

5 2nd Street
Herminie, PA 15637
<http://pokrov.iksnazul.com/>

Cantor
Joseph Luzanski

Sunday of the Holy Ancestors

Tone 3

Menologion

SS. Sebastian and Companions were put to death A.D. 292 during the reign of Diocletian, Emperor.

Liturgical Schedule

Divine Liturgy

Sunday: 8:30 am
Holyday: 9:00 am

Confessions

One half hour before
the divine liturgy or
by appointment

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KEEP THE
TRADITION OF PUTTING SOME STRAW ON
OR UNDER YOUR TABLE FOR CHRISTMAS
EVE* I'VE BUNDLED SOME STRAW AND
TIED IT WITH A RIBBON*
IT WON'T MAKE A MESS*

Served By

Father Vasyl Yakubych
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FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO WISH TO DONATE
TOWARDS THE CHRISTMAS FLOWERS THERE
ARE ENVELOPES IN THE VESTIBULE.

Father will be blessing houses in the New
Year. If you are interested in having your
home blessed talk to Father Vasyl

Fasts & Feasts

December

26 *Great Doxology* THE SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS
AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY

27 THE HOLY APOSTLE, FIRST MARTYR, AND
ARCHDEACON STEPHEN

January

1 THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND
SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

1 OUR HOLY FATHER BASIL THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP
OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA (379)

Christmas Liturgy Schedule

24th

9:00 pm Traditional Christmas Carols
9:30 pm Compline and Divine Liturgy

25th

9:00 am Divine Liturgy

Reminder:

There is a list for Divine Liturgy and
Sanctuary Lamp intentions in the vestibule
of the church.

We pray for the elderly, who represent the
roots and memory of a people; may their
experience and wisdom help young people
to look towards the future with hope and
responsibility

The Carpatho-Rusyn people maintain a wide variety of customs associated with all the holidays of the year, but few of them are as elaborate or as eagerly awaited as those associated with the Feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ.

The meal begins just as the first star appears in the sky at the setting of the sun. The first star represents the star of Bethlehem. The father then proceeds into the room greeting his family with "Christos Razdajetsja" - "Christ is Born!" The family replies, "Slavite Jeho" - "Glorify Him!" He then ties the four legs of the table with rope or chain, asking God's blessings and protection from all corners of the world. He also prays that the family be always united like the links of the chain.

The mother sprinkles the family members with holy water so that their souls and minds might be receptive to the meaning of the Birth of Christ. The father then takes the holy water to sprinkle the livestock and the household animals, after which they are given sugar or salt and plenty of feed. (It is a belief among many Rusyns that the animals can speak at midnight on Christmas Eve and would complain to God if they were mistreated!)

The candles on the table are lit to symbolize the appearance of Christ, the Light of the World, at His birth. The father or eldest son leads the family in kneeling prayer, like the adoration of Christ by the shepherds and wise men. The prayer expresses gratitude to God for His blessings during the past year. It includes petitions for health, happiness, long life and salvation, that the family may be united in love forever, and blessing of the food. Then the Troparion of Christmas is sung: "Rozdestvo Tvoje Christe Boze naš, vozsjia mirovi svit razuma...." "Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge...."

The food may be blessed with holy water. A toast "vincovanja" with sweet wine, brandy "palenka", or whiskey mixed with honey is offered, again by the father. It may be simple or quite elaborate, but is usually something like this: "Good Christians! I greet you on the Feast of Christ's Nativity and wish that the Lord grant you

and your children good health and fortune to praise the eternal God for many blessed years!"; those present answer "Daj Boze!" - "Grant it, o God!"

The mother takes a tooth of garlic, dips it honey, and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the father and then on each member of the family according to seniority. The honey symbolizes the sweetness of life, the garlic - the bitterness. Garlic is held by Rusyns to have curative powers and to keep away evil spirits. When the mother makes the sign of the cross on her eligible-for-marriage daughter, she exclaims. "May Jesus grant that young men will go after you like bees to honey!"

The Carolers Arrive

The local carolers (jaslickari / gubi / Betlehemcj / Vyfejemci / zvizdari) may now pay a visit to the home. The carolers come dressed as angels and shepherds, carrying a miniature church (typical in Subcarpathia) or led in procession by a star on a pole (more common in the Lemko Region/Galicia). They dress in white garments, with tall cylinder hats and brightly colored ribbons across their chests, and they carry staves, perhaps with a bell at the end. Almost all ages - youngsters, teens, adults - are known to form "Bethlehem caroler" - or "Star Caroler" groups.

The guba, kuba, dido or staryj pastyr, the oldest shepherd (with a mask on his face) is the main character and also the comedian. The "Bethlehem play" they present is a short presentation of carols, sung greetings (koljadky), dialogue, dancing, and the announcement of Christ's birth. A puppet play, vertep (the cave) may be presented instead in some regions. The family then rewards the carolers with drinks or coins to thank them for their long journey from home to home. The carolers journey will continue after the evening church services, into the night, and throughout the next three days.

Christos Razdajetsja!
Slavite Jeho!
Христос раждається!
Славите jeho!