

Holy Apostles Newsletter

DIOCESE OF THE WEST

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



Holy Apostles Orthodox Mission

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From The Holy Fathers

When we leave the Holy Banquet of Communion, we are as happy as the Wise Men would have been if they could have carried home the infant Jesus.

- Saint John of Kronstadt

He who sits at the right hand of the Father goes without shelter at the inn, that He may for us prepare many mansions in the house of His heavenly Father He was born, not in the house of His parents, but at the inn, by the wayside, because through the mystery of the Incarnation He is become the Way, by which He guides us to our home.

- Venerable Bede 

WAITING FOR THE LORD TO COME

Adapted from an Advent Sermon by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

In these days of fasting as we approach the festival of the Incarnation, the Church gives us in the words of Christ Himself, a stern and clear warning. Are we going to be like the guests called to the bridal feast of the king's son? One refused to come because he had acquired a plot of land. He wanted to possess the earth and instead became a slave to it. The others could not come because they were too busy—there was no time for God. The one who had taken a wife could not share in the joy of the Bridegroom because his heart was already too full. This parable will be read on December 14, just two Sundays before the Winter Pascha. How do we respond to the invitation?

Advent is a time when we should stand face to face before the judgment of God and listen to the voice of our conscience. Every time we come to communion we must have made our peace with those with whom we are at variance. We must have made our peace with the thoughts of our mind and heart that accuse us of disloyalty to God and to one another. We must have made our peace with the living God so that it cannot be said that He died in vain for us. It is a matter of pondering deeply within ourselves, of passing a severe judgment upon ourselves and coming to Communion through repentance and Confession, after a searching examination of our lives so as to not be condemned for coming lightly to the holy meal. This implies a certain number of simple things, but things that must be done.


No one should come to communion who is deliberately late for the liturgy through laziness or carelessness.

No one should come to communion who has not prepared himself in the course of the whole week by praying, by examining his conscience, and by reading prayers before communion. If they are too long to be read on Saturday after the evening service or on Sunday morning, they can be distributed

throughout the week and be part of our morning and evening prayers. This is a discipline which is required of us always, but in these days particularly.

The Orthodox Church has always taught that those who wish to receive communion should strive to do everything in their power to be present on Saturday evening at the service, so as to be prepared to meet the Lord on Sunday, the day of His Resurrection.

These are guidelines which are not simply rules of formal discipline; these are calls for us to be guided into a deeper spiritual life and to meet the Lord more worthily, or rather less unworthily.

So let us continue to enter into this period of fasting, preparing ourselves by a rigorous mental discipline, by being attentive to movements of our heart, by the ways in which we treat others, and ourselves and God, to the way in which we learn from the Church to pray, to worship and to obey the Lord's commandments. And then also let us pay attention more seriously than we do habitually to the fasting rules. The fasting rules are meant to shake our physical complacency, to help us stir ourselves into a condition of liveliness, to prevent ourselves from being heavy and incapable of soaring Godwards. Pay attention to them, prepare yourselves throughout the rest of this period of Advent, waiting for the Lord to come, but waiting not passively for Him to come, but in the way in which a sentry waits for his queen or king to appear. And let us remember that being in the presence of God is the greatest privilege, the holiest thing that can occur; it is not our right, it is the greatest privilege that He can confer on us, and let us behave accordingly. Amen. 

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Community Forum

NATIVITY & THEOPHANY DETAILS

Tuesday, January 6th (Christmas Eve)

8:00 a.m. Royal Hours

9:00 a.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

6:00 p.m. Nativity Vigil w/Lity

Wednesday, January 7th (Christmas Day)

8:30 a.m. Hours

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy followed by light coffee hour (each family bring 1/2 dozen muffins or pastries to share)

4:00 p.m. Nativity Party at Ivkin home w/ White Elephant gift exchange and Children's play

Nativity Party Details:

Each person bring one white elephant gift (under \$10) for gift exchange. The Church will provide a Ham as well as paper goods, utensils, and napkins. Families with the last names A-K, please bring a *generously-sized* side dish to go with the meat (e.g., salads, deviled eggs, scalloped potatoes, etc.). Families with the last name P-W, please bring a *generously-sized* dessert. Families with the last names A-Z, plan to clean up.

The week of Christmas and the week after are fast-free.

Sunday, January 18th (Theophany Eve)

8:00 a.m. Royal Hours

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy followed by Blessing of Waters

6:00 p.m. Theophany Vigil w/Lity

Monday, January 19th (Theophany)

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil followed by 2nd blessing of waters at River (place - tbd), followed by breakfast out at a restaurant tbd!

HOUSE BLESSINGS

It is the custom among many Orthodox Christians to have their homes blessed with the holy water sanctified on or after Theophany (the feast which commemorates the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan River). If you would like your home blessed, please put your name on the sign-up sheet in the back of the church. See Fr. Dimitri w/any questions.

House Blessing: The Purpose

The annual blessing of homes is a custom of special beauty and significance. We again ask Christ to bless and enter into our homes and our lives. We ask Him to be with us, as we desire to be with Him. We ask that by the sprinkling of blessed water, the Holy Spirit renew us, our families and our lives in our homes. As Christ brought salvation to the house of Zacchaeus; we ask for the same for all dwelling in our homes.

The celebration of the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River reveals wondrous salvific events:

- The Mystery of the Holy Trinity was revealed.

- The waters were blessed by Christ and ceased to be waters of the fall and became waters of re-newal (holy water).
- Any demonic influence over water was ended.
- A model of Baptism was established for the followers of Jesus Christ.
- The sin of the old Adam was washed away and buried in the waters.
- St. John the Forerunner was blessed by Christ.

The word Theophany (meaning manifestation of God) comes from the apostolic passage, "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory" (1 Timothy 3:16). Another name for the Feast is Epiphany (meaning manifestation from above), "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). A third name is the "Feast of Lights", as Christ reveals Himself as the "Light of the World" (John 8:12).

CONFESSION

The perfect way to receive Christ during this season is to receive the wonderful sacrament of His most pure Body and Blood in Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy on the Holy Feasts of Christmas and Theophany.

Part of our preparation for this reception should include repentance and a sincere confession of our sins during this Advent. Confessions will be heard after any of the services or any time by appointment.

Kitchen Corner

Parmesan & Thyme Crackers

- 1/4 lb. (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 4 oz. freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 1 cup)
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme leaves
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter for 1 minute. With the mixer on low speed, add the Parmesan, thyme, salt, and pepper and combine. With the mixer still on low, add the flour and combine until the mixture is in large crumbles, about 1 minute. If the dough is too dry, add 1 teaspoon of water. Dump the dough on a floured board, press it into a ball, and roll into a 9-inch log. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or for up to 4 days. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350. Cut the log into 3/8-inch-thick rounds with a small, sharp knife and place them on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper. Bake for 22 minutes, until very lightly browned. Rotate the pan once during baking. Cool and serve at room temperature.

**You can make the roll ahead and freeze for up to 6 months. Defrost overnight in fridge & then slice & back when you're ready to serve the crackers.

THE NEWSLETTER IS BACK!

Submit your monthly submissions no later than the last week of the month to Matushka Mary.

PRAYER REQUESTS

In the back of the Church, you will be able to find Prayer Request Sheets and a box to put them in, where you can list both Orthodox and Non-Orthodox, departed and living. Keep in mind that only Orthodox living and departed are commemorated during the Divine Liturgy.

POTLUCK COFFEE HOUR

We will continue having coffee hour potluck style. It is important that each family bring something to contribute to the coffee hour, so we have enough food for members and guests.

Clean-up teams remain in place and are as follows:

Team Blue - Aiello, Harvey, Virosteck, Perez, Harvest
Team Green - Donnor, Campbell, Story, Tregub, Vaganova, Cable
Team Orange - VanDenend, Harmon, Beckel, Koehn
Team Yellow - Ivkin, Domico, Watt, Kojenov

See the calendar for dates you are on clean-up. If you are unable to clean up on your day, make sure to trade with someone. Clean-up duties are light and include sweeping, cleaning the coffee maker, wiping down tables, stacking chairs, making sure everyone takes their dish home from coffee hour, etc. We should leave it the same way in which we arrived.

UP & COMING LITURGICAL DATES

Saturday, Feb. 14 - Vigil w/Lity at 6 pm for Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple

Sunday, Feb. 15 - 8:30 a.m. Hours, followed by Divine Liturgy

Sunday, Feb. 22 - Meat Fare Sunday

Sunday, March 1 - Forgiveness Sunday; Vespers w/Rite of Forgiveness immediately following Liturgy

Monday, March 2 - Great Lent Begins

Lenten Liturgical schedule to follow

PEREZ'S OUT OF TOWN

Father Dimitri and Matushka Mary will be out of town January 8 - 16. Please keep them in your prayers while they travel to California. A visiting priest will serve on Sunday, January 11th. Times for all services remain the same.

2009 - LOOKING AHEAD

Here's what's cooking at Holy Apostles in the months to come - please see the calendar for specific times/dates:

Sunday School after Divine Liturgy, beginning early in the New Year

Women's reading group resumes after Theophany, occurring every other Saturday at 9:30 a.m., rotating homes.

Men's get together - 3rd Thursday of every month

One evening liturgical service per week at Perez's (in addition to Great Vespers on Saturday and Feast day services)

Choir Practice

Parish Council Meeting

Potluck Coffee Hour/clean-up teams

We are a parish in transition, and as such, we are limited as to what we can do - for now. Please remember this is a time that is temporary; however we shouldn't miss out on the great opportunities that exist in the "temporary". We can all pull together and make the best of it - these are some of the best times! But we have to be patient with what we have, our resources, and with each other. God willing, when we have our own space, we will be able to have a fuller, richer liturgical life.

If anyone has ideas for a festival (perhaps Russian or Mexican?) in 2009 as a fundraiser, talk to Fr. Dimitri. Ideally, something that would enable us to reach out to the people of Vancouver, letting them know of our presence, would be worth our time and efforts.

