

Christ Is Born!



Glorify Him!



The Weekly Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

301 Struthers Liberty Rd

Campbell, OH 44405

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest



JANUARY Bulletin Sponsor- OPEN

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Wednesday, December 25

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy

Sunday, December 29

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Social

Saturday, January 4

6:00 PM: Vespers / confessions

Sunday, January 5- Strict Fast Day

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Social

4:30 PM: Holy Night Supper

6:00 PM: Vigil of Holy Theophany w/ Litia & the Great Blessing of Water

DECEMBER CHARITY

Zoe House in Cleveland for un-wed women

JANUARY CHARITY

OCMC Support a Mission Priest

HOME BLESSING

Please consider having your homes blessed in January. Contact Father Andrew to set up a time. Home blessings will take place from January 6th through February 1st. (Bring Christ into your home for a good & real relationship with Him.)

40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

January, 12- Eugene Pallai / Dennis Graban

Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God Commemorated on the Second Day of Christmas December 26

On the second day of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church has established the celebration of the Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God. The name of today's festival signifies the gathering of the faithful in order to praise and glorify the All-Holy Virgin, who gave birth to our Savior.

On the first day of the Nativity of the Lord, the Church glorifies the Redeemer of the human race, and the blessed deliverance which freed the sinful world from the snares of the Enemy. On the second day of the Nativity of the Lord, which was such a great event for our salvation, the Church calls upon us to honor the Ever-Virgin Mary, the Mother of our Lord, in an appropriate manner.

The day after many of the Church's Feast Days is called the Synaxis - such as the day after the Nativity of the Theotokos, when the righteous Joachim and Anna are commemorated; or the day following the Feast of Theophany, when we honor Saint John the Baptist, etc.

The Feast of the Synaxis of the Mother of God dates back to very ancient times. In the IV century, some Holy Fathers, such as Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus (May 12), were already preaching about it.

In the ancient Menaia, the Feast of the Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos was called "the Nativity Gifts." This refers to the gifts which the Magi from the East brought to the newborn King of the Jews - the Divine Child Jesus. The Feast of the Synaxis of the Mother of God was also called "the Flight into Egypt." *Con't Pg 7*



PLEASE KEEP OUR ELDERS OF THE CHURCH & SHUT-INS IN YOUR PRAYERS

Send a “Thinking of You” card or remember their Birthday with a card. If anyone needs to be added, please contact Fr. Andrew.

PRAYER LIST

PARISHIONERS: Achilles Arvan / Audrey Chengelis / Helen Colaluca / Joan Cross / Ann Cvercko / Pauline Fesz / Mary Fredericks / George Horodnic / Matushka Christine Hryb / Gianna Hryb / Sue Kennedy / George Kolesar / Barbara Kolesar / Matushka Helen Psinka / Sub-deacon Vladimir Rusnak / Dorothy Shirilla / Julia Simko / Marion Zwinski

HIERARCHS & CLERGY: AP James Gleason (Fr.) / Fr. Michael Rustic / Fr. Edward / Fr. Matthew Nyumu & his family & parish

FAMILY & FRIENDS: Mary Ann Bozichovich (Kennedy) / Patty Bozichovich (Vansuch) / Karen Debiec / Basil Glovinsky (Fr.) / Bruce Harris (Sabol) / Paula Kennedy / Joe Kollar (Fr.) / Andrew LaChard (Jesko) / James Malchisky (Fr.) / Mea Mahan / Mary Mahan / Pauline Meath (Fr.) / Matushka Raisa (Nicoloff) / Teri Petroff (Fr.) / Chris Quotap (Fr.) / Julia Shirilla / Bob Smrek (Sirilla) / Emilia Yanitto / Catherine Zile (Fr.) / Brian (Shirilla) / David (Willison) / Drew (Willison) / Eleanor Marie (Vansuch) / Ellen (Clark) / Ellen (Kessler) / Johanna (Tusinac) / Joseph (Vansuch) / Karen (Vansuch) / Katherine (Steffaro) / Kathy (Kolesar) / Katie (Garrity) / Paul (Kolesar) / Paula (Voytilla) / Malakai (Kolesar) / Richard (Tusinac) / Steven (Fr)

MILITARY FAMILY & FRIENDS: Cory Deaton (Fr.) / Alena Grabavoy (Fr.) / Liam Garrity (Zelinsky)

MISCELLANEOUS: Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo) & Archbishop John (Archdiocese of Aleppo) still being held captive & Metropolitan Arseny imprisoned / The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers around the world / Those suffering persecution in Syria, Iraq, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and around the world.

Christmas Greetings

from your Rector

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Today is the beginning of our salvation. There is much to learn from the Theotokos in her obedience to the will and call of God. She never questioned anything; but with humility, gave to the world everything.

This past year has been a struggle for many of us, both financially and spiritually. The presidential campaign put many of us at odds with each other, so strongly, that some family and friends don't talk to one another anymore.

It was a hard year financially with food, clothing & gas prices going through the roof, causing some of us to barely get by. This brings a lot of stress to ones' life, which can lead to physical problems as well.

Doesn't the Lord tell us not to worry about things? After all, the animals are taken care of. He tells us we are more precious than them. We need to take a breathe in life, look within ourselves to our personal relationship we have, or don't have, with God.

How do we fix this? Reevaluating our priorities, stop making excuses for ourselves, and stop making excuses for others. Begin making the amends with others, even if we didn't cause the break in the relationship. Heal the weaknesses in our fallen state and commit to be God's child in 2025. Start small. Finish 2025 strong.

Attending Liturgy or Vespers is a good place to start. Taking that small step shows God your love. As the Lord welcomes you, so will those also present. Shame and fear are the devil's toys. Put them aside for the warmth, kindness and welcome from God.

May the New Born King come into your lives anew and remain with you. May God Bless all of you and your loved ones!

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

V. Rev. Andrew Bartek

The Religious Meaning of Christmas in Orthodoxy

For the Orthodox Church, Christmas is not just a time of gift-giving or festive gatherings. The religious meaning of Christmas is centered on the incarnation of Christ—God becoming man to serve His people. This event is seen as the beginning of the redemption of humanity; It's a time to reflect on God's humility, as the Creator of the universe chose to be born in a humble manger, and incorporate His teachings in our daily lives so the world can be peaceful and harmonious.

The Incarnation: God Becoming Man

The incarnation is a key concept of Christmas in Orthodoxy. Unlike other celebrations, which might focus more on the joy of the season, Orthodox Christianity emphasizes that Christ's birth is an unfathomable mystery. The Creator enters creation, not as a king in grandeur but as a humble child. This humility is central to understanding Orthodox Christian Christmas and is reflected in the prayers, hymns, and iconography of the season.

The Nativity Fast: Preparing for the Feast

Before the actual celebration of Orthodox Christmas, believers engage in a period of fasting called the Nativity Fast. This fast lasts for 40 days, starting on November 15th, and is similar to the Lenten period before Easter. The Nativity Fast is a time of spiritual preparation, reflection, and repentance, where the faithful abstain from meat, dairy, and sometimes oil and wine. This practice is designed to help Christians focus on the spiritual aspects of the holiday, turning away from material distractions.

Orthodox Nativity Traditions

Orthodox Nativity traditions are diverse and vary depending on the country and culture. However, they all share a common focus on the spiritual essence of Christmas.

Liturgical Celebrations and Church Services

One of the central Orthodox Nativity traditions is the series of liturgical celebrations leading up to Christmas Day. These include special services such as the Royal Hours, the Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, and the All-Night Vigil. Each service includes specific prayers, hymns, and Scripture readings that recount the prophecies and events leading to Christ's birth. These services are filled with deep religious meaning and immerse the faithful in the mystery of the incarnation.

The Blessing of Homes

Another beautiful tradition is the blessing of homes. After the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day, it is customary for the priest to visit the homes of the faithful, offering prayers and sprinkling holy water. This blessing is seen as a way to invite the presence of Christ into the family home, reinforcing the idea that Christmas is not just celebrated in church but should permeate every aspect of a believer's life.

JANUARY Candle & Bulletin Sponsors

NOTE: If anything is missing from the Sponsorships please contact Fr. Andrew ASAP

Bulletin: OPEN

Wine: OPEN

Incense: OPEN

Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light: OPEN

Altar Candles: OPEN

Tetrapod Candles: OPEN

St. Herman Candles: Commemorating all who participate in maintenance of the church, the teachers, singers & those who participate in social events. Praying for everyone to love one another.

St. Panteleimon Icon Candles: OPEN

Protection Icon Candles: OPEN

St. John the Baptist Candles: In memory of my brother William Karr– Given by Carol Ruff

Flowers: OPEN

<u>\$50 per month</u>	<u>\$30 per month</u>	<u>\$25 per month</u>
*Wine	*St. Herman candles	Incense
*Bulletin	*St. Panteleimon Icon candles	
*Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light	*Protection Icon candles	Flowers - \$50 for 2 weeks at a time– <i>Updated</i>
*Altar Candles	*St. John the Baptist candles	
*Tetrapod Candles		

ATTENDANCE: A Comparison - <i>DECEMBER</i>	2023	2024
1st Week		
Vespers	7	No Vespers
Liturgy	52 / 35	52 Liturgy / 38
St Nicholas	23	Weather NO S.
2nd Week		
Vespers	15	13
Liturgy	67 / 37	65 / 50
3rd Week		
Vespers	16	10
Liturgy	60 / 46	55 / 35
4th Week		
Vespers	31	
Christmas Eve	95 / 53	
Christmas	79 / 52	
5th week		
Vespers	15	
Liturgy (NYE)	101 / 74	

DECEMBER FINANCIALS	
Expenses	\$5,438.67
Income	\$9,061.00
TOTAL	+\$3,622.33
Weekly Tithe	\$6,334
Weekly Candles	\$244
Weekly Flowers	\$50
Christmas Flowers	\$195
Altar Candles	\$50
Christmas Offering	\$120
Christmas Card	\$180
Rubric Book Reimbursement	\$120
Reimbursement Check for IOCC	\$1,265
Monthly Charity Collection: (Zoe for Life– Cleveland)	\$437

SOCIAL SCHEDULE FOR 2025

First Sunday: O Club

Second Sunday: Open *Anyone can sponsor.*
(Contact Fr. Andrew if interested.) *Coffee will be served.*

Third Sunday: Sisterhood

Fourth Sunday: Council

Fifth Sunday (if applicable): (Anyone can sponsor.)
(Contact Fr. Andrew if interested.) *Coffee will be served.*

JANUARY Reposed List

- Margaret Graban (1978) ©
Judith Banas (2019)
1- Katherine Kristian (1994) ©
1- Anna Harvischak (2013) ©
2- Nicholas Libertin (2021) ©
2- Nicholas Bohac (1921) ©
2- Elia Dudin (1949) ©
3- Mitred Archriest Stavros Rousos
3- Anna Roman (1978) ©
3- Elizabeth Kuzma (1925) ©
4- George Bartek (1983)
4- Archpriest Michael Slovesko
4- Peter Fatholitis (1937) ©
5- Ann Marie Petroff (2006) ©
6- Helen Pender (2016)
6- John Timkovich (1951) ©
6- Infant Klimis (still born) (1964)
6- Mother Elizabeth (2024)
7- Mary Vansuch, Sr. (1971) ©
7- Mike Felt (1920) ©
8- Bishop Mark of Boston (2018)
8- Sub-deacon John Zeling (2012) ©
8- John Voytilla (1945) ©
8- Mary Graban (1995) ©
9- Katherine Trovers (1980) ©
9- Carolyn Weil (1998) ©
9- Vasil Kovach (1925) ©
9- George Ontko (1943) ©
9- William Boldish (1968) ©
11- Alan James Cole (2017) ©
12- AP Moses Berry (2024)
14- George O'Shanie (1981) ©
14- John Graban (1990) ©
14- Helen Papach (1929) ©
14- Michael Harvey (1958) ©
14- John Genaros (1960) ©
15- Augustine Shima (1928) ©
15- Fedor Chulik (1943) ©
16- Elizabeth Mariniak (1927) ©
16- Infant Nicholas Hariuschak (1996) ©
17- Vera Kawalik (2001) ©
17- Anna Talaban (1949) ©
18- Andrew Kovach (1994) ©
18- Margaret Domowchik (1996) ©
20- Joshua Zdinak (2016)
20- Marie Borsic (1984) ©
20- Catherine Cochran (2011) ©
20- Diamada Patellis (1929) ©
20- Irene Horodnic (2024)
21- George Evans (1984) ©
21- Fr. Michael Shuster (2020)
21- Ann Shirilla (2012) ©
21- Charles Patellis (1928) ©
21- Catherine Vojtilla (1942) ©
22- Fr. John Stefanik (2000)
22- Andrew Pacak (1973) ©
22- Michael Pasloskey (1985) ©
22- Steve Dmetruk (2002) ©
22- Nicholas Bobosh (2008) ©
22- Lubica Krestich (1926) ©
23- Fr. Michael Sopoliga (2009)
23- Helen Midlick (2004) ©
23- Eugene Kennedy (2004) ©
23- Rudolph Zelina (2007) ©
23- Kosovka Raslta (1923) ©
24- Madeline Puskarcik (2006) ©
25- Steve Sirihla (1977) ©
25- Helen Graban (1992) ©
25- George Magriplis (1931) ©
25- Veronica Shirilla (1995) ©
26- Nate DiPero (1985) ©
26- Baby Brown (1939) ©
26- Vasil Maximor (1957) ©
27- Joe Vansuch (1998) ©
27- Michael Guorgiadis (1952) ©
28- John Anos (1936) ©
28- Vasil Vasilagas (1959) ©
28- Helen Lis (2024)
29- George O'Shenic, Jr. (1986) ©
30- Archpriest John Mason (2019)
30- Stephen Kurtos (1965) ©
31- Edward Bartek (1983)
31- Olga Venslavsky (2003) ©

Second Day of the Nativity of our Lord Commemorated on December 26

On the day after the Nativity of Christ we celebrate the Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos, and come together to give her glory and praise. This is the second day of the three-day Winter Pascha.

Combining the hymns of the Nativity with those celebrating the Mother of God, the Church points to Mary as the one through whom the Incarnation was made possible. His humanity—concretely and historically—is the humanity He received from Mary. His body is, first of all, her body. His life is her life. This feast, the assembly in honor of the Theotokos, is probably the most ancient feast of Mary in the Christian tradition, the very beginning of her veneration by the Church.

Six days of post-feast bring the Christmas season to a close on December 31. At the services of all these days, the Church repeats the hymns and songs glorifying Christ's Incarnation, reminding us that the source and foundation of our salvation is only to be found in the One who, as God before the ages, came into this world and for our sake was "born as a little Child." Father Alexander Schmemmann, *The Services of Christmas* (1981)

JANUARY Celebrations *Birthday*

- 2 Stella Jane Zelinsky
- 3 Terri Konik
- 6 Karen Simko / Faith Simko
- 7 Lueleta Dardovski / Luke Clark / Charles Wilfong
- 10 Elizabeth Willison
- 11 Ronald Allen Fredericks
- 12 Patricia Pethtel
- 15 James Bufalini / Ron Luthern
- 19 Balaci Kristian / Nicola Nicoloff
- 21 Andrea Stokley
- 22 Stephen Elash / Lorraine Livosky
- 23 Susan Beskid
- 25 Frank Batura
- 26 Mildred Wilfong
- 30 Nadine Todessa
- 31 Julie Dardovski

Anniversary

- 01-02-05 Diaconate Ordination of AP Andrew Bartek
- 16-2023 His Grace Nikodhim Bishop of Boston & Albanian Diocese
- 24-2015 AB Daniel of Chicago & the Diocese of the Mid-west
- 25-2020 His Grace Bishop Alexis Bishop of Sitka & Alaska
- 26- Fr. James Gleason Anniversary to the Holy Priesthood

Names Day

- 2 Retired Bishop Seraphim of Sendai / Julia Simko

INTERESTED IN RUNNING FOR COUNCIL?

If anyone is interested in running for council, please see Fr. Andrew ASAP.

In 2018 Archbishop Paul made it mandatory that any potential council member be vetted and have a background check before they could be presented for nomination. Obviously, that cannot happen on the day of a meeting. Therefore, there will not be any nominations from the floor.

One needs to be in good standing in the church. Regular confession (at least 4 times a year & frequent communion.

FR. A

Synaxis Con't from pg 2

On December 26, the early Church commemorated the Wise Men who came to worship the Savior, and the flight into Egypt, as well as the Synaxis of the Mother of God. That is why some icons of the Nativity of the Lord depict His Birth, the worship of the shepherds and the Magi, as well as the Flight into Egypt. Sometimes the inscription reads "The Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos."

Now, however, we commemorate "the Adoration of the Magi: Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthasar, and also the shepherds in Bethlehem who were watching their flocks and came to see the Lord" on the first day of the Nativity (December 25), but the Flight into Egypt is commemorated separately on December 26, the second day of the Nativity.

Before the massacre of the 14,000 Holy Innocents (December 29), an Angel warned Saint Joseph to take the Child and His Mother and flee to Egypt and to remain there until the Angel brought him word that it was safe for him to return to Nazareth, "for Herod will seek the child to destroy him" (Matthew 2:13).

In the icon of the Flight into Egypt there are mountains. The Virgin sits on a donkey with her Child, looking back at Joseph. He holds a staff, and his cloak is thrown over his shoulder. A young man (Tradition says this was Saint Joseph's son James, the Brother of the Lord) leads the donkey carrying a rush basket, and looks back at the Virgin. Behind them is a fortified town with idols toppling from the walls. This event was prophesied by Isaiah: "Behold, the Lord sits on a swift cloud, and shall come to Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and their heart shall faint within them" (Isaiah 19:1); and the Prophet Hosea alludes to it: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son" (Hosea 11:1). This is also mentioned in the Church's hymns.



Righteous James the Brother of the Lord Commemorated on the Sunday after Christmas December 29

The Holy Apostle James, Brother of the Lord, was the eldest son of Joseph the Betrothed from his first marriage with Solomonia. The Apostle James is remembered after the Feast of the Nativity of Christ together with his father Joseph and the Prophet-King David, since he accompanied his family on the Flight into Egypt and lived there with the Infant Jesus, the Mother of God and Joseph. Later, he returned to Israel with them.

After the Ascension of the Lord, Saint James was the first Bishop of Jerusalem, gaining the great esteem not only of Christians, but also of Jews. He was thrown from the roof of the Jerusalem Temple because he had publicly preached to the people about the God-Manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Apostle James is also commemorated on October 23.

14,000 Infants (the Holy Innocents) slain by Herod at Bethlehem Commemorated on Sunday after Christmas December 29

14,000 Holy Infants were killed by King Herod in Bethlehem. When the time came for the Incarnation of the Son of God and His Birth of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Magi in the East beheld a new star in the heavens, foretelling the Nativity of the King of the Jews. They journeyed immediately to Jerusalem to worship the Child, and the star showed them the way. Having worshipped the divine Infant, they did not return to Jerusalem to Herod, as he had ordered them, but being warned by God in a dream, they went back to their country by another way. Herod finally realized that his scheme to find the Child would not be successful, and he ordered that all the male children two years old and younger at Bethlehem and its surroundings be killed. He thought that the divine Infant, Whom he considered a rival, would be among the dead children.

The murdered infants thus became the first martyrs for Christ. The rage of Herod fell also on Simeon the God-Receiver (February 3), who declared before everyone in the Temple that the Messiah had been born. When the holy Elder died, Herod would not give permission for him to be properly buried. On the orders of King Herod, the holy prophet and priest Zachariah was also killed. He was murdered in Jerusalem between the Temple and the altar (Mt. 23:35) because he would not tell the whereabouts of his son John, the future Baptist of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The wrath of God soon fell upon Herod himself: a horrid condition struck him down and he died, eaten by worms while still alive. Before his death, the impious king murdered the chief priests and scribes of the Jews, and also his brother, and his sister and her husband, and also his own wife Mariam, and three of his sons, and seventy

men of wisdom who were members of the Sanhedrin. He initiated this bloodbath so that the day of his death would not be one of rejoicing, but one of mourning.

The Christian Church very rightly proclaimed these murdered children as Saints, because they died at an innocent age, and were, in some way, the first martyrs of Christianity. They may not have been baptized in water, but they were baptized in the blessed blood of their martyrdom.

Last but not least, the relics (or perhaps some) of the Holy Infants are found in Constantinople, in the Church of Saint James the Brother of the Lord, which was built by Emperor Justin. Most of their Holy Relics are at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Portions of their Holy Relics are also to be found in the Pantokrator Monastery on Mount Athos.

Holy Righteous David the King Commemorated on the Sunday after Christmas December 29

The Holy Prophet-King David was a forefather of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh. The youngest son of Jesse, David shepherded a flock of sheep belonging to his father. He was distinguished by his deep faith, and he zealously fulfilled the will of God.

During a battle with the Philistines, he vanquished the giant Goliath in single combat, which decided the outcome of the war in favor of the Israelites. He endured many things from King Saul, who saw him as a favorite of the people and his rival. David, however, showed his own decency and magnanimity. Twice, when he had the possibility of killing Saul, he did not do so.

After Saul and his son perished, David was proclaimed king of the southern part of Israel, and after Saul's second son was killed, he became king of all Israel. He built a new capital, Jerusalem ("the City of Peace"), and a new tabernacle. His great wish to build a Temple was not realized. It was foretold to him that his son would build the Temple.

The life of the Prophet David was darkened by a grievous falling: he took Uriah's wife for himself, and sent Uriah to his death in battle. He was also an example of great repentance, humbly and with faith bearing the sorrows sent in punishment for his sins. Saint David gave a model for repentance in Psalm 50/51. King David died in great old age with steadfast faith in the coming of the promised Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. His divinely-inspired Psalter is widely used in the divine services and in personal prayers. (See the Books of Kings and Chronicles).

The holy Prophet-King David is invoked by those facing a difficult situation, such as an interview, etc.

Christmas Flowers

Your loved one's name (living and/or deceased) will be remembered at the Christmas Liturgy. Cost: \$15 per flower. Please give names to the Church Office or Father Andrew directly.

Fredericks, Sherrie (2 Flower)

- ◆ In memory of my dad Robert Fredericks
- ◆ For the Health of my mother Mary

Fredericks, Mary (1 Flower)

- ◆ In memory of my parents Naume & Mary Evanoff

Bartek, V.R. Andrew (10 Flowers)

- ◆ In memory of my Ordaining Hierarch His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas, AB Paul, His Grace Bishops John & Matthias
- ◆ In memory of My parents George & Dorothy & all my family & friends
- ◆ In memory of the diptychs of the parish including John Shirilla killed in action & all the priests who served this parish (Priest: Theodore Kulchitsky, Daniel Kreshko, Joseph Dvonchik, Isadore Salko, Peter Honchok, Michael Ugrin, Nicholas Yuschak & Archpriests: Michael Kostyk, Nicholas Vansuch, John Psinka
- ◆ All the military who lost their lives defending the freedoms of this country will still observe
- ◆ For the Health of all our parishioners & their families especially the former Priests who served here, Archpriest John Steffaro, Archpriest Andrew Nelko; for the parish council; all the organizations of this parish; and all those on our prayer list
- ◆ For the Health of the Campbell City Hall, all the residents & businesses of this City, including the Fire Department: Stephen, David, Evan, Greg, Robert, Steve, Bryan, Nick
- ◆ For the health of all my friends & family especially my 5 God-children
- ◆ For the health of all the active military especially those in harm's way and away from their families
- ◆ For the health of all who are homeless, depressed, lonely and all those in need of God's mercy
- ◆ For the Health of the entire Diocese, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel, Chancery staff, all my former parishes & their parishioners and my home parish

Jesko Family (2 flowers)

- ◆ -In memory of Kathleen Mahar & Anne Jesko

Kiolesar Family (2 flowers)

- ◆ -In memory of Hary Sveda & Olga Sveda

Cverko Family (3 flowers)

- ◆ In memory of Andrew Cvercko
- ◆ In memory of Andrew & Anna Cvercko
- ◆ In memory of Morris & Antonia Pecuszok

Gozur Family (1 flower)

- ◆ In memory of our parents Stevlana and Steve Gozur

Zenko Family (1 flower)

- ◆ In memory of my mom Charlotte & my uncle Andy

Ruff Family (1 flower)

- ◆ In memory of my brother William Karr

Holy Righteous Joseph the Betrothed Commemorated on the Sunday after Christmas December 29

Saint Joseph the Betrothed was of the lineage of King David. He had four sons from his previous marriage: James, Judah, Joses, and Simon (or Symeon), and three daughters: Esther, Martha, and Salome, who was the mother of Saint John the Theologian. After he became a widower, Saint Joseph led a life of strict temperance. He was chosen to be the husband and guardian of the Most Holy Theotokos, who had taken a vow of virginity.

An angel told him of the Incarnation of the Son of God through her. Saint Joseph was present when the shepherds and the Magi worshiped the new-born divine Infant. On the orders of the angel, he fled into Egypt with the Mother of God and the Infant Jesus, saving them from the wrath of King Herod. He lived in Egypt with the Virgin Mary and the divine Child, working as a carpenter. Saint Joseph reputedly died at the age of one hundred.

Saint Joseph is commemorated on the Sunday after the Nativity. If there is no Sunday between December 25 and January 1, his Feast is moved to December 26. The Righteous Joseph is also commemorated on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers.

FIRST ANNUAL HOLY NIGHT SUPPER FOR THEOPHANY

This year we are going to try to establish a new holy tradition at St. John's.

We are going to have a Holy Night supper on Sunday, January 5 at 4:30 PM in the social hall. At 6:00 PM there will be Vigil and the Great Blessing of Water upstairs.

This will be just like Christmas Eve Holy night Supper. There will be 12 courses.

Please sign up at the Candle desk or see Nancy for further information. I hope and pray this can become part of the traditions here at the parish. FR. Andrew

Commemoration of the Holy Righteous David the King, Joseph the Betrothed, and James the Brother of the Lord Commemorated on the Sunday after Christmas December 29

The Holy Prophet-King David, Saint Joseph the Betrothed, and Saint James the Brother of the Lord are commemorated on the Sunday after the Nativity. If there is no Sunday between December 25 and January 1, their commemoration is moved to December 26.

At an early date, some churches in the East began to commemorate certain important figures of the New Testament at the time of Theophany, and later during the Nativity season. In Syria, for example, Saint Stephen (December 27), Saints James (April 30) and John (September 26), and Saints Peter and Paul (June 29) were commemorated near the end of December.

In Jerusalem, the saints mentioned above were combined with a feast that the Jews of Hebron celebrated on December 25 or 26 in honor of the Old Testament Patriarch Jacob. Later on, the Christians substituted Saint James (October 23) for Jacob, and then the commemoration of the Brother of the Lord became associated with his ancestor King David. In time, Saint Joseph was linked with Saints David and James.

Saint Joseph had four sons from his previous marriage: James, Judah, Joses, and Simon (or Symeon), and three daughters: Esther, Martha, and Salome, who was the mother of Saint John the Theologian.

20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia Commemorated on the Fourth Day of Christmas December 28

The Holy 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia: At the beginning of the fourth century the emperor Maximian (284-305) gave orders to destroy Christian churches, to burn service books, and to deprive all Christians of rights and privileges of citizenship. At this time the bishop of the city of Nicomedia was Saint Cyril, who by his preaching and life contributed to the spread of Christianity, so that many members of the emperor's court were also secret Christians.

The pagan priestess Domna was living in the palace at that time. Providentially, she obtained a copy of the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Saint Paul. Her heart burned with the desire to learn more about the Christian teaching. With the help of a young Christian girl, Domna went secretly to Bishop Anthimus (Cyril's successor) with her faithful servant, the eunuch Indes. Saint Anthimus catechized them, and both received holy Baptism.

Domna began to help the poor: she gave away her valuables with the assistance of Indes, and she also distributed food from the imperial kitchen. The chief *Con't Next Pg*

Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen Commemorated Third day of Christmas on December 27

The Holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen was the eldest of the seven deacons, appointed by the Apostles themselves, and therefore he is called "archdeacon." He was the first Christian martyr, and he suffered for Christ when he was about thirty. In the words of Asterias, he was "the starting point of the martyrs, the instructor of suffering for Christ, the foundation of righteous confession, since Stephen was the first to shed his blood for the Gospel."

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Saint Stephen preached Christianity and defeated Jewish teachers of the Law in debate. The Jews maligned Saint Stephen, saying that he had uttered blasphemy against God and against Moses. Saint Stephen came before the Sanhedrin and the High Priest to answer these charges. He gave a fiery speech, in which he recounted the history of the Jewish nation, and denounced the Jews for persecuting the prophets, and also for executing the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ (Acts ch. 7).

During his speech, Saint Stephen suddenly saw the heavens opened and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God. The Jews shouted and covered their ears, and rushed at him. They dragged him out of the city and stoned him, but the holy martyr prayed for his murderers. Far off on the heights stood the Mother of God with the holy Apostle John the Theologian, and She prayed fervently for the martyr. Before his death Saint Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Then he joyfully gave up his pure soul to Christ.

The body of the holy Protomartyr Stephen, left to be eaten by beasts, was secretly taken up by the Jewish teacher Gamaliel and his son Habib, who buried Stephen on his estate. They both believed in Christ, and later received holy Baptism.

Saint Stephen is also commemorated on August 2 (Translation of his relics) and on September 15 (Uncovering of his relics in the year 415).



20,000 Martyr's con't from previous pg

eunuch, who was in charge of provisions for the imperial household, found out that Domna and Indes were not eating the food sent them from the emperor's table. He had them beaten in order to find out why they did not partake of the food, but they remained silent. Another eunuch informed him that the saints were distributing all the emperor's gifts to the poor. He locked them up in prison to exhaust them with hunger, but they received support from an angel and did not suffer. Saint Domna feigned insanity so she wouldn't have to live among the pagans. Then she and Indes managed to leave the court, and she went to a women's monastery. Abbess Agatha quickly dressed her in men's clothing, cut her hair and sent her off from the monastery.

During this time the emperor returned from battle and ordered that a search be made for the former pagan priestess Domna. The soldiers sent for this purpose found the monastery and destroyed it. The sisters were thrown into prison, subjected to torture and abuse, but not one of them suffered defilement. Sent to a house of iniquity, Saint Theophila was able to preserve her virginity with the help of an angel of the Lord. The angel led her from the brothel and brought her to the cathedral.

At this time the emperor cleared the city square to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. When they began sprinkling the crowd with the blood of the sacrificial animals, Christians started to leave the square. Seeing this, the emperor became enraged, but in the middle of his rantings a great thunderstorm sprang up. People fled in panic, and the emperor had to retreat to the palace for his own safety.

Later Maximian went to the church with soldiers and told them they could escape punishment if they renounced Christ. Otherwise, he promised to burn the church and those in it. The Christian presbyter Glycerius told him that Christians would never renounce their faith, even under the threat of torture. Hiding his anger, the emperor exited the church, and a short time later commanded the presbyter Glycerius be arrested for trial. The executioners tortured the martyr, who did not cease to pray and to call on the Name of the Lord. Unable to force Saint Glycerius stop confessing Christ, Maximian ordered him to be burned to death.

On the Feast of the Nativity of Christ in the year 302, when about 20,000 Christians had assembled at the cathedral in Nicomedia, the emperor sent a herald into the church. He told the Christians that soldiers were surrounding the building, and that anyone who wished to leave had to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Anyone who defied the emperor would perish when the soldiers set fire to the church. All those present refused to worship the idols.

As the pagans prepared to set fire to the church, Bishop Anthimus, baptized all the catechumens and communed everyone with the Holy Mysteries. All 20,000 of those praying died in the fire. Among them were the abbess Agatha and Saint Theophila who had been saved from the den of iniquity by a miracle. Bishop Anthimus, however, managed to escape the fire.

Maximian thought that he had exterminated all the Christians of Nicomedia. He soon learned that there were many more, and that they would confess their faith and were prepared to die for Christ. The emperor wondered how to deal with them. At his command they arrested the regimental commander Zeno, who was openly criticizing the emperor for his impiety and cruelty. Zeno was fiercely beaten and finally beheaded. They jailed the eunuch Indes, formerly a priest of the idols, for refusing to participate in a pagan festival.

The persecution against Christians continued. Dorotheus, Mardonius, Migdonius the deacon and others were thrown into prison. Bishop Anthimus encouraged them by sending letters to them. One of the messengers, the Deacon Theophilus, was captured. They subjected him to torture, trying to learn where the bishop was hiding. The holy martyr endured everything, while revealing nothing. Then they executed him and also those whom the bishop had addressed in his letter. Though they were executed in different ways, they all showed the same courage and received their crowns from God.

For weeks, Saint Domna concealed herself within a cave and sustained herself by eating plants. When she returned to the city, she wept for a long time at the ruins of the church, regretting that she was not found worthy to die with the others. That night she went to the sea shore. At that moment fishermen pulled the bodies of the martyrs Indes, Gorgonius and Peter from the water in their nets.

Saint Domna was still dressed in men's clothing, and she helped the fishermen to draw in their nets. They left her the bodies of the martyrs. With reverence she looked after the holy relics and wept over them, especially over the body of her spiritual friend, the Martyr Indes.

After giving them an honorable burial, she did not depart from these graves so dear to her heart. Each day she burned incense before them, sprinkling them with fragrant oils. When the emperor was told of an unknown youth who offered incense at the graves of executed Christians, he gave orders to behead the youth. The Martyr Euthymius was also executed along with Domna.

