



ST. STEPHEN'S QUARTERLY

A Newsletter of St. Stephen Orthodox Cathedral

8598 Verree Rd. Philadelphia, PA 19111

WINTER 2011/2012

A note from Fr. Victor...



Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

The feast of the Nativity of our Lord is upon us. Soon we will gather in the church for the celebration of this glorious feast. Yet year after year we find ourselves poorly prepared for this celebration. The pre-Christmas season is extremely busy, filled with much care, but often not with much thought for the One whose birth we will celebrate soon. We worry whether we will manage to get everything done, while forgetting the words of Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man whose will is in the law of the Lord. Whatever he does shall prosper."

Let us use this time wisely, fixing our mind on the Incarnation of our Lord and Savior. Let us keep Advent fast as a reminder that this feast is about a spiritual reality. Let us make an effort by coming to Confession and preparing to receive Communion. Let us make it a special part of our family life by gathering on Christmas Eve for Holy Supper. Let us plan to attend more services of the feast of Nativity. And, above all, let us thank our Lord for becoming a little child for us so that we could have Life Eternal!

God is With Us!

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LOOKING AHEAD:

(Feast Days and Events)

- **Great Feast Day: Theophany of our Lord.** Jan. 5: Compline with Great Blessing of Water 7 PM; Jan. 6: Divine Liturgy 9 AM
- **Novogodny Ball: Jan. 15**
- **Feast Day: Three Hierarchs.** Jan. 29: Great Vespers 7 PM; Jan. 30: Divine Liturgy 9 AM.
- **Great Feast Day: Meeting of the Lord.** Feb. 1: Great Vespers 7 PM; Feb 2: Divine Liturgy 9 AM.
- **Annual Parish Meeting: Feb. 12**
- **Meatfare Sunday: Feb. 19**
- **Altar Servers Retreat: Feb. 25**
- **Forgiveness Sunday: Feb. 26.**
- **Great Lent Begins: Feb. 27**

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY CELEBRATION: all the faithful of our Cathedral are invited to join area clergy and faithful for this celebration at St. Vladimir's Ukrainian Cathedral on March 4, 2012.

NATIVITY CELEBRATION SCHEDULE

Friday, Dec. 23

**Royal Hours
of Nativity 9:00 AM**

Monday,
Dec 26

*Synaxis of the
Theotokos*

Divine Liturgy 9:00 AM

**Great Vespers for the
Feast of St. Stephen
7:00 PM**

Saturday,
Dec. 24
Eve of Nativity

**Vesperal Divine
Liturgy 9:00 AM**

Tuesday,
Dec 27

*St. Stephen
Protomartyr*

**Hierarchical Divine
Liturgy 9:30 AM
Brunch to Follow**

Sunday, Dec. 25
*Nativity of our
Lord*

**Divine Liturgy
10:00 AM**

Saturday,
Dec. 31
New Year Eve

**Great Vespers and New
Year Moleben 5:00 PM**



Christmas Eve Supper

We find the beauty of Orthodox Tradition not only in the ancient services that were preserved in the Church, but also from wonderful family customs that our Orthodox ancestors followed for many generations. One of such important custom is to have a special family meal on the Eve of Nativity, often referred to as "Holy Supper". The family prepares a lenten meal, traditionally consisting of twelve dishes, according to the number of the apostles, and gathers before the first star can be seen in the sky. As the light of the first star shines, the family starts the meal, reading the Gospel accounts of Christ's Nativity and singing Christmas carols. We hope that all of the families of St. Stephen Cathedral will follow this beautiful custom this Christmas Eve. Here are some of the ideas for the dishes that are commonly used for the Holy Supper:

Kutya (from wheat or barley)	Lenten Bread	Soup (borsch or mushroom)
Honey	Garlic	Salt
Sauerkraut	Lenten Pierogie	Pieroshki
Potatoes	Fish	Apple Strudel

Remember that proper conclusion to the Holy Supper is coming to Church for the celebration of the Vigil Service of the Nativity of our Lord (7 PM on Dec. 24).

Theophany Home Blessings

The celebration of the Theophany (Baptism) of our Lord is very important in the life of the Church. We bless the water on the Eve of the Feast, which is a reminder for all of us about our own Baptism. We also bless with this Holy Water our places of habitation so that in all aspects of our life we have purity of life and protection from God. It is a pious custom to schedule a visit with the parish priest after the feast of Theophany and before the beginning of Great Lent for the blessing of the house. This not only allows for our houses to be blessed, but also is important opportunity to spend some time with your pastor. Here are some simple rules to prepare for house blessing:

- Make a list of the first names of those family members you wish to pray for (living and departed).
- On your dining room table or icon corner, place a lit candle, an icon of Theophany or Christ, and a wide bowl (to hold the holy water).
- Turn on a light in each room, so the priest can see where to go.
- Turn off all TVs, stereos, and computers.

To learn more about how to make Theophany Home blessing a special event in the life of your family, visit <http://www.orthodox.net/10things/theophany-house-blessings.html>.

Snapshots of Recent Events at St. Stephen's



Visit by Bishop Tikhon for the Feast of
Nativity of Theotokos 9/8/2011



Beginning of Church School Year 9/11/2011



Stremsky Family Concert 10/19/11

Parish Stewardship

As part of our preparation for the year 2012 here at St. Stephen Cathedral, we sent Stewardship Pledge cards to all our parishioners asking them to provide us with their best estimate of the level of financial support that they plan to give to the parish in the upcoming year. We thank those of our parishioners who promptly responded and submitted their cards to the parish office. This year we also included, for the first time, a special survey of your talents that can benefit our parish. We would like to have more of our parishioners involved in the life of St. Stephen's, beyond Sunday morning

Liturgy. In order for us to be truly successful as a community, we all should feel our own share of responsibility for the Cathedral. Please let us know what talents you have so that we could turn to you when we need help in certain areas. Such participation both helps our spiritual lives and helps us establish connections with other parishioners and to get to know them better. Our goal, as a parish, is to be an organic community of faithful Orthodox Christians who continue to actively show our love for God and for each other. Help us to become that which we are called to be by our Lord!

St. Stephen Orthodox Cathedral
8598 Verree Rd.
Philadelphia, PA

His Grace Bishop Tikhon
Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk, Dean
Fr. Dn. George Zlatkowski, Deacon

Visit us on the Web:
www.ststephencathedral.org



Postage



75th

Novogodny (New Year's) Ball

Sponsored by

*St. Stephen's OCF - Chapter 82
Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America*



Sunday, January 15, 2012

Crowne Plaza Hotel – Philadelphia
Cherry Hill, NJ
*A Semi-formal for the Benefit of the IOCC &
Orthodox Christian Theological Education*

Optional Dinner: 4:30 PM Dancing & Entertainment: 6:30 – 11:30

**For detailed information regarding reservations,
call Paul Fedoronko at (610) 328-6911 or
email: novogodnyball@verizon.net**