



## **Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church Bulletin**

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### **HOLY MYSTERIES**

**VISITATIONS OF THE SICK AND INFIRM** – If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Father Stephen at the Rectory. Our hospitalization code for Christiana and Wilmington Hospitals is **UKR**.

**EMERGENCY CALLS** – Please call the Rectory anytime (day or night) in an Emergency!

**BAPTISMS** – Celebrated by appointment.

**CROWNING IN MARRIAGE** – Please discuss timing with Father prior to setting a date. At least six months notice is needed. There are three 2-hour courses that must be

**BULLETIN DEADLINE** – The deadline for getting information printed in the Weekly Bulletin is Wednesday.

**SUNDAY COLLECTIONS** – For the Needs of the Parish; 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Ministry

**December 28, 2025**  
**Volume 61: Number 52**  
**Schedule of Services and Activities**  
**Week of December 28, 2025 – January 4, 2026**  
**Celebrating our 98<sup>th</sup> year of Service to the Lord**

Sunday, December 28 - 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Holy Forefathers – Tone 4 (Sts. Peter and Paul)  
8:30 AM – Confessions  
9:10 AM – Prayers before Holy Communion  
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful  
Coffee Hour

Tuesday, December 30 – Holy Prophet Daniel  
7:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

Thursday, January 1 – New Year, Circumcision, St. Basil  
9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy (St. Nicholas – Dover, DE)

Sunday, January 4 Sunday before the Nativity – Holy Fathers – Tone 5  
8:30 AM – Confessions  
9:10 AM – Prayers before Holy Communion  
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful  
Coffee Hour

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**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday – Holy Forefathers – Matins John 20:1-10; Liturgy: Colossians 3:4-11; Luke 14:16-24

Monday – Hebrews 8:7-13; Mark 9:42-10:1

Tuesday – Prophet Daniel – Hebrews 11:33-12:2; Day: Hebrews 9:8-10,15-23; Mark 10:2-12

Wednesday – Hebrews 10:1-18; Mark 10:11-16

Thursday – Hebrews 10:35-11:7; Mark 10:17-27

Friday – Hebrews 11:8, 11:16; Mark 10:23-32

Saturday – Before Nativity – Galatians 3:8-12; Luke 13:18-29; Day: Ephesians 5:1-8; Luke 16:10-15

30<sup>th</sup> Sunday – Before Nativity – Matins: John 20:11-18; Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40; Matthew 1:1-25

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## **SUNDAY OF THE ANCESTORS OF CHRIST**

### **False Security (Luke 14:15-24)**

When Jesus mentioned "the resurrection of the just," one of the guests became excited and said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" The Jewish people pictured their future kingdom as a great feast with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets as the honored guests (Luke 13:28; see Isa. 25:6). This anonymous guest was confident that he would one day be at the "kingdom feast" with them! Jesus responded by telling him a parable that revealed the sad consequences of false confidence.

In Jesus' day when you invited guests to a dinner, you told them the day but not the exact hour of the meal. A host had to know how many guests were coming so he could butcher the right amount of animals and prepare sufficient food. Just before the feast was to begin, the host sent his servants to each of the guests to tell them the banquet was ready and they should come (see Es. 5:8; 6:14). In other words, each of the guests in this parable had already agreed to attend the banquet. The host expected them to be there.

But instead of eagerly coming to the feast, all of the guests insulted the host by refusing to attend, and they all gave very feeble excuses to defend their change in plans.

The first guest begged off because he had to "go and see" a piece of real estate he had purchased. In the East, the purchasing of property is often a long and complicated process, and the man would have had many opportunities to examine the land he was buying. Anybody who purchases land that he has never examined is certainly taking a chance. Since most banquets were held in the evening, the man had little daylight left even for a cursory investigation.

The second man had also made a purchase—ten oxen that he was anxious to prove. Again, who would purchase that many animals without first testing them? Not many customers in our modern world would buy a used car that they had not taken out for a "test drive." Furthermore, how could this man really put these oxen to the test when it was so late in the day? His statement "I go to prove them!" suggests that he was already on his way to the farm when the servant came with the final call to the dinner.

The third guest really had no excuse at all. Since they involved so much elaborate preparation, Jewish weddings were never surprises, so this man knew well in advance that he was taking a wife. That being the case, he should not have

agreed to attend the feast in the first place. Since only Jewish men were invited to banquets, the host did not expect the wife to come anyway. Having a new wife could have kept the man from the battlefield (Deut. 24:5) but not from the festive board.

Of course, these were only excuses. I think it was Billy Sunday who defined an excuse as "the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie." The person who is good at excuses is usually not good at anything else. These three guests actually expected to get another invitation in the future, but that invitation never came.

Having prepared a great dinner for many guests, the host did not want all that food to go to waste, so he sent his servant out to gather a crowd and bring them to the banquet hall. What kind of men would be found in the streets and lanes of the city or in the highways and hedges? The outcasts, the loiterers, the homeless, the undesirable, the kind of people that Jesus came to save (Luke 15:1-2; 19:10). There might even be some Gentiles in the crowd!

These men may have had only one reason for refusing the kind invitation: they were unprepared to attend such a fine dinner. So, the servant constrained them to accept (see 2 Cor. 5:20). They had no excuses. The poor could not afford to buy oxen; the blind could not go to examine real estate; and the poor, maimed, lame, and blind were usually not given in marriage. This crowd would be hungry and lonely and only too happy to accept an invitation to a free banquet.

Not only did the host get other people to take the places assigned to the invited guests, but he also shut the door so that the excuse-makers could not change their minds and come in (see Luke 13:22-30). In fact, the host was angry. We rarely think of God expressing judicial anger against those who reject His gracious invitations, but verses like Isaiah 55:6 and Proverbs 1:24-33 give a solemn warning that we not treat His calls lightly.

This parable had a special message for the proud Jewish people who were so sure they would "eat bread in the kingdom of God." Within a few short years, the Gospel would be rejected by the official religious leaders, and the message would go out to the Samaritans (Acts 8) and then to the Gentiles (Acts 10; 13ff).

But the message of this parable applies to all lost sinners today. God still says, "All things are now ready. Come!" Nothing more need be done for the salvation of your soul, for Jesus Christ finished the work of redemption when He died for you

on the cross and arose from the dead. The feast has been spread, the invitation is free, and you are invited to come.

People today make the same mistake that the people in the parable made: they delay in responding to the invitation because they settle for second best. There is certainly nothing wrong with owning a farm, examining purchases, or spending an evening with your wife. But if these good things keep you from enjoying the best things, then they become bad things. The excuse-makers were actually successful people in the eyes of their friends, but they were failures in the eyes of Jesus Christ.

The Christian life is a feast, not a funeral, and all are invited to come. Each of us as believers must herald abroad the message, "Come, for all things are now ready!" God wants to see His house filled, and "yet there is room." He wants us to go home (Mark 5:19), go into the streets and lanes (Luke 14:21), go into the highways and hedges (Luke 14:23), and go into all the world (Mark 16:15) with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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**Second Sunday Before the Nativity**  
**SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS**

The Gospel today deals with the parable of the great supper to which many were invited, but they all excused themselves, offering flimsy excuses. This Gospel supper is symbolic of the Mystical Supper to which we are all invited. This Mystical supper is the Holy Eucharist to which we are called every time we attend the Divine Liturgy. The priest, in the name of Jesus, extends the invitation to us with the words: "Approach with fear of God and with faith!"

Though the priest, Jesus invites us to "Taste and see how good the Lord is." Those who come with reverence and faith can see Him with spiritual eyes under the appearance of bread and wine. In faith we are mystically taken back to the Upper room of the Last Supper where the Holy Eucharist was instituted and distributed by Jesus Himself. We can hear His words of invitation: "Take, eat, this a my Body, which is broken for you.." "Drink of this, all of you, this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins." Jesus is really and truly present in the Holy Eucharist.

The benefits of frequent Holy Communion are many. This is expressed in the prayer of thanksgiving after Communion in the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great: "We give You thanks, O Lord our God, for participating in the well-being, sanctification, and cleansing of our souls and bodies. Grant, O Lord of All, that the

Communion of the holy Body and Blood of Your Christ may be to us the occasion of a faith openly professed, a sincere love, fullness of wisdom, cleansing of our soul and body; defeat of every enemy, fulfillment of Your Holy Commandments, and an acceptable defense before the awesome judgment seat of Christ.

Let us not make flimsy excuses like the people of today's Gospel, but approach Holy Communion with sincere faith, saying: "I believe and profess that this, which I am about to receive, is truly Your most precious Body and Your life giving Blood,"

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### **Reflection: Three Trees\***

Once upon a mountaintop, 3 little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up. The 1st little tree looked at the stars and said: "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I will be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!"

The 2nd little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by one of its ways to the ocean. "I want to be traveling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world!"

The 3rd little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave this mountaintop at all. I want to grow so tall that when people look at me, they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world."

Years passed. The rains came, the sun shone and the 3 little trees grew tall. One day 3 woodcutters climbed the mountain. The 1st woodcutter looked at the 1st tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the 1st tree fell. "Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest, I shall hold wonderful treasure!" the 1st tree said.

The 2nd woodcutter looked at the 2nd tree and said "this tree is strong, it is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe the 2nd tree fell. "Now I shall sail mighty waters," thought the 2nd tree. "I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!"

The 3rd tree felt its heart sing when the last woodcutter looked its way. It stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven. But the woodcutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me," he muttered. With a swoop of his shining axe the 3rd tree fell.

The 1st tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought it to a carpenter's shop, but the carpenter made it into a feedbox for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered in gold or with treasure. It was coated in sawdust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The 2nd tree smiled when the woodcutter took it to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead the once strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. It was too small and too weak to sail into an ocean, or even a river, instead it was taken to a little lake.

The 3rd tree was confused when the woodcutter cut it into strong beams and left it in a lumberyard. "What happened?" the once tall tree wondered, "All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountaintop and point to God." Many, many days and nights passed. The 3 trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one golden starlight night that poured over the 1st tree a woman placed her newborn baby in the feedbox. "I wish I could make a cradle for Him" her husband whispered. The mother squeezed His hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful," she said. And, suddenly the 1st tree knew that it was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveler and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the 2nd tree sailed quietly out into the lake. Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered; it knew it didn't have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through the wind and the rain. The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And, suddenly the 2nd tree knew that it was carrying the King of Heaven and Earth.

One Friday morning, the 3rd tree was startled when its beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. It flinched as it was carried through an angry jeering crowd. It shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hands to it. It felt ugly, harsh and cruel. But, on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath it, the 3rd tree knew that God's love had changed everything. It had made the 3rd tree strong. And every time people thought of the 3rd tree they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

So, the next time you feed down because you didn't get what you wanted, just sit tight and be happy because God is thinking of something BETTER to give you. Remember, Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ knows what we need in our lives when we don't. -Anonymous

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY** - is expressed to Patricia Redden, 12/28; Wasył Bernhard, 1/1 & Maria Borowenski, 1/1. May God grant them a very happy birthday and keep them for many, happy and blessed years!

**HOLY SUPPER** – will be scheduled for Christmas Eve, January 6 at 6:00 PM. If you would like to attend please sign in at the dessert table.

## MEETINGS

**Parish Board** – Wednesday, January 14 @ 6:30 PM  
Annual Meeting – Sunday, February 1

## MINISTRY SCHEDULE

(Please find a substitute if you cannot make a given week)

December 28 – John Plachuta and Linda Hnatow  
January 4 – Matthew Andreas and Victor Kaliakin  
January 11- Matthew Andreas and Victor Kaliakin  
January 18 – Sonya Patronik and John Plachuta  
January 25 - Sonya Patronik and John Plachuta  
February 1 – Linda Hnatow and Matthew Andreas

## CALENDER OF EVENTS - 2025

2026 - January 6 - Holy Supper 6PM  
January 7 – Nativity of Our Lord – 9:30 AM Liturgy  
Sunday, February 1 – Annual Meeting  
Monday, February 23 – 1<sup>st</sup> Day of the Great Fast  
Saturday, March 28 – Spring Bazaar  
Sunday, April 5 – Palm Sunday – Easter Egg Hunt  
Sunday, April 12 – Resurrection of the Lord  
Sunday, April 19 – St. Thomas Sunday – Visiting Cemeteries  
Sunday, May 31 – Pentecost  
Monday, June 8 – Apostle' Fast  
Sunday, July 12 – Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul – Patronal Dinner  
Saturday, November 7 – Fall Bazaar  
Saturday, November 28 – St. Philip Fast  
Sunday, December 20 – UOL Cookie Sale

## **GREETER MINISTRY SCHEDULE**

December 29 - Sonya Patronik

2026 – January 4- David and Eve Lazaration

January 11 - Zina Twardus and Nancy Tur

January 18 - Kathy and Michael Chalfont

January 25 - Sandy Cramer

**100th ANNIVERSARY** – will be held on Saturday, July 17th with a 10:00 AM – Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with a Banquet at the Claymont Ballroom. Mark your calendars! Our first fund Raiser for the event is the sale of T-shirts (\$10) polo shirts (\$15 ) and sweat shirts (\$20) with the Anniversary Logo on them thanks to the art and stitching work of Michael Kapelus.

**NATIVITY FAST SOUP SALE** – Our UOL will be making vegan soups for the Nativity Fast beginning today for \$10 a quart. Money raised will be for the UOL Thanksgiving project and will be sent for humanitarian aide in Ukraine.

**FLOWERS FOR THE NATIVITY** – Donations for the Nativity Flowers are being accepted by Linda Hnatow. They can be for the Health of or in Memory of Family member s and friends. Donation requested is \$15.

## **READERS MINISTRY SCHEDULE**

December 28 – John Plachuta

January 4 - Thomas Sulpizi

January 11 - Pani Elizabeth Hutnick

January 18 - Linda Hnatow

January 25 - Jean Roeth

February 1 - Thomas Scholz

## **CLEANING OF THE CHURCH MINISTRY SCHEDULE**

Week of December 29 - Mark & Laura Andreas

2026 – Week of January 5 - Earle and Jennifer Robinson

Week of January 12 – John Plachuta and David Lazaration

Week of January 19 - Thomas and Lynn Sulpizi

Week of January 26 - Nancy Hlywiak, Jean Roeth, Zina Twardus

Week of February 2 - Earle and Jennifer Robinson

Week of February 9 - Michael Tilson & Linda Hnatow, Irene Maskaly

Week of February 16 - Mark & Laura Andreas

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL** – Metropolitan Antony, Archbishop Daniel, Archimandrite Raphael, Father George Bazylevky, Father Vasyl Dovhan, Father Oleh Hucul, Father Andrew Molewski, Father James Weremedic, Father Volodymyr Wronskyj, Matushka Andrejuk, Matushka Laura Odell, Matushka Lisa Weremedic, Pani Matka Oksanna Bazylevsky, Pani Matka Maryann Ozlanski, Jonathan Angelo, Colby Atkinson, Shannon Austin, Joyce Belles, Joyce Bendoakas, Ethel Bernhard, Irene Billon, James Bolton, Maria Borowenski, Betty Bosland, Becky Bosley, Angie Brengle, Paul Brengle, Patricia Bringle, Richard Bringle, John Brick, Fedir Bukacz, Christine Cain, Mark Cello, Erik Colazo, Alex Czernik, Sharon Dalaski, Stephen Dalecki, David Dalldorf, Taylor Davis, Peter DiVirgilio, James Dudrick, Kathleen Dugan, Mary Eagleton, Maria Economou, Rose Eldridge, Archantula Fanjoy, Mary Farell, Kandi Fullerton, James Garrett, Lisa Gee, Peter Glenn, Ivan Golovnirov, Kathleen Gortva, Staci Gray, Charles Gunther, David Hamilton, Richard Haslam, Rick Hastings, Victoria Herrschaft, Carla Hitchings, Greg Hitchings, Alicia Hlywak, John Hlywak, Daniel Holoziak, Jennifer Huertes, Serhii Ivashyna, Violet Jaskolka, Stephen Johnson, Bill Jones, Linda Josepinson, Michael Kapelus, Walter Katolik, Diane Keyser, Wendy Klinedinst, Tommy Knight, Judith Kocinski, Lorissa Kozakova, Francis Lano, Ed Lavender, Ron Lazaration, Joan Libera, Karen Livick, Charles Lontor, Alla Lysenko, Jeremy Madea, Andrew Makolynyk, Jean Marano, Frederick McCarthy, Fred McKirachan, Stephen McNulty, Ronald Michel, Mary Ann Michalcewicz, Michelle Michalcewiz, Lisa Miller, Matthew Miller, Mary Elizabeth Moran, Barry Morris, Elsie Moroz, Karen Needham, Julie Neff, Ann Nester, Rick Orner, Sienna Ozboya, Betty Painter, Anastasios Pantelopulos, Anthony Pantelopulos, Daphne Pantelopulos, George Pantelopulos, Linda Phillips, Joseph Pierson, Barry Pinkowicz, Janilyn Pinkowicz, Bernice Pinkowicz, Joseph Porini, Robert Powers, Joanne Procak, Joseph Ptak, Carol Purse, Chuck Redden, Patricia Redden, Sharon Reigh, Christopher Riehl, Arlene Roginski, Wyatt Roland, Andrea Roman, Jeff Rozwadowski, Glenn Runyan, Carol Rusk, Richard Scharba, Isaac Schmidt, Clay Seman, John Serth, Larissa Serth, Dawn Sheets, Justin Sheets, Emily Smitheman, Georgie Smolyar, Alexandra Sparco, Natalia Stanford, Rich Steinman, Joseph Stevens, Noel Strobino, Charles Joseph Sweeney, Evelyn Synczyszyn, Michael Synczyszyn, Pavlo Tabak, Nicholas Taylor, Sue Taylor, Elenora Thomas, Lydia Thomas, Brysen Tomei, Dominic Tomei, Mark Tomei, Violet Tomei, Aria Tonner, Mariel Trimble, Martha Vignali, Jack Vognetz, Margaret Vognetz, Marilyn Wagner, Olena Wasylevska, James Watts, Chris Way, Leah Way, Barbara Weeks, Laura Worley, Jack Ziegler & James Zook

## **Second Sunday Before the Nativity SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS**

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