

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 24, 2017

29th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (12TH LUKAN SUNDAY) – SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

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 Ann Krenicky**, offered by Uncle Gene & Aunt Patsy Krenicky.

FRIDAY, DEC. 29... 9:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy for the repose of the soul of God's departed servant, +**Libbie Bachofsky**, offered by +Michael Bachofsky (Husband).

SATURDAY, DEC. 30... 11:00 A.M. to 12 NOON: Hearing of Confessions during the Nativity Fast.

Sunday, December 31, 2017

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY (SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS)

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

Divine Liturgy: 9:00 A.M.

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10; 17-23; 32-40 Resurrection Tone: 5 Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

Tropar & Kondak: Blue Book: 93-95; 129-130 / Red Book: 108-110; 146-148

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

Luke 14:16-24

14:16, 17 – This parable operates on two levels, illustrating both the first and second coming of Christ, who is the **servant** sent to gather many. **Supper** indicates evening, the end of the age. The people **invited** are first the Jews, then all mankind.

14:18-20 – The Fathers see the three **excuses** as having both a literal meaning, that many are too attached to worldly cares to accept the Kingdom of God (v. 26; 18:29), and spiritual meanings. St. Ambrose sees the three excuses of **I cannot come** representing the Gentile, the Jew, and the heretic. The Gentile's devotion to earthly wealth is represented by the **piece of ground**, the Jew's enslavement to the five books of the Law by the **five yolk of oxen**, and the heretic's espousal of error by the man refusing on account of his **wife**. Theophylact more generally associates the excuses with people devoted to earthly matters, to things pertaining to the five senses, and to all pleasures of the flesh.

14:21-23 – Those in the **streets and lanes** indicate (1) the Gentiles who accepted Christ after the faithless Jews rejected Him, and (2) those outside the Church replacing those within who have rejected their own baptism.

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/acroddiocese> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews> You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

LET CHRIST INCREASE WHILE YOU DECREASE

By Abbot Tryphon of The Morning Offering

As we are in the midst of the Nativity season, our stress level tends to increase, leading to conflict. Worries about finances, interactions with certain family members who are not usually a part of our everyday lives, and holiday shopping and cooking obligations can lead to increased tension between members of families. Husbands and wives can find themselves arguing about petty things, children can become disobedient, and family arguments can overwhelm the peace that should reign during the holy season of the fast and the Nativity celebrations.

Sometimes one little remark of a visiting relative can open old wounds, leading to a family argument. Adult children can find themselves acting like angry teenagers, with one critical word leading to a meltdown and ruining a family dinner.

During the holiday season, you need to be vigilant, guarding your words and keeping your emotions under control. This season should be a time when you work harder at keeping the peace, guarding your heart, and letting Christ rule your words and thoughts. Don't let the celebration of the birth of our Savior be trampled upon by your ego. Make sure Christ is glorified in your speech, your actions, and your thoughts. Make this season one in which you treat all your family members, friends, and co-workers with extra respect and love.

May we let Christ increase in our hearts as we make ourselves decrease.

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.

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!

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.

FORMER MEMBER OF ST. NICHOLAS, RAYMOND RUSNAK, FALLS ASLEEP IN THE LORD! It has been brought to our attention that a former member of our parish in Homestead, PA has departed this life while residing in the state of Florida. God's newly-deceased servant, +Raymond Rusnak was among the earliest lay people of the church. We pray that the merciful Lord will keep +Raymond's memory eternal, granting him a blessed repose and number him among the righteous souls of the heavenly kingdom.

WELCOME – AND A FEW WORDS ABOUT COMMUNION... We warmly welcome all visitors and friends in our midst today, trusting that you experience here at St. Nicholas Church will be an uplifting and enriching one. Like the ancient Christians, we engage the whole person, heart, mind and all senses in Divine Worship. This experience has been so powerful to seekers in the past that it was often said, "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. We knew only that there God dwelt among human beings." (Russian Primary Chronicle). That communion experience of heaven on earth and God in our midst forms the heart of all Orthodox Christian worship. It culminates in the sharing of Holy Communion, which not only unites us with the Divine, but also expresses the deep unity in faith and life between all Orthodox believers. Since Holy Communion expresses that deep unity in belief and practice alike, it is reserved for observant Orthodox Christians. This does not mean, however, that non-Orthodox are 'excluded' – rather, the Orthodox choose not to make an external display of unity when actual unity does not exist. While working to restore the full communion that did exist in antiquity, today we offer the sign of the blessed bread at the service's conclusion as a symbolic gift of hospitality and growing unity that is offered to all present. If you would like to learn more about the Orthodox way of life, or have any questions about worship or Holy Communion, please approach Fr. Michael or one of the deacons following services. Thank you for joining us, and again, we welcome you!

THE CHURCH – A HOLY PLACE! When you enter the church building as the "House of Worship," you are entering into the Great Throne Room of the "King of Kings" as His subjects and His soldiers. The "King of Kings," Jesus Christ, is enthroned on the Holy Altar and all the angels, prophets, saints and the Most Holy Mother of God are present. His soldiers should be attentive and standing at attention. No one in the presence of the "king of Kings" would sit with his legs crossed, or his hands in his pockets, or chewing gum, or looking at his watch because to do any of these things would be disrespectful. The only proper disposition a soldier can have before his commander is that of reverence which is indicated by a bowed head, a submissive heart and prayer.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS?

In the classes to prepare a man and woman for marriage, we talk about how we are not preparing for that one service or that one wedding day, but for the rest of their lives together with Christ at the center of it. Isn't it the same with Christmas? The world wants us to prepare for a moment with presents or "things" which often can be thrown away. However the gift of Christmas from God is not a thing but God Himself, Person, Christ Who desires to know us and that we get to know Him, not for a day, but all of eternity! He is our eternal life, the only Way to Life, Life itself. How are we preparing for such a gift? We can begin with prayer, praying as you know how, with love for God, attending the services where God meets us even before this big celebration of His Birth. Remember, Christ established one Church and before the text books on theology and before the Bible were fully compiled, the Church, her services. As our theology was expressed in writing, it was held up to the services for accuracy and truth. In the services, God comes to meet us. Prepare at home with prayer as a family, individually and then come pray in Church. It is not healthy to approach the services thinking, "what am I getting out of it?" The question is, "What have I been putting into it?" If we pray at home before Divine Liturgy, every evening and morning, my brother and sisters in Christ, Christmas will be like you have never experienced before. Not an emotional event, but rather you will have prepared a heart of attention towards Heavenly things, a Heart that God can walk in, heal and breathe.

CHEERFUL GIVING – In II Corinthians 9:7 we read "Each person should give what he/she has decided in his/her heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Consider you weekly expenditures on entertainment, coffee, etc. Keep in mind that the expenses of the Church increase every year. In order to grow our ministries and meet our expenses, stewardship contributions must also increase each year.

PROPORTIONATE GIVING – The more we are given, the more is expected of us. Each steward should determine the percentage of their income that will be committed to Christ and His Church.

[Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church](#)