



# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 15, 2013

### A Warm Welcome!

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

### Helping a Needy Family

For the next two Sundays, you are invited to make a donation to help buy Christmas presents for a needy family, with nine children, whose house recently caught fire, destroying much of their possessions. To help, please earmark your check "Gifts for Family".

### The Schedule of Services for Christmas

Christmas Eve: Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

- ❖ 9:00am – Vespersal Divine Liturgy
- ❖ 7:00pm – Vigil

Christmas Day: Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>

- ❖ 9:00am – Festal Divine Liturgy; Coffee hour
- ❖ 7:00pm – Great Vespers

Thursday, December 26<sup>th</sup>

- ❖ 9:00am – Akathist for the Nativity

### About Confession Before Christmas

With all the hustle and bustle that revolves around Christmas preparations, let's not forget to prepare our innermost chamber for Christ.

### The Sunday After Christmas – December 29<sup>th</sup>

St. Basil's Bread, Open House in the Rectory, and Christmas Carols.

### 2014 Calendars & Pocket Planners

The new calendars and pocket planners are available for pickup at the candle stand. Please earmark your payment "Bookstore". The calendars are \$5.00 and the pocket planners \$4.00.

### Safety First

Everyone is asked to be particularly attentive to safety, especially in the parking lot. Parents are asked to please stay with their children at all times or leave them in the supervision of another adult. First-aid boxes are available in both bathrooms.

### Appreciation is Extended

to those who stay after on Sundays to help clean the chapel, hall, bathrooms, and grounds. Thank you and may God bless you!

### The Post-Communion Prayers / Chapel Cleaning

If not staying in the chapel to listen to the post-communion prayers, read during the veneration of the Cross, please make your exit as quietly as possible so as not to disrupt the service. Additionally, it is requested that only adults blow out the candles and clean-up the chapel, and only after the prayers are finished. Thank you!



### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>

#### Sunday of the Forefathers

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

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>

7:00p.m. Vespers

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>

7:00p.m. Vespers

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>

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

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup>

#### Sunday Before the Nativity

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

*"Compel them to come to the feast,  
 that my house may be filled!"*

Luke 14:23

### READER SCHEDULE

**Sunday, Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Gabriela Jones

**Sunday, Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>**

Kathy Parrish



CASH FLOWS THROUGH 11/30/13					CASH FLOWS IN DECEMBER 2013					FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT		
OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	ASSETS & LIABILITIES – 12/15		
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	3,770	3,547	1,325	375	+1,173	+3,208	0	-3,313

## ASK FATHER: 1 QUESTIONS / 1 ANSWERS

### Q. Why is the Nativity of Christ celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>?

A. There are two main explanations as to why the Church chose to celebrate the Nativity of Christ on December 25<sup>th</sup>.

The first says that the day was chosen to oppose the great pagan feast of the sun god, which was celebrated near December 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Winter Solstice, the time of year when the days started to get longer again (at least in the northern hemisphere). It is believed that the Church chose December 25<sup>th</sup>, because it ensured that Christians would be fasting during the pagan celebration and would therefore not easily be tempted to participate. And also because it would help the pagans to leave off worshiping the false sun god and instead celebrate the coming of the True God, "the Sun of Righteousness".

The second explanation says that the day was chosen in relation to the feast of the Annunciation, which was celebrated on March 25<sup>th</sup> commemorating the supernatural conception of the Lord in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Annunciation was celebrated on this day because of the belief in the ancient world that great men died on the same day as they were conceived. Since the Lord was believed to have been crucified on March 25<sup>th</sup>, it also came to be believed that He was likewise conceived on this day. And since it followed that the Lord's birth would be nine months after His conception, the feast of His Nativity was set on December 25<sup>th</sup>.



## THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

*From Parish Publishing, LLC*



Let the theme of this Christmas be giving and receiving. Receiving first, the amazing grace of God in Christ Jesus. Then to give. A gift for someone in need. A thank-offering of money for the Lord's work at your church. The gift of ourselves: our souls and bodies, our time and talents. What do we have that we did not receive?

Love is faith in action. Two of the most important questions we ask ourselves are: "Whom do I love?" and "Who loves me?" As Christians we put faith into action by extending our concern for people beyond ourselves. We show our concern for others in our actions and relationships. Is our concern for others Christ-like? Do we reach out to help people in need?

The meaning of stewardship has to do with 100%, rather than 2, 3, or even 10%. All people are stewards. The only uncertainty is what kind. We are stewards of God's gifts to us: our time on this earth, our material resources, our talents, our very life itself. It is the Lord's world in which we live, and it is to God that we are responsible.

## SENSE OF HUMOR NEEDED: CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

- ❖ Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.
- ❖ Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.
- ❖ Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10 AM. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done.
- ❖ Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church.. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
- ❖ The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.



## ASK FATHER: 4 QUESTIONS / 4 ANSWERS

### Q. Is it an Orthodox practice to pray in one's own words? Or do we only pray with prayer books?

A. This is an excellent question, and the answer is definitely "yes" as Orthodox Christians we should learn to pray in our own words. But before prayer in one's own words can develop properly, one must first learn how to pray and what to pray for. This is why the disciples asked Christ to teach them to pray, so that they could pray in spirit and truth.



Now, as we know, prayer to God can take on a variety of forms, but as St. Basil the Great says there are four types of prayer which are absolutely necessary for the Christian to develop in order to have a healthy relationship with God: 1) petition – in which we ask for those things necessary for salvation; 2) repentance – in which we confess our sins and change our life by keeping the commandments; 3) thanksgiving – in which we offer to God our gratitude for all He has done for us; 4) praise – in which we glorify God, being enrapt in His divine goodness. Since the prayers of the Church include all four of these types of prayer, they help us become well rounded Christians. They help us not only avoid unhealthy types of prayer such as complaining or self-justification, but they also help us move beyond simply asking God for things in a selfish way, to giving Him thanks for everything, confessing our sins before Him, and praising Him for His great goodness.

These prayers of the Church which we find in prayer books were written by the Saints, those men and women who passed through all the stages of the spiritual life on their way to union with God. One could even say that the Saints have left us their prayers as a spiritual roadmap to the Kingdom, for they teach us not only how and what we should pray for on our Christian journey but also what our hearts should feel and how our minds should think. When we make the prayers of the Church our own through attention and feeling we put ourselves on that same straight and narrow path which the Saints themselves took, that path which leads from earth to heaven.

Now it will happen that after time, when we start to become accustomed to praying in the manner of the Saints, we will feel prayer taking on its own life within us, and even when we do not have our prayer books before us we will start to feel the need to 1) seek those things necessary for salvation, 2) ask the Lord's forgiveness and repent, 3) offer Him thanksgiving, and 4) praise God. At these times, when we are moved by the Spirit, our prayer can take on its own words and be very pleasing to God.

### Q. How should we pray in our own words?

A. Prayer in our own words should be simple and direct. There is no need for eloquence or verbosity. In fact, at times there is no need for words at all. God knows what is in our minds and hearts even before we have a chance to verbalize our thoughts and feelings. It is enough simply to say, "Lord, have mercy" or "Thank You, Lord". Or to say the Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me" or in the plural form, "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on us". Whatever our pray is, it should be spiritual not intellectual, it should come from the heart, wherein resides the Holy Spirit who cries unto God, "Abba, Father!"

### Q. What is the best way to develop this spiritual prayer?

A. Each person is different and no two peoples' prayer life develops in exactly the same way. However, generally speaking we should apply ourselves to both prayer with books as well as prayer in our own words. In the morning and evening, and before and after meals, we should use the prayers given to us by the Church, those prayers which we find in Orthodox prayer books. And at all other times, whether we be at home or work, during the day or at night, we should seek to remember God through short simple prayers such as "Lord, have mercy" or the Jesus Prayer.

The more we apply ourselves to continual prayerful remembrance of God, the more we will start to see a change in our lives. We will become not only more sensitive to the Lord's presence among us and within us, but also more sensitive to the presence of our neighbor and his or her temporal and eternal needs. We will begin to become more spiritual people, not in the prideful sense – may the Lord preserve us from this – but in the sense that we will start to realize are destiny to live in loving, self-sacrificial communion with God and each other.



**Q. How do prayer and the keeping of the commandments actually affect our daily lives? Don't we say that everything that happens to us is part of God's providence? If so, what's the point? We can't really change our destiny, can we?**

**A.** Though the Lord works in mysterious ways, arranging all things according to His Providence, we do actually have a crucial part to play in choosing our own destiny, both in this life and the next.

As the Scriptures teach us, just because God is all-powerful and always desires what is best for us, this does not mean that He will force us to enter into His Kingdom. He respects our free will so much that He even allows us to choose hell, both in this life and the next. Though He desires to shower us with His goodness in an infinite measure, in order not to infringe on our free will, He limits His goodness to us to the measure that we are



willing to receive it from Him by working with Him - keeping His commandments, praying to Him, etc..

That's why when we keep the commandments or pray "Lord have mercy" we should remind ourselves that we are not trying to convince the Lord to be merciful to us - how silly would it be to think that we sinners can convince the Lord of infinite goodness, love, and wisdom to be more merciful or more loving. Prayer and the

keeping of the commandments have their power to change our destiny not because we convince God to do something better for us, but because through prayer and the keeping of the commandments we become humbler and more open to His action in our lives - we allow Him to work wonders on our behalf - the greatest wonder being the gift of salvation. In the spiritual life, the simple rule is: the measure in which we change (repent, turn to the Lord, keep the commandments, etc) is the same measure in which we will receive God's mercy. I think that this is really what St. Anthimos of Chois was getting at when he said that "the Goodness of God is so rich in graces, that it seeks a cause to have mercy on a person."

Anyway, it is a daily struggle (for all of us) to put Him first, but the great thing about it is that when we do we are guaranteed that everything will turn out for the best (even if we can't always see it from our human perspective). Hard work in the spiritual life always is worth it.

## FINDING GOD

Seek God daily. But seek Him in your heart, not outside it. And when you find Him, stand with fear and trembling, like the Cherubim and the Seraphim, for your heart has become a throne of God. But in order to find God, become humble as dust before the Lord, for the Lord abhors the proud, whereas He visits those that are humble in heart.

St. Nectarios of Aegina (+1920)



## A PRAYER FOR ONE'S PARISH PRIEST



O Lord Jesus Christ, enkindle the heart of Thy priest, \_\_\_\_\_, with the fire of zealous love for Thee, that he may always seek Thy glory; Give him strength that he may labor unceasingly in Thine earthly vineyard for the salvation of our souls and the glory of Thine all-honorable and majestic Name: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



## A PRAYER FOR ONE WHO IS ILL

O holy Father, heavenly Physician of our souls and bodies, who hast sent Thine Only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to heal all our ailments and deliver us from death: do Thou visit and heal Thy servant \_\_\_\_\_, granting him release from pain and restoration to health and vigor, that he may give thanks unto Thee and bless Thy holy Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

