

Holy Resurrection Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church
'Visoki Decani'

Herald

January, 2008

God's Peace - Christ is Born!



Мир Божији - Христос се роди!

Holy Resurrection Herald

Vol. XXIII

January, 2008

No. 206

Church Executive Board

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Rector | Fr. Rade Merick |
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Affiliated Organizations

K.S.S. SVETA PETKA (Steubenville-Mingo)
First Thursday — 11:30 am

President — Millicent Santilli

K.S.S. VIDOVDAN (Weirton)
Second Thursday — 12:00 Noon, Serbian-American Cultural Center

President — Dorothy Zatezalo

SERBIAN ORTHODOX MEN'S CLUB
Second Thursday — 7:00 PM Picnic Grounds

President — Theodore Zatezalo

PETAR KRSTICH CHOIR
Practice Tuesday Evenings — 7:00 PM

President — Mary Lynn Ricci
Director — Slobodan Zelich

4-C'ers CHURCH SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOC.
Third Sunday — after Liturgy

President — Milena Karas

CHURCH EXECUTIVE BOARD
Second Sunday — After Liturgy

President — Mark Zatezalo

HOLY RESURRECTION TAMMIES
Mondays — 6:30 PM Sept.-May

President — Margaret Zapor

CHURCH SERVICES

Divine Liturgy — Sundays and Holidays: 10:00 AM
Great Vespers — Saturdays and Eves of Feasts: 6:00 PM (5 pm Saturdays during Great Lent)
Confessions — After Vespers or by appointment

Church office: (740) 282-4463 (9 am-1:00 pm, Mon, Wed, Thurs) Rectory: 264-4809 Fax: 282-0313
Web site: www.hrsoc-steuben.org email: hrsoc@1st.net

Herald elves — Joanne Jenikovsky, Mary Drazich, Dorothy Delich Bossert, Tracy Yaich, Elaine Capozzoli, Richard Jenikovsky

The Editorial Staff of the *Holy Resurrection Herald* assumes the responsibility and reserves the right to reject, edit or rewrite any article submitted to the *Church Herald* for publication.

From the Church's Records...

Deaths:

Anna J. Gvoyich of Weirton, WV on November 20 at age 72. Burial at Serbian Cemetery, Weirton.

George Mrvos of Weirton, WV on December 15 at age 88. Burial at Serbian Cemetery, Weirton.

Grant rest eternal in blessed falling asleep, O Lord, to the souls of Thy departed servants, and make their memory to be eternal! Vecnaja pamjat!

Jan.–Feb. Altar Servers/Epistle Readers Schedule

January 6

Ben Rodgers
Nicodimus Karas
George Zapor
Mitchell Zapor
Epistle: Ben Rodgers

CHRISTMAS EVE Vigil

ALL SERVERS

January 7 CHRISTMAS

ALL SERVERS

Epistle: Jelena Povich
Brittany Rodgers

January 13

Nicklas Battista
Strati Maragos
Nicholas Stewart
Austin Yaich
Epistle: Milena Maragos

January 20

Ben Rodgers
Nicodimus Karas
George Zapor
Mitchell Zapor
Epistle: Anna Vasich

January 27

Nicklas Battista
Strati Maragos
Nicholas Stewart
Austin Yaich
Epistle: Nicholas Stewart

February 3

Ben Rodgers
Nicodimus Karas
George Zapor
Mitchell Zapor
Epistle: Brittany Rodgers

February 10

Nicklas Battista
Strati Maragos
Nicholas Stewart
Austin Yaich
Epistle: Jelena Povich

February 17

Ben Rodgers
Nicodimus Karas
George Zapor
Mitchell Zapor
Epistle: Strati Maragos

Please be sure to serve or read as scheduled. If you cannot be present that day, it is your responsibility to arrange for your replacement.

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar now for these upcoming events...

- Sun, Jan. 6..... Christmas Eve—Badnjidan. Nativity Vigil, 8 pm. Strict Fast
Mon, Jan. 7..... Nativity of Christ—Christmas—Bozic. DL 10 am
Sat, Jan. 12..... Pan-Orthodox Blessing of Water and Prayer for Peace service, St. Andrew's Church Mingo Jct, 11 am.
Mon, Jan. 14..... Julian Calendar New Year. St. Basil. Circumcision of Christ. DL 10 am.
Fri, Jan. 18..... Theophany Eve—Krstovdan. Strict Fast. Home blessings begin.
Sat, Jan. 19..... Theophany—Bogojavljenje. DL 10 am.
IOCC Benefit Epiphany Ball, SACC Weirton.
Sun, Jan. 27..... Annual St. Sava Dinner & Program, SACC, 12:30 pm
Sun, Feb. 10..... Petar Krstich Choir slava celebrations, Lyceum, after Liturgy
Sun, Feb. 17..... SACC & HRC Inc. annual meetings, SACC, 1 pm
Sun, Feb. 24..... Stewardship introduction lunch and presentation, with questions and answers.
Mon, March 10..... Great Fast begins
Sun, March 16..... We will be at Pan-Orthodox Sunday of Orthodoxy Liturgy at the Greek Church in Steubenville. No services at our church that day.
Sun, April 27..... Pascha
Sat, June 14..... Soul Saturday Grave blessings before Pentecost
Mon, June 23..... Apostles' Fast begins
Sun, July 27..... Annual Church Picnic

Christmas Service Schedule

The services of the Christmas season are among the most beautiful of the year. All of you are urged to attend as many of the services as possible, as we confess in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs that God has become a man for us and our salvation.

Christmas Eve (Badnjidan):

Christmas Eve is called Badnjidan in Serbian, because this is the day when the Badnjak (yule log) is cut and brought into the home. On the morning of Christmas Eve, we have a special Divine Liturgy. In the evening we bless and burn our church badnjak and then have the Christmas vigil, during which we welcome in the feast. At this service the five loaves of bread as well as wheat, wine and oil are blessed and distributed to the faithful. Hot refreshments will be served following the service.

Strict Fast Day.

Sunday, January 6

Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am

Blessing of Badnjak and Vigil, 8:00 pm

Christmas Day (Bozic):

The Great Feast of the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Divine Liturgy is served with the special Christmas antiphons and hymns. All those who have prepared themselves by fasting and who have received Holy Communion during Advent are welcomed and encouraged to receive Holy Communion at this Liturgy, and so partake of



the true feast. From this day until the Eve of Theophany (January 18) there is NO FASTING.

Monday, January 7.

Divine Liturgy, 10 am.

Assembly to the Birthgiver of God

The day following Christmas is dedicated to the Most Holy Birthgiver of God and ever-Virgin Mary. We assemble as the Church in her honor at the Divine Liturgy.

Tuesday, January 8

Divine Liturgy, 10 am.

St. Stephen the Protomartyr:

The third day of Christmas is also the feastday of St. Stephen the Apostle, Archdeacon, and First Martyr. His feastday is combined with the continuing celebration of the Nativity of Christ.

Wednesday, January 9

Home Blessings Begin January 18

Home blessings this year will begin on Friday, January 18, Theophany Eve, with blessing of homes in Mingo Junction and adjacent areas. Homes will then be blessed in the order of Steubenville and Wintersville, Weirton, and then remaining areas. We will call a day or two ahead of time to let you know when we will be by. Please attempt to cooperate by leaving us as much leeway of time as possible.

Why an annual Home Blessing?

As Orthodox Christians, we regard our homes as a kind of home church. We traditionally have icons and candles or lamps, and sometimes burn incense in our homes as part of our prayer life. The "baptism" of the home by the priest at Theophany reaffirms the connection of the home church with the Church of the whole community of the people of God.

Just as our home needs to be cleaned periodically

as dirt and dust accumulate, so our homes need a spiritual house cleaning periodically as a rededication to God and His presence in our lives and homes. We often in our day to day lives "desecrate" the sanctity of the home church by our sinful attitudes and behavior, and it is important that we rededicate our homes and our lives to Him. This is the purpose of the home blessing: to purify, to cleanse, to rededicate, and to strengthen our lives and the place we live out our lives in Christ.

After the service the water may be saved for future use. It may be drunk or sprinkled on persons or in the home in time of sickness or temptation, or it may be used in preparing holiday foods such as chesnica or slavski kolac. It should never be poured down the drain.

When Father comes, please have a table prepared with a bowl of water, a candle and an icon if possible. All should gather for the blessing, and

If your home has not been blessed before, or if it has been missed in recent years and you would like it to be blessed, please call Fr. Rade or the Church office.

Communion at the Christmas Liturgy

Those who have received Holy Communion previously during the Advent season are encouraged to receive Holy Communion again at the Christmas Day Divine Liturgy, as the most fitting feast at the end of the fast. They should prepare themselves as usual with fasting and prayer, be present for the Christmas Eve vigil if at all possible, and come for confession/absolution if they have not had this recently.

Fasting during the Christmas Season

January 6, the eve of Christmas, and January 18, the eve of Theophany, are days of strict fasting in the Orthodox Church. No meat or dairy products should be eaten on these days. Of course, the Advent season (November 28–January 6) is also a time of fasting to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Savior in the flesh, which should also be kept by all Orthodox Christians.

The time from Christmas Day through January 17 is a fast-free time. There is no fasting during this time, even on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Serbian Christmas Dinner offered at SACC



In response to numerous requests, our Serbian American Cultural Center will offer a traditional Serbian dinner on Christmas Day, Monday, January 7. The dinner will be served noon-3:00 pm and 4-8 pm on Christmas. This is a great opportunity for small families and friends to spend some time together on this holy day. Enjoy a great meal with good people and Serbian music. Call the Cultural Center at 304-

723-7372 for details and more information, and to make reservations.

Help Decorate the Church for Christmas

Donate to the Christmas Flower Fund

The Sveta Petka Kolo Sisters are again this year taking charge of the purchase of flowers and decorations for our Church for Christmas. The beautiful poinsettias, wreaths and other decorations make the Church seem even more special for this great holiday. We will be able to purchase as much as your donations allow, so please be generous in donating towards the Church Christmas Decoration Fund. Donations may be sent to Mary Lynn Ricci, 202 Opal Dr, Steubenville OH 43952, phone 740-264-6924. Please be sure to send only checks (no cash) through the mails. Please make your donations early so that we can plan our orders. Thank You!

Church Christmas Decoration Fund Donation Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount of donation: \$ _____

In Memory of or for Health of (Optional): _____

Please return this form with your donation to:

Mrs. Mary Lynn Ricci, 202 Opal Dr., Steubenville OH 43952

Annual Congregational Meeting

December 30, 2007

The annual meeting of the Holy Resurrection Serbian Orthodox Church School Congregation of Steubenville, Ohio will take place on Sunday, December 30, 2007 in the Holy Resurrection Church Lyceum, 528 N. Fourth St., Steubenville following the Liturgy.

The annual meeting hears the reports of the parish priest and executive board on the previous year's activities, adopts an operating budget for the coming year, and elects executive board officers and members at large for the coming year. The annual meeting also gives the congregation the opportunity to ask questions, receive more information about the state of the church, and enact other business as may come before the meeting.

Members of the congregation who have fulfilled all the responsibilities of membership during the previous year, including sacramental, moral and financial qualifications as enumerated in the congregation bylaws and Uniform Rules and Regulations of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the US and Canada, will have the right of voice and vote at the meeting.

Certain amendments to the By-laws governing the congregation will be presented. The proposed amendments will change the way financial obligations to the congregation by members will be determined by establishing a stewardship pledge system in 2009, as well as update affiliated organizations.

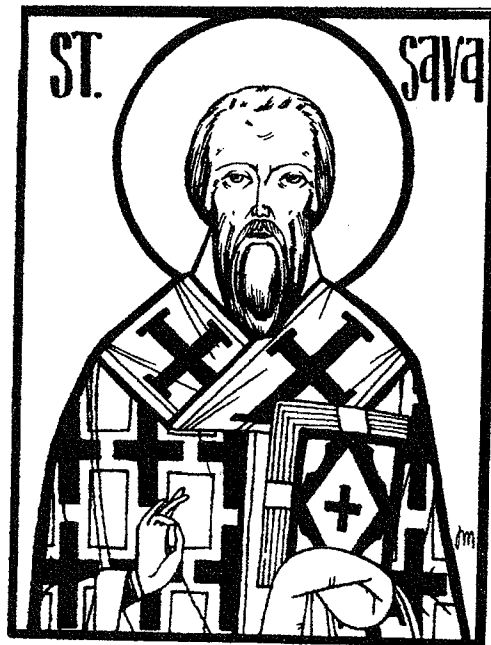
Light refreshments will be provided. All members are urged to attend.

The Church Board has formed a nominating committee to seek out those willing to take on an office for the coming year. Those interested in serving the congregation in a position on the Church Board are asked to notify President Mark Zatezalo or Secretary Barbara Matey for inclusion on the nominating committee report. Everyone is encouraged to consider offering their services to God and our Church as an officer or board member for the coming year as part of their stewardship of time and talent.

Should the meeting not be able to take place on December 30 for any reason (weather, lack of quorum), the meeting will take place January 13, 2008.

Your interest, your input and your participation are vital to the ongoing life of our Church community. Please make every effort to attend Liturgy and the Annual Meeting on December 30!

Annual
St. Sava Dinner & Program



Sunday, January 27

- Divine Liturgy at Church, 10:00 am
- Cutting of the Slavski Kolac & Delicious Festal Banquet at the Serbian-American Cultural Center, 12:30 pm
- Church School Program following banquet

Your free will offering will be greatly appreciated!

***Come honor our Patron and Father,
Saint Sava of Serbia!***



Epiphany Charity Ball

All Proceeds to Benefit

International Orthodox Christian Charities

Saturday, January 19, 2008

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Address</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4:00 PM | Vesper Services | St. Nicholas Church | 604 Colliers Way, Weirton, WV 26062 |
| 5:00 PM | Hors d'Oeuvres | Serbian-American Cultural Center | 1000 Colliers Way, Weirton WV 26062 |
| 6:00 PM | Dinner & Dance | Serbian-American Cultural Center | 1000 Colliers Way, Weirton WV 26062 |

For Reservations:

Online (preferred method): www.iocc.org/pittsburgh

Call: IOCC at 877-803-4622

Mail: IOCC, 110 West Road, Suite 360, Baltimore, Maryland 21204

Sponsors:

Holy Resurrection Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church of Steubenville, OH, and IOCC Pittsburgh Metropolitan Committee invite all Orthodox Christians to an Epiphany Charity Ball.

Dinner:

Five course dinner including soup, salad, appetizer, combination entrée and dessert.

Dance:

Dancing to the music of The Greek Company Orchestra, Randy Lugares, & various other Orthodox traditions. Also, a special performance by the renowned male choir, Tsar Lazar.

Donations:

Tickets are \$30 per person. Donations for IOCC will also be gladly accepted.

Directions:

From Downtown Pittsburgh (35 minutes):

Take 279 S toward the Airport; 22 W toward Weirton; Colliers Way Exit 5; turn left onto Colliers Way 1 mile.

From Wheeling (40 minutes): Take OH-7 N; left onto University Blvd; right onto US 22 E toward Pittsburgh; Colliers Way exit; take right onto Colliers Way 1 mile.

From Cleveland area: Take 80 E, to 11 S, to 7 S; right onto University Blvd; right onto US 22 E toward Pittsburgh; Colliers Way exit; take right onto Colliers Way 1 mile.

Silent Auction:

Several gifts will be auctioned. If you would like to donate an auction prize, please contact Barb Matey at 304-723-0838.

Please RSVP as Soon as Possible – preferably before January 10!! Group reservations must be received by January 12 (tables seat 8 people). When sending checks please write “Epiphany Charity Ball” and the number of tickets in the memo. Pre-Purchased tickets will be available at the door on the day of the event.

Tickets will not be mailed to you ahead of time.

Enjoy a wonderful evening in Pan-Orthodox fellowship,
and help a worthy Orthodox cause at the same time!

Third Annual IOCC Epiphany Charity Ball

Sponsorship and Ticket Information

On Saturday, January 19th the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) Pittsburgh Metropolitan Committee and Holy Resurrection Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church of Steubenville, OH will host its Third Annual Epiphany Charity Ball at the Serbian-American Cultural Center in Weirton, WV. Please consider this your personal invitation to attend this event, and to also consider becoming an event sponsor.

As you may know, IOCC is a pan-Orthodox organization with the following mission: To respond to the call of our Lord Jesus Christ to minister to those who are suffering and in need throughout the world, sharing with them God's gifts of food, shelter, economic self-sufficiency and hope. (For more information about IOCC, please go to www.iocc.org).

The IOCC Pittsburgh committee hopes to achieve two goals through this Charity Ball:

- 1) To increase the awareness of IOCC's presence in the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area; and
- 2) To raise money to support IOCC's important work throughout the world.

We are turning to you to ask for your support in helping us achieve these goals. Your help in any of the following ways is greatly appreciated:

1) Attend the Charity Ball – see the attached flyer for details (or go to www.iocc.org/pittsburgh) Tickets may be ordered through the web site, or at the Serbian-American Cultural Center. Tables of 8 may be reserved as well. Tickets must be purchased in advance, preferably by January 10.

2) Be a Sponsor – There are three levels of Sponsorship. Gold and Silver levels will be acknowledged in the Charity Ball Program:

- Gold Level Sponsor – Donation of \$250 or more
- Silver Level Sponsor – Donation of \$100 – \$249
- Bronze Level Sponsor – Donation less than \$100

If you are interested in being a Gold, Silver, or Bronze Level Sponsor, please send your donation made Payable to "IOCC" directly to the Committee Chairman at: IOCC, c/o Nicholas Terezis, 500 Market Street, Suite 610 Steubenville OH 43952.

Additionally, if you would like to donate a Silent auction prize, please call Barbara Matey at (304 723-0838).

3) Spread the Word – Please tell your friends about this event, and distribute copies of the attached flyer. All are welcome (Orthodox or non-Orthodox) to join in on what will be a fun celebration with fine food and drink, great entertainment, dancing and fellowship with people from throughout the Tri-state area, all in an elegant setting.

4) Make a special Donation – In addition to your ticket purchase, part of which will benefit IOCC, please consider making an extra, more substantial donation, either at the Ball or through the Church or the IOCC web site. Your generosity will be multiplied many times over!

Your help and support is greatly appreciated as we all help this wonderful Orthodox charity!

In Christ,

Holy Resurrection Church and the IOCC Pittsburgh Metro Committee



From Father Rade...

The Holy Day season (for we should never forget that is what "holiday" actually means) is a time for family and friends, a time for warmth and togetherness. It is a time when we celebrate all that is near and dear to us.

But why do we celebrate these things now? It might be just because everybody else is doing it; because we are almost coerced into it by all the advertising images of what this time is meant to be.

But we Christians know better. We know that we gather as family because God has sent His Son into the world to become our brother, so that we can become God's family through adoption through Him. Jesus' heavenly Father becomes our Father as well, as we are reminded each time we say the Lord's Prayer.

We gather together as God's family in the Church, to experience that togetherness. We let the Light and Warmth of Christ dispel the darkness and cold of sin, just as the burning Badnjak dispels the darkness and cold of the winter night.

This can also be a bittersweet time, a difficult time, as we remember and miss those who are no longer present with us physically. There may be an empty place at our table, but there is no empty place in our hearts as we remember that in Christ they live, they are, for Christ has conquered death and destroyed its power over us. As long as we are all in Christ, we are all together, the living and the departed. This is why Christ came into the world on that first Christmas—so that we would never be parted from Him or from each other in Him.

As we celebrate at this time of year, let us remember what it is we are celebrating. Let us center our celebration on the joyous worship and praise of the Church, our spiritual home and family. Let us remember our Church with generosity as we share our time, talents and treasure with one another as well. Let this be a time of spiritual recommitment and renewal for all of us, as Jesus Christ is reborn in our hearts.

At this blessed time, may God grant each of us a new and fresh awareness of what it means not only to say, but to know for ourselves in the deepest sense the meaning of our greeting:

Peace from God—Christ is Born!

Мир Божию—Христом се роди!

And a most blessed New Year!

Yours in His love,

Father Rade & Protinica Donna

Nativity Troparion

Thy nativity, O Christ our God, has shown to the world the light of wisdom! For by it those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Daybreak from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

Sermon on the Birth of Christ

St. Leo the Great

All share in the joy of Christmas

Our Savior, dearly-beloved, was born today (Christmas day): let us be glad. For there is no proper place for sadness, when we keep the birthday of the Life, which destroys the fear of mortality and brings to us the joy of promised eternity. No one is kept from sharing in this happiness. There is for all one common measure of joy, because as our Lord, the destroyer of sin and death, finds none free from the charge, so He comes to free us all. Let the saint exult in that he draws near to victory. Let the sinner be glad in that he is invited to being pardon. Let the gentile take courage in that he is called to life. For the Son of God in the fullness of time which the inscrutable depth of the Divine counsel has determined, has taken on him the nature of man, thereby to reconcile it to its Author: in order that the inventor of death, the devil, might be conquered. And in this conflict undertaken for us, the fight was fought on great and wondrous principles of fairness.

Truly foreign to this nativity is that which we read of all others: "no one is clean from stain, not even the infant who has lived but one day upon earth." Nothing therefore of the lust of the flesh has passed into that peerless nativity, nothing of the law of sin has entered. A royal Virgin of the stem of David is chosen, to be impregnated with the sacred seed and to conceive the Divinely-human offspring in mind first and then in body: she learns from the angel that what is to be wrought in her is of the Holy Ghost. Nor does she believe it loss of honor that she is soon to be the Mother of God. Her implicit faith is confirmed also by the attesting of a miracle, and Elizabeth receives unexpected fertility: in order that there might be no doubt that He who had given conception to the barren, would give it even to a virgin.

Therefore the Word of God, Himself God, the Son of God who "in the beginning with God," through whom "all things were made" and "without" whom "was nothing made," with the purpose of delivering man from eternal death, became man: The true God and true man were combined to form one Lord, so that, as suited the needs of our case, one and the same Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, could both die with the one and rise again with the other.

Rightly therefore did the birth of our Salvation impart no corruption to the Virgin's purity, because the bearing of the Truth was the keeping of honour. Such then beloved was the nativity which became the Power of God and the Wisdom of God even Christ, whereby He might be one with us in manhood and surpass us in Godhead. For unless He were true God, He would not bring us a remedy: unless He were true Man, He would not give us an example. Therefore the exulting angel's song when the Lord was born is this, "Glory to God in the Highest," and their message, "peace on earth to men of good will." For they see that the heavenly Jerusalem is being built up out of all the nations of the world: and over that indescribable work of the Divine love how ought the humbleness of men to rejoice, when the joy of the lofty angels is so great?

Christians then must live worthily of Christ their Head.

Let us then, dearly beloved, give thanks to God the Father, through His Son, in the Holy Spirit, Who "for His great mercy, wherewith He has loved us," had pity on us: and "when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together in Christ," that we might be in Him a new creation and a new production. Let us put off then the old man with his deeds: and having obtained a share in the birth of Christ let us renounce the works of the flesh. Christian, acknowledge your dignity, and becoming a partner in the Divine nature, refuse to return to the old baseness by degenerate conduct. Remember the Head and the Body of which you are a member. Remember that you were rescued from the power of darkness and brought out into God's light and kingdom. By the mystery of Baptism you were made the temple of the Holy Ghost: and do not subject yourself once more to the devil; because your purchase money is the blood of Christ, because He shall judge you in truth Who ransomed you in mercy, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit reigns for ever and ever.

Eternal God: a Little Child

By the Very Rev. John Breck

Thanksgiving is over and we are moving toward what one of our wise and dedicated priests refers to as "Getmas." He is as frustrated and dismayed at what exuberant commercialism and American popular religion have done to Christmas as I am with the relentless efforts to transform our national feast of Thanksgiving into "Turkey Day." These campaigns are insidious and they've been highly effective: God - the true God who reveals Himself in Scripture and in the lives of those who strive to know Him - has been all but eliminated from our collective civil conscience.

This might not be a totally bad thing, though, if it leads us to reflect again at this time of year on our response to God's wonderful if incomprehensible gift of Life, bestowed on us through the "coming in the flesh" of His eternal Son. In fact, there may be no better way to experience genuine gratitude, and respond to it with thanksgiving, than by focusing mind and heart on the Incarnation. Jesus' Conception and Nativity enabled Him to share fully in our humble, broken and sinful nature, our earthly existence, with the single purpose of offering to us the possibility to share eternally - in this life and beyond - in His own life, His own glorified existence. This is the Church's most fundamental conviction, grounded in the experience of multitudes of witnesses, from the Disciples and early Church martyrs down to the present time, where discipleship still often means martyrdom. It is this conviction that gives transcendent meaning and purpose to our daily life, while it preserves us from the temptation to reject the world around us as the world has rejected Christ.

A striking feature of the Nativity feast is the reciprocity between God's work on our behalf and our reply. Liturgical verses from the feast stress the point that our response to that work is precisely to give thanks, to express our boundless gratitude for the free gift of divine Life.

"What shall we offer Thee, O Christ, who for our sakes hast appeared on earth as man?

Every creature made by Thee offers Thee thanks.

The angels offer Thee a hymn; the heavens a star;

the Magi, gifts; the shepherds their wonder;

the earth, its cave, the wilderness, the manger.

And we offer Thee a Virgin Mother...." (from Vespers stichira)

God offers the gift of life to angels as well as to us. Every aspect of creation is involved: the visible and the invisible, things in heaven and things on earth. They are all the objects of God's gift in Christ. That gift elicits in return a

response of thanksgiving that takes the form of other gifts, reciprocal offerings of our own treasures. Chief among those treasures is what we, as bearers of the divine image, offer in return: the Virgin Mother, the God-bearer or Theotokos . Yet like every treasure we possess and can offer up in thanksgiving, she is first given to us by God. We can only offer what He has already bestowed upon us, "Thine own of Thine own...."

The most striking and significant feature of the Nativity feast, though, is its celebration of paradox. Repeatedly, liturgical verses hymn elements of the mystery of Christ's birth that defy human reason.

"A strange and most wonderful mystery do I see.

The cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim;
the manger a room, in which Christ, the God whom nothing can contain, is laid.

Him do we praise and magnify!" (Irmos, 9th Ode of Matins)

No traditional creche scene can capture the wonder expressed in these lines. Here in a cave a newborn child is laid in a manger by his devoted mother. It is a scene repeated countless times throughout history. This time, however, everything is different, changed. For here the cave, a dark hole carved into the earth, is filled with radiant glory. The Virgin appears as a Mother, "more honorable than the cherubim" enthroned upon her. And the humble manger contains the Agent of Creation, the Word of God who called all things into being, and whom no created thing can contain.

The ultimate expression of the Nativity mystery, the unfathomable paradox of God's appearance in the flesh, is found in the Kontakion of the feast:

"Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One,
and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One.
Angels, with shepherds, glorify Him.

The wise men journey with the star.

Since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little child!"

Today the birth occurs. Today , in our immediate experience, in our own time and space, a virgin becomes a mother and gives birth to God. Today the earth offers to its Creator a simple cave, while angels, shepherds and wise men offer their praise and adoration. Today the entire cosmos enters into the celebration with ineffable joy and exultation. Because for our sake , for ourselves and our loved ones, for every person who has ever longed for eternal life in the joy, peace and beauty of the heavenly Kingdom - for us all, and for our salvation, the eternal God is born as a little child.

Letter From Jesus Christ, concerning His birthday celebration:

It has come to My attention that many of you are upset that folks are taking My name out of the season. How I personally feel about this celebration can probably be most easily understood by those of you who have been blessed with children of your own. I don't care what you call the day. If you want to celebrate My birth just, GET ALONG AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER. Now, having said that let Me continue:

If it bothers you that the town in which you live doesn't allow a scene depicting My birth, then just get rid of a couple of Santa's and snowmen and put in a small Nativity scene on your own front lawn. If all My followers did that there wouldn't be any need for such a scene on the town square because there would be many of them all around town. Stop worrying about the fact that people are calling the tree a holiday tree, instead of a Christmas tree. It was I who made all trees. You can & may remember Me anytime you see any tree. Decorate a grape vine if you wish: I actually spoke of that one in a teaching explaining who I am in relation to you & what each of our tasks is. If you have forgotten that one, look up John 15: 1-8.

If you want to give Me a present in remembrance of My birth here is my wish list. Choose something from it.

- 1. Instead of writing protest letters objecting to the way My birthday is being celebrated, write letters of love and hope to soldiers away from home. They are terribly afraid and lonely this time of year. I know, they tell Me all the time.**
- 2. Visit someone in a nursing home. You don't have to know them personally. They just need to know that someone cares about them.**
- 3. Instead of writing George complaining about the wording on the cards his staff sent out this year, why don't you write and tell him that you'll be praying for him and his family this year. Then follow up. It will be nice hearing from you again.**

- 4. Instead of giving your children a lot of gifts you can't afford and they don't need, spend time with them. Tell them the story of My birth, and why I came to live with you down here. Hold them in your arms and remind them that I love them.**
- 5. Pick someone that has hurt you in the past and forgive him or her.**
- 6. Did you know that someone in your town will attempt to take their own life this season because they feel so alone and hopeless? Since you don't know who that person is, try giving everyone you meet a warm smile it could make the difference. Also, you might consider supporting the local Hot-Line: they talk with people like that every day.**
- 7. Instead of nit picking about what the retailer in your town calls the holiday, be patient with the people who work there. Give them a warm smile and a kind word. Even if they aren't allowed to wish you a "Merry Christmas" that doesn't keep you from wishing them one. Then stop shopping there on Sunday. If the store didn't make so much money on that day they'd close and let their employees spend the day at home with their families.**
- 8. If you really want to make a difference, support a missionary, especially one who takes My love & Good News to those who have never heard My name. You may already know someone like that.**
- 9. Here's a good one. There are individuals & whole families in your town who not only will have no "Christmas" tree, but neither will they have any presents to give or receive. If you don't know them (and I suspect you don't) buy some food & a few gifts & give them to the Marines, the Salvation Army or some other charity which believes in Me & they will make the delivery for you.**
- 10. Finally if you want to make a statement about your belief in and loyalty to Me, then behave like a Christian. Don't do things in secret that you wouldn't do in My presence. Let people know by your actions that you are one of mine. Just love Me & do what I have told you to do. I'll take care of all the rest. I'll help you. And do have a most blessed Christmas with all those whom you love, and remember, I LOVE YOU!**

Jesus

Borrowed

Christian Stewardship

CALLED BY CHRIST

GIFTED BY THE SPIRIT

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."

1 Peter 4:10

Stewardship: Turning Cultural Values Upside Down

Many people wince when they hear the word stewardship. It's a reaction prompted by a mistaken notion that stewardship is just another way the Church asks for money. This is not true.

The Life of a Christian Steward

The decision to share one's financial resources with one's communion of faith is an important aspect of being a Christian steward. But that is only part of the story. Christian stewardship is the commitment made in response to God's generosity: to live a life of gratitude; to make daily decisions to glorify God; and to share oneself and one's gifts generously as circumstances and talents allow.

A life of gratitude is the first mark of a Christian steward. God has endowed His followers with more gifts than they can imagine- life and faith, time and relationships, health, talents, skills and material wealth. Everything one has is a gift from God, and a Christian thanks God daily for these blessings.

Stewardship Involves Daily Choices

Stewardship means making daily, conscious choices that glorify God. Decisions are made daily that reveal a person's priorities. The axiom, "Tell me to what you pay attention and I will tell you who you are," holds true. There are such things as self-glorification and the exaltation of wealth, social status, race, success, power, peace of mind and security. However, one should be able to recognize the Christian disciple by the place God has in his or her daily life.

Christian stewards regard success, a high standard of living and the accumulation of material objects as secondary to a life of generosity, hospitality, and the joy of personal relationship. In making these decisions, culture's values are turned upside down.

We Give Thanks for God's Blessing

The best way to respond to God's loving generosity is by reflecting that generosity day by day. Take time for prayer; nurture relationships with family and friends; participate in the worship life of the community of Christians; and act out of loving concern on behalf of others in the world. What God does in Jesus' human life is a much magnified version of what happens when one's personal schedule is rearranged to be with someone who is lonely or despairing, or when creative ways are devised to volunteer talents for the parish, or when family budgets and spending habits are reprioritized in light of the Gospel. The stewardship question is not, "Should I do these things?" but rather, "How much can and should I do?"

The Decision is Ours

Ultimately, stewardship comes down to personal decisions about how each of us lives, and how each of us will respond to God's gifts based on our experience, self-knowledge and the call of God's grace. There is the paradoxical truth, hallowed in the New Testament, that by giving ourselves to someone or something beyond ourselves, we discover our own best self: "He who loses himself for my sake will find himself."
(MT 10:39)

Living as Christian stewards should bring a deeper and more solid joy, and confidence about being disciples of Jesus Christ. Though Christians have not seen Christ, they are assured, by dint of a faith truly lived and the life that comes to those who dare to believe and trust.

Stewardship Prayer

Lord God,

You alone are the source of every gift, of the vast array of our universe, and the mystery of each human life. We praise You and we thank You for Your great power and Your tender, faithful love.

Everything we are and everything we have is Your gift, and after having created us, You have given us into the keeping of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Fill our minds with Christ's truth and our hearts with His love, that in His Spirit we may be bonded together into a community of faith, a parish family, a caring people.

In the name and spirit of Jesus, we commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talent and our material gifts as an outward sign of the treasure we hold in Jesus, to Whom we give glory with all we have and are, forever.

Amen.

**CHRIST IS
BORN!**



GLORIFY

Him!

The Officers and Members of the Church Board,
together with the *Herald* and church office staffs
wish all of you a most joyous and blessed
Christmas and New Year!

**Mir Bozji! Hristos se rodi!
i Sretna Nova 2008 Godina!**

**Peace from God! Christ is born!
and a blessed New Year 2008!**

From the President's Desk,

I hope that the Christmas season finds my fellow parishioners well and prosperous. The Church is preparing for the season as usual by observing Advent as well as preparing for a new year in church life. Our annual congregational meeting is scheduled for December 30, at which time we will be electing those persons who will help run church affairs. If you have not performed this duty and would like to be considered, please contact Mark Zatezalo, Barb Matey or Father Merick prior to the date.

The past ten years has been quite an interesting time in the parish history. We have accomplished many things including the building of our center and have put in place financial aids for taking care of the cemetery. We have repaired the church physical plant and have celebrated 100 years in a very dignified and proper manner.

The cultural center is set to have another profitable year, and the financial health of the project is better than it ever has been. We have used the multi-purpose room for basketball and will expand that program this year. Our outreach to the community has risen as our financial ability has strengthened and I believe that this has been good for both us and the community at large. The SACC board is charged with keeping the project moving forward and shows no signs of letting up on this task. Congratulations to Nick Jovonovich and the SACC for another successful year.

The Men's Club will be renovating the roof of the pavilion at the picnic grounds this year. While the cost is relatively high, Sam Kusic Jr. has agreed to support the project and for that we say thank you, as we have so many times in the past. The roof repair should allow the pavilion to be leak free for the foreseeable future.

We hope to use all of our facilities in the coming year to more greatly benefit the church.

Since the major projects of the church are functioning fairly well, it is time to turn our attention to the parish from which the good things we enjoy come. God has been good to us in many ways and we need to remind ourselves that we need to give back to Him the gifts he has given us. In the coming year we will begin to introduce the stewardship program in our church that will allow all of us to personally give back to God some of these blessings. Parishes in our diocese have begun to institute this practice of giving ones time, talent and treasure back and have reported gains in overall parish life as a result. We hopefully will be able to explain this program in the coming year and if possible would like hear from some of our sister parishes to gain from their experience.

See you in church,

Mark

1st Vice-President's Report

I thought I might go over some of my annual report now to save time at our annual meeting. This does not mean you don't have to attend on December 30. We don't have any surprises, but then again you might want to vote on our proposed work list for next year. The Church does need your input and ideas.

At our last Slava, as we walked around the church, I felt proud of the work that has been accomplished in the last three years. The Church grounds looked great. The window restoration is completely paid for and the plaque mounted on the back wall of the Sanctuary. A new plaque honoring the Kumovi is also mounted there. Inside and out most of the major repairs have been completed and we can look forward to doing some of the cosmetic work that has been suggested.

The boiler has been repaired, but not without some difficulty. This is an area in which we need your help. It seems that repair services are hard to find. Johnson Boiler was the third party we called for help with the heating problem. About four weeks were needed to complete the repairs in part because of miscommunication. Cleaning the Sanctuary walls and/or restretching the carpet has been turned down by three different companies and it took over two weeks to get someone to help us with a pest problem. As services are needed, we may be asking for your help in the form of suggesting names of companies or people who are qualified to do specific repairs/maintenance or to help with making the necessary phone calls to obtain information and make appointments.

On the other hand, help from Church members has been impressive. We can thank Luka Povich for taking charge of the boiler repair. Teddy Zatezalo has been a steady helper with lights and other important maintenance matters. Nino Karas has volunteered to head up a crew to clean the kitchen and Mark Zatezalo has signed on to repair, clean and paint the Church school back door. There is a work list on the bulletin board with other projects that need to be completed. I am pleased to report that the last two work parties have been very successful.

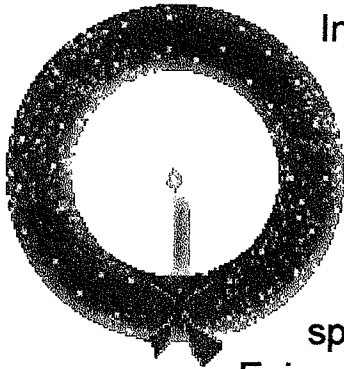
Posted on the bulletin board, you will find the last approved meeting minutes (Ex. Board, HRC and SACC) for your information. They are posted there for you, so you may keep yourself informed on our church's activities, future plans and problems. Hopefully this will stimulate some questions and result in a productive meeting.

See you at Church and at the ANNUAL MEETING December 30!

Rich Jenikovsky

PS: Our By-Laws are now 15 years old. Implementing stewardship principles in our Church will require a change in ways of determining membership, and there are a few other items to be updated at this time and voted on.

Enjoy Christmas Lunch or Supper at the SACC



In response to numerous requests, our Serbian American Cultural Center will offer a traditional Serbian Christmas dinner on Christmas Day, Monday, January 7. The dinner will be served noon-3:00 pm and 4-8 pm on Christmas. It will include roast pig, sarma, and many other traditional favorites and desserts. This is a great opportunity for families and friends to spend some time together on this holy day.

Enjoy a great meal with good people and Serbian music. Call the Cultural Center at 304-723-7372 for details and more information, and to make reservations.



Help Needed at SACC for December 25

Each year on December 25 the Serbian American Cultural Center offers Christmas dinner for those who celebrate Christmas on that day. Because our non-Serbian employees would like to have the day off, our Center turns to our Serbian Orthodox people who celebrate Christmas on January 7 to help out. If you would be able to volunteer your help for the Christmas dinner on December 25, it would be greatly appreciated and would be of great help to our Center. Call the Center at 304-723-7372 for more information. Thank you!

Pan-Orthodox Prayer service January 12

On Saturday, January 12 the Ohio Valley Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood is sponsoring a pan-Orthodox prayer for peace and blessing of water at St. Andrew's Orthodox Church in Mingo Junction. The service will be a pan-Orthodox offering of creation back to God in the blessing of water, and will also pray for peace for our country and for the world, and for all those serving in our Armed Forces. The service will be at 11:00 AM, and all are invited to attend.

Donations Received

Church Donations

M/M Leo Bogetich 100
Edna Nicely 25

Church Slava Donations

KSS Vidovdan 200
Dorothy Delich Bossert 50

Easter Donation

Lawrence Brown 50

Patron Saint Demetrius

Imo John Karas

Rose Karas 20

Patron Saint Demetrius

M/M Nick Karas 25
M/M Nino Karas 25

Patron Saint Michael

Minnie Merick 20
James Price 10

Patron Saint Nicholas

Nick Yonyon 200
Sophia McKay 100
Mike Vuchenich 20
Peter Matijevich 10

Patron Saint Nicholas

Imo Nick Marovich

Mrs Nick Marovich 10

Imo Sam Mamula

Lawrence Brown 25

Imo Sagy & Anna Golubofsky

George Golubofsky 50

Imo Nozica & Radananov Families

Julia & Thomas Nozica 100

Imo Milly Zori

Mildred Ostovich 15

Imo Milton Brdar

William Putich 25

Imo Olga Mihalik

Donna Staffilino 25

Imo Mike Lonchar

Dorothy Delich Bossert 10

Imo Mike Lonchar

(Building Fund)

M/M Dewey McKay 10

Imo Howard "Bud" Haines

Dorothy Delich Bossert 10

Cemetery Endowment Fund

Georgia Milosovich 500

Building Fund Donation

Gary & Charlene Stanich 300

Charity Food Drive Donation

John & Barbara Bellopatrick 600

Stewardship: Not Just Charity

Very often we consider giving to God's Church to be giving to charity, like giving to the Red Cross or the local homeless shelter. However, this is a mistake. Giving to charity is a wonderful and important thing to do, and we should all try to do that to best of our ability. But giving to God's Church is something entirely different. The Church is not just another charity—it is the Family and the Kingdom of God. It is the Family of which we are members and the Kingdom of which we are subjects and citizens. In giving to charity we are helping others. In supporting the Church, we are giving what is already God's back to God, and in doing so we are in a very real sense helping ourselves because, as His family and heirs, God's Church is ours as well.

This is one reason why being a good steward of the resources God gives us is so vital to our spiritual life. In practicing good stewardship of our time, our talents and our financial and physical resources, we acknowledge that God has a legitimate claim on all that we are and all that we have, since it all comes from Him as His free gift to us. He expects us—no, He commands us—to give back a significant portion of all that He has given us for carrying out His Church's mission to us and to the world. Stewardship of God's good gifts to us—the gift of life, the gift of time, the gift of abilities and talents, the gift of food and drink and possessions—is a simple acknowledgement that these things are God's gifts, and that in supporting His Church we are simply sharing with Him what He has already freely shared with us. Out of love for God we freely give back to Him part of what He has lovingly given us, and He again returns it to us increased and perfected, in an everlasting circle of giving in love.

"He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work.... He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which... also overflows in many thanksgivings to God."

St. Paul to the Corinthians, second letter, 9: 6-12

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“I bring you good news of great joy for all people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.... And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.’”

—Luke 2: 11-14