

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Yonkers, New York



Sunday, December 30, 2018 ~ Tone 6

**Afterfeast of the Nativity of Our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ
Saints David the King, Joseph the Betrothed, and James the Brother of the Lord**

MANY YEARS AND CONGRATULATIONS ~ NEWLY TONSURED READER GABRIEL COWAN

Gabriel was tonsured a Reader yesterday, Saturday, December 29, by His Eminence Archbishop Michael, here at Holy Trinity Church. May God grant Gabriel many, many blessed years of service to His Holy Church!

THANK YOU TO OUR CHRISTMAS CAROLERS!

Our tradition of visiting the home-bound with Christmas carols and cheer continued on Dec. 26 after the Liturgy. Many thanks to everyone who sang and spent time sharing the joy of the Feast with those who needed it the most!

COMING UP IN THE PARISH, THE DIOCESE, AND ELSEWHERE ...

- **New Year's Eve, Monday, Dec. 31, 7:00 PM:** Service of Thanksgiving for the New Year, and New Year's Eve Celebration in the Fellowship Hall!
- **Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 5-6, Blessing of Holy Water at the Feast of Theophany:** Bring your Holy Water bottles and take some newly blessed Holy Water home with you next weekend.
- **Home Blessings:** Father David will begin annual Home Blessings next Sunday, January 6. Please speak with him to schedule your home blessing visit.

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH ✦ 46 Seymour Street ✦ Yonkers, New York 10701

Rector: V. Rev. David Cowan; Protodeacon John Eby; Attached: V. Rev. John Tkachuk; V. Rev. Vitaly Bahanovich
Rector Emeritus: V. Rev. Yaroslav Sudick, Ph.D., D.D.

Rectory Phone 914-965-6815 ✦ Email: frdavidcowan@gmail.com; Web: www.HolyTrinityYonkers.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HolyTrinityOrthodox

Diocese of New York & New Jersey: www.nynjoca.org

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Today ~ Feast of Ss. David the King, Joseph the Betrothed, and James the Brother of the Lord

9:30 AM *Divine Liturgy* followed by Coffee Hour

Monday, December 31

7:00 PM *Service of Thanksgiving* for the New Year – Followed by New Year's Eve Celebration in the Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, January 1, 2019 ~ Feasts of St. Basil the Great and the Circumcision of the Lord ~ New Year's Day

10:00 AM *Divine Liturgy*

Saturday, January 5

5:00 PM *Panikhida* for Victor Makarov (40 Days)

5:30 PM Private Confession Available

6:00 PM *Vigil Service with Blessing of Water* – Great Feast of the Theophany (Baptism) of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Sunday, January 6

9:30 AM *Divine Liturgy with Blessing of Water* followed by Coffee Hour

Monday, January 7 ~ Synaxis of St. John the Baptist (Nativity of Our Lord on the Old Calendar)

10:00 AM *Divine Liturgy / Божественная литургия*

TODAY'S EPISTLE Galatians 1:11-19 Brethren: I make known to you that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

TODAY'S GOSPEL Matthew 2:13-23 At that time, when Jesus and Joseph and Mary had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more." Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

RECLAIMING OUR HOMES FOR CHRIST – A NOTE ON HOME BLESSINGS

The custom of blessing homes during the Theophany season is of special beauty and significance. When the Holy Water touches our doors, our walls, and us, we show the Lord – and the devil – that we wish for God to physically expel every trace of sin, anger, bitterness, and worry that has invaded our homes and our families over the past year!

Plan your home blessing at a time when **all family members can be present**, if at all possible.

When Father comes to bless the family and house, these things should be prepared:

- A lit candle, an icon, and a wide bowl for Holy Water should be on the table.
- All present in the house should come together and stand at the table. If kids are present, an icon for each child to carry (who is big enough to carry one) should also be on the table.
- All radios, televisions, etc. should be turned off.
- Lists of Departed and Living family members and loved ones to be prayed for.

PRAYER LIST

Above all, we are a praying community. Keep this list in your prayer corner, and in your daily prayers remember our Brothers & Sisters in Christ:

Luna Shin (Sohee Talley's sister); Newly baptized Alexander Matthew Statkevics and Lukas Gogichaishvili; Fr. Nicholas & Mat. Anastasia Molodyko-Harris and Fr. Alexis Vinogradov, Fr. Samuel & Mat. Photini Davis, Serge Schmemann and Shaun McElray, recovering from surgery; Melania King & Victoria Miroshnikov and the children to be born of them; Michelle Brown; Alice Coyle; Aaron Hoskins; Janice Keil; Michael Lucak; Emily Sarisky; Walter Shymansky, Stephanie Whiting; Vera Bullock; Gerald D'Inzillo; Matushka Lorissa Gregory; John Krawchuk; Martha Scigliano; Mat. Mary Shafran; Fr. Dennis Swencki; Fr. Joseph Lickwar; Fr. Steven Belonick; Fr. Daniel Skvir; Joseph Rao; Charlie Andonis; Barbara Garbinski; children Felicity Davis & Victoria Saraceno; Vera Bouteneff; Ted Chaiko; Earle & Sally Ausman; Rocco Mastronardi; Nancy Prusak; Pedro Rosario; Honorina Rodriguez; Christina Sceppaquercia & Regina Cataldo; Douglas Jenkins, Sara Haughton; Mary Braig; Marian Harris; Vincent Knarr; Luka & Elena Herman; Nicholas Macagnone; Tanya Balasenowich; the child Alena; Andrew Czuchta; Boris Lyzak; Douglas & Susan Hansen; Bill Bodack; Courtney Lyzak; Suzanne Gee; Kathleen & Maryanne Nolan; Shawn Malone; Metropolitan Paul and Bishop Gregorios; Nikolai & Nadezhda Solidnov; the priests Frs. Maryan Chaykivsky, Stephen Hoskins, Samuel Kedala, Leonid Kishkovsky, John Malcom, Josef Petranin, John Reeves, Basil Summer, John Tkachuk, John Zabinko; Matushki Ellen Chupeck, Rebekah Markewich, Priscilla Shipley, Katherine White; all those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness, including Eugen Balasenowich, Sr.; Maria Chouplat; Helen Delandri; Olga Donski; Walter Donski; Irene Homa; Anatole Honczarenko; Olga Juck; Olga Pavelchak; Stephanie Phillips; Tekla Rzyk; for all soldiers, especially Mykola; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence and natural disasters, and refugees; all those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addiction, abuse, abandonment and despair; all Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families. Those afflicted by the earthquakes in Alaska and the fires in California. Feast Day: All those named for Saints David, Joseph & James. Asking God's blessing on our labors renovating the Education Building and the Church building.

For blessed repose for the souls of: Newly departed Lorna Nelson (12/4) former President George Bush (+11/30); Fr. Athanasius Shaw (+11/29); Victor Makarov (+11/28); all the departed named for Saints David, Joseph & James; and all those departed this life in hope of the Resurrection.

Please give prayer requests to Fr. David, to Protodeacon John, or to an Altar Server. Typically, names remain on this list for 40 days, unless requested otherwise.

PRAY FOR OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS – our parish sons & daughters, OCF chapter members, AND those at nearby colleges who make HTO their spiritual home away from home!

Elizabeth Bouteneff
Joe Ciamarra
Brandon Ferguson
Samantha Fricke
Kaydee Kowalczyk
Andrew Nolan

Peter Nolan
August Perry
Kamille Perry
Joshua Rzyk
Stephanie Rzyk
Matthew Skalski

Justyna Skalski
Adriana Szpynda
Emily Szpynda
Katherine Wislocki
Olivia Wislocki

"Sending our kids to college without a connection to the Church is like sending children to play in traffic." -- Abp. Michael

Please tell Fr. David if there are any errors or omissions on this list.

CANDLE SPONSORSHIPS FOR DECEMBER:

Vigil Candles, Icons of Christ and the Theotokos, Departed Members, Wirchansky Family: Janet, Peter, Christina, Anne, Helen & Anastasia. Living: Wirchansky, Seckerson & Carlucci Families.

PASTORAL CARE – GENERAL INFORMATION

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please call Fr. David at (914) 965-6815, when a family member is in an emergency or admitted to the hospital.

Anointing In Sickness: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick, however severe. It doesn't mean "Last Rites!"

Marriages and Baptisms require early planning, scheduling, counseling, and selection of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!

Funerals are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please be aware that those Orthodox Christians who freely reject the invitation to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, are not buried with a funeral in the church. Please see Father for details.

The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

Archbishop Michael's Letter, Nativity 2018 ~ Beloved of Our Diocesan Family: Christ is Born! – Glorify Him!

“God became man, so that man could become like God.”

The Incarnation – the Son of God taking on human flesh, which we celebrate on this Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord – is an act of God's loving-kindness towards mankind. Looking at the Incarnation from this point of view, several Orthodox Saints – like St. Maximos the Confessor and St. Isaac the Syrian – have taught that even if man had never sinned, God still would have become human in His love for mankind. They tell us that the Incarnation was part of the eternal purpose of God – and not simply an answer to Adam's Fall.

But the fact is that mankind did sin – and because this is so, the Incarnation is not just an act of divine love, but an act of salvation. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ united mankind and God in His own Person, and re-opened for us the path to union with God. In His own Person, Christ showed what the true “likeness of God” is ... and through His redeeming passion and death and glorious resurrection, He set that likeness once again within our reach. Christ, the Second Adam, came to earth to reverse the effects of the first Adam's sin of disobedience.

Without the Incarnation, there would be no salvation as we know it; no Cross, no Resurrection, no partaking of the divine energies of God, no deification. Without the Incarnation, Paradise and eternal life (which were given to man before the Fall) would still have resulted in humanity being eternally joined to God – but only as servants. When the Father gives His Son to redeem mankind – you and me – from the curse of the Fall wherein God had forewarned Adam and Eve that “you shall surely die,” His Son defies human flesh and makes it possible for every man, woman, and child to be a communicant with the Holy Trinity through Himself. By this, we humans are no longer called to be servants of the Kingdom, but rather we are invited to become adopted daughters and sons of God the Father.

This profound message of the Feast of the Nativity can easily be overlooked in our celebration: we forget these words of St. Athanasius the Great, “God became man, so that man could become like God.” Yes, we celebrate the Son of God's Birth ... but are we also celebrating the possibility of our own deification? Do we realize what Christ offers us this day?

Beloved fathers and brothers and sisters: We are being called by Our Lord Himself to partake of His very life. To be united to Him. He is inviting us to enter into union with Him, asking us if we will allow Him to enter into us, to take His abode in us. God has taken on our material body, so that He might give us the greatest gift – His eternal, heavenly, immaterial life. In so doing, we are given the opportunity to become saints – if not canonized Saints, with a capital “S” ... then at least everyday saints, with a small “s”.

Instead of being moved by His gift with a response of gratitude and love, too often we respond by engrossing ourselves in the desire for material things – wealth and power, earthly comforts and personal prestige – instead of heavenly gifts such as peace and joy, communion and life eternal with God. No wonder Christmas itself has become a celebration of materialism, commercialism and hedonism in too many cultures ... in too many homes ... in too many hearts.

So what is to be our response to the message of this great Feast? Shall we just celebrate the Birth of Christ ... or shall we actually try to respond to His Incarnation? Shall we really try to be united to Him, as we once were at our Baptism? The easy reply to this invitation is to think that “I must be strive to be better, more virtuous; more kind and loving; more patient and forgiving; more honest and trustworthy and chaste.” But this is not true Christianity – simple behavior modification. These virtues are not the goal of our spiritual life; they are simply the natural expression, the flowering, of the pursuit of our real goal – which is to be united with Christ.

We might try with all our might to live these virtues, and perhaps we could sustain this for a while ... but eventually we burn out. The strength to possess these virtues comes only from our union with Christ. So, then, how can I unite with and become like God? Our Lord's own teaching, the Church's own tradition across the centuries, provides us with the tried and true methodology that has produced both canonized Saints and everyday saints in every generation of history: pray to God and read His Holy Scriptures daily; participate in the divine services and receive the Holy Mysteries as often as they are offered; follow the commandments and help those in need in His Name. If we truly try to seek Christ above all else, if we pray to Him from our heart daily, and show sincere repentance for our sins – from time to time with tears, but always with a desire to return to the Father's saving love – then we are indeed on the narrow road to union with Christ, which is salvation and theosis.

The Feast of the Nativity invites us, beckons us, to seek Christ above all else. It calls us to unite ourselves to Him ... but it offers us only the invitation to this union. It does not ever force us. That would not be the way of love, because love can only be given where there is freedom – to accept or reject the beloved. What is our response to this gift of Christ – to be united with Him, to save our souls, to live with Him forever, to become more and more like Him unto eternity?

Too many voices today are advocating change in our society through the political arena. What we need, what our society and our world need, more than anything else, is for us Orthodox Christians to really live our faith ... for us to focus our energy on seeking our Savior above all else ... to have Christ living within us, so that we can help others find Him. So that we can be witnesses, to the saving truth that God has become man, so that man can become like God.

On the glorious Feast of the Lord's Nativity, I wish you every blessing that comes from His hands – a prosperous and peaceful life, good health and spiritual joy, His visitation and assistance in all good things, and most importantly: salvation, deification and union with Him in His Kingdom.

With love in the Newborn Savior, + Archbishop Michael