



# Saint Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church

146 Third Avenue, Rankin, PA 15104  
Pastor: Very Reverend Nicholas Ferencz, PhD  
Cantor: Professor Jerry Jumba  
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Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!  
Slava Isusu Christu! Slava vo v'iki!

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## JANUARY 5, 2020

### SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS: REMEMBERING THE HOLY ANCESTORS OF OUR LORD.

	<b>CarpathoRussian</b>	<b>Greek</b>	<b>Serbian</b>	<b>Russian</b>
CHRIST IS BORN!	Christos Roždajetsja!	Christos Gennatai!	Hristos se Rodi!	Kristos Rozhdaetsya!
GLORIFY HIM!	Slavite Jeho!	Doxasate!	Voistinu se Rodi!	Slav'te ego!

**Sun., Jan. 5**      **Sunday of the Ancestors of Our Lord.** 10 Martyrs of Crete.  
**8:15 AM**      *Holy Mystery of Confession*  
**9:00 AM**      Divine Liturgy

#### SERVICES FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

**Mon., Jan. 6**      VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD. MARTYR EUGENIA.  
**9:30 AM**      *Holy Mystery of Confession*  
**9:45 AM**      Christmas Carols and the Christmas Canon  
**10:00 AM**      Great Vespers with the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.  
**6:30 PM**      *Holy Mystery of Confession*  
**6:45 PM**      Christmas Carols and the Christmas Canon  
**7:00 PM**      Velikij Povečerije - Great Compline with the blessing of the wheat, wine and oil

**Tue., Jan. 7**      THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
**9:30 AM**      *Holy Mystery of Confession*  
**9:45 PM**      Christmas Carols and the Christmas Canon  
**10:00 AM**      Divine Liturgy.

**Wed., Jan. 8**      *2<sup>nd</sup> Day of Christmas: Synaxis of Holy Mary Theotokos*  
**9:00 AM**      *Divine Liturgy*

**Sun., Jan. 12**      *Sunday after Christmas and before Theophany. Remembering the Relatives of Our Lord: King David, Joseph the Betrothed, and James, brother of the Lord*  
**9:00 AM**      Divine Liturgy

#### Holy Mystery of Confession:

**Christmas Schedule:** I will be especially available for Confessions from 8:15 AM on. We can also meet other times (after Liturgy, or by appointment). Just let me know.

## PEOPLE STUFF

**Prayer List:** *Deceased:* Fr. Stephen Shuga. Edward Pehanich, Sr. Stelian Popescu, father of Paňi Alexandra Urban.

*Living:* Fr. Joseph Cervo. Paňi Alexandra Urban and all the family. Paňi Dorothy Hutnyan. Paňi Eleanor Pribish. Dana Andrade. Fr. Deacon Art Steinstra. Gloria Andrade. Gregory Michael Aurilio. Walter Bolbat. John Bonga. Donald Bodnar. Charlene Borsic. Jaime Budesa. Barbara Chappie. Steve Bournius. Rebecca, David & Bradley Noah Cozad. Mary Ann Crouse. Martha Danchak. George & Margaret Dorogy. Patty Ferrence. Breanne Glass. Dorothy Glass. Eddie Gombos. Jennifer Hartrick. Joseph Hlavac. Shirley Hrubic. Kevin Ianni. Gary Ingelido. Andrea Kerkentzes. Jeanne Lesko. Bobby Malackany. Joan Martell. Bill and Barbara McCauley. Jake McLaughlin. Helen Mihalik. Frank Palmieri. Diane Phillips. Millie and Edward Phillips. Anna Senich. Peter Simonoff. Bernice Sindak. Terry Slezak.

Milton and Thelma Supak. Diana Terezis. Bobby and Dee Triffanoff. Josh Walendziewicz. Paul Worst. Paul & Valerie Yednak. Jim Zajac. *Prophora Bakers:* Trudy Trifanoff. Delores Cubakovic, and their intentions.

**New!** *Fell asleep in the Lord, both on December 30: Edward Pehanich, Sr.* father of Fr. Ed Pehanich, Jr., and **Stelian Popescu**, father of Paňi Alexandra Urban. Funerals were held this past week in Taylor, PA and Roumania, respectively. Please pray for the repose of the souls of Edward and Stelian. Please also pray for the Popescu/Urban and Pehanich families during this difficult time. We will celebrate a 40-day Memorial for both Stelian and Edward on Sunday, February 9. *Eternal memory!*

**New!** Also *fell asleep in the Lord* this past week: **John Kobasa**. I understand that the Kobasa family had some connections to our parish in the past, so some of our parishioners may have known John. We will also celebrate the 40-day Memorial service for John on February 9. *Eternal memory!*

**Welcome!** We welcome to our church this morning all visitors, guests, relatives, and friends of Saint Michael Church. We invite *everyone* present today to chant the Liturgy along with the cantor.

## F(E)ASTING

**CHRISTMAS FAST (FILIPOVKA)** began November 15/28 and goes until Christmas Eve, Dec. 24/Jan. 6. It is called Philip's Fast because it begins the day after the Feast of St. Philip the Apostle on Nov. 14/27.

- The **Traditional Fast** requires fasting from meat, eggs, dairy products, fish, oil, and wine on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from meat and dairy on Saturdays and Sundays, and meat, dairy and fish on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There are some exceptions – if you are in doubt, please ask me. The usual exceptions apply for those who are ill, etc. The Nativity Fast is not as severe as Great Lent or the Dormition Fast.
- **CHRISTMAS EVE** is a Day of *Fasting from Meat and Dairy*. On this day no solid food should be eaten until the first star is seen in the evening sky.

**FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST:** Please see Schedule for service times. We will celebrate the Vigil Divine Liturgy on Christmas Eve morning at 10 AM, Velikij Povečerije at 7 PM and Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day at 10:00 AM. I will be available for Confessions before all services.

## Our Gifts to God and our Church

December 29, 2019

Attendance	38
Communions	21

### Collections

Monthly	140.00
Sunday	705.00
All Votive Candles	138.00
Christmas Candles	547.00
Building Maintenance	5.00
Diocesan Membership	150.00

**Total Offerings: 1685.00**

*Building and Repairs Donations which are available for upcoming repairs to date are \$2341! God bless your generosity!*

## DIOCESE, DEANERY AND ADDITIONAL STUFF

It's a little quiet right now. Enjoy.

### PARISH STUFF

**New! The Parish Council** meets for its regular January meeting on *Monday, January 13* (moved because of the Holy Day) at 7 PM.

**New! 2020 Contribution Envelopes:** 2020 Envelopes are available in the hall. If you haven't picked yours up yet, please do so!

**New! Divine Liturgy Intentions:** *Praying for the Living and the Deceased.* This is just a reminder of something we've been doing for some time now. If you would like to have someone remembered during today's Liturgy, just put their name(s) on the form in the vestibule (Allen, Denny, Bobby or any one of the guys back there can help you out). The list is brought to the altar after the Gospel Entrance, and we will remember them at the Anaphora.

**New! Official Announcement: The Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on Sunday, January 26, after the Divine Liturgy, More info soon.

**Parish Directory 2020:** is now available! There have been a few updates. Pick up yours today!

**Update! Christmas Candle Offering for Special Intention:** We continue to collect for Christmas Candles through Christmas.

Scott Stemler – In memory of Robert and Brian Stemler

Sharon Stemler – In memory of Margaret Stemler

All the following donations (in no special order) are for Special Intentions:

John Varoscak

Dennis Baran

Mary Ann Hlavac

Anna Zamule

Janet and David Alm

Ronald Bohin

Elsie Ingelido

Bobby and Dee Triffanoff

Gary Ingelido

Milan and Trudy Trifanoff

Barbara Chappie

Jeanne Lesko

Barbara Simonoff

Lois Liberman

Peter Simonoff

Matt and Kimberly Fry

**Update! Agape Offerings: Sign up today before all the good dates get taken!** *Today:* Christina Duranko. *Next week:* Jeanne & Jim Zajac for Jeanne's Birthday.

**Update! Church Repairs:** we have available at this time \$2341 in donations towards repairs in the church and rectory. 2019 donations have totaled so far \$5755, some of it already used.

### THE CASTLE AND THE KING (FOR THE SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS)

*by Fr. Jonathan Tobias, December 11, 2019*

Once upon a time, there lived a grand King in a great Castle.

The Castle looked magical, and it probably was, since most people in the valley could not see it very often. It was perched upon the top of a high, steep hill which was difficult to climb and not very convenient. It was so high that it was, more often than not, above the clouds: and the people of the valley had grown so accustomed to the overcast sky that they no longer gave much thought to the Castle, much less the King living there.

Occasionally, on a clear day, the Castle seemed to glow in the blue sky at the top of the hill. Most of the time, this bright image was dismissed as a mirage by the people in the valley.

But once in a while, over the years, some few hardy people would climb the hill. Some of them never returned. Others came back down the hill and into the valley. They tried to describe the Castle and the King. Their descriptions were strange, and were completely beyond the everyday experience of the valley people. They spoke of brightness and seeing the stars clearly, and even the Sun seemed to shine there more cleanly. They tried to describe the trees that whispered songs in the evening wind. They said that the water from the well was cool, and seemed like a cold wine that warmed the heart and refreshed the soul.



The hardest thing that they tried to describe was the King's voice, his face and his smile. When pressed by the valley people, they tried to sing the song sung by the King on his throne. They could manage a few phrases, but the melody escaped them, like trying to remember music from a dream.

When they tried to speak of the laughter of the King, they could only smile weakly, under tears of warm remembrance.

These people became strange, and were often dismissed by the practical, common-sensical valley people as being just fanciful, given to nonsense and too much imagination.

The people who stayed with the King were generally forgotten in the valley.

The business of the valley was very important to the people of the valley. Something would be very important for a few days or weeks and everyone would be talking about it on their phones and texts. But the next month, these things were forgotten about in favor of other things.

This was just the way things were. The people of the valley had gotten themselves used to this business by practicing some helpful sayings, like "whatever" or "it is what it is" or "that's the way I am, get used to it."

But the King, who always took seriously each and every word, could never accept getting “used to it,” and he was quite opposed to the business of the valley. “It is what it is” was definitely not true, and he knew it. “Whatever” was a lie, but only those who knew the truth could understand this. And the most realistic people of the valley were those who had climbed the hill and had been in his Castle.

The King knew that the valley was set below sea level, and a thousand-year event was on the horizon. The business of the valley would soon be interrupted by natural, cataclysmic disaster. The Sea would soon find its way into the valley, and everything that the valley people thought was important and practical would end up submerged, drowned by the tides of time.

So the King decided to call the people away from the business of the valley. He decided to invite the valley people up to his Castle to a great feast, because he knew that the people needed a reason that they could understand for climbing the great Hill.

The Hill that would save them from the flood.

The Feast would be free of charge. It would be sumptuous and grand. Its menu would be of the highest, richest fare. The music and the celebration would be joyous, and would set hearts high above the sounds of the torrential floods below. The Sun would shine above the clouds. The Trees would sing in the breeze.

And he, the King, would welcome each one with open arms, and he would smile, sing and laugh.

Things would be as they should be.

And it would be right, not merely “whatever,” not just “it is what it is.”

It would be, actually, Peace on Earth.

So the King sent down his representatives, the hardy souls that had climbed up to his Castle and had stayed on. He told them to go down in bright clothing, with musical instruments and to sing with gladness and tell the people of the valley that everything will be all right, that they should come and join the King for a merry feast and stay with him as long as they wanted, and their hearts would be glad.

They walked down the hill and sang into the houses of the valley people. They invited every family and home to climb the hill and enter the Castle of the King for the feast of feasts.

But the business of the valley was busy being important. One family said, “No, we cannot come, for we have things to do. We have concerts to attend and holiday parties to show up to. There are games that must be played and paid for, and holiday shopping is so very busy, we must do our part for the economy. Surely you see that.”

Another family said, “No, we cannot come, for we prefer other more pleasant people to spend our time with. We found a better castle, one that is more comfortable and does not require any hill-climbing. It is where our friends are already going and they play better music there. There are lots of people there and we feel like we’re part of something big. Besides, we would much prefer McDonalds and Applebee’s to the mythical fare of an unknown king. He would probably bore us with his old-fashioned songs that have no guitars, no drums, no exciting lights. Advertise on TV. Get a website. Do some social media. And then we might come, you’ll see.”

Another family said, “No, we cannot come, for we cannot stand hearing about negative things like floods. These have all been dammed up and controlled by our superior technology, so we do not need to worry, you see. The castle is just an old illusion, and the king is only a thing of mythology and coloring books. We would rather be realistic and stick to what we know. Besides, we would rather hear about raising our self-esteem and improving ourselves. Put good feelings on the program, and then we’ll see.”

The representatives, with heavy heart, reported these things to their master.

“No, they do not see,” said the King. “Who has blinded their eyes that they cannot see?” he asked, piteously. “Who has deafened their ears that they cannot hear? Who has deadened their hearts that they cannot turn and come back to me?”

The King, angered and saddened, sent his representatives back down the hill. This time they were to wear black clothes and chant the lays of requiem. They were to go to the places of the marginalized, the lower classes, the irreligious, the halt and the lame, the ones who had never received any invitation, much less a ticket to a Feast at the Castle Royale.

They staggered in slowly, the halt and the lame in the snow, for poverty and circumstances had weighed them down and had handicapped their way. The King sent servants down to help them, to strengthen the weary knees, to lift up the fainthearted as if on the wings of an eagle, to make their way straight.

For no one, the King had decided, would ever fail to make it to the Castle if he had set one step upon the hillside of ascent.

“I will lose no one,” the King did say, at the inauguration of the parade of the weak and the poor and the oppressed to his Feast of Feasts.

They all came, and still there were places, empty and waiting. “There are not enough for the Feast to play,” the King did say to his servants. “Go now into the highways and the byways, the brambles and the hedges, and compel them to come in that my house shall be filled.”

And so they left on their last mission, where they are busy today. Compelling, with gentle persuasion, in beauty and in peace. Compelling, those lost in the highways and byways. Calling, those caught up in the hedgerows and brambled paths.

But the King was still not satisfied with His preparations, not yet. He decided that there remained one invitation. “I will go.”

And so He Himself knocks at every door one night, in the eve of the Starbright.

The door sounds in neighborhoods of the valley, in Yeopim and Elizabeth City, in Rocky Hock and Hertford, in Tyner and Roper, in Windsor and Columbia, Nags Head and the Outer Banks. In Edenton.

There is knocking at your door.

“Who is it?” the harried voices clamor from the TV den. “Is it Santa?”

The door opens, and it is the King, but He is disguised as a dirty child in a dusty coat with the colors of the wrong NFL team. “No, I do not want your money.

“I played my pipe for you, and you did not dance. I sang a dirge for you, and you did not cry.”

“But we do not understand,” the families did say, “And we do not have time to go up the hill.”

The hidden King looked deep into the loud, distracted hearts. “So I came Myself, because you have no more time ...

“Come. Tomorrow morning ...

“I will be there. I will guide you home.”



*Office of the Metropolitan*

*312 Garfield Street*

*Johnstown, PA 15906*

**Protocol No. 13/2019**

**CHRISTMAS ARCHPASTORAL LETTER**

**December 25, 2019 / January 7, 2020**

**CHRIST IS BORN!**

**GLORIFY HIM!**

**Dear Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

**I greet you with great joy and love in the Name of our Incarnate Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as we celebrate the Feast Day of His Nativity. It is a day when once again the compassion and mercy of God is revealed to us. I give thanks to Almighty God by whose grace we have been given the opportunity to celebrate the Birth of His Son. We joyfully sing, “God is with us”, remembering all that has been done for us on this great day when God entered the world as one of us, born as a little baby to save mankind!**

**As we seek reconciliation with God and with each other, we realize the battle that rages between mind and heart, knowledge and faith, secular society and the Church. Today every family has to find its way to live an authentic Orthodox life in a secular sometimes hostile world. Although our modern society does not recognize, and is even antagonistic to the religious meaning and significance of the season, it has gotten into the habit of celebrating what we might call a worldly or secular Christmas, especially in a commercial or materialistic way. So the season of frantic “busyness” and commercialism takes a spiritual toll on all of us.**

**Perhaps it seems sometimes that the celebration and spirit of this bright and joyous day will soon disappear. However, as Christians, we know that the spirit of this day reaches far beyond one day, for God is with us – yesterday, today and tomorrow. In today’s frantic world, the Good News of the Birth of our**

*The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America*

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

**Saviour brings with it hope and faith. When sorrow and sadness, sickness or hard times overtake our lives, when it seems as if darkness has triumphed over the light, we remember that the Light illumined the world on this blessed day, “the true Light which gives light to every human coming into the world” (John 1:9). Let us therefore celebrate and give thanks to the Lord for His great gift, with confidence that we are not alone, for God is always with us!**

**Today may all of us, Priests, Panis, Deacons, Subdeacons, Readers, Parish Officers, Parishioners ( young and old ), Friends, and Supporters of our God-protected American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese experience the joy and wonders of the Shepherds and the awe and respect of the Three Wise Men at the arrival of the Messiah, our new born King. Christ is Born!**

**Greetings from Johnstown with much love,**

*+ Metropolitan Gregory*

**+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa**

*To be read as the sermon and distributed in all the churches of the Diocese at the Divine Liturgy on the Feast Day of the Nativity of our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ!*

*The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America*

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE