



Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church

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Celebration of the Holy Mysteries

RECITATION OF THE HOLY ROSARY AND CONFESSIONS: ½ HR BEFORE DIVINE LITURGY

BAPTISM & CHRISMATION / ANNOINTING OF THE SICK / COMMUNION CALLS & VISITATIONS:
CONTACT FR. IHOR TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS

MARRIAGE PREPARATION:
CONTACT FR. IHOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO SETTING THE ACTUAL WEDDING DATE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN:
CONTACT MRS. CHRISTINA VOGEL AT (603) 686-2092 TO REGISTER YOUR CHILDREN

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE LITURGIES:
SUNDAYS: 10 AM (September thru May) MON THRU SAT: AS NOTED IN WEEKLY BULLETIN
 9 AM (June thru August) HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION: 7 PM

DIVINE LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF JANUARY 1, 2023

Sunday, January 1st – Circumcision of Our Lord, Feast of St. Basil the Great, and Sunday Before Theophany

Divine Liturgy: 10 AM Propers: Festal Tones Vestments: Bright
Epistle: 2Timothy 4: 5-8 Gospel: St. Mark 1: 1-8
Intention: For all Parishioners & Panakhyda for the blessed repose of the soul of **Pope Emeritus +Benedict XVI**

Friday, January 6th (7 PM): Feast of Theophany with Great Water Blessing (Holy Day of Obligation)

Saturday, January 7th (10 AM): Christmas Day according to the Julian Calendar

Intention: For all Parishioners (All Ukrainian Language Divine Liturgy; Різдвяна Служба Божа в українській мові)

Divine Liturgy and Vespers Services Schedule and Intentions for January and February

Sunday, January 8th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, January 14th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, January 15th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, January 21st (10 AM): For the blessed repose of the souls of **+Larissa and +Josef** Jerrold with Panakhuda, offered by the Maksymowych Family

Saturday, January 21st (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, January 22nd (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, January 28th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, January 29th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, February 4th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, February 5th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, February 11th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, February 12th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, February 18th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, February 19th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, February 25th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, February 26th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday Services

Fr. Ihor is celebrating Vesper services every Saturday at 7 PM. All parishioners are invited to attend this beautiful service. Those who wish to have a Divine Liturgy celebrated for a loved one whether living or deceased or for a private intention are still able to do so. Please request your Divine Liturgy by contacting Fr. Ihor at (860) 617-6357 or cantor Jaroslaw Maksymowych at (603) 627-2042. Please note that Saturday Divine Liturgies will now be celebrated only at 10 AM whenever they are requested. If no Divine Liturgy has been requested for a particular Saturday, then none will be celebrated on that day. The Divine Liturgy schedule in the bulletin will only show 10 AM Divine Liturgies on Saturdays when they have been requested. If the bulletin does not show a 10 AM Divine Liturgy for a given Saturday, then this means that particular Saturday is available for your request.

Суботні Богослужіння

Отець Ігор святкує Вечірню кожної суботи у 7-мі годині вечером. Ласкаво просимо усіх парафіян до участі. Парафіяни які бажають замовити Божественну Літургію в суботу для померших або на особисті інтенції можуть дзвонити до о. Ігоря на номер (860) 617-6357. Суботні Божественні Літургії будуть відслужені тільки о годині 10-тій ранком коли замовлені. Якщо Літургія в певну суботу не буде замовлена, то в цей день не буде жодна відправлена. Порядок Богослужінь в бюлетені покаже тільки ті суботні Служби Божі які є замовлені. Якщо в бюлетені не відображається Божественна Літургія на дану суботу, то це означає, що ця субота доступна на Ваше замовлення.

Liturgical Propers, Readings and Sermon for Sunday

Liturgical Propers for the Sunday Before Theophany, Circumcision and Feast of St. Basil

Resurrectional Tropar – Tone 5: Come believers, let us praise and worship the Word. With the Father and the Spirit, He has no beginning. Though He was born of a virgin for our salvation, and He willingly ascended the Cross as a man and suffered death, He raised the dead by His glorious resurrection.

Festal Tropar of Circumcision – Tone 1: You are seated upon Your glowing throne on high together with Your eternal Father and Your Divine Spirit. You also chose to be born on earth of Your all-pure virgin mother. As a man, You were circumcised on the eighth day, O Jesus. Glory to Your gracious will, glory to Your plan of redemption, glory to Your overflowing divinity, for You alone truly love mankind.

Festal Tropar of St. Basil – Tone 1: Throughout all the land your voice resounds, your word has been accepted as a divine doctrine of the nature of things. You have given us a rule of life, O royal priest. Pray to the Christ-God, O holy father Basil, that He may save us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit...

Festal Kondak of St. Basil – Tone 4: You became an unshakeable foundation of the church. All mankind is strengthened by your teaching. You gave us a bottomless treasure. Holy Basil, you reveal divine mysteries.

now and always, and forever. Amen.

Festal Kondak of Circumcision – Tone 3: The Lord of all submits to circumcision, and in His goodness, He cuts away the sins of men. He bestows salvation upon the world today, while Basil, the blessed and radiant mystic of Christ, rejoices on high.

Prokimen – Tone 6: Save Your people, O Lord; and bless Your inheritance.

VERSE: To You I cry, O Lord my God; do not be deaf to my call.

Prokimen – Tone 1: My mouth shall speak wisdom. The clear understanding of my heart shall be heard.

НЕДІЛЯ ПЕРЕД БОГОЯВЛІННЯМ

Апостол: (2Тим 4: 5-8)

До Тимотея другого послання св. апостола Павла читання.

Сину Тимотею, будь тверезим у всьому, зноси напасті, виконуй працю євангелиста, виконуй твою службу. Бо я вже готовий на ливну жертву, і час мого відходу настав. Я боровся доброю борнею, скінчив біг - віру зберіг. Тепер же приготований мені вінок справедливості, що дасть мені того дня Господь, справедливий Суддя; та не лише мені, але всім тим, що з любов'ю чекали на його появу.

Epistle Reading for the Sunday before Theophany (2Timothy 4: 5-8)

Timothy, my son: As for you, be steady and self-possessed; put up with hardship, perform your work as an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. I for my part am already being poured out like a libation. The time of my dissolution is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on a merited crown awaits me; on that Day of the Lord, just Judge that He is, will award it to me – and not only to me, but to all who have looked for His appearing with eager longing.

Allelulia – Festal Tone

VERSE: May God have pity on us and may He bless us; may His face shine upon us and may He have mercy on us.

Allelulia – Festal Tone

VERSE: So that His way may be known upon the earth, and His salvation be known among the nations.

Allelulia – Festal Tone

Gospel Reading for the Sunday before Theophany (St. Mark 1: 1-8)

Here begins the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In Isaiah the prophet it is written: "I send my messenger before you to prepare your way: a herald's voice in the desert, crying, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, clear Him a straight path.'"

Thus it was that John the Baptist appeared in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance, which led to the forgiveness of sins. All the Judean countryside and the people of Jerusalem went out to him in great numbers. They were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. John was clothed in camel's hair, and wore a leather belt around his waist. His food was grasshoppers and wild honey. The theme of his preaching was: "One more powerful than I is to come after me. I am not fit to stoop and untie His sandal straps. I have baptized you in water; He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

Євангелія: (Мк 1, 1-8)

Початок Євангелії Ісуса Христа, Сина Божого. Як написано в пророка Ісаї: "Ось я посилаю мого посланця перед тобою, який приготує тобі дорогу. Голос вопіючого в пустині: Готуйте Господеві дорогу, вирівняйте стежки його," - так виступив Іван, хрестивши у пустині та проповідуючи хрищення покаяння на прощення гріхів. І виходили до нього - вся країна Юдейська та всі ерусалимляни, хрестились від нього в ріці Йордані й визнавали гріхи свої. Іван одягнений був в одяг з верблюжого волосу й носив ремінний пояс на своїх бедрах, а їв сарану й мед дикий. І проповідував кажучи: "Слідом за мною іде сильніший від мене, що йому я недостойний, нахилившись, розв'язати ремінця його сандалів. Я Вас хрестив водою, а Він хреститиме Святим Духом."

Sermon for the Sunday before Theophany

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him! My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The Baptism of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is an important Holy Day in our Church. We also call that day "Theophany" which roughly translated means the "manifestation of God" (theos from the Greek meaning God; phany – from the Greek meaning revealing or showing forth). On the day of Jesus' baptism, which we will celebrate this coming Friday, He was revealed as the Son of God first in His Person (the Son), second by the "Spirit in the form of a dove" (the Holy Spirit), and finally by the voice of the Father (Whose voice "thundered" and said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The baptism of Christ was the beginning of His public ministry. It would last only three short years before crucifixion, but then ultimately He would be resurrected.

We continue to walk spiritually at Christmas time with the newborn Jesus. We recently met the Divine Child, who was born in a poor stable in Bethlehem. In a few days we will meet Jesus Christ as an adult, preparing for His missionary work and His first sermon, "...repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15) He will go to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. John the Baptist prepared people for the encounter with Jesus, the Messiah, by saying, "After me comes He who is mightier than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie." (Mark 1:7)

Why was John's sermon so effective that crowds of people came to listen to him and receive Baptism? He was a man who sincerely loved God and lived by faith in salvation. Not only his words, but his whole life was a confirmation of his relationship with God. The desert in which he lived, his camel-hair clothes, his meager food — locusts and wild honey — all testify to his great simplicity and involvement in the suffering of the people and their poverty.

Most of the sayings of today's Gospel reading speak of John the Forerunner and are addressed to all of us, because the word of Scripture is always relevant and alive. This gospel calls us to prepare our souls for the coming of Christ. To prepare them as John the Forerunner urged them to do, through repentance. The Church

today tells us not to delve into the cares of life, but to draw closer to Christ, who came into the world for our salvation.

Today, one week after the Holy Nativity of our Lord, we celebrate His Circumcision, one of the Feasts of the Lord, on which—in accordance with Hebrew tradition—He received the name "Jesus": "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, His name was called Jesus, which was so named of the Angel before He was conceived in the womb" (St. Luke 2:21). The true descendants of the Patriarch Abraham were separated from the other nations by the sign of circumcision (a prefigurement of Baptism: "the circumcision made without hands" [Colossians 2:11] and thereby became members of the God-ruled community of the Old Testament; that is, through circumcision, they entered among the chosen People of God.

Christ was now "made under the law," being conformed to the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law (Galatians 4:4) and "fulfilling" the Law (St. Matthew 3:15), in order to elevate the Church of the Law into a Church of Grace, into a new "Israel of God" (cf. Galatians 6:16), into a The anthropic organism—into His Body.

John Chrysostom called Christians to a pious celebration of the beginning of the year. Here is what he says, "A Christian should not celebrate at the appointed time, not on the first day of the month, not only on Sunday, but spend his whole life in constant celebration." So how should we celebrate? Let's listen to the Apostle Paul, who says, "Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5:8) That is how we Christians should celebrate the beginning of the New Year.

It is because we are concerned with various worries of life that we forget about the true essence of these Christmas and New Year holidays. The Church addresses us with the words of the Gospel of Mark, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." (Mark 1:3) Let us purify our hearts and souls from the cares of life and follow Christ, so that together with the Apostle Paul, who addresses us today, we may say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day..." (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

So let us prepare for the great feast of Christ's baptism by straightening the crooked areas of our lives. Instead of finding ways to ignore the Forerunner, let us take his sobering message to heart for the Messiah is born and on His way to the Jordan where His divinity will be made clear. But will we have the eyes to see His glory? Will we be ready for Him? There is only one way to prepare and that is to repent, to turn away from everything that hinders our full participation in the divine glory that He brings to all who bear His image and likeness and to the entire creation. That is what His baptism makes possible for us, but we must prepare by repentance in order to share personally in this great mystery of our salvation. Amen!

ПРОПОВІДЬ НА НЕДІЛЮ ПЕРЕД БОГОЯВЛІННЯМ

Христос Народився! Славім Його! Дорогі в Христі браття і сестри!

Всі ми знаємо істину, що життя не стоїть на місці, а постійно змінюється, рухається вперед. Так само правдиве духовне життя потребує поступу, зросту в чеснотах, удосконалення зв'язків із Богом через глибше пізнання Христа і Божих правд. Різдво Божого Сина об'явило нам любов Бога, Який є одним із нас, перебуває разом із нами у всіх подіях та обставинах життя.

Найближчою важливою подією із життя Ісуса Христа, що настає після празника Христового Різдва, є Господнє Обрізання і надання імені. Святе Євангеліє про це так говорить: "Як сповнились вісім днів, коли мали обрізати хлоп'ятко, назвали Його Ісус — ім'я, що надав був ангел, перше, ніж Він почався у лоні" (Лк. 2, 21). Ісус Христос, як Бог і Законодавець, не був зобов'язаний виконувати релігійні приписи ізраїльського

народу, та все-таки Він їм добровільно підкорився і їх зберігав. З тієї причини Він восьмого дня після народження піддався обряду обрізання. Цю подію святкуємо першого січня. Тож погляньмо на закон обрізання і його значення у Старому Завіті, на встановлення празника Обрізання та його значення для нас. Старозавітне обрізання було прообразом новозавітного хрещення, що втілює нас у Христа. Святий апостол Павло, називаючи хрещення нерукотворним обрізанням, каже: “У Ньому ви були й обрізані обрізанням нерукотворним, коли ви з себе скинули це смертне тіло обрізанням Христовим. Поховані з Ним у хрещенні, з Ним ви разом також воскресли” (Кол. 2, 11-12).

У святах після Різдва Господнього бачимо Ісуса, Який зростає літами й мудрістю у Бога та в людей. Цим більш детальніше об’являє нам Бога. Христос є не тільки з нами, а входить у наш внутрішній світ дорогою покаяння і навернення. Тим самим дотикає нас любов’ю не тільки ззовні, а старається наповнити нею зсередини. Для цього Ісус об’являє правду про Божу любов, яка бажає дарувати нам життя вічне, і про нашу недосконалість, гріховність. Коли приймаємо істину про безмежну любов Бога до нас і проявляємо покаяння за свої провини, Христос стає присутнім у нас в середині - нашій свідомості та душі. Вершиною цього зближення, єднання людини з Господом є Пресвята Євхаристія. Приймаючи Тіло і Кров Ісуса, Він стає невід’ємною частиною нас самих: „Хто їсть Моє Тіло й п’є Мою Кров, у мені перебуває, і я в ньому” (Йо 6,56).

За кілька днів ми зустрінемо Ісуса Христа вже у дорослому віці, який готується до своєї місії діяльності і першої проповіді: „Покайтесь і вірте в Євангеліє” (Мк. 1, 8). Він іде на ріку Йордан, щоб отримати хрещення з рук Івана Хрестителя. Там Небесний Отець об’явить Його людям з допомогою різних символічних знаків: у вигляді голуба і голосу з неба, як Месію і Спасителя людства. Відбувається перехід від вифлеємських ясел до Йордану, від Ісуса немовляти, до Ісуса у зрілому віці. У Вифлеємі народження Ісуса об’явила зоря, спів ангелів, відвідини пастухів і мудреців. На ріці Йордан Ісуса об’являє людям Іван Хреститель і голос Небесного Отця: „Це Син мій любий, якого я вподобав” (Мт 3, 17). Цей перехід історичний і віковий символізує духовний зріст християнина, поступовий перехід від віри в існування Бога, у Божество Ісуса Христа, до повного довір’я Божій любові.

Ця неділя, звана перед Богоявленням, приготує нас до чергового великого торжества – Богоявлення чи Хрищення Господнього. А тим самим до таємниці Божої любові, яка є милосердна і очищає людей з гріхів. Бажаючи і шукаючи щастя з Богом, любимо, пізнаваймо і цінуймо Божу правду, тобто Євангеліє – науку Христа. Пригадуймо собі Його слова: „Коли хто мене любить, слово моє берегтиме, і Отець мій буде його любити, і Ми прийдемо до нього, і в ньому зробимо оселю” (Йо 14,23). Керуймося у житті Божою правдою та любов’ю, і вони стануть дорогою, якою Ісус прийде до нас і принесе благословення та щасливе життя. Амінь.

Communion Verse: Хвалить Господа з небес, хвалить Його на висотах. Справедливі залишаться у вічній пам’яті; їм не треба боятися поганій репутації. Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest. The just shall be held in everlasting memory; they need not fear an evil reputation. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Prayer of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in these Holy Gifts! I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot receive You now sacramentally, I place before You my whole life and hope, O loving Master; and I ask, pray, and entreat You: Make me worthy to partake in a mystical way and with a pure conscience of Your awesome and heavenly Mysteries: for the forgiveness of sins, for the pardon of offenses, for the communion of the Holy Spirit, for the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, for confidence before You, and not for judgment or condemnation. I embrace You as You enter and abide in me, and I unite myself completely to You. Permeate my soul and body, and never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Молитва Духовного Причастя

Мій Ісусе! Я вірю, що Ти присутній у цих Святих Дарів!
Люблю Тебе над усе і моя душа тужить за Тобою.
Не можу зараз Тебе прийняти в Святій Євхаристії,
тому хоча б духовно прийди до мого серця!
Запрошую Тебе, відчиняючи навстіж двері мого серця, згадаючи Твої слова:
«Ось стою під дверима і стукаю.
Якщо хто почує Мій голос і відчинить двері,
Я ввійду до нього, і буду вечеряти з ним, а він зі Мною».
Я весь єднаюся з Тобою.
Ісусе, моє найвище Добро й моя солодка Любове!
Торкнись мого серця і запали його,
щоб воно завжди палало любов'ю до Тебе! Амінь.

Parish Announcements

We Welcome You!

If you are visiting our church today, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Thank you and God bless you for visiting with us today! We welcome all our visitors and guests who worship at our parish. We invite families and individuals who wish to become members to register by calling Fr. Ihor at (860) 617-6357.

Вітаємо Вас!

Якщо Ви відвідуєте нашу церкву сьогодні, наша парафіяльна громада рада вітати Вас тут! Щире спасибі Вам, і нехай Бог благословить Вас за Ваші відвідини з нами сьогодні! Ми запрошуємо сім'ї та осіб, які бажають стати членами, зареєструватися у нас по телефоні о. Ігоря на номер (860) 617-6357.

Please Pray for our Sick and Homebound Parishioners

Fr. Ihor Papka, Fr. Zbigniew Brzezicki, Oleh and Valentina Babski, Michaelle Baker, Marylou Blaisdell, Luba Dyky, Carmel Horangic, Christine Kolagji, John Koromaus, Helen Kucman, Martha and Ray Majkut, Karen and Jaroslaw Maksymowych, Jean Mandych, Sherri Martel, Katherine Masso, Jennifer McMillan, Katharine McNaughton, Jackie Morales, Lauren Morales, Jonathan Morales, Tanya and Ronald Morales, Alice Morris, Elizabeth Mozina, Olympia Pasicznyk, Billie Sheesley, Derek Stanley, Pauline Stanley, John Terninko, Elisha Wallace, Cindy Wilson, Dr. Mark Windt, Lauren Zelenski. Please contact Fr. Ihor if you would like to add a friend or loved one to this prayer list.

Ukrainian Traditional Vertep

On Sunday, January 8, 2023, our parish will be visited by a Ukrainian Traditional Vertep - Вертеп - a unique Christmas performance with sacred and secular parts. Vertep is the Ukrainian Christmas puppet theater that had its beginnings in the XVII century. It was first mentioned in 1667. Over time, Vertep became a traveling group of people with up to 40 characters, and the scenes exemplified daily life and activities. The Vertep theatre had numerous regional variants. The storyline is always the same – the conflict between good and evil in our souls. Evil is always vanquished and good always triumphs. Vertep was an illegal practice during the Soviet occupation of Ukraine but continued to be performed in secret as a way for the Ukrainian people to both rebel and preserve their culture.

Today, while forces of darkness are looming over Ukraine's wartime Christmas, the rich Nativity traditions of its people offer a light of hope to lead them through this joyous season. This truly Ukrainian tradition continues today and brings more hope, faith, and joy to everyone, by reminding us that good will always win over evil. We cherish Ukrainian traditions and culture and are thankful for everyone joining us to share this experience. Any donations given to the performers during the Vertep performance will be donated to our parish to support Ukrainian war refugees.

Happy Birthday, Fr. Ihor!

Please join us in the church hall today for coffee and pastries as we celebrate Fr. Ihor's birthday today. The parish wishes Fr. Ihor a Happy Birthday and a New Year abundantly filled with God's choicest blessings. Мнoгaя Лита, Fr. Ihor!

З Днем Народження, о. Ігорє!

Запрошуємо усіх сьогодні до церковної залі на каву та тістечка, бо ми нині святкуємо о. Ігоря день народження. Парафія бажає о. Ігорєві, з Днем Народження та Новим Роком, щастя, здоров'я та Божих обильних ласк. На многі та благі літа, о. Ігорє!

January Birthdays

The following parishioners are celebrating a birthday this month:

Jan. 1 – Father Ihor

Jan. 1 – Andrew B.

Jan. 2 – Nicole H.

Jan. 6 – Tanya M.

Jan. 6 – Nick H.

Jan. 8 – James V.

Jan. 17 – Anya V.

Jan. 19 – Isa B.

Jan. 19 – Lauren M.

Jan. 19 – Garrett H.

Jan. 30 – Violetta P.

Our parish community wishes this month's birthday celebrants peace, joy, love and good health on their special day as well as throughout the year. May our dear Lord grant all of you many more healthy, happy and blessed years. Happy Birthday and На Многая літа! (На Мнoгaя Лита!).

Day of Abstinence and Holy Day of Obligation

Please note that Theophany Eve (January 5th) is a day of abstinence. Consumption of meat and meat containing products are prohibited on that day. Also, January 6th is the feast of the Holy Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is a holy day of obligation and Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 7 PM followed by the Great Water Blessing. Please bring a small container to church so you can take some holy water home with you.

Yordan Home Blessings

Beginning on Sunday, January 8th, Fr. Ihor will be available to travel to parishioners' homes to bless them during the season of Yordan (Theophany). Father Ihor will be blessing homes on Saturdays and Sundays during the month of January. Please see Fr. Ihor if you would like to sign up to have your home blessed. Kindly have at least three dates and time slots in mind when you sign up so that we can accommodate everyone. Thank you.

Parish Services Cancellation Announcements on WMUR-TV

In the event of inclement weather, any cancellations of parish church services will be announced on WMUR television. Cancellations will also be posted on the parish Facebook page, which can be accessed directly via the Internet. Please check these resources when winter storms approach to see if services have been canceled.

Even if parish services have not been canceled, but weather or road conditions are poor, please remember to use caution and good judgment before deciding whether or not to travel to church, keeping your safety and that of your family as the most important priority. Thank you and please stay safe.

Christmas Yalynka Dinner

The Ladies' Sodality will be hosting the annual Christmas Yalynka dinner on Sunday, January 15, 2023 in the church hall after Divine Liturgy. All are invited to attend and there is no charge for this dinner. However, each family is asked to bring a dish to share to this pot luck dinner. Please see Martha to sign up for a dish to bring to the dinner. A raffle will also be held at the dinner. If you have any items to donate to the raffle, please also see Martha.

Weekly Reflection:

Learning about our Catholic Faith – The Great Water Blessing at Epiphany

One of the greatest feasts of the Eastern Catholic Church (celebrated since the second century) is the feast of the Epiphany or Theophany also known as Yordan. It commemorates the Baptism of Christ in the river Jordan by St. John the Baptist when God appeared in the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. As Jesus was standing in the water, the Holy Spirit in the appearance of a dove was seen hovering above Him, while the voice of God the Father was heard to say, "This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased!"

On this day, in our Ukrainian Catholic faith, it is customary to bless water. Today in Ukrainian Catholic churches, a vessel of water is sanctified — in a great ceremony, which includes a procession with the carrying of banners and the cross. In Ukraine as well as in communities in the U.S. and Canada where Ukrainians have settled, this blessing of water was sometimes held outside at a local body of water such as a river or lake. Weather permitting, the men of the community would build a large cross of ice blocks near where the water was blessed along with an altar table made of ice. The incensing of the water by the priest signifies the descent of the Holy Spirit during Christ's Baptism. During the ceremony, three special triplet candles are immersed in the water; this is to remind us that through Christ's Baptism our sins are destroyed and forgiven. After the ceremony, the people take some of the newly sanctified holy water to keep in their homes during the coming year.

On the evening before Yordan, which is called *Shchedriy Vechir*, (Bountiful Evening) a meatless meal similar to the one eaten on Christmas Eve is prepared and eaten. Carolers walk from house to house in the village singing *shchedrivky*, which are seasonal songs that wish good luck and a bountiful harvest to the master of the house and his family in the coming year. One of the most famous Ukrainian *shchedriks* is the song that has been translated into English and renamed "Carol of the Bells". The original Ukrainian lyrics speak of a little swallow that flies into the home of a farmer and speaks to him telling him that he will have a good harvest and many livestock and will make a lot of money selling them and that he has a beautiful dark eye-browed wife.

Also on Epiphany Eve, the Christmas tree would be taken down along with the *didukh* or sheaf of wheat, which had stood in the house since Christmas Eve, would have been carried out and burned in the orchard or pasture.

It is also the custom on Epiphany after the blessing of the water or in the days following this feast, for the priest to visit his parishioners at their homes and to bless their homes with holy water. In some areas, such as where great distances make visiting all the homes difficult, the father of the family may be the one who blesses the home.

The home is tidied up and prepared in advance of this visit, for it is appropriate to have the home in good order for this blessing. When the priest comes, he is accompanied by one of the family, either the oldest or the

youngest who walks with him through the house. While he sprinkles the rooms with holy water blessed on the feast of Yordan, the priest prays that the home is kept as a place of love and security for the family that lives there, and that the family be protected from all evil of body and soul, and that all who live there will receive abundantly of God's blessings for good health, hope and happiness, courage and confidence in the New Year, as well as an awareness and assurance of His lasting love and presence. This ceremony of the blessing of the home signifies the beginning of the New Year and reminds us of the Sacrament of Baptism when the soul is cleansed of original sin.

