

Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church



American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

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Pastor – Very Rev. R. Michael Zak, Cell phone:(412)-804-8865

Deacons: Fr. Deacons Artemius Stienstra & Dr. Marc Wisnosky

Sub- Deacon: Andrew Halapin, Jr.

Cantor/Choir Director: Danielle Bartko

Assistant Cantors – Donald Bodnar Jr. & Michele Tomko

Parish Council President: Tom Pingor

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Sunday, December 17, 2017

28th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (11TH LUKAN SUNDAY)

Singing of the Nativity Canon: 8:30 A.M.

Divine Liturgy: 9:00 A.M.

Epistle: Colossians 1:12-18

Resurrection Tone: 3

Gospel: Luke 17:12-19

Tropar & Kondak: Blue Book: 87-89 / Red Book: 102-105

Offering Table Flowers' Sponsor: To welcome the newly-enlightened servant of God, **Charlotte Marie Johns**, offered by the Family.

Panachida Service conducted for the repose of the soul of God's departed servant, **+Ruth Ann Krenicky**, offered by Richard & Valeri Krenicky.

Panachida Service conducted for the repose of the soul of God's departed servant, **+George Palchik**, offered by daughters: Mary Ann Grossett & Agnes Kane.

St. Nicholas Day Brunch, served in the auditorium following the Liturgy. A free-will offering is in effect. The Singing of the Nativity Carols after the repast and the visit of the Patron Saint of our Church and People, Saint Nicholas the Wonder-Worker, bearing gifts for all the children of the parish.

MONDAY, DEC. 18... 7:00 P.M. Vespers on the Feast of St. Nicholas the Wonder-Worker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia.

TUESDAY, DEC. 19... 9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy on the Feast of St. Nicholas the Wonder-Worker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia; Patron Saint of the Carpatho-Russian People and our Diocesan Church Schools. Birthday prayers intoned for the servant of God, Leslie Beres-Sochka, offered by Andrea Labik.

SATURDAY, DEC. 23... 9:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy for the repose of the soul of God's departed servant, **+Charles Udut**, offered by himself.

11:00 A.M. to 12 NOON: Hearing of Confessions during the Nativity Fast.

Sunday, December 24, 2017

29th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (12th LUKAN SUNDAY)

Singing of the Nativity Canon: 8:30 A.M.

Divine Liturgy: 9:00 A.M.

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Resurrection Tone: 4

Gospel: Luke 14:16-24

Tropar & Kondak: Blue Book: 90-92 / Red Book: 105-107

Panachida Service conducted for the repose of the soul of God's departed servant **+Ruth Krenicky**, offered by Uncle Gene & Aunt Patsy Krenicky.

Luke 17:12-19

5:12, 14 – Leprosy was one of the most dreaded diseases of the time. It brought great physical suffering as well as total banishment and isolation from society. It is also a symbol of our sin.

Show yourself to the priest: Christ gives this command in order to convince the priests by a tangible miracle that He is superior to **Moses** (St. Cyril of Alexandria). The priests hold Moses to be greater than Christ, yet Christ heals a leper immediately and with his own divine authority. However, when Miriam was struck with leprosy, Moses had to seek mercy from above, and still she was only healed after seven days (Numbers 12:10-15).

17:17-19 – Where are the nine? Christ came to heal all of fallen humanity, yet only a small portion receive Him in faith and thanksgiving **to give glory to God** (v. 18). Thus, “many are called, but few chosen” (Mt. 20:16). The lesson for Orthodox Christians is that worship is the number one priority.

RECTORY OFFICE HOURS are 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Monday thru Friday.

EMERGENCY SICK CALLS can be made anytime. Please notify your Pastor when someone is taken to the hospital; Sacred Scriptures remind us to call the presbyter to anoint the sick.

MARRIAGES are celebrated on Saturdays and Sundays. Consult the Pastor at least 6 months in advance and before wedding reception plans have been made. Marriages cannot be celebrated during Lent or Advent, or on Fridays.

BAPTISMS are scheduled on Saturdays and Sundays at 11 A.M. Two God-parents are required; at least one of whom must be an Orthodox Christian by Faith, and the other a practicing Christian. An infant’s first or middle name must be a saint’s name.

CHURCH FUNERALS are provided for parishioners who are current in their spiritual and financial obligations to the Parish. Otherwise, burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.

FOLLOW OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE! Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org> Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddioocese> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews> You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddioocese>

UNWITTINGLY ENTERTAINING ANGELS

By Abbot Tryphon of The Morning Offering

All of us meet someone in any given week who is in need of encouragement, love, and mercy. Consider mothers whose children are going to bed at night hungry because they cannot afford to buy food, or old women whose husbands are long gone and whose children are too busy to check in on them. The world is full of lonely people in need of comfort, kindness, mercy.

How about the college student down the hall in the dorm who has no place to go for Christmas, no caring family wanting to see him? Or the crabby old neighbor who is always frowning? Is it not possible that his frown masks grief for a lost wife or for a son who turned his back on his father? There’s the police officer who pulled you over for going over the speed limit and was abrupt with you. Is there a chance she’s having marital problems?

All these people can be in need of a word of kindness, a gentle smile, and a word of encouragement. Can you imagine the impact on the officer’s day if you, after having been served with the traffic ticket, thanked her for making our roads safer? What if you sat down next to the old man and asked him how he was doing? What if you offered to take him to a café or baked a plate of cookies for him? What if you invited the lonely college student to celebrate Christmas with you?

What if you collected all your children’s old toys and gave them to a shelter for abused women? What if you gave out one hundred dollars worth of ten-dollar bills to homeless people on the street? What if you made a pact with yourself to do seven acts of kindness each and every day, without judgement?

What if you entertained an angel? “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Hebrews 13:2).

COME TO CONFESSION DURING THE NATIVITY FAST! We hear so much talk about keeping Christ into Christmas. Let’s prepare our hearts as a manger for the Christ-Child and kneel in adoration at the coming of the Prince of Peace and Saviour of our souls. Confessions shall be heard on every Saturday during Advent from 11:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon. Come and receive the grace of Almighty God who welcomes you home, as did the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

ACRY TIDBIT: Lots O’ Luck Calendars are here; they are \$25.00. Please see Carol Dunn to buy the item, which makes a perfect gift for the Nativity feast.

PURCHASE THE VARIETY OF PIROHI ON SALE DOWNSTAIRS FOR THE NATIVITY FAST AND "HOLY NIGHT SUPPER"! See Jean Colantoni to secure these mouth-watering Slavic delicacies that are being sold, containing a variety of delicious fillings. And, we give thanks to all of our considerate pirohi-workers for their exemplary stewardship in this fund-raising project!

WQED DARR MINE/ST. NICHOLAS PROGRAM AIRDATE IS DEC. 18 AT 7:30 P.M.! A reminder of this year's air date for WQED's Darr Mine program, which includes the Miracle of the Intercession of St. Nicholas, is Monday, December 18, at 7:30 P.M. And a reminder that at the time it was filmed, Christina Duranko did not know about the 220 Italians saved on December 6; the Church Messenger article noted 60 of our people and some Italians without an estimate. The two groups only discovered each other's numbers at the Heinz Center a few weeks after the program was completed. The volunteer website of St. Nicholas is the best link to offer to interested readers. A recent Rostraver Historical Society meeting included the program and Christina asked, and the program's producer agreed, to provide an updated link on this website for the WQED program; hopefully, he will be able to follow through this week. Check out: **St. Nicholas Center :: Centennial** (Everything about St. Nicholas: stories, customs, crafts & more.)

FROM THE BOOKSTORE: With Great Feasts and holidays approaching, it is time to choose special gifts for special people. Stop at the bookstore to select from an expanded inventory. Catalogs are also available for custom orders. Deadlines for ordering are December 10th and 24th. "Come and See" today!

ST. NICHOLAS MEDOVNIKI COOKIE SALE – SENIOR ACRY CHAPTER #11 \$2.00 each; \$10.00/half dozen; Cookies will be individually wrapped with a special treat from St. Nicholas, himself! Please contact Aaron Zak with orders: aarondzak@gmail.com or 724-910-9719. Orders should be placed by Monday, Dec. 11th. Cookies will be available for pickup on Saturday, Dec. 16th after 5 P.M. and after Divine Liturgy on Sunday, Dec. 17th.

UNLESS THE LORD COMES TO US By Virginia Nieuwsma

"Unless the Lord comes to us, we are completely helpless." – St. Maximos, Greek ascetic

It always seems that, just when I need it, the holy season of Advent arrives. Rather than being burdensome, the spiritual habits and proscriptions given to us in the Church are a lifeline. Certainly, there have been times when I have struggled to understand why we approach Christmas with such sobriety. This is a season for parties! For gifts! For happy celebrations! For family! What's this fasting in the midst, this remembrance of His death, these extra services that mirror the somber services of Holy Week?

Father Thomas Hopko explains in his book, *The Winter Pascha*: "The Lord's birth and baptism are directly connected to His dying and rising. He was born in order to die... the harmony between the events is overwhelming... Jesus lay as an infant in the cavern in the reign of Caesar Augustus that He might lay in the tomb under Pontius Pilate. He was hounded by Herod that He might be caught by Caiaphas... He was worshipped by wise men that the whole of creation might adore Him in His triumph over death."

Christ comes to us, then, and we do rejoice, for we are indeed helpless and have no life apart from Him. But the shadow of a cross falls over the tender and peaceful scene at the stable. His suffering life, His sacrifice, the weight of the world's sins; all are implicit in, and present at, His birth. So our Advent celebrations should be tempered by this reality; in a sense, the bright Lenten sadness is there at the manger, too.

Some years, I have had no trouble entering into sober Advent reflection during the 40 days of preparation prior of the Nativity Feast. The year my father died, for instance, the quiet, reflective spirit of Orthodox Advent was a comfort. Anyone who has suffered a deep loss or sorrow through illness or death knows about the "bright sadness" that accompanies Dec. 25, & the shadow of the cross is indeed long for those grieving hearts.

Yet even in my most sanguine years, I must prepare my heart if I hope to receive "the King of All," and this inner struggle is my cross which is present at the manger. Somehow I must find ways to screen out the sentimental, saccharine messages daily delivered via TV, radio, Internet, social gatherings, the printed page, and the billboard. Just as the waning winter light bids me to flee the cold and light a fire in the sanctuary of my home, Advent is a time for me to enter into the sanctuary of my soul, stoking the fires of my heart through repentance, cleaning out the cobwebs in preparation for the birth of God in the center of my being.

Author Matthew Gallatin has said that we in America have traditionally celebrated the Christmas season in backwards fashion. "Just as the guest of honor walks through the door, it's all over," he notes. This year, may we embrace the Orthodox vision of holy preparation, so that when December 25th dawns, we will be ready to receive Christ in the feast, the "Winter Pascha" of Nativity!

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