

ST. ANDREW'S OUTREACH
EXTRA

January, 2009



Христос
Рождается!



The Epiphany Blessing of Homes

During the Epiphany season, traditionally the Parish Priest, who is the Spiritual Father of the greater family of God, the Church community, comes to each "Domestic Church" (the Home Church) bringing God's grace to all brethren within that home.

The sanctification of the "Home Church" takes place through prayers and the sprinkling of blessed water by which God Himself fills all things with Himself, including even the smallest particles of material existence.

When the Parish Priest comes for the Epiphany visit, with prayers and holy water, he asks for God's mercy on the household and the home be rid of all evil, and be

filled with His blessings. All present pray together for the welfare of those living in the home and for any others that prayers could be said for, and also in memory of those that had eternally reposed in the Lord. All join in singing the great hymn of salvation that Christ, the Son of God the Father by the grace of the Holy Spirit, has revealed Himself and has enlightened the world.

When the Parish Priest comes to bless your family and home, the following principles should be observed in accordance with our Orthodox tradition ...

- A lit candle, an icon, a kolach, and a bowl of blessed water should be placed on the table.

- Radios, televisions, and other such sound producing apparatus should all be turned off.
- All present should gather around the "Home Altar" for prayers and blessings offered.
- Those who are able, should join in the singing of the responses and hymns of the service.
- The names of those for whom special prayers are to be offered should clearly be written out and presented to the visiting priest. These should include all members of the household, relatives and friends; both living and deceased.

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Malanka 2009

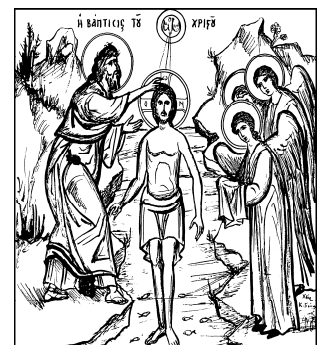
If you still need to buy tickets for our January 16th MALANKA, call Wally Yadlowski (780-469-2555) or George Gushaty (780-456-4037).

Adults: \$40.00
Youth (9-17 yrs): \$20.00
Family Pack: \$ 90.00

Music by "The Sparkling Tones"

"Theophany of Our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ"

is celebrated January 19th



Blessing of Homes

During the Epiphany Season (January 19th to February 15th), Fr. Victor will be visiting the homes of those members who wish to have their home blessed and prayers

offered. The home is considered to be the "Domestic Church", which the Parish Priest visits annually to offer prayers and ask for God's blessings of not only the homes but also of those

who dwell within it.

All visitations will be by appointment, thereby you will be called to arrange an appointment for such a visit.



“As It Was ...” Continued from p. 5 of the Outreach

... After the solemn meal, the family joins in singing Christmas carols and general merry-making. There is no visiting on Christmas Eve with the exception of bringing Yuletide greetings and some of the supper dishes and pastries to the grandparents. It is strictly a family evening. There are many beliefs and superstitions connected with the Christmas Eve celebration which are no longer observed.

Soon after midnight, or at early dawn, the family attends a special Christmas service enriched with beautiful choral music. In the afternoon of the Christmas Day, continuing late into the night and through the following days, organized groups of carollers visit homes, singing ancient and modern carols, bringing traditional Yuletide greetings, and soliciting funds for worthy causes. This is the general modern practice wherever the Ukrainians may be. In the old country, carolers carry a large star of Bethlehem, or a miniature

manger (*wertep*) with hand-carved wooden figures on it, or they may present short skits with members of the group dressed in appropriate costumes for their parts. There may be a heralding angel, the three kings, the shepherds, and perhaps a comical character for a touch of humor. This custom is not practiced in Canada.

A comparative adaptation in Canada is the Christmas tree and gift giving. In the Ukrainian tradition, St. Nicholas' Day on December 19th is the occasion for a richly adorned “yalynka” (Christmas tree) and gifts. This custom is still observed in the old country.

New Year is another feast rich in traditions which are gradually passing away in Canada. About the only custom that still remains is visiting homes by young children who bring New Year's greetings, recite verses, and then scatter a few grains of wheat or other seed

over the floor as a symbol of good luck and general prosperity for the coming year.

The Feast of Jordan, which comes on January 19th and 20th, brings the Christmas cycle to a close. The evening prior to this holy day is observed in the same manner as Christmas Eve but with less solemnity. The main feature of the Feast of Jordan is an impressive church service and the blessing of water, commemorating the baptism of Christ in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist. In Ukraine, this ceremony is held on a nearby river or a creek where a large cross of ice blocks is set up. Women carolers visit homes during these holidays, singing New Years carols (*schedrivky*), several of which have been translated into English, but the best known of them all is “*The Carol of the Bells*.” Pre-Christian in origin, these New Year carols are the oldest folk poetry and songs. Their subject matter offers rich material to ethnographers.

YOU HAVE TO STOOP

The announcement went first to the shepherds. They didn't ask God if he was sure he knew what he was doing. Had the angel gone to the theologians, they would have first consulted their commentaries. Had he gone to the elite, they would have looked around to see if anyone was watching. Had he gone to the successful, they would have first looked at their calendars. So he went to the **shepherds**.

These men had no reputation to protect or axe to grind or ladder to climb. These men didn't know



enough to tell God that angels don't sing to sheep and that messiahs aren't found wrapped in rags and sleeping in a feed trough.

A small cathedral outside Bethlehem marks the supposed birthplace of Jesus. Behind a high altar in the church is a cave, a little cavern lit by silver lamps. You can enter the main edifice and admire the ancient church. You can also enter the quiet cave where a star embedded in the floor recognizes the birth of the King. There is one stipulation, however. **You have to stoop**. The door is so low you can't go in standing up.

The same is true of Christ. You can see the world standing tall, but to witness the Saviour, you have to get on your knees. ...

Cont'd on p. 4

Need help thinking of a Christmas Gift?

Then why not consider an item from our “Kiosk”.
Come in and check out our display.



IMPORTANT DATES:

Phillipian Fast/Advent
runs Dec. 28th thru Jan. 6th

This Christmas there will be two services:

“Eve of Nativity” on Tues., Jan. 6th:

10:30 p.m. - Nativity Vigil /
Confession

11:30 p.m. - Divine Liturgy

“Nativity of Our Lord” on Wed., Jan. 7th:

9:30 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

Connect
Your Family and the
Church

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS



Glory to Jesus Christ!

A special **thank you** is extended to Hilda Alaeddine and Rachel Zukiwsky for greeting His Grace Bishop Ilarion, the younger students for dropping the flower petals during the procession, the Altar Boys and Myrrhbearers for their involvement during our Parish's Patron Saint Feast Day celebration. Also a special thank you to Elyse Dzenick, Rachelia Pawluk, Megan Alexandruk, Nicole Zukiwsky, and Nicole Grumley for their presentation of the "Life of St. Andrew". Parents and Students, your commitment was greatly appreciated.

In spite of the cold weather; organized activities in commemoration of St. Nicholas went off quite well, and St. Nicholas' visit was especially well received.

Please note that Church School classes will resume on January 4th, 2009.

On Sunday, January 11th the students will celebrate the "Nativity of Our & Saviour Jesus Christ" with a Nativity Pageantry following the Divine Liturgy. Please mark this date on your calendar so that we can have 100% participation.

Wishing you God's Blessing while we prepare for the Holy Supper on the Eve of the Nativity and the Nativity of Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ.

Christ Is Born!

Let Us Glorify Him!

Olga Alexandruk, Director

"THE ORTHODOX HOME" continued from p. 5 of the "Outreach" newsletter:

...

Offer Your Child to God

Our children do not belong to us. They have been entrusted to us by God. Knowing this, we must raise our children up to God and not to this world. We must recognize Him as the most critical member of our family — the One we should turn to for guidance in all matters. We are all quick to run to the Internet or bookstore to find information to direct us in the upbringing of our children, but how many of us run to God Himself for guidance? When we do this, we let go of all the worldly dreams we have for our children. We simply offer our children to God and let Him show us what He wants for their lives.

Above all Else — Pray

When we pray, we enter into a conversation with God and attach ourselves to Him in body, mind, and soul. We ask Him for strength, guidance, and forgiveness. We thank Him for His many blessings and ask Him to care for those we love. We bring our prayers to life through our worship in the Church and in the home — both as a family and as individuals. Constantly turning to God deepens our relationship with Him and helps our children see how important He is in our lives.

Holding our children close in our arms, we stand before the icons and lift up our voice and hearts to our Heavenly Father in prayer. We must pray for — and with — our children throughout the day during the simplest of tasks: bathing, feeding, and especially when they need consoling. Taking them to church at a very young age helps them to become familiar with the sensory feast that is involved in Orthodox worship. They smell the incense, see the candles, hear the hymns, taste Communion, and touch the icons. They learn through all this how we connect with our Heavenly Father.

A Final Note

We have been speaking much about our newborns and their attachments, but what of the child who is entrusted to us at an older age? Attachment to God and parents is the most important developmental step for a child at *any* age. Although it can be easier when it occurs as children are first entering the world, circumstances don't always permit this. Attachment is not a skill exclusive to newborns.

A couple of years ago I had a chance to visit another orphanage. This one was run by Orthodox nuns in Guatemala. The difference in the children at this monastery's orphanage versus the children at the prior orphanage I had visited in Mexico was quite remarkable. Many of these children had come from unspeakable backgrounds, but instead of listlessness I found joy in their eyes. Where did this joy come from? I found that out with the first church service I attended in the chapel.

The children were fully attentive and actively participating in the services with great delight. You see, these children were in love — with God! Their great joy came from attaching themselves to their Heavenly Father, who was helping them heal their wounds and giving them great hope for the future.

As we fall in love with God, let us remember — above all else — that God is love. Through knowing Him, we better understand what love is and are better able to experience it in our lives and help our children experience it for themselves. *"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love"* (1 John 4:7, 8).

So what are you waiting for? Attach yourself to God, and you will experience what it is like to truly fall in love — for yourself and your children!

Source: The Handmaiden Vol. 12 No. 1

A Christmas Greeting from Your Pastor



Христос народився!
Christ is Born!

The birth of the Christ child into the world was the dawn of a new era for humanity, an era of salvation, and an era of hope. From the proclamation of the angel to the prophetic words of St. John the Baptist and through the evangelism of the Holy Apostles, the good news of the Lord's unceasing love for His children has been spread.

Through our embrace of the Faith we too become witnesses to the newborn King. Every time we attend a Liturgy, with each prayer before a meal, and humble acts of charity amongst other such acts, we stand before those who may not know Christ and say, "*Behold I bring you good tidings.*"

With the feast of the Nativity upon us, we join you in offering all glory to God in the highest for the gift of His only begotten Son. As Orthodox Christians, we are like the shepherds having been blessed to receive the angel's message of hope. Through our witness, we ourselves, become the messengers, working to share the Lord with those who still hunger and thirst for Christ.

With those thoughts, my family and I wish you a Blessed Nativity Celebration filled with peace of heart and an ever urgent desire to spread the joy of the True Life in God's messages. He comes all the way to the door of our hearts and knocks especially loudly this time of the year.

If we contemplate His messages this time of year it can be especially fruitful in generating the warmth and broadness of heart we all need; so that our heart growing warm can generate a fire of love for God and others. Before we can warm other hearts, we need His warmth in our own.

We can only get this warmth by becoming quiet and intimate with God. During the Nativity celebrations let us all try to remember His presence through the "*We/Us*"; let us take Jesus with us to our family gatherings, our church, our outings, even when we are shopping for the festivity. Let us remember why our Blessed Saviour came!

On this festive season—the Nativity of Jesus Christ, Epiphany, and the New Year, we extend greetings to all members and associates of St. Andrew's Sobor Parish. We take this opportunity to bring tidings of gladness and joy to you and yours! May the spiritual joy of the Holy festive season reside in your hearts, and bring you outward happiness, inner contentment, and the richest blessings. May the New Year 2009 bring you much health and happiness.

~ Fr. Victor & Marusia

We are sending our "Outreach" electronically. Do you have an email address? Please submit your address to the Church Office.

On behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary of St. Andrew's Parish, I wish each and every one of you a joyous Christmas season and the best of all good things for 2009.

God Bless,
-Sandra Hohol
President – Ladies Auxiliary



YOU HAVE TO STOOP

Continued from p. 2

... So, while the theologians were sleeping and the elite were dreaming and the successful were snoring, the meek were kneeling. They were kneeling before the One only the meek will see. They were kneeling in front of Jesus. ■

He Shall Come Again In Glory

"When You first came to us, O Christ, You desired to save the race of Adam. When you come again to judge us, show mercy on those who honor Your holy birth."

The birth of Christ has always been related to **His Second Coming** on the last day; the way we receive Him now will determine the way He will receive us on the final day. Jesus Himself spoke of this: *As it was in Noah's day, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating and drinking, marrying wives and husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all... It will be the same when the day comes for the Son of Man to be revealed*" (Luke 17:26-27, 30).

Our feasts and customs are no excuse for us to avoid keeping watch for the coming of the Saviour; the vigilance we observe now is the vigilance with which we will welcome Him when He comes again in glory.



Йордан Jordan
Monday, January 19

Join us at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village to celebrate the Feast of Jordon (Epiphany)

Church services start 10:00 a.m.

St. Nicholas Ukr. Catholic Church
St. Vladimir's Ukr. Orthodox Church
St. Nicholas Russo Orthodox Church

*Traditional Water Blessing Ceremony
At The Ice Cross*

Blessing of Historic Homes

Admission by donation.

Lunch available in the Red Barn
Dress Warmly – Most activities are outdoors!