



# Glory be to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

We extend a warm welcome to all our parishioners and guests,  
and pray that your participation in the Divine Liturgy will be enriching and meaningful.

## December 11, 2016 ~ Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

(Two Sundays before Christmas ~ Неділя Святих Праотців)

Epistle ~ Colossians 3:4-11      Gospel ~ Luke 14: 16-24

See insert for troparia and special texts



**Prepare for Christmas by fasting not feasting:** For Week Five of the Nativity Fast, the **purple candle** on the banner is lit to remind us of **repentance**. We must recognize our failings toward God and ask for forgiveness and strength. *“O holy Child of Bethlehem descend to us we pray. Cast out our sin and enter in, be born to us today.”*

## This Week's Liturgical Services

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17

5:00 p.m. ~ Sunday of the Holy Fathers  
Epistle Reader: Linda Douglas

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

10:00 a.m. ~ Sunday of the Holy Fathers  
Epistle Reader: Susan Soldan



## Your Return Gift to God



**DECEMBER 3/4, 2016**

Envelopes: \$1,771.<sup>00</sup>  
Flowers for Christmas: \$170.<sup>00</sup>  
Mission Collection: \$91.<sup>90</sup>

*Thank you for your generosity!  
Щиро Вам дякуємо!*

The **Mission Collection** for December has been designated for **Blessings in a Backpack**, a unique program designed to support schoolchildren who simply do not have enough to eat on weekends. Families who struggle with hunger or who are 'food insecure' rely on food banks and other resources during the week, but many cannot satisfy weekend needs.

## Parish News & Coming Events

Many thanks to **Jackie and Chris Strehlow** for organizing and running the St. Nicholas party held last Sunday after the Divine Liturgy, and of course, the parents and grandparents and friends of the children who attended. It was truly a special occasion. And thank you to St. Nicholas who made his way all the way from Myra to visit.

Thank you to **all** parishioners and their family members and friends for supporting this year's "Getting Ready for Christmas" Sale held on Saturday morning. Your time, effort, and dedication in making this event a success was sincerely appreciated. Many thanks also to those who donated items for the bake table, Baba's and Dido's Kitchen and Santa Sale. May God bless you all!



We welcome **Skylar Ann Kozyra**, daughter of Mark and Danielle Kozyra (née Gaudry) into our Christian family who will receive the Holy Sacrament of Baptism on Sunday, December 11. May the light of Christ shine over Skylar all the days of her life. *Many happy and blessed years! Многая і благая літа!*

Your 2017 envelopes and calendars are on order and should arrive shortly. However, if they are late, please be patient ~ you will (hopefully) get them before the New Year. Thanks for your patience and understanding. ☺

## Бажаємо Вам приємного тижня! Wishing everyone a lovely week!

It's impossible to imagine that any of us, while being in good health, would refuse to come to the celebration of a jubilee, or a wedding, or any other family festivity, if asked by a friend, a relative, or simply by an acquaintance or a colleague, or, let us say, by a boss, by the Queen of England or the Prime Minister of Canada. We all understand very well that there are such dates and events that should not be neglected, if we cherish – at least a little bit – the friendship with those who invite us and want to share with us the delight of the feast. Such refusal, whatever the reasons for it might be, would necessarily be interpreted as very offensive, and consequently harm existing good relations.

When the people that were called by God, do not go to the feast, the new guests are invited. They are called two times: first, from "the streets and lanes of the city" are brought "the poor and the maimed, and the lame, and the blind", or, according to the interpreters of the Holy Bible, publicans and sinners, and then from "the highways and hedges" the people that are situated even lower – and interpreted as the pagans – are also "compelled to come..." (Luke, 14:23).

While going "to see the land", "to test the oxen" and declining the Vesper Supper of our Lord "for the sake of the family and the kids," we, the contemporary Christians, place ourselves in the position of those traitors, about whom the exasperated Master of the House said directly: "None of those men who were invited shall taste a morsel of my supper" (Luke 14:24). For "many are invited, but few are chosen" (Math. 22:14). The Heavenly Kingdom, the Wedding Feast, The Holy Eucharist – God's Vesper Supper – are already offered to us, we have already been called. Let us try to live and pray in a way to become worthy to enter the House of God, Our Lord! AMEN!

## Holy Cross Golden Agers

Regular Thursday activities are now cancelled for the rest of December and through to the end of January, and will resume on **February 2, 2016** at the usual time. We wish all members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

The next bus trip to Grand Portage is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 18**. Please feel free to contact Ann Kozlowski (622-3006) or Ann Opaski (577-2805) between now and early January to book your seat. Non-members are invited also. This is a **free** service. All we ask is that you be at the church no later than **3:45 p.m.**



## St. George's Society

Thanks to all members who assisted in any way with the parish *Getting Ready for Christmas Sale* held this past Saturday morning. Your cooperation and participation were appreciated, and together, helped to make it another success for Holy Cross!

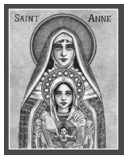
Bingo dates for the New Year will be published in future bulletins. Consequently, our volunteer coordinator Gerry Bullock will be contacting members to arrange the schedule.

We wish all members and their families a very special holiday season with all the best in 2017! Our first meeting in the new year will be the annual **'Super Bowl'** Meeting at 4:30 p.m. on **Sunday, February 5**, followed by a dinner and social.

**QUESTION:** What makes the Immaculate Conception so important that our salvation should hinge on it?

**ANSWER:** The Immaculate Conception can be related to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross in various ways. Some of these go beyond Church doctrine and into the realm of theological elaboration. First, the Immaculate Conception prepares for the Cross by making Mary a fitting mother for the Son of God, who came to die on the Cross. It isn't that God *had* to make Mary immaculate in order to send His Son into the world. He didn't. God is omnipotent, and His power is not limited. He could send His Son into the world without an immaculate mother if He chose. But it was fitting that the mother of Christ be a holy woman, and in fact a woman who was a perfect example of holiness. Thus He prepared her for this role from the moment of her conception by giving her a special grace to preserve her from all stain of original sin.

Second, the Immaculate Conception reflects the Cross in that it is what Jesus did on the Cross that made the Immaculate Conception possible. By preserving Mary from all stain of original sin, God thus redeemed her. He redeemed her in an even more spectacular way that He does us, for He preserved her from falling into sin rather than pulling her out of it after she had fallen into it. But since all redemption comes to mankind through the Cross, it was the Cross itself that made the Immaculate Conception possible.



Although God does not redeem us the same way He redeemed Mary, at the beginning of our lives, he will eventually free us of all stain of original sin as well. We will all one day be "stainless" (immaculate) if we persevere in His grace. Thus, by redeeming Mary in such a way that she was given this gift while still in this life – and at the very beginning of her life – God made her an icon of what He will one day do for all of us.

*Check out the back cover for events in our community.* 



## Come to God's Banquet When He Invites You

**T**wo weeks ago, Jesus told us the Parable of the Great Banquet. We hear it again today, the exact same Gospel reading, because our Church Fathers really want us to understand that we shouldn't say 'no' to God's invitation or make excuses as to why we do not come when we are called. In this parable Jesus taught that those who were invited and made excuses not to come would not be able to taste the food that had been prepared for them.

If you have been baptized, you have accepted God's invitation (by way of your parents, godparents, family and friends) to be saved through faith in His Son Jesus. You have been cleansed of your sin and will enjoy a personal relationship with Jesus on this earth and one day will spend eternity with Him in Heaven. In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, Chapter 19:7-9, we are told that one day all who accepted the invitation to be saved will celebrate a wedding supper with Jesus. But you must **always** remember: the life you live here on earth is preparing you for the Great Banquet when you will live forever and ever in God's presence. You must have a close relationship with Jesus by praying everyday to Him, reading your Bible, and showing your love to Him by obeying His Word.

You are lovingly  
invited to

- Come close to God and become best friends
- Have all your sins forgiven
- Learn to live and love like Jesus, God's only perfect Son
- Spend forever with God in heaven

**TIME:** Anytime you believe

**PLACE:** Starts in your heart  
Continues forever in heaven

Your response is required  
Call out anytime, day or night  
Love,

Jesus

# What, Where and When: Community Calendar

**School Christmas Concert** - St. Patrick High School bands and choir will be performing their Christmas Concert at 7 p.m. on **Wednesday, December 14** at St. Agnes Church. Tickets (\$5) will be available at the door. Donations of non-perishable food items will also be gratefully accepted for the St. Vincent de Paul (St. Agnes) food bank. Everyone is welcome to attend!



**Jingle Bash for ALS** - **Friday, December 16** at the CLE Coliseum. Come out and dance up a storm with the band Private Eyes and IDJ music. The fun starts at 8 p.m.; bring your friends and enjoy a fantastic pre-holiday celebration. Raffles and Penny Auction. Tickets are \$10.<sup>00</sup> and available at Java Hut and Dulux Paints (Memorial Ave.). All funds raised stay in Thunder Bay and support ALS patients.

**A Daylin James Christmas: Double Feature Concert** - Elvis *and* Daylin James in one memorable occasion of seasonal music, **Saturday, December 17** at 7 p.m. & **Sunday, December 18** at 4 p.m. at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 207 S. Brodie St. Tickets are \$20/person (non-refundable) and available at the TBCA Box Office (684-4444), Marv Chony Jewellers (Centennial Square) or by calling 346-8716.

**Rotary Carol Sing** - **Sunday, December 18** from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Gather your family and friends for an evening of song and entertainment in support of the Thunder Bay Christmas Cheer Fund. Held in Fort William at St. Paul's Anglican Church, 808 Ridgeway Street, and in Port Arthur at St. Paul's United Church, 349 Waverly Street. This is fun and free event for all!



**Fundraiser In Support of the MS Society** - **Thursday, December 29** from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at Superior Shores Gaming Centre, 435 Memorial Avenue. A great opportunity to gather your friends or co-workers this holiday season. Tickets are just \$15 (\$29 value!) and can be obtained by calling 344-2944 or you can send an email to [Sarah.Boucha@mssociety.ca](mailto:Sarah.Boucha@mssociety.ca). Must be 18+ to play bingo. ID is required.

*For a complete listing of all events happening in and around Thunder Bay, visit [www.thunderbay.ca/living](http://www.thunderbay.ca/living) and check out the monthly calendars. They're filled with fun and interesting information for the whole family!*

