



HOLY RESURRECTION ORTHODOX CHURCH



A Parish of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
Ecumenical Patriarchate
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Potomac, Maryland 20854
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www.holyresurrection.com
www.facebook.com/groups/hroc25
YouTube: HROC Media

Very Rev. Peter Zarynow, Pastor
Protopresbyter John Fedornock
Subdeacons Anastasios Davis & Michael Vaporis Reader Stephen Sudik

19 January 2025

**FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST
(Holy Theophany)**

Epistle: Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

Tone Five

The Schedule of Divine Services for the Week is as Follows:

**19 Jan (SUN) FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST
(Holy Theophany)**

Chanting of 3rd Hour 9:15am

Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great 9:30am

Coffee Social/Book Club to follow

Blessings of Homes begins

22 Jan (Wed) 31st Wednesday after Pentecost

Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom 9:30am

Coffee Social to follow

26 Jan (SUN) Sunday after Theophany

Chanting of 3rd Hour 9:15am

Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom 9:30am

Sunday School/Coffee Social to follow

Announcements:

Confessions be heard by appointment. Please contact Fr Peter to schedule. All faithful are encouraged to come to the Sacrament every 8-10 weeks, on average, to help maintain spiritual health.

Following Coffee social this morning the members of the JR ACRY will "undecorate" the Christmas Tree. All members present are asked to assist with this "labor of love."

A Special Parish meeting is announced for Sunday, January 26 from 11:30 – 11:45 am. The purpose of the short meeting is to approve an invoice requested by the Master Plan committee to secure a cost estimate for construction of a new rectory. The fee to do the cost estimate is \$5,554. Our parish Bylaws require parishioners' approval for any expense over \$5,000. Payment will be made from the Build for the Future fund.

Following the brief special parish meeting on 26 January the Social Concerns Ministry will have their annual meeting to set projects for the coming year. Members of the team are asked to stay for the meeting and new members are always welcome!

Wall calendars for 2025 are available on the table under the TV. You may take as many as you need, but not more than you need. Offering Envelopes for 2025 are also available. Please take yours home today.

We will be needing coffee social hosts for the month of January. Please sign up for this vital ministry in the life of our parish! Never hosted a social before or you don't have the time or resources to think you can host? What about setting up a simple "Grab & Stay" social? We have all the ingredients here. The donations collected during a "Grab & Stay" go back into purchasing items for us to keep in stock. Or have you thought about maybe teaming up with one or two others so that you do not have to do everything yourself? All these are possible. Let us try to get some others into the rotation of hosts. Remember, the main idea of the coffee social is fellowship! What is served is secondary. Keeping it simple is best! (While we're at it, let's try to fill February, too)

2025 DIOCESAN ASSESSMENT

Being our parish, and we as its faithful, are a part of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, each parish member (who is over 18 years of age and not a full-time undergraduate student or in first term of military service) has been assessed **\$84.00** this year to support the work of the Diocese (Seminary, Camp Nazareth, etc.) and administration. A special envelope, Diocesan Assessment, is included as the first envelope in your box. Everyone is asked to please pay the assessment in January since that is when the assessment is due by the parish. You may also see Debi Myers if you have any questions

CANDLE OFFERINGS

Vigil Candles Offered For the Living- (Many Years! Mnohaja L'ita!)

- 2-for health-love Mom & Dad
Jonathan & Lara; Stephanie
- 1-health of Melanie-love Alex
- 1-health of Alex-love Melanie
- 2-safe travel-Alex & Melanie
Alex & Melanie; our family
- 1-health & Special intention John & Marie Smith,
Georgene & Ray Ammon, Fr Peter & Pa i Bernadette,
Alex Zarynow, Marie Skasko, Fr John & Pa i Marge
Fedornock, Lois Erhard, Charlie & Debi Myers, Chris
Fallon, Barbara Homick, All parishioners of HROC-Carol
Miller
- 2-for health-Sheila
HROC parishioners; Family members
- 3-special intention-Sheila
*Fr. Peter & family; Diocesan Priests & their families;
OCMC Missionaries*
- 1-health of children & grandchildren-Tom & Amy
- 1-health of Chris Fallon-Michael, Kathleen, John & Anna
- 1-health of cousin George Hazuda-Greg & Debbie
Yakubik
- 2-special intention-brother George
Archbishop Michael; Barbara Harrington
- 1-special intention Metropolitan Gregory-George
Dahulich
- 13-for health-George Dahulich
*Archbishop Michael; Fr. Tom Kadlec; Fr. Jim Dutko;
Chris Fallon; Charlie Myers; Barbara Harrington; Pañi
Kathy Dutko; Alex Zarynow; Emily Dzubak; Katherine
Chow; Psa. Diana Acsente; Fr. John & Pañi Marie
Brancho; Georgia Wimberly*
- 5-happy birthday-George Dahulich
*Donny Boyd; Serena Gay; Erika Sofelkanik; Faith
Breno; Rachel Pribish*
- 1-health of Savannah, Chloe, Caroline, Christopher,
Natalie, Cole-love Grandparents
- 16-health & special intention-John & Marie Smith
*Irene Dzubak; Melanie Samson; Carol Miller; Barbara
Homick; Marie Skasko; Georgene & Ray Ammon; Fr
Tom & Pañi Linda Kadlec; FrJohn & Pañi Marge
Fedornock; FrPeter & Pañi Bernadette; FrJohn & Pañi
Eleanor Pribish; Eleanor Breno; Charlie Myers; Lois
Erhard; FrJohn & Pañi Marie Brancho; Pañi Jean
Hutnyan; Chris Fallon*
- 1-safety & peace Ukraine & Israel and their people-John
& Marie Smith
- 6-special intentions-the Breno Family
*Breno Family; Fedornock Families; Peart Family;
Nakonecznyj Family; Zankey Family; Fabian Family*
- 2-happy birthday-the Breno Family
Faith; Nika
- 2-special intention-the Breno Family
all who are ill; all who travel
- 1-continued healing Hudson-the Breno Family
- 2-specail intention-Mom & Dad
Brian, Angela & Dominic; Stephen
- 11-for health & special intention-Mark & Marie
*Nancy Shields; Mike Czap; Skeets & Beth; Irene
Dzubak; Carol Miller; Ray & Georgene Ammon;
Eleanor Breno; FrJohn & Pañi Marge; FrPeter & Pañi
Bernadette; Chris & Mike Fallon; Susan & Dan
Zelensky*
- 4-health-Charlie, Debi, Jacob & Joey
Skeets; Jessica; Carol Miller; Irene Dzubak
- 2-specail intention Jacob & Joey-love Mom & Dad
- 1-health & healing Hayley, Bob, Peggy and Bruce,
Andrea, Carol Miller, Chris Fallon, AnneMarie, Pa i
Jean, Ray Ammon, Tom Delare, Irene Dzubak, Jordan-
Lois
- 1-for health Savannah, Caroline, Natalie, Karen K,
Jeanne Delasko, Barbara Homick, Georgene, Debbie
Delare- Lois
- 1-health and wellbeing of Artem-Olga Vovk
- 1-health and wellbeing of Andrey, Lidia and Tatiana,
Natalia, Konstantin, Eva, George, Michael, Lubov,
Anastasia, Maxim and Ivan-Olga Vovk
- 1-health and wellbeing of Sofia, Sergey, Eva, Matthew,
Tomothy, Yuliia, Alex, Dru, Irina and Dennis-Olga Vovk
- 3-for healing-Rose Plowchin
Carol Devine; Nancy Hall; Georgeann Shalayda
- 1-birthday blessings EileenMcKinney-Rose Plowchin
- 1-special prayer-Pa i Marge Fedornock
- 1-specail intention all my children-Pa i Marge Fedornock
- 1-happy birthday Dimi-Pa i Marge Fedornock
- 1-safe trip-Pa i Marge Fedornock
- 1-happy birthday Pa i Marge Fedornock-Eleanor B

Vigil Candles In Loving Memory: (Memory Eternal! Vicnaja Pamjat!)

- 1+in loving memory of Les-love Carol
- 1+in memory Mother & Father. Carol Miller
- 1+In loving memory of Chris Hudack, Grandparents,
Bettie Searfoss, Myrtle Miller, John Hudack,
John Hrapchak, John Homick, Marge Tomasevich-Carol
Miller
- 1+in loving memory of Tom, Ann & Chrysa Thear-Taina &
Craig
- 2+loving memory-the Fallons
Pañi Jeannette; Anna & John Luchok
- 1+in memory of parents Helen & Larry Rowland-Diane
- 1+in memory grandparents Helen & Peter Sedlar-Diane
- 1+Memory Eternal Parents/Grandparents-Koval Family
- 1+Memory Eternal Uncle George, Aunt Marge & Uncle
Tony- Koval Family
- 2+Memory Eternal-love Alex, Melanie
parents Michael & Elaine; parents John & Katherine
- 6+in memory-Sheila
*John; Dad Kraynok; Mom Kraynok; Charles Hrapchak;
Anna Hrapchak; Evelyn Hrapchak*
- 1+In loving memory of Metro-Love, Joan and Family
- 1+in loving memory of parents Peter & Ann Dahulich-
love son George
- 1+in memory of Grammy-Charlie, Debi, Jacob & Joey
- 1+loving memory of Vladimir, Irina, Sergey, Nina, Rafael,
Germina, Maxim, Anna, Irena, Lidia, Pavel, Tatiana,
Natalia, Olga-Olga Vovk
- 1+loving memory of Leonid, Anna, Izot, Natalia, Afanasii,
Anastasia, Lidia-Olga Vovk
- 1+in memory of Mom-Mark & Dorothy Sudik
- 1+in memory of Grammy-Charlie, Debi, Jacob & Joey
- 1+in memory of Aunt Dorothy-Charlie, Debi, Jacob &
Joey
- 3+in memory-Pa i Marge Fedornock
Parents; Brother & Sister; sister Ann on her birthday
- 1+in memory Pa i Delores Zuder-Pa i Marge Fedornock
- 1+in memory of grandfather Peter Fitzurka-Lois
- 1+in memory of aunt Julia Tomko-Lois
- 1+in memory Pa i Delores Zuder-Rose Plowchin



Flowers are donated this week by Yuliya ☹ore in memory of grandmother ☹Nina ☹ mother ☹Elvina on their birthdays (Memory Eternal! Vicnaja Pamjat!)



☺☺☺☺ Sponsorships for the Bulletin and the Parish website are now available. ☺ Please use the sign-up sheets on the bulletin board and hand in your sponsorship asap. Make sure you fill in the special intention column so that Father does not have to contact you last minute to fill it in. ☺ Thank you☺

☺☺☺d☺☺☺☺☺☺☺ because of many factors we have been very behind in getting our Sunday School together this year. ☺ We will begin our abbreviated program for our Middle and High School students on ☺☺ January and go through until approximately ☺☺ May. More details coming soon.

The ACRY Corner



Soup Sales for 2025: 2025 Soup Sale dates are as follows: 09 February and 09 March. All ACRY members, and any non-members who wish to help, are asked to make one (minimum) 5-quart batch of homemade soup. Quart containers are available in the ACRY closet in the parish hall. Please have your soup in the church kitchen fridge before Divine Liturgy on the morning of the sale.

Sr ACRY Annual Cash Day: Cash Day will be held on Meatfare Sunday, 23 February 2025. Tickets are now available from Nick Dzubak during Coffee Social. Tickets are still \$10 each. All 300 tickets need to be sold for Cash Day to work.

Sr ACRY Super Bowl Squares are available during Coffee Social. Please see Marie or Mark Sudik to purchase a square (or two, or three)

PARISH ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 16, 2025

Once a year the parish has an Annual Meeting to review the past year and plan for the future. Be at the 2025 Parish Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 16 from 11:30 to 12:30 to participate in making plans for 2025! In



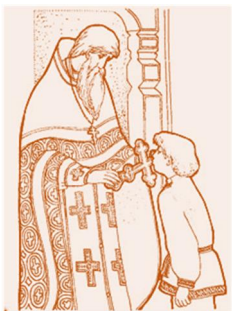
preparation for the meeting, this is a request for nominations for the election of officers.

Election of Officers: This year the following Council officer positions will be elected. Vice President, Financial Secretary, Curator, Trustee, and two Auditors. Please refer to the flyer, "Serving on the Church Council 2025," for the position duties and eligibility requirements. If you would like to nominate yourself to be a candidate or have questions, please talk with Tim Dzubak, Nominating Chair.

Requests for Reports: Presidents of the Junior and Senior ACRY and Chairs of committees and ministries are asked to submit a written report summarizing their

activities in 2024 and plans for 2025. Please email your report to Fr. Peter **no later than February 16.**

Suggestions for Agenda Topics: If you would like to have a certain topic discussed at the meeting, please give your suggestion to Marie Sudik, Council Secretary. We welcome them!



Prayer For The Priesthood

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our **Metropolitan Gregory**, and our spiritual fathers who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Remember also, O Lord, our priests and deacons, especially **Fr Edward Pehanich, Fr John Pribish, Fr Deacon Art Steinstra and our Diocesan Seminarians & Graduates: Dn. Peter Sodini, Sbdn. Nicholas Worobey, Sbdn. Seamus Murry, Reader Samuel Loposky, Nicholas**

Laliberte, Ignatios Leonardo, an Alexander Hurtsellers. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God who loves us, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

PREPARATION FOR THE BLESSING OF HOMES

Call or email FrPeter to make an appointment to have your home blessed.



Before the Priest arrives at your home, here are a few reminders on how to prepare:

- ❖ In the main room of the home, usually the kitchen or dining room, have placed on the table a white cloth, a candle and/or an Icon or cross. You may place a small container of Holy Water on the table as well. [Note: Father will bring water with him]
- ❖ Turn off TV's, radios, computers, etc. so as to keep focused on the blessing service
- ❖ Please make sure that pets are heeled or restrained so as not to get underfoot while Father goes through the home.
- ❖ If you have any items to be blessed (Icon, Cross, etc.), put them on the table where the blessing takes place.
- ❖ When the Priest arrives, have everyone in the home gather around the table and join in the blessing. Participation is important!
- ❖ Invite friends or neighbors to participate and witness the beauty of this Tradition.
- ❖ If you need to discuss a personal matter with Father, this is the time to do so. Time is made between appointments for this reason.

This year the Blessing of Homes will take place from Sunday 19 January to Saturday 22 February. Please schedule an appointment with Father as soon as possible. Please allow for changes due to Father's schedule or inclement weather.

Remember, the invitation to the priest to come and bless your home is an invitation to ask for the mercy of God upon the household. The sprinkling of the Holy Water is a sign of God's presence in the home as an extension of His Holy House, the Church. It is a time to renew our commitment to God as we begin another year in His mercy and love for mankind.

Please pray for the following: Metropolitan Gregory; Fr. Frank & Paňi Connie Miloro; Paňi Betty Jean Baranik; Fr Michael Rustik; Fr. Mark Leasure; Fr. John Fencik; Fr. Paul Stoll; Fr. Robert & Paňi Peggy Teklinski; Dn. Peter Skoog & family; Fr James & Paňi Kathy Dutko; Fr. Gregory Allard; Paňi Linda Barriger; Fr. James Gleason, Fr. Luke Mihaly; Fr. Ted & Paňi Marjorie Mozes; Hieromonk Michael; Fr Thomas Kadlec; Fr Stephen Krivonak; Fr David & Paňi Donna Smoley; Paňi Annamarie Slovesko; Paňi Patricia Duranko; Fr John & Paňi Cindy Zboyovski, Fr. Jonathan & Paňi Marsha Tobias, Paňi Delores Zuder; Paňi Amy George; Paňi Sharon Holowaty; Paňi MaryMargaret Conjelko; Fr John & Paňi Eleanor Pribish; Fr John Mikitish; Paňi Karen Miklos; Paňi Marie Brancho; Paňi Jean Hutnyan; Fr David & Paňi Paula Kossy; Fr Edward Pihanich; Paňi Betty Baranik; SGT Joey Myers; SPC Alexander Zarynow; Beth & Ed 'Skeets' Williams; Carol Miller; Dorothy Mastronicola; Tony Zankey; Justin Popek; Florence Gregoric, James & Melody Peyton; Carol Blum, Alexi Williams, Missy Johns, Susan Buckley, Constance Amey, James Lazor, Debbie Dell; Grace Yoon; Michael Dinneen; Joan Detwiler; Joan Kondratick; Barbara Homick; Jim David & Jeanne Delasko; Melanie Samson; Laura Gary; Richard & Wendy Sulich; Wendy Taylor; James Durachko; Randi Cañalle, Hayley Marshall, Jon Green, MaryJane, Kyle & Rosie Brant, Alicia, Lisa Chernov, Stephen Brancho; Emily; MaryMargaret; Leslie Perez; Thomas & Deborah Delare; Diana Hannan; Bridget Myers; Devan Merrill; Bob Fitzurka; Olga Vovk; Lela; Carly; Robert; Vic Fitzwater; Taina Ferguson; Olya Romanova; Luke Griñith; Richard Durachko; Jennifer Haire; Mary, Simon, Alla; Artem Vovk; Charles Arnhold; Danielle V; Debbie Aumen; David Bulko; Bill Finken; Angelo Taveira-DaSilva, Andrew S.; Natalie Z; Stephen Hutnyan; Barbara Drilllock; Dayton Naugle; Cassidy Riselvato; Phillip Trivett; Camila Bonilla; Hilary Soperak; Robert Knowlton; Ray Rushnak; Christine Sakmar; Joel F, Frank, Jordan, Ruth Moore; Hudson Kennedy, Maria H & baby

May Our Lord Jesus Christ Touch Them with His Healing Hand!!



Did you know that the parish has a grocery gift card program? If you shop at Giant grocery stores, you can assist the parish, too. Every time you purchase a gift card our parish receives 5% of the proceeds. See Marie or Mark Sudik after Divine Services to purchase cards. The cards are available in increments of \$20, \$50 & \$100

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

December 2024

December 2024 Treasurer's Report

Non-Designated Fund Balance, 11/30	\$ 84,244.82
Income	50,757.25
Expenses	13,095.69
Non-Designated Fund Balance, 12/31	\$ 121,906.38
GAIN in December:	\$37,661.56

CUMULATIVE Year to Date

Income	\$ 220,664.07
Expenses	167,099.22
GAIN Year to Date	\$ 53,700.21



Thanks for Sharing Your Time and Talents

- Coffee Social hosts: Marie Sudik, the Sr. ACRY, Diane Rowland, Georgene Ammon & Lois Erhard
- ACRY Holiday Cookie Sale: Co-chairs Carol Strauss & Cyndi Dzubak, those who baked their favorite cookies, and all who helped, in any way, to make the sale a success
- St. Nicholas Luncheon: Faith Breno for assisting St Nicholas by filling gift stockings, Philip Breno for his role as St. Nicholas, and everyone who helped by setting up, bringing food and helping to clean up afterwards
- Sarah Hetzler & Jr ACRY for decorating the Christmas tree
- Robbie Buck for cleaning and polishing the Iconscreen

Attendance and Communicants December 2024

01 Dec: 56/39	22 Dec: 42/26
08 Dec: 57/48	29 Dec: 44/32
15 Dec: 60/53	

**EVERY MAN SHALL GIVE AS HE IS ABLE, ACCORDING TO THE
BLESSINGS OF THE LORD YOUR GOD WHICH HE
HAS GIVEN YOU**
Deuteronomy 16:17

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS JANUARY 2025

ATTENDING: Rose Plowchin, Marie Smith, Debi Myers, Matt Delcher, Tim Dzubak, Jason Aumen, Marie Sudik, Mark Sudik, Father Peter.

Financial/Maintenance items

December receipts exceeded disbursements by over \$37,000.

Our cumulative gain for 2024 is \$53,700. We appreciate our generous parishioners!

Upcoming expenses:

- Rectory dishwasher needed a new control board.
- Plumbing needs in Hall Kitchen (traps leaking and drain snaking).

Upcoming events

- Special Meeting to approve hiring Downey and Scott (a Construction Management Services LLC) for a price of \$5554 to provide a cost estimate for the design/build of a new rectory.
- Olga Vovk, and Sacred Grounds, will present information about area Native Plants and their use in our planned church garden 2 FEB 2025.
- Home Blessings begin 19 JAN.
- Cash Day 23 FEB
- HROC Parish Annual Meeting 16 MAR

The Council is planning for the Parish Annual Meeting and finalizing strategic goals for next year. We are always looking for new thoughts or recommendations. If you are interested in serving on the Council, Tim Dzubak is Nominating Chair.

Next Council meeting is Sunday, 9 FEB. Any parishioner can attend our meetings!

Respectfully Submitted,
Marie Sudik, Council Secretary

MARTYR POLYEUKTOS OF MELITENE IN ARMENIA

Commemorated 9/22 January

Saint Polyeuktos¹ (Polyeuktos) was the first to be martyred for Christ in the Armenian city of Melitene (Melitēnē). He was a soldier during the reign of Emperor Decius (249-251), and he later suffered martyrdom in the reign of Valerian (253-259). He was a friend of Nearkhos (Néarkhos/Nέαρχος) a fellow-soldier and a firm Christian. Polyeuktos, however, although he led a virtuous life, remained a pagan.



When the persecution against Christians began, Nearkhos said to Polyeuktos, “Friend, soon we shall be separated, for they will take me to torture, and you, alas, will renounce your friendship with me.” Polyeuktos told him that he had seen Christ in a dream. The Savior took his soiled military cloak from him and dressed him in a radiant garment. “Now,” he said, “I am prepared to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Enflamed with zeal, Saint Polyeuktos went to the city square, and tore up the edict of Decius which required everyone to worship the idols. A few moments later, he met a procession carrying twelve idols through the streets of the city. Dashing the idols to the ground, he trampled them underfoot.

His father-in-law, the magistrate Felix, who was responsible for enforcing the imperial edict, was horrified at what Saint Polyeuktos had done and advised him to obey the imperial edict. Polyeuktos told him that we must obey God rather than men. Felix declared that Polyeuktos must die for this. “Go then, bid farewell to your wife and children,” he said. Paulina wept and urged her husband to renounce Christ. Felix also wept, but Saint Polyeuktos remained steadfast in his resolve to suffer for Christ.

Bowing his head beneath the executioner's sword, he was baptized in his own blood. In the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, when the Church of Christ had triumphed throughout the Roman Empire, a church was built at Melitene in honor of Saint Polyeuktos. Many miracles were worked through his intercession. In that same church, the parents of Saint Euthymios the Great prayed fervently for a son. The birth of this great luminary of Orthodoxy occurred in the year 376, through the prayers of the Holy Martyr Polyeuktos.

Saint Polyeuktos was also venerated by Saint Akakios, the Bishop of Melitene, who participated in the Third Ecumenical Council, and was a great proponent of Orthodoxy. In the East, as well as in the West, the Holy Martyr Polyeuktos is venerated as the patron Saint of vows and treaties.

¹The name Polyeuktos means much-desired.

CAMP NAZARETH SUMMER CAMP 2025

The time for Summer Camp is Rapidly Approaching!!! The clock is ticking!!

Dates for the Summer Camping Program

Week 1: Sunday, July 20 ó Saturday, July 26, 2025 ó Pittsburgh, Mid-Atlantic, Washington D.C., and Tri-State Deaneries

Register Online Starting March 1, 2025 @ 6pm (EDT)

Register at ó campnazareth.org

Registration for Camp will be on a First-Come First-Serve Basis!! Once capacity for a given week is filled, all other campers will be put on a waiting list.

Cost for Camp ó Diocesan \$370/child, Non-Diocesan \$420/child

\$20 Early Bird Discount Per Child!!!!

(one-time only, not per week)

No child should be prevented from attending Camp because of cost. If a campership is needed, please contact Fr Peter

Must Register & pay by May 1, 2025!!!!

Online Registration **MUST** be complete **AND** payment must be submitted by **May 1** in order to qualify for the Early Bird Discount.

Registration will close on June 15, 2025 @ 12pm!

WHY BLESS OUR HOMES?

By Phyllis Onest, (Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh)

Begin Everything with Prayer

Since we are reminded in Scripture to begin whatever we do with prayer, it has been the practice of Orthodox Christians for centuries to have new dwellings blessed either before or just after settling in. This has been extended to one's business or office, and even college dorm rooms. "The service performed by the priest to bless the new dwelling is somewhat similar to the consecration of a church [in the Russian practice] in that holy water, holy oil, and incense are used and a lesson from the holy Gospel is read. All the rooms of the house are sprinkled with holy water and each of the four outer walls are anointed with the sign of the Cross with holy oil, a candle placed before them, and after the censuring of the house, the lesson from the Holy Gospel is read [in Greek practice the service of the Small Blessing of Waters is generally done]. At the conclusion of the blessing, the inhabitants are blessed with holy water: the husband first, followed by the wife and then the children - the oldest first. Relatives and friends present are then blessed." (Marriage and the Christian Home, by Rev. Michael B. Henning, p.24.)

Back to "The Fall"

From Scripture we know that whatever God created was good, but with "the Fall", evil entered the world, corrupting the creation. God the Father sent His Son Jesus to save it by effecting a "new creation". This is celebrated at Theophany, specifically with the Great Blessing of Water. "The consecration of the waters on this feast places the entire world - through its 'prime element' of water - in the perspective of the cosmic creation, sanctification, and glorification of the Kingdom of God in Christ and the Spirit." (The Orthodox Faith, Vol. II, Worship, by Fr. Thomas Hopko, p.127.) All the readings, hymns, prayers, and actions of the day speak of God's presence in our entire world and universe, His creation.

Through water all of the creation is once again sanctified by God, becoming good again, the way God had intended.

The Feast Of Theophany

The Feast of Theophany (or Epiphany) commemorates the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. We know from the troparion of the day that "the Trinity was made manifest" to us. But there's more to it than this. "When Jesus descends into the depths of the river, there occurs a profound upheaval. It is not the one baptized who is purified, for he is spotless; but it is the water that is transfigured and illumined. This water, which was believed to be transparent and purifying, is in fact

polluted, inhabited by evil spirits, servants of the old gods. ... By purifying the elements, by sanctifying matter, Jesus frees the cosmos from the powers of evil." (The Incarnate God, Vol. I, Catherine Aslanoff, French edition editor, translated by Paul Meyendorff, p.163.)

The Great Blessing of Water and the Home

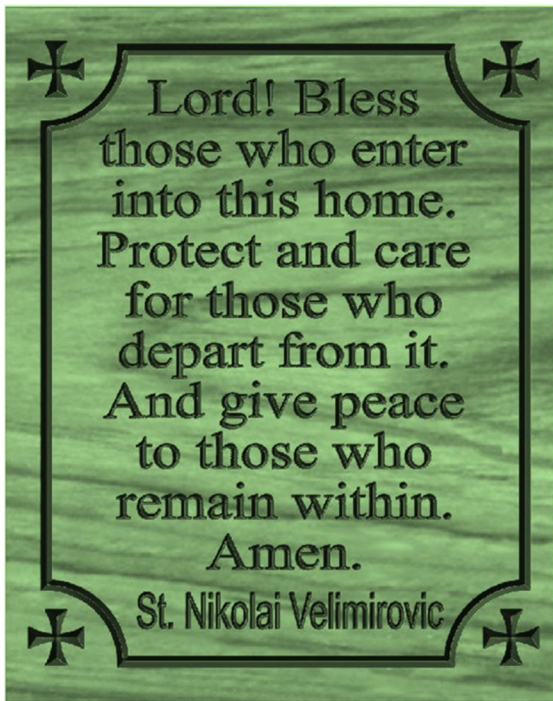
The Great Blessing of Water takes place at the end of that day's Liturgy. Since our homes cannot be brought to the Church, the Church - through the priest and cantor - go to the homes. There the service of blessing, which began in the church, is finished with the sprinkling of water in the home. Traditionally, in most Orthodox parishes, the priest personally visits all his parishioners each year to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with the newly sanctified water of Theophany (January 6/13). By sanctifying our living quarters, our private place, we extend the grace of God to our individual dwellings. (In very large parishes a yearly visit may not be possible. In areas of the country where the winter is harsh, I know of at least one parish where houses are blessed at the beginning of the ecclesiastical year in September.) We also bring the blessed water to our homes to use throughout the year to bless our homes and to drink whether we are ill or as part of our daily prayer life. "There are many occasions in family life when a sip of holy water can help to remind us of the blessing that was given 'to bestow sanctification', 'unto healing of soul and body', 'to be a fountain welling forth unto life eternal', as the priest prayed in the litany of Epiphany Day." (Little Falcons: Water, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1998, p.33.)

Weaving Christ into Our Lives

The blessing of homes by these holy waters maintains the spiritual association between the 'family church' and the parish, as well as again providing for the sharing of God's spiritual gifts. ... This annual blessing is not as elaborate as the blessing of the new dwelling, but because of this it should not be overlooked, for it is in this way that the grace of God is extended to individual dwellings." (Marriage and the Christian Home, p.25.) If the priest comes to bless the home when the children are present, they have the opportunity to see the parish priest in a different and personal situation. If the priest permits, they can lead the way through the house, or hold a candle. They can show him their rooms or pets or favorite toys. They receive a blessing with water. For children, the house blessing shows the connection of the Church to the home.

In Summary

What does it mean to ask God to bless something? All things in the world have been spoiled right along with us. God must bless His world again in order for it to be the way that He wants it to be. For this reason, God sent His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit to the world: to bless everyone and everything that He made, to make all things good again. When the priest comes to bless our homes, he asks God to have mercy on the house, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing. What a wonderful way to begin the New Year!



THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST [HOLY THEOPHANY]

Commemorated 6/19 January



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 Saint 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 Saint 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 Saint 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. Saint 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.
(oca.org)

Native Plant Presentation

The Sacred Grounds team will be visiting on February 2, 2025 on 11:30 AM (during Coffee Social) to deliver their engaging presentation on native plants. Known for their expertise and passion for promoting sustainable landscaping, they will share insights on the importance of native flora in supporting local ecosystems. Attendees will learn practical tips for incorporating these plants into their spaces, fostering biodiversity, and creating habitats for pollinators. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with nature and enhance your understanding of eco-friendly gardening practices!

There will also be a sign up for those interested in receiving free plants for home gardens. Those plants will be distributed on 11 May, Mother's Day.

Please plan to stay for this presentation. If there are any questions before the meeting, please contact Olga Vovk.



Native Plant of the week: Blue False Indigo - *Baptisia australis*

Species of genus *Baptisia* are legumes. Most legume species harbor beneficial bacteria called rhizobia on their roots. Genus-specific strains of this bacterium called inoculum can aid in the fixation of atmospheric nitrogen and improve long-term health of native plant communities. It attracts hummingbirds.

Baptisia australis spends its first few years developing mostly below ground. The branching foliage and blossoms become showier and more developed with each subsequent growing season.



NATIONAL MARCH FOR LIFE 2025

The National March for Life 2025 will take place on the National Mall on Friday 24 January. The rally will be held at on Madison Drive between 7th and 9th Street NW beginning at 12 Noon. A prayer service will be held at 12:30pm, led by the Orthodox Hierarchs in



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attendance. The March begins approx. 1pm and ends at the Supreme Court building (the Orthodox group usually cuts out before the end)

If you are interested in attending, you are welcome to meet with other Orthodox Christians from around the DC area, and beyond, by meeting

at the above location. If you want to go as a group, FrPeter will be leaving the rectory at around 10:30am to get to the Grosvner Metro station to take the Red Line to the Mall. If you want to go as a group, please let him know so that he will wait for you in the church parking lot.



WHY WAS JESUS BAPTIZED?

On the great Feast Day of THEOPHANY, we commemorate, our Lord's baptism in the Jordan River by John. Have you ever wondered why Jesus was baptized? Why did the Sinless One need to submit to a ritual that symbolized the washing away of sins? St. John himself must have had the same question in his mind. The Gospels tell us that when Christ approached him in the Jordan, he was reluctant to baptize Him, saying: *"I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"* (Matthew 3:14) In the following verse of Matthew's Gospel, Christ answers: *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."*

Therein lies our answer. Jesus certainly did not NEED purification. But by making the purification of humanity His own, He would wash away the sin of humanity, grant regeneration and reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Thus, Christ's baptism was necessary for the fulfillment of all of God's righteousness. St. Gregory of Nyssa puts it beautifully: *"JESUS ENTERS THE SINFUL WATERS OF THE WORLD, AND WHEN HE COMES OUT, HE PURIFIES THE ENTIRE WORLD WITH HIM."*

The Church refers to baptism as a *"new birth."* In this *"new birth,"* a true mystery takes place, for in the Sacrament of Baptism, we die, going down into the water to be mystically united to Christ in His death. Then we live again, rising up out of the water in His Resurrected humanity.