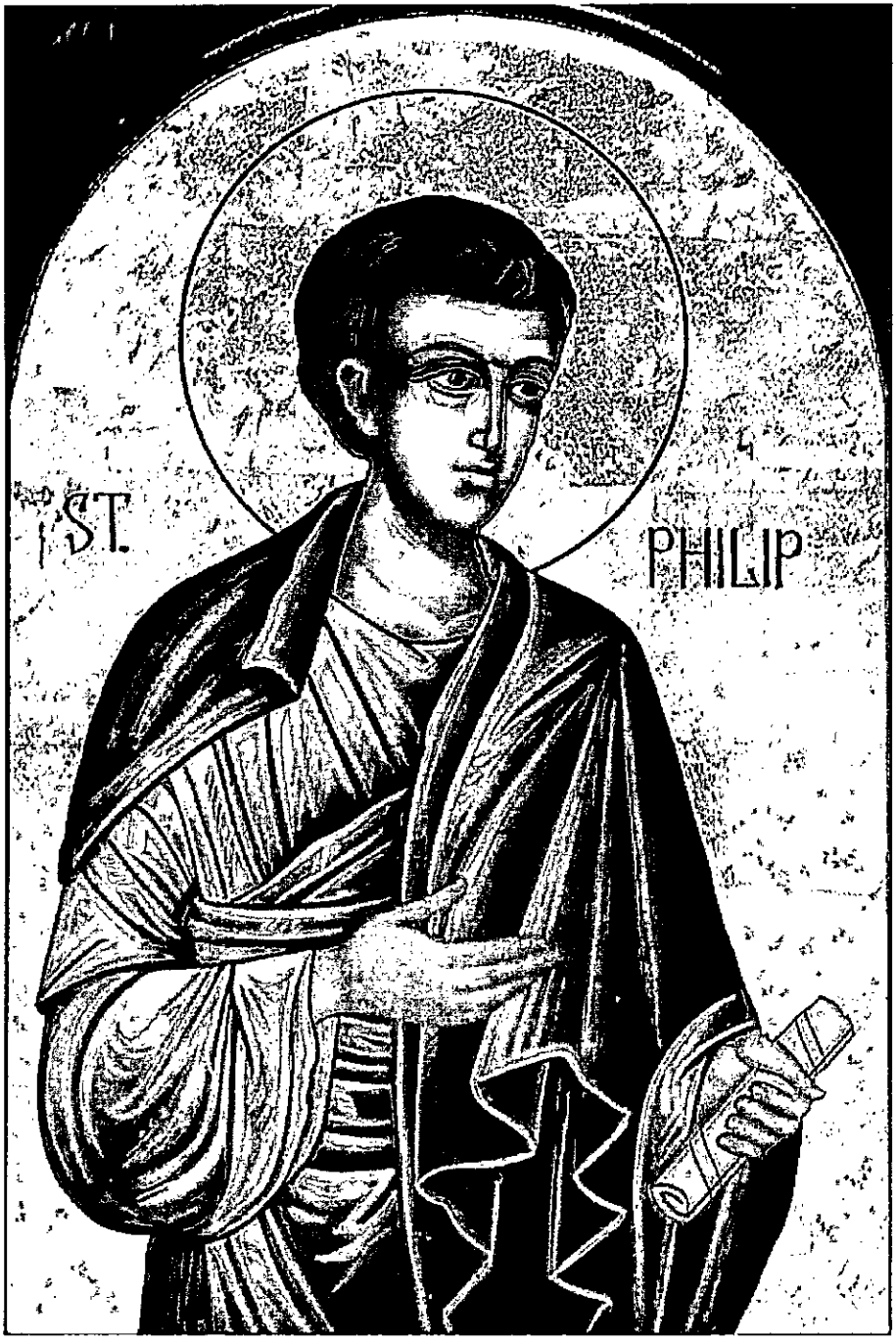
ST.
PHILIP

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; 2nd Youth Ministry

November 23, 2025
Volume 61: Number 47
Schedule of Services and Activities
Week of November 23 - 30, 2025
Celebrating our 98th year of Service to the Lord

Sunday, November 23 – 24th Sunday – Tone 7
8:30 AM – Confessions
9:10 AM – Prayers before Holy Communion
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful
Panakhyda: + for those Who Died in the Artificial Famine in Ukraine
Coffee Hour – Religious Education

Tuesday, November 25
7:00 PM – Community Thanksgiving Service – Ascension Episcopal Church

Wednesday, November 26 – St. John Chrysostom
7:00 AM – Divine Liturgy – Veneration of his relics
6:00 PM – Moleben of Thanksgiving

Thursday, November 27 – THANKSGIVING DAY – Feast of St, Philip
8:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

Friday, November 28 – Beginning of ST. Philip's Fast

Saturday, November 29
10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy (Holy Trinity - Whaleyville, MD)

Sunday, November 30 – 25th Sunday – Tone 8
8:30 AM – Confessions
9:10 AM – Prayers before Holy Communion
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful
Coffee Hour – Religious Education

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SCRIPTURE READINGS

24th Sunday – Matins: Mark 16:1-8; Liturgy: Ephesians 2:14-22; Luke 10:25-37
Monday – 2 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Luke 12:13-15, 22-31
Tuesday – 2 Thessalonians 1:10-2:2; Luke 12:42-48
Wednesday – St. John Chrysostom – Hebrews 7:26-8:2; John 10:9-16Day: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Luke 12:48-59
Thursday – Apostle Philip – 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; John 1:43-5:1; Day: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5; Luke 13:1-9
Friday – 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18; Luke 13:31-35
Saturday – Apostle and Evangelist Matthew: Matins: John 21:15-25; Liturgy: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16; Matthew 9:9-13; Day: Galatians 1:3-10; Luke 9:37-43
25th Sunday –Matins Mark 16:9-20; Ephesians 4:1-6; Luke 12:16-21;

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ARCHPASTORAL LETTER of the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora For the Nativity Fast

Beloved Clergy and Faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora,

Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be!

As the quiet beauty of the Nativity Fast embraces us, the Church invites us once again to walk the sacred road from Bethlehem to Golgotha, from the humility of the Manger to the sacrifice of the Cross. It is a journey that reveals the very heart of God - a heart so full of love that it stoops down to dwell among us, to share our suffering, and to redeem our broken humanity.

In a world intoxicated by pride, power, and self-importance, the Son of God chooses to enter history not in a palace but in a cave, not on a throne but in a manger. The Almighty Creator becomes a Child - poor, vulnerable, and wrapped in the swaddling clothes of simplicity. This divine condescension is not a mere gesture of compassion - it is the very revelation of who God is: "God is love" (1 John 4:8) - love that humbles itself, love that serves, love that gives all.

The Nativity is not a sentimental story of shepherds and stars; it is the unfolding of God's eternal plan of salvation. The humility of Bethlehem points directly to the humility of Golgotha - where the Child born in a manger will stretch out His arms on the Cross to embrace all of creation.

The Incarnation and the Cross are not separate mysteries but one continuous act of divine love.

When we gaze upon the Infant Christ, we see not only the sweetness of His humanity but also the shadow of the Cross. In the cave of Bethlehem already rests the wood that will one day bear His Body. In His small hands is already the power that will bless, heal, and forgive. And in the tears of the Virgin Mother is already the quiet prophecy of the sorrow she will bear at the foot of the Cross.

The humility of God is not weakness - it is divine strength that transforms suffering into resurrection. Thus, to fast during this season is to walk with the Lord in His humility - to lay down our pride, our selfish desires, and our indifference to others, so that Christ may be born in us anew.

The world teaches us that greatness is found in domination, success, and acclaim. But the Gospel proclaims a different truth: "Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:4).

To be humble is not to think less of ourselves, but to think less about ourselves and more about God and our neighbor. It is to see every person - especially the poor, the suffering, the displaced, and the forgotten - as icons of Christ Himself.

During this Fast, let our prayer and fasting become instruments of compassion. Let us give from our abundance to those who hunger, clothe those who shiver in the cold, and comfort those who mourn - especially our brothers and sisters in Ukraine who continue to endure the agony of war, displacement, and destruction. Their tears, their faith, and their endurance are the modern echo of Bethlehem's holy poverty and Golgotha's redemptive pain.

We see Christ crucified again in the bombed hospitals, the destroyed homes, the wounded soldiers, and the weeping mothers. Yet we also see the resurrected power of His love in the countless acts of courage, mercy, and faith that spring forth from the Ukrainian people - priests and chaplains who pray in the trenches, children who sing carols in basements, families who share bread with strangers.

Beloved in Christ, our journey from the Manger to the Cross must be active, spontaneous, and actionable.

Fasting is not merely abstaining from food - it is feasting on mercy. It is not a passive waiting but a living response to God's love. Every moment of the Fast

offers us the opportunity to act - to forgive someone we have avoided, to visit the sick, to reconcile a broken relationship, to serve a meal to the hungry, to support a family in need, to reach out to the lonely. Let us remember that a fast without love is only hunger. But a fast filled with charity, prayer, and humility becomes a ladder that reaches Heaven. As the Apostle James reminds us: "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). Therefore, let our fasting be faith made visible - faith that gives, heals, and builds up the Body of Christ.

We encourage every parish and faithful of our Church to make this season a time of compassionate action: Collect food, clothing, and medical supplies for the suffering in Ukraine and your local communities.

Support your parish outreach and the humanitarian ministries of the UOC of the USA. Visit the lonely, comfort the grieving, and pray for peace - not only with words but through deeds of mercy.

As the Body of Christ, our Holy Church is called to embody His humility. When we serve without seeking recognition, when we forgive without resentment, when we love without condition - then the world beholds the living Christ.

In the faces of chaplains comforting soldiers, of clergy feeding refugees, of children collecting gifts for the needy - we see the continuation of the Bethlehem miracle in our own time.

Our Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, through its parishes, seminary, charitable organizations and ministries, and faithful, continues to be a living witness of God's humility - responding to suffering with compassion, to evil with goodness, and to despair with faith.

Every act of kindness - whether offered to a child in Ukraine, a neighbor in need, or a stranger on the street - becomes a candle in the darkness, a testimony that Christ is born, and the world is not abandoned.
Beloved in the Lord, the Apostle Paul reminds us: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus - Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:5–7).

To have the mind of Christ is to live with open hands and open hearts. It is to descend so that others may rise, to forgive so that peace may reign, to pray so By doing so, we join the first Americans who shared what they had with strangers -

that hope may be reborn. The more we humble ourselves, the more space there is for Christ to dwell within us.

The story that begins in the manger does not end at the Cross - it leads to the empty tomb and the glory of resurrection. This is the mystery of divine humility: it does not diminish but exalts; it does not destroy but transforms. The road from Bethlehem to Golgotha is also the road to eternal life.

May this Nativity Fast be for all of us a season of rediscovery - of simplicity, of mercy, and of the quiet majesty of God's humility. As we bow before the Child of Bethlehem, may our hearts whisper the words of the Birth-giver of God: "Behold, the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

And as we continue to pray for peace and healing in Ukraine and throughout the world, may we live in such a way that others will see Christ in our eyes, hear His kindness in our words, and feel His mercy in our actions.

With Archpastoral Love and Blessing,

† Antony
Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora

† Jeremiah
Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy of South America

† Daniel
Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Western Europe

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LINCOLN'S 1863 THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION (IN PART)

The year that is drawing towards its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God.

No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be reverently, solemnly, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and voice, by the whole American people.

It is interesting to note that it wasn't until we were at war, the Civil War to be exact, that our Thanksgiving holiday was officially recognized by Congress. It had started in the small Plymouth Colony in 1621 when the English Pilgrims feasted with members of the Wampanoag (Wam·pa·no·ag) Indians who brought gifts of food as a gesture of goodwill. The custom grew in various colonies as a means of celebrating the harvest. In 1777, over 100 years later, the continental congress proclaimed a national day of Thanksgiving after the American Revolution victory at the Battle of Saratoga. But it was twelve years later that George Washington proclaimed another national day of thanksgiving in honor of the ratification of the Constitution and requested that the congress finally make it an annual event. They declined and it would be another 100 years and the end of a bloody civil war before President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November Thanksgiving. The year was 1863. It might surprise you to learn that it took still another 40 years, the early 1900's, before the tradition really caught on. For you see Lincoln's official Thanksgiving was sanctioned in order to bolster the Union's morale. Many Southerners saw the new holiday as an attempt to impose Northern customs on their conquered land.

Thanksgiving today is a mild-mannered holiday full of football, hot apple pie, and family reunions. But that's not a realistic historical picture of Thanksgiving. It is more often born of adversity and difficult times. So many of the greatest expressions of thanksgiving have occurred under circumstances so debilitating one wonders why people give thanks. It would seem a more reasonable response would be bitterness and ingratitude.
It is a paradox. In times of plenty we become indifferent. The smallest gifts are overlooked and unappreciated. We might even regard the basic pleasures of life with contempt. But, let hard times come and the threat that these gifts will be taken from us and we are jolted into sudden recognition and gratitude. What are the characteristics of a truly grateful people? I would like to offer three observations in answer to that question.

The first characteristic of a truly grateful people is remembrance. When we are truly grateful we are slow to forget what made us grateful.
The second characteristic of a truly grateful people is humility. When we are truly grateful we humbly confess that we are indebted to God, that we belong to him and that we are not our own.

The third characteristic of truly grateful people is their recognition of the goodness of God. When we are truly grateful we come to understand that God's mercies endure forever.

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A Thanksgiving Message from the Council of Bishops of the UOC of the USA

Beloved in Christ, clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA,

Christ is among us! He is and ever shall be!
Every year, on the fourth Thursday of November, the citizens of the United States of America pause from their labor and gather around a common table for Thanksgiving Day, a civil holiday rooted in the earliest history of this nation. In the autumn of 1621, after a long and perilous journey across the ocean, the Pilgrims celebrated a meal of gratitude together with the local Indigenous people who compassionately assisted them in surviving their first harsh winter. They shared food - the most basic nourishment of life - and in doing so, they shared hope.

From that moment on, generations of Americans have linked this day with the themes of gratitude, hospitality, compassion, and unity.

In our Orthodox Christian understanding, gratitude is not merely an emotion or a polite gesture - it is a spiritual act. The Greek word Eucharist means thanksgiving. Every Divine Liturgy is an offering of thanksgiving to God, the Giver of every blessing.
"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His mercy endures forever." - Psalm 118:1

True gratitude is rooted not in abundance, but in the recognition that everything we possess is a gift from God. Even in times of uncertainty, trials, or suffering, thanksgiving opens our hearts to see grace at work.

This year, as we observe Thanksgiving, we cannot ignore the reality that many families are struggling. Economic instability, political tension, and social divisions weigh heavily upon the daily lives of countless people. For many in America, the rising cost of food forces difficult choices between nourishment and other basic necessities.

Food is not only a physical need - it is a symbol of life itself. When we break bread with others, we acknowledge the image of God in them. Our Lord taught us: "I was hungry and you gave Me food... whatever you did for the least of these, My brothers and sisters, you did unto Me." - Matthew 25:35, 40. Thus, to share our food is to participate in the work of God.

As people of Ukrainian descent living in America, while we embrace this national celebration of gratitude, our conscience and our history compel us to remember another reality.

Ninety-two years ago, in 1932–1933, the government of Soviet Russia carried out a genocide against the Ukrainian people through the cruel weapon of forced starvation - the Holodomor. Up to 10 million innocent men, women, and children died because grain was seized, villages were blockaded, and people were deliberately deprived of food - the very nourishment of life.

On Thanksgiving Day, when Americans gather around tables filled with abundance, we are called to remember the millions of our ancestors in Ukraine whose tables were left empty by evil.

Two extremes stand before us:
Thanksgiving - celebrating nourishment, gratitude, and shared compassion.
Holodomor - famine imposed through hatred, greed, and dehumanization.

May the contrast awaken us. May it stir us to compassion, to action, and to the defense of human dignity everywhere food is used as a weapon.

As Orthodox Christians, we are called to be caretakers of: God's Creation - for the earth produces our nourishment. Each Other - for no person should face hunger alone. Truth in History - for silence allows evil to repeat itself.

Let our Thanksgiving table become a place of prayer and remembrance, a place where gratitude leads to action: feeding the vulnerable, supporting the poor, and defending life in every form.
May every parish this year organize or support a charitable effort: Food drives; Meals for the homeless; Assistance to families in crisis; Continued Humanitarian Aid to Ukraine and to the local Food banks, as we are inspired to do so by the Ukrainian Orthodox League's Holodomor initiative.

By doing so, we join the first Americans who shared what they had with strangers - and we honor the memory of our ancestors who were denied the bread necessary to live.

With gratitude for each of you, and with prayer that your homes may be filled with peace, love, and holy joy, we extend our archpastoral blessing.
May your Thanksgiving Day be a feast not only of food, but of compassion. Not only of celebration, but of remembrance. Not only of gratitude, but of love.

With Archpastoral blessings,
+Metropolitan Antony **+Archbishop Daniel**
+ + + + + + +

A Thanksgiving Prayer
Lord Jesus Christ, Giver of every good gift, receive our humble thanksgiving. Bless the food before us and the hands that prepared it. Remember those who hunger today and use us as instruments of Your mercy. Strengthen us to protect the life, dignity, and freedom of every person You have created.

For You are a Merciful and Loving God and to You we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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PASTOR'S CORNER
Thanksgiving Day

We as Americans celebrate on Thursday a special day set aside to give thanks to Almighty God for all the gifts that we have received throughout the year. It is a special day, one that should be filled with prayer, hope and peace.

We as Ukrainians can relate to the meaning of that first Thanksgiving Day. It was celebrated by those who had come from another land in search of religious freedom. Our own ancestors in many ways resemble those first Pilgrims. They also came to this great country in the pursuit of a better life and a place where they could freely worship God in their own Orthodox fashion.

Unfortunately, today's society no longer remembers why we celebrate this feast of Thanksgiving. I had read an article where there was a push to delete from the history books that the first Pilgrims came to America in pursuit of religious freedom. They have substituted a different political ideology as the reason for them making this journey.

We might say to ourselves, "But that is not right, no one will believe them." But alas, so many have already begun living that lifestyle. Thanksgiving Day has been a holiday relegated to the eating of the Turkey and stuffing and then lounging and watching the football games on TV. For some, saying the blessing before the meal only takes up time that could be better spent eating. To take a few minutes in prayer and giving thanks only brings us closer to missing the opening kickoff of the football game.

Let us not fall into that trap. Let us remember the importance of that first Thanksgiving Day and the importance of our ancestors traveling to this "New World", a place of opportunity both spiritual as well as economic. Let us take the time on Thursday to give thanks for all that God has bestowed upon us. Wednesday evening at 6:00 PM there will be a Moleben in Thanksgiving and Thursday morning at 8 AM a Liturgy of Thanksgiving offered on behalf of our entire Parish Community. Let us put God first on this Thanksgiving Day . Plan to attend the liturgical services of our Church.

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ANNOUNCEMNETS

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY - is expressed to. May God grant them a very happy birthday and keep them for many, happy and blessed years!

CALLING ALL BAKERS!!! – It is time again for the UOL Christmas Cookies Sale!! We could use all the help that we can get. Please bring at least 60 home-made cookies (NO chocolate chip, please) to the Church on Saturday, December 20 between 8 – 9AM. Thanks!!!!

TENTATIVE CALENDER OF EVENTS - 2025

Sunday, December 21 – UOL Christmas Cookie Sale – St. Nicholas

GREETER MINISTRY SCHEDULE

November 23 - Sonya Patronik
November 30 - David and Eve Lazaration
December 8 - Zina Twardus and Nancy Tur
December 15 - Kathy and Michael Chalfont
December 22 - Sandy Cramer

MEETINGS

Parish Board – Wednesday, December 10 @ 6:30 PM

MINISTRY SCHEDULE
(Please find a substitute if you cannot make a given week)
November 16 - Sonya Patronik and John Plachuta
November 23 – Linda Hnatow and Matthew Andreas
Novembre 30 – Linda Hnatow and Matthew Andreas
December 7 – Victor Kaliakin and Sonya Patronik
December 14 – Victor Kaliakin and Sonya Patronik
December 21 – John Plachuta and Linda Hnatow
December 28 – John Plachuta and Linda Hnatow

100th ANNIVRSARY – 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.

PYROHY – ORDERS (9-11AM) (302) 798-4588	**PICKUP**
Monday – Tuesday	**Friday**
December 1 & 2	
December 8 & 9	December 12

READERS MINISTRY SCHEDULE
November 23 - Thomas Sulpizi
November 30 - Pani Elizabeth Hutnick
December 7 - Linda Hnatow
December 14 - Jean Roeth
December 21 - Thomas Scholz
December 28 – John Plachuta
2026 – January 4 – Andrew Duncan

CLEANING OF THE CHURCH MINISTRY SCHEDULE
Week of November 24 - Thomas and Lynn Sulpizi
Week of December 1 - Nancy Hlywiak, Jean Roeth, Zina Twardus
Week of December 8 - Earle and Jennifer Robinson
Week of December 15 - Michael Tilson & Linda Hnatow, Irene Maskaly
Week of December 22 - John Plachuta and David Lazaration
Week of December 29 - Mark & Laura Andreas
2026 – Week of January 5 - Earle and Jennifer Robinson

UOL SPIRITUAL RETREAT – What a great Retreat!!!

THANKSGIVING SERVICE 2014 – will take place on Tuesday, November 25th beginning at 7:00 PM at the Ascension Episcopal Church. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend!

FAITH IN ACTION – We will be collecting non-perishable foods for the local food cupboard. The labels are in the office to be placed on each of the items. Let us think about those in need this holiday season and ley them never be hungry again.

HELPERS OF ST. NICHOLAS - Our Ukrainian Orthodox Church is accepting financial contributions to help those in need in Ukraine to have a blessed Christmas. Donations can be sent by using the QR Code on the poster or mailing your check to: UOC of USA; P.O. Box 495; South Bound Brook, NJ 08873; Memo: Helpers of St. Nicholas. Every dollar helps!!

FESTIVAL OF TREES – Special Thanks to Sandy Cramer for the beautiful job in decorating the tree donated by our Parish to help the Delaware Hospice. It is our Christmas giving sponsored by our Parish. Please take an envelope from the tree at the entrance and make your contribution. Please make the check out to the Church and one check will be sent.

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 Golovniov, Kathleen Gortva, Staci Gray, Charles Gunther, David Hamilton, Richard Haslam, Rick Hastings, Victoria Herrschaft, Carla Hitchings, Greg Hitchings, Alicia Hlywak, John Hlywak, Daniel Holoviak, 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

THE APOSTLE PHILIP (November 27)

When our Lord ascended into heaven, He gave the same command to all the Apostles: **"GO AND TEACH ALL NATIONS."** To His most trusted and intimate followers was entrusted the awesome responsibility of establishing the Church throughout the world.

Although the exploits of some of his contemporaries are documented in greater detail, the Apostle Philip certainly responded to his divine commission with zeal and enthusiasm, achieving a great deal of success in spreading the Gospel. Philip was given the task of ministering to the region known as Asia Minor. Accompanied by his sister Miriam and the Apostle Bartholomew, Philip labored tirelessly, winning large numbers of converts for Christ. Like St. Paul before him, this dedicated missionary from Bethsaida spent time in Athens, trying to turn the hearts of the inhabitants of this "center of learning" away from their pagan ways. While St. Paul's efforts there were in vain, it is said the Philip brought countless numbers into the Christian fold.

Philip returned to Asia Minor, where he encountered a great challenge in the region of Phrygia. The people there were reverting back to behavior that would be deemed "un-Christian" in character! A cult of snake worshippers were exerting a great deal of influence there, proclaiming that a certain viper of massive size was a god! In a miraculous display of strength and courage, Philip placed his hand on the snake, causing it to die immediately. The enraged leaders of this cult seized Philip, along with Bartholomew and Miriam and sentenced them to death by means of crucifixion. First, they took the holy Apostle Philip, bore holes in his anklebones, slipped cords through them, and crucified him head downwards. Philip was suspended from a tall cross set opposite the portals of the viper's temple and the people stoned him as he hung there. Then they crucified Bartholomew directly to the wall of the temple. Suddenly, a mighty earthquake struck and the earth split apart, swallowing the governor and all the pagan priests and a multitude of the impious citizens as well. The faithful and the unbelievers alike were struck with fear and all who remained alive begged the holy apostles to pray for them and to beseech the one true God not to allow the earth to devour them. They hastened to loose Bartholomew but Philip they could not easily untie, because he was hung high above the ground.

They began to remove Philip from the cross but found that he had already surrendered his soul into God's hands so they took down his body. Philip's sister, Miriam, who witnessed the sufferings and death of her brother, lovingly embraced and kissed his body when it was taken down from the cross. The people confessed and glorified the power of Christ with a mighty voice and asked to be baptized. Philip willingly gave up his life for the Lord on November 14th, 86 A.D.

Because the Nativity Fast begins on the day following the Feast of St. Philip, it has always been called St. Philip's Fast. The fast is 40 days long following the same prescriptions as the Fast before the Resurrection. Let us take the Fast seriously and prepare ourselves for the coming of our Lord in His Nativity on Dècember 25th