

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

DECEMBER 27, 2015

ST. STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT was held last Sunday, and as always, it was moving and touching to see the young people in the role of those blessed to witness the Savior's birth some 2,000 years ago. Thanks to Valarie Stamoulis and Alysia Valoras for organizing the Pageant. And thanks to the children who participated and their parents for encouraging them.

A DEEP DEBT OF GRATITUDE is extended to all the people who have been baking and working in a myriad of ways these past months to make our Holiday Baked Goods Sale an amazing success. Sales this year are up over 30% compared with last year — and last year was itself a banner year! Many people helped, this includes the dedicated men and women who have been regulars for many years. But, we've also had many new people who have stepped up. Each contributed amazing energy and dedication. However, we especially want to recognize: Chris Toda and Betty Anderson who have led and coordinated our baking effort. *God bless all of you!*

THE FULL CHRISTMAS/ EPIPHANY SCHEDULE is available and attached to the Bulletin.

ARCHBISHOP NICOLAE'S PAS-

GREETERS TEAM 5:

DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW C:

PRIZIO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

*THE PROPHET-KING DAVID; JOSEPH THE BETROTHED; JAMES THE LORD'S BROTHER
THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT*

EPISTLE: GALATIANS 1:11-19 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 2:13-23

TONE 5 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 8

TORAL LETTER on the occasion of the **Lord's Nativity** is available for you to read in English and Romanian available at the candles.

THE 2016 CHURCH CALENDARS in both English and Romanian are available at the Candles. Please consider making a donation to cover the costs!

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity has finally installed automatic door openers at the main entrance! This new feature is beneficial for the elderly, as well as those who are physically challenged that have difficulty opening, closing and passing through the doors.

The staff and residents continue with the holiday festivities; annual Pot Luck Christmas luncheon, Resident Council Bake Sale, a visit from the Armenian Church Choir, the Burncoat Middle School

Chorus and a New Year's Eve party with entertainment by Worcester's Joe Cariglia!

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 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.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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



A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

O GOD AND FATHER OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST: At the

celebration of the birth in the flesh of your only Son, we hasten to wreathe the portals of our hearts with love and desire, that your Holy Spirit may be drawn to enter and dwell within us, sanctifying us by his very presence. Let his inspiration help us accomplish your will in all things, so that, just as your Son deigned to dwell in the womb of the virgin in a bodily way, so will he deign to dwell in our souls in a spiritual way.

y the grace and mercy and love for us of your only Son, with whom you are blest, together with your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

NAMEDAYS

December 25

The Holy Nativity of our Lord

Christy Belba
Christopher Blanchard
Chrysanthi Charalambides
Cristina M. Culcea
Christopher Demake
Cristean Dumitriu
Kristjan Endriko
Cristina Gavala
Cristian Ionete
Christine Kelly
Christian Andrew Polymeros
Christopher Rucho
Christina Soriano
Christina Soter
Christo Spyrou
Christina Thoren
Christine Toda
Christina Marina Tonna
Chris Zaruha
Cristian Zaruha

December 27

The holy and righteous Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin

Josephine Mbuthi
Joseph Opio

The Holy Prophet and King David

David Zonia

The Holy Protomartyr Stephen

Stephanie Elizabeth Demake
Stephanie Keimig
Stephen Keimig
Stephen Maynard
Stephanie Sparages
Stephen Sparages
Steven Thoren

December 31

St. Melania the Younger, nun of Rome

Melanie Mentis



“BURN THE MORTGAGE” CAMPAIGN ENTERS FINAL STAGE



Nearly two years ago, the parish undertook an initiative to pay off the principal amount due under the church's mortgage in order to finish this first phase of our building project. Presently, the principal balance due on the mortgage is \$523,000. As a result of our campaign, we've received 19 pledges totaling \$117,250.

By God's Grace, we have wonderful announcement to make. Thanks to the faithfulness and generosity of Vasil (Billy) and Elva Gartsu, founding members of our parish, St. Nicholas has received a bequest in the amount of \$300,000 to be applied against the principal debt of our mortgage. We are humbled and overwhelmed by their example of stewardship and faithfulness. Vasil and Elva were humble and hardworking people. Throughout their lives they were faithful stewards of their time, talent and treasure to the church. When Elva married Billy she was

not Orthodox. In fact, when they were married the entire service was conducted in Romanian and Elva didn't understand a word. It was only when Fr. Nicholas was appointed priest at St. Nicholas, and the services were celebrated in English, that she began attending Liturgy regularly, pulling Billy along with her. It was then that Elva expressed her desire to embrace the Orthodox faith. Together, they became stalwarts of the Parish.

Vasil fell asleep in the Lord over a decade ago. Elva continued her devotion to the Lord and her dedication to the Parish. Remembering the original Church on Hammond Street in Worcester, she expressed her constant desire to see a new Church on our current site in Shrewsbury. While she didn't see the new Church itself, she certainly saw the new structures and design. As she declined in health, her constant wish was that whatever resources she had should be devoted

to seeing the completion of the new St. Nicholas. Both her and Vasil's faith are a great blessing for our St. Nicholas community.

Where are we now? How do we get to where we need to be? As a result of the pledges previously made and this generous and profound gift, ONLY \$106,000 remain to be paid on the principal in order to finish paying off this current debt! Given where we began only a few years ago, our St. Nicholas Parish has a property valued at \$1.9 million dollars. Yet, we still have the Church building to build.

OUR CHALLENGE RIGHT NOW is to finish the work and receive pledges that would pay off the full debt by Palm Sunday 2016. Of course the dollar total is important, but equally as important is that we have every member of our parish contribute towards this goal, at whatever level is within their means.

During the season of Epiphany Fr. Nick visits each of our homes to bless them and ask for God's blessing on our families in the coming year. We also ask this year that each one of us consider the importance of our St. Nicholas community in our lives. Reflect on the example of faith and love that Vasil and Elva Gartsu have shown. We all need to participate in the paying off of our church mortgage to the Glory of God and to securing the future of His Church for generations to come.

Attached is a pledge form for your consideration. Please fill it out and send it in as soon as possible.

With love in Christ,

Thomas Fitzpatrick, Chair
"Burn the Mortgage" Campaign

OUT OF EGYPT HAVE I CALLED MY SON

THE SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF THE SAVIOR is dedicated to the relatives of Christ, especially David the King and Prophet, Joseph the betrothed of the Theotokos and “step-father” of our Lord, and James the Lord’s brother, Joseph’s son from his first marriage. In the Gospel lesson for this Sunday, St. Matthew (2:13-23) concludes his narrative of the Nativity. He recounts: the fury of Herod when he realized that the Magi had tricked him; the warning that Joseph received in a dream to flee to Egypt in order to save the baby Jesus and His mother; the massacre of the infants in and around Bethlehem; and finally the return from Egypt to Nazareth.

As you can see, there are a number of themes in this relatively short passage, many of which overlap. Let us look first at Herod. We know from other ancient sources that Herod was a ruthless and terrible tyrant. He was jealous of others and feared threats to his power. He killed a number of his own family when he thought they were plotting against him. And while there is no record outside of the Bible of the massacre mentioned by Matthew, it is quite in keeping with Herod’s personality. He often ordered indiscriminate massacres.

Matthew has also another purpose in telling us this story of the massacre of the innocents. He wants us to understand how the lives of many of the people whose stories are chronicled in the Old Testament should also be seen as pre-figuring Christ. Christians generally view the Old Testament as a preparation for the coming of Christ. Through and in the Children of Israel, God is readying the world to hear and receive God’s full revelation of Himself. This is partly what is meant by the phrase used to describe Christ’s coming as “the fullness of time.”

In his account of the Nativity, St. Matthew is drawing particular parallel to two persons in the history of Israel: the Patriarch Joseph (son of Jacob) and Moses. These men represent two “types” or foreshadowings of Christ. For example, just as Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt, but

later found refuge there and became a savior to his family and nation (Genesis 37:1ff), so also the Christ child finds refuge in Egypt and becomes a Savior to the world. And, just as Moses was rescued from the massacre of Hebrew boys by the hand of Pharaoh (Exodus 2:1ff), so also was Jesus rescued from the massacre of the young boys in Bethlehem by the hand of Herod, who in this regard is like to Pharaoh. Matthew wants to prepare us to understand how Jesus will be an even greater Savior than these two great saviors of the people of Israel.

Another theme in this Gospel passage is the proclamation of the Good News to the pagan world. The Magi, who had been drawn by a star to worship Jesus, are now warned in a dream not to return to Herod, but rather to go home by another way (Matthew 2:12). They carry within themselves the profound experience God has revealed to them. They lay the foundation for the proclamation of the Gospel in Babylon and Persia — modern-day Iraq and Iran. At the same time Joseph the Betrothed takes Mary and the Child Jesus to Egypt, another sign of how Christianity will come to transform the faith of this ancient pagan civilization.



Finally, we see how Joseph himself has been changed by the events he has experienced. The angel comes again, this time to warn of the danger to the Child, not to Mary, but rather to Joseph. He says to him, “take the child and his mother” (v. 13) to Egypt. Notice, the angel doesn’t speak of “wife” or “son.” He knows that Joseph believes and no longer needs to be convinced of God’s hand in all that has happened. When Joseph sees the angel there is no doubt or questioning, just faith and action.

And, after Herod had died (a tortured death in prison), the same angel comes to Joseph again, telling him it was safe to go home. He took Mary and the Child Jesus to Nazareth, “calling him out from Egypt” (v. 22-23), and there He grows to manhood.

May each of us embrace the examples of the faith and perseverance David and Moses had, as well as the courage and faithfulness found in the young Virgin Mary and Joseph her betrothed. May each of us be like they, listening to God’s call for us and willing to follow it.

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 Liturgy 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).

