

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

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ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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December 28, 2014

29TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST. 13TH SUNDAY OF LUKE.

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS OF OUR LORD.

PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., Dec. 28 29th Sunday of Pentecost. 13th Sunday of Luke. Sunday of the Holy Forefathers of Our Lord.
8:45 – 9:15 AM Confessions
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

Sun., Jan. 4 30th Sunday of Pentecost. 14th Sunday of Luke. Sunday of the Holy Fathers. Great-martyr Anastasia.
8:45 – 9:15 AM Confessions
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

The Christmas Schedule is printed here ahead of time so that everyone can properly prepare.

TUE., JAN. 6 VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
Fast from Meat & Dairy Products
7:30 PM Confessions
8:00 PM Great Compline – Special Books

WED., JAN. 7 NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
8:45 – 9:15 AM Confessions
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – pp. 132–135
No Fasting

Thu., Jan. 8 *Synaxis of Holy Mary Theotokos*
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

Fri., Jan. 9 *St. Stephen the First Martyr*
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets
No Fasting

Sun., Jan. 11 Sunday After Christmas, remembering Holy Joseph the Betrothed, King David and James, Brother of the Lord..
31st Sunday of Pentecost. 15th Sunday of Luke.
8:45 – 9:15 AM Confessions
9:30 Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets
Church School Meets
Regularly scheduled Men's Club meeting

FEASTS . . . & FASTS

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 the bulletin of Dec. 7 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 day of fast from meat and dairy products. It is called Paramony (lit. "preparation"), since this is the day of preparation for the celebration of the Birth of Our Lord.

No solid food should be eaten until the first star is seen in the evening sky. 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. 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. Tim & Christina 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.

Eternal Light: Memory of John Baron by Bill & Beverly Thomas.

Panachida: Memory of Steve Roberts by Pucher family.

Social Hour: For December 21, the Social Hour was donated in memory of William Stocoski by Kathryn Stocoski. *I apologize for the omission last week.*

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!

PARISH STUFF

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.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND HIS CHURCH

Sunday, December 21

\$ 729.76	General Collection
\$ 186.00	St. Nicholas Banquet
\$ 94.00	7-day Candles
\$ 41.00	Holy Days
\$ 100.00	Christmas
\$ 15.00	Tapers
\$ 115.00	Christmas Flowers
\$ 90.00	Church Dues
\$ 175.00	Maintenance & Repairs
\$ 3267.00	Pirohi
\$ 4812.76	Total Collection

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

Concert of Christmas Music at St. Michael's, Binghamton, NY: Join us on Friday evening, January 2 for a special Concert of Christmas Music, which will be shared by our choir and choirs from our neighboring parish. The program will begin in our church at 6:30 PM! A reception for all follows in our Center.

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.

MARCH FOR LIFE – is on Thursday, Jan. 22. As in past years, our Potomac Parish is offering a lunch for those who come and march against the unjust taking of human life. Fr. Peter Zarynow made this announcement:

With the blessing of His Grace, Bishop Gregory, the Potomac Chapter of the ACRY (#25) will be offering a soup and sandwich lunch to those coming to Washington DC for the annual March For Life on 22 January. Lunch will be served approx. 10:30am, so to give time to get to the National Mall by the noon start time. If you are planning on attending, please contact Fr. Peter Zarynow (frzarynow@gmail.com or 301-299-5120) by no later than 16 January so that the ACRY knows how many to prepare for. We look forward to seeing you at the March!

HOLY SUPPER OR *VELIJA*

The following is a description of the Christmas Eve meal known as *Velija* by Carpatho-Russians and Slovaks who are Orthodox or Byzantine Catholic. As is true with all countries, customs and traditions vary from region to region and family to family. You may want to see what customs are the same or are different from what your family's are. [adapted from <http://easteuropeanfood.about.com/od/slovakchristmaseve/a/slovakxmaseve.htm>, accessed December 27, 2014]

Whether Christmas is celebrated on December 25 or on January 7, one thing is universal among Carpatho-Russians – Christmas Eve *Velija* (veh-LEE-yah), literally "vigil" and meaning Christmas Eve Holy Supper or *Svety Večer*. *Velija* is a 12-dish (the number of dishes symbolizes the apostles) meatless feast whose preparations begin early on Christmas Eve. It is a solemn meal that brings the family together, sometimes from hundreds of miles away.

The Velija Table Is Prepared

Hay or straw is placed under the tablecloth or under the table – or both – symbolizing Christ's humble birth in a manger. A fine white tablecloth is placed over the straw representing the Babe's swaddling clothes. An extra place is always set on the table for two reasons: to receive a traveling stranger who might be the Christ Child in disguise and to honor a deceased loved one. Usually a special loaf of bread is placed on the table, covered by a white cloth. It symbolizes the everlasting presence of Jesus Christ; but is covered since He has not yet been born. Dinner doesn't begin until the first star of the evening is sighted, a job usually given to the young children of the household to keep them occupied while dinner is prepared.

The Meal Begins

Prayers and blessings begin the meal. They are followed by breaking, passing around and eating a prosphora (the Communion Bread of Byzantines and Orthodox). The bread is eaten with honey and garlic, symbolizing the bread of the Passover supper, and the sweetness and bitterness of life. The head of the

household offers the bread to each person in turn, from the oldest to the youngest. The head of the household (or the oldest family member present) also dips their thumb in honey and makes the sign of the cross on everyone's forehead as a reminder to keep Christ foremost in their lives.

Once the prophora has been shared, the meal begins with a toast, asking for God's blessings. The toast is followed by some type of tart soup (continuing the exodus theme of recalling the bitterness of slavery) -- mačanka (sour mushroom), potato, or maybe pea soup with barley or prunes.

Next come freshwater fish, usually floured and quickly fried. Carp, trout and white fish are common. Bandurky (potatoes), bobalki (baked dough balls) with honey and poppyseeds or sauerkraut and onion, holubky (cabbage rolls) stuffed with mushrooms and rice, pagač (sometimes known as "Slovak pizza," which is thin raised dough baked either in a single or double layer filled with sweet cabbage or mashed potatoes), and pirohi (dumplings filled with sweet cabbage, sauerkraut, or lekvar). Some families like lokša, a potato pancake type of dish.

Dessert is usually kolači (strudels filled with walnuts, poppyseed or lekvar), and fruit like apples and nuts. It is believed the order in which the courses are served signifies the sweetness, sourness, and sweetness, again, of life -- honey on the prosphora, sour soup, sweet pastries.

After the Meal

When the meal is finished kol'ady or Christmas carols are sung. Sometimes there is a visit from the Jasličskari or Star Carolers -- young men and boys dressed as the Three Kings or shepherds and an angel carrying a star on a pole. They carry with them a *Viflejem* (literally "Bethlehem," usually a model of the parish church with a Nativity scene inside of it) and, in song, tells the story of the Nativity. Then, if they aren't snowbound, families bundle up and head off to Christmas Eve services.

Superstitions

Some families throw walnuts into the corners of every room to ensure good luck for the coming year. Others break them open to foretell the future. The four

quarters of the walnut represent a quarter of the year. If one or more sections is healthy, then the coming year will be a good one. If one or more sections is black and shriveled, watch out!

No one is allowed to leave the table until the meal is finished. To do so would result in bad luck (or death) in the year to come. A blessed, lighted candle is on the Velija table during the entire meal. In some families, at the end of the supper, the candle is blown out by the eldest person. If the smoke goes up, the person's luck will be good. If it goes down, bad luck and, possibly, death await. The candle is then relighted and passed to the next eldest person until everyone has his chance. A final prayer is said by the head of the household and then it is deemed safe to leave the table.

Poppyseeds are eaten with abandon because they're considered lucky, recalling the pagan tradition of scattering poppyseeds at the doorway so an evil spirit intent on entering would be so preoccupied with picking up each tiny seed, it wouldn't enter the house.

A Very Unusual Tradition

Last but not least, In some areas of Slovakia and Ukraine, the head of the household takes a spoonful of bobalki, loksa or kutia (a dish of boiled wheat mixed with honey, raisins and nuts) and throws it up on the ceiling. The more that sticks, the bigger the crops will be in the coming year!

As you celebrate the Holy Supper this year, think about the religious customs and traditions which come down from the past in order to bring home the true meaning of the celebration of the Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ!

Christ is Born!

Glorify Him!

Christos Raždajetsja!

Slavite Jeho!