

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF JANUARY 13, 2013

SUNDAY, JANUARY 13TH

Sunday After Theophany

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

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19TH

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

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20TH

33rd Sunday of Pentecost

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

In spite of our sinfulness, the Grace of the Holy Spirit, conferred by baptism in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, still shines in our hearts with the inextinguishable light of Christ ... and when the sinner turns to the way of repentance the light smooths away every trace of the sins committed, clothing the former sinner in the garments of incorruption, spun of the Grace of the Spirit.

St. Seraphim of Sarov

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Jan. 20th

Gabriela Jones

Sunday, Jan. 27th

Kathy Parrish



Welcome Visitors!

We are very pleased to have you with us today! Please consider staying after the service for fellowship at our coffee hour in the hall.

Parish Council Meeting – Today, Jan. 13th

will/should be brief and only to prepare for the Annual meeting.

Annual Meeting – Next Sunday, Jan. 20th

The 2013 Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, January 20th, following the Divine Liturgy and coffee hour. All full-time and part-time members, as well as visitors to the Mission are asked to attend.



The March for Life in Washington – Friday, Jan. 25th

This annual event mourns the legalization of abortion in 1973 and affirms the sanctity of human life at all stages of development. All Orthodox Christians are encouraged to attend. More details on page two of this bulletin.

New Photos

from yesterday's Blessing of the Atlantic with St. George's may be found on our website. Check them out!



Stewardship Envelopes for 2013

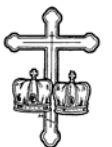
If you haven't yet picked up your envelopes for 2013, please do so at the usher's stand. Please also sign your name to the list of envelop users. There are envelopes available for everyone.

Did You Know?

Our diocesan website is wdcoca.org. News, photos, and more pertaining to the life of the diocese can be found here.

Marriage of Olga and Vladimir – Sunday, January 27th

Questions and congratulations, please see Olga



The 2013 Calendars and Pocket Planners

from St. Tikhon's are in. Calendars are \$5.00 a piece and pocket-planners are \$4.00. We have ordered extras so you may purchase them even if you didn't order any.

The 2013 Directory Sign-up Sheet

is for everyone associated with the Mission in any fashion, both parishioners and friends. Please be sure that you are not only listed in the draft copy at the candle stand but also that your information is full and accurate.



Living: Fr. Alexander Atty, Fr. Christian, Mat. Dunia, Hayley, Tyler Pelesh, Wallace & Michelle, John Trax, Maleah Morsey, Victoria Kokkinos, Karen Nichols, Denise Royal, Jane Koshutko, Nina Gordon, Mirela & Chris, Bruce Eckerd, Stella, Ari, Nedelina, Liliana, Nada and child, Jess and child, Irene Clenney, **Departed:** Fr. Michael Mihalick, Kathryn, Avramia.

CASH FLOWS						FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT					
OPERATING THRU 12/31/12			RENOVATION THRU 12/31/12			JANUARY OPERATING			ASSETS & LIABILITIES – 1/13/13		
Income	Expense	Net	Income	Expense	Net	Income	Goal	Difference	Checking	Overdue	Due 2/2014
69,126	59,676	+9,450	73,436	95,780	-22,344	1,001	4,858	-3,857	+2,399	-2,155	-29,740

A PRAYER FOR DURING PREGNANCY

Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, Source of life and immortality, we thank Thee, that Thou hast enabled us in wedlock to become partakers of Thy blessing and gift, for Thou hast said, O Master, "Grow and multiply and you will fill the earth." We thank Thee and pray: bless this fruit of our body which Thou hast granted us, show Thy mercy upon it and enliven it with Thy Holy Spirit. Make its body to grow in health and without flaw and grant it well-formed members. Sanctify its body, mind, heart and inward parts. Grant this infant wisdom and fear of Thee; appoint a faithful guardian Angel for his soul and body. Cover, protect, strengthen and preserve the child in our womb until the very hour when Thou didst command him to be born. But do not conceal him in his mother's womb, for Thy hands have prepared him. Thou gavest him life and breath. O Lord Jesus Christ, we entrust our child into Thine all-powerful hands. Place the right hand of Thy grace upon him, sanctify him with Thy Holy Spirit and renew him for eternal life, that he may partake of Thy Kingdom. Amen.



QUESTIONS ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

1. What is the shortest prayer in the Bible?
2. What famous building did the Romans destroy in 70 AD?
3. Which book of the Bible was written by a tax collector?
4. What book ends with the admonition, "Keep yourselves from idols."
5. Who did Christ send fishing to get money to pay the temple tax?
6. What king was hailed as a god but then struck down by an angel of the Lord?
7. At what event did a cloud hide Jesus from the Apostles' sight?
8. What did Joseph accuse his brothers of stealing?
9. Who said, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord."
10. Who, using John as a scribe, wrote to the seven churches in Asia?

1. "Lord, save me." (Matt. 14:30)
2. The Temple in Jerusalem.
3. The Gospel of St. Matthew.
4. The 1st Epistle of St. John
5. St. Peter (Matt. 17:24-27)
6. King Herod Agrippa (Acts 27:1-3)
7. The Ascension (Acts 1:9)
8. His silver cup. (Gen. 44:1-17)
9. The Virgin Mary (Luke 1:38)
10. The Lord (Rev. 1-3)

A PRAYER BEFORE READING OR LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

By St. John Chrysostom

O Lord Jesus Christ, open Thou the eyes of my heart, that I may hear Thy word and understand and do Thy will, for I am a sojourner upon the earth. Hide not Thy commandments from me, but open mine eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of Thy law. Speak unto me the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom. On Thee do I set my hope, O my God, that Thou shalt enlighten my mind and understanding with the light of Thy knowledge, not only to cherish those things which are written, but to do them; that in reading the lives and sayings of the saints I may not sin, but that such may serve for my restoration, enlightenment and sanctification, for the salvation of my soul, and the inheritance of life everlasting. For Thou art the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and from Thee cometh every good deed and every gift. Amen.



ON CEASELESS PRAYER

By St. Basil the Great

Prayer is a request for what is good, offered by the devout to God. But we do not restrict this "request" simply to what is stated in words... We should not express our prayer merely in syllables, but the power of prayer should be expressed in the moral attitude of our soul and in the virtuous actions that extend throughout our life... This is how you pray continually – by joining yourself to God through your whole way of life, so that your life becomes one continuous and uninterrupted prayer.

CALCULATING CHRISTMAS

Abbreviated from [touchstonemag.com/William Tighe](http://touchstonemag.com/WilliamTighe)

Many Christians think that Christians celebrate Christ's birth on December 25th because the church fathers appropriated the date of a pagan festival. Almost no one minds, except for a few groups on the fringes of American Evangelicalism, who seem to think that this makes Christmas itself a pagan festival. But it is perhaps interesting to know that the choice of December 25th is the result of attempts among the earliest Christians to figure out the date of Jesus' birth based on calendrical calculations that had nothing to do with pagan festivals.

Rather, the pagan festival of the "Birth of the Unconquered Son" instituted by the Roman Emperor Aurelian on 25 December 274, was almost certainly an attempt to create a pagan alternative to a date that was already of some significance to Roman Christians. Thus the "pagan origins of Christmas" is a myth without historical substance.

A Mistake

The idea that the date was taken from the pagans goes back to two scholars from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Paul Ernst Jablonski, a German Protestant, wished to show that the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25th was one of the many "paganizations" of Christianity that the Church of the fourth century embraced, as one of many "degenerations" that transformed pure apostolic Christianity into Catholicism. Dom Jean Hardouin, a Benedictine monk, tried to show that the Catholic Church adopted pagan festivals for Christian purposes without paganizing the gospel.

In the Julian calendar, created in 45 B.C. under Julius Caesar, the winter solstice fell on December 25th, and it therefore seemed obvious to Jablonski and Hardouin that the day must have had a pagan significance before it had a Christian one. But in fact, the date had no religious significance in the Roman pagan festival calendar before Aurelian's time, nor did the cult of the sun play a prominent role in Rome before him...

As things actually happened, Aurelian, who ruled from 270 until his assassination in 275, was hostile to Christianity and appears to have promoted the establishment of the festival of the "Birth of the Unconquered Sun" as a device to unify the various pagan cults of the Roman Empire around a commemoration of the annual "rebirth" of the sun. He led an empire that appeared to be collapsing in the face of internal unrest, rebellions in the prov-



A Journal of Mere Christianity

inces, economic decay, and repeated attacks from German tribes to the north and the Persian Empire to the east.

In creating the new feast, he intended the beginning of the lengthening of the daylight, and the arresting of the lengthening of darkness, on December 25th to be a symbol of the hoped-for "rebirth," or perpetual rejuvenation, of the Roman Empire, resulting from the maintenance of the worship of the gods whose tutelage (the Romans thought) had brought Rome to greatness and world-rule. If it co-opted the Christian celebration, so much the better.

A By-Product

It is true that the first evidence of Christians celebrating December 25th as the date of the Lord's nativity comes from Rome some years after Aurelian, in A.D. 336, but there is evidence from both the Greek East and the Latin West that Christians attempted to figure out the date of Christ's birth long before they began to celebrate it liturgically, even in the second and third centuries. The evidence indicates, in fact, that the attribution of the date of December 25th was a by-product of attempts to determine when to celebrate his death and resurrection.

How did this happen? There is a seeming contradiction between the date of the Lord's death as given in the synoptic Gospels and in John's Gospel. The synoptics would appear to place it on Passover Day (after the Lord had celebrated the Passover Meal on the preceding evening), and John on the Eve of Passover, just when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Jerusalem Temple for the feast that was to ensue after sunset on that day.

Solving this problem involves answering the question of whether the Lord's Last Supper was a Passover Meal, or a meal celebrated a day earlier, which we cannot enter into here. Suffice it to say that the early Church followed John rather than the synoptics, and thus believed that Christ's death would have taken place on 14 Nisan, according to the Jewish lunar calendar or approximately April 6th according to the Roman calendar...

In contrast, 2nd-century Latin Christians in Rome and North Africa, by the time of Tertullian, had concluded that he died on Friday, 25 March 29...

Integral Age

So in the East we have April 6th, in the West, March 25th. At this point, we have to introduce a belief that seems to have been widespread in Judaism at the time of Christ, but which, as it is nowhere taught in the Bible, has completely fallen from the awareness of Christians. The idea is that of the "integral age" of the great Jewish prophets: the idea that the prophets of Israel died on the same dates as their birth or conception.

This notion is a key factor in understanding how some early Christians came to believe that December 25th is the date of Christ's birth. The early Christians applied this idea to Jesus, so that March 25th and April 6th were not only the supposed dates of Christ's death, but of his conception or birth as well. There is some fleeting evidence that at least some first- and second-century Christians thought of March 25th or April 6th as the date of Christ's birth, but rather quickly the assignment of March 25th as the date of Christ's conception prevailed.

It is to this day, commemorated almost universally among Christians as the Feast of the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel brought the good tidings of a savior to the Virgin Mary, upon whose acquiescence the Eternal Word of God ("Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten of the Father before all ages") forthwith became incarnate in her womb. What is the length of pregnancy? Nine months. Add nine months to March 25th and

you get December 25th; add it to April 6th and you get January 6th. December 25th is Christmas, and January 6th is Epiphany.

Christmas (December 25th) is a feast of Western Christian origin. In Constantinople it appears to have been introduced in 379 or 380. From a sermon of St. John Chrysostom, at the time a renowned ascetic and preacher in his native Antioch, it appears that the feast was first celebrated there on 25 December 386. From these centers it spread throughout the Christian East, being adopted in Alexandria around 432 and in Jerusalem a century or more later. The Armenians, alone among ancient Christian churches, have never adopted it, and to this day celebrate Christ's birth, manifestation to the magi, and baptism on January 6th.

Western churches, in turn, gradually adopted the January 6th Epiphany feast from the East, Rome doing so sometime between 366 and 394. But in the West, the feast was generally presented as the commemoration of the visit of the magi to the infant Christ, and as such, it was an important feast, but not one of the most important ones—a striking contrast to its position in the East, where it remains the second most important festival of the church year, second only to Pascha (Easter).

In the East, Epiphany far outstrips Christmas. The reason is that the feast celebrates Christ's baptism in the Jordan and the occasion on which the Voice of the Father and the Descent of the Spirit both manifested for the first time to mortal men the divinity of the Incarnate Christ and the Trinity of the Persons in the One Godhead.

A Christian Feast

Thus, December 25th as the date of the Christ's birth appears to owe nothing whatsoever to pagan influences upon the practice of the Church during or after Constantine's time. It is wholly unlikely to have been the actual date of Christ's birth, but it arose entirely from the efforts of early Latin Christians to determine the historical date of Christ's death.

And the pagan feast which the Emperor Aurelian instituted on that date in the year 274 was not only an effort to use the winter solstice to make a political statement, but also almost certainly an attempt to give a pagan significance to a date already of importance to Roman Christians. The Christians, in turn, could at a later date re-appropriate the pagan "Birth of the Unconquered Sun" to refer, on the occasion of the birth of Christ, to the rising of the "Sun of Salvation" or the "Sun of Justice."

