

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN DECEMBER 15, 2019

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

OUR CHILDREN & YOUTH CHRISTMAS PROGRAM will be held on Sunday, December 22nd. Preparation and rehearsal will occur during Religious Ed on Sunday Dec 15; and on Saturday, Dec 21 at 10AM. All of those who are interested please attend these Rehearsals. Questions? see Valarie Stamoulis: 617-803-3798.

OUR NEXT MUSTARD SEED MEAL is this coming Friday, December 20TH. We'll need help cooking and serving. **Prep** help needed (3 persons), NOON Thursday. **Prep** help needed (2 persons), NOON Friday. **Serving** help needed (5 persons), 5:30PM Friday. If you'd like to help, please talk to Fr. Nick.

DONATIONS FOR ALBANIAN EARTHQUAKE RELIEF may be made through our parish. Please clearly designate this on donation. We will forward all monies collected to the Orthodox Church of Albania. For information about their relief efforts: <http://orthodoxalbania.net/index.php/en-us/>.

THE 2020 CHURCH CALENDARS are here, in both English and Romanian. Pick them up at the candles. Please consider a small donation to cover the costs.

TODAY WE CELEBRATE A 40-DAY

GREETERS TEAM 4:
V. GERALD BELBA & ROSE SALERNO

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:
HELP NEEDED
PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



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

EPISTLE: COLOSSIANS 3:4-11 ☩ GOSPEL: LUKE 14:16-24

(THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET)

TONE 1 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL: 4

BLESSING for the servant of God **Nadine Kamilla Shaheen**, daughter of **Gheorghina and Daniel Shaheen**. *May our loving Lord bless her and her family!*

A THREE YEAR MEMORIAL is observed today for the servant of God **Christy Belba**. The Belba family remembers him together with his wife Dorothy, his grandson Craig, his brother Theodore, and his parents Lambi and Meropi. *May their memory be eternal!*

to made it happen. Remember, it was a 4-day celebration. For the Feastday itself, we had clergy participation from our sister parishes for Vespers on Thursday and Liturgy on Friday, as well as faithful from each of those communities. Saturday's reception was both elegant and relaxing. Everyone was impressed. And, we managed to burn the mortgage, without burning down the Church! While many helped, **special thanks** go to **Tim Rucho and Deb Sedares**, who chaired and directed the event. We also want to **recognize**

70TH ANNIVERSARY THANKS!

OUR 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION was a memorable event. It took a lot of work over these last months, and we owe a debt of gratitude

DATES TO REMEMBER

HOLIDAY LITURGICAL SCHEDULE ATTACHED	
Sun, Dec 15	Pageant Rehearsal
Fri, Dec 20	Mustard Seed Meal, 5:00 PM
Sat, Dec 21	Pageant Rehearsal, 10 AM
Sun, Dec 22	Children & Youth Christmas Program
Wed, Dec 25	Nativity of the Lord
Sat, Jan 4	Staff Food Pantry, 9AM-NOON

34 GOLD STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545-6238 ♦ VOICE: 508.845.0088 ♦ FAX: 508.845.8850
E-MAIL: FRNICK@STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG ♦ WEB: WWW.STNICHOLASCHURCH.ORG

A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

Maclynn Saffron for her yoewoman's efforts! *God's blessing on each of you!*

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!*

DIVINE LITURGY is celebrated every Wednesday morning at 9:30AM. And please always keep Holy Trinity Nursing Home, it's staff, directors, residents, and families in your prayers.

HOLY TRINITY is a non-profit skilled nursing and rehabilitation center and a project of the Council of Orthodox Churches of Central MA. Please keep Holy Trinity in your prayer.

A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

BLESSED ARE YOU, Lord God of our fathers, for giving us your only Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, as our refuge and stronghold, that evil might never master our lives nor the enemy enslave us! Now, as we offer you these prayers in watchfulness and expectation, enable us to call on your holy name, filled with understanding and love. Prepare us for the celebration of your Son's birthday by renewing in us a spirit of true dedication and discipleship, and grant that we may always enjoy your saving power.

For you are one to have mercy on us and save us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Thanks to the Bakers!

Our baked goods have become a significant support for our Parish. It's a team effort and a lot of our parishioners and friends are involved. It's only fitting that we send out a "thank you" to the people who work very hard producing all of the baked goods we sell. Here they are. Offer each one a personal "thank you" when you see them.

Ken Anderson
Lillian Chachi
Katina Cocavessis
Maria Dumitriu
Eileen Favata
Phil Favata
Mary Feeney
Michael George
Bessie Kyros
Margarite Landry
Lisa Mielnicki
Maria Mossaides
Arthur Peterson
Padraic Peterson
Florence Rucho
Tim Rucho
Maclynn Saffron
Janice Samara
Deb Sedares
Eleanor Sedares
Anna Stefania Seith
Chris Seith
Kayla Snow
Carol Soter
Karen Wilder
Natasha Zhaka

And especially our baking superheros:

**Chris Toda
Betty Anderson**

NAMEDAYS

December 12

St. Spyridon

the Wonderworker of Tremithus

Spiro Kelly
Spiro Kelly
Spiro Spyrou

December 15

**The Hieromartyr Eleftherios,
Bishop of Illyria**

Lillian Chachi

December 17

The Holy Prophet Daniel

Dan Manescu
Dana Manescu
Dan Alexandru Nedelescu
Robert Daniel Salerno
Daniel Shaheen
Dana Tsoules

December 22

**The Sunday of the Ancestors of
Our Lord, according to his humanity**

The High Priest Aaron

Aaron Paul Christo

Adam the first man

Adam Mayer

**The Holy Prophetess Abigail,
wife of David**

Abigail Mayer

The Righteous Deborah

Deborah Rucho

Deborah Sedares

The Righteous Noah

Noah Peter Christo

The Righteous Rebecca

Rebeka Tanacea

The Righteous Sarah

Sarah Maria Blanchard

Sarah Maria Bourisk

CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL

As we approach the feast of the Lord's birth we might also want to keep in mind the full line of holiday celebrations ahead climaxing with the Lord's baptism in the Jordan — his Epiphany. In the weeks before Christmas the Apostolic readings are taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians, which will be interrupted for readings specifically chosen for each feastday. (We again take up the Letter to the Colossians following Theophany.) This Sunday we read Chapter 3, verses 4-11 from this Letter.

To refresh your memory, Colossae was a community composed largely of Gentile converts, but also with a substantial Jewish component. Some of them were falling under the influence of gnostic teachers — what today we might call “new age” thinkers. There was a lot of syncretistic thinking and behavior, a kind of mix-and-match approach to the spiritual life. Paul wanted to address what he saw as the dangers of these tendencies straight on.

This Letter has two distinct parts. Paul starts out by addressing questions of faith. There were real doctrinal problems in the Colossian community, and he wanted to get them back on the right track. The verses we read today are the opening thoughts to the second part: how Christians ought to live. In order to make his point about the new life that Christ offers us, he draws on imagery and language from the Baptismal rite. He bridges his discussion of doctrine and faith to his thoughts on Christian living by reminding the Colossians of their baptism. Very probably, much of what St. Paul wrote to them was part of their catechetical instruction when they were preparing for baptism.

I should say one more thing. Often when the portions of St. Paul's letters are read during the Liturgy, people can be left a little perplexed, wondering what it meant. St. Paul intended his Letters to be read as a whole, and even studied. It

may be hard to appreciate the fact that they are usually very pastoral and even emotional, when we only hear them in small snippets, dare I say, sound bites. This week's reading is a good example. He uses the images of death in the waters of Baptism and the new life in Christ which we have been given. But the selected reading only gives us the first part. We have to wait until another Sunday to get the second. So if you don't understand the whole context, the opening verses can be a little jarring. Listen to what he says:

“Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things — anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth” (v. 3:5-8).

If you have attended a baptism recently, you probably recognize many of these phrases from the first part of the service, the exorcisms. When we hear these words read again, it reminds us of the “old man” we left behind when we embraced Christ. Think about that moment in the baptismal service where, after having renounced Satan and joined Christ, the person who is to be baptized is led by the priest toward the font. Now listen to the next verses from today's reading:

“[Y]ou have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator” (v. 9-10). These verses echo what he wrote to the Galatians: “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (v. 3:27). We sing these words at every baptism and at every Divine Liturgy that was traditionally a day for baptisms, like Pascha, Theophany and

Christmas. It is a regular reminder of our baptismal commitment and vow.

In order to emphasize this change that we undergo in Christ — the “new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (v. 10) — he speaks of the disappearance of social barriers in the Christian community, such that, “there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!” (v. 11). He says something similar in Galatians: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (3:28).

Because so many people who called and call themselves Christians have behaved in discriminatory and even horrific ways toward other human beings “different” from them, it can be easy to forget that Christianity and the Church has been the greatest liberating force in human history. One doesn't need to look very hard to see how over the millennia people who were poor and marginalized were able through the Church to rise out of their situations in societies that were frozen by social position and class. As Christians we need to remember St. Paul's words and help to make our parish communities examples of the new humanity that we find in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian faith is regularly criticized as a regressive force in our modern world. All religious faith is often characterized as a source of division and even war. It is true that faith is a powerful motivating force, and sometimes people act badly, thinking it is what God wants. But we know that Christ came to restore humanity, not to destroy it. We know that we are called to renew and reshape ourselves according to the image of him who created us. Let us act on it. Each of us needs to listen to God's call and let it permeate our hearts.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

CHRISTMAS & THEOPHANY SCHEDULE



SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2019

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM
 Children's Christmas Program after the Liturgy

CHRISTMAS EVE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2019

Royal Hours 9:30 AM
 Great Vespers 6:00 PM

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2019

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2019

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

NEW YEAR'S DAY

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD ✨ FEAST OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2020

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 AM

FRIDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY ✨ JANUARY 3, 2020

Royal Hours 9:30 AM

SUNDAY BEFORE HOLY THEOPHANY EVE OF THE FEAST SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom 10:00 AM
 Great Blessing of Water at end of Liturgy

SUNDAY AFTER HOLY THEOPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2020

Matins 9:00 AM
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM



HOUSE BLESSINGS. The blessing of homes at Theophany will begin the week of January 6, 2020, 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 (508.335.7378).