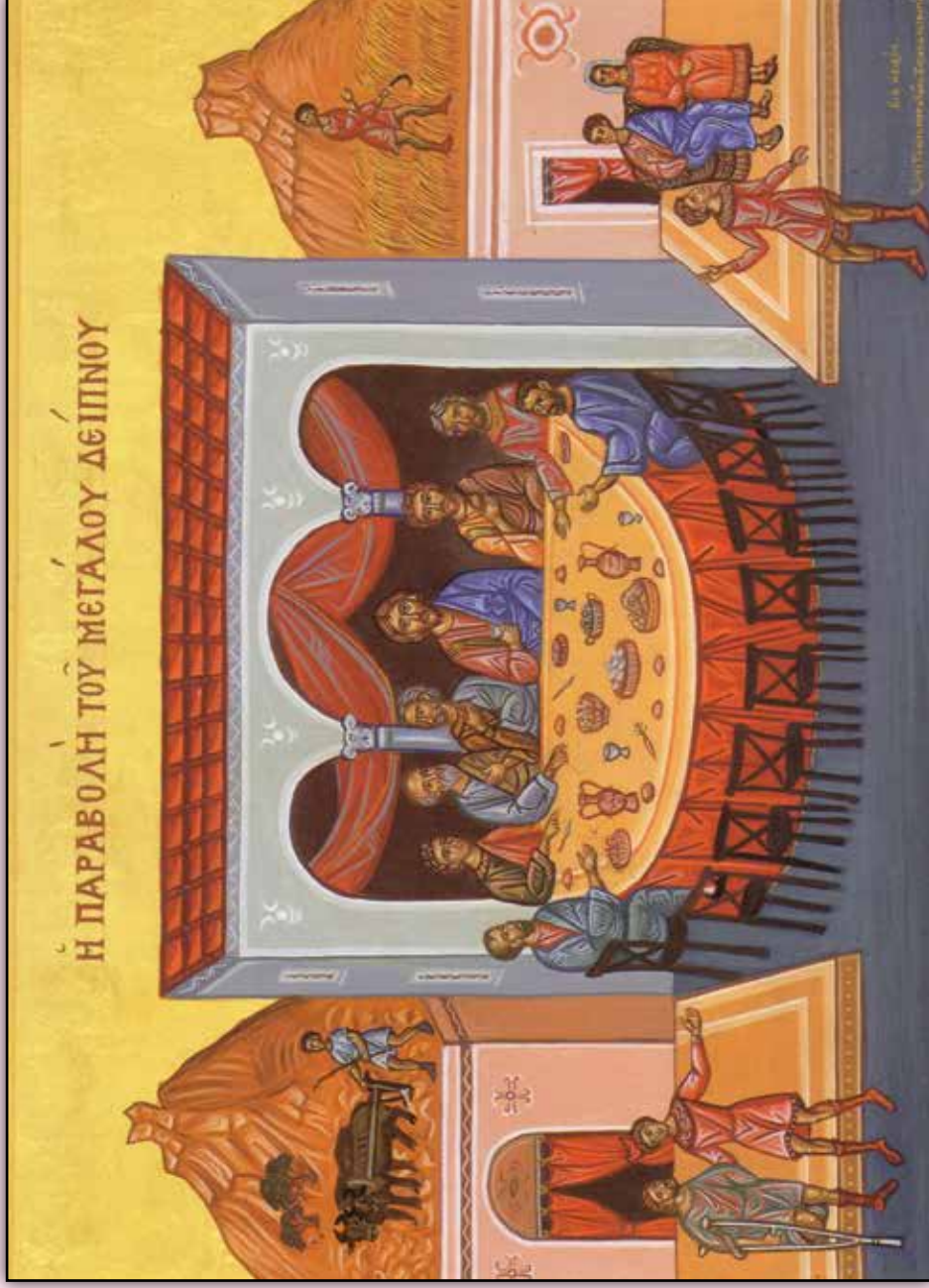


## SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS



*Icon of the Parable of the Great Feast (Luke 14:16-24)*

<b>December 13, 2020: 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Forefathers</b>		
Epistle: Col. 3: 4-11		Gospel: Lk. 14: 16-24
<b>Mon., Dec. 14</b>	9:00	+ Olga Smith (Son, Howard)
<b>Tues., Dec. 15</b>	9:00	Health of Fr. Paul Wolensky (Father Nestor)
<b>Wed., Dec. 16</b>	9:00	+ Bill Davis (Michaelene Davis)
<b>Thurs. Dec. 17</b>	9:00	+ Jacob & Ann Jablonski (Gloria Jablonski)
<b>Fri., Dec. 18</b>	9:00	+ Rev. Archpriest John Fields (Father Nestor)
<b>Sat., Dec. 19</b>	<b>No Morning Divine Liturgy.</b>	
	2:00	Confessions.
	4:00	+ George Chowanec (Family)
<b>Sun., Dec. 20</b>	10:00	For Our Parishioners

## **CHRISTMAS PASTORAL OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY OF THE USA**

### **Christ is born!**

*“...all at once with the angel there appeared a great throng of the hosts of heaven, praising God with the words: ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.’” (Luke 2:13-14)*

This was the joyous proclamation of the angels at the most significant event in human history to that point: the birth of the Messiah, the Son of God, in a stable in Bethlehem.

This intrusion of God into the world of men was something that was

totally unexpected; it caught everyone off guard. In fact, we can say that, in sending his Son to us, God interrupted the normal course of events in the lives of many people. In the Gospel narrative, we see this clearly in those most closely associated with the Nativity of Christ.

Mary and Joseph were a typical young couple of the time, betrothed to each other in anticipation of a formal marriage that would take place some time in the future. That is, until the angel of the Lord appeared to them both, leaving their plans in shambles.

The shepherds were settling in

for a long, uneventful night tending their sheep. That is, until the angels suddenly filled the sky and sent them hurrying in search of a poor stable.

The Magi were esteemed and established scholars in far-off Persia. That is, until a mysterious star compelled them to make a long and arduous journey to Palestine.

And Herod sat contentedly on his throne in Jerusalem. That is, until the Magi brought him the astonishing news of the birth of a would be pretender to his throne that shook him to his core. Indeed, the news of Jesus' birth not only interrupted the lives of these people, it totally upended them.

It is more important for us however, to observe how God's interruption changed these people, for better or worse.

We see that Mary and Joseph did not fall into anger or despair at the predicament they found themselves in. Rather, they embraced in obedience, the news brought by the Archangel Gabriel, as the will of God for them. "Let it be done according to your word" said Mary to Gabriel, while Joseph "did what the angel of the Lord told him to do".

The shepherds were rewarded for their sleepless night with the honor of being first to worship the Son of God in the flesh. The Magi were privileged

with being the first to bring gifts to the newborn King. Only King Herod did not embrace God's intrusion into his life as a blessing, unleashing rather, a violent wave of terror and bloodshed upon the innocent citizens of Bethlehem.

Dearly beloved in Christ! Each of our lives is filled with interruptions, inconveniences, and unexpected intrusions. Though these are unexpected, they are not random, meaningless events. In fact, these interruptions are divinely placed by God in our path for a reason. Like Herod, we do not always react as we should when these interruptions occur. So, God uses these interruptions to teach us patience and to transform us into better and more Christ-like Christians. The small frustrations, the little interruptions in our life, in reality present opportunities for us to rely on God, to obey Him and to embrace His will for us.

A contemporary spiritual writer puts it this way: "You and I don't live in a series of big dramatic moments. We don't run from one big decision to the next. Rather, we all live in an endless series of little every day moments that shape our life. And the struggles that emerge from these little moments when things don't go our way, when our plans fail and our life is interrupted, reveal the character of our heart."

Perhaps, we can view the pandemic that is spreading throughout the world at the present time as one of these unexpected and unwanted intrusions into our life. It has certainly interrupted our celebration of Our Lord's Nativity in a dramatic fashion.

Because of it, our ability to travel and visit friends and family with the joy of Christmas has been greatly restricted. Caroling concerts and Christmas plays have been cancelled. Even worse, our ability to come together in our parish churches to worship Christ in His Nativity in the divine services is diminished as well. Perhaps we have ourselves been sickened with the virus or have lost friends or family to it. And because of this we have become embittered, sad and depressed. When will it finally end?

Dear brothers and sisters! Instead of falling into despair, let us resolve to look upon this interruption in our life

through the eyes of faith and as a God-given opportunity to grow in grace, in spiritual peace, and in love for each other. At this time when most of us are more homebound, let us devote more time to personal and family prayer, spiritual reading and meditation upon the miracle of Christ's Incarnation and His coming to us as a helpless baby. And let us be true neighbors and stretch our helping hands and hearts to those in our communities who are suffering both spiritually and physically during these difficult days.

And remember that with the Birth of Christ all fear and doubt are conquered, all darkness and chill are banished, leaving only the light, warmth and love of the newborn Emanuel - God With Us! May the blessing of the newborn Christ be with all of you!

**CHRIST IS BORN! - GLORIFY HIM!**

**+Borys Gudziak**

Archbishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainians

Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States

**+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM** (author & Eparch of Stamford)

**+Benedict Aleksiychuk** (Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago)

**+Bohdan J. Danylo** (Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma)

**+Andriy Rabiy** (Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia)

## NOVEMBER 2020 CHURCH ATTENDANCE NUMBERS

	4:00 pm	10:00 am	Total
<b>Oct. 31/Nov. 1</b>	44	39	83
<b>Nov. 7 &amp; 8</b>	50	43	93
<b>Nov. 14 &amp; 15</b>	37	38	75
<b>Nov. 21 &amp; 22</b>	45	38	83
<b>Nov. 28 &amp; 29</b>	36	32	68
<b>Total:</b>	212	190	402

### SPRIT OF CHRISTMAS

It was the evening of December 24, 1944 -- and three American soldiers, one badly wounded, had become lost in a snow-covered Ardennes forest.

They had wandered for three days, unable to find their unit. If they didn't find shelter soon, the one injured soldier would surely die.

These three American soldiers eventually stumbled upon a small shack in the middle of the woods. They knocked on the door.

When Elisabeth Vincken and her 12 year old son Fritz heard the knock on the door, they were struck with fear. Elisabeth cracked the door open, and was shocked to see three enemy soldiers on her doorstep.

But seeing the injured soldier, Frau Vincken had compassion on these three boys and welcomed them inside.

Frau Vincken didn't have much -- a single chicken was all the food she had

left. But having compassion on the war weary soldiers she offered them all she had.

As the chicken was roasting in the oven, there was another unexpected knock on the door. Her son went to open the door, thinking there were more American soldiers who were lost.

But this time, the four soldiers standing outside the cottage were not American -- they were German!

The punishment for harboring enemy soldiers was death.

Elisabeth, fearing for her life, pushed past Fritz and stepped outside.

The four German soldiers explained that they were lost and hungry, and asked if they could spend Christmas Eve in her home.

Elisabeth told them they were welcome to share what little food she had, but warned that she had other "guests." The German soldiers sternly asked if they

were Americans.

Frau Vincken nodded. "*Es ist Heiligabend und hier wird nicht geschossen,*" she said. "It is the Holy Night and there will be no shooting here."

She told the German soldiers to leave their weapons outside and then invited them into the cabin. The tension in the air was thick as the German and American soldiers stared at each other.

But what happened next is truly a Christmas miracle.

One of the German soldiers, a former medical student, noticed the badly injured American soldier. The German had compassion on his enemy and offered to tend his wounds.

That simple act of kindness broke the tension. The American soldiers began to strike up a polite conversation using what little German they knew.

Frau Vincken finished preparing supper and motioned for everyone to sit around the table. As they said grace, the exhausted and forlorn soldiers forgot all about the war -- if only for a moment. Several of the soldiers -- both American and German -- had tears in their eyes as they ate their humble Christmas dinner.

That evening, these bitter enemies declared an informal truce as the spirit of Christmas filled Frau Vincken's tiny shack.

The next morning, the German soldiers provided directions to the American front lines -- and even gave the Americans a compass. They shook hands, thanked Frau Vincken for her hospitality, and went their separate ways.

With carnage all around them, the Spirit of Christmas proved to be a more powerful force than the hatred of war.

## CHRISTMAS EVE SCHEDULE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have had to adjust our schedules. This has affected the Church as well. Normally, the Christmas Eve service is the most attended. In order to facilitate social distancing and keep everyone safe,

we will have two (2) Divine Liturgies on Christmas Eve. The first Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy will be at 7:30 pm; the second Divine Liturgy will be at 10:00 pm. The Christmas Day Divine Liturgy will be at 10:00 am.

## ANDREW'S PENCE

The Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) has decided to hold a collection, called

Andrew's Pence, to support faithful of UGCC abroad where there is no permanent ecclesiastical structure.

More than 100 years ago Ukrainians started to leave their native land in search of a better life, material welfare, and freedom. Many settled on another continent, where church buildings of the UGCC are not everywhere, so that the faithful could not attend services in their native Church. Wishing to provide all faithful of the UGCC with spiritual

care, the bishops call upon all to support the faithful of the UGCC abroad in prayer and financially, collecting the so-called Andrew's Pence.

According to the Protocol of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, the "Andrew's Pence" collection is to be taken in all parishes each year in the month of December.

## **2021 CHURCH CALENDARS**

The 2021 Church Calendars are available in the Vestibule of the

Church. The Calendars are free, but any donations will be appreciated.

## **COOKIE SALE**

Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church 320 Vine St. Old Forge is holding their annual Christmas Cookie Sale on Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 12 pm. All cookies will be sold on a preorder basis only. Cookie are homemade and include anise wedding, thumbprint, pepper cookies, chocolate chip, peanut butter

kisses, nut rugalach, linzer, fruitcakes and many many more. Cost is \$9 per pound. Preorders can be placed by calling Betty 570-457-9292 or Maria 570-457-8275. Preorders will be accepted until December 7th. Preorders will not be accepted after this date. All Covid 19 safety guidelines have been followed for this sale.

## **COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM...**

The Collection Processing Team for the month of December 2020 is Team

#4: Ron Barkofsky and Joe Smagula.

## **Sunday Collection for Dec. 5 & 6, 2020: \$**

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our Parish financially in our weekly collections. If you are still staying at home due to the pandemic, and are able to send any amount, it would be a blessing.



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Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

### ***The Great Feast***

This familiar parable is read in the Church each year just two Sundays before the feast of our Lord's Nativity. In it we are reminded of the great care with which God prepared the way of His incarnation. All of the Law and the Prophets look forward to this moment, the moment when the God-man Jesus Christ comes into the world. He is, in fact, the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets – the goal towards which they were all aiming. The whole world was prepared by them for this great event. As the parable tells us the King – that is God – has prepared a great feast for us and has invited us to come and enter into the joy that He has prepared for us.

Today we begin in earnest to move toward the

feast of the birth of our Incarnate Savior Jesus Christ. Today we are called to see the great preparation that has gone into this event, to marvel at the great love and care of God for us that He would labor so long and with such great care for us. Today we look back at the whole of the history of the people of God and see that it is the history of God's preparation all leading to the moment when He would take flesh, become incarnate and enter the world as a child. We have been given an invitation to come and join the feast, to abandon the world and enter the Kingdom of God, to leave our own life and receive instead the Life of Christ. We have been invited, chosen by God – will we then accept the invitation and choose Him?