

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

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ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

505 Jefferson Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18510

Fr. Nicholas Ferencz, Ph.D., Pastor

Rectory: 570-344-5917

Cell: 724-953-6046

nferencz35@gmail.com

www.stnicholasorthodoxscranton.org

Jane Togher, Board President

570-842-3311

jtogher@yahoo.com

Madelyn Hodanich, Choir Director

Hall - 570-344-1522

December 14, 2014

27TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST.

11TH SUNDAY OF LUKE. PROPHET NAHUM

PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., Dec. 14 27th Sunday of Pentecost. 11th Sunday of Luke. Prophet Nahum.

9:45 – 10:15 AM Confessions

10:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Tone 2 pp. 84–86.

Noon Hors d'oeuvres for St. Nicholas Banquet.

12:30 - ish St. Nicholas Banquet

Wed., Dec. 17

7:30 AM *Pirohi Prep*

Thu., Dec. 18

8:00 AM *Pirohi Making*

FRI., DEC. 19 HOLY FATHER NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Sun., Dec. 21 28th Sunday of Pentecost. 12th Sunday of Luke. Pre-feast of the Conception by St. Ann of Holy Mary Theotokos. Monk Patapius

8:45 – 9:15 AM Confessions

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Tone 3 pp. 87–89.

Parish Board Meets

Church School Meets

FEASTS . . . & FASTS

Feast of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, patron of our parish, is this Friday, December 19(6). Divine Liturgy will be at 9 AM.

Confessions: During the Christmas Fast, I will be especially available for Confessions before Divine Liturgy. Please see Parish Calendar for times.

Filipovka (Philip's Fast, or Christmas Lent) continues until Christmas Eve, January 6 civil (Dec. 24 Julian).

The **Traditional Fast** requires fasting from meat, eggs, dairy products, fish, oil, and wine. Fish, wine and oil are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays, and oil and wine are allowed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. See last week's bulletin for a complete listing of the guidelines for the Traditional Fast.

The MINIMUM Diocesan Rule is no meat on Wednesdays and Fridays.

The Eve of Nativity (Dec. 24) is a strict fast day, called Paramony (lit. "preparation"), on which no solid food should be eaten until the first star is seen in the evening sky (or at the very least, until after the Vespereal Divine Liturgy that day). That's why the *Vilija* or *Holy Supper* traditionally begins when the first star is seen.

No dispensation has been granted from fasting on Dec. 24, 25, 31, or Jan. 1 (civil calendar).

Almsgiving: Also, giving to the poor and needy is the other flip of fasting. The parish offers opportunities to fulfill this duty. See below.

PEOPLE STUFF

Please remember in your prayers:

Deceased: Michael Besket.

Living: Matt & Lori Algar. Stephanie Bonk. Gloria Bracey. Mary Chupron. Susan Danchak. Ricky, Rick & Sarah. Michael Danchak. Fr. George Dursa. Jada Eiden. Heather Harris. Robert & Eddie Hawley. Lorraine Kacaba. Dawn & Warren Kieffer. Anna Mae Kuklis. Dee Lositski. Dan & Teri Ludwig. Peggy Majcher. Theresa Niester. John Polanichka. Emma Sacco. Amy Shimo. Connie Lou Slater. Faye Snell. Marion Sosnowski. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigue. Fr. Donald Valasek. Gary Wassel. Julia Worobey.

At Home: Michael Andreosky. Elizabeth Basalyga. George & Anna Senich. Kathryn Stocoski.

Assisted Living Homes: Julie Kovacs. Julie Roberts.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Ongoing Food Collection Project: Please remember those families who rely on food donations to help make ends meet. As you are aware, the funding for the Bread Basket of NEPA has been cut, and they rely on donations to help those families in need. A food donation container is available in the Church Hall. Please help fill this container with non-perishable food items: cans, dry goods, etc. Make this a part of your Christmas Lent and donate!

Christmas Mitten Tree: As in past years, we are asking for donations of *New* mittens, gloves, hats and scarves to adorn our "Gift Giving Tree," set up in the hall. The donations will go to help keep the children of our area warmer this winter. All proceeds from this drive will go to *Families United*, a Foster Care program for children. **Deadline** for donations: **Dec. 21**. Help us decorate our Giving Tree properly this year!

PARISH STUFF

ANNUAL ST. NICHOLAS BANQUET TODAY!

Commemorations Binder: The book for signing up for commemorations for the Altar Vigils, Eternal Light, Panachidas and Social Hour is in the vestibule just as you come in.

2015 Church Calendars are now available in the hall.

2015 Contribution Envelopes are available in the hall, or ask Nick Polanichka. He will be happy to give you yours.

Auditors Sought: One more auditor is needed. If you are willing to consider taking on this task, please see Fr. Nik or Jane Togher. Ordinarily there are 2 auditors selected to check the parish's books every year.

LAST PIROHI SALE THIS FRI., DEC. 19, TOGETHER WITH THE ANNUAL BAKE SALE. Pirohi making is the same time and place – see calendar. We will make the usual 2 ½ bags. Thanks to all who continue to work so hard.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND HIS CHURCH

Sunday, December 7

\$ 574.00	General Collection
\$ 1318.00	Pirohi
\$ 78.00	7-day Candles
\$ 14.00	Holy Days
\$ 69.00	1 st Sunday
\$ 12.00	Tapers
\$ 180.00	Church Dues
\$ 2245.00	Total Collection

St. Nicholas Banquet: *Thanks and God Bless!* To all who helped to make the St. Nicholas Banquet successful. Many years!

Church School: Church School meets next Sunday, December 21.

Parish Board meets next Sunday, December 21.

Men's Club meeting to be announced.

Christmas Bake Sale, sponsored by the Altar Society, will be Friday December 19th along with the Pirohi sale. Anyone who can bake cookies, breads, nut/poppy rolls, etc. please contact Carol Pugh at 570-489-2321, toots638@comcast.net.

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

Annual Community Christmas Day Breakfast, Thursday, December 25, 8 AM – 11 AM. At the DeNaples Center, 900 Mulberry St., Scranton, 3rd floor. There is no cost to guests. No reservations are

needed. Parking is available in the garage at Mulberry and Monroe Ave. Sponsored by the Center for Service and Social Justice of the University of Scranton. Flyers with information are available in the hall.

St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Center International Dinner Club, 320 Mifflin Ave. Scranton, Pa. will be featuring the PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH Cuisine on January 8, 2014. Seatings are at 5:30 and 6:30pm. The menu will start with a Potato and Leek Soup and Roasted Red Beet Salad with goat cheese and champagne vinaigrette. The entrée will be Pork Snitzel served over warm apple & cabbage slaw with spatzle. The dessert will be an Apple Dumpling served warm with a salted caramel sauce. Coffee, tea, water and soda are included. Cash bar is available. The drink special is Pennsylvania Dutch Egg Nog (Alcoholic). Reservations can be made before January 5, 2015 and the price is only \$20.00 per person at 570-343-5151.

Malanka 2015 Northeastern Pennsylvania's 11th Annual Ukrainian New Year Dinner Dance - MALANKA - will take place on Saturday evening, January 17, 2015 at the Parish Center of St. Vladimir Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, 428 North Seventh Avenue, Scranton, PA.

The menu will feature both Ukrainian and American fare catered by Paul Wanas of Accentuate Caterers of Distinctive Events. Cash bar will be available. Door prizes will be awarded. Music for dancing will be provided by the internationally known Ukrainian band "Fata Morgana". Wearing Ukrainian apparel is encouraged.

Tickets \$40.00. Reservations are required and can be made by contacting Michael Trusz at 570 489-1256.

YOU BETTER WATCH OUT—ST. NICHOLAS IS COMING TO TOWN: The Seldom-told Stories of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

December 06

by Christopher B. Warner from

<http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/1787>

[In the past I have published the true account of St. Nicholas from Orthodox sources like the Menologion. I offer here a Western perspective, which helps in understanding the connection that St. Nicholas has to modern Christmas celebrations.

Editor's note: Today Saint Nicholas is the patron saint of sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, children, brewers, pawnbrokers and students in various cities and countries around Europe.

Everyone loves jolly ol' Saint Nicholas. There is something romantic and cozy about telling Santa stories around the crackling fire. He is an icon of the Christmas season. But not everyone agrees about the real Santa Claus. Some like to picture Santa as the early-19th century, pipe-smoking elf with a bucket full of coal for naughty boys who don't eat their cauliflower. Others prefer Santa as an emasculated, overweight consumer who gets bossed around by Mrs. Claus and thus flees the North Pole once a year to relive the glory days. Then there is the wiry bishop who pulled Arius' beard and punched him in the face for teaching heresy. Maybe they're all the same guy. A 1,700-year-old hero can't be expected to fit into just one old Santa suit. Our images of St. Nicholas seem to evolve or deteriorate based on the values of contemporary culture in different times and places.

In 1809, Washington Irving wrote *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, a work of imaginative fiction that included several tales about a jolly, elfin Dutchman scampering down chimneys to bring gifts to children. The American image of Santa Claus was solidified during this time period. "A Visit from St. Nicholas," a poem by Clement Clarke Moore published in 1823 and better known as "'Twas the Night Before Christmas," introduced the enduring image of Santa's reindeer and sleigh and fixed the date of his visit to Christmas Eve. *[Editor's note: However, if you read the poem carefully, you find that Santa Claus is elf-size – i.e., small enough to fit in a chimney].* These are fun stories that make up an important part of our literary tradition and culture in America. However, stuffing chimney-hung stockings is an ancient tradition that pre-dates the American elf lore as well as the Dutch, who fill their children's wooden clogs with gifts the night before St. Nicholas Day (December 6). Chucking gold into people's wet socks is a custom started by a young man named Nicholas who lived in Asia Minor around 300 AD.

There are hundreds of stories about St. Nicholas of Myra. He was born in Lycia on the southwest coast of modern Turkey. His wealthy, pious parents, Theophanes and Nonna, read to him the Holy Scriptures and faithfully taught him his prayers, but

apparently died while he was still young. His uncle, Bishop Nicholas of Patara, ordained young Nicholas and made him his personal assistant. The zealous youth proved himself an inspiring catechist in the Christian community and an obedient servant to his uncle. During these dutiful years he showed great kind-heartedness and generosity by distributing his inheritance to the poor.

During this time, the three grown daughters of a formerly rich inhabitant were in danger of being sold into slavery because of their father's pennilessness. Hearing of this, young Nicholas secretly visited the man's house at night and threw gold in at the window to provide a dowry for one of the girls. The eldest daughter was soon married, and Nicholas again made clandestine donations for the other two daughters, with equally felicitous results. Modern children who awake to an orange or to gold-foiled chocolates in their stockings reenact this story because, by all accounts, one of Nicholas' gifts landed in a sock that was hanging by the fire to dry.

The young Nicholas was blessed with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. During the voyage, a storm came up that terribly frightened the crew but, through the prayers of the saint, the waves of the sea were becalmed and the passengers saved.

According to Palestinian Christians, *Mar Nkoula* (St. Nicholas) lived in a cave as a hermit for three years after visiting the holy places. In a vision Nicholas was told to return to Lycia. Years later an Orthodox Church was built over the hermit's abandoned cave at Beit Jala, and Palestinians still commemorate this saint by giving gifts to children on December 19.

Not long after his return to Asia Minor, Nicholas was made archbishop of Myra. Difficult years followed for the archbishop and his flock, who were forced underground by the Roman Emperor Diocletian's brutal, expansive persecution of Christians. During this time the good archbishop, who had the charism of bi-location, often appeared to imprisoned members of his flock as a model of gentleness, kindness, and love, until the day he too was discovered in hiding. In jail Nicholas continued to sustain and exhort his fellow believers to endure torture and death for the love of Christ. After Diocletian's death, Nicholas was released and returned

to his sacramental duties as a "confessor of the faith"—a titled given to Christians who were imprisoned and tortured for their faith during this period, but not executed. They were extremely revered and respected by their contemporaries.

Archbishop Nicholas attended the first Ecumenical Council at Nicaea (325), where he allegedly assailed the heretic Arius. In the middle of his hearing, Arius stood up on his seat in order to be better heard. Enraged by Arius' denial that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, Archbishop Nicholas strode quickly over to Arius, pulled him down by his beard, and punched him in the face. The scandalized council fathers sprang upon Nicholas, stripped him of his pallium, and threw him in prison for his brutish behavior. That night Nicholas was visited by the Holy Family who loosed his bonds and vested him again in his apostolic garb. The bishops were astonished by this miracle and realized that Nicholas' anger was righteous. He was honorably restored to his chair—where the aged prelate slept through much of the remaining proceedings.

During one of these naps, the holy confessor of orthodoxy bi-located again, this time to save more sailors at sea. When he awoke in Nicaea he was resentfully charged with sleeping through the entire council, whereupon the venerable Nicholas is said to have answered, "While you were talking, I was busy rescuing a disaster-driven ship at sea." Some of the pious brethren took the ship to be an analogy of the Church. Others dismissed his words as the babblings of an old man. But not long after the council, the rescued sailors returned safe home and, traveling through Myra, recognized Nicholas as their deliverer. Not surprisingly, every Greek and Slavic Christian sailor for the past millennium and a half has sailed under the protection of St. Nicholas. In the midst of a storm, Greek sea captains still keep the ancient custom of promising St. Nicholas an effigy of their ship, called a *tamata*, if the holy wonderworker will save them from calamity.

Archbishop Nicholas peacefully fell asleep in the Lord on December 6, 343. He was immediately recognized as a saint and as the patron of travelers. He is called upon by Christians round the world for deliverance from flood, poverty, or any misfortune.