM, Matins of the Prefeast, Confessions
5 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Nomadic Shelter dinner/Christmas Caroling
6 PM, Vespers for the Prefeast
- Friday, Dec. 23: 9 AM, Royal Hours (3rd & 9th) for Nativity
Noon–4 PM, Confessions
6 PM, Prefeast Vespers
- Sat., Dec. 24: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy (sung by Children’s Choir)
5 PM, Festal Matins for Christmas (confessions will be heard during Vigil)
- Sun., Dec. 25 CHRISTMAS DAY: 9:30 AM, Festal Divine Liturgy, *The Nativity of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ*

- SAINT NICHOLAS PARTY ~ SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18:

You are invited to attend a parish celebration for our children in honor of St. Nicholas of Myra on Sunday, December 18. At 4 PM we will sing the Akathist of Nativity in the Protection Church (which has is more “congregational” than the scheduled Vespers); then enjoy a dinner prepared by Serge Anderson, some caroling, and a Nativity Play, starting at 5:30 PM, written and directed by Carmen Anderson.

- THE GENEALOGY OF THE LORD—MATTHEW 1:

The progression of the lineage of the promised Savior, the Messiah, the Christ passed through the generations. On the Sunday before Nativity we read the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. He began his account by tracing the genealogy of Jesus beginning with Abraham: “Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah, etc.” Though there were more, Matthew chooses to list fourteen generations from Abraham to David, another fourteen from David to the Babylonian captivity, and another fourteen from then to the Christ; *three groups of fourteen* signifying to the ancient Jewish mind perfect completion and fulfillment of God’s original promise. It so happens also that in Hebrew the Prophet David’s name is composed of three consonants: D-W-D, which also have in Hebrew a numerical value, 4-6-4. So, St. David’s name is also the number fourteen. (*adapted*)

- CHRISTMAS HOSPITALITY:

If you or someone you know does not have a place to spend Christmas Day, please let one of the clergy know.

- SERVICES OF CHRISTMAS:

We begin the Christmas Prefeast with Matins at 8 AM on December 20. Each day thereafter we will have a morning and evening service (see calendar). I realize that the demands of work, holiday preparations, morning and evening routines will prevent many from attending all of these Prefeast Services, but surely, attending SOME is possible for all of us. Why so many services? Like Holy Week, Christmas also has preparatory Services to instruct us, to focus us, and to foster within us a sense of

childlike anticipation of what's to come. The hymns direct our attention to the "one thing needful" (that "thing" can easily get lost in the Christmas rush) which is what one of the hymns describes: "Glorify Him whose will it was to be made manifest a young Child the pre-eternal God." Our focus is to glorify Him Who humbled Himself to become a human, so that He could lift us up to become by grace godlike! Make the time to come to at least one of these Matins or Vespers, perhaps scheduling a confession after or before the service.

On Saturday morning, December 25, the Children's Choir will sing the prefeast Divine Liturgy. At **5 PM, Christmas Eve**, we sing the bright and joyful Matins of Nativity, with the hymns "Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom..." and "God is with us" and the beautiful "Christ is born, glorify Him, Christ comes from heaven meet Him." And of course, at the conclusion of Matins we will sing those Carols that focus on the birth of the Savior, His humility and glory. On **Christmas morning, the Divine Liturg begins, please note at 9:30 AM.**

How essential it is to realize that Christmas is centered around the services of the Church, cleansing of the soul and body by prayer and repentance, so that Christ is renewed within us! Yes, family, festive foods and drink are important aspects *ON* Christmas and after—but only because of the joy that comes from the birth of the Word of God ("God became flesh!"), and our rebirth in baptism. We celebrate for a reason; the world celebrates the "holidays" as a distraction from life (celebrating about nothing in particular). I encourage you to attend whatever of the Prefeast Matins or Vespers you are able to attend. However, I absolutely expect all of you to be present in Church for Christmas Eve and Day services to enjoy the banquet of faith. I can't imagine celebrating without each one of you. —*Fr. Lawrence*

- **CONFESSION BEFORE CHRISTMAS:**

Please prepare yourself in every spiritual way for the Feast of the Birth of Christ. It is appropriate and proper for us—priests and people together—to make a Confession prior to receiving Holy Communion on all feast days, but **especially before the feast of Christmas**. It is not appropriate for anyone over seven years of age to receive Holy Communion on Nativity without a recent Confession.

- **NOMADIC SHELTER:**

Our parish will host the Nomadic Shelter on Thursday, December 22. Our guests who had no place to go now have a place to go for dinner, Christmas Carols, a warm place to sleep. For us, who have everything, it is an opportunity to share our hospitality with strangers. What's not to like? May it be pleasing to God! Our guests will arrive between 6:00 and 6:30 PM. Set up, servers, and clean up volunteers are needed.—*Ambrose Inlow and Fr. Lawrence*

- **THE DAY OF OUR PATRON SAINT:**

On Monday, January 2, we will greet His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin at 9:30 AM, and begin the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Repose of Saint Seraphim of Sarov.

- **A HOMILY OF ST. NIKOLAI (VELIMIROVIC):**

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world (John 16:28). So great is God's mercy, and so great is the dignity of man, that the Son of God Himself came down from eternity into time, from heaven to earth, from the throne of glory to the shepherd's cave, solely to save mankind, to cleanse men from sin and to

return them to Paradise. *I came forth from the Father, where I had everything, and am come into the world, which cannot give Me anything.* The Lord was born in a cave to show that the whole world is one dark cave, which He alone can illumine. The Lord was born in Bethlehem—and Bethlehem means “the House of Bread” — to show that He is the only Bread of Life worthy of true men. O Lord Jesus, the Pre-eternal Son of the Living God and the Son of the Virgin Mary, enlighten us and nourish us with Thyself. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

• THE HOLY SUPPER OF CHRISTMAS EVE:

Among the Orthodox people of Carpatho-Russia there is a wonderful tradition of having a “Holy Supper” on Christmas Eve, just before going to Church for the Vigil. While the menu and details of the meal may be different from family to family and region to region, the general idea is as follows:

After the Liturgy on Christmas Eve we go home to prepare the meal. Back in the “old country,” twelve dishes are prepared, in honor of the Holy Apostles. The foods, prepared with oil, but without dairy products due to the fast, usually include fish, soup, stuffed cabbage, stewed plums, mashed potatoes, honey, garlic, etc. The dining table is covered with a white linen cloth in memory of the swaddling clothes of Christ Child, and an extra place is set to receive a stranger, remembering that the Holy Family found no lodging in Bethlehem’s inn. In the center of the table is a large round loaf of bread which symbolized Jesus as the Bread of Life. A tall candle is placed in the bread, as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem. Straw is laid down on the floor, and some of it also placed on the table or under the white tablecloth, symbolizing the fact that Jesus lay in a manger. The father greets everyone with the exclamation: “Christ is born!” And just as in Church, all answer, “Glorify Him!” Wine is poured by the father, or the eldest, for a toast, recalling the act of our Lord Jesus at the Last Supper with these words: “Grant, O God, that we may live to an even better Holy Night next year. May the Lord give good health to you, my dear wife, and to our children, to my good and bad neighbors, to my friends and enemies. May God bless all Christians here and abroad, and may He grant eternal memory and heaven to the departed. And above all, my Sweetest Jesus, born this day, bring peace, health and happiness!” All reply with the prayer: “Grant this, O Lord!” The mother sprinkles all the family members with Holy Water so that their minds and hearts would open to the meaning of the Birth of Christ. The father also takes Holy Water, sprinkling his livestock and household animals, and treating them to sugar or salt and plenty of feed. Many people wistfully feel that perhaps the animals speak at midnight on Christmas Eve. One would be fearful that they might complain to God if mistreated! Beware, those with livestock and pets.

After dipping her forefinger into honey in a bowl, the mother makes a sign of the cross on the foreheads of all present, including herself. The use of honey symbolizes her prayer that the lives of all present would be sweet without bitterness. After the Holy Supper, all then go to the Church for the evening Nativity Vigil, to hear the Psalms, the *Troparion* “Thy Nativity, O Christ our God...” the *Kontakion* “On this day the Virgin beareth...” the prophecy from Isaiah “God is with us” many other hymns, and of course, the Gospel of the birth of the Lord. Afterwards Carols are sung as all return home to prepare themselves for the Divine Liturgy on Christmas morning.

Menu options: The traditional Holy Supper consists of twelve dishes in honor of the number of apostles. This is a fast day, so all dishes should be selected and prepared without meat, cheese, eggs or dairy products.