

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

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ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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January 4, 2015

30TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST. 14TH SUNDAY OF LUKE.

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS. GREAT-MARTYR ANASTASIA.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Christos Raždajetsja! Slavite Jeho!

PARISH CALENDAR

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

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

Panachida: Joseph Maruhnich

Fri., Jan. 9 *St. Stephen the First Martyr*

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

Panachida: Stephen Roberts

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 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

Panachida: Michael Besket - 40 Day mem.

Church School Meets

Regularly scheduled Men's Club meeting

Confessions: from about 45 minutes before any Divine Liturgy until about 15 minutes before. Please see Parish Calendar for times. If not listed, Confessions will still be available.

FEASTS . . . & FASTS

Filipovka - 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.

Almsgiving: Also, giving to the poor and needy is the flip side of fasting. The parish offers opportunities to

fulfill this duty. See below.

Feasts in January: see Parish Calendar for service times

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD– Wed., Jan. 7

Synaxis of Holy Mary Theotokos (2nd Day of Christmas) – Thu., Jan. 8

St. Stephen the First-martyr – Jan. 9

Circumcision of Our Lord, & Commemoration of St. Basil the Great – Wed., Jan. 13

THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD – Mon., Jan. 19

No Fasting! We should not fast from Christmas until the Eve of Theophany (Jan. 18), in celebration of the coming of Our God among us!

Fasting Theophany Eve: Theophany is the twin feast of Christmas, and so liturgical practices and home practices are very similar. So, Theophany Eve (Jan. 18) is a day of fast from meat and dairy products. The custom is to celebrate the same kind of Holy Supper that is celebrated on Christmas Eve.

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 Michael Besket by Pucher family.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS! I would like to extend my prayers and best wishes to you and your families for a blessed and joyous Christmas. I want to thank you for your support and kindness this past year as your

President. God Bless! Jane Togher.

Thank You & God Bless! To all of you who have remembered me in your prayers, with your cards and gifts during this Christmas season. May God grant us all a blessed and happy New Year! – Fr. Nik.

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!

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND HIS CHURCH

Sunday, December 28

\$ 515.75	General Collection
\$ 14.00	Eternal Light
\$ 70.00	7-day Candles
\$ 7.00	Holy Days
\$ 10.00	Christmas
\$ 9.00	Tapers
\$ 67.00	Christmas Flowers
\$ 25.00	Church Dues
\$ 13.00	Maintenance & Repairs
\$ 730.75	Total Collection

PARISH STUFF

Altar Society News: The total for the Christmas Bake Sale was \$701.00. *Thanks & God Bless!* To everyone who donated baked items and to those who gave a monetary donation. Also, of course, thanks to those who bought.

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.

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

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!

THE DATE OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

from www.oca.org.

The present Feast, commemorating the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, was established by the Church. Its origin goes back to the time of the Apostles. In the Apostolic Constitutions (Section 3, 13) it says, "Brethren, observe the feasts; and first of all the Birth of Christ, which you are to celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month." In another place it also says, "Celebrate the day of the Nativity of Christ, on which unseen grace is given man by the birth of the Word of God from the Virgin Mary for the salvation of the world."

In the second century St Clement of Alexandria also indicates that the day of the Nativity of Christ is December 25. In the third century St Hippolytus of Rome mentions the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, and appoints the Gospel readings for this day from the opening chapters of St Matthew.

In 302, during the persecution of Christians by Maximian, 20,000 Christians of Nicomedia (December 28) were burned in church on the very Feast of the Nativity of Christ. In that same century, after the persecution when the Church had received freedom of religion and had become the official religion in the Roman Empire, we find the Feast of the Nativity of Christ observed throughout the entire Church. There is evidence of this in the works of St Ephraim the Syrian, St Basil the Great, St Gregory the Theologian, St Gregory of Nyssa, St Ambrose of Milan, St John Chrysostom and other Fathers of the Church of the fourth century.

St John Chrysostom, in a sermon which he gave in the year 385, points out that the Feast of the Nativity of Christ is ancient, and indeed very ancient. In this same century, at the Cave of Bethlehem, made famous by the Birth of Jesus Christ, the empress St Helen built a church, which her mighty son Constantine adorned after her death. In the Codex of the emperor Theodosius from 438, and of the emperor Justinian in 535, the universal celebration of the day of the Nativity of Christ was decreed by law. Thus, Nicephorus Callistus, a writer of the fourteenth century, says in his History that in the sixth century, the emperor Justinian established the celebration of the Nativity of Christ throughout all the world.

Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople in the fifth century, Sophronius and Andrew of Jerusalem in the seventh, Sts John of Damascus, Cosmas of Maium and Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople in the eighth, the Nun Cassiane in the ninth, and others whose names are unknown, wrote many sacred hymns for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, which are still sung by the Church on this radiant festival.

During the first three centuries, in the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Cyprus, the Nativity of Christ was combined together with the Feast of His Baptism on January 6, and called “Theophany” (“Manifestation of God”). This was because of a belief that Christ was baptized on anniversary of His birth, which may be inferred from St John Chrysostom’s sermon on the Nativity of Christ: “it is not the day on which Christ was born which is called Theophany, but rather that day on which He was baptized.”

In support of such a view, it is possible to cite the words of the Evangelist Luke who says that “Jesus began to be about thirty years of age” (Luke 3:23) when He was baptized. The joint celebration of the Nativity of Christ and His Theophany continued to the end of the fourth century in certain Eastern Churches, and until the fifth or sixth century in others.

The present order of services preserves the memory of the ancient joint celebration of the Feasts of the Nativity of Christ and Theophany. On the eve of both Feasts, there is a similar tradition that one should fast until the stars appear. The order of divine services on the eve of both feastdays and the feastdays themselves is the same.

The Nativity of Christ has long been counted as one of the Twelve Great Feasts. It is one of the greatest, most joyful and wondrous events in the history of the world. Concurring with the witness of the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church, in their God-inspired writings, describe the Feast of the Nativity of Christ as most profound, and joyous, serving as the basis and foundation for all the other Feasts.

SECOND DAY OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

The Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos
Commemorated on December 26

from www.oca.org.

On the day after the Nativity of Christ we celebrate the Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos, and come together to give her glory and praise. This is the second day of the three day Winter Pascha. Combining the hymns of the Nativity with those celebrating the Mother of God, the Church points to Mary as the one through whom the Incarnation was made possible. His humanity—concretely and historically—is the humanity He received from Mary. His body is, first of all, her body. His life is her life. This feast, the assembly in honor of the Theotokos, is probably the most ancient feast of Mary in the Christian tradition, the very beginning of her veneration by the Church.

Six days of post-feast bring the Christmas season to a close on December 31. At the services of all these days, the Church repeats the hymns and songs glorifying Christ’s Incarnation, reminding us that the source and foundation of our salvation is only to be found in the One who, as God before the ages, came into this world and for our sake was “born as a little Child.”

THIRD DAY OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen
Commemorated on December 27

The third day of the Nativity is dedicated to the Protomartyr St Stephen. This is the third day of the three day Winter Pascha. The Holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen was the eldest of the seven deacons, appointed by the Apostles themselves, and therefore he is called “archdeacon.” He was the first Christian martyr, and he suffered for Christ when he was about thirty. In the words of Asterias, he was “the starting point of the martyrs, the instructor of suffering for Christ, the foundation of righteous confession, since Stephen was the first to shed his blood for the Gospel.” the description of his martyrdom by stoning can be found in the *Acts of the Apostles*, ch. 7.

After Stephen was stoned to death, his body, left to be eaten by beasts, was secretly taken up by the Jewish teacher Gamaliel and his son Habib, who buried Stephen on his estate. They both believed in Christ, and later received holy Baptism.