

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN DECEMBER 13, 2015

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**THANKS TO ALL WHO WORKED AND SUPPORTED THE FEASTDAY CELEBRATION.** These include: those who prepared the meal; those who set-up and decorated and helped clean-up afterward; and those who attended and shared the joy of the Feast. Thanks to Dean Valoras for spearheading the Raffle and all those who bought and sold tickets. Congratulations to the winners!

\$2,500 Katherine Stamoulis  
\$500 Tim Rucho  
\$500 Paul Soter  
\$500 James Stamoulis  
\$500 Patrick Healy  
\$250 Paul Soter  
\$250 Kevin Maloney

**OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT** will be held on Sunday, December 20th. We will not have any rehearsals but **all children who would like to participate MUST arrive on time to Church** so they can be fitted with a costume and assigned a part.

**OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL** is Friday, December 18th. We'll need help cooking and serving. **Prep** help needed (3 persons), 6pm Thursday. **Cooking** help needed (2 persons), noon Friday. **Serving** help needed (5 persons), 5:30pm Friday. If you'd like to help,

### **GREETERS TEAM 3:**

EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

### **COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW A:**

MARGARITE LANDRY  
CHRISTINE MASTERJOHN

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



## THE TWENTY EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS)

APOSTOLIC READING: COLOSSIANS 1:12-18 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 14:16-24

(THE PARABLE OF THOSE INVITED TO THE DINNER)

TONE 3 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 6

please talk to Fr. Nick.

**CHRISTMAS BAKING ORDERS** may be picked up: this coming Saturday morning between 9-12pm, Sunday after the Divine Liturgy, or at another time, according to agreement. Call 508-845-0088.

**THE PARISH COUNCIL** will hold its regular monthly meeting on **Monday, November 14th at 7:00 pm.** Parish Council Members, please let Deb Sedares know if you are unable to attend.

**WE ARE IN THE NATIVITY FAST.** Let us use this time to withdraw from the noise of the "Christmas Season," in order to reflect on the great mystery of Emmanuel: God-with-us!

**THE 2016 CHURCH CALENDARS** in both English and Romanian are available at the Candles. Please consider mak-

ing a donation to cover the costs!

**A 40-DAY MEMORIAL** is celebrated today for the servant of God **Joanna Trakadas**, the mother of James (Dimitrios) Trakadas. **May her memory be eternal!**

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored in memory of **Joanna Trakadas** by her family.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**IMPORTANT HOPE CEMETERY NEWS.** The Orthodox section of Hope

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, Dec 14 Parish Council, 7pm  
Fri, Dec 18 Mustard Seed Meal, 5pm  
Sun, Dec 20 Christmas Pageant  
Thurs, Dec 24 Royal Hours, 3:00 pm  
Great Vespers, 6 pm  
Fri, Dec 25 Divine Liturgy, 10 am  
Fri, Jan 1 New Year's Day Divine Liturgy, 10 am  
Sat, Jan 2 Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-12pm

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

Cemetery in Worcester is completely full. The Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches has been trying to get the City of Worcester to expand the Orthodox section for quite some time. The City of Worcester has scheduled **a second public hearings to deal with the cemetery master plan.** on **Monday, December 14, 2015 at 6:30 pm in the Esther Howland Chamber in City Hall.** This is the Orthodox community's chance to express our desire to have more plots earmarked for the Orthodox community. There is land available in the cemetery adjacent to the existing Orthodox section. In order to expand the Orthodox section the community should make its desire known at these hearings.

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**THANKS FOR ALL WHO VOLUNTEERED TO BUY GIFTS** for the Holy Trinity Residents. Also, we appreciate **Eleanor Sedares'** efforts coordinating our parish's part in this effort. **God bless all of you!**

**HOLY TRINITY** is pleased to announce the **appointment of Renee Kubbeck, Director of Nursing.** Renee comes to us from Beaumont Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, and with 14 years experience as Director of Nursing and 23 years experience in long term care.

**ST. SPYRIDON LADIES' PHILOPTOCHOS** will be serving **lunch to the residents on Thursday, December 17.** The residents look forward to their visit every month, which is always a fabulous event!

**HOLY TRINITY HOSPICE** offers exceptional care for individuals facing serious illnesses and those at the end of life. It provides individualized care for loved ones in their place of residence, whether that be at home, in an assisted living or at a nursing facility. Holy Trinity Hospice would be honored to help through your difficult time. If you

### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**G**LORY TO YOU, LORD JESUS CHRIST, for allowing us to serve you. In fulfilling the law and the prophets in accord with the Father's divine plan, you raised us to a new covenant, leading us to worship in spirit and in truth. So, today, as we ponder your birth in our midst, we, your sinful and unworthy servants, entreat your goodness: In our hearts, engrave the mysteries of your incarnation as well as your constant presence within us, give us the strength to serve and worship you at all times, and lead us to that liturgy that never ends.

For you teach us to pray in your name, O Christ, reconciling us with the Father, to whom we give glory in the Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages, amen.

would like further information, please call our office at 508-791-8200 and ask for the Hospice Director, Beth Miller or the Community Liaison, Ursula Hanus.



## NAMEDAYS

### December 12

**St. Spyridon the Wonderworker of Tremithus**

Spiro Kelly  
Spiro Spyrou

### December 15

**The Hieromartyr Eleftherios, Bishop of Illyria**

Lillian Chachi

### December 17

**St. Dionysios of Zakynthos, Bishop of Aegina**

Denise Sparages  
**The Holy Prophet Daniel**  
Dan Manescu  
Dana Manescu  
Dan Alexandru Nedelescu  
Robert Daniel Salerno

### December 20

**The Fore-father of our Lord, the Patriarch Jacob**

Jacob Datz  
**The High Priest Aaron, and all the holy forebearers**  
Aaron Paul Christo  
**The Holy forebearers of Christ, Adam the first man**

Adam Mayer  
Adam Donabed  
**The Holy Prophetess Abigail, wife of David**

Abigail Mayer  
**The Righteous Deborah, and all the holy forebearers**

Deborah Rucho  
Deborah Sedares  
**The Righteous Noah, and all the holy forebearers**

Noah Peter Christo  
**The Righteous Rebecca, and all the holy forebearers**

Rebeka Tanacea  
**The Righteous Sarah, and all the holy forebearers**  
Sarah Maria Blanchard  
Sarah Maria Bourisk

## PLEASE R.S.V.P.



**T**HIS WEEK'S GOSPEL LESSON IS THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET (Luke 14:16-24). St. Matthew also has an account of this same parable (22:1-4) that we hear on the 14th Sunday after Pentecost. However, while both Evangelists relate a similar story, the different contexts in which they are placed shifts the focus of the parable. St. Matthew places his account of the Wedding Feast in a sequence of other parables that Jesus spoke intending to challenge the hypocrisy of the religious authorities of his time. St. Luke places his account in the context of Jesus teaching about humility and hospitality.

In trying to explain what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, Jesus uses the image of a Great Banquet. In an earlier part of this chapter (v. 8-9), he says, "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down in the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, and the host who invited both of you may come and say, 'Give up your place to this man.' And then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place." He goes on to say that "all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (v. 11).

Jesus then moves on to speak about hospitality. He says, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case that they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you" (v. 12-14).

Very often we struggle to understand what St. Paul means when he says, "by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). In the Lord's teaching on hospitality we gain an insight into what St. Paul means when he says we have been saved "by grace." When we read this parable many of us perhaps identify with the host who extends the invitation and is turned-down by his guests. But, in actuality, we are the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind who have been invited to the banquet. We are the ones who do not have the ability to repay. We have a place at the table only because of God's grace and His love.

This Parable of the Great Banquet can be very helpful for us as we prepare for the Feast of the Lord's Birth. When the Lord wants to show us what the Kingdom of God is like, he gives us joyful images like a banquet (Luke 14:16), or a wedding feast (Matthew 22:1), or a bridal chamber (Matthew 25:1, John 3:29). He also gives us transformative images like yeast (Luke 13:20), or a mustard seed (Luke 13:18). He wants us to see the Kingdom of God as something that will bring happiness to our lives even as we are changed by it.

And, who does God send to extend his invitation for us to attend this Banquet? God sends the invitation in the form of His Son, who embodies the very humility he preaches to us. This Son does not take the first seat, but the last. He does not impose himself, but comes as a vulnerable child. And showing us what he means by hospitality, he invites not only the rich and powerful, but also the lowly and the unimportant, the meek and the poor.

We all know it is hard to focus on the spiritual importance of the holiday. During this time of year we are wittingly or unwittingly distracted from responding to the Lord's invitation as we should. We are preoccupied with family and social obligations. There are decorations to hang and gifts to buy. Commercial interests conspire to twist the miracle of Christ's birth to increase the bottom line. Yet still, neither are we captives nor victims. We can choose. This is the point of the Parable. People were invited to feast at God's table yet they chose the distractions of life over the joy of the Kingdom.

We are invited to the Feast, but if we choose not to attend, the Banquet Hall will not remain empty. The Lord will fill His House, and He will fill it as it pleases Him (v. 23). We should take care not to be blinded by the frenzy of the season, and as a result reject the invitation offered us. Rather, we should actively seek out refuge in that quiet cave in Bethlehem, where rests a young child, the pre-eternal God.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA





# CHRISTMAS & THEOPHANY SCHEDULE

## SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2015

Matins ..... 9:00 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy ..... 10:00 a.m.  
 Children's Christmas Program ..... after the Liturgy

## CHRISTMAS EVE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2015

Royal Hours ..... 3:00 p.m.  
 Great Vespers ..... 6:00 p.m.

## THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2015

Matins ..... 9:00 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy ..... 10:00 a.m.

## SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2015

Matins ..... 9:00 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy ..... 10:00 a.m.

## NEW YEAR'S DAY

### CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD ✨ FEAST OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2016

Matins ..... 9:00 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil ..... 10:00 a.m.

## EVE OF HOLY THEOPHANY TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2016

Royal Hours ..... 9:30 a.m.  
 Vespers of St. Basil ..... 6:00 p.m.  
 Great Blessing of Water ..... at end of Liturgy

## HOLY THEOPHANY OF THE SAVIOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2016

Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity ..... 9:30 a.m.  
 Great Blessing of Water ..... at end of Liturgy

## SUNDAY AFTER HOLY THEOPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2016

Matins ..... 9:00 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy ..... 10:00 a.m.



HOUSE BLESSINGS. The blessing of homes at Theophany will begin on Thursday, January 7, 2016, and continue until all homes are blessed. As in the past, we will be setting times when we will be coming to bless your home. If there is a specific time that is more convenient for you, please call Fr. Nick to arrange it (508.845.0088).

