

JANUARY 2016 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RECTOR

Archpriest John Dresko • December 13, 2015

METRICAL RECORDS 2015 (since last annual meeting)

Baptisms	17	Chrismations	1
Weddings	2	Burials	0

PASTORAL LIFE

Before going on to my report, a comment must be made about the metrical records listed above. There are no burials recorded in our parish metrical records for the past two years. But we have lost four parishioners. It is easy for me to announce that “other arrangements” had been made after their deaths. But the reality is that for three (the fourth was buried in California after pastoral care here), I had either limited access to minister to them (i.e., I was not informed of their conditions or that they were hospitalized, or actually **denied** permission to visit) or was simply informed of their deaths and the disposition of their bodies after the fact. I cannot be a priest to anyone unless I am allowed to be a priest, either by someone or someone’s family. I’ve been amazed during my whole time in Las Vegas (7.5 years now) that I do not have a large number of pastoral visitations per week. I used to think we were remarkably healthy. Now I suspect that people (or their families) just don’t inform me of their illnesses and sometimes even deaths. If you or a loved one is hospitalized, you need to inform me – the hospital will not. If a loved one dies, they should be afforded an Orthodox Christian burial.

THANKS

There are so many people who do so many things to help maintain the day-to-day life of St. Paul’s: To all those who serve on the parish council and fellowship committee, to all those who serve in the sanctuary or raise their voices to the glory of God in our worship services, to all those who teach in and organize our church school program, to those who decorate, clean, and maintain our church building and the vestments, to those who watch over our kitchen and hall and help make fellowship each week enjoyable, to those who organize and volunteer in our charitable outreach projects, to those who gather to study the Word of God, to those who simply offer up our parish and activities to God in prayer – thank you! As always, I offer special thanks for my wife, who not only directs the choir, but makes my ministry here so much easier by her energetic participation and leadership in a number of areas, her support of me, and her love.

LOOKING BACK

CHARITY

It is worthwhile in looking back on the past year to begin with the charitable outreach of our parish. We have, of course, the regular Feeding the Homeless project, which bi-monthly feeds approximately 200 people. In addition to food, we distribute hygiene kits, socks and clothing as available. The regulars who help with this have become very professional and efficient. It rarely takes more than a few hours from start to finish to accomplish everything including distribution of the outreach. An “extension” of this project is our assistance to the Guardian Foundation, a feeding the homeless project in Bullhead City, Arizona begun and coordinated by Jeremiah and Lacey Bezona. Each week, we generally are able to provide food from the coffee hour and kitchen

THE MESSENGER

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE ORTHODOX CHURCH • PO BOX 12635 • 5400 ANNIE OAKLEY DRIVE
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JANUARY 2016

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church • Las Vegas, Nevada

<p>31 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: E. HUFFMAN EPISTLE: PARKER POST-COMM: DEMKO CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>GREETERS JAN 3: WHEELER/CAMPBELL JAN 10: MCAULEY/OSBURN JAN 17: CAMPBELL/MASON JAN 24: OSBURN/CHONG JAN 31: MCAULEY/STAFFORD</p>			<p>FAST FREE 1 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD</p>	<p>FAST FREE 2 CHOIR REHEARSAL, 3 PM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>	
<p>FAST FREE 3 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: BROOKS EPISTLE: J. HUFFMAN POST-COMM: WHEELER CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>FAST FREE 4</p>	<p>STRICT FAST 5 VESPERS/BLESSING OF WATER, 6:30 PM</p>	<p>FAST FREE 6 DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD BLESSING OF LAKE MEAD HOUSE BLESSINGS BEGIN ERITREAN SERVICE, 6:00 PM</p>	<p>7 DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (OLD STYLE CHRISTMAS)</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
<p>10 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: DEMKO POST-COMM: STRANSKY INSTALLATION OF PARISH COUNCIL CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 PARISH COUNCIL, 6:00 PM</p>	<p>13 DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS</p>	<p>14 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16 FEEDING THE HOMELESS, 10:30 AM GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
<p>17 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: ABRAHAM EPISTLE: TESFAY POST-COMM: PARKER CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19 FATHER JOHN OUT OF TOWN, JANUARY 18-21, SYOSSET, NY</p>	<p>20 ADULT CLASS ONLY, 7:00 PM</p>	<p>21 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM NO COFFEE CHAT</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS CHILI COOKOFF</p>
<p>24 DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: J. HUFFMAN EPISTLE: ABRAHAM POST-COMM: BROOKS CHURCH SCHOOL</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 DAILY VESPERS, 6:30 PM ADULT CLASS</p>	<p>28 ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

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PARISH COUNCIL

Virginia Hood, Vice-President
Karen Short, Treasurer
Catherine Wilkalis, Secretary

Gregory Brooks
James Brophy
Kevin McAuley
Karen Murphy
Litsa Osburn
Joseph Wheeler

SUB-COMMITTEES

Building & Grounds
Kevin McAuley

Eritrean & Ethiopian Outreach
Tekeste Nuguru

Russian Outreach
Natalia Minkoff

Church School/Youth
Dn. Stephen Osburn, Jr.
Amy McAuley
Stephan Tanksley

Fellowship Committee
Charity Committee

to support their weekly feeding. Individuals have also offered support.

Besides feeding those less fortunate, we also had outreach through IOCC. We participated in the School Supply Bag project, which sent supplies to orphans and displaced refugees from Syria.

Planning has begun on having a number of our young people and volunteers travel to Project Mexico next summer to help build a house for a family that is homeless. Deacon Stephen will speak about that.

The health of a parish can very deeply be measured by looking at how much is done simply “for us,” and how much is done “for others.” We will continue to use the opportunities that God provides to reach out to those who cannot help themselves.

FELLOWSHIP

Last year at the annual meeting we had just really begun a concerted effort to plan a number of activities to simply foster fellowship in our parish. They were not meant to raise funds per se, although they had a cost and raised modest amounts of support for the parish. Rather, we wanted to have a regular calendar of opportunities for parishioners to gather together in a

social setting (often revolving around food!). We had:

Chili Cookoff again in January
A wine-tasting in May
A “St. Paul’s” night with the LV 51s
Oktoberfest in October
The Christmas Cookie Walk
And, of course, regular fellowship

on Sundays at Coffee Hour

I believe I speak for everyone when I praise the spirit of fellowship and friendship that has blossomed in our parish, not just because of the planned events. But the events offer a focused chance to get together.

The Annual Benefit Dinner was held last February and was a wonderful time and the only true and major fundraiser for our parish. We thank Pam Campbell and all those who helped for their tireless efforts for many years to coordinate that project. However, most everyone agreed it was time to rejoice in our memories of that event and move on to something else. Our committee will try to replace the event with something as nice, but that is in flux right now and our budget has hopes of the income being replaced. If you bought tickets to past events, we may just ask you to add the amount you would have spent to your regular

MARK THE DATES

January 1: The Circumcision of our Lord; Divine Liturgy, 9:00 AM

January 1-4: FAST FREE

January 2: Choir Rehearsal, 3:00 PM

January 5: EVE OF THEOPHANY (Strict Fast)

Vespers and Blessing of Water, 6:30 PM

January 6: THEOPHANY, Liturgy 8:00 AM, Blessing of Lake Mead

January 7: Synaxis of St. John the Baptist, Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM

January 10: Installation of 2016 Parish Council

January 12: Parish Council Meeting, 6:00 PM

January 18-21: Father John out of town (Finance Meeting, NY)

January 23: Chili Cookoff following Vespers

February 2: MEETING OF THE LORD

Send email addresses and corrections to:

fatherjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

support of the parish.

EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

The parish is very busy with all that we do liturgically, sacramentally, socially, and administratively. I am busy, in addition, with diocesan and national responsibilities. I serve on the Bishop's Advisory Committee and our Diocesan Council (four meetings or more per year), our Diocesan Finance Committee (one meeting, other phone conferences per year), am the clergy representative of our diocese to the Metropolitan Council of the OCA (two meetings per year in New York as well as occasional phone meetings), and in September was elected as Chairman of the OCA's Finance Committee (adding one more meeting in New York per year plus phone meetings). I am also asked to occasionally speak at other parishes and to consult on various clergy matters.

But besides daily and regular activities, there are two events from the past year to highlight. The first, of course, was the visit of His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin, for the ordination of Stephen Osburn to the Holy Diaconate on March 15. Following his ordination, Deacon Stephen returned to St. Vladimir's Seminary and graduated in June with his Master of Divinity degree. He has returned to St. Paul's and will serve the Church here for the time being. I am very pleased with his dedication in serving – he serves with attention, skill and piety. I am also pleased to announce that we have set a tentative date of March 6, 2016 (Meatfare Sunday) for his ordination to the Holy Priesthood. Following his ordination to the Priesthood, he will remain attached to St. Paul's for further priestly formation and to assist me. May God bless him and Matushka Lindsey with many years of service in God's Holy Church!

The second event was the 18th

All-American Council, which was held in July in Atlanta. Much has been written and publicized about the Council. You can read all that. I don't want to go over the various decisions, although the revision of the Statute was very important. I simply want to say that it was my thirteenth All-American Council, and I have never experienced a better spirit at an AAC. The past ten years have been so difficult for our Church with scandal and upheaval. The Address of the Metropolitan was the best address I have ever heard from a bishop. He single-handedly constructed the spirit of the Council. Finally, I really never thought I would live to see the OCA finally embrace a Biblical system of financing the Church. I spent 25 years speaking and hoping about that day. It finally came. May God bless these efforts moving forward!

BOND PROGRAM

In my annual report last year, I said these words: "It is now time to begin work on eliminating the last albatross around our necks – the mortgage. I am going to invite to a parish summit selected professionals with the resources and connections to help us either refinance our mortgage through instruments other than a bank or to simply find a way to pay it off. I know that God will bless our efforts if we prayerfully and with trust begin this work. Please pray that He light our path to this destination."

As you all know, God has blessed that effort. We worked with Share Financial Services, a church bonding company, to issue a \$500,000 bond which paid off our mortgage with the Bank of Nevada and will fund a number of needed capital projects including, but not limited to, the painting of the church, replacement of the doors and a contingency for the roof as needed. If there are enough funds, we

may be able to complete the iconography of the church. Kevin will speak more about this later.

Although this program does not eliminate our debt (actually, it has gone up), it has allowed us to benefit both the parish and those who bought bonds. We are paying ourselves now instead of a bank. Parishioners have the option of cashing out their bonds when they mature, donating them back to the parish, donating the interest, or finding other inventive ways to help the parish. The monthly payment remains the same as it was with a bank mortgage and will never change, but the interest goes to **you**. The hope of the parish council is that we will be able to accelerate the payments to finally eliminate the debt altogether. Until that day comes, we are still better off loaning ourselves the money instead of depending on banks.

We have so much for which to be thankful at St. Paul's. Our temple is beautiful. Our worship is prayerful and filled with glory. Our community continues to witness a steady stream of people finding the fullness of Christ here and uniting to the Church. We see others getting ready to join them. I believe the spirit here is one of love and divine friendship. I see and hope for great things in 2016.

Finally, in the past year, there are many times when I have fallen short as a father, pastor, preacher, and priest. For this and any possible offense I may have committed against any one of you, I beg your forgiveness. May God continue to bless St. Paul's with His goodness and light. May the Lord bless you from Zion and may each of you see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

Father John

FEASTDAYS

During January, we celebrate the following feasts:

CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD

January 1

DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM (FRI)

THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

January 6

VESPERS WITH BLESSING OF WATER,
6:30 PM (TUES)

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (WED)

**BLESSING OF LAKE MEAD IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWS LITURGY**

SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
(OLD STYLE CHRISTMAS)

January 7

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (THUR)

LAKE MEAD/HOUSE BLESSINGS

This year, we will be going directly to Lake Mead to bless the lake following liturgy on Theophany (Wednesday). Following the blessing, everyone is welcome to join us for breakfast in Boulder City. This is a change from previous years.

A sign-up list is available in the vestibule for those who would like Father John to come and bless the house. Sign your name and phone number and check the preferred time of day. If you have a special request (would like to serve dinner, etc.), please note that. Father will then contact you about the date and time.

TRAVELS

Father John will be away January 18-21 in Syosset, NY for the annual meeting of Treasurers and Chancellors for the OCA. As OCA Finance Committee chairman, he is asked to attend. Matushka Liz will still be here and you can contact her (860-983-1083) if you have a pastoral emergency.

Because of this trip, the normal Parish Council meeting will be held

one week earlier than usual (January 12 instead of January 19) at the same time, 6:00 PM.

NATIVITY FAST/FEAST

The annual Nativity Fast continues until Christmas, December 25.

Regular communicants should make an effort to come to the Sacrament of Confession before Christmas.

Then, we are fast-free from the until the Eve of Theophany (Jan 5), which is **strict-fast**.

SLAVONIC SERVICE

Father Alexander will be unable to come to St. Paul's in January because of his own parish commitment. We anticipate a normal visit schedule in February.

FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Our next Feeding the Homeless project date is January 16, 2016. If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches (or funds to provide such), it would be appreciated.

CHILI COOKOFF

Our annual Great Chili Cookoff will take place following Vespers on January 23. Cost is \$5.00 for all you can eat (or stomach!), beer and wine available for a separate charge. Join us and watch Cathy Wilkalis defend her title as Greatest Chili Cook!

PLEDGE FORMS

The 2016 Pledge Form has been emailed along with the Proposed 2016 Operating Budget. Please prayerfully fill out your form and return it to Father or Karen Short no later than December 13. Please consider volunteering your time for one of the duties available in addition to your financial pledge.

PROJECT MEXICO

St Paul's has teamed up with Amazon

to have a small bit of your purchase go towards our Project Mexico Youth Trip.

A little bit about what we are doing: "Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage performs works of mercy and helps others do works of mercy in the name of Jesus Christ, transcending cultural barriers by building homes for the poor in Mexico.

Since 1988, Project Mexico has been building safe, secure and weather-tight homes for some of the most impoverished families in Northern Mexico. Every home is constructed over the course of four days and built entirely with volunteer labor. Once complete, these homes are provided so that these families can build a brighter future for themselves and their children."

So before you order anything from Amazon online, type in the link and thank you for your support.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/88-0242982>

ADULT FAITH FORUM

Our Wednesday evening Adult Faith Forum sessions continue. We will have Daily Vespers at 6:30 PM, followed by a one hour discussion. This year's topic is *Christ and the Church in the Old Testament*. Please join us!

On Wednesday, January 20, there will be **class only** (no Vespers) at 7:00 PM.

CHARITY

Our normal collections of food for Friends of the Desert continue. Needs: jelly, jam, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned tuna/chicken. Thank you!

ORTHODOX VENDORS

A list of businesses that our parish uses or are owned and operated by Orthodox Christians (some parishio-

ners). We provide this information for you to consider if you need services.

CB Air Conditioning
Cedomir Blagojevic
(702) 493-0295

Dolphin Court Salon & Day Spa
7581 W. Lake Mead Blvd.
(702) 946-6000

Kyklos Café (Greek food)
Galleria Mall
Sophocles Frangakis
(702) 450-1515

Westfield Eye Center
C. Edward Yee, MD
2575 Lindell Road
(702) 362-3937

PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

We ask everyone to remember our parish in daily prayer:
Lord, God and Savior of all, we thank You for the blessing of St. Paul parish in our lives. May Your word become alive in each and every one of us who strive to follow You. Please bless and multiply all the gifts – time, talent and treasure – which are given in thanks to benefit our mission and glorify Your name. Bless and multiply the givers and help us all to make present Your Kingdom. For You are the Giver of all that is good, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

SACRAMENTS/SPECIAL SERVICES

Please follow these guidelines.

- Baptisms. A personal meeting scheduled with Fr. John will be necessary to schedule any baptism requested.
- Matrimony. A date and time for weddings must be requested at least six months (preferably twelve) in

advance. There will be premarital sessions for both bride and groom to attend.

- Memorials (Panikhida). Requests for a memorial must be made at least one week in advance. If possible, the service should be served on Saturday. Other requests will be met as pastorally possible.

PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS DECEMBER 15, 2015 MEETING

Rector's Report: Reminded parish council members that their installation will take place on Sunday, 10 Jan 2016.

Father will be in NY for OCA finance committee on 19 Jan. This will change the date of the January parish council meeting from the 19th (third Tuesday) to the 12th (second Tuesday). While in New York, Father will also schedule a brief visit with family on the 20th.

In February he will need to be away again for Metropolitan Council from 16–18 Feb. Again, the parish council meeting will be moved to the second Tuesday the 9th.

No substitute clergy will be needed since in both instances only the weekdays are affected.

Vice President's Report: No report.

Treasurer's Report: Karen Short distributed our financials before the meeting:

Capital Fund: \$4,099.86
Rainy Day: \$12,012.12
Icon Fund: \$10,255.21

Income for November was \$20,811.81, with expenses of \$21,423.37 for a **deficit of \$611.56.**

YTD 2015 (Jan-Nov)
2015 Inc \$ 225,139.26
2015 Exp \$ 208,013.79
Inc over Exp \$ 17,125.47

All parish finances including accounts payable are totally current.

COMMITTEES

Building and Grounds: Projects listed on the 2016 Capital Projects as presented at the annual meeting will be done as scheduled.

Father informed council that Teresa Pechonis who has been cleaning our parish hall, office and restrooms so efficiently over the past several years will no longer continue after the end of December 2015. Her schedule no longer allows it. Discussion about a replacement ensued. Ginny Hood has a commercial cleaning crew for her school she is satisfied with and will ask them about price estimates for a twice a month service.

Charity: Cathy initiated discussion about the commitment this parish has toward charity projects:

So far we have two major ones – the homeless feeding project coordinated by Cathy Wilkalis and the IOCC “School Bags for Syria” project coordinated by Rae Pattison. Rae is working this project out of her love and concern for the suffering refugee children of Syria. She is doing this despite the fact that she is not even officially a member of the parish and has put in a great deal of her own time, material and even financial resources despite a demanding and unpredictable work schedule.

Existing programs have weaknesses:

- There is no overall parish plan in support of charity projects. Before we can even think about expanding current projects or adding others, a functional plan of action needs to be in place.
- There is no charity committee, no back-up personnel support in case the project coordinators are unable to supervise due to unforeseen circumstances. Both are

coordinated by individuals working independently.

- Projects lack a definite timeline of activities or schedule of completion. Coordination and cooperation with other parish functions like church school could be improved.
- There is a line item in the budget for “charity” but concerns exist over its availability.
- Cathy voiced her impression that over the years she has felt the Charity programs have not been treated with the respect and concern necessary for such a valuable aspect of parish life.
- After discussion it was decided that:
- A charity committee will be formed. This will require at least 2 additional dedicated individuals. Father will announce that we are looking for people. Rae and Cathy will also check with possible interested individuals. Cathy agreed to chair it. 2016 will be a test year for the IOCC projects.
- The committee will have regular meeting times and will function much like the Fellowship Committee currently does in planning, setting goals and accountability.
- Karen Short offered that if there are funds remaining in the Charity line item at the end of the fiscal year, they will be made available for charity projects as long as the funds are used before the end of the year and all purchases are accounted for with receipts and spreadsheet. Each budget year starts anew.

IOCC: Joe Wheeler reminded council of upcoming IOCC representative’s visit and presentation Sunday, 20 Dec during Coffee Hour.

Church School/Youth: Reported on Project Mexico at Parish Annual Meet-

ing. Only added item is that St. John’s parish is going to pay the expenses for their one young person attending. Dn. Stephen and Amy McAuley are still trying to work out some details involving Project Mexico, and will meet after the holidays.

Stated that Amy McAuley wants to form a committee with Deacon Stephen and Steve Tanksley plus the Youth Group. They want joint functions together with St. John’s church and get more kids involved. Right now in the youth committee Ivy is the president and Eden and Lydia are regular participants.

Eritrean/Ethiopian: The funeral for the son of Genet Bokre, Yonas, will take place at St. Paul’s this Thursday at 10:00 AM.

Fellowship: The Fellowship Committee is meeting at Father John’s house Thursday evening at 7:00 PM.

The Cookie walk was not well attended on Saturday 5 December despite extensive publicity in the local neighborhood and within the parish. It earned \$150 on Saturday, and \$430 on Sunday for a total of \$580. There was a general sentiment that it was too much work for the amount earned. The Oktoberfest was successful because many items were donated.

Karen Short asked a question about what we are going to do for another major fund raising event. She was insistent the parish should not depend on fellowship events to pay the bills. Father John decided to wait to see what ideas come out of the committee meeting Thursday.

Outreach/website: No report.

Russian: Father Alexander will not be here in January.

Stewardship: Thirteen pledge forms were received this past Sunday, some for very large amounts.

OLD BUSINESS

Iconography: Status quo.

Bond Program: The program is essentially completed. Our only remaining obligation is to make payments on time to the trust company.

NEW BUSINESS

Annual Meeting: Observed that the Annual Meeting went well and took 1.5 hours. Everything was covered. There is nothing to add.

Security Concern: Informed council there is a cultic quasi-religious organization called Koosha in Las Vegas that has been targeting Catholic churches. They consist of a group of 5–6 African American men wearing blue shirts, who disrupt churches mostly during lightly attended weekday services. Father stated we need a plan to deal with this if it should happen to St. Paul’s. Greg Brooks agreed to develop a written contingency plan and we will have mock exercises. Meanwhile, Father stated the plan is to have the biggest guys in the congregation escort them out, call the police, and have people record as much video on their cell phones as possible for documentation.

Wall Calendars: There was no one to sponsor the purchase of 2016 Orthodox wall calendars this year. Father ordered 200 at \$5.00 each. After discussion about ways to pay for them the council agreed to fund these from the missionary outreach money that was left over at the end of this year. The calendars will then be sold to the parish at the bookstore for a donation and the money earned, potentially as much as \$1000, will be applied to Project Mexico.

Closed Session: Father briefly discussed a private matter with the council.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, January 12, 2016.

PARISH DIPTYCHS

This list of parish departed is to remind us all of those whom we love and miss and to spur us to remember them in our daily prayers. They will be remembered in the proskomedia before each liturgy.

MONTH OF JANUARY

Mark Medick

January 6, 1991

George Gavrilov

January 10, 1991

George Menas, Jr.

January 11, 1992

Martha Jean Simmons

January 14, 1993

Mehret Berhanu

January 15, 2009

Natalia Lissenkoug

January 17, 2000

George Zonitch

January 19, 2001

Louise (Ljubica) Ford

January 20, 1994

David Vranesh

January 21, 1991

Helen Hoffman

January 21, 2003

Roy Babich

January 22, 1989

Frank Theodore Walko

January 22, 2002

Cornell Lazar

January 25, 2015

Ethyl Caras

January 28, 2008

Stana "Stella" Kekich

January 30, 2008

THE WINTER PASCHA

The liturgical services for Christmas, officially called The Nativity According to the Flesh of Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, are consciously patterned after the services for the festival of the Pascha of the Lord, the holy Resurrection. There is a forty-day fast. There are prefast preparations. There are the special royal hours with their prophecies, epistles, gospels, and hymns on the eve of the feast, followed by the vesperal liturgy of St. Basil the Great. There is the solemn all-night vigil, crowned by the matin's canon and hymns. And finally, after the Eucharistic Celebration of St. John Chrysostom on the day of the feast itself, the celebration continues to its completion in the festival of The Meeting of the Lord in the Temple forty days later. At the center of the festal season remains the original "Festival of Light," the holy Epiphany, officially called in the Orthodox Church: The Holy Theophany of Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. The liturgical verses and hymns for Christmas and Epiphany, the Pascha of Christ's incarnation and manifestation in the flesh, repeat those of Easter, the Pascha of Christ's death and resurrection. The Lord's birth and baptism are directly connected to His dying and rising. He was born in order to die. He was baptized in order to be raised.

Nativity/Theophany

Today, He who holds the whole creation in His hand is born of a virgin.

He whose essence none can touch is bound in swaddling-clothes as a mortal man.

God who in the beginning fashioned the heavens lies in a manger.

He who rained manna on His people in the wilderness is fed on milk from His mother's breast.

The Bridegroom of the Church summons the wise men.

The Son of the Virgin accepts their gifts.

We worship Thy Nativity, O Christ!
We worship Thy Nativity, O Christ!
We worship Thy Nativity, O Christ!

Show us also Thy glorious Theophany!

Pascha

Today, He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the tree.

The King of angels is decked with a crown of thorns.

He who wraps the heavens in a cloud is wrapped in the purple of mockery.

He who freed Adam in the Jordan is slapped in the face.

The Bridegroom of the Church is affixed to the cross with nails.

The Son of the Virgin is pierced with a spear.

We worship Thy Passion, O Christ!
We worship Thy Passion, O Christ!
We worship Thy Passion, O Christ!

Show us also Thy glorious Resurrection!

Jesus lay as an infant in the cavern in the reign of Caesar Augustus that He might lay in the tomb under Pontius Pilate. He was hounded by Herod that He might be caught by Caiaphas. He was buried in baptism that He might descend into death through the Cross. He was worshipped by wise men that the whole of creation might adore Him in His triumph over death.

The Pascha of His Cross was prepared by the Pascha of His Coming. The Pascha of His Resurrection was begun by the Pascha of His Incarnation. The Pascha of His Glorification was foretold by the Pascha of His Baptism. This is what Christians celebrate each year in what Father Alexander Schmemmann was the first to call "the Winter Pascha."

Father Thomas Hopko,
The Winter Pascha

