



CHRISTMAS - 2018 - ПІЗДВО

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

Христос Раждається! - Славіте Його! - Old Slavonic

Христос народився! Слава Його! - Ukrainian

Kristus De Je Rodil! - Slavite Ga! - Slovenian

Χριστός Γεννάται! Δοξάστε τον! - Greek

Dearest Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I was beginning to prepare this short Christmas Bulletin, it dawned on me that this will be the 46th Christmas that I have shared with many of you. My first Christmas at St Michael's Parish was in 1972, having been assigned by Bishop Jaroslav Gabro, the first bishop of the St. Nicholas Eparchy, on November 1st of that year. Further, Bishop Michael Wiwchar established Holy Ascension Parish in 1999 and so I have celebrated Christmas with them already 19 times. While it doesn't seem possible that so much time has already passed since I first came into contact with you, my fellow Christians, I always feel, when I share with you the good news about God's love for us as clearly seen in His Incarnation in the Person of His Son,, that it is the first time I share this most wonderful news with you.

Christmas is truly a feast about God's great love for us. While He had to create human life the way that He did in order to allow us to have free

will, He loves us so much that He also decided to come to us in the Person of Jesus to help us understand the meaning and purpose of earthly life. He embraced all human experiences, even death, so that He could reveal to us how to deal with the uncertainties of human life. He further shares with us His Spirit so that we can truly benefit from earthly life - we can truly grow as spiritual-physical beings.

So this feast that we celebrate is all about God's love and about human life. It clearly tells us that if we live the way that Jesus lived, we will come to know and understand life and truly comprehend its beauty, even though it has its challenges.

It is my priestly prayer, that all those with whom I celebrate this feast will come to truly realize God's love for them. It is my hope that sharing life and faith with you will help you to see the beauty of life and truly rejoice in the gift that God has given you. May you all have a very blessed and holy Christmas.

Fr. Wayne

THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

The Source of life and of Salvation from despair and the condition for the existence of the whole world is contained in only these three words: 'The Word became Flesh' [John 1:14]"

The question, "What does Christmas mean?" has as many answers as people in our society.

Opportunity for merchants, vacation days for school children, parties and exchange of gifts even for non-Christians, since it has become a national holiday even in a nation that forbids official recognition. All Christians define the event by their own understanding, and by doing so limit the meaning of Christmas. There can be no definition, because the birth of the Son of God transcends every attempt to explain the inexplicable or comprehend the incomprehensible. We can only thank the Holy Trinity for the nativity of the Messiah and celebrate His life on earth.

Christmas is a mystery, a glorious event in history, the awesome phenomenon when "*Christ Jesus Who, being in the very nature of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no*

reputation, taking the form of a bond-servant and coming in the likeness of men..." (Philippians 2:5). The kenotic condescension of the Holy Trinity expressed by the evangelist John, "The Word became flesh," can only be explained by the word "love." Such a divine love for human beings transcends the ability to grasp with our limited capacity, which is why the Our Church services for this season, filled with joy, wonder and genuine gratitude, point to the inexplicable event without even trying to elucidate the wonder.

"Heaven and earth join in celebration... Wise men and

shepherds welcome Him... Angels and humans sing with joy..." The glorious hymn of laudation: "*God is with us!*" requires an explanation, because that phrase has been misused through the ages. What it does not mean is that God endorses a nation or purpose against His other children.

Our Church exclaims that "Christ IS Born! He is born right now in the hearts of those who follow Him and attempt to make His way of thinking and living into our world right now. Will you put Christ into Christmas this year?"



REMEMBERING TRADITIONS - THREE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS



You have heard me talk a lot about putting Christ back into Christmas. I have shared that only we Christians can do this. So, how will you begin your Christmas meal?

One of our traditions is to begin the meal by reading the story of the Lords Nativity from the New Testament. It appears only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

MATTHEW 1: 18-25

LUKE: 2: 1-20

Do you have the courage to introduce this into your Christmas traditions? It helps people focus on the real reason for your celebration.



AS many are probably aware, our Christmas celebration traditionally involves three days - our Church calendars show this clearly by shading in the two days after Christmas.

Wednesday December 26th

Synaxis of the Mother of God

Thursday, December 27th

Protomartyr Stephen

The Divine Liturgy will be served each of these days at 8:00 AM. While these are not days of required attendance at the Liturgy, I mention this so that you might make these days special and continue your celebration.



OUR 2019 CHURCH CALENDARS

Our 2019 Church Calendars are not available. Our calendars this year are in both Ukrainian and the English so there is only one kind available. Take one home and follow the Church Year. The calendars contain "readings" for every day of the year. Why not try using these references.

BEGIN THE UP-AND-COMING NEW YEAR RIGHT

As you are probably very aware, our Church sees the beginning of any New Year as a special event, one that she punctuates with a Feast. **TUESDAY, JANUARY 1st** is the Feast of the Lord's Circumcision and St. Basil the Great. The Divine Liturgy will be served at the regular time - 10:00 AM. Why not start the new year out right, that is with prayer.



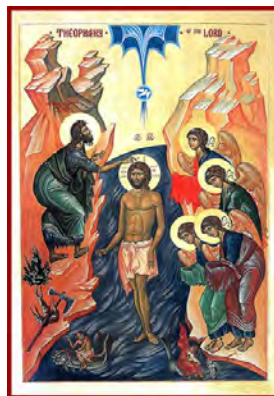
OUR WINTER FEASTS



The Church Church, and therefore Our Church, celebrates two major winter feasts: The Nativity of our Lord and the Baptism of Our Lord. These winter feasts find their origins in historical events that revealed God to humanity. These events are called “Theophanies” or “Epiphanies,” since we believe that that they are *manifestations* of our Triune God. This is why the theme of both Christmas and Theophany in the Eastern Church is more about “**God Being With Us**” than it is about the historical facts of His Birth and Baptism. In fact, on the Eves of Christmas and Theophany, the Church has a service which is called the ROYAL

HOURS and during that service the phrase GOD IS WITH US (Snamì Boh) is repeated over and over again.

As we celebrate these feasts, we need to keep in mind that we celebrate them because we truly believe that GOD IS WITH US - He is not far-away in some distant place. Rather, He is here with us, sharing human life with us each and every millisecond. If we keep this focus to our celebration, we will not only better understand God’s actions in history but also understand our own human lives. Let us pray that God will “manifest” Himself to us in a special manner this year. We have to open our hearts and minds, however, in order to allow Him to manifest Himself to us. Will you open your heart and mind and meet God this year? Only you can make it happen!



A VERY BIG THANK YOU

I would like to extend a very big THANK YOU to all who remembered me with Christmas Greetings. It is always very wonderful to think that you are remembered. Again Thank You for including me in your thoughts at Christmas.

A very big THANK YOU is also extended to all those who helped in anyway to make our services more beautiful and my job easier. So to the servers, readers, singers and helpers, may God bless you abundantly for your help!



By Maron Lushak

CHRISTMAS LETTER OF OUR AMERICAN UKRAINIAN BISHOPS

The liturgical texts of the Nativity of Our Lord often repeat a word “Today” and call everyone to respond to God’s invitation. Emmanuel—God with Us—came to the world over two thousand years ago and was greeted with marvel by shepherds and magi offering him homage and gifts. If we want that joy of Christmas to invade our lives, we must do what the shepherds did so long ago. We must come to our parish churches and bow before the newborn King. Hope is available but only to those who will humble themselves and bow in faith before the Lord Jesus Christ. We often think about Jesus Christ each year in the Christmas season. We are deeply touched by the beauty of the nativity scene, and resolve to know Christ personally, follow Jesus in our daily lives and be with Him. But, then the Christmas season passes and the pressures of a new year lead us away from the manger. There is great danger in coming near to Christ but never making a commitment. Sooner or later, we must make a personal commitment that Jesus Christ will be our Lord and Savior. Every time we put it off, it becomes harder the next time. May God give us, the grace to make room in our hearts for Jesus Christ! The angel said, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior.” “Unto you.” “For you.” He came for us! This is where Christmas becomes intensely personal. It’s not enough to say abstractly that we believe Christ came. Many people say that and are still lost in their search for the living God. It’s not enough to say that Christ came for someone else. We can never be saved until we say, “Christ came for me. He died for me. He rose from the dead for me.” Two thousand years ago God sent a gift wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Jesus is God’s Christmas gift to us. But we will never experience Christmas joy until we personally receive God’s gift—the Lord Jesus Christ. There is left to each of us a choice. What will we do with the Christ-child this Christmas? Will we run to meet him and make him welcome in our hearts? Will we sing with the angels or will we be too busy to go to see the babe in the manger? Will we open our hearts and our homes to Jesus? Today, let us come and welcome Emmanuel—God with Us. Let us with joy welcome Christ among us! The beauty of this personal encounter with the living God will call us to share this “Good News” with others. This is the same message the shepherds received from the angels. If we want to experience the real joy that Jesus wants for us, then we must learn to share! By sharing what God has so generously given to us, we will receive an even greater gift—the gift of joy. This is the true joy. It is found in a Person—in Jesus Christ our Savior. This joy flows out of a relationship with the One who never changes, the One who never lets us down, the one who never leaves us or forsakes us—the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. On this Christmas day, let us come to our churches and personally encounter this great joy. Let us experience the life-giving Christ. Then, with the deep personal conviction we will be able to share this “Good News” with those whom we encounter in our daily lives, and say to one another “God is among us”!

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

HOLY ASCENSION & ST. MICHAEL'S

Monday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

HOLY ASCENSION PARISH

5:30 PM - Divine Liturgy
- Intention of the Parish Family

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

10:00 PM - Divine Liturgy
- Intention of the Parish Family

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

Tuesday December 25 - Christmas Day

10:00 AM - Divine Liturgy

Wednesday December 26 - Synaxis of Mother of God

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday December 27 - Stephen, Protomartyr

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Friday December 28 - 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia

8:00 AM - Special Intention

HOLY ASCENSION PARISH

Saturday December 29 - Holy Innocents, Martyrs

5:30 pm - Intention of the Parish Family

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

Sunday December 30 - Sunday After Christmas

10:00 AM - Divine Liturgy
- Intention of the Parish Family

Monday, December 31 - Melany, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday January 1 - Circumcision - Basil the Great
This is a Major Holy Day

10:00 AM - Divine Liturgy
+Intention of the Parish Family



PLEASE JOIN ME

I would invite members of Holy Ascension Parish to join me at St. Michael's Parish if the Holy Ascension schedule is difficult for you. I would especially invite you to join with me on New Year's Day since I won't be in Plymouth New Year's Eve.

St Michael the Archangel
Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church
6340 Chase Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

Holy Ascension Eastern Catholic Church
1062 Church Street
Plymouth, MI 48170



A TRULY WARM WELCOME

I would, on behalf of myself and the two Christian Communities that I serve, truly extend a **Warm Welcome** to all who may have joined us in celebrating the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ and are not regular members. It was truly wonderful having you with us and we only hope and pray that your experience of worshipping God with us and celebrating His presence with us was spiritually rewarding for you.

As you probably observed, the two communities that I serve are, while small, communities that truly believe that God came into our world in order to help us understand the meaning and purpose of life and that He

is here with us. Both communities follow the traditions and customs of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and our ritual is that of the Byzantine Church.