

Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Christian Church

A Parish of the Diocese of New England of the Orthodox Church in America



Fr. John Hopko, Pastor • Protodeacon Paul Nimchek

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Sunday, December 24, 2017

*The 29th Sunday after Pentecost – Tone 4
Eve of the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord*

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Eugenia
and her Companions

Schedule of Services

- 12/24 Sunday**
Christmas Eve
9:15 AM – Divine Liturgy
4:00 PM – Vigil of Christmas,
Followed by “Parish Holy Supper”
- 12/25 Monday**
Feast of Christmas
9:00 AM – Festal Divine Liturgy
- 12/27 Wednesday**
8:00 AM – Matins (Morning Prayers)
- 12/29 Friday**
6:00 PM – Festive Holiday-Season Supper
- 12/30 Saturday**
6:00 PM – Vigil
- 12/31 Sunday**
***Leave-taking of Christmas
Civil New Year’s Eve***
9:15 AM – Divine Liturgy,
with prayers for the New Year
- 1/1 Monday (In the Hartford Parish!)**
***Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord
Feast of Saint Basil the Great***
9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy
(At All Saints Church in Hartford!)
- 1/3 Wednesday**
8:00 AM – Matins (Morning Prayers)
- 1/5 Friday**
Eve of the Feast of Theophany
7:00 PM – Festal Vigil
- 1/6 Saturday**
Feast of Theophany
9:15 AM – Festal Divine Liturgy,
with the Blessing of Water
6:00 PM – Vigil
- 1/7 Sunday**
Sunday after Theophany
9:15 AM – Divine Liturgy
- 1/8 Monday**
7:00 PM – Parish Council Meeting

A Note of Thanks at Christmas...

Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

We wish to thank all those who are remembering us during this Christmas season with kind and generous gifts and greetings. We are deeply, deeply grateful for the privilege and blessing of being part of this Orthodox Christian parish community! Thank you very much.

With love in Christ,

Fr. John, Macrina and Family

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Please pray for all victims of disaster, difficulty and senseless violence throughout the world.

+ THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED THIS LIFE: *Memory Eternal!*

Newly Departed

Andrew Behr—Macrina Hopko's uncle	d. 12/17/17
Julie Ann Voytovich—Fr. Steven Voytovich's mother	d. 12/15/17
Michael "Mischa" Semanitzky—Dn. Paul Nimchek's uncle	d. 12/3/17
child Maven—child of friends of the G. and D. Wegh Family	d. 11/29/17
Ronald—a Food Pantry volunteer	d. 11/27/17
Valentina Tichy Rhodes—acquaintance of the Hopkos	d. 11/17/17

Anniversaries of Repose – Memory Eternal!

Andrew Yakowitz	12/25/1955
Philip Uckin	12/25/1964
Nicholas Hriceniak	12/25/1975
Harry Kanot	12/26/1952
Joseph Pawelchak	12/27/1972
Afton Susidko	12/30/1963
Anna Baychuk	12/30/1967

THOSE IN NEED OF GOD'S MERCY AND HELP

Persons captive and suffering for the Faith

Metropolitan Paul and Archbishop John—hostages in Syria

Those who are sick and suffering

Fyodor (Frank) Guba—increasing sufferings from Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
Dolores Twombly—permanent colon malfunction following colon cancer treatment
Karen—Mary Fomenko's niece; unwell and in need of prayers
child Drew—grandson of friends of the Nimcheks; ongoing treatment for eye cancer
child Matthew—son of friends of M. Osuch; genetic disorder with medical complications
child Ava—young daughter of friends of Melanie Osuch; suffering seizures
Alexander—acquaintance of M. Osuch; suffering and in need of God's mercy and help
Michele—very close friend of M. Osuch; troubled and in need of God's mercy and help
Anna Osuch—suffering in ill health
Jadwiga ["Yahd-vee-gah"]—mother of an acquaintance of E. Watras; cancer
Steven Belonick—Cynthia Belonick's father; unwell
Phyllis George—Donna Kriniske's cousin; battling breast cancer
Alex—John Dubnansky's brother, suffering permanent effects of stroke
Darlyne—facing health challenges; daughter of Bob and Vera Martin
Gregory Shesko—long-time laborer in the Diocese of New England; lung cancer
child Asa—great-grandson of friend of E. Watras; child with developmental challenges

Barbara—Arlene Osuch's sister; epilepsy with complications
Anatoli—a friend of Tania Bouteneff; diagnosed with colon cancer
Galina—wife of above-mentioned Anatoli
William "Bill" Markovich—recently unwell
Samantha—extremely ill child for whom we have been asked to pray
Eugene—Tania Bouteneff's uncle; battling cancer
Donna—Ann Sovyrda's niece; kidney disease
Dayrl—Ann Sovyrda's niece; kidney disease
JoAnn—acquaintance of Jeanne Moore; ovarian cancer
MaryEllen—Louine King's daughter-in-law; declining due to Huntington's Disease
Zachary—nephew of acquaintances of Nimcheks; recent double lung transplant
George Klachany—our fellow parishioner; still in need of prayers for health
Virginia ("Gina")—Elena Watras' sister; unwell and in need of prayers
Dawn—friend of Joan Markovich; Stage Four lung cancer
Vince—friend of the Oraschewsky Family; colon cancer
Vera Bouteneff—Tania Bouteneff's mother; presently unwell
Galina—Svetlana Shorey's sister-in-law; suffering with cancer
Barbara Sovyrda—Mark Sovyrda's former wife; health challenges
Joan Spencer—has asked for our prayers
Bachloan—friend of Jeanne Moore; recent open heart surgery
Sophie (Sonia) Ozerov—Fr. John's great-aunt; broken pelvis
Jerry Grasso—Jayne Grasso's husband; unwell and in need of prayers

Shut-ins and those resident in long-term Care Facilities

Eva Kopcha—at Sheriden Woods in Bristol; now on hospice care
Sonya Petroff—at Sheriden Woods in Bristol
Irene Kiehart—Jayne Grasso's mother; now resident in Connecticut
Mary Fomenko

Expectant Mothers and the Children to be born of them

Matushka Holly (Hanna) and the child to be born of her
Matushka Brenda (Barbara) and the child to be born of her
And all the other expectant mothers and their children for whom we have been asked to pray

Those from among us serving in the Armed Forces

Joel Orelup—U.S. Navy, hospital corpsman ("medic") serving with the Marines
Joseph Bellmay—a Terryville neighbor; U.S. Marine Corps

Travelers, those soon to be traveling, and those away from us

Douglas Henrick—O. Petroff's great-grandson; in China until spring 2018
Peter and Chezelle Serev
John "Jack" Kriniske

Birthdays

Roland Oscar Joseph Massicotte—Yelena's son	12/26
Nina Dubnansky—John's wife	12/29

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT CHRISTMAS

Fr. Thomas Hopko, writing about the Incarnation (the "Becoming Flesh") of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his book "The Orthodox Faith: Volume One – Doctrine"

The divine Son of God was born in human flesh for the salvation of the world. This is the central doctrine of the Orthodox Christian Faith; the entire life of Christians is built upon this fact.

The Symbol of Faith [the Creed] stresses that it is "for us men and for our salvation" that the Son of God has come. This is the most critical biblical doctrine, that "God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (The Gospel of John 3:16, quoted at each Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom at the center of the Eucharistic prayer).

Because of His perfect love, God sent forth His Son into the world. God knew in the very act of creation that to have a world at all would require the incarnation of His Son in human flesh. Incarnation as a word means "enfleshment" in the sense of taking on the wholeness of human nature, body and soul.

C.S Lewis, Writing about Christmas, in his book "Mere Christianity"

The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God.

News and Notes

Fr. John out of the office, Tuesday, December 26, through Saturday, December 30: Fr. John will be out of the office the week following Christmas. During that time, however, Father John will preside at Matins on Wednesday morning, December 27, and he will be present at the Parish Family Dinner scheduled for Friday evening, December 29. He will also preside at Vigil on Saturday evening, December 30. In particular, Father John is likely to be out of town on Tuesday, December 26, and during the day on Friday, December 29. In the case of a **true emergency**, requiring the ministry of a priest, you may try to contact Fr. John during those five days, but, if you fail to reach him, you are asked to contact other clergy of the Connecticut Deanery, beginning with Fr. David Koles of the New Britain Parish, at 860-573-0013. Thank you.

Festive Holiday-Season Parish Family Dinner, Friday evening, December 29, 6:00 PM: This year, Friday, December 29, is the fast-free Friday that follows Christmas, and we will be having a festive family dinner that evening here at Church in order to celebrate the holidays together. The dinner will begin at 6:00 PM. That event will be led by Paul Senetcen and Tim Osuch. There is a sign-up listed posted in the Parish Basement Hall, so that we can determine who will be attending that event.

Christmas Appeals: Our Parish's two Christmas Appeals, the General Christmas Appeal that goes to the basic support of the Parish, and the Flower Appeal, that helps us pay for the floral arrangements with which we decorate the Church at Christmas-time, were mailed out two weeks ago. Please be generous in your support of these appeals. Thank you!

2018 Pledge Forms: The Pledge Forms for 2018 are now being distributed. Please pick up your packet in the Narthex of the Church, and then review it carefully. Please make a prayerful decision about how you are going to support our parish financially in the coming year and then fill out and return your pledge form using the envelope provided in the packet. If you have any questions about this matter, please see Fr. John.

2018 Contribution Envelopes: The small boxes containing the contribution envelopes for 2018 are now being distributed. Please pick up your box of envelopes in the Narthex of the Church. If you have any questions about this matter, please see Fr. John.

Online Donations to the Parish: A PayPal Donation "button" is located on our parish website to make possible online donations. Our parish is registered as a charity with PayPal, so we have slightly lower fees connected to the use of that means of receiving donations. For us, PayPal's fees are 2.2% + \$0.30 per transaction and no monthly fee. (So, for example, a donation of \$100.00 given via PayPal will realize us actual income of \$97.50.)

House Blessings in the Theophany Season: Soon, it will be time for the annual blessings of homes. House Blessing Forms are now available in the Narthex. If you want your home blessed this year, please fill out a form and return it in the box provided. Thank you!

Installation of the Year 2018 Parish Council, Sunday, January 7: The Year 2018 Parish Council will be formally installed with a brief service of prayer at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, January 7, 2017.

Meeting of the Parish Council, Monday, January 8, 2018, 7:00 PM: The Year 2018 Parish Council will meet for the first time on Monday, January 8, 2018, beginning at 7:00 PM.

Weather Related Cancellations: If we need to cancel parish services and/or other events due to bad weather, those announcements will appear on NBC Connecticut Television and on the NBC Connecticut Internet website. Also, you can always call the Parish House (860-582-3631) for further information.

Readings from Holy Scripture

Scripture Readings for the Sunday before Christmas and the Forefeast of the Nativity of our Lord

The Reading from the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40)

Brethren: By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your descendants be named." He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead; hence, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his burial. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful; and they were not afraid of the king's edict. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets--who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated--of whom the world was not worthy--wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

The Reading from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew (Matt. 1:1-25)

THE BOOK of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of She-altiel, and She-altiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanu-el" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.