

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

Vol. 5 No. 1.3

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

505 Jefferson Avenue, Scranton, Pa. 18510

Fr. Nicholas Ferencz, Ph.D., Pastor
Rectory: 621 Vine St., Scranton, PA 18510
Rectory: 570-344-5917
Cell: 724-953-6046
nferencz35@gmail.com
www.stnicholasorthodoxscranton.org

Jane Togher, Board President
570-842-3311
jctogher@gmail.com
Madelyn Hodanich, Choir Director
Hall - 570-344-1522

JANUARY 17, 2016

SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY

PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., Jan. 17 *Sunday Before Theophany.* Synaxis of the 70 Apostles.

8:45–9:15 AM Confessions

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets

Newly Elected Board Members take the Oath of Office.

Parish Board meets.

MON., JAN 18 VIGIL OF THEOPHANY.

6:00 PM Great Compline & Blessing of the Jordan Water.

TUE., JAN. 19 THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy – pp 145–148

Panachida: Julia Kovacs - John & Mary Brizinski.

Wed., Jan. 20 Synaxis of St. John the Baptist.

8:00 AM *Pirohi Prep*

Thu., Jan. 21 Monk George the Chozebite. Confessor Emilian.

8:00 AM *Pirohi Making*

Fri., Jan. 22 Martyr Polyeuctus. Bishop Peter of Sebaste.

10 AM – 4 PM *Pirohi Sale*

Sun., Jan. 24 *Sunday after Theophany.* Monk Theodosios. Michael of Novgorod, Fool for Christ.

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets
Church School Begins!

FEASTING...

The Theophany of Our Lord is on Tuesday, Jan. 19. This is the day we remember the Baptism of Our Lord in the Jordan. It is also the day that we bless the Jordan water. See Parish Calendar for service times.

...AND FASTING

- **Theophany Eve**, Jan. 18, we fast from *meat and dairy*, just like we did Christmas Eve. The old tradition was to re-celebrate the *Vilija (Holy Supper)* on this day before Church services.
- After Theophany, we return this Wednesday to the normal Wednesday/Friday fast.

Confessions are available before Divine Liturgy.

PEOPLE STUFF

Please remember in your prayers:

Deceased: George Senich.

Living: Fr. George Dursa. Fr. Donald Valasek.

Stephanie Bonk. Owen Bonn. Gloria Bracey. Bob Chalk. Susan Danchak. Ricky, Rick & Sarah. Michael Danchak. Jada Eiden. Tammy Hall. Heather Harris. Robert Hawley. Madelyn Hodanich. Lorraine Kacaba. Anna Mae Kuklis. John Lange. Dee Lositski. Peggy Majcher. Rose Markiewicz. Theresa Niester. Mary Phillips. John Polanichka. Karen Rolka. JoyAnn Scarnato. Amy Shimo. Faye Snell. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigie. Gary Wassel.

At Home: Michael Andreosky. Elizabeth Basalyga. Anna Senich.

Assisted Living Homes: Julie Roberts. Marion Sosnowski. Kathryn Stocoski. Dolores Naglak. Mary Kneiss.

Our Shut-in Parishioners redux: Last week I neglected to put the addresses in for those of our parishioners who are in Assisted-living homes or otherwise in Rehab. Here is the info:

Marion Sosnowski. Kathryn Stocoski.

Green Ridge Care Center. 2741 Boulevard Ave. Scranton, PA 18509. 570-344-6121

Julie Roberts.

Old Forge Manor. 246 S. Main St. Old Forge, PA 18518. 570-451-0788

Susan Danchak.

Allied Rehab Hospital. 475 Morgan Highway. Scranton, PA 18508. 570-348-1359

Dolores Naglak..

Clarks Summit Senior Living. 950 Morgan Highway. Clarks Summit, PA 18411. 570-586-8080

I am sure that any and all of these folks would appreciate a note, a phone call or a visit.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Breadbasket of NEPA: We are starting up again. Donation boxes are in the hall.

PARISH FUND RAISERS

St. Nicholas Banquet: *Correction:* The total given for the St. Nicholas Banquet was *not* the profit, but only the gross income. Sorry for the confusion.

Kolači Sale: The Men's Club sold 216 nut, poppy and

apricot rolls. Their net profit was \$648. Thanks to all who helped support this project.

The Men's Club is planning to sell Kolači again for Easter, so look for the ads coming soon!. It looks like the guys are starting to build a reputation!

Pirohi Sales Begin: *This Week!* Yayy! See Parish Calendar for days and times. Anyone who can help out, even if just for while, is welcome!

PARISH STUFF

Parish Board meets today.

Group Event: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.* The *Men's Club* is exploring interest in getting a group together to attend this event at the Scranton Cultural Center. Here are the details:

- *When:* Sunday February 7, 1:00 PM show.
- *Where:* Scranton Cultural Center. Lower Balcony seats (I am told these are good seats).
- *Cost:* Group rate is \$45.50/ticket.

Yes, we know that this is Super Bowl Sunday, but thought that people might be interested anyway, since this show will be over long before the S.B. events begin.

If you are interested, we need to know right away. Please see Bill Thomas, Nick Polanichka, Frank Pucher or Andrew Barnett. There is a minimum number for the group rate, and there is limited time to get the tickets. Let us know!

House Blessings: I am in the process of preparing the house blessing routes. I will announce the areas I plan to visit as soon as I can.

You may want to get some of the New Jordan Water so that you are ready to have your house blessed when I come. Just saying.

Church School begins the Winter term *next Sunday*, January 24!

CHURCH SCHOOL CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan. 24	Mar. 13
Feb. 7	Mar. 37
Feb. 28 (Note change)	Apr. 10
	Apr. 24 - Palm Sunday, Last Class

Oath of Office for the Newly Elected Board Members has been rescheduled for today.

Christmas Trees available: We have two slightly used Christmas trees which are free for the taking. If you are interested, please see Frank Pucher who can show them to you. First come, first serve.

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

Stewardship Workshop note: Four of us from our parish attended the workshop yesterday. It was a rather fruitful day. We will be talking about it and at some point be able to offer some thoughts to the parish for your consideration.

Pirohi, Haluski, Clam Chowder Sale St. John's Auxiliary, 310 Broadway Ave. Scranton will be held on Feb. 10th. Orders will be taken until Jan. 16 or while manageable. Pick up date is Feb. 10th between 10 and 2pm. Prices: Pirohi \$8.00 dozen; Haluski \$7.00 qt.; Clam Chowder \$8.00 qt. Please call 570-343-8820.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH	
Jan 10, 2016	
\$303.00	General Collection
2.00	1st Sunday
51.00	7 Day Light
32.00	Holy Days
11.00	Taper Candles
6.00	Calendar Donations

\$405.00	Total
<i>Renovation Donations to date: \$1000.</i>	

FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

January 6/19 *from oca.org*

Theophany is the Feast which reveals the Most Holy Trinity to the world through the Baptism of the Lord (Mt.3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptized by the St John the Forerunner, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a dove. From ancient times this Feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since God is Light and has appeared to illumine “those who sat in

darkness,” and “in the region of the shadow of death” (Mt.4:16), and to save the fallen race of mankind by grace.

In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptize catechumens at the Vespers of Theophany, so that Baptism also is revealed as the spiritual illumination of mankind.

The origin of the Feast of Theophany goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in The Apostolic Constitutions (Book V:13). From the second century we have the testimony of St Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this Feast.

There is a third century dialogue about the services for Theophany between the holy martyr Hippolytus and St Gregory the Wonderworker. In the following centuries, from the fourth to ninth century, all the great Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, John of Damascus, commented on the Feast of Theophany.

The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this Feast, which is sung at Orthodox services even today. St John of Damascus said that the Lord was baptized, not because He Himself had need for cleansing, but “to bury human sin by water,” to fulfill the Law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify “the nature of water” and to offer us the form and example of Baptism.

On the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, the Holy Church proclaims our faith in the most sublime mystery, incomprehensible to human intellect, of one God in three Persons. It teaches us to confess and glorify the Holy Trinity, one in Essence and Indivisible. It exposes and overthrows the errors of ancient teachings which attempted to explain the Creator of the world by reason, and in human terms.

The Church shows the necessity of Baptism for believers in Christ, and it inspires us with a sense of deep gratitude for the illumination and purification of our sinful nature. The Church teaches that our salvation and cleansing from sin is possible only by the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, therefore it is necessary to preserve worthily these gifts of the grace of holy Baptism, keeping clean this priceless garb, for “As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ” (Gal 3:27).

On the day of Theophany, all foods are permitted, even if the Feast falls on a Wednesday or Friday.

The Connection between the Feasts of the Birth of Our Lord and his Theophany

Everyone knows that the two feasts are celebrated very much the same way, and that the “Twelve Days of Christmas” refers to the time between the two feasts. Here is an explanation of the connection, from www.oca.org.

The present Feast 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 Feast Days; 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 Feast Days and the Feast Days themselves is the same.