

# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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**BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 29, 2013**



## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup>**

### **Sunday After the Nativity**

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Open House in Rectory

## **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>**

7:00p.m. Vespers

## **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>**

### **Circumcision of the Lord/St. Basil**

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

## **SATURDAY, JANUARY 4<sup>TH</sup>**

5:00p.m. No Class  
6:00p.m. Great Vespers

## **SUNDAY, JANUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>**

### **Eve of Theophany**

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour  
7:00p.m. Matins; Blsq. of Water

## **MONDAY, JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup>**

### **Theophany of the Lord**

#### *One of the Twelve Great Feasts*

8:40a.m. Hours  
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

### **A Warm Welcome!**

We warmly welcome all of our visitors! It's good to have you with us!

### **Many Blessed Years to Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak!**

Today, as we congratulate Fr. Daniel on his 87<sup>th</sup> birthday, we ask the Lord's continued blessings upon him. May God grant Fr. Daniel and Mat. Dunia many more years of health, happiness, and salvation!

### **Christ is born! Glorify Him!**

During the celebration of Christmas, it is the custom of Orthodox Christians to greet one another with the joyous exclamation, "Christ is born!", to which the one greeted responds, "Glorify Him!"



### **St. Basil's Bread**

Today, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, we will keep the beautiful custom of St. Basil's Bread (see page 4 of this bulletin).



### **Open House in the Rectory**

You are asked to please stay after the Divine Liturgy to join us for a festive luncheon and open house in the rectory. There will be singing of Christmas carols, accompanied by the piano, and time for food and fellowship. Everyone is invited!

### **New Civil Year**

As we enter into 2014, we give thanks to God for all of His blessings during this past year. We will have Vespers on New Year's Eve at 7:00pm, and Divine Liturgy on New Year's Day at 9:00am.

### **Fast Free Period**

During the twelve days of Christmas, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, through Theophany, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, we do not fast, even on Wednesday and Fridays. A one day fast is observed on January 5<sup>th</sup>, the Eve of Theophany.

### **Helping a Needy Family**

Many thanks to those who offered to help the needy family our church sponsored for this year's Christmas. We were able to send \$1,000. May the Lord bless you for your generosity!



### **Annual Meeting of the Parish – February 2<sup>nd</sup>**

will be on Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, following the coffee hour. Everyone is asked to set aside this day, making a special effort to be in attendance. While all are welcome and encouraged to attend, voting privileges are reserved for those who are official members of the parish. A Parish Council meeting will be held on January 12<sup>th</sup> in preparation.



### **READER SCHEDULE**

#### **Sunday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Joanne Patrick

#### **Sunday, Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>**

Gabriela Jones



CASH FLOWS THROUGH 11/30/13					CASH FLOWS IN DECEMBER 2013					FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT		
OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	ASSETS & LIABILITIES – 12/29		
Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Net	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Net	Checking	Overdue	Due 2/2014
62,318	55,022	45,652	27,119	+25,892	6,370	3,547	4,695	1,375	+6,143	+5,558	0	-513



## "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE"

By Abbot Tryphon



One of the most beloved movies ever made was Frank Capra's, "It's a Wonderful Life". Staring Jimmy Stewart as George Bailey, the movie tells the story of an ever optimistic man, who, while facing life's hardships, set aside his own dreams in order to help others, only to witness a run on his bank. Feeling he'd failed his family, his friends, and the bank's customers, and that he was about to lose everything, George found himself struggling with the idea of committing suicide on Christmas Eve.

At the point in the movie where George utters the words, "It would have been better had I never been born", his guardian angel, Clarence, played by Henry Travers, shows George all the lives he has touched and how different life in his community of Bedford Falls would have been, had he never been born.

George is allowed the gift of seeing firsthand the lives he has touched, and as a result learns to understand the miracle of family and friendship.

"It's a Wonderful Life" has become a favorite movie to watch for countless Americans, during the Christmas season, for the message is timeless. All of us have had moments where we felt we just couldn't go on, and suicide seemed like the only



logical solution. As a young man I experienced a terrible period of depression and despair, and attempted suicide. Yet, when I hear from others how my daily blog and Ancient Faith Radio podcast, both under the banner, "The Morning Offering", have helped so many people, it is unfathomable that I was ever that despairing young man. Yet perhaps it is because I was that young man, that I am able to sympathize with those who are suffering, and help them see that this dark time can be the very catalyst for a bright future.

It has been my experience that we are all called, at some time or another, to be Clarence, that funny guardian angel who points out the worth of another person, and reaches out with a loving embrace, and soothing words of comfort, and support. If, as Clarence, we pay

attention to the fact that many people's high expectations for happiness during the Christmas season, will fall short, and leave them lonely and despairing, our own acts of kindness, words of encouragement, and smile of acceptance, will make all the difference in the world, and we will become that signpost pointing the way to a bright and happy future.

### ST. BASIL THE GREAT

*Commemorated on January 1<sup>st</sup>*

Basil was born during the reign of Emperor Constantine. While still unbaptized, Basil spent fifteen years in Athens where he studied philosophy, rhetoric, astronomy and all other secular sciences of that time. His colleagues at that time were Gregory the Theologian and Julian, later the apostate emperor. In his mature years he was baptized in the river Jordan along with Euvlios his former teacher. He was Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia for almost ten years and completed his earthly life fifty years after his birth. He was a great defender of Orthodoxy, a great light of moral purity, a religious zealot, a great theological mind, a great builder and pillar of the Church of God. Basil fully deserved the title "Great." In liturgical services, he is referred to as the "bee of the Church of Christ which brings honey to the faithful and with its stinger pricks the heretics." Numerous works of this Father of the Church are preserved; they include theological, apologetical, ascetical and canonical writings as well as the Holy and Divine Liturgy named after him. This Divine Liturgy is celebrated ten times throughout the year: the First of January, his feast day; on the eve of the Nativity of our Lord; on the eve of the Epiphany of our Lord; all Sundays of the Honorable Fast [Lenten Season], except Palm Sunday; on Great and Holy Thursday and on Great and Holy Saturday. St. Basil died peacefully on January 1, 379 A.D., and was translated into the Kingdom of Christ.

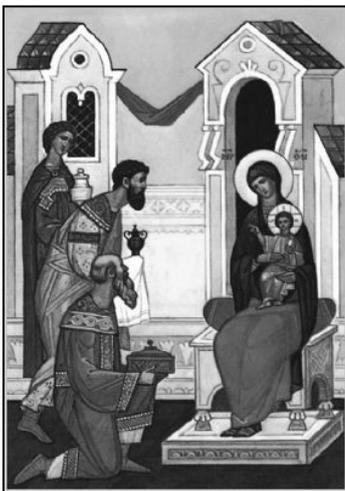


## WHO WERE THE MAGI?

The Magi were Persian priestly scholars, known for their expertise in medicine, philosophy, science, astrology, and dreams. When the Prophet Daniel was taken to Babylon in 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar recognized his God as the "God of gods and Lord of lords, Who reveals mysteries". Daniel was renamed Baltasar and appointed the chief of this society. (Daniel 2:48; 4:6; 5:11). The prophetic and messianic writings of Daniel had a profound effect on these scholars, who also were familiar with Balaam's prophecy about the star shining forth from Jacob (Num. 24:17).

At the time of Christ, the Magi composed the upper house of the Council of the Megistanes whose duties included the absolute choice and election of the king of the realm. Their sudden appearance in Judea caused Herod great fear as he sought to keep his fragile control over the region. However, it was in the hope a divinely-imposed dominion that the Magi had made their lengthy journey to Judea.

Since the Magi believed that there was a mystical influence of the stars, they would constantly study the heavens seeking extraordinary sign which might herald the "Expected One." St. Theophylact explains how the Lord used the stars to draw the Magi to Him when he writes: "Because the Magi were astrologists, the Lord brought them in a manner natural to them, just as Peter, being a fisherman, came through the catch of a multitude of fish."



The wise men, on behalf of the entire human race, brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh: gold because they were returning to the acknowledgment

that God is the only true King, frankincense because they were returning to the worship of the Lord as the only true God, and myrrh because Christ, as the bringer of the Resurrection, would abolish death and there would no longer be any more need for myrrh as a burial ointment. What subsequently happened to these gifts is never mentioned in the Scriptures, but several traditions have developed. One story has the gold being stolen by the two thieves who were later crucified



alongside Jesus. Another tale has it being entrusted to and then misappropriated by Judas.

The number and identity of the Magi is not known for sure. Since three gifts were offered, it is often assumed that there were three in their company; the traditional names being Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthazar. Sometimes they are depicted as old, middle-aged, and young. Some consider them to be from Persia, Arabia, and Egypt as the descendents of Shem, Japheth, and Ham.

St. John Chrysostom rebukes an unbelieving Jewish nation by comparing them to the Gentile Magi: "The faith of the Magi is the condemnation of the Jews. The Magi believed on the authority of their one soothsayer Balaam and the Prophet Daniel; but the Jews, from the testimony of many prophets, refused to believe. Whereas the magi acknowledged that the coming of Christ would terminate their profane knowledge and magical arts, the Jews would not accept the Lawgiver's doing away with their sacrifices and refused to accept the mysteries of the divine dispensation. The Magi confessed a Stranger; the Jews rejected their own.

### Behold, the Virgin shall be with child.

The Jews say that the prophecy in Hebrew does not say "virgin" but "young woman". However, in Hebrew the word for "young woman" and "virgin" is one and the same; it being understood that young women are to be virgins. Yet, what would be the significance of any young woman giving birth, for this happens all the time. The sign was that a Virgin, one who knew not man, would give birth. This has happened only once, with the birth of Jesus, the Savior, "God with us".



## SAINT JOHN OF SAN FRANCISCO ON MATTHEW 1:25

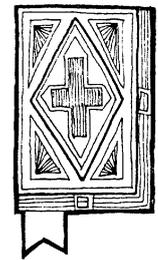
***And [Joseph] knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called His name JESUS.***

The word "until" does not signify that Mary remained a virgin only until a certain time. In the Bible, the word "until" and words similar to it often signify eternity. It is said of Christ: "In His days shall shine forth righteousness and an abundance of peace, *until* the moon be taken away" (Psalm 71:7), but this does not mean that when there shall no longer be a moon at the end of the world, God's righteousness shall no longer be; precisely then, rather, will it triumph. And what does it mean when it says: "For He must reign, *until* He hath put all enemies under His feet?" (1 Cor. 15:25). Is the Lord to reign only for a time until His enemies shall be put under His feet?! The Savior in the Gospel says to the Apostles (Matt: 28:20): "Lo, I am with you always, even *until* the end of the world." Are we to believe that the Lord will no longer be with the disciples in the age to come? While there are plenty more such examples of the use of the word "until", the above are sufficient to prove that Matt 1:25 does not argue against the life-long virginity of the Mother of God.



## BLESSED THEOPHYLACT ON MATTHEW 1:19

***Then Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to divorce her secretly.***



The law decreed that the adulteress be exposed and punished publicly. How, then, was Joseph righteous since he intended to cover up her sin and thus transgress the law? The answer is, first, that he was righteous for intending to do this very thing. He did not wish to be harsh, but in his great goodness took compassion on her, showing himself to be above the law, and already living in a manner superior to the decrees of the law. Secondly, since he himself knew that she had conceived not by adultery but of the Holy Spirit. Behold what the evangelist says: "She was found to be with child." Found by whom? By Joseph; that is, he discerned that she had conceived of the Holy Spirit. Therefore he "was minded to divorce her secretly," for he no longer dared to take as a wife her who had been deemed worthy of such grace.

## ON CHRISTIAN CHARITY

*St. John Chrysostom (4<sup>th</sup> century)*

Lift up and stretch out your hands, not to heaven, but to the poor; for if you stretch out your hands to the poor, you have reached the summit of heaven. But if you lift up your hands in prayer without sharing with the poor, it is worth nothing... Every family should have a room where Christ is welcomed in the person of the hungry and thirsty stranger. The poor are a greater temple than the sanctuary; this altar the poor, you can raise up anywhere, on any street, and offer the liturgy at any hour.



## ST. BASIL'S BREAD



The tradition of Saint Basil's Bread dates to the fourth century, when St. Basil the Great, the father of philanthropy, wanted to distribute money to the poor in his diocese. He commissioned some women to bake sweetened bread, in which he placed gold coins. Thus the poor families in cutting the bread to nourish themselves were pleasantly surprised to find the coins. This custom is kept to this day among Orthodox Christians, who on Saint Basil's Day, January 1st, place gold coins inside a loaf of sweetened bread in honor of the Saint's care for the poor. The one who finds the coin in his or her piece is considered commissioned by St. Basil to carry on his work for the poor, and in exchange he will ask the Lord for whatever is needful for the New Year.