

THE SERB

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Christ is Born
Καλά Χριστούγεννα
С Рождеством

The Serb
winter of 2023

publication of St. George Serbian Orthodox Church
Protojerej-stavrofor Aleksandar Bugarin, parish priest

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The Church news-letter Editor assumes responsibility and the right to reject, delete and rewrite any part or all of the articles submitted for the publication. Any news of the social interest should be submitted to the Editor. No articles will be considered that are submitted unsigned and/or improperly identified.

The Nativity Services in St George Serbian Orthodox Church, Joliet, IL

Mir Božiji Hristos se rodi! Peace of God Christ is Born!

Sunday, December 31 – Sunday of the Holy Fathers / Serb Father's Day – Očevi

Divine Liturgy at 10 am. Church School and decorating of Badnjak, luncheon.

Tuesday, January 2 – St Ignatius of Antioch / St John of Kronstadt

Confession at 8:30 am; Divine Liturgy at 9 am

Friday, January 5

Royal Hours at 9 am

Saturday, January 6 – The Nativity Eve – Badnji Dan

Confession at 8:30 am; Divine Liturgy at 9 am

Nativity Compline and Matins at 6 pm. Blessing of Badnjak (Yule Log) and refreshments in the upper-level hall after the church services.

Sunday, January 7 – The Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – Božić

Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great at 10 am

From the Feast of the Nativity until the Eve of Theophany, January 18 is fast free

Monday, January 8 – Synaxis of the Theotokos / Sabor Presvete Bogorodice

Divine Liturgy at 9 am

Vigil/confession at 5 pm

Tuesday, January 9 - St Stephen the Protomartyr / Sv Stefan Prvomučnik

Divine Liturgy at 9 am.

Saturday, January 13 – Leave taking of Nativity / Odanije Božića

Vigil / confession at 6 pm

Sunday, January 14 – Circumcision of our Lord and Savior / St Basil the Great / Julian Calendar New Year

Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great at 9 am Church school and coffee hour

The traditional Serbian Orthodox greeting for the Nativity season is Christ is Born and the reply is Indeed He is Born or Truly He is Born. In Serbian it is Hristos se rodi and the reply is Voistinu se rodi The Christmas greeting is used from the day of the Nativity of Christ until the Apodosis or Leave-taking of the Feast which is January 13.

From your priest's desk,

Mir Boziji Hristos se rodi! Blessed and prosperous New Year!

After the Nativity celebration, our responsibility as Orthodox Christians should not disappear or become less important. The next Major Feast Day is Theophany and this Feast is not less significant than Nativity. Even if the physical fast is omitted from the Nativity until the Eve of Theophany, it doesn't mean we should not spiritually prepare to confess our sins, partake of holy communion and attend as many services as possible. No one should be forced to partake of holy sacraments unless he/she properly understands them and feels the importance and spiritual benefit from them. There is no one rule for all! It would be best to talk to me, your priest and spiritual father, about the preparation and how often you should partake of sacraments.

Many times we have not had a full choir to sing responses for Sunday worship, but the entire church sang, led by a few singers. I absolutely enjoyed it, and I hope and pray more and more faithful in church will join in and sing responses during the services. It makes our worship more special.

I will start blessing the homes in our parish after the Eve of Theophany, first in Joliet, and continue to Shorewood, Plainfield, and continue from there. You will receive either an email, text, or call from me to schedule the day and time which works for you and your family. The blessing of homes is part of our piety and way of Orthodox life. Once per year, a priest will bring the blessing of Theophany to your home which spiritually protects your dwelling place and your family with Theophany water. It is also an opportunity for Father to talk to and get to know his parishioners better.

Sveti Sava is on January 27, Divine Liturgy will be at 9 am and vigil on the Eve at 6 pm. Parish celebration of Sveti Sava is on Sunday, January 28. Blessing of slava kolac and koljivo and Children's poems after the liturgy all in church. Luncheon downstairs! Please join us.

May this Nativity and Theophany season bring you many blessings, health and spiritual growth.



ST GEORGE EXECUTIVE CHURCH SCHOOL BOARD

As we bid farewell to 2023, we wanted to share some noteworthy updates from your St George Church Board.

THANKS TO OUR PARISHIONERS

We are deeply grateful for the support of our dedicated parishioners. Your financial contributions, along with the countless hours invested in fundraising events held throughout the year, play a vital role in sustaining our parish community. The Church Board is sincerely thankful for your generosity. In recognition of this, we wanted to acknowledge a select few parishioners for their exceptional generosity.

Nick and Helen Malinovich for making a \$50,000 donation to our church. Their dedication and years of service to our parish and the Diocese are commendable. Despite health challenges that Nick faced, they took time to make this contribution which is a testament to their deep love of our parish. Much thanks to both of you.

+Ely Grubisich, a cherished member of our community, passed away in 2023. Ely's dedication to our church is evident in his generous bequest of \$25,000. His absence is keenly felt and his legacy continues at St. George. Vjecnaja Pamjat.

Sam and Simo Starcevich dedicated considerable time and resources to perform concrete repairs at the gate entrance on Midland Ave. All time and materials were generously donated and saved the church thousands of dollars. Thank you so much for your invaluable contribution.

Dan Zubic devoted a significant amount of time to diagnosing and repairing the marquee sign outside the Social Center, which suffered damage from a power surge. Dan donated his time and all equipment that needed replacement amounting to thousands of dollars. We are grateful for your help and look forward to the operational marquee.

DONATIONS MADE ON BEHALF OF ST GEORGE:

We provided a \$500 donation to Messiah Lutheran Church in Joliet. They were given a deadline by the government to return monies received from a donor later convicted of a running a Ponzi scheme. They desperately needed help from the community to raise funds and prevent closure of their parish.

ST GEORGE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY:

On December 10, 2023, we held our Annual Assembly. For 2024, the following individuals have been elected to serve on our Church Board:

- President – Dan Dorsey
- 1st V.P. – David Laketa
- 2nd V.P. – Nick Malinovich

Secretary – Danielle Serdar

Treasurer – Vicki Dorsey

Financial Secretary – Tana Petrich

Members At Large – Steve Malinovich, Zakk Kocoj, Michael Cora,
Susan Kljaich, Dr. Howard Grundy, Phil Rowe

Delegate to Diocesan Assembly -- Vicki Dorsey, Alternate is Bonnie Dauer

Auditing Board – Millie Rowe, Darlene Jovanovich, Olga Deschamps

Nominating Committee – Ryan Dorsey, Kathy Petkovich, John Dauer

Stewardship Donations were discussed during the Assembly. In the past, contributions to our annual SerbFest picnic were not considered part of our annual stewardship. However, beginning in 2024, any funds received through the SerbFest Picnic appeal letter will now be included in our annual stewardship.

Recommendations for Execution by the Church Board in 2024 are:

- 1) Develop a new business model for the Social Center to increase revenue.
- 2) Address general maintenance concerns surrounding the Social Center. This includes the resealing of the parking lot, repairing damage to the south wall stucco and tackling the runoff issues on the east side.

Moving forward, a signup sheet will be available at the warden's table when smaller repair and improvement projects are identified and can be completed with the help of volunteers. This will reduce the church's need to hire outside services and minimize unnecessary repair costs.

Lastly, stewards at the Assembly voted to keep our Diocesan dues at ½. This will continue until there is some concrete plan or definitive progress made regarding the St. Sava camp building.

BADNJE VEČE

After the Nativity Compline and Matins Service at 6:00pm on January 6th, we invite you to the Social Center for the blessing of the Yule Log (Badnjak) and some refreshments. If you plan to attend, please consider contributing a posno/vegan dish to share. Whether it is dessert, bread, jam, nuts, chips, dip, veggies, pasta, salads, fish, fruit, soup, etc., we appreciate anything posno that you would like to share.

The Social Center will be open starting at 5:00pm, so you may drop off your food donation before Church Services commence.

At the end of this Church sponsored event, **we need assistance from EVERYONE in attendance for a quick cleanup.** This will ensure that all parishioners and their families return home at a reasonable hour. We appreciate everyone's cooperation and we look forward to celebrating this special occasion together.

FISH FRYS

We will continue with our Church sponsored Friday Fish Frys at the Social Center beginning on Friday, February 16th and concluding on March 29th. The hours of operation are 4:00pm to

7:00pm. This year we decided to commence after Ash Wednesday, given its overlap with Valentines Day as we were concerned about attendance.

To make these Fish Fry Fundraisers a success for our Church, we need support from our parishioners. We are seeking assistance with food preparation throughout the day, hands-on support during hours of operation, contributions of pastries, and, of course, encouraging fellow parishioners and friends to attend.

We will keep you apprised as to how you can help through emails and the weekly bulletins.

DONATIONS TO ST. GEORGE CHURCH

Your contributions to St. George are greatly appreciated, and even if you are unable to attend church services in person, there are other ways to make your donation. Please consider the following options:

By US Mail: St George Serbian Church, 300 Stryker Ave., Joliet, IL 60436

Electronic Payment Options:

1) ***PayPal:***

Find us on PayPal using stgeorgejoliet@gmail.com

2) ***Zelle:***

Soon, our church will offer Zelle as an additional payment option. Many banking institutions support this method and there are no associated fees, ensuring that your entire donation goes to St. George. We will let you know when this becomes operational.

We hope these options make it easy for you to contribute, no matter where you are. Thank you for your generosity to St. George Serbian Church.

SAVE THE DATE!!! SerbFest 2024 will take place at St Joe's Park on July 28th.

SENDING EVERYONE HEARTFELT WISHERS FOR A BLESSED NATIVITY SEASON!

HRISTOS SE RODI! VAISTINU SE RODI!

President's Report December 2023

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all!

As a result of our recent Annual Church assembly and election of the Executive Board, we say thank you to Chrissy for her service as she steps down, and hello and welcome to Susie Kljaich.

Saying farewell to the 2023 board, my appreciation for a job well done as there was major work accomplished.

While we dealt with the day to day and our immediate needs, talks have begun in earnest about our future and directions we must take to secure our parish. This is a goal of the 2024 Board and with expenses/projects accumulating, the revenue stream needs our primary attention. A friendly reminder that our infrastructure is approaching the half- century mark and just like your own homes, original materials and equipment usually need to be repaired or replaced.

Come springtime, we will once again ask for volunteers to install mulch around the church area. This time with an added twist and that is shoveling dirt and spreading grass seed to the damaged areas due to the construction of our new church parking lot. More on that in the next report.

Hope to see a good crowd at the Social Center on Christmas Eve. Remember what has been said many times before, please remember your Church, especially during Advent and Lent.

Until next time, may 2024 bring you much peace and happiness. Dan Dorsey



Seven Lessons for the New Year from St. Seraphim of Sarov

PRIEST LUKE A. VERONIS

“Acquire inner peace and thousands around you will be saved.” These words come from Saint Seraphim of Sarov, one of the greatest Russian ascetics and mystics of the 19th century. This simple man profoundly impacted Russian society despite the fact that he lived far away from the world for most of his life. From a young age he felt attracted to the monastic life and his mother encouraged him in his spiritual pursuit. He entered the monastery in the wilderness of Sarov at age 24. He lived in the monastery praying, working and seeking out God in the communal life of the monastery for numerous years until he felt God’s call to go deeper into the forest wilderness miles away from the monastery to continue his pursuit for God. During this time, he even imitated the holy stylite ascetics and climbed on rocks of various heights and spent 1000

days praying, night and day, winter and summer, from the rock. At 70 years old, he finally opened his cell to receive visitors for counsel and prayer, inspiring people from all walks of society through his holiness, wise counsel, and miracles.

As we remember and celebrate Saint Seraphim today, I want to offer seven lessons from his teachings for us to carry into the New Year.

1. **“Acquire inner peace and thousands around you will be saved.”** This may be his most famous saying. He explains how there *“is nothing better than peace in Christ, for such peace brings victory over all the evil spirits. When peace dwells in a*

person's heart it enables them to contemplate the grace of the Holy Spirit from within. He who dwells in peace collects spiritual gifts as it were with a scoop, and he sheds the light of knowledge on others. All our thoughts, all our desires, all our efforts, and all our actions should make us say constantly with the Church: "O Lord, give us peace!" When a man lives in peace, God reveals mysteries to him." As we begin the New Year, can we take the time daily to open our hearts to receive the "peace that passes all understanding," as the Apostle Paul described it.

2. Of course, the peace of God is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and Saint Seraphim reminds us that **the ultimate goal in our life is acquisition of the Holy Spirit**. All the spiritual disciplines we practice through our prayers, fasting, almsgiving, and other good deeds are simply ways to open our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit. We want God living in us and His Spirit inspiring, directing and empowering us. "Everything good that we do is given to us by the Holy Spirit." This is why our Lord Jesus, after His Resurrection from the dead, promised His followers that they would "receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will become my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the world." Thus, we begin every day with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to come and dwell in us – "O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, who are present everywhere and fill all things, Treasurer of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and abide in us and save our souls O Good One."
3. **Keep your eyes on Paradise**. Saint Seraphim explains "If you only knew what joy, what sweetness awaits a righteous soul in heaven, you would decide in this mortal life to bear whatever sorrows, struggles, persecutions and slander with gratitude." Our life on earth is but a brief journey, and it may be filled with challenges and difficulties. We must always remember Saint Paul's words that "our citizenship is in heaven." Of course, this doesn't mean that we only live for the future. Christ said "The kingdom of heaven is within" and we begin tasting the delight of God's Presence here and now. What is important, though, is to remember how transitory and brief this life on earth is. Keep your eyes on Paradise.
4. **Nourish your soul with the Word of God**. Saint Seraphim would read the entire New Testament every week. EVERY WEEK! He emphasized nourishing one's mind and heart daily on the New Testament and the Psalms. "The reading of the Word of God should be performed in solitude so that the whole mind of the reader might be plunged into the truths of Holy Scripture. The Word of God is angelic bread which nourishes our soul. From this he will receive the warmth of the Spirit which will produce in each person tears of repentance."
5. As we keep our eyes on paradise, seek to acquire the Holy Spirit, allow God's peace to dwell in our hearts, and read the Word of God, **we will face whatever life brings with courage, never giving in to despair**. "Where God is, there is no evil. Everything coming from

God is peaceful and healthy, and leads a person to see clearly see his own imperfections with humility... the devil strives to lead a person into despair. A lofty and sound soul never gives in to despair over misfortunes, no matter what sort they may be. Our life is as it were a house of temptations and trials; but during our temptations we never turn away from the Lord for we know these temptations are teaching us patience and helping us overcome our passions! Judas the betrayer was fainthearted and unskilled in spiritual battle, and so the enemy, seeing his despair, attacked him and forced him to hang himself. The Apostle Peter, a firm rock, did not despair or lose heart when he fell into great sin, but repented and turned back to God.”

6. These spiritual disciplines will help us **stay vigilant against unclean and unholy thoughts.** *“The devil is like a lion, hiding in ambush (Psalm 10:19; I Pet 5:8). He secretly sets out nets of unclean and unholy thoughts. We must stop these as soon as we notice them, and the best means to do this is through prayer and pious reflection. ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ Repeat these words again and again. Don’t give in to despondency but with great courage say “Get behind me Satan! Who are you who have been cut off from God, a fugitive*

of heaven. You have no power over me because we have been made steadfast by the Holy Cross... Remember, the Lord sometimes allows people who are devoted to Him to fall into dreadful vices; and this is in order to prevent them from falling into a still greater sin – pride. Your temptation will pass and you will spend the remaining days of your life in humility. Only do not forget your sin.”

7. Finally, **treat others with kindness and not with judgement.** *“You can never be too gentle or too kind with others. Never treat others in a harsh manner. Allow radiant joy to shine forth from you, and as you radiate joy you will kindle joy in the other. All condemnation is from the devil. Don’t even condemn those whom you catch committing an evil deed. We condemn others only because we don’t know ourselves. When we gaze at our own failings, we see such a morass of filth that nothing in another can equal it. That is why we mistakenly make much of the faults of others. Instead of condemning others, pray for them and strive to maintain inner peace. Keep silent and refrain from any judgement. This will raise you above the deadly arrows of evil that the devil shoots at you.”*



Kolo Sestara News

As we prepare for the Blessed Nativity season and the new year, now is a good time to reflect on past events. We have a bit extra to share, since I missed sending in our fall activities.

Past Events

On Sunday, August 27, we celebrated our Kolo Slava with prayers in church and a wonderful posno brunch in the church hall bar area. The array of food was quite remarkable and most delicious! We appreciate the efforts of our Kolo members who donated their time, energy, talents, and financial support and to our parishioners who supported the event and joined us in our celebration. The event was a success, and thanks to you all, we raised \$1,265.

On Sunday, September 17, the 3Kolo Lifeline Fundraiser took place at the St. Archangel Michael Social Center in Lansing. Despite the miserable weather, the collective efforts with our Kolo sisters in Lansing (Saint Archangel Michael Kolo and Knjegin Zorka Kolo) resulted in an enjoyable afternoon filled with good food, delicious bakery items, raffle prizes, fellowship, and fun. Thanks to the generosity of Kolo members, parishioners, and friends, the event generated \$22,218 to support needy children and the elderly in Serbia.

Other than that, it has been a quiet end of the year – but we plenty of events scheduled for the new year.

Looking Ahead

We have yet to finalize the details, but we hope to have our Kolo Christmas party at Al's Steakhouse on Saturday, January 21. This is open to whole parish, so we hope you will join us. More details will be shared when we know more.

Our annual Kolo meeting will be held after liturgy on Sunday, February 4. This is a very important meeting – all members should attend. We will look into having a Zoom option, as we did for the December meeting; we should be getting better at that with practice. ☺

Pencil in plans to participate in a Pascha bake sale. In the past we had the sale scheduled for the Christmas season, but that did not work out for us this time. Rather than cancel it, we wanted to revisit it in the spring, when people will have a bit more time and energy to get involved. We will need bakers, boxers, and buyers – more information to come!

Reminder

If you are not a member, please consider joining our Circle of Sisters. Supporting our parish and parishioners should be a priority for all of us. There are all sorts of ways you can contribute.

Wishing you a joyous and peaceful Nativity and New Year!

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St George Church School

We will have our annual St. Sava program on January 28. Poems will be given to all students. The program will be held in church and a luncheon will be held after in the lower level of church.

Sad news for us is that Diane Grubisich is retiring at the end of this church school year! Diane will be missed by all of us but we wish her all the best.

That being said, we will be needing a Pre-school - Kindergarten teacher. If interested please see me.

Hristos Se Rodi! Gayle

Cultural Club News

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Only a few months ago we were preparing for the beginning of a new Church school year, and now we are preparing for the Nativity of Christ!

In keeping with our tradition, we will gather in the upper level of our Social Center to decorate the Badnjak this coming Sunday, December 31st, immediately following Divine Liturgy. Anyone wishing to donate fruit or pre-strung candy for the Badnjak may bring it to the Social Center or give the donation to any Church school teacher. Coinciding with our decoration of the Badnjak, our Cultural Club will host a

Lenten luncheon. We thank Draginja Lukin and Gordana Jakovljevic for volunteering to prepare Lenten palacinke, and Father Aleks for offering to make soup for our luncheon! We extend an invitation to all parishioners to join us for fellowship and tasty food. After the decoration of the Badnjak and luncheon, our Cultural Club will conduct its annual meeting with election of officers.

This year, our Saint Sava Day Celebration will take place on Sunday, January 28, 2024. As in our most recent celebrations, our program will take place in our Church following Divine Liturgy, with a luncheon to follow in the lower level of our Church. Further planning will take place during our upcoming meeting.

Our Saint George the Great Martyr bookstore is open for business every Sunday following Divine Liturgy. We have a variety of many items for all ages and a selection of crosses. Come to our bookstore and check out our inventory.

Our St. George Cultural Club is always welcome to new members. The cost to join is free and rewards are great.

Indeed He is Born!

Nancy Cora, Cultural Club President

Orthodox Dictionary:

Gehenna - Abode of the damned in the afterlife in Jewish and Christian eschatology (the doctrine of last things). Gehenna originally was a valley west and south of Jerusalem where children were burned as sacrifices to the Ammonite god Moloch. Gehenna later was made a garbage centre to discourage a reintroduction of such sacrifices. The imagery of the burning of humans supplied the concept of "hellfire" to Jewish and Christian eschatology. Mentioned several times in the New Testament (*e.g.*, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and James) as a place in which fire will destroy the wicked.

Sepulchre - Commonly refers to a burial place or tomb, usually associated with a notable individual or a significant historical site.

Compline - is a service of prayers and psalms read after dinner and following Vespers. The English word *Compline* is derived from the Latin *completorium*, as Compline is the completion of the working day.

Matins - is the longest and most complex of the daily cycle services. Matins is celebrated in the morning, unless it is celebrated as part of a vigil in the evening.

Incarnation - is the act of clothing with flesh, or the state of being so clothed; the act of taking, or being manifested in, a human body and nature. Used by itself, the word refers to the fact that in Jesus, God took on flesh and became man. God, the Son, has truly lived and died and risen from the dead in the flesh, as a true human being.

Leviathan - is a sea serpent noted in theology and mythology. It is referenced in several books of the Hebrew Bible, including Psalms, the Book of Job, the Book of Isaiah, the Book of Amos, and, according to some translations, in the Book of Jonah; Christian theologians identified Leviathan with the demon of the deadly sin *envy*. According to Ophite diagrams, the Leviathan encapsulates the space of the material world.

Thoughts on Theophany and Revelation

ELISSA BJELETICH

Traditionally, Christians mark the moment when our Lord is revealed to the world on January 6/19. In the early days, we celebrated His birth, the visit of the Magi, and His baptism all at once – and each of these events, in its own way, is the moment at which our Lord truly comes to us. He comes to us in His incarnation, and then He is revealed to the nations through the Magi who honor Him, and finally He is proclaimed by John at His baptism. I find it so poetic and apt that “the moment” seems to happen more than once. Martha stood before our Lord and confessed, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” (John 11:27) Even seeing Him in the flesh, Martha knows Him as the One “who is to come”, for isn’t our Lord always coming to us? Even today, our Lord is still coming to us all the time, every day, and we joyfully expect the day when He comes again.

Over the years, Christians have separated these feasts of the revelation of Christ, moving Christmas to December 25/January 7, creating a joyful twelve-day season of celebration. In the Christian East, the arrival of the Magi (now Epiphany in the West) is celebrated on Christmas, and provides a counterpoint to the angelic salutation to the shepherds, emphasizing how Christ comes for all of us: for Gentile and Jew, for the educated and the illiterate, for the rich and the poor. January 6/19 for the Orthodox Christian is Theophany, the feast of Christ’s baptism.

In his beautiful Discourse on Theophany, St. John Chrysostom explains that,

[...] Christ made Himself known to all – not then when He was born – but then when He was baptised. Until this time He was not known to the people. And that the people did not know Him, Who He was, listen about this to John the Baptist, who says: “Amidst you standeth, Him Whom ye know

not of” (Jn.1:26). And is it surprising that others did not know Him, when even the Baptist did not know Him until that day? “And I – said he – knew Him not: but He that did send me to baptise with water, about This One did tell unto me: over Him that shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, This One it is Who baptiseth in the Holy Spirit” (John 1:33).

And so John baptizes our Lord, and the Orthodox Church sings,

When You were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord
the worship of the Trinity was made manifest
for the voice of the Father bore witness to You,
calling You His beloved Son.
And the Spirit, in the form of a dove,
confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ, our God, You have revealed Yourself
and have enlightened the world, glory to You!
(Kontakion of Theophany)

For the Orthodox, January 6/19 is the day when the Holy Trinity was made manifest: human senses could take in the Father (through His voice), the Son (in the flesh) and the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove). In this moment, the Holy Trinity is revealed to us more concretely than ever. The Son is incarnate, and now even the Father and the Holy Spirit can be heard and seen: the Holy Trinity is present in the stuff of creation.

Our Lord, in order to fulfill all righteousness, steps into the waters of the Jordan and is baptized by John. The waters of baptism wash away our sins, but Christ is without sin, so His baptism engenders the opposite: His holiness streams into the Jordan, sanctifying the waters. We see God pouring into creation in a physical way, inhabiting the very matter.

According to Orthodox tradition, at that moment, the Jordan River ran upstream; the mighty river knew its Creator and changed direction. John the Baptist, who leapt in his mother's womb, now sees the Jordan leap at the coming of the Lord! In our icons of Christ's baptism, the water is tumultuous and the fish are jumping. God's creation responds to Him, recalling the Psalmist: "the sea saw and fled, the Jordan turned back". (Psalms 114:3) The Psalms sing about how creation praises the Lord; may this echo in our hearts when we hear a waterfall singing or see an eagle soaring. All of creation praises God forever!

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth greatly rejoice; Let the sea be shaken and all its fullness. Then the fields and everything

in them shall rejoice; Then all the trees of the forest shall greatly rejoice before the face of the Lord; for He is coming [...] (Psalm 96: 11-13a)

On Theophany, we celebrate His presence among us. We gather in our churches and at the shores of local waters, and we pray that He will again pour His holiness into the rivers and lakes and oceans, and into vessels of water in our churches, just as He sanctified the waters of the Jordan. We ask Him to bless these waters, and in the days to come, Orthodox priests will carry Theophany's holy water into the homes of the faithful, to bless each of them. We invite God to be present in our world and in our homes, praying that He will come reveal Himself in our hearts.

Mir Boziji Hristos se rod! Merry Christmas

From: The American Serbian Social Club

We greet all of our Saint George parishioners with the Christmas greeting

"Mir Bozji Hristos Se Rodi!!!!"

This past fall we have been busy with Sunday luncheons with the Saint George Cultural Club. These luncheons have been well attended and incorporated Chicago BEARS games as well in the upstairs bar room.

Moving forward in the upcoming year we have had talks regarding,

- Super Bowl party in the hall
- Scrappers Baseball game in June.
- With even more ideas being discussed

We will continue to have lunches at the hall and will get that information to Proto Alex to make announcements in church.

As always, a huge thank you to our partners the Saint George Curtal Club. They are always offering to help and offer ideas for future events and how we can make those events even better. We are always open to suggestions and ALL are welcome to come and enjoy.

We would also like to give a thank you Zakk Kocoj with all of his contributions to our luncheons and how well he has been taking care of the bar.

Hristos Se Rodi from myself , Pete (kum) Petkovich , Mike Cora , Don Grubisich, Stephine Shimek and Zakk Kocoj

Respectfully

Milorad Stamenkovich, President ASSC.



Симболика празника рођења Исуса Христа: Праштање и љубав као вјечни завјет

Божић се празнује као успомена на дан рођења Исуса Христа, Сина Божијег, Спаситеља свијета. Чињеница да је то празник рађања новог живота, дјеце и дјетињства, родитељства, очинства и материнства, украсила је код Срба овај празник

најљепшим вјерским обичајима и обредима. Сви они имају један основни смисао и своде се на један циљ - да умоле Бога да сачува и увећа породицу и имање домаћина. За Божић везујемо три ствари: породицу, милосрђе, односно помагање свакоме ко нема, и чин опраштања.

Исусово рођење

Сама ријеч Исус има значење "Бог спасава" и означава Његово послање и идентитет. Исус је постао човјек тако да је попримио праву људску душу и тијело. Он је Син небеског Оца по божанској нарави и Маријин син по људској нарави. У Старом завјету пророци су наговијестили рођење Месије, који ће откупити људе од гријеха, а Нови завјет доноси испуњење пророчанства.

Исуса, Божијег Сина, родила је дјева Марија, уз помоћ свога вјереника Јосифа у граду Витлејему. Око девет мјесеци прије зачела га је по Духу светоме. Цар Аугуст наредио је пописивање становништва, а Јосиф и трудна Марија кренули су на пут из њиховог града Назарета у Витлејем, гдје је био попис становништва за њих, јер је Јосиф био из рода краља Давида.

Због гужви нису могли наћи мјесто у склоништима па су на крају завршили у стаји, окружени домаћим животињама, гдје се Исус родио. За рођење Сина Божијег први су сазнали витлејемски пастири, који су опазили необичну свјетлост. Јавио им се анђеоски Господњи и рекао да се не плаше, јер свјетлост коју су видјели показује да се родио Син Божији, Исус Христ. Дошли су у пећину и нашли дјеву Марију са новорођенчетом, повијеним и положеним на сламу у јасле. Наложили су ватру да се мајка и дијете угрију. Док се све ово дешавало, далеко на истоку појавила се чудесна сјајна звијезда и довела до пећине три мудраца, који су читали старо пророчанство о рођењу Исуса Христа. Дошавши у Јерусалим, распитивали су се: "Гдје је цар јудејски, који се родио?" Говорили су: "Видјесмо Његову звијезду на истоку и дођосмо да Му се поклонимо".

Чувши да мудраци траже јудејског цара, ондашњи цар Ирод се побоја за свој престо и нареди да се сва мушка дјеца до двије године у Витлејему и околини побију, рачунајући да ће тако и Христа погубити. Анђео божији јави Јосифу и он са дјевом Маријом и дјететом оде у Мисир (Египат) гдје остадоше све до Иродове смрти. У Библији није наведен датум Исусова рођења.

Разлике

Рођење Исуса Христа у првим вијековима хришћанства није слављено као засебан празник. Не зна се када је тачно установљено празновање Божића, али неки извори биљеже да је још 354. године овај празник постојао у Риму, 379. уведен је у Цариграду, а 386. године и у Антиохији. Током петог вијека готово све цркве широм васељене прихватају слављење овог хришћанског празника. Прослава Божића за Србе, Русе и припаднике Јерусалимске патријаршије почиње тачно у поноћ између 6. и 7. јануара. Божићне празнике православни Срби, Руси, Грци, као и Бугари прослављају са примјетним разликама. Литургијски и молитвени дио славља у цркви је исти, с тим што се Грци држе новог, грегоријанског, а Срби и Руси старог, јулијанског календара. Тако Грци славе Божић 25. децембра, а Срби и Руси 7. јануара. Дужина божићног поста, шест седмица иста је код ова три православна народа, као и прописи о начину исхране које у те дане треба поштовати.

Симболи очувани кроз вијекове

Мало који хришћански празник има толико народних обичаја и симбола као Божић, а који се одржавају и дан-данас. Најчешћи обичаји су полагање бадњака, застирање домова сламом, пијукање, печење чеснице, полагајник, а има и многих других вјеровања, изрека и пословица.

Један од симбола Божића је слама, која се ставља по поду у кућама и представља јасле у витлејемској пећини у које је положен новорођени Исус. У сламу се стављају разни слаткиши и ситни поклони које дјеца траже и пијучу као пилићи. Ораси у слами и у ћошковима собе симболизују да Бог влада на све четири стране свијета, док кађење куће представља симбол смирне и тамјана који су, такође, даровани Христу. Поред ових симбола, прославу Божића обиљежава и полагајник, односно гост на Божић, а најчешће је то мушко дијете или младић, јер по ријечима Спаситеља: "Ко прими дијете у име моје, мене прима". Зато се полагајник прима као сам Господ који својим рођењем у све домове људске доноси мир и добру вољу. Неизоставни симбол Божића је и бадњак који представља гране којима је заложена ватра да угрије новорођеног Исуса и његову мајку. То је и симбол Исуса Христа, који је у напону своје снаге, силом свога божанства, раскинуо ланце ропства гријеху, препородио човјека и у њему разбуктао пламен љубави према добру, врлини - према Богу, највећем добру, омогућивши му спасење од гријеха, зла и вјечне смрти - смрти духовне, као што и млад церић, односно храстић, силином својом разбуктава ватру на огњишту, а јарким пламеном својим обасјава све ћошкове домова наших. Чесница са новчићем сматра се важним обредним колачем. Чесница симболизује рођење младог Христа када су га пастири даровали. Када буде печена, износи се на сто на којем је већ постављен божићни ручак. Сам назив потиче од ријечи "чест", "дио", "срећа", јер је ломљена на дијелове, према броју укућана, да би се по тим дијеловима прорицала срећа. Онај ко добије дио чеснице у којем је новчић, по народном вјеровању, биће срећан цијеле те године. Када се заврши ломљење чеснице, укућани једни другима честитају празник и сједају за трпезу.

**Memorials, Parastos and Donations
October 1, 2023 to December 24, 2023**

Memorials

+George Cizmas

\$50 given by Dan and Mildred Arangelovic

+Ely Grubisich

\$500 given by Steve, Shelia and Anna Sarovich

+Stojka and Radasin Markovic

\$50 given by the Markovic Family, Racine, WI

+Chris Nikolich

\$100 given by Joseph and Josephine Orlovich

+Janice Enich Taylor

\$250 given by Alex and Marisue Grabavoy

\$250 given by Dr's Michael and Nadine Keer

\$100 given by Colleen McKay

\$100 given by The Voyager Group LTD

\$50 given by Rex Denkmann and Denise Grabavoy Denkmann

\$25 given by Stephanie S. DelGrosso

\$25 given by Nancy Jovanovich

\$23.79 given by Betty Ginden

For the Health and Salvation

\$60 for the Spegar Family

\$50 for the Stojanovich Family

\$25 for the Nikola Babich Family

\$20 for Vida & Milo Dukic, given by Lydia Dukic

\$30 for Kristijana Bugarin

Slava Donations

\$300 given by Anonymous for Cosmos & Damian Slava

\$350 given by Steve Malinovich for Sveti Nicholas Slava

\$50 given by Dan and Vicki Petrich Dorsey for Sveti Nicholas Slava

\$40 given by Nikola Radojkovic for Sveti Toma Slava

\$40 given by Olgica Negovanovic

\$40 given by Natasha Makedonski for Sveti Nicholas Slava

\$25 given by Bill and Patricia Zakavec

\$20 given by Petar Stojiljkovic for Holy St Arch Michael

St George Serbian Orthodox Church General Donations

\$50,000 donated by Nick and Jelena Malinovich

\$25,000 donated by +Ely Grubisich

Fr Ned Scholarship Fund

\$250 donated by Joseph and Josephine Orlovich in memory of +Janice Taylor

\$250 donated by Marlo Orlovich Perry in memory of +Sophie Anderson

Church Drive and Parking Lot Donations

\$1,000 given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
\$250 given by Joseph and Josephine Orlovich Jr
\$100 given by Dragan and Snezana Ivancevic
\$50 given by Fr Alek Bugarin and Family
\$10 given by Nadine Paukstys

In Honor Of...

\$230 donation, given by Anonymous in Honor of SNF Person of the Year V Rev. Fr Ned Lunich and Newly Elected SNF Secretary Vicki Petrich Dorsey
\$200 donation, given by Donald Konjevich in Honor of and the Devotion of V Rev. Fr Ned Lunich and Fr Alek Bugarin
\$500, given by Nadine O'Leary in Honor of Josh Potts Conversion to the Orthodox Faith

Saint Mardarije of Lješanska, Libertyville and All America

\$50 given by Daniel and Vicki Dorsey

A correction to Memorials, Health & Salvation and Parastos from the Fall edition of The Serb:

The donation of \$2,000 in memory of +Steven Pyevich was given by Eli and Linnea Pyevich, and Brian, Elana and Grant Engelkes

Memorials, Health & Salvation, Slava and Parastos received as of December 24, 2023. If there are any corrections, please contact the financial secretary, Tana Petrich at tjpetrich@gmail.com. Corrections will appear in the next edition of The Serb.

Pomens - October 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023

October 1, 2023

+Sophie Anderson, given by Tom and Susan Roach
+Charalambos Roach, given by Tom and Susan Roach
+Alexander and +Violet Hrechko, given by Ron Moses and Family

October 8, 2023

+Sophie Anderson, given by Tom and Susan Roach
+Charalambos Roach, given by Tom and Susan Roach
+Chris, +Nicholas and +Beda Nikolich; +Joyce Bauman, given by Pete and Kathy Petkovich
+Rosella Petrich, given by Tana Petrich and Family
+Ronald Reece, given by Bill and Kathy Harper

October 15, 2023

+Draga Vuicich, given by Chrissy Vercelote and Family
+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
+Millie Frysch, given by Fr Aleksandar Bugarin and Family
+Chris Nikolich, given by Joseph Orlovich Jr Family
+Chris Nikolich, +Joyce Bauman and +Peter and +Leona Petkovich, given by Pete and Kathy Petkovich

October 22, 2023

+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
+Chris Nikolich and +Joyce Bauman, given by Elaine and Jim Czajkoski
+Michael Starcevich, given by Kirk and Jacky Stampinski
+Chris Nikolich, given by Radovan and Darlene Jovanovich
+Ely Grubisich, given by Pat Mancke and Family
+JoAnnHoniotis, given by Sandy Fenilli

October 29, 2023

+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
+Mildred Marinkovich, given by Tana Petrich
+Chris Petkovich, given by Radovan and Darlene Jovanovich
+Ronald Reece, given by Bill and Kathy Harper
+JoAnn Honiotis, given by Olga Schuman

November 5, 2023

+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
+Chris Nikolich, given by Elaine and Jim Czajkoski
+Donna Moses, given by Ron Moses and Family
+Chris Nikolich, given by Fr Ned Lunich
+Milord and +Ruzica Dmitrov, given by Steva and Draginja Lukin

November 12, 2023

+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
+Janice Taylor, given by Millie O'Leary
+Joseph Gioannini, +Paul Bertucci, +Nicholas Ostoich, +Leo Klent, +George Shimek, Sr.,
+Peter Petkovic, Sr, +Fred Orlovich, +George Orlovich, +Steve Orlovich, +Raymond Orlovich,
+Fred Pribish, Sr, +Peter J Pasteris, +Martin Pasteris, +Angelo Boroni, +Sam Orlovich, and
+Janice Enich Taylor, given by Joseph and Josephine Orlovich
+Janice Taylor, given by Olga Schumann
+Janice Taylor, given by Bill and Marty Seemann
+George Enich, +Janice Taylor, Chris Nikolich and +Joyce Bauman, given by Pete and Kathy
Petkovich

November 19, 2023

+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
+Chris Nikolich, given by Elaine and Jim Czajkoski
+Janice Taylor, given by Bill and Marty Seemann
+Janice Taylor, +Arthur Schumann, +JoAnn Honiotes, Ely Grubisich, given by Olga Schumann
+Arthur Schumann, +JoAnn Honiotes, Ely Grubisich, given by David and Carol Schumann
+Janice Taylor, given by The Circle of Serbian Sisters
+Janice Taylor, given by Jack and Dollie Book, Sr

November 21, 2023 (Holy Arch Michael)

+Peter Sr, +Trifko and +Mary Laketa, +Helen Vuicich, +Pavao and Dragica Susich, given by
Anka Laketa and Family
+Michael Kljaich, given by Susan Kljaich and Francis Juarez

November 26, 2023

+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic

+Janice Taylor, given by Bill and Marty Seemann
+Janice Taylor, +Arthur Schumann, given by Olga Schumann
+Arthur Schumann, given by David and Carol Schumann
+Janice Taylor, given by Pete and Kathy Petkovich
+Draga Vuicich, given by Anka Laketa and Family
+Draga and +Nikola Vuicich, +Stoja and +Jovo Prica, +Dayna Less and +Devin Tlanda, given by Radavon and Darlene Jovanovich
+Janice Enich Taylor, given by Pat Mancke
+Nicholas Ostoich, given by Genevieve Ostoich
+Michael Kljaich Sr, +Delores Malinovich, +Michael O'Leary, +Millie Skoryi, +Ely Grubisich and
+Janice Taylor, given by Susan Kljaich and Francis Juarez

December 3, 2023

+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
+Janice Taylor, given by Olga Schumann
+Nicholas Ostoich, given by Genevieve Ostoich
+Michael O'Leary, +Ann Malinovich and +Michael Kljaic, given by Millie O'Leary
+Michael O'Leary, +Ann Malinovich and +Michael Kljaic, given by Annette O'Leary
+Michael O'Leary, +Ann Malinovich and +Michael Kljaic, given by Nadine O'Leary and Josh Potts
+Donna Moses, given by Ron Moses and Family
+V. Rev. Fr Lazar Kostur, given by Gayle Shimek and Family

December 10, 2023

+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
+Janice Taylor, given by Olga Schumann
+Janice Taylor, given by The Circle of Serbian Sisters
+Jeffrey and +Judy Lockwood, given by Pat Mancke and Family
+Bertha and +John O'Brian, +George and +Mary Shimek, and +Janice Taylor, given by Gayle Shimek and Family
+Ely Grubisich, given by Dr. Howard Grundy
+George, +Violet, and +Michael Enich, +Danica Grabavoy, +Iso Ciganovich and +Janice Taylor given by Dr's Mike and Nadine Keer

December 17, 2023

+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
+Janice Taylor given by Dr's Mike and Nadine Keer
+John and +Bertha O'Brian, and +Janice Taylor, given by George and Mary Shimek
+Marion Oldham and +Nicholas Ostoich, given by Gayle Shimek and Family
+Zorka Miller, given by Vivian Tadin
+Rada Abu, given by Katy Abu
+Rada Abu, given by Dan and Radoica Kilgore

December 24, 2023

+Dimitrije Sajic, given by Velibor and Jelena Sajic
+Janice Taylor given by Dr's Mike and Nadine Keer
+John and +Bertha O'Brian, and +Janice Taylor, given by George and Mary Shimek
+Zorka Miller, given by Vivian Tadin
+Jayne Ferraro, given by the Stamenkovich Family
+Radu Abu, given by Katy Abu
+Radu Abu, given by Dan and Radoica Kilgore

+V Rev Lazar Kostur and +Nicholas Ostoich, given by Joseph Orlovich Jr Family
+Nicholas Ostoich, given by Genevieve Ostoich and Family

Pomens received as of December 24, 2023. If there are any corrections, please contact the financial secretary, Tana Petrich at tjpetrich@gmail.com. Corrections will appear in the next edition of The Serb.

**St George Serbian Orthodox Church
95th Church Anniversary Donations
November 5, 2023**

\$300 - \$500

Rosanne Angelovich
Michael and Nancy Cora
Susan Kljaich
Christian and Kristy Kourkoumelis
Steve Malinovich
Nadine O'Leary and Josh Potts
Brane Planojevic
Gayle Shimek and Family

\$200 - \$299

Dan and Vicki Petrich Dorsey
Howard Grundy
Fr Ned Lunich
Kris and Natalie McDonough
Phil and Millie Rowe
Marty and Bill Seemann
The Stamenkovich Family

\$100 - \$199

Fr Alek Bugarin and Family
Radovon and Darlene Jovanovich
Annette O'Leary
Millie O'Leary
Joseph and Josephine Orlovich

Genevieve Ostoich
Susan and Tom Roach
Danielle Serdar
Dan and Nada Zubic and Family

\$50 - \$99

Ryan and Mira Dorsey
Zoe Evans and Family
Cheryl Ferguson
Kathy and Bill Harper
Anka Laketa
Dave Laketa
Steva and Draginja Lukin
Pat Mancke
Nadine Paukstys and Family
Tana Petrich and Alan Miller

\$10-\$49

Jack and Chris Book
Don and Diane Grubisich
Pete Grubisich
Boro Markovic
Edythe Miller
Ron and Matt Moses
Bob Orlovich
Barbara Phelan
Michael and Amanda Roach
Milan and Vladinka Vranjes

