

St. Mary Protection of the Theotokos Parish

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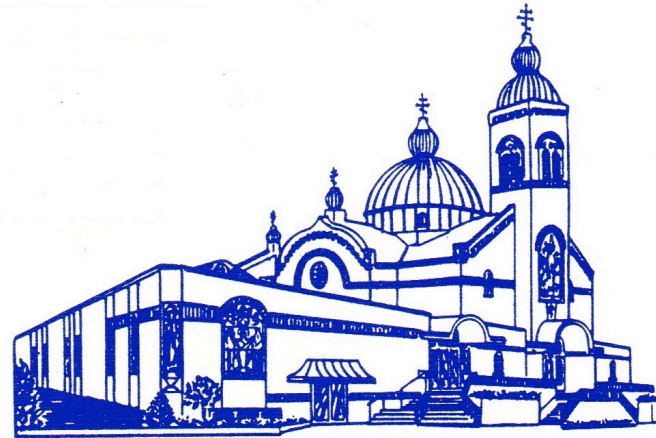
GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

GLORY FOREVER TO GOD!

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СЛАВА ІСУСУ ХРИСТУ!

СЛАВА НАВІКИ БОГУ!



Welcome to the God-loving and God-protected Orthodox Christian parish of *Pokrova* (Protection of the Holy Theotokos or “St. Mary’s”)!

It is a blessing to have you with us today and we encourage you to come back as often as you are able. Like us, you may find that you have found your spiritual home here!

We are a parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA under the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and our doors and hearts are open to you and your family!

Please visit our website: pokrova-allentown.org and help yourself to the many pamphlets located on the literature racks outside the church. Fr. Anthony would love answering your questions; you can reach him at 484-232-9423, father.anthony@yahoo.com, on Facebook (Douglas Anthony Perkins or facebook.com/pokrova.allentown), or face to face after services.

Handicap parking is available behind the church; regular parking is available on the street and (on Sundays) at Kohut Funeral Home.

Upcoming Services

Sunday	1/3	9:00AM	Divine Liturgy; Coffee, School;
Wednesday	1/6	9:00AM	Royal Hours of Nativity (CHAPEL)
		10:30AM	Vesperal Liturgy of Nativity (CHAPEL)
		8:00PM	Great Compline w/Litya (CHURCH)
Thursday	1/7	9:00AM	Divine Liturgy - Nativity!!! (CHURCH)
Friday	1/8	9:00AM	Div. Liturgy - Holy Theotokos (CHAPEL)
Saturday	1/9	9:00AM	Div. Liturgy – St. Stephen (CHAPEL)
		6:00PM	Great Vespers w/Litya (CHAPEL)
Sunday	1/10	9:00AM	Divine Liturgy; Coffee, School, Spiritually Speaking
Wednesday	1/13	7:00PM	Parish Vigil – Circumcision of Christ (CHAPEL)
Thursday	1/14	9:00AM	Festal Divine Liturgy (CHAPEL)
Saturday	1/16	9:00AM	Div. Liturgy – Forefeast of Jordan (CHAPEL)
		6:00PM	Great Vespers w/Litya (CHAPEL)
Sunday	1/17	9:00AM	Divine Liturgy; Coffee, School,
Monday	1/18	9:00AM	Royal Hours of Theophany/Jordan (CHAPEL)
		10:30AM	Vesperal Liturgy of Theophany (CHAPEL)
		7:00PM	Great Vigil w/Blessing of Water (CHURCH)
Tuesday	1/19	9:00AM	Divine Liturgy–Theophany/Jordan (CHURCH)
Wednesday	1/20		** NO SERVICE **
Saturday	1/23	9:00AM	Divine Liturgy (CHAPEL)
		6:00PM	Great Vespers w/Litya
Sunday	1/24	9:00AM	Divine Liturgy; Coffee, School, Spiritually Speaking
Wednesday	1/27	7:00PM	Akathyst (CHURCH)
Saturday	1/30	9:00AM	Divine Liturgy - St. Anthony (CHAPEL)
		6:00PM	Great Vespers w/Litya (CHAPEL)
Sunday	1/31	9:00AM	Divine Liturgy; Coffee, Church School,

Check our website for the full listing of services & activities!!

January 3rd; Gone 6; 31st Fathers

Tone 6 (Tropar, Resurrection)

The angelic powers were at Your tomb; / the guards became as dead men. / Mary stood by Your grave, / seeking Your most pure body. / You captured hell, not being tempted by it. / You came to the Virgin, granting life.// O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You.

Tone 2 (Tropar, Fathers)

Great are the accomplishments of faith,
for the three Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain of flames as though in the waters of rest;
and the Prophet Daniel appeared
a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep.//
So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

Tone 4 (Tropar, Forefeast)

Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all!
Adorn yourself, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave!
Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit;
if we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.//
Christ comes to restore the image which He made in the beginning.!

Tone 1 (Kondak, Fathers)

Rejoice, O Bethlehem! Prepare yourself, O Ephratha!
The Lamb is on her way to give birth to the Chief Shepherd she carries in her womb.
The God-bearing Forefathers will rejoice, beholding Him,
and with the shepherds, they will glorify the Virgin nursing Him.

Tone 2 (Kondak, Forefeast)

In Bethlehem, seeing wrapped in swaddling bands,
Him who holds the whole earth in his hand,
let us bring prefestal hymns beforehand to her who gave birth to him,
for mystically she rejoices,
carrying in her bosom the Son of God.

Prokimen (Tone 4; Song of our Fathers)

Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name forever! (Song of the three Holy Children, v. 3)
v: For You are just in all that You have done for us! (v. 4)

Epistle. Hebrews 11:9-10,17-23,32-40. Summary: Faith is important and, despite their flaws, our ancestors had it – let us emulate them in their faith!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! (Tone)

v: v: We have heard with our ears, O God, for our fathers have told us. (Ps 43/44:1)
v: For You have saved us from them that oppose us, and have put to shame them that hate us. (Ps 43/44:7)

Gospel. St. Matthew 1:1-25. Summary: The genealogy of Christ – how we got to the fullness of time... in Bethlehem!

Homily: A New Year's Resolution

As we begin the new year, we look backwards and forwards; taking stock of what has gone before and deciding what to do in the year to come. It is the same with today's Epistle and Gospel readings.

Looking backwards. The first thing we notice when reading today's scriptures is all those names. We are looking backwards through time to remember and evaluate what has happened up to this point in history. There are so many things that we can learn from this genealogical history – today I want to focus on what it says about charity. Those of us who have studied the Hebrew Bible are familiar with the deeds of many of those described in today's readings. What stands out when we reflect on their lives is that they were very real people. I don't just mean that they had flesh and blood and walked the earth at such and such time, but that they sometimes did things that don't look so good. Some people use this as an excuse to dismiss the scriptures. We know better. We know that it is not their mistakes that are being held up for us to emulate, but their faith. We find it immensely reassuring that God accomplished such wondrous things through His fallen people [more on this later].

The references to the "ancestors of God" in today's readings serve as a model of how we should categorize, value, and interact with all the people in our lives. Charity sees the good in others, despite their shortcomings. "The strong must bear the burdens of the weak" (Romans 15:1) is a good gateway verse as it engages and begins to train our pride (it is spiritual milk/ice cream); but the stronger approach is that we are in need of such charity ourselves, and even more powerfully, that everyone is made in God's image and has His breath animating their lives. Everyone really is worthy of love no matter how they have tarnished the image of God within them. The point of naming all these lives is to show how God works through His fallen people to accomplish truly great things. Rather than dismissing the ancestors of God for their sins, we are called to recognize and celebrate their faith and their role in salvation history; and in so doing, we are called to recognize and celebrate the way God is working through all His people (no matter how fallen).

A New Year's Resolution (cont'd)

... and seeing the present. The second part of today's Gospel takes us right up to the birth of Christ. All of history led up to this single point – a radical singularity of cosmic significance. God became incarnate as a man in Bethlehem of Judea. The one who is outside of time and matter joined Himself to it to redeem it; the one who is undefinable and incomprehensible translated Himself into something we could see and touch. [hymnography of the Church captures this the best, riffing on these themes over and over again] But this happened two thousand years ago – what is the point of celebrating it again and again? Are we historians? No. We are realists. The singularity is here – Christ is born within each of us. Just as He condescended to leave the glory of His rightful abode to be born in Bethlehem of Judea, so now has He condescended to incarnate Himself within our hearts and within this church. This is the living miracle of Christmas – that Christ has come into our hearts to bring us His peace, love, and salvation – and through us (His Church) brings His peace, love, and salvation to the world. Which brings us to my final point: what do we do with this blessing?

A resolution to love God (and neighbor). New Year Resolution – nurture your soul. Allow the Christ “child” within you to grow; allow His power and grace to transform your life. You have accepted Him as your savior; now renew your love for Him and nurture that love every day. Resolve to live a life in Christ – not because you should, but because you love Him, desire to live in His peace and joy, and desire to share His love with others. When we say profess to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind; when we say that we love our neighbors as ourselves, we mean something very real. We do not love ideas or platonic concepts, but a living God and living persons. And because they are real, our love for them requires real charitable and sacrificial action. It would be strange if a man confessed love for his wife, but did nothing to help, nourish, and serve her; if he sacrificed nothing for her well being. We would doubt the sincerity of his confession. Similarly, it would be strange if we confessed our love for God and mankind and sacrificed nothing on their behalf. Real love requires real action. Let's resolve in this new year to live lives more consistent with our confessions than ever before; to pray more consistently and sincerely, to be more steadfast in our worship, to be more sacrificial in our giving, to be more charitable in our evaluation of others, and to allow the grace of God to transform our hearts, our lives, and relations with others. If we do this, then we are sure to enjoy a prosperous and peaceful new year, no matter what challenges it may bring.

Parish News and Events

The sign-up list for coffee hour is in the hall – an opportunity to serve!
Don't have a place to celebrate Holy Supper? Celebrate it with your St. Mary's family! We will enjoy fellowship and twelve traditional dishes together in the parish hall before Great Compline. See Chris Z. for details (and if you want to request or sign-up for a dish – although both are optional). **All are invited!!!**

It's Caroling Season! We will be joining other groups to carol for His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony on Saturday 16 January 2016 at 1:00 PM in South Bound Brook! We will also make rounds after the Nativity Divine Liturgy on 1/7.

Royal Hours? You may notice that we are having “Royal Hours” for both Nativity and Theophany. These are 90 minute services that combine, psalms, songs, and scripture design to deepen our understanding and appreciation of the feast. They are beautiful and simple; if you have the time, I think you'll enjoy them!

Spiritually Speaking (every other Sunday after Coffee Hour in the Social Hall):
Next Sunday: “Orthodoxy and the Paranormal!” I've spent a lot of time researching this subject and have several friends who are (or were) paranormal investigators. I look forward to your questions!

St. Mary's Seniors

1/11 at 12:30PM: Seniors' Meeting; 1/27 at 8:00AM: Hoagie Sale

St. Mary's Ukrainian Dance Group: Every Wednesday @6:30 in the Social Hall

Educational Series: Saturdays, 12/5-1/2 @ 5:00 in the Chapel (before Vespers)
Next Saturday's lesson will explore the deeper magic of Theophany.

Reading and Greeter Schedule

Today's Epistle Reader: Richard Bodner; Robin Bodner

Today's Communion Prayers: Michael Hutzayluk.; Next Week: Joseph Hutzalyuk

Today's Greeters: Eleanor Fox & Katherine Kramer;

Next Week: Judy Miller & Vera Muzychka

In Orthodoxy, communion is reserved for those who are members of an Orthodox parish and who have prepared themselves through prayer and fasting. We would love to have you as a member and communicant here at St. Mary's - See Fr. Anthony if you would like to join our parish!