



ST. MATTHEW ORTHODOX CHURCH

From the desk of Father Eugene.....

The celebration of Theophany provides a time to renew or re-enter the rhythm of our Church life. This past year has been difficult at every level - from family life, to work, to school, to church - every bulwark that we are accustomed to leaning on, that we have as a foundation of the rhythm of our lives, has in some way been shaken. So with the feast as a jumping off point, it is important to remember that our daily life of prayer, fasting and good works does not have to be upset by the turmoil in the world around us. And here, we must admit, that when our daily life of prayer becomes disrupted, no amount of other spiritual activity is going to center our lives back again on Christ. Yet, it may be that our current situation serves to sharpen our dedication to these daily rituals. The

struggle itself may be more intense because of the numerous voices that try to persuade us in one direction or another, usually away from Christ. At the same time however, we can become more keenly aware of these distractions so that we may avoid them.

What then are we given at Theophany? First and foremost we have the liturgical services. Like the Nativity, these services give us an opportunity not only to worship but to come to an understanding of what exactly the feast means, that is to say, who Christ is. Simply singing or even reading the Festal Troparion gives us ample material to contemplate about who He is and what He has done for us. And once again, we have the same cycle of services that we celebrated at the Nativity so we have a chance to experience all of the beautiful features that come to us during the eve of the feast. The exquisite Anaphora prayers of the Liturgy of St Basil and the quiet solemnity of the Vigil service are inspiring, contemplative, and peaceful. While each of the twelve great feasts has its own uniqueness and focus, the Nativity and Theophany have special features that even this world somehow longs to comprehend and that the Church powerfully imbues in our lives.

The most prominent feature of Theophany is the Great Blessing of Water. During this service, we call down the Holy Spirit to sanctify all of God's creation. Everything that was made good by Him in the beginning is once again renewed to become that which God made it to be in the first place. This same renewal comes to each of us if we are willing to accept it. The command that we drink of the blessed waters is an acknowledgement that we are a part of God's new creation and that we accept being a part of the Body of Christ. The Church also provides for the blessing of homes at this time. Even our homes can be sanctified by God! Let us renew ourselves in water and the Spirit by partaking of the joy this feast offers.

Jeff Zdrale, Director

Like everyone else, I'm looking forward to what the new year is going to bring, especially at Church. Of course, my main interest is the choir and I'm hoping that we'll have some new voices join us when we can sing at full force.

I have to say that I was a bit disappointed with the attendance at our Christmas services. This holiday usually sees people on the road, but this year, I thought it might be different. The church was pretty empty for both services. Luckily, on Christmas Eve, we had two friends of Eric Johnson, as well as the Pfitzinger family, Alaric, Angelica and their three kids, as well as Alaric's brother, Blaise, and their mom, Eve. Alaric and his family, as well as Blaise, have moved back to Green Bay. I wonder how many singers we can get out of that bunch.

I've mentioned before how important it is for the children to learn and to sing songs at church. They can make indelible impressions on young children. So, I'd like to include the words to one of our songs and ask that parents reading this sing it along with their kids. It's to the tune of "Amazing Grace."



"We go to-o church; we go to church,
We go to-o church to pray; We-e bless the Lord; We thank the Lord,
For giving us this day."

"We go to-o church; we go to church,
We go to-o learn to be; To be kind, to be good, And to do what we should,
A good world starts with me. (Then repeat the first verse.)"

Best wishes to all of our choir members, young and old, as well as everyone in our congregation for a peaceful and healthy 2021.

***Congratulations to Pedro and Keely Sarsama
on the birth of their daughter, Sylvia Cristina,
on December 31, 2020
What a wonderful blessing!!!***



Happy Birthday!!

Anna Jeffers - 1/4
Andrea Hurst - 1/5
Anastasios Yogerst - 1/10
Rebecca Pagan - 1/15
Peter Parry - 1/17
Nathaniel Tomac - 1/17
Jackie Nassios - 1/21
Oksana Brown - 1/24
Maddie Kotz - 1/30

Mark you calendars!! Upcoming Annual Meeting February 14th at 3:00 pm

This year's meeting will be a virtual meeting held over ZOOM. More details, including the agenda, parish council reports and instructions for joining the meeting via ZOOM will be forthcoming.

Please contact Paul Novak at:
PaulNovak11@gmail.com, with any questions.

Happy Anniversary!!

Matt and Sarah Tomac - 1/9

Parish Council President's Perspective.....Paul Novak

Christ is Born! Glorify him!

I hope that you and your family were able to get together for Christmas and enjoy your family traditions.

Having both sets of Grandparents come to the United States from small Villages in Czechoslovakia, I have had many traditions become a regular part of my family life. Many of those traditions are centered around the food that was grown in small tidy gardens in the "old county." These traditional foods were brought with them when they emigrated to the US. At that time, recipes were unheard of - everything was a "handful of this and a pinch of that." Out of this remembered knowledge came such foods as poppy seed bread, pirohi, and mushroom gravy, all of the other delectables that I have come to enjoy. Over time, recipes were developed and written down and passed from mother to daughter, from neighbor to neighbor. Many of the traditional foods center around the Church calendar and the Holy Days of the Orthodox Church. One such tradition is the Holy Supper meal.

The Holy Supper is a traditional family meal that is partaken on Christmas Eve. In this Orthodox tradition, following 40 days of Nativity Lent, the birth of Christ is commemorated with a final Lenten feast. As we all gathered around the table for this meal, a single candle was lit and was to symbolize Christ as the Light of the World. The head of the family then leads all of us in prayer. In our house, once we had completed the prayer, my Grandfather then started singing Holy Night, Silent Night. We were off key and didn't always start right, but it was his tradition and we still do it today. On the table, an extra place is always set -- for Jesus, either in Spirit, or in the form of a traveler or stranger, for none are turned away on this day without a warm invitation to partake of this Holy Supper. Hay is placed under the tablecloth in memory of the manger in which the Holy Child was placed by His Mother at His birth. A sheaf of straw was also left under an icon in the room. Completely Lenten, the supper consists of 12 lenten dishes - twelve to symbolize the twelve Apostles chosen by Christ to preach his gospel.

The customs around the starting of meals vary as do the foods served. It is custom for the head of the household to break bread and give it to everyone at the table. This symbolizes Christ at the last supper. In our home, a cold shot of Russin Vodka was also offered to all. While not all families may serve 12 dishes, it is common to see the following on the table: wine, garlic, potatoes, mushroom gravy (machanka), oats, beans, dumpling filled with prunes, cabbage, potatoes or sauerkraut (perohi), fish, sauerkraut, fruit cup, and bread with poppy seed and honey called either (foochki or bobalki) depending on which village the family came from. The foods range from bitter to sweet to remind us of the bitterness of life before Christ was born and the sweetness of life which comes after His birth.



I pray that more of us can gather together next year and enjoy Christmas Eve Holy Supper together.

Christ is Born!, Glory Him!

Hello Everyone from the Pitkevich family.

My name is Denis and my wife is Tanya. We have two kids, Eva and Kirill.

I grew up in [Sergiev-Posad](#) city that is named after Saint Sergey Radonezhsky. Nowadays, this city is considered the "Russian Orthodox Center." We are trying to grow our kids in Christ by reading Bible, the Law of God. While living in Russia, Kirill served in Altar.

I have been working in Kimberly-Clark as a Procurement manager since 2011 and we moved from Russia to U.S. in June 2020 as "work transfer". Tanya is an English teacher. Same month we came to St. Matthew Orthodox Church.

In spare time, we are doing sport, reading (as we brought our home library with us!). Tanya likes cooking traditional Russian dishes. We like spending time together.

We are blessing God that we are parishioners of St. Matthew Orthodox Church and within short time we have met a lot of friends.



Greetings from Your Ministry Team!

This month we are asking you to participate in an act of benevolence. Please consider an act of kindness and give a generous gift to our Benevolence Fund. So many people are struggling this time of year, especially during this pandemic. Your benevolent act of kindness will stay right here in our church family and/or our community. Cash or a check made out to St. Matthew with "Benevolence Fund" noted will be greatly appreciated. These may go to Tom Julian, Treasurer. Thank you!



***Congratulations to Martha and Jason Heid
on the baptism of their son, Mateo,
on Saturday, December 5, 2020.
Doug and Linda Bisbee are his baptismal sponsors.
May God bless you, Mateo!***



***January and February
Church Cleaners***

- NASSIOS (week of) 12/27/20 for 1/3/21
- MYKHAYLYUK (week of) 1/3/21 for 1/10
- ODMAN (week of) 1/10/21 for 1/17
- BISBEE (week of) 1/17/21 for 1/24
- SCHWEINER (week of) 1/24/21 for 1/31
- ENCK (week of) 1/31/21 for 2/7
- PITKEVICH (week of) 2/7/21 for 2/14
- ZDRALE (week of) 2/14/21 for 2/21
- NOVAK (week of) 2/21/21 for 2/28
- SCHAHCZAENSKI (week of) 2/28/21 for 3/7



Church Bookstore

Come check out the SMOC bookstore!!! Everything from books, cards, crosses, incense, calendars....and much, much more. If I am out of something or if you would like me to order something, please let me know.

Cheryl Julian
cheryllynn61@gmail.com

Mandarin Spinach Salad

8c washed, drained Spinach torn into bite-size pieces
 1c diagonally cut celery
 2 green onions with tops chopped
 1 can mandarin oranges drained
 2 oz slivered almonds, toasted

Dressing:

1/2c veg or canola oil, 4Tbsp each cider vinegar and sugar, 10 drops hot sauce(Franks?), 2tsp fresh chopped parsley, 2tsp salt (yes 2), dash of ground black pepper. Make the dressing first. Place it in a jar; it needs a lot of shaking on and off to blend and melt the sugar into the oil.

Combine the spinach, celery, green onions and mandarin oranges. Chill. Toast almonds in oven until fragrant and lightly toasted light tan. Cool. Toss greens together, add salad dressing and top with almonds.

NOTE: Some nice variations are to add dried cranberries instead of the oranges and then sprinkle with Feta or goat cheese or gorgonzola cheese. Also, you can use walnuts instead of almonds. You could also thinly slice red onion instead of green. The dressing is what makes this salad special.

*Thank you Melissa McNeil
 for the wonderful recipes!!*



This recipe takes 2 ingredients and the microwave, that is it!!

The coconut oil, I've read is something we all should be using instead of veg or olive oil to saute and fry because it doesn't result in free radicals at higher temperatures. Anyway, that is just an aside. I got mine at Woodmans in the shortening area. You can use other fruit than the Clementines. I didn't use them because I have to buy an entire bag to get just 2. So I used bananas, strawberries, raspberries and orange sections. You could also use nuts or angel food cake or anything else that goes with chocolate, but the fruit and nuts are healthier.

Home made Magic Shell and Chocolate covered Clementines

Cut fruit into chunks or wash/dry whole berries, place on a cookie sheet covered with waxed paper or foil or parchment paper. Set aside.

1/2 c semi sweet or bittersweet chocolate chips
 2 tbsp coconut oil (Their recipe note was to use refined coconut oil if you didn't want the coconut flavor. However, I used unrefined C oil and didn't taste any coconut flavor at all. Just FYI.)

Warm the chocolate and coconut oil in a glass bowl in the microwave oven at 50% power for 1 minute. Check and then warm for 30 seconds more at 50% power repeating until the chocolate mix melts when stirred. It takes between 2 or 3 minutes depending on your microwave's power. Then either dip the fruit and place on the cookie sheet or drizzle it onto the fruit on your cookie sheet pan. Place in the fridge or in a cold garage (what I did) for 15 minutes, until the chocolate is hardened. Then transfer the fruit to a jar or bowl and cover and refrigerate until eating time. They keep for at least 2 days, mine kept longer. That is if you can hold off eating them all for that long! This is much better than cookies etc.

