



Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church

1773 Woodbourne Road * Levittown, PA 19057
Fr. Edward G. Cimbala, D.Min – Pastor
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fredcimbala@gmail.com

Rev. Myron Badnerosky – Pastor Emeritus

Liturgical Schedule

for the Week of December 11, 2016

Sunday, December 11 ~ Sunday of the Forefathers

9:00 AM For the Parish Family
of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Festal Anointing in celebration of the Maternity of Anna
and St. Nicholas will follow the Divine Liturgy
Coffee Social Following

Saturday, December 17 ~ Daniel – Great Prophet

8:30 AM +Lt. Joseph P. Yatsko by mother Helen

Saturday, December 17

Christmas Confessions

Stop In Between 10:30 and Noon

Guest Confessors

Sunday, December 18 ~ Sunday Before Christmas

9:00 AM For the Parish Family
of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

CANDLE DEDICATION FOR DECEMBER

Tetrapod

In Honor of all the ECF Children by
M. Catherine McFarland

“Remembering that a child led the way...”

Altar of Preparation

In Memory of Nelli G. Donatelli,
my grandmother by Robert P. Donatelli

Blessing Altar

In Memory of Frank Scalia, my father by Nora Scalia
Downs & Greg Downs

2017



2017 LOTTERY CALENDARS

Margaret Churilla will have
2017 Lottery Calendars for sale
at \$20.00 per calendar. Every
night a possible winner based
on 3 digit PA Evening Daily

Number. Prizes vary from \$20 to \$200.



Holy Supper Svjatyj Večer

Fr. Ed has the tradition of preparing Holy Supper
for his family and friends on Christmas Eve. The
parish Family of OLPH is also invited. If you
would like to attend, please sign up on the sheet on
the table at the entrance of the church by
December 11 so he can prepare. Holy Supper will
be held in the Parish Hall at 4:30 PM. If you
would like to bring something or help, please let
Fr. Ed know. (It is not necessary to bring
something)

Fr. Ed Away - From Monday December 12 to Friday,
December 16. He will be visiting his mother and
stepfather in Florida. In case of an emergency, please
call his cell 908-872-2928.

Offertory – December 4, 2016

Weekly Offerings - \$1,687.00

Building Fund - \$225.00

Attendance ~ 83

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT 2016

Special Thanks to those who have responded to OLPH
Special Assessment Fundraising Drive

If you haven't contributed, please do so as soon as possible.

While the suggested amount is \$250.00 per family, all
contributions no matter what size are appreciated.



Preparing for Confession

How can one prepare for Holy
Confession? Preparation for Holy
Confession is a prayerful examination of
feelings, thoughts, words, acts, attitudes,
habits, values, priorities, goals, direction and way of life.
This prayerful self-examination includes not only the
personal religious life, but also family relationships,
social activities, job conduct, business dealings, political
commitments and even recreational pursuits, because our
entire existence should be lived in under the light of the
Holy Spirit is not to condemn ourselves, but to affirm our
true selves in Christ who has given us access to God's
mercy and forgiveness and who has taught us to live for
God's glory. Pray and think and your confession over
several days. Ask God to help you perceive your sins and
to make a thorough confession of them. **Christmas
Confessions will be heard on Saturday, December 17
from 10:30 AM to Noon.**



Please remember our Seminarian Tim
Fariss during the Christmas Season he
will be delighted to hear from you.

Tim Fariss

Byzantine Catholic Seminary
3605 Perrysville Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15214

Take a tag from the tree and
LOOSLEY attach it back on your
gift package so we can collect the
tags for next year. Please mark the
age and sex of the child on the
outside of the wrapped package. Gifts
are due before the Divine Liturgy **NEXT SUNDAY** on
December 18. Thank you for your support of this very
special program which benefits the Children's Home
Society of New Jersey.



A SPECIAL GIFT FOR CHRISTMAS

– A special gift for Christmas is a fitting
way to thank God for coming to us and
showering us with His Light. As Christmas
falls on a Sunday this year, please use your Sunday
envelope in addition to the special Christmas envelope.
Thank you for your generosity.

Christmas in the Carpathian Highlands

by Michael Roman

The below article first appeared in Greek Catholic Union Magazine, and was authored by Michael Roman, K.S.G.G.

In recent years many Carpatho-Rusyns -- also known as Rusyns, Carpatho-Russians, Carpatho-Ruthenians or Ruthenians --- have been showing a keen interest in their "roots," history, traditions and customs. Some of the traditions, so enthusiastically observed by our pioneers in America, then partially lapsed, are slowly but surely being revived. With the approach of the Feast Day of the Nativity of Our Lord, preparations are being made in many Rusyn-American homes for Holy Supper on Christmas Eve.

For many centuries Holy Supper on the eve before Christmas was traditionally a special family meal for our Rusyns. It was full of meaning and symbolism. Even those who have unfortunately abandoned this glorious tradition still recall and cherish the childhood memories of "Svjatyj Vecer."

In a booklet printed a few years ago, Father Joseph Ridella, Donald Petyo and Michael Huszti of the Parma Diocese have emphasized the importance of observing the traditional Holy Supper in the following words.

"This custom of taking time to gather together in joy as a family and to share a special meal is not only something of fond memories but a vital way of reaffirming the importance of family where we learn to love and be loved. Beginning our Christmas celebration with 'Holy Supper' is just as meaningful today as it was years ago; perhaps it is needed even more now than ever before."

It is my hope that more of our Rusyn-Americans heed the call for the revival of the traditional Holy Supper on Christmas Eve.

Recalling his fond childhood memories of Christmas Eve in the old country, a Rusyn writer - Michael I. Dzamka of Cleveland, Ohio - wrote a very illuminating article on "Rozdestvo na Verchovini", Christmas in the Highlands.

The Carpatho-Rusyn article was published thirty years ago in another fraternal newspaper, microfilms of which are at the Hillman Library of the University of Pittsburgh. Most of the following paragraphs are based on notes taken while reading the microfilm of the article.

Many of our older readers will recall that a strict fast was fully observed on the day before Christmas. Some families -- in the Carpathians and in America -- observed the fast so strictly that they did not eat any food until Holy Supper. Only the drinking of water was permitted. No wonder everyone waited for Holy Supper!

For the wife and mother of a Rusyn family the day before Christmas was a very busy one indeed. She

spent it entirely in the preparation of the various foods for Holy Supper and in cleaning the hut.

Holy Supper Table

When twilight arrived on Christmas Eve, the mother covered the table with a white cloth in memory of the swaddling clothes of infant Jesus. She then set the various foods in their proper places on the table. The foods, prepared in or with oil, included fish, herring, bobalki, mushroom sauerkraut soup or lima bean sauerkraut soup, meatless holupki, stewed plums, mashed potatoes, honey, garlic.. etc.

In some villages there were twelve foods on the table, symbolizing the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. In the center of the table was a large round loaf of bread which symbolized Jesus as the bread of life. The candle which was placed in the bread symbolized the Star of Bethlehem which guided the shepherds and wise men to worship and adore the light of the world. While mother prepared the table for Holy Supper, the father fed the cattle a little earlier than usual. He then picked up some straw and entered the hut saying: *"We wish happiness, fortune and health with the approaching Feast Day of the Nativity of Our Lord, and we hope all of us may live to another Christmas, live in peace and happiness and we ask God's blessing upon all of us."*

The straw was strewn on the floor and some of it was also placed on the table, symbolizing the fact that little Jesus lay on the straw in the manger.

Immediately before the beginning of Holy Supper, all participants therein went to a nearby stream or creek to wash their faces and hands. This was done in the belief that they would be clean and healthy during the coming New Year. The washing also signified that the shepherds first washed themselves before they went to see the newly born Child.

Returning to the hut, they all enthusiastically greeted each other with "Christos Razdajetsja! Slavite Jeho!" Christ is born! Glorify Him! They then gathered around the table and the father, opening the Holy Supper with prayer, asked God's blessings on the foods they were about to eat.

The father then poured himself a drink and proposed the following toast:

"Grant, Oh God, that we may live top an even better Holy Night next year. May the Lord give good health to you, my dear wife, and to our children, to my good and bad neighbors, to my friends and enemies. May God bless all Christians here and abroad and may He grant eternal memory and heaven to the departed. And above all, my Little Jesus, born this day, bring peace, health and happiness!"

The mother replied: "Daj Boze!" Grant it, Oh Lord! She also took a little drink and expressed similar greetings. The older children were allowed to take a sip.

A Honeyed Sign of the Cross

After dipping her forefinger into the honey, the mother made a sign of the cross on the foreheads of all present

including herself. The use of honey symbolized the mother's prayer that the lives of all present will be sweet, without any bitterness. However, when the mother made a honeyed sign of the cross on the forehead of her eligible-for-marriage daughter, she expressed her prayerful wish: *"May Jesus grant that the young men will go after you like the bees go after honey!"*

The mother then dipped garlic into honey and each one present had to taste it. Our Rusyn ancestors believed that garlic chased away all pagan and evil spirits and kept them healthy. While giving the garlic to taste the mother said: *"May God grant that you be as healthy as this garlic!"*

Yes even in this day and age there are many Rusyn old people who believe that garlic has curative powers. With the symbolic preliminaries out of the way, all started to eat the delicious strict-fast foods on the table. No one was permitted to by-pass a food; he or she had to taste it at least.

After Holy Supper the cattle also received a portion of each of the foods that were on the table, thus symbolizing the fact that Jesus at His birth was surrounded with cattle. The Holy Supper ended with an extemporaneous prayer by the head of the household who again expressed gratitude to Infant Jesus and wished everyone a Happy and Blessed Christmas. Most of the Rusyn parents did not have Christmas trees to decorate. Those that did have trees decorated them with the help of their children immediately after Holy Supper. Singing Christmas Carols (kol'ady) and hymns, they placed home-made ornaments on the trees.

Christmas Carols

Christmas carols and hymns were sung in every hut in the village, starting immediately after the conclusion of Holy Supper. One of the favorite carols was "Bozij Syn dnes' narodilsja," God's Son is born today, composed by Bishop Basil Popovich.

The mothers participated in the carol singing with their husbands and children. They had no dishes, pots, pans, knives, forks and spoons to clean. There was a superstitious belief that someone who had died in the family was hungry and would return on Christmas Eve to fill himself up with what was left on the dishes or in the pots and pans.

Hut-to-hut -singing of carols and hymns also began after Holy Supper. Young lads, upon entering the hut, started singing "Rozdestvo Tvoje," "Your Birth," "Divnaja Novina," "Wondrous News," after which one of them extended the following greeting:

"Following an ancient custom we too, like shepherds of old, have come to adore little Jesus. We humbly show our adoration and thus glorify Jesus. May we, with his help, be able to celebrate these joyous Holy Days in peace and happiness. We wish all of you peaceful and happy holy days"

Receiving a monetary gift, the lads departed and continued on their merry and carol-singing way. And then came the Bethlehem Carolers or "Jaslickari" to re-enact the Nativity Scene, stating that they were

shepherds who had come from Bethlehem and who had brought with them the manger of Bethlehem. While performing the Nativity Scene, the "Jaslickari" sang a few Christmas Carols, concluding with greetings from the Old shepherd, "Staryj Pastyr":

"My dear fellow Christians, we are deeply grateful for your warm reception. Our sincere 'Thank You' and the best of wishes of this Holy Christmas Season. May the good Lord Jesus grant you all that you need. May He bless you with health and happiness. May the these gifts of the Lord be yours for many years!"

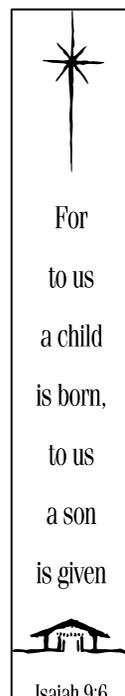
Shortly after the "Jaslickari" had departed, the father and the oldest son and daughter trudged through the snow to participate in the midnight services in the church, during which the entire congregation, led by the pastor and cantor, in unison welcomed Infant Jesus with enthusiastic, moving and hearty rendition of "S Nami Boh," "God With Us!"

Yes the enthusiastic singing of "S Nami Boh" was a climactic conclusion to an unforgettable Christmas Eve in the Carpathian Highland. May the just as enthusiastic rendition of "God With Us" be a fitting climax an always remembered Christmas Eve in the Appalachians, the Alleghenies, the Rockies, the Plains or anywhere in America!

Paraphrasing the old "Jaslickari," I conclude with the following sincerest greetings:

"My dear fellow Christians, I extend the best of wishes of the Holy Christmas Season. May Infant Jesus grant all that you need and may He bless you with health and happiness now and during the New Year. Christos Razdajetsja! Slavite Jeho! Christ is Born! Glorify Him!"

The above article was first published in the Greek Catholic Union Messenger, has been published in pamphlet form, and republished by many newspapers over the years including the Byzantine Catholic World from which the above text was taken from the December 9, 1990 edition. This article is now considered the classic definition of Christmas tradition by many Carpatho-Rusyns.



Special Liturgical Celebrations

During December

Christmas Confessions

Saturday, December 17

Stop in Between 10:30 AM and Noon

Guest Confessors

Christmas

The Nativity of Our Lord

Saturday, December 24

7:15 PM – Grand Compline

8:00 PM – Divine Liturgy

Sunday, December 25

9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

Synaxis of the Theotokos

Monday, December 26 - 7:00 PM

Divine Liturgy

Stephen - Protomartyr

Tuesday, December 27 - 8:30 AM

Divine Liturgy

WELCOME VISITORS!
“MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER
FOR ALL PEOPLES.” - Isaiah 56: 7

If you are a visitor to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, we want you to know how welcome you are; whether you have come from another part of the country, from across the world, or simply from another parish. We hope you find our worship true and reverent and our people here friendly and cordial. If you are seeking a spiritual home, we would be honored by your presence in our family. For more information about becoming a parishioner, please see Fr. Ed.

FR. MYRON RETIREMENT DIVINE LITURGY – Michael Sudik has prepared a CD of Fr. Myron’s retirement Divine Liturgy. The cost is \$10.00. Please see Michael to get a copy of this historical recording.



On the Road with Fr. Ed
Spain Pilgrimage with Fatima, Lourdes & Barcelona
Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Apparitions at Fatima November 1- 11, 2017
\$2,989 per person from Newark - See Fr. Ed for more info.