

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR THE DAY

Epistle Lesson: St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians 1:11-19

BRETHREN, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

Gospel Lesson: St. Matthew 2:13-23

When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaos reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

New Calendars Available. Ecclesiastical calendars for 2009 are available on the back table in the narthex of the church. Calendars that will fit nicely in your pocket or purse are also available through the generosity of the Archdiocese. The calendar that highlights our services and activities for the month of January is available as well. Please take a moment to pick one up so that you can plan your monthly activities and include your faith life in your decision making.



TRAVERSE CITY ORTHODOX MISSION

A Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit

Meeting at 1030 Hastings St., Traverse City, Michigan

www.tcorthodoxchurch.org

Vol. II Nr. 51

Sunday, 28 December 2008

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† PARISH CALENDAR OF EVENTS †

Sunday 28 December. Sunday After the Nativity of the Lord. 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia.

9 AM Orthros

10 AM Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos

11:30 AM Fellowship Hour

4 PM 9th Hour and Vespers (Petoskey)

Monday 29 December Holy 14,000 Innocents Slain by Herod in Bethlehem.

No Choir Rehearsal

Tuesday 30 December St. Anysia Virgin-Martyr of Nicomedia.

Wednesday 31 December Apodosis of the Nativity of the Lord. St. Melania the Younger,

Nun of Rome.

No Fast Day

5:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers

Thursday 1 January Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord. St. Basil the Great.

9 AM Orthros

10 AM Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Friday 2 January Forefeast of the Theophany. St. Sylvester, Pope of Rome.

No Fast Day

Saturday 3 January Saturday Before Theophany. St. Malachi the Prophet.

4:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers

Sunday 4 January Sunday Before the Theophany of the Lord.

9 AM Orthros

10 AM Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos

Pageant of Prophecy Brings History Alive! We were treated to a wonderful production of our church school last Sunday as they put on the Pageant of Prophecy written by our church school staff. The play brought together all of the prophecies that dealt with the birth of the Messiah and enabled us to visualize them as they were acted out. Elisabeth Dalbo presented a clarinet solo performing the well loved hymn based upon Gregorian chant, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" as part of the programme. Participating in the production from our church school were: Alex Batsakis; Samantha and Elisabeth Dalbo; Malena Kain; Katie Long; James, Jenna and Jacob Olszewski; and Calvin (Thomas) Patterson. Adults participating in the programme were: Matthew and Steven Bemis, Rob Fickling, Karen Kain, Stephanie Long, Sub-deacon Euphrosynos (Eric) Patterson and Tina Tank. Directing and writing the programme for this year's performance was our director of religious education, Mrs. Holly Olszewski.

Church School "Giving Tree" Surpasses Expectations! Our church school project was a real "eye-opener." We collected all kinds of things ranging from gift cards, to winter coats, hats and gloves, to laundry soap, personal care items, and many other practical gifts. We just couldn't believe what our small congregation was able to do in a very short time! Members of the church school will help in the continued distribution of these items as we try to coordinate schedules with those benefiting from this drive. Thanks to everyone that participated in this important philanthropy of our parish. It truly made Christmas wonderful for the families that we have targeted as recipients.

Bible Study Class Graduation. The Monday night Bible study class which has been dealing with the Gospel of St. John wrapped up the semester with an extended class this past Monday. The group finished up the syllabus and students opted to conclude the class rather than carry it over into the New Year. The class studied the Gospel of St. John by reading the text as well as commentaries provided by Blessed Theophylact of Bulgaria and St. John Chrysostomos. In what was a challenging enterprise, students were stretched to synthesize the work of the commentaries and use them to gain insight into the Holy Scriptures. The following persons completed the course work and were "graduated": Martha Ealy, Elizabeth Husby, Donellen and Robert Fickling, Presvytera Joleen-Elisabet, and Holly Olszewski. A special course offering dealing with an overview of the Old Testament Book of the Exodus will take place during Great Lent. Watch this space for more information on that offering.

Thanks Expressed to the Stavros Family. The beautiful floral decorations of our analogion and templon were lovingly done by Katerina and Dennis Stavros of our parish. On the Monday and Tuesday prior to Christmas Eve the couple were busy in our church putting up greens that came from their own yard as well as some additional plants that were brought back from a recent trip South. Our parish joins in thanking them for taking the time to work on diligently beautifying the Holy Temple.

New Year's Day is an Holy Day. Believe it or not, New Year's Day, the Feast of St. Basil the Great and the Circumcision of the Lord are Holy Days in our Church which are to be kept by church attendance. Don't let the New Year get off on the wrong foot. Why not start the year by asking God to be a part of it for you? A special service of supplication will be offered on that day to

implore God to help us through the events that lie ahead for us in the New Year. Please party responsibly and make church attendance a part of your celebration!

Fr. Iakovos to Make Theological Presentation at St. Francis High School. Our priest has been invited to present to the Senior Theology students at St. Francis Traverse City who are in the midst of course work entitled Major World Religions. Father was invited by Ms. Jan McCall, the instructor of this programme, to make a presentation on the Orthodox Faith to her four classes of seniors. In his talk he was asked to provide them with insight into the Eastern Church; especially highlighting differences and similarities between the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches. The presentation will be made at classes meeting on Tuesday, 13 January.

Fr. Edwin Thome Retires From The Father Fred Foundation. The Spiritual Director of the Father Fred Foundation for the past nine years will retire at the end of December. Father Edwin Thome, pastor of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church located on the peninsula, has served as the second spiritual director of the foundation following Father Edwin Frederick, founder of The Father Fred Foundation. A party to fete Fr. Thome will take place on Friday 9 January at the Foundation. The Board of Directors recently appointed Fr. Iakovos to fill the position vacated by Father Thome's retirement. Fr. Iakovos has been working as the Assistant Spiritual Director of the Foundation since July 2008. We have numerous parishioners who volunteer at the Father Fred Foundation.

Theophany Service Schedule. Historically, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord known as Theophany (or Epiphany) was of greater importance than the Feast of the Nativity (Christmas). As it has happened, though, the Nativity has eclipsed this commemoration of the Baptism of the Lord in the popular culture as well as in our church attendance. Most people do not pay much attention to what is happening following the Christmas services. Yet, the baptism of the Lord and the sanctification of water that is part of this feast are essential applications of the consequence of the Incarnation. In our church, we will commemorate this feast according to the traditions and customs of the Holy Faith. This observance will include: Royal Hours, Vespers and Liturgy of St. Basil, Great Compline with the Lesser Blessing of Water all on the eve of the Feast. On the day itself, we will celebrate the Holy Liturgy and the Great Blessing of Water. Finally, we will have the first ever blessing of Grand Traverse Bay by an Orthodox priest. On the Saturday following the Feast of the Theophany of the Lord Fr. Iakovos will celebrate the Great Blessing of Water outdoors at an access point to the West Bay. The outdoor blessing will take place at 9 AM, Saturday, 10 January. Everyone is welcome to join us. Watch this space for more information as we prepare to celebrate this wonderful feast of the Lord. Everyone is encouraged to make time in their schedule to attend these important services that commemorate this event that is part of our salvation history.

Youth General Topic Discussion and Pizza Party Planned. Our religious education department has planned a general topic discussion that will take place within the context of a pizza party for our youth. This will take place on Saturday, 10 January at about noon. The host restaurant has not been identified yet but our youth will receive a mailing with details in the next week. Parents are encouraged to make their young people available for the blessing of the bay as well as this event that provides an opportunity for the young people to engage our priest on current issues that affect them. For more information, contact the parish office at 668-6583.