

Слава Ісусу Христу ~ Слава на віку! Glory be to Jesus Christ ~ Glory forever!



We extend a warm welcome to all our parishioners and visitors, and pray that your participation in today's Divine Liturgy will be enriching and meaningful.

December 24, 2017 ~ Sunday of the Holy Fathers

(Sunday before Christmas ~ Неділя Перед Різдвом Христовим - Святих Отців)

Epistle ~ Hebrews 11: 9-10, 17-23, 32-40

Gospel ~ Matthew 1: 1-25

See insert for troparia and special texts

Focus on the GOSPEL

Today's Gospel passage, the story of the genealogy of Jesus, not only illustrates that sometimes unlikely people do extraordinary things, but also reveals to us some unlikely individuals, who became a part of the most important event in all of human history. And although the cast of characters in the lineage of Jesus consists of some of the greatest people of the Bible (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Boaz, David, and Solomon), there are some that one would not suspect to be numbered with such notable company. Regardless, even the greatest 'heroes' of the Bible have strikes against them. They were all unlikely vessels, but God chose to use them, just as He chooses to use all of us to bring the MESSIAH to the world. Amen!

- taken from a sermon by Steve Kinnard

Your Return Gift to God

DECEMBER 16/17

Envelopes: \$3,415.⁰⁰ Mission Fund: \$90.⁵⁰
Vigil Lights: \$218.²⁵ Special Projects: \$40.⁰⁰
Flowers for Christmas: \$30.⁰⁰

Thank you for your generosity ~ Щиро Вам дякуємо!

December's Mission Collection is designated for St. Andrew's **Dew Drop Inn**, a safe and welcoming place where hungry people can come to eat with no questions asked.

Parish News & Events

The end of our journey through St. Philip's Fast - Pylypiwka (Advent) in preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord is nearly complete. This past Wednesday, the **red candle** on the banner was 'lit' to signify the **Holy Eucharist**, reminding us that Christ, Who came to Bethlehem, also comes to us in the great Sacrament of His Presence, the Holy Eucharist. The reason He was born in Bethlehem was that we might allow Him to come and be born in the manger of our hearts. "Christ our God to earth descends; He will give to all the faithful, His own self for heavenly food."

We extend our sincerest condolences to Ann Clavet and her family on the passing of her brother †Peter Fodchuk on Friday, December 14. May the Lord accept the soul of His servant †Peter into His heavenly kingdom, and may his memory be everlasting ~ вічна йому пам'ять.



Every year at this time, Christmas carolling has taken place. Five years ago, it happened on Ukrainian Christmas Eve (January 6, 2013). This year, due to issues with availability and scheduling, carolling has been arranged for the afternoon of 'Ukrainian Christmas', **Sunday, January 7**. If you wish to have the carollers come and sing, please sign the sheet posted on the narthex bulletin board at your earliest convenience. And if you'd like to participate, please speak with Murray Salomon, Dr. Jennifer Swerdlyk, or Andriika Warywoda. Everyone is welcome. We will likely meet in the church hall around 1 p.m. that day, but will firm up the time as the date gets closer. *Колядуймо разом!*

THIS WEEK'S LITURGICAL SERVICES

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

7:50 p.m. - **Great Compline with Litiya**

8:30 p.m. - **Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy**

Epistle Reader: Andrea Warywoda

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25

10:00 a.m. - **The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Day)**

Epistle Reader: Mary Ann Lysak

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

10:00 a.m. - **Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

10:00 a.m. - **Feast of St. Stephen, First Martyr**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

4:45 p.m. - Christmas carol sing-along

5:00 p.m. - **Sunday after the Nativity** (Relatives of Christ)

Epistle Reader: Evelyn Poleschuk

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

9:45 a.m. - Christmas carol sing-along

10:00 a.m. - **Sunday after the Nativity** (Relatives of Christ)

Epistle Reader: Michael Watral

Your **2018 Parish Collection Envelopes** are now available for pick-up. Please do not use them until the New Year. Since many boxes of envelopes were not used this past year, the numbering system has again been reorganized, meaning that many envelope holders will have a new number for 2018. In doing so, we will be able to order less envelopes for the following year and save the parish some money. Please check the box when you pick it up and ensure that your name is on it. If you have any questions, please leave a message on the Parish Office answering machine.

And we are still looking for individuals to help count the weekly collections. New counters will receive training. To volunteer, speak with Susan Soldan or call her at 475-4550.

Attention all Epistle Readers & Eucharistic Ministers!

The schedules for 2018 will be available soon. Thank you again to those who have volunteered for these important tasks. Copies will be available in the box in the narthex next week. Please make sure to check for yours.

HOLY CROSS GOLDEN AGERS

Regular Thursday afternoon activities are now cancelled now until the end of January, and will resume on **February 8, 2018** at the usual time (12:30 p.m.) when new members are welcome to join. Membership is just \$10 per year. Until then, we wish all current members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Stay safe and warm throughout the holidays!



An afternoon/evening bus trip to Grand Portage is planned for **January 17, 2018**. To book your seat, please contact either Ann Kozlowski (622-3006) or Ann Opaski (577-2805) between now and mid-January. This is a **free** service. Non-members (18 years and up) are invited also ~ the more, the merrier. Come for the ride, relaxation and recreation!

Readings for the Sunday after the Nativity

Commemoration of the Relatives of Christ ~ December 31
(to help prepare for the nourishment of the Word of God at Liturgy)



Epistle: Galatians 1: 11-19

Gospel: Matthew 2: 13-23

As you read each passage, ask yourself these questions,
"What thoughts, ideas, words or images come to mind?"
and "What are the connections between them?"
This will help make them easier to follow and understand.

Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)



I have travelled many moonless nights,
Cold and weary with a babe inside,
And I wonder what I've done,
Holy Father, You have come
And chosen me now to carry Your Son.

I am waiting in a silent prayer;
I am frightened by the load I bear.
In a world as cold as stone
Must I walk this path alone?
Be with me now, be with me now.

Breath of heaven, hold me together,
Be forever near me, breath of heaven.
Breath of heaven, lighten my darkness,
Pour over me Your holiness for You are holy.
Breath of heaven, breath of heaven.

(as sung by Amy Grant)

Sunday Smile



Seasonal Church Signs



ST. GEORGE'S SOCIETY

Our next bingo at Superior Shores Gaming Centre is an afternoon one on **Thursday, January 11, 2018**. Members who have agreed to volunteer on that occasion should be present at the bingo hall no later than 12 noon.

There will be no regular monthly meeting in December or January. We will reconvene on **Sunday, February 4, 2018** at our annual 'Super Bowl' meeting. Until then, the Executive wishes all members and their families a peaceful and holy Christmas holiday season and a happy and blessed New Year! To all ice fishermen, tight lines and stay safe!

EVENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

'Mini-Monster Bingo' - Sunday, December 31 at Superior Shores Gaming Centre, 435 Memorial Avenue, 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (Doors open at 4 p.m.) Tickets limited; \$60 per person (18 years and over). Featuring elevated jackpots



including a \$3,000 final full card, plus 3 swag bags and gift card random raffles - over \$10,000 in guaranteed prizes. Help ring in the New Year while supporting local charities!

Malanka - New Year's Eve 'Ukrainian Style' - Saturday, January 13, 2018 at the Royal Canadian Slovak Legion, presented by Zorya Ukrainian Dance Association. Symposium @ 6 p.m.; Dinner @ 7 p.m. Entertainment by the Zorya Dancers. Live music by Danny Johnson and 21 Gun Fun. Advanced tickets only. Featuring 'Kolomeyka', 50/50 draw, and late night snack. See the poster in the narthex for more information or call Alice at 577-2100.

"Malanka ~ A New Year's Celebration" presented by the League of Ukrainian Canadians and Chaban Ukrainian Dance Group on **Saturday, January 27, 2018** at the Port Arthur Polish Hall, 102 S. Court St. Live music with featured band "Zirka" from Toronto. For tickets, call Doug Chorkawy at 621-1593 or Hanya Cvornek at 344-3136. Check out the poster on the narthex bulletin board. Get yours early to avoid disappointment! Забавляймо всім!

Бажаємо Вам Всім "Веселух Свят!"
Wishing Everyone a Very "Merry Christmas!"



Jesus' Family Tree: A Long List of People

These days on television, there is a commercial, aired many times a day, about finding your ancestry or where you come from. In today's Gospel story from St. Matthew, we hear the family record of Jesus Christ. It is a long list of people starting with Abraham and going through the generations up to Jesus' birth. We call this 'a family tree.'

We all have family trees. On each 'branch' are the names of our relatives, those who came before us. And there is probably a story with each of those names telling us about their individual lives. It is the same with Jesus' family tree. The list of names that we hear is about real people. It starts by stating that Jesus is the son of David, the son of Abraham. It is a list of people all with exciting stories of how they behaved towards God and how God responded to them. David was a shepherd boy who fought off the giant Goliath with just a sling and 5 stones. He played a musical instrument and wrote many

of the Psalms in the Bible. He also became the King of Israel and was known as a man after God's own heart.

Because Jesus was descended from David and Abraham we know that He was from the family which God's special Saviour was to come from. Matthew is pointing out that Jesus is the Saviour that had been foretold throughout all the stories of the people who had come before Him in His family tree. And God knew about every one of them; however, none of them knew how important he or she was, only God did. From the very beginning, God was making things ready for Jesus to come to be our Saviour. Each of those people was helping to make the family that Jesus needed here on earth.

Yes, Jesus had many ancestors. God wanted many different people in His family. He still wants people in Jesus' family today. He wants you. Happy Birthday Jesus!

Sources: www.mowcopchurch.com; www.jesusisall.com
Compiled and edited by Michael A. Watral

The Nativity of Our Lord — An Unfathomable Mystery

"A strange and glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, a dwelling place in which is laid Christ, the God whom nothing can contain. Singing His praises, we magnify Him."

(Canon of Christmas)

The greatest and most profound mystery of the Christian faith is the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. The eternal God becomes a little infant and does not cease to be God. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us," says St. John the Evangelist (1:14). "The eternal God is born" — we sing in our most-beloved Ukrainian Christmas carol, *Бог Предвічний* (*Boh Predvechniy*). Christ's nativity is the cradle of our faith. Only faith is able to accept this unfathomable mystery, understand it and adore it.

In the first centuries, the holy Fathers of the Eastern Church accepted the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God with profound faith and great piety. Enraptured by this mystery, they have nothing but words of wonder for the most wonderful love of God, the sacrifice, humility, and poverty of the newly-born Messiah and Saviour. Moreover, from their lips come exclamations of heavenly joy that the time of salvation has come. "And this shall be a sign to you," said the angels to the shepherds, "you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." (Luke 2: 12) These virtues will shine forth throughout his entire life; they will accompany him to the cross and to his grave.

St. John Chrysostom, pondering the manner of the Incarnation of the Son of God, says: "I see the carpenter and the manger, the child and the swaddling clothes, a birth of a Virgin deprived of all that is necessary; all is poverty; all is destitution. Do you no see the riches in that great poverty? How he who is rich became poor for our sake? How he had no bed, but was laid on a bare manger? O poverty! You are the source of riches! O immeasurable riches, which appear as poverty!"

St. Ephrem the Syrian summons us to imitate Christ's humility and love: "Today, when God has come to sinners, let not the righteous raise himself above the sinners. Today, the Lord of the universe has come to His servants, let also the master condescend to His servants in love. Today when the Rich One became poor for our sakes, let also the rich invite the poor to his table."

St. Gregory the Theologian, calling all to rejoice, says: "Christ has come in the flesh, rejoice with trembling and joy — with trembling because of sin — with joy, because of hope...Who will not adore the Eternal? Who will not praise the Last? Again, darkness is dispersed, and again light appears... For I am sure that the heavenly Powers rejoice and celebrate today with us, because they are full of love for man and for God."

The holy Father and authors of our Christmas services not only admire and extol the mystery of the Incarnation, but also summon us to give worship to Christ and bring Him the gifts of our faith and love, together with the Most Holy Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, the angels, the shepherds and the Wise Men.

- from A Byzantine Rite Liturgical Year, Detroit, 1983