



St. John Chrysostom Church

A Mission of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
www.stjohngoldenco.org

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December 2012 SJCC News

My Joy in the Lord,

This month brings us the great Holy Day of the Nativity of our Lord. When we think of the baby in the manger, we often don't think about the real circumstances – no room in the inn means packed with people. But why then, did they have to go to the poorest, and have only a manger to lay the infant in? Surely if there had been money, they could have arranged with some family for a spare room. But they didn't. They wound up in a cave, which is where the poorest of the poor lived and had to line the manger with straw to lay the infant down. This poverty is emphasized 40 days later when they go to the temple to make the offering according to the Law: “when the days of her purifying are completed, she shall bring ... a lamb year old ... and a young pigeon or a turtledove And if she cannot afford a lamb, she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons. (Lev. 12:6-8). Mary and Joseph brought the cheaper of the allowed offerings. (A lamb cost up to a week's wages, while a turtledove cost about a half day's wages for a laborer.) Thus, understanding that Christ came to the poor and among the poor, though King of All (Pantocrator), we should see that this Feast of the Nativity is not about the money we spend, but the joy we give.

And as we spend a certain amount of time wrapping gifts and preparing surprises for our friends and loved ones, let us not forget to also wrap up our love for each other and give the greatest gift of all – ourselves: to God and to our neighbor; not grudgingly, but with open hearts and open minds.

With love, in Christ,
Fr. Seraphim

St. Nicholas will make his annual visit on Sunday, Dec. 2!

YAL Schedule: Please contact Kara Yakubik for details.

Day of Service signups: **PLEASE** continue to sign up for Coffee Hour and cleanup – this is an important aspect of what is meant by being one of the People of God- to help serve each other.

January House Blessings: At the end of this newsletter is my House Blessing Schedule for January. Please look at it carefully. If you are not on it, call me and I'll add you. If the time I have scheduled is inconvenient, call me and I'll change it. I will send out a schedule by day next month.

Adult Discussions: I have been faithfully coming down for these discussions but several times people, who said they were coming have not shown up. Rather than continue trying a weeknight evening, perhaps a couple of hours before Saturday Vespers would make more sense? Please let me know what you think!

Please note that I am only including December Calendar with this issue. I am preparing a year-long Calendar that will be mailed to you soon. (After some feedback about Adult Discussions and other things). That way you can plan ahead.

PROSPHORA Baking Schedule

PLEASE make sure that you bring ONE (and only one) prospora with names for commemoration to church at least the night before the date on which it is due. You can bring it up to three weeks before and we'll freeze it until the date, but don't try to bring it that morning. I usually start the Proskomedie early and need the prospora to be there. If it's not there by the night before, I will defrost a spare to use. Thank you for your consideration. I don't need more than one. If you bake two or more, keep the rest and use them as you would any other home-made bread. Despite having a seal, they are not blessed and can be eaten just like regular bread.

December

2 Becca Higgins (for Nickolas)
9 Miriam Fox (for Hannah)
16 Jonathan Spencer
23 Jacque Gisetti
30 Dana Berry

January

6 Parish (Theophany)
13 Larissa Spencer
20 Timothy Wretling
27 Masha Gisetti

REMINDER: when you are scheduled to provide the prospora for a Sunday, I expect and ask / plead – give me a list of names of your family to commemorate. Too often I have gotten a loaf but no names!!! This includes both living and departed. If some of the living or departed are not Orthodox, I want them anyway. Thank you for remembering this.

Parishioner Celebrations in November & December

**NOTE: If you don't see your day listed OR see your day listed on the wrong day
PLEASE let Fr. Seraphim know – as soon as possible**

December

12/02	Namesday	Margo Waisanen
12/03	Birthday	Margo Waisanen
12/06	Namesday	Haley Bergren
12/06	Namesday	Nickolas Higgins
12/09	Namesday	Hannah Fox
12/11	Birthday	Micco Waisanen
12/12	Birthday	Jaimy Weddingfeld
12/16	Birthday	Samuel Wretling
12/16	Namesday	Jonathan Spencer
12/21	Birthday	Jacque Gisetti
12/26	Birthday	Christina Veselak
12/30	Anniversary	Dana & Nathan Berry
12/31	Namesday	Melia Weddingfeld

January

01/07	Namesday	Ladd Moravek
01/07	Namesday	John Russell
01/07	Namesday	Sean Weddingfeld
01/15	Birthday	Matthew Bourquin
01/17	Birthday	Nathan Berry
01/17	Birthday	Larissa Spencer
01/19	Birthday	John Russell
01/22	Namesday	Timothy Spencer
01/22	Namesday	Timothy Wretling

ON Fasting

“When you fast, do not be sour like the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces so that they may appear fasting to men. When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face that you do not appear before men (to be) fasting; but to your Father, in secret. And your Father, seeing it in secret, will give to you openly.”
Matthew 6: 16-18

We are all familiar with the various levels of feasting (so often incorrectly called levels of “fasting”):

1. nothing processed
2. processed vegetarian (oil and wine)
3. cold blooded flesh (fish)
4. warm blooded animal products (eggs and dairy)
5. warm blooded animal flesh (meat)

This is what we usually focus on when we talk about fasting - how far up the scale we are going to “give up” for a certain period of time. But if we seriously look at the scale, seeing it from a historical, agrarian perspective, what we begin to notice is that each level requires less time gathering and less time preparing.

In our modern world, there is actually no difference in gathering any of those levels – we simply go to the store and buy what we want. It does not take any longer to buy peanut butter or oil than to buy a steak. It doesn't take longer to barbecue than to throw into a microwave. And it certainly doesn't take longer to order in a fast food joint.

So how to fast in these modern circumstances?

Let us begin by considering what the Church wants us to accomplish by fasting: Fasting has four components to it: to eat modestly, to eat frugally, to spend less time on food preparation, and to do it out of the eyes of our neighbors: eating modestly means smaller portions, less elaborate meals AND, less attention paid to what I am eating; eating frugally means spending less on my meal, whether it be at home or in a restaurant; to spend less time on food preparation is to make my meals simpler; to do it out of the eyes of my neighbors is to make my fast something between me and my God.

But what is the purpose of the fast? Why bother to fast?

Firstly, our Lord said so! He didn't say “IF you fast...”, He said “WHEN you fast...”.

Secondly, the Church has found that the discipline of fasting in our daily lives helps us to fight the temptations of the devil. To tell our bodies or our taste buds or our minds, “No” when we desire something, is much easier with something like food than it is with our tempers or our lusts. But the practice of saying “No” to something simple like a particular food or even to food, creates a habit of discipline in which our minds are in command of our desires. We become people of choice rather creatures of whim.

Thirdly, fasting is tied to charity. The money that we save and the time that we save are to be spent on the needy. Thus fasting is a time for spending less on ourselves and more on others: less time, less money, less attention to our wants and more time, more money, and more attention to the needs of others. This is the basis for the idea of fasting as sacrifice. It is not a sacrifice to God of our pleasures, it is a sacrifice for those around us. When a child gives up candy for Lent, too often we leave it at that, instead of taking the money that would be spent on the candy and letting the child give to those in need. We have two opportunities for this – the bell-ringers during the Nativity Fast and the FFHP boxes during Great Lent. Both give the child an opportunity to learn a deeper meaning of “Fast”. Also, this allows us to keep track of what we are spending – not just during a fast but all the time so that when a fast comes, we know what the difference in our spending is and how much additional to give to the poor.

Lastly, fasting is to be done in secret. Too often I have heard faithful people say that they cannot attend an office party because it is during a Fast. While this is a nice piety, and trumpeted by many monastic writers who could afford to isolate themselves from the world during a fast, this is not appropriate. We are called

to do for others during a fast. Our focus should be on others -and this includes office parties, parties by non-Orthodox friends, and other events where we are called to show our love for our neighbor. Yes it will break our fast. Is the fast made for us or are we made for the fast? Too often we burden our lives with rigidity. We follow neither the letter nor the Spirit. We see the Church as draconian in her requirements, unyielding in her restrictions. This is not right. I do not say this to encourage anyone to ignore the fast. The instruction to fast in secret is not liberty to escape fasting or to excuse our lack of discipline. Far from it. If we can go to a party and still fast, so much the better. If we accept every invitation so that we will have no time to fast, so much the worse. But we should not make our fast either an excuse or an obstacle to doing for others.

So, what about those office parties? When I go, I will eat what is served. If I go to a home of someone who does not fast, I will also eat what is served, and if I have to host a party, I will serve what I feel is appropriate. The most repugnant moment I had was with some Orthodox who prepared a steak dinner during Holy Week because "SOME of the people coming were not Orthodox, and well, father, we can't expect them to fast!" Don't fall for that temptation. It is better to forgo hosting a party than making excuses to avoid fasting.

I had occasion recently to go out to dinner with some friends. It being the Fast, I looked for vegetarian or seafood dishes to order. And, after having, frankly, an unappetizing and not very cheap meal, it struck me that I was going about it the wrong way. I need to look, not just at the contents of the dish but at the price as well and try to find something that meets the requirements of frugality as well as of the fast. And, perhaps, next time, I will look for frugality more than contents and give some more to the needy.

Fr. Seraphim

Alphabetically – House Blessing IN JANUARY

Baldwin, C	Mon	7	11:30
Berry, N & D	Fri	11	18:00
DeLeo & Bergren	Fri	11	19:30
Emmons, A	Thu	10	16:30
Fox, J & M	Sun	6	15:00
Fredrickson, K	Tue	8	14:00
Gisetti, A & A	Thu	10	18:00
Gisetti, A & J	Sun	6	13:30
Grace, J & L	Mon	7	14:30
Higgins, R	Fri	11	16:30
Jerome, E & J	Mon	7	17:00
Kurtz, T & S	Tue	8	17:30
Leshinski, E & P	Sun	6	noon
Mikita, D	Thu	10	19:00
Mikita, J & J	Mon	7	13:00
Moravek, L	Sat	12	15:00
Negreanu, M & F	Mon	7	19:30
Negreanu, P			no date set
Perkins, K	Wed	9	noon
Peyton, O	Tue	8	noon
Rall, J	Wed	9	18:30
Saieg, P	Wed	9	19:30
Spencer, J & L	Sun	6	19:30
Waisanen, B & M	Sun	6	16:30
Weddingfeld, S&J	Tue	8	19:30
Wrettlng, Tim			no date set
Yakubik, K	Sun	6	18:00

Schedule of Services and Events

December

1	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
2	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	<i>Visit of St. Nicholas</i>
8	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
9	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
15	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
16	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday of the Forefathers
19	Wed	7:00 pm	Adult Discussion	
22	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
23	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday of the Fathers (before the Nativity)
24	Mon	8:00 am	Royal hours	Nativity Eve
			Vesperal Liturgy	
		7:00 pm	Vigil	
25	Tue	9:00 am	Liturgy	The Nativity of our Lord
29	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
30	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday after the Nativity
			Prayer for the New Year	

January

4	Fri	9:00 am	Royal Hours	
5	Sat	10:00 am	Liturgy	Eve of Theophany
		5:00 pm	Vespers	<u>and Blessing of Water</u>
6	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Theophany
12	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
13	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday after the Theophany
16	Wed	7:00 pm	Adult Discussion	
19	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
20	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
26	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
27	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	

Daily Scripture Readings: I am not including daily readings of Scripture because there are so many on-line sources and they don't agree; so rather than my adding to the confusion, pick one and follow it. The same holds true for the commemoration of the saints – there are many calendars and while most agree on the majority of days, when they do disagree, it is always for historical reasons rather than theological, so pick a calendar and follow it.

Looking ahead - 2013 General Schedule of Services

(see monthly newsletter for changes)

January

5 Sat 5:00 pm Vespers w/ Blessing of Water
6 Sun 9:00 am Liturgy **Theophany of our Lord**

February

2 Sat 9:00 am Liturgy & Brunch **Meeting of our Lord**

March

18 Mon *Great Fast begins*
25 Mon 9:00 am Liturgy & Potluck **Annunciation**

April

28 Sun 9:00 am Liturgy **Palm Sunday**

May

5 Sun midnight Matins & Liturgy & BreakFast **PASCHA**
19 Sun 9:00 am Hierarchical Liturgy w/ Bishop Basil

June

6-8 Parish Life Conference in Kansas City.
13 Thu 6:30 pm Liturgy & Potluck **Ascension of our Lord**
23 Sun 9:00 am Liturgy **Pentecost**
29 Sat 9:00 am Liturgy & Brunch **SS. Peter & Paul**

August

1 Thu *Dormition fast begins*
6 Tue 6:30 pm Liturgy & Potluck **Transfiguration of Our Lord**
15 Thu 6:30 pm Liturgy & Potluck **Dormition of the Theotokos**

September

8 Sun 9:00 am Liturgy **Nativity of the Theotokos**
14 Sat 9:00 am Liturgy & Brunch **Elevation of the Cross**

November

13 Wed 6:30 pm Liturgy & Potluck **St. John Chrysostom (Patronal Feast)**
15 Fri *Nativity Fast begins*
21 Thu 6:30 pm Liturgy & Potluck **Entrance into the Temple of the**

Theotokos

28 Thu 9:00 am Liturgy **Thanksgiving Day**

December

24 Tue 9:00 am Royal Hours *Nativity Eve*
Vesperal Liturgy
7:00 pm Vigil
25 Wed 9:00 am Liturgy **Nativity of our Lord**

DECEMBER 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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2 9 am Liturgy (St. Nicholas visit)	3	4	5	6	7	8 5 pm Vespers																																																																																				
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23 9 am Liturgy Sunday of the Fathers	24 NativityEve 8:00 am Royal Hours Vesperal Liturgy 7:00 pm Vigil	25 9 am Liturgy NATIVITY of our Lord	26	27	28	29 5 pm Vespers																																																																																				
30 9 am Liturgy Sunday after the Nativity	31 New Year's Eve	November 2012 <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>Th</td><td>F</td><td>Sa</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td></tr> </table>		S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		January 2013 <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>Th</td><td>F</td><td>Sa</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>		S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			Notes:  Denotes a fasting day  Denotes a strict fasting day  Denotes a total fast day
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