

## Mission Statement

Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Parish is a member of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh who through the Holy Spirit is called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a community and family, we grow in faith and in the image and likeness of God by dedicating ourselves to welcoming, celebrating and caring for all of God's people.

**Mysteries of Initiation (Baptism, Chrismation & Eucharist):** Must be a registered, active, supporting member of the parish family. Pre-baptism instructions are required. Contact Fr. Andrew to schedule.

**Mystery of Crowning:** Must be a registered, active, supporting member of the parish family. Must meet with Fr. Andrew before setting date and reserving your banquet hall. Pre-Cana program is required and three sessions with Fr. Andrew. The ceremony will be celebrated according to the prescription of the liturgical book of the Byzantine rite.

**Mystery of Reconciliation:** Celebrated Saturdays, 4:00 PM - 4:30 PM and upon request.

**Mystery of Anointing:** Celebrated upon request. Ideally celebrated in Church the Sunday before undergoing any surgical or other medical procedure.

**Visitation of the Sick:** The parishioners confined to their homes or nursing homes due to health reasons are visited monthly. Also, persons who are hospitalized are visited when Fr. Andrew is notified. It especially is important that a family member contact Fr. Andrew whenever a loved-one is hospitalized.

**Funerals:** Families of the deceased or the funeral director must contact Fr. Andrew before setting and publishing the day and time of the funeral.

**Parish Membership:** We welcome anyone to become a parishioner of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish. Only those who are registered are considered members of the Parish. When one registers to become a parish member they assume the responsibility of rendering stewardship of time, talent and treasure to this parish family. Worship at this parish is always expected. Registration is done only through the pastor by appointment. The Parish Office should be notified as soon as possible of any change of address within the Parish as well as one's leaving.

**Godparent/Sponsor Letters:** Must be a registered, active, supporting member of the parish.

**Rectory Office Hours:** The Parish office is open from 10 AM – 2 PM Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Father Andrew is available on other days and times by appointment.

## THE CHRISTMAS GREETING

It is certainly commendable to wish someone a "Merry Christmas." But how powerful a message is given by the traditional Byzantine Christmas greeting: "*Christ is Born!*" and the response: "*Glorify Him!*"

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING . . .



We will be caroling for our Parishioners who are in Nursing homes or who are home-bound on **December 28**. We want them to know they are loved and missed. More information will be forth-coming. **Mark your calendars** and set aside an afternoon to join us for this important event.

## FAMILY FUN EVENING

A Family Fun evening is being planned for Sunday, 28 December beginning around 4 PM. The Nativity movie will be shown in our social hall and pizza, snacks and beverages will be provided. All are invited and welcome to enjoy an evening with your Parish Family and celebrate the Birth of our Savior. If you plan to attend, please indicate on the sign-up sheet located in the Social Hall.

## CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES AND CALENDARS

*The 2015 Church Calendars and Contribution Envelopes are ready for pick-up in the Social Hall. Our Parish family would like to thank the Sinchak and Sons Funeral Home for their generosity in providing our calendars again this year. God bless them for their kindness and generosity!*

*Please pick up your contribution envelopes in the Social Hall! If there is any name or address correction, if you are unable to locate your envelopes, or if you wish a set of envelopes, please call the office, or drop a note in the collection basket. **This year all envelope numbers were reassigned due to the number of deaths and relocation of former parishioners. Please discard your old envelopes at the end of 2014. If you want proper credit for your contributions, you must use the envelopes you were assigned for the 2015 year.***

## Divine Liturgy Attendance weekend of 14 December:

5:00 PM: **93**; 11:00 AM: **102**

Moleben to Emmanuel 17 December 2014: **18**

**Our return to the Lord for all He has given us ..... \$3,383.97**



- **Sun. Dec. 21** ECF Religion Classes – 9:30 AM to 10:45 AM.
- **Sat. & Sun. Dec. 20 & 21** St. Benedict's Auxiliary Cookie Sale – after both Divine Liturgies. This is your golden opportunity to get delicious homemade cookies for Christmas. There will be a limited number of (\$6.00) nut rolls for sale.
- **Wed. Dec. 24** A day of strict fast and abstinence – No meat or dairy products.
- **Fast Free Time** – Christmas Day until January 4, 2015.
- **Sun. Dec. 28** Caroling for Parishioners who are Homebound and Nursing Homes
- **Sun. Dec. 28** Family Fun Night: 4:00 PM in the Social Hall. Sign-up sheet is in the Social Hall.



### 90<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF PARISH FOUNDING

On January 7, 2015 our parish will celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. This milestone anniversary will be commemorated on Sunday, **January 11** with a Divine Liturgy celebrated by Metropolitan William followed by a dinner in our Social Hall. Also we are looking for photographs from the life of the parish through the years. If you have any photos from any activities (i.e. Baptism, Wedding, First Communion, Choir, picnics, school, etc.) that you would like to share, please submit them to the Parish Office with your name on the back so that we can return it to you. We are planning to scan the photos into the computer to have a slide presentation through our media equipment in the hall. More information will follow as details are finalized. **We are accepting prepaid reservations. Reservation envelopes are available from Ladies Guild members in the Social Hall.** I hope you make every effort to celebrate this milestone with your parish family.

### GREETINGS FROM FATHER ANDREW

I would like to wish you and your loved ones a very blessed Christmas season. May the reality of Christ's birth be ever present throughout the New Year. Be assured that you and your intentions will be remembered at each Divine Liturgy I celebrate during this season. With prayers that you will know the love of Jesus this Christmas season, I remain your fellow servant in the Lord,

21 DECEMBER 2014

### SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

Sunday,	21 December	<i>SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, OF THE ANCESTORS. Holy Martyr Juliana of Nicomedia.</i>
(Vigil Liturgy)	<b>5:00 PM</b>	<b>+Sister Mary John Semon – Benedictine Sisters</b>
(SM)	<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>Health &amp; Welfare of Paul Simon – Marjorie &amp; Cheryl</b>
(PP)	<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>+Mary Reese (40<sup>th</sup> day) – Becky Prest</b>
Monday,	22 December	<i>Prefestive Day of Christmas. Holy Great Martyr Anastasia</i>
		<b>No Divine Liturgy</b>
Tuesday,	23 December	<i>Holy Ten Martyrs of Crete. Commemoration of the Dedication of the Great Church of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople.</i>
		<b>No Divine Liturgy</b>
Wednesday,	24 December	<i>Vigil of Christmas. Holy Great Martyr Eugenia.</i>
(PP)	<b>10:00 AM</b>	<b>Royal Hours</b>
(PP)	<b>6:00 PM</b>	<b>Intention of the Parish Family</b>
(PP)	<b>10:00 PM</b>	<b>Intention of the Parish Family</b>
Thursday,	25 December	<i>THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.</i>
(SM)	<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>Intention of the Parish Family</b>
(PP)	<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>Intention of the Parish Family</b>
Friday,	26 December	<i>SYNAXIS OF THE THEOTOKOS. Holy Martyr Euthymius, bishop of Sardis.</i>
		<b>No Divine Liturgy</b>
Saturday	27 December	<i>HOLY APOSTLE, FIRST MARTYR AND ARCHDEACON STEPHEN. Venerable Father and Confessor Theodore, brother of Theophane the Hymnographer.</i>
(Vigil Liturgy)	<b>5:00 PM</b>	<b>+John, +Mary, &amp; +Paul Fejko – Robert J. Fejko</b>
Sunday,	28 December	<i>SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS. Memory of the Holy and Just Joseph, husband of Mary; of David, Prophet and King; of the Holy Apostle James, brother of the Lord. Holy 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia. Bl. Martyr Gregory Khomyshyn, Bishop of Stanislaviv. (1945).</i>
(SM)	<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>+Paul &amp; +Joseph Shifra – Kevin &amp; Betsy Cihan Family</b>
(PP)	<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>+Victor Burick – William Burick Family</b>



## Attentive to the Word

### *Sunday Before Christmas: of the Ancestors*

*Matthew 1: 1-25*

*Pages 135 and 285 - 287*

Most of us find seeing our family's genealogy or hearing stories about the people we grew up with as enjoyable as resurrecting the old Christmas decorations from the attic each year. We like to be reassured of who we are and where we came from. It gives us a sense of identity and of belonging to a particular community.

The opening lines of Matthew's Gospel should have a similar, although more profound, effect on us—if we don't get hung up on all those unfamiliar Hebrew names. Matthew's genealogy, his "family record of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham" is intended to illustrate for us in great detail how God guided salvation history from the call of Abraham the patriarch down through the generations to the birth of Jesus, the Messiah.

These men and women, Jews and Gentiles alike, are our spiritual ancestors. They are part of who we are and where we came from as believers. David, a ruddy-cheeked shepherd as deft with a slingshot as he was adept at the harp, chosen by God to rule Israel in its golden age of prosperity. Ruth, model of loyal friendship to Naomi and faithfulness to Yahweh, whom she chose to be her God. Joseph, husband of Mary and hero of Christians who are called on to discern God's will in difficult and unusual circumstances. And Mary herself, from whom we have so much to learn about hearing the word of God and heeding it.

As Advent runs its gentle course toward Christmas, let's spend a little time with our ancestors by rereading a few of their stories in Scripture. They can help us to know and appreciate who we are as a people who belong to one another and to our Church.

### **THE TROPARION AND KONTAKION OF CHRISTMAS**

No holy day has so many hymns and songs celebrating the glories of the birth of the Son of God than does Christmas. This is true both of the liturgical hymns and of popular songs known as Christmas carols. In the Byzantine Church the festal anthems are "Your birth, O Christ Our God" (troparion) and "The Virgin Today" (kontakion). They

convey to us the theme and the spirit of the Christmas celebration in the Byzantine tradition.

The troparion "Your birth, O Christ Our God" is very ancient and we do not know its author. This troparion speaks only about the adoration of the Magi and not of the shepherds. The reason is that in the Byzantine tradition the adoration of the shepherds is celebrated on Christmas Eve while on Christmas day both the Gospel reading and the hymns concentrate on the Magi. Some see this as the tendency of Byzantine thought to emphasize the divinity of Christ. Actually, the reason is simply the concern to commemorate everything about Jesus' birth on Christmas day.

First the poet proclaims that the birth of Christ brought a new day and that the light characteristic of this day, which starts a new age, is the light of knowledge. It begins the period of human history when the darkness and ignorance about God is broken and the full daylight of the knowledge of the divine truth has dawned upon us. The troparion continues by saying that this new light of knowledge enabled the Magi, who until that time "worshipped the stars, to worship You, the Sun of righteousness and to know You the Dayspring from on high." The poet actually says that the Christmas star taught the Magi to worship this Sun of the new light. Just as the sun at its rising puts out all minor lights (i.e., stars), because its light is so overwhelming that the stars become invisible, so Jesus Christ shines above all other flickering lights. The new people of God live and move in the full daylight of truth about God since the sun of Righteousness began to shine and no power of darkness could overpower it or extinguish it. It will shine forever! The hymn ends with "O Lord, glory be to You." These are words of praise, glorification and of gratitude. God is with us! How fortunate we are!

The Kontakion "The Virgin Today" was written by the greatest and most famous of all Byzantine hymn writers, St. Roman the Melodist, sometime around 540 A.D. The poet uses the whole world for his stage: man and God, earth and heaven. Angels and shepherds, the Magi and the Star. All of this forms the background of the great and most wonderful event — the human birth of the Son of God for our sake: He who is always for us men becomes an infant, a child; becomes man. What a spectacle! The Virgin mother gives birth to Him who is beyond all existence and being and the earth comes offering a cave to Him who is beyond reach, who is unapproachable. Then there are the Angels who mix their praises with those of the shepherds. The Magi are journeying but guided by this strange star which leads them to Christ. All this cosmic orchestration glorifies the fact of the birth of the Son of God on earth.

*CHRIST IS BORN!*

*GLORIFY HIM!*