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Liturgical Schedule

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

Confessions

One half hour before  
the divine liturgy or by  
appointment

Served By

Father Vasyl Yakubych  
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*The Divine Liturgy intention is for my mom Helen  
Luzanski.*

*If you would like to schedule a Litrgy please talk to  
Father Vasyl or use the sign up sheet in the vestibule.*

Philip's fast begins on November 15th.

The regulations of this Fast are not strict, as it falls during the winter. Abstinence remains in force for Friday, and is recommended for Wednesday and if possible, also Monday. **Christmas Eve** remains a day of strict fast: no meat, no dairy, one main meal, which is the Holy Supper in the evening.



**Reminder:**

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

For those of you who wish to donate  
towards the **Christmas Flowers** there  
will be envelopes in the vestibule.



Sunday of the Holy Forefathers or Sunday of the Holy Forefathers of Jesus Christ is a Christian holiday that is always celebrated on a Sunday and always on the second Sunday before Christmas in the Eastern Orthodox Church and in the Eastern Catholic Churches using the Byzantine Rite. The beginning of the celebration is December 11. If December 11 is a weekday, then the holiday is postponed until the following Sunday. This can be perceived in the year 2024: December 11 is a Wednesday, therefore, the holiday will be celebrated

The Second Sunday before the Nativity  
(Sunday of the Forefathers)  
Tone 5

**Menologion**

The Holy Martyr Eleutherius (120).

Our Venerable Father Paul of Latra (950).

St. Daniel, and the Three Youths, SS. Hannaniah, Azariah, and Mischael. Daniel is the Fourth of the Four Great Prophets. He died a centenarian in Persia in the 5th century B.C. The Three Youths were cast into the fiery furnace by the order of King Nebuchadnesar of Babylon but miraculously came out unscathed. (Dec. 17)

**Propers**

**Pages** 146, 281-283

**Fasts & Feasts**

**DECEMBER**

- 15 The Second Sunday before the Nativity (Sunday of the Forefathers).
- 22 The Sunday before the Nativity (Sunday of the Ancestors).
- 24 Vigil of the Nativity.
- 25 The Nativity Of Our Lord, God And Savior Jesus Christ.
- 26 Great Doxology The Synaxis Of The Theotokos And Ever-Virgin Mary.
- 27 Stephen the Protomartyr

four days later on Sunday, December 15.

The Sunday that falls between December 11 to 17 is known as the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers. The ancestors of the Old Testament. Those who lived before and under the Law, and those of the flesh, namely the Patriarch Abraham whom the Lord said unto "In thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3; 22:18).

*This bulletin contains items for Christmas  
Eve Services (Compline and Litia) and prayers  
for the Christmas Eve holy Supper (**Svjatyj  
Večer**).*

The two last Sundays before the Nativity of Christ are called the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers and the Sunday of the Holy Fathers. The Holy Forefathers and Fathers are the Old Testament relatives according to the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, beginning with the holy ancestors Adam and Eve, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, and his sons, the holy patriarch Abraham, and so on up to the glorious Nativity of Christ.

We honor all the righteous of the Old Testament, including those who became the Savior's ancestors according to the flesh, because these people burned like candles of God in the darkness of paganism, and lived in the hope of the coming of the Messiah and mankind's deliverance from slavery to the devil, sin, and death. They lived by this hope, lead by it as by a certain inner ray of the heart, which cut through the darkness of pagan religion and gave them the anticipation, the prescience of Christ, the joy of communion with God, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the foretaste of paradise, where human feet had not stepped for many thousands of years but where (O, they believed in this!) the gates would unfailingly open; because into the world would come the One Whom these forefathers and fathers loved above all else, loved more than life itself, and for Whose sake were ready for anything—even death. Into the world would come our Lord Jesus Christ, Who would save them. And he will save all of us!

It is precisely for this reason that on the final Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, on the Sunday of the Holy Fathers, at the Liturgy is read the first synoptic Gospel, the first in order according to the Gospel of Matthew, where the genealogy of the Lord God, our Savior Jesus Christ is recounted. On the one hand, this was established by the Church in order that we would know and be interested in the lives of these Old Testament righteous ones, finding much that is fascinating and, especially, instructive in them. On the other hand, this established order is testimony to the fact that Christ is a real, historical person—and not just an historical person, but God incarnate in human nature, become a real Man, Who took on our sins, healed us with His redeeming podvig, and Who ascended with human nature to the right hand of God the Father. Every man has ancestors and the Savior also had them, which is what the Gospel retells with utmost clarity.

Furthermore, brothers and sisters, we would like to direct your attention to the podvig of the holy forefathers and fathers from the historical point of view. We live in a society that is penetrated and drenched with Christian morality, as the earth is penetrated with air and drenched with water. But at that time, among the ancient Greeks flourished homosexuality, the Canaanite peoples made sacrifices of their own nursing children to Moloch, the Scythians drank the blood of their enemies, and among many nations drunkenness and fornication were glorified by their pagan religions and exalted to the level of religious ritual.

Cruelty and slavery were the norm then. Human life was cheap. Anyone could break into another man's house during war and take him into slavery, to make of him a "talking thing" with absolutely no rights.

And it seems to me that in those times it must have been very easy to lose the guiding star of the true faith, but the holy forefathers and father did not lose it; to the contrary they preserved it as a flaming, fiery tradition, like a burning candle, which we also must pass on (still burning!) to our own descendants. The world is still standing because of this.

There is a reason why this year at the Liturgy on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers the Gospel parable of the wedding feast of the king's son is read (Lk. 14:16-24). The powerful of that world rejected Christ, but the lame on the wayside accepted Him and were triumphantly led to the wedding feast. Who are "the maimed, the halt, and the blind" in the Gospel, who were called to the feast of faith? Of course they are, first of all, the holy forefathers and fathers, and after them all Christians who sincerely consider themselves spiritually sick—sick with sin, and therefore do they weep and lament over their sins and seek their most important Doctor, God. They seek and find Him.

The central liturgical theme on the Sundays of the Holy Forefathers and Fathers is the theme of the three holy friends of Prophet Daniel, Sts. Ananias, Azarius, and Misael, whom the king had thrown into the Babylonian furnace because they did not bow down to the pagan idol. The holy youths did not burn, as an angel protected them. Their being "in a fiery furnace" became a prefiguring of the Nativity of Christ: Just as the three youths were not harmed by the flames of the furnace, so also Christ's Nativity did not scorch (did not harm) the "Virgin Womb".

At the threshold of the Nativity of Christ, we would like to wish that all of us, dear brothers and sisters, would have within ourselves, veritably like a heavenly fire, that feeling of the living God, Who appears One and the Same for them, the holy forefathers and fathers, and for the holy apostles, and for us.

In fact, just as the Most High conversed with the holy foreparents Adam and Eve in paradise and abode with them, so does He converse with our souls; although because of our sinfulness we cannot perceive this in full measure as did the first people in paradise. But this happens, nevertheless.

And perhaps one of the most important feelings or thoughts that unites the holy forefathers, the fathers, the apostles, and in general all the saints of all generations is the understanding that the Lord, just as before so also now, like a thousand years ago, and in the coming year, is amidst us, and walks beside us through life.

## The Christmas Eve Holy Supper

### *Svjatj Večer*

#### **Bringing in the straw**

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 on all of us. (Place the straw under the table.)

#### **Blessing with a drink**

Grant O God that we may live to an even better holy night next year. May the Lord give health to you my dear wife and to my son, and to our family, to our 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, give peace health and happiness.

#### **Bind the family together.**

The legs of the table were tied by an iron chain as a symbol of family ties and togetherness.  
Or lay the chain on the floor so everyone touches it with their feet,

#### **Blessing with the garlic**

May God grant you be as healthy as this garlic.

#### **Blessing with honey**

May God grant you be as sweet as this honey.

## The Christmas Eve Holy Supper

The Church, both in the East and West – has traditionally observed a strict fast on the day before the Nativity of our Lord. Some families in Europe and 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!

In Eastern Europe, the day before Christmas was a very busy one indeed for the wife and mother of a family. She spent it entirely in the preparation of the many foods for Holy Supper.

When twilight arrived on Christmas Eve, the mother covered the table with a white linen cloth in memory of the swaddling clothes of Christ Child. When she set the table, she set an extra place to receive a stranger, a place for the Holy Family who found no lodging in Bethlehem's Inn. The children would vie to spot the first star in the sky after sundown, the star that symbolized the Star of Bethlehem.

When joyful cries announced the first star, the mother could then set the various foods in their proper places on the table. The foods, prepared in or with oil, but without dairy products due to the strict fast, included fish, herring, bobalki, sauerkraut soup with mushrooms or lima beans, meatless holupki, stewed plums, mashed potatoes, honey, garlic, etc. In some villages, there were as many as 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. A tall, blessed white candle, was placed in the bread, as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem, which guided the shepherds and wise men to worship and adore Christ, 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 blessings upon all of us.

The straw was strewn on the floor and some of it was also placed on the table or under the white tablecloth, symbolizing the fact that Jesus lay humbly in our poverty on the straw in a manger. The father may have prepared a sheaf of wheat or oats and placed it in the icon corner in hopes of a good harvest in the next year.

Immediately before the beginning of Holy Supper, all participants 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 recalled the tradition that the shepherds first washed themselves before they went to see the newly born Christ Child.

Returning to the house, they all enthusiastically greeted each other with 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.

In many families, the head of the household would break a Lenten fast bread and give everyone at the table a piece of it. The father then poured himself a glass of wine, recalling Christ at the last supper, and proposed the following toast:

Grant, O God, that we may live to 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: Grant it, Oh Lord! She also took a little drink and expressed similar greetings. The older children were allowed to take a sip.

The mother sprinkled all the family members with holy water so that their minds and hearts would open to the meaning of the Birth of Christ. The father also took the holy water, sprinkling the livestock and household animals, and treating them to sugar or salt and plenty of feed. Many believed that the animals could speak at midnight on Christmas Eve and feared they might complain to God if mistreated.

#### 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 her prayer that the lives of all present would be sweet without bitterness. However, when the mother made a honeyed sign of the cross on the forehead of her marriageable 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. They 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, many people believe that garlic has curative powers and science finds new applications for the medicinal use of garlic every day!

In the tradition of the Byzantine Rite, the night-time vigil for the feast of the Nativity consists of: - the service of Great Compline - the litija procession, with prayers for the world - the service of Matins, with the Gospel of the Nativity, and the Great Doxology which begins with the words of the angels, announcing the birth of our Lord and Savior in Bethlehem: Glory to God in the highest!

*We will chant a shortened version of the Great Compline*

**Refrain:**  
**S námi Boh,**  
**rozumíjíte jazýci,**  
**i pokarjájtesja:**  
**jáko s námi Boh**

**Refrain:**  
**God is with us!**  
**Understand, all you nations,**  
**and submit yourselves**  
**for God is with us!**