

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.

INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE

The 63rd annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be celebrated on **Tuesday, 25 November 2014** at 7:00 PM at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Please join other members of our Parish Family along with members from Central Christian Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church and Beth Israel Synagogue as we give thanks to God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us. A social with refreshments will follow the service.

SPIRITUALITY DAY

The Benedictine Sisters of Queen of Heaven Monastery are offering a Day of Spirituality, Saturday, December 13, 2014, from 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM. It will be held at SS. Peter and Paul Social Hall. To register, please call 330-856-1813 or email gohm@netdotcom.com by Monday, December 8, 2014. The presenter will be Reverend Christiaan Kappes, Professor of Liturgy and Patristics at SS Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA. His topic will explain the relationship of the Theotokos to the Holy Eucharist and how this knowledge can transform us. There will be time for reflection, questions, refreshments and the Mystery of Reconciliation (Confession). You are welcome to pray Vespers with the sisters. There is no charge for the afternoon. Please avail yourself of the opportunity to further prepare for the glorious Feast of the Nativity.

OUR PHILIP'S FAST OUT REACH

1. This year our parish will take part in *Be a Santa to a Senior* program which is being sponsored by the Home Instead Senior Care Office. They hope to collect 2,400 gifts to help more than 800 Seniors this Christmas. A tree with "ornaments" listing a senior's name and gift request is in the church on the Belvedere side. Please take an ornament, purchase the gift item and return **unwrapped gifts** to the church by **7 Dec. 2014**. Your gift and the visit that comes with the delivery will make their Christmas memorable and happy.

2. The teens of our ECF program are collecting new and "gently used" books to be distributed to local charities. The book levels can range from those for infants and children to young adults. Collection boxes are in the Social Hall. Deadline is 14 December 2014.



Divine Liturgy Attendance weekend of 16 November:

5:00 PM: **88**; 11:00 AM: **106**

Our return to the Lord for all He has given us \$2,937.50



- **Sun. Nov. 23** Eastern Christian Formation (ECF) classes for our young people – Kindergarten thru 12th grade – from 9:30 AM to 10:45AM.
- **Sun. Nov. 23** Bible Study – 4 PM in the Social Hall – Session 9 *Please note: Both Bible Study classes will meet today.*
- **Tues. Nov. 25** Interfaith Thanksgiving Service – 7 PM at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church.
- **Sun. Nov. 30** No Bible Study



THANKSGIVING DAY

More than three hundred years ago, a small number of grateful Pilgrims gathered in prayerful tribute to God for an abundant first harvest. This launched a meaningful custom which is one of our most cherished holidays, Thanksgiving Day. Thursday, we celebrate Thanksgiving Day. It is an appropriate time for us to reflect on our blessings. It is a day to express our gratitude to Almighty God for His abundant gifts. He is the source of all blessings, as we pray in the Ambo prayer of the Divine Liturgy. "For every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from You, the Father of Lights."

There is no true prayer without thanksgiving. God expects gratitude. Thanksgiving forces us to take stock of our situations. The blessing we are able to count forces us to conclude we are much better off than we thought we were. Today we take good things too much for granted. In the hot dry desert when the sun beats down unmercifully, we treasure water more than gold. After being without food for a few days, we know the importance of food. When our pockets are empty, we realize the value of money. When we are ill, we finally acknowledge the wonders of health. We can go on and on to enumerate how we take so many things for granted and it is only when we are deprived of them that we really begin to appreciate them. We do have reason to be thankful, don't we?

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Oh, God, when I have food, help me to remember the hungry. When I have work, help me to remember the jobless. When I have a warm home, help me to remember the homeless. When I am without pain, help me to remember those who suffer; and remembering, help me to destroy my complacency and stir up my compassion. Make me concerned enough to help, by word and deed, those who cry out for what we take for granted. Amen.

23 NOVEMBER 2014

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES

Sunday,	23 November	<i>TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Post-festive Day of the Entrance. Holy Fathers Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium and Gregory, Bishop of Agrigento.</i>
(Vigil Liturgy)	5:00 PM	+ Tom Vislosky - Family
(SM)	8:30 AM	+Michael Guinaugh – Eugene & Judy Bailey
(PP)	11:00 AM	+Michael Prokop – wife, Elizabeth
Monday,	24 November	<i>Postfestive Day of the Entrance. Holy Great Martyr Catherine. Holy Great Martyr Mercury.</i>
(PP)	6:00 PM	Liturgy of Thanksgiving
Tuesday,	25 November	<i>Otdanije (Leave-taking) of the Feast of the Entrance. Our Holy Fathers and Martyrs Clement, Pope of Rome and Peter, Bishop of Alexandria.</i>
	7:00 PM	Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul Lutheran Church
Wednesday,	26 November	<i>Venerable Father Alypius the Stylite. Commemoration of the Dedication of the Church of the Holy Great Martyr George of Kiev.</i>
		No Divine Liturgy
Thursday,	27 November	<i>Holy Martyr James the Persian. Venerable Father Paladius. Icon of the Theotokos, called “the Sign”</i>
		No Divine Liturgy
Friday,	28 November	<i>Venerable Martyr Stephen the Younger. Holy Martyr Irenarchus.</i>
		No Divine Liturgy
Saturday	29 November	<i>Holy Martyr Paramon. Holy Martyr Philemon, Venerable Father Acacius, mentioned in the Ladder of St. John.</i>
(Vigil Liturgy)	5:00 PM	+Steve Zombar – Betty, Steve, Jennifer & John
Sunday,	30 November	<i>TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Holy and Glorious Apostle Andrew the First-called.</i>
(SM)	8:30 AM	+Andrew Wujick – Estelle Wujick Liming
(PP)	11:00 AM	Intention of Father Andrew – Benedictine Sisters



Attentive to the Word

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

**Pages 156 – 157 and 268 – 271
or use the papers provided**



The secular "holiday season" begins with Thanksgiving parades and the holiday bustle of office parties and shopping frenzy will soon be upon us. Today's Scriptural readings challenge us to stop and think carefully before we dive enthusiastically into the crowds. Can we Byzantine Catholics fit our celebration of the birth of Christ our Savior into the pattern of overindulgence and conspicuous consumption by which America treats itself to the winter "holidays?" Or must we be careful not to get lured into conformity with those around us who do not know Christ and are not interested in His invitation to salvation.

Daring to be different from the neighbors is exactly the message of St. Paul's words to the Ephesians, citizens of a bustling city famous for its pagan "partying" attitude: "Awake sleeper, rise from the dead and Christ will give you light. Watch carefully then how you live, not as fools but as wise men, making the most of the present opportunity for these are evil days. Therefore do not continue in ignorance but try to understand what is the will of the Lord. Do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts" (Ephesians 5, 14-19).

By the same token, today's Gospel parable of the man whose barns were too small to hold all his goods challenges us to look at our idea of a "merry" Christmas. Is it the sensory overload of too many luxuries under the tree, the overstuffed feeling of self-indulgent living, the self-satisfied attitude that surveys the scene and says, "I've earned all this"? The rich fool represents the shopping mall version of the "holidays." He says to himself, "You have so many good things stored up for many years: take your ease, eat, drink, be merry." Our Savior's response should chill us. "You fool," God says to that rich man, "this night your life will be demanded of you; to whom will all the things you have

stored up go? Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself, but is not rich in what matters to God" (Luke 12, 19-20).

What matters to God? Jesus gives only two commandments: to look beyond ourselves by loving God in worship and by loving each other through mercy, justice and charity. This much was clear centuries before Jesus: "You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: only to do right, to love goodness and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6,8).

How should a Christian celebration of Christmas be different from pagan celebrations of the "winter holidays?" First, the celebration should begin on Christmas Eve, not on "shopping Friday." Our tradition prescribes a period of fasting (traditionally beginning on November 15th;) by which we prepare an empty place for God to fill with joy, and by which we cleanse our lives of sin and selfishness so as to welcome our Savior. Our Christmas gift giving should be marked by charity, not competition or conspicuous consumption; it should include real charity to the really needy.

Does this mean our celebration of Christmas should be joyless and bare? Hardly! St. Paul commands joy but it is the joy that comes from the Spirit, not the canned laughter of network TV. Our tradition includes and expects a solemn Holy Supper on Christmas Eve and a festive Christmas dinner, but the company and the spirit matter as much as the menu. Our festive season stretches from December 24th to January 6th. By comparison the winter "holiday" wimps out by December 26th when all the gifts get returned and Christmas music has stopped on the radio.

St. Paul commands us to greet each other piously and to fill our homes with celebrations of spiritual song. Have we Byzantine Catholics become so lazy and so dependent on our electric toys that we can no longer sing our beautiful kol'ady - Christmas carols -- with our own voices? Are TV Christmas specials as much fun as actually performing the traditional Bethlehem play ourselves? Are we so ashamed of the name of our Savior that we camouflage our feast of Christmas behind the generic "Happy Holidays"?

Today's Scripture challenges us to find that real human joy which cannot be bought or induced by alcohol. St. Paul challenges us learn how to celebrate the feast actively, joyfully and as whole persons: body, soul and spirit, not just wallet and belly. Our tradition already includes all the elements for a joyous Christmas celebration and it has been my pleasure to serve parishes that still know how to throw such a real Christmas feast. To join that party we need only summon up the courage to hear the Gospel, ignore the hype, be ourselves and proclaim "Christ is Born - Glorify Him" loud enough to wake the neighbors from their snow and Santa stupor.

By Fr. John Custer