

DIVINE LITURGIES FOR THIS WEEK**Sunday After Christmas, December 27, 2020**

9:00 AM - Lit. God's Blessings on Our Parishioners

11:30 AM - Lit. + Rose Ann Rudy r/by Nancy Bialkowski

Wednesday, December 30, 2020

8:00 AM - Lit. + Wolodymyr - r/by daughter

Thursday, December 31, 2020

5:00 PM - FOR ALL SICK PARISHIONERS OF OUR PARISH

Friday, January 1, 2021**Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord**

9:00 AM - Special Intention r/by Kitchoula Family

Saturday, January 2, 2021

9:00 AM - Lit for Peter Mac Hudson

5:00 PM - Lit. + Katherine Ochotsky r/by Olga M. Yurechko

Sunday Before Theophany, January 3, 2021*Epistle - 2 Tim 4:5-8; Gospel - Mk 1:1-8*

9:00 AM - Lit. God's Blessings for Stan Jakubowycz

11:30 AM - Lit. God's Blessings on Our Parishioners

Christmas Greetings.

Keep greeting one another just as we prepared for Christmas with a 40-day preparation and fasting period, so now we celebrate the bright days of Christmas, New Year's, and Theophany for 40 days. Please continue to sing our beautiful Christmas carols, and to greet one another with our traditional "Christos - Razhdayetsia! Slavite Yeho! Christ is Born! Glorify Him!" The season of the Incarnation spans the time until the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on 2 February; the 40th day of Christmas. We celebrate the central mystery of the Christian Faith—the Word become flesh. The Incarnate Word—Jesus the Christ—shines light into our lives to bring wholeness in body, mind and spirit.

COVID Reminder.

We are asking all who come to Sunday services to please continue wearing a mask and keep a "social distance" of 6ft or more from each other as much as possible until further notice. Please remember, Covid-19 cases/infections are spiking across the country and across the world. Therefore, as a special reminder and for everyone's safety: if you cough or sneeze (even a little--no matter for what reason), please stay home from Church. With the rise in Covid cases, it's best to keep EVERYONE around you safe, even if you don't think your symptoms are "contagious."

2021 Donation Envelopes

Donation Envelopes for 2021 may be picked up in the church hall. Please check your envelopes for correct name and address. Any corrections should be directed to the church secretary. If you do not see your envelopes, please contact the parish office. If you would like to have envelopes, please speak to Fr. Ivan or contact the parish office @ 732-826-0767 and a number will be issued to you.

Memorial Donations

\$500.00 - John P. Terefenko, in memory of
+ CAROLYN TEREFEENKO

\$100.00 - Patricia Colfer and Family, in memory of
+ CAROLYN TEREFEENKO

\$1,000.00 - Rozalia Czaban, in memory of
ANDRUSEZKO & CZABAN FAMILIES

\$500.00 - Joseph Britton, in memory of
BRITTON FAMILY

\$200.00 - Ernest Moryan, in memory of
+ GEORGE LADAY, SR.

Bishop Gabro Memorial School Endowment Fund

\$1,000.00 - Ernest Moryan, in memory of wife,
+ ANNA MORYAN

School Chromebook Donations

\$2,100.00 - Anonymous

\$125.00 - Robert Romanetz

Gift for Children.

St. Nicholas has a Christmas gift for you! Look for your tree ornament at the church manger.

Dear Parishioners!

As we look into 2021 we look at a block of time. We see 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 8,760 hours, 525,600 minutes, 31,536,000 seconds. And all is a gift from God. We have done nothing to deserve it, earn it, or purchased it. Like the air we breathe, time comes to us as a part of life. The gift of time is not ours alone. It is given equally to each person. Rich and poor, educated and ignorant, strong and weak— every man, woman and child has the same twenty-four hours every day. Another important thing about time is that you cannot stop it. There is no way to slow it down, turn it off, or adjust it. Time marches on. And you cannot bring back time. Once it is gone, it is gone. Yesterday is lost forever. If yesterday is lost, tomorrow is uncertain. We may look ahead at a full year's block of time, but we really have no guarantee that we will experience any of it. Obviously, time is one of our most precious possessions. We can waste it. We can worry over it. We can spend it on ourselves. Or, as good stewards, we can invest it in the kingdom of God. The new year is full of time. As the seconds tick away, will you be tossing time out the window, or will you make every minute count? On behalf of Deacon Paul, our Parish Staff and myself, I would like to wish you, your family and loved ones a Healthy and Blessed New Year!

Fr. Ivan - Pastor

Congratulations!

Congratulations and best wishes are extended to Stephanie Marie Karanevskii, who recently passed the Bar Exam in Boston, and is working as Corporate Council.

Thanks.

Thank you everyone who helped in any way with the Christmas celebrations. To all those who came to decorate the church, to everyone who donated toward the Christmas collection, light candles, to the choir who always sing so beautifully, to our cantors, to the Altar Boys for the beautiful and uplifting services. God Bless you and hope you have a most blessed and joyous Christmas with your family and friends. AT THIS TIME I extend a big heartfelt thank you to all who worked so hard throughout this past year in our parish - St. Ann society members, Holy Name Society members, our Catechist teachers, our elementary parish school stuff, the Bingo workers, the Choir, the ladies who look after the Altar, to everyone who works at fellowship, etc. God bless all of you for sharing your time and talents for the betterment and spiritual growth of our parish.

The Real Stable

"Jesus was born in a stable, a real stable, not the bright, airy portico which Christian painters have created for the Son of David, as if ashamed that their God should have lain down in poverty and dirt.

A real stable is the house, the prison of the animals who work for man. The poor, old stable of Christ's old, poor country is only four rough walls, a dirty pavement, a roof of beams and slate. It is dark, reeking. The only clean thing in it is the manger where the owner piles the hay and fodder.

This is the real stable where Jesus was born. The filthiest place in the world was the first room of the only pure man ever born of woman. It is not by chance that Christ was born in a stable. What is the world but an immense stable where men produce filth and wallow in it?...Upon this earthly pigsty, where no decorations or perfumes can hide the odor of filth, Jesus appeared one night." - Giovanni Papini -

ACS Virtual Christmas Bazaar

We would like to thank our Family & School Association for all their hard work on this project. A special thank you to our President and her family who have coordinated the prizes and details of the virtual event. Despite the challenges faced this year, the FSA Board has created and our parents and friends have supported an exciting and successful event that brought around ten thousand dollars profit for our school. Thanks to Investors bank for a \$1,500 donation towards this fundraising event. Thank you and Merry Christmas to all!

CHRISTMAS PASTORAL LETTER OF HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV

Most Reverend Archbishops and Metropolitans, God-loving Bishops, Very Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics, Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters, in Ukraine and throughout the world

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. 2 Cor 8:9

**Christ is born! Glorify Him!
Beloved in Christ!**

It is hard to believe how our life has changed from the final carol of last year to the first “*Boh Predvichnyj*” (God Pre-eternal) of this year’s Christmas Eve. Throughout 2020 we were, it would seem, transported into a different world—a world of fear and uncertainty before the unknown. Yet, in spite of the restrictions, challenges, and human losses we endured due to the coronavirus pandemic, together, as Church, in our families, parishes, communities, and countries, we did not cease to proclaim the good news of hope, love, and joy. And so, this year on the occasion of Christ’s Nativity, we are called in a special way to bear witness before others to the “good news of great joy that will be for all the people: for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:10-11). The mystery of Christmas is found in the joy of the coming of the Son of God into a world, full of affliction, pain, and suffering. He leaves heavenly glory in order to enter into the human frailty of all times, cultures, and people. Christ-God becomes not just a human being, but a poor human being, a person who suffers from the beginning of His earthly life. The Pre-eternal God enters into human history and experiences human hunger and cold, pain and sickness, adversity, and the indifference of society.

A homeless newborn God—what a strange contradiction, what wonder is this divine poverty! The Almighty God becomes poor in order to enrich us. The King of the Universe is placed “in a poor stable-cave, in a manger on hay” (from the carol, *Vozveselimsya vsi razom nyni*), in order to set a path for us to the heavenly abode. Gazing at this mystery St. Gregory the Theologian says: “The One who enriches became poor; for he took on the poverty of my flesh, in order that I may be enriched in His divinity” (*Oratio* 45, 9). The Lord has come, the One who with His wounds heals our wounds, our weakness, our affliction. And He remains from generation to generation our Emmanuel, which means “God is with us,” in our needs, pains, and sufferings. The presence of the incarnate God in human history and in our life is our constant and endless joy, both on Nativity Day, and all the days of our life.

In everyday life we sometimes use a word without thinking about its origin or meaning. Language evolves spontaneously and abruptly—we forget where the word came from and fail to grasp its depth. This is the case of the Ukrainian word *ubohyj*, which is used to describe a poor person. However, when we examine how this word is constructed, we understand that *u-Bohyj* (in God) is a person through whom the Lord comes to us, a person who is “in God,” that is, under the special care of the Almighty.

Christ teaches us that the materially poor and the poor in spirit, the humble, are happy, are blessed, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven (see Lk 6:20). Only God is the last hope, support, and salvation for the poor. Their fate is always in God’s hands. And the Lord is especially sensitive to how we treat His poor, that is, the needy, downtrodden, homeless, hungry, lonely, widows, and orphans. Those who disregard the poor scorn their Creator. To wrong such persons is to commit a sin that calls to heaven for vengeance!

This year, in fact, the Synod of Bishops of our Church focused its attention on the face of poverty today. I encourage you to heed the Synodal pastoral letter, entitled “Only one thing will remain yours – that which you have given to the poor!” and examine it in the light of the star of Bethlehem, contemplating the face of the newborn Savior. The Divine Child is present in every destitute person who knocks on the door of our heart, as Joseph knocked on the doors of the inns in Bethlehem.

Then, the wise men from the East hurried to the town of David, in order to bring gifts to the King of the ages, who was born as a little child in a stable-cave—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Today, the infant Jesus is present in the sick, the frail, the homeless, and the neglected, who wait for someone to help them, to bring them gifts—the gold of a compassionate word, the incense of brotherhood, and the

myrrh of immediate assistance, necessary for life. Those who stretch out their hand to the poor become rich with God and become partakers in the eternal goodness of the Creator Himself.

We are celebrating Christmas in the midst of a worldwide situation of human anguish, brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. We have not yet fully grasped or understood all the consequences and faces of this global misfortune. We do not know what changes await us in the sphere of economic, social-community, and church life... But we have already understood that the virus is not interested, neither in our place of residence, nor in our wealth or social status. All of us are equally in danger of infection, and a new threat of poverty hangs over all corners of the globe. All of us in the same way need the kind of help and strength that goes beyond human abilities and power. For this reason, Christ’s Nativity is for us a ray of hope and joy in the midst of today’s dark fear and confusion, and each one of us must be open to God’s grace, which pours out on us without ceasing, even in the worst of times.

To celebrate Christmas in a time of pandemic is to enlighten those who dwell in darkness, as the prophet Isaiah foretold: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined” (Isaiah 9:2). If we are permitted to gather—with proper distancing, of course—may our eyes shine with a joy that is visible to all. Let us wear masks, when necessary, but let them not silence our traditional carols. Let us celebrate as we are able. Let us acclaim the birth of the Savior, however possible, so that even in this pandemic we might bear witness to the most important truth of human history—that we are not alone or abandoned, because “God is with us!”

Today let us bring to Bethlehem as our gift for the newborn Savior our own poverty and the wounds of humanity today, and let us ask Him for the richness of Divine wisdom in order to overcome this disease, for the fullness of divine strength in order to deal with its effects on society, on the life and health of every person. Above all, let us ask for the richness of His love, which alone can restore this distressed world of ours, and grant it hope, security, and joy. Solidarity with and closeness to those in need, participation in their pain and anxiety, rather than escape from the suffering that hangs over us all today—this will grant us the possibility to be merry and truly celebrate Christmas this year.

Therefore, let us hurry to the creche where our Savior rests in a manger, and together with the shepherds and wise men let us sing:

*The pre-eternal God has been born!
Today he came from the heavens,
To save all his people,
And has comforted all!*

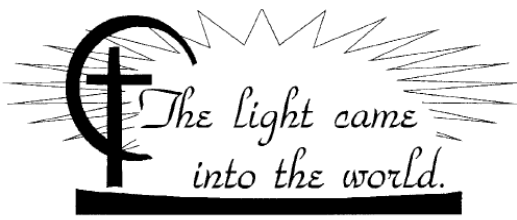
Dear Brother and Sisters! In spite of our poverty and frailty, today we are rich in the joy and love of our newborn Savior. With Christ’s Nativity, I sincerely greet you all: from Kyiv to London, from Buenos Aires to Melbourne, from Winnipeg to Zelenyj Klyn—those who are celebrating today in their family circle and those who are keeping distance from their loved ones to protect them from danger, those who are able to attend church services for the Feast, and those who at home join in community prayer through social media. I especially greet all medical workers who, in spite of real danger to themselves and their families, tirelessly and with great sacrifice give of their time and talents for the health of others. I embrace those who suffer physical and spiritual wounds. I send a word of comfort to those who this year lost family members and friends, and for whom it is particularly painful to approach the festive table this Christmas eve. I unite myself in prayer with those who fearlessly stand on the frontlines and defend our country and people, risking their lives not only before the threat of the insidious sniper’s bullet, but also before the microscopic virus-enemy that has come upon us and inflicts on us added suffering and distress. May the all-merciful Lord, who in His infinite love has visited our poverty, fill the heart of each and every one of us, Dear Brothers and Sisters, with His peace, His grace and hope!

From the bottom of my heart, I wish all of you the authentic joy of the children of God, a tasty kutia, a cheerful celebration of Christ’s Nativity, and a happy, peaceful, and blessed New Year!

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

† SVIATOSLAV

Given in Kyiv at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ.



Pastor's Corner

Hope in the midst of a global pandemic.

Exhausted by enforced detention and dreading the daily news of more enigmatic deaths, humanity is spiraling through a year none of us have ever experienced. We yearn for hope, normalcy, freedom, eager to exhale, unwrap our wings, and break out from the confinement. Many pray just to survive.

Providentially, the Christmas season is upon us — a time for anticipation and inspiration, reflecting on lessons from this year while gaining confidence in the fulfillment of the desires of our hearts. Despite the pitfalls, losses, and the depressive quagmire of 2020, the time we've spent alone has given us an unprecedented occasion to contemplate spiritual matters. In what is it that we put our hope and faith? What is truly significant and life-giving? What is the true meaning of Christmas? Frankly—do we truly need the Christmas parties? Is Christmas about the sleigh bells, eggnog, and presents? Or is it about THE presence?

I hope that for you, the lockdown and quarantine, the limits on travel and recreation have not been exclusively negative. This crisis can be an occasion for deep personal discovery and honest soul-searching. And maybe, victories, large and small.

For me, these peculiar months have offered graces. At the urging of doctors, I have used the past few months to get into shape. I am near my college weight—one of my small triumphs. More importantly, along with Bishop Andriy and guests, who quarantined with us for weeks and months, we prayed mornings and evenings in our chapel, recently renewed. We prayed for those who suffer the most, the needy, the sick and dying, the poor, the unemployed, and for all of you who asked for our prayers. In this tumultuous year, in a special way we prayed for social and racial justice, for the first-responders, for the police, for peace and stability in America, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Ethiopia, the Middle East, Hong Kong, and the rest of the world.

In the days before the Nativity of the Lord, my prayer is that you and I, together, might take advantage fully of the opportunities the global calamity offers to slow down, focus, and open our hearts to the coming of the Savior. That is our true Christmas hope as we meander bewildered and downtrodden—to encounter the Way, the Truth, and the Light (Jn 14,6).

The Son of God shows us the Way by coming down, descending. It is counterintuitive. We are thrilled when our grades, bank accounts, and finances go up and are high. Yet our salvation happens because God goes low for us. Paradoxical, as the Christian faith at times seems to be. We believe in God who became man and gave up His life to save us.

He is ever-present! Here in the midst of this turbulent year descending to the lowly manger. The Lord invites us to follow Him, to reach down and uplift the poor, the depressed, the struggling. With Him, who is with us, let us stoop down to a level of somebody who's down, forgotten, or marginalized to lift them as the Savior lifts all of us. At a time of confusion Jesus is for us the Truth and He brings us the truth. The Truth which is not "what" but "Who" — a truth that is a Person, the God Who loves, Who is intimate, Who is with us where it is hard and where it hurts.

In the darkness of this dim year, more than ever, Christ is the Light, a tranquil light, unfading, warm, and eternal, illuminating the path to peace, beauty, and bliss. This is my prayer that you and I be open to the Way, the Truth, and the Light that is coming to us. Here and now.

Maranatha!
Christ is Born!
+Borys



• **WHY was Jesus born in Bethlehem when his parents, Mary and Joseph, lived in Nazareth (Luke 2:39)?**

The primary reason the birth of Jesus took place in Bethlehem was to fulfill the prophecy given by the minor prophet Micah, "And you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, you being least among the thousands of Judah, out of you He shall come forth to Me, that is to become Ruler in Israel. He Whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2, HBFV throughout)

The interesting thing about our Savior's birth in Bethlehem is how God used the powerful but sometimes brutal Roman Empire, coupled with a Jewish fixation on their ancestral lineage, to fulfill a 700-year-old prophecy! Before they left their hometown, Mary was betrothed, but not married to, Joseph. As a side note, betrothed women had many of the same legal rights as those who were married except that they could not have sex until after the wedding.

Mary and Joseph had to go to Joseph's ancestral home due to Roman taxation policies. From time to time, the Romans conducted a census not merely to count people but also to find out what they owned so that they could be taxed. It was decreed in the year Christ was born (5 B.C.) that such a taxation census would be taken of the people.

Now it happened in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus (the first true Roman Emperor who ruled from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D.) that all the world should be registered. Then all went to be registered, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and lineage of David (Luke 2)

• **As is well known from the often told Christmas story found in the Gospel of Luke, Mary wrapped her newborn son "in swaddling clothes" (Luke 2:7). What on earth were swaddling clothes, and why would Luke have bothered to include this detail in his account of the birth of Jesus?**

Swaddling clothes are cloths and bands used in the practice of swaddling, or essentially "wrapping" an infant tightly in cloth. The idea behind swaddling is that it helps the baby transition from the womb (a very snug place) to the outside world. Swaddling clothes are still used today, but with some modifications. In general, swaddling has been proved to help infants sleep better, to prevent them from scratching themselves, and to reduce the risk of SIDS. In ancient times, like today, a swaddled infant was safe if wrapped and watched properly. Many cultures still practice swaddling today. When the Son of God came into our world, He was entrusted to responsible, loving parents who sought to meet His every need. Baby Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes according to the custom of the day, an action that showed the tender care and affection of His mother.

• **Why Did the Magi Bring Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh?**

In addition to the honor and status implied by the value of the gifts of the magi, scholars think that these three were chosen for their special spiritual symbolism about Jesus himself—gold representing his kingship, frankincense a symbol of his priestly role, and myrrh a prefiguring of his death and embalming—an interpretation made popular in the well-known Christmas carol "We Three Kings."

The Three Wise Men also may have presented Jesus with these gifts because of their medicinal uses. For example, frankincense can prevent inflammation, says researchers at Cardiff University, who believe communities in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, from where the Three Wise Men likely came, used frankincense to treat arthritis.

Some theologians believe that the Three Wise Men gave these specific gifts to Jesus for more practical reasons. Mary and Joseph could use gold to pay for shelter, food and other things that a baby needs, which they, as a young couple, likely could not otherwise afford. They could also sell the valuable frankincense and myrrh to further support themselves, or use these oils and fragrances themselves.