

SAINT JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

3180 Morefield Road • Hermitage, PA 16148
Office: 724-981-0571 • Rectory: 724-346-4457
Fax: 724-308-6615 • Website: www.stjohnacroc.org

Clergy:

Rev. Father David Mastroberte
Very Rev. Protopresbyter Michael Polanichka
Rev. Deacon John Anderson

A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese – Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Bulletin for December 11-24, 2016



*“And
all
went
to be
enrolled,
each to
his own
city.”*

Luke 2:3

CALENDAR OF SERVICES & EVENTS

MON	12/12/2016	
	6:00 PM	Board Meeting for December
TUES	12/13/2016	
	8:30 AM	Parastas for ++Tripp Family & ++Latcheran Family (Per.)
FRI	12/16/2016	
	5:00 PM	Arrival of "Kardiotissa" Icon from Taylor
	6:00 PM	Akathist to the Mother of God and Anointing with Myrrh
SAT	12/17/2016	
	3:00 PM	Confessions
	4:00 PM	Vespers
SUN	12/18/2016	SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY
	8:45 AM	Reception of Paul McMahon into Orthodoxy
	9:00 AM	Divine Liturgy <i>Panachida for: +Alice Vasilenko, by the Family +John Jr. & +Helen Andras (Per.)</i>
WED	12/21/2016	
	5:00 PM	Confessions
	6:00 PM	Moleben for the Nativity Fast
SAT	12/24/2016	CHRISTMAS EVE
	7:45 PM	Singing of Carols from the Western Christian Tradition
	8:00 PM	Vigil Service with Singing of Carols from Carpatho-Rusin Tradition
SUN	12/25/2016	CHRISTMAS DAY; THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
	10:00 AM	Divine Liturgy <i>Fellowship to Follow</i>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

¶ **Reminder: Bring in Cookies for Christmas Day Fellowship.**

As is customary in our parish, we will have a Fellowship Hour following Liturgy on Christmas. We are asking our parishioners to bring in a dozen cookies or another item (*cheese, crackers, be creative!*) to share. Don't skip this! *Share a cookie – and some time – with your fellow parishioners to celebrate Our Lord's Birth!*

¶ **Christmas Gift Wrapping at the Shenango Valley Mall** continues! The schedule is available in the church hall. Taking even just one shift is a great help. Please consider giving of your time and talent for this annual event, since the proceeds go to support many worthwhile ministries and charities.

¶ **Schwans Fundraiser Reminder:**

Through Schwans-Cares.com, you can order from Schwan's Home Delivery and help our church! When you order by December 29, 2016, 20% of product and 40% of eGift Card sales go to Saint John's! Order online at schwans-cares.com/c/30390 and click "Shop to Give." Or order by phone by calling 1-855-870-7208 and provide our ID 30390. *Great for the holidays!*

¶ **2017 Treasure Chest Tickets** are available for a \$20 donation, as well as to sell to your family and friends. Please help with this annual fundraiser for our parish!

¶ **Looking for a great gift?** Visit the "Smart Money" counter in the hall to

purchase gift cards for a variety of stores. *Perfect for Christmas!*

¶ **Sunday School "Christmas Break"** on Sunday, December 25 and Sunday, January 1. Classes will resume on January 8.

¶ **The "Christian Greeting"** for the 12 Days of Christmas is "Christ is born" and the response "Glorify Him"! *Be sure to know the response when you come forward for mirovaniye after services.*

¶ **Attention 11th and 12th Grade Students!**

The Diocese is providing scholarships for tuition and travel for two diocesan 11th and 12th grade students to attend the CrossRoad Summer Institute held at Holy Cross/Hellenic College in Brookline, MA. CrossRoad is a ten day academic summer institute that prepares high school juniors and seniors for the next phase in their life, helps them identify their strengths, and connect with the Orthodox Christian theological and spiritual tradition. Students experience daily worship, visit local parishes, tour Boston, and spend a day at the beach. Visit www.crossroadinstitute.org for more info on the program. Session 1: June 17-27 or Session 2: July 5-15. DEADLINE TO APPLY: December 22, 2016. CONTACT: Fr. Miles at 814-467-7444 or Frmiles@gmail.com by December 22nd, 2016 to apply, or for more information regarding this opportunity.

The Myrrh-Streaming “Kardiotissa” Icon of the Mother of God from Taylor will be visiting our church on the evening of Friday, December 16th. The schedule is:

- 5:00 PM (approx.): Arrival of the Icon and Remarks by Fr. Mark Leasure.
- 6:00 PM: Akathist Service to the Mother of God
- Veneration of the icon and anointing with myrrh (oil) will follow the service, and continue as long as needed.

All are welcome at the service! Feel free to invite family, friends, and neighbors. We have made arrangements for additional parking, but as we are expecting a **large** number of visitors, please consider carpooling with others.

Thoughts on Stewardship *by Dan Hromyak*

"When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home." - Matthew 1:24

Putting our complete trust in the Lord without expecting anything in return. Striving to put God first in all things and follow Him wherever He may lead us. As we prepare for the birth of our Lord, pray for the strength and courage to be a model of discipleship, just as Joseph was.

Stay up-to-date on happenings throughout our Diocese!

Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org> Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>
You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

Don't forget to "like" our parish on Facebook: facebook.com/SaintJohnHermitagePA

Keeping "Christ" in CHRISTmas Means Keeping the "Mass" in ChristMAS!

What services do we have this week?

- **Wednesday, December 21: Moleben at 6:00 PM**

This service includes hymns, prayers and readings related to our preparation for the Nativity. It is a great way to spend quiet time in prayerful reflection during the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Fr. David will also be able to hear Confessions before and after this service. *(This is the last scheduled time for Confession before Christmas.)*

- **Saturday, December 24: Vigil Service at 8:00 PM**

"Vigil" means to keep watch, and thus we keep watch like the shepherds and begin the celebration of Christmas. This service includes many hymns and prayers celebrating the birth of Our Savior. We hear the Gospel of the Nativity announced. We will also sing familiar carols before and after the service.

- **Sunday, December 25: Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM**

Did you know that Bethlehem is Hebrew for "House of Bread"? What better way to join ourselves to the mystery of what happened in Bethlehem than by coming to the Divine Liturgy and receiving Christ, the Bread of Life in Holy Communion! This is THE most important service of Christmas and shouldn't be missed. *Presents and cookies can wait, but Our Lord's invitation to the Divine Liturgy on Christmas can't!*

- **Monday, December 26 and Tuesday December 27: Divine Liturgy at 9:00 AM**

We continue our celebration of the Nativity on the days after Christmas with Divine Liturgy at 9:00 AM. December 26 honors the Mother of God, and December 27 honors Saint Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

- **Saturday, December 31: Vespers at 4:00 PM**

- **Sunday, January 1: Divine Liturgy at 9:00 AM**

This year, New Year's Day is a Sunday. Just because it is a civil holiday doesn't mean it is a day off from church! There is nothing wrong with celebrating the arrival of 2017 on New Year's Eve, but be mindful of your presence and participation in Divine Liturgy the next morning, especially if you plan on receiving Holy Communion. At Divine Liturgy on January 1, prayers will be offered for the New Year, and we will cut and share the special "St. Basil Bread" (*vasilopita, novoričnyj kolač*). Start 2017 in a Christ-centered manner!

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

The Crèche or Nativity Scene

One beautiful seasonal display of faith seen in homes, churches, and outdoors is the “Crèche” or Nativity Scene. What are its origins?

The crèche as we can see it today took its origin from [the Roman Catholic Saint of Assisi, Italy] St. Francis’ wish of recreating in a natural environment the scene of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, with real characters of his times, such as shepherds, friars, shepherds and barons, all of whom took part to a re-enactment in Greccio on the Christmas night of the year 1223; the episode inspired Giotto to paint the superb fresco in the Basilica Superiore, Assisi. The first example of a non-living crib in history was made by Arnolfo di Cambio in 1280 with wooden statues, some of which are still preserved in the Crypt of the Chapel of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome. Since then, up to about mid-15th century artists created terracotta or wooden statues which were then placed against a painted background; the crèche was usually placed inside churches in the Christmas season. [http://www.italyheritage.com]

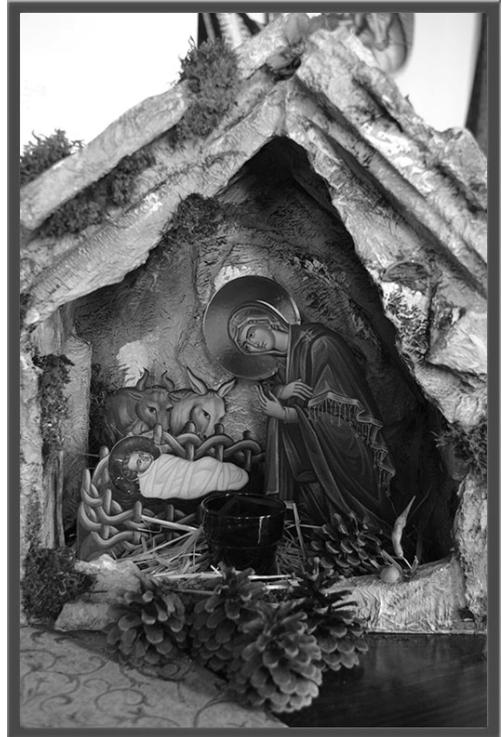
Did you know that “Orthodox” style Nativity scenes are now being created? These are especially becoming more prominent in Orthodox countries. In place of statues, cut-out icons are used. For example, the nuns of the Rajčica Monastery in Macedonia, as part of their monastic obedience, design and create icon Nativity scenes, complete with a hand-made cave! (picture on right)

Whether you have a 2-D or 3-D Nativity Scene, the idea is the same: to make Bethlehem present in our lives and to remind us that Christ is born in our homes and in our hearts!

The Holy Supper on Christmas Eve

The day before Christmas has been observed as a day of fasting among both Eastern and Western Christians since the earliest centuries. While the Roman Catholics broke with this ancient tradition by eliminating the Christmas Eve fast after their Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, Orthodox Christians (*as well as most Eastern Catholics*) continue to keep Christmas Eve as a strict-fast day: no meat or dairy are eaten on this day, as it is the final day of the Nativity Fast. That being said, Christmas Eve is *not* somber!

In the church’s cycle of services, the new day begins at sunset—just as was the custom in the Old Testament. Fasting, however, doesn’t end until midnight and, on days when there is a Divine Liturgy, after Liturgy and the reception of Holy Communion. To balance the fact that Christmas has begun but the fast has not ended, many Christian peoples of Central and Eastern Europe such as Carpatho-Rusins, Ukrainians,



Belarusians, Slovaks and Poles, developed a festive-yet-fasting meal known as the “Holy Supper” (*Svyaty Vecher*) or “Veliya” (from “vigil”).

One possible origin of this dinner is the common monastic practice of eating sweetened boiled wheat kernels known as *koliva*—in Slavonic, *kutya*—on days of fasting. This food is still made for Christmas Eve in some locales.

Customs for this meal vary from region to region, village to village, and family to family. Here is a rough outline of some common traditions among Carpatho-Rusins:

- The table is covered with a white cloth, to remember the swaddling clothes of the Infant Jesus. Straw is placed either under or on the tablecloth, as a reminder of the manger.
- The meal begins after the first star appears, as a reminder of the star of Bethlehem. The head of the household signals the start of the meal by saying “Christ is born!” with all replying “Glorify Him!”
- Before food is served, any number of customs might take place. Participants may wash their hands, as a sign of purity. Some tie a rope around the table legs to symbolize unity. Rural families even bless the animals in the barn to recall the animals present at the birth of Christ. (*These days, some people bless their pets!*)
- A candle is lit, to remember that Christ is the Light of the World. Everyone then joins in a prayer like the Lord’s Prayer or the Tropar of Christmas “*Your nativity, O Christ our God...*”
- A loaf of bread is cut and shared, since Jesus is the “Bread of Life.” This simple leavened bread (*made from flour, water, yeast, and perhaps a little salt, sugar, or oil*) is similar to the “prosfora” used for Holy Communion. (*Wafers—oplatky—are used by Roman Catholics, since they use unleavened bread for Communion.*)

- Everyone gets a glass of wine and a toast is given, wishing good health for the new year.
- Some families share pieces of garlic dipped in honey—a symbol of accepting both the sweet and the bitter in life. Others dip the bread in honey.
- After these preliminary actions, the meal itself begins. As noted before, it is a strict-fast meal, so the foods are prepared without meat or dairy products. However, this doesn’t mean the foods aren’t plentiful and delicious! Some families serve 12 dishes, in honor of the 12 apostles. Familiar dishes utilize the kinds of foods that could be preserved for the winter, and include: a **soup**, of beans, mushrooms, cabbage, or other similar ingredients; **bobal’ky** (*bread dough made into small balls, baked, and seasoned with cabbage/sauerkraut, or sweetened with honey, poppy seeds, or ground nuts*); **pirohy** (*filled with potato, cabbage, prunes, or apricots*); beans, mushrooms, or cabbage made with *zaprashka* or roux; potatoes of some sort; rice-stuffed cabbage; seafood or fish. (*This is not an exhaustive list!*)
- Dessert of fruit, nuts, and/or sweets concludes the meal. The family then goes to church for the evening service.

This variety of custom and food shows that the *exact* details of this “holy supper” are less important than the underlying concept: that meals can be sacred occasions to celebrate our Christian faith in the home. Whether you grew up with this tradition or not, all Orthodox Christians from all backgrounds can make this tradition their own by gathering as a family on Christmas Eve to pray together, break bread, make a toast of wine, and share a fasting meal. This is a worthy way to begin the celebration of Our Lord’s Nativity. *This Christmas Eve, make your supper a Holy Supper!*

Eternal Lamp ~ Sunday, December 11th

In Loving Memory of Mother, Mary Hromyak, by Daughters, Mary Jane & Margie

Candelabrum ~ Sunday, December 11th

In Loving Memory of Father, John Jisko, from Daughter, Jennifer Jisko

Bulletin Sponsor ~ Sunday, December 18th

Dorothy Pacinda & Bob & Michael Andras, In Loving Memory of Father/Grandfather, John Andras, Jr.

Candelabrum ~ Sunday, December 18th

William & Marlene Roach, In Loving Memory of Alice Vaselinko

Eternal Lamp ~ Sunday, December 18th

In Loving Memory of Sister ,Mary Gaydos' Birthday, December 20, 2016, from Sister, Delores Jisko

BIRTHDAYS

- Dec. 12 Katie Hartley
- Dec. 16 Sue Boslough
Donnie Nameth
Dan Ristvey
- Dec. 20 Mary Gaydos
- Dec. 22 Richie Preston
- Dec. 24 Natalie Lukac

**MEN TO
HOLD CANDLES**

Sunday, December 18th

- Ed Chuba
- Jerry Chupak
- Chester Everett
- Ed Fabian
- Matt Fabian

Sunday, December 25th

- Michael Holmes
- Jim Hynes
- Bob Kapusta
- Jim Kudelko
- Matt Kulusich

Pirohi Wrap-up

	<u>Doz.</u>	<u>Profit</u>
Oct.	393	\$2,371.31
Nov.	389	\$2,438.65
Dec.	388	\$2,281.56
Total	1,170	\$7,091.50

Thank you to EVERYONE who helped in some way with the pirohi sales. We couldn't have done it without your support and your giving of your time and talent. Profit goes toward the repayment of the Cemetery Perpetual Care Loan.

