

ST. ANASTASIA (COMMEMORATED ON DECEMBER 22) Mary Kjendal

St. Anastasia lived during the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletian, a time when Christians were severely persecuted. St. Anastasia's father was pagan, while her mother was secretly a Christian. In her youth, Anastasia's teacher was a Christian named Chrysogonus. When her father arranged a wedding with a pagan named Publius, Anastasia refused, but she was forced to marry him anyway. Despite being a married woman, St. Anastasia remained a virgin. Many times, she dressed as a beggar, and she visited and cared for the Christians held captive in prisons. During those trips, Anastasia took only one servant with her. Her servant then told Publius about the visits, and Anastasia was severely punished. Later, Publius, drowned at sea. Then, Chrysogonus, Anastasia's former teacher was martyred. A Christian named Zoilus found his relics and preserved them. Theodota, Anastasia's friend and fellow minister to imprisoned Christians, and Theodota's three sons were martyred very soon after Chrysogonus. After surviving many tortures, St. Anastasia was finally burned alive. Then, a pious woman named Appolinaria buried St. Anastasia's unharmed body in her garden. Saint Anastasia is known as the "Deliverer from Potions" because, through her prayers, many people were healed from the effects of poisons.



HARVEST FAIR FOR HARVEY RAISED OVER \$ 3,300 FOR VICTIMS OF RECENT HURRICANES



SAINT MICHAELS WELCOMES EVERYONE! FATHER BEN KJENDAL (508) 420-1113
SUNDAY LITURGY 10:00 CHURCH SCHOOL 9:15 SATURDAY VESPERS 5 PM

Saint Michael Orthodox Church
62 Main Street
Cotuit, MA 02635



The Mission of Saint Michael the Archangel Church is to love and worship God, to grow closer to each other and to proclaim and to spread the Good News of the salvation of Jesus Christ to our parishioners, our neighbors and people everywhere. We worship and pray in English. We experience the beauty and joy of living the Holy Orthodox Christian Faith – sharing love and fellowship, teaching and leading by example, coming together through service, education, stewardship and forgiveness.

A MESSAGE FROM FATHER BEN...



To the church of Cape Cod and beyond: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ!

“Come and see.” These words of Jesus (John 1:39) called Andrew (and John the Evangelist) to follow Him, having been revealed as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world by the Prophet and Forerunner John the baptizer. The same words were used by Philip as he called Nathanael to also follow Jesus. In a season that begins with the commemoration of the Holy Apostle Philip (November 14) and includes the commemoration of the Holy

Apostle Andrew (November 30), these words become a theme for us as Orthodox Christians. Indeed, our Nativity fast and celebration of the feast are an invitation to all of us to “Come and see” – not just a baby in a manger, but rather the Son of God who has come into the world! It is not just that Christmas is coming again, but rather that we are again coming to Christmas. We are again called to enter into the very life of Christ. With the Theotokos we are called to enter in the temple that we might become temples of the Son of God.

The Nativity season is also known as the Winter Pascha. In this season the darkest nights of winter start to give way to an ever increasing light of day, heralding the victory of the Light and Life that shines forth in its fullness at the springtime Pascha, the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our celebration of the Lord’s coming in the flesh recognizes that the victory begins now. The very framework of the services of our Church during this time mirror the services of Pascha and lead us to enter into this glorious celebration. The preceding fast, beginning on November 14th, prepares us to come into the celebration of this feast as does Great Lent leading up to Pascha.

This wonderful Nativity season, as we spend time with family or friends, as we give and receive gifts, as we prepare and eat delicious meals, let us not forget the call that begins our journey to this Nativity celebration – “come and see”. Heed these words of Christ and of the Apostle Philip. Avail yourself of the many opportunities to draw near to Christ that He may also draw near to you. Attend the services that you might spend time with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Celebrate together the fast and the many feasts through which the gift of the Holy Spirit is poured upon you. Gather around the meal of thanksgiving in which we partake of the very body and blood of Christ to our salvation. Come and see, for God has come in the flesh! And may He who calls, give you peace.

Fr. Ben

EPIPHANY FOLLOWS CHRISTMAS – GET YOUR HOUSE BLESSED George Sowpel

The Feast of Theophany or as some call it – Epiphany – is on the 6th of January. It celebrates Jesus being baptized in the Jordan River and reminds us of renewal and shining forth of the light of Christ. As we enter the new calendar year, it is a time to refresh our mental, spiritual and physical countenances. Renewed reading of scriptures and more frequent prayer are often “resolutions” many make in addition to losing weight or going to the gym. Some begin to clean their houses in preparation for Lent and Pascha. It is also a very popular tradition to have one’s house or apartment blessed by the Priest. Not long ago priests would travel throughout a town on Sunday afternoons visiting the houses of parishioners to bless their home. In a parish we once belonged to, three or four homes would be scheduled for a weekend afternoon every week during January. The entire community would travel from house to house with the Priest - and the family whose house was being blessed would have an icon of the Theophany out on a table as well as snacks or sandwiches as the kids and adults came by, holding candles, singing hymns and following the Priest from room to room as he sprinkled Holy water on the walls, the icons and the beds. If a child was in the family he or she would lead the way with a lit candle! In our parish, Father Ben invites everyone to schedule a time when he can visit (most likely alone without the community in tow!) and Bless your house. It can take a few minutes and is a nice way to bring peace and the light of Jesus into our lives.



DIVERSE ETHNIC TRADITIONS HELP MAKE CHRISTMAS SPECIAL George Sowpel

The highpoint of the Christmas season for Orthodox faithful everywhere around the globe is celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The common element to this is breaking the Nativity fast and coming together for the Liturgy on Christmas Day. Local, regional and national traditions add to this celebration in their own unique and diverse ways. In Ukrainian households for example, the parish or family comes together to share prayers, songs and a meal of special foods as the first star appears in the sky on Christmas Eve. This meal is called *Svaty Vechr*. Symbolic foods such as honey and garlic represent the sweetness and bitterness of life. A wafer is passed around with each person saying what they are grateful for and what they hope for. Popular foods include pierogi, herring, mushroom soup and poppy seed cake. In Greece some families still decorate a small model boat with lights and ornaments in homage to the role the sea has played in their heritage. Carols or *kalanda* are sung and *kourambiethes* as well as traditional Christmas foods include sweet *melomakarona* and (or Christ's) bread *Christopsomo*. Jordan straw is put under the tablecloth to represent the setting is prepared for anyone who might just show up. Her family places straw under the placemats to ease in clean up and the ones who may visit. Straw is also an important item to some Middle Eastern families whose children leave it and water out for the "Littlest Camel" on Christmas Eve who is thought to have been blessed by Jesus since he was so young and fell down during the journey of the Magi. Arabic greetings at the Nativity include *Milad Majid* which translates to Glorious Birth. Lamb, *kibbeh*, and sweet almonds are some of the foods many Middle Eastern families break the fast with on Christmas. A Lebanese tradition is to plant chickpea or lentil seeds in cotton and wool several weeks before Christmas – after the children care for them, the small plants are placed near the Christmas tree or crèche on the Nativity to symbolize the birth of Christ. Serbians have a similar custom called *Psenica* which uses wheat grains planted on St. Nicholas Day. While all these traditions are meant to enrich the Christmas holiday, Orthodox of all ethnicities keep their focus on the true meaning of the season – the Nativity - and attending the Liturgy is the best way to make Christmas special.



Psenica - Serbian Nativity wheat

ST. NICHOLAS Nicholas Kjendal



Do you believe in Santa Claus? I do! Santa Claus is just another name for Saint Nicholas! St. Nicholas was the Bishop of Myra in the fourth century. He helped a poor family that had no money. Father Nicholas prayed to God at night in the church lit with candles to see how he could give God's love to the family. He came at night and secretly gave them three bags of money. After that, the three sisters were able to get married.

We commemorate Saint Nicholas on **December 6**. Some people leave their shoes out on the night of December 5. In the morning, you might get chocolate coins and a chocolate Saint Nicholas in your shoes to remember how Saint Nicholas gave gold coins to show God's love.

LOOKING AHEAD ...

- ❖ **November 20th** **Vespers for Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos, 6 PM**
- ❖ **November 21st** **Entrance of the Theotokos, Liturgy 8 AM**
- ❖ **December 6th** **Feast of St. Nicholas, Liturgy 8 AM**
- ❖ **December 24th** **Christmas Eve, Sunday Liturgy 10 AM. Vespers for Nativity at 6 PM**
- ❖ **December 25th** **Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Liturgy 8 AM**
- ❖ **January 1st** **Circumcision of Jesus, Liturgy 10 AM**
- ❖ **January 5th** **Prefeast of Theophany, Liturgy 5 PM**
- ❖ **January 6th** **Theophany, Liturgy 10 AM at St. George Cathedral, Worcester**
- ❖ **January 27th** **Food for Thought: 4 PM Discussion and dinner, 6 PM Vespers**

PUTTING OUR FAITH INTO ACTION - Matushka Alyssa

Thanksgiving Meals - For the third year in a row, our family at Saint Michael will be providing 30 Thanksgiving meals for families in need through Faith Family Kitchen in Hyannis. There are many ways you can be a part of this endeavor:

- *Donate generously. Each meal will cost about \$50.*
- *Join us to make Thanksgiving cards that will be included with each meal.*
- *Bake a pie (or 2 or 3) so each family has the opportunity to enjoy a homemade dessert.*
- *Volunteer to help shop for the food to be donated or be a part of the delivery team.*

These meals have been a huge blessing to so many families who struggle daily to put food in their mouths, clothes on their bodies, and a roof over their heads. Let's work together to make this Thanksgiving a little brighter and more bountiful for our neighbors in need.

Christmas Meals - Thanksgiving is not the only opportunity we have to share what God has given us with others! We will be donating Christmas meals again this year to struggling families at Faith Family Kitchen. Help ease the burden these families feel by:

- *Donating generously. Each meal will cost about \$50.*
- *Joining us to make Christmas cards that will be included in each meal and proclaim the Christmas message*
- *Baking a batch or two of your family's favorite Christmas cookies for one of the families who will be receiving a meal.*
- *Helping shop for the food or being a part of the delivery team.*

May the families who receive these meals come to more deeply know the hope, love, and joy that Christ brings to us!

Shopping With Purpose - Look out for forthcoming information about the families Saint Michael will "adopt" this Christmas and purchase gifts for. These families are experiencing hardships of varying degrees and are often unable to provide for their basic necessities. We will have the opportunity to help meet some of their daily needs through gifts of clothing, gas cards, and grocery cards, as well as treat these individuals to a few non-essential items.

Helping the Homeless - An alarming number of families and individuals on Cape Cod are homeless. Be part of the discussion about how we at St. Michael can work toward alleviating this devastating issue. Meetings will resume in the new year.

Winter Clothing Drive - Beginning in January, we will be collecting winter clothing to be donated to The Family Pantry of Cape Cod in Harwich. Clothing may be new or used, but it must be clean and in good condition. All winter items are accepted, including coats, hats, scarves, gloves, handbags, shoes, boots, etc.

Where else can we help the light of Christ shine? How else can we share the love of Christ? If you have an idea or see a need, please speak to Kh. Alyssa.

THE "GIVING" CHRISTMAS LIST - Erika Kjendal

As this Christmas season approaches, you might put together a Christmas list. Why? Because for centuries this has been part of the Christmas tradition; since the first Christmas when God gave the gift of Jesus, Himself, we give to others to reflect that same love and selflessness. Often, this takes the form of presents for our family and friends wrapped in pretty paper under a tree. Whether you're itching to buy that new video game for your nephew, or you really want to get a new doll for your granddaughter, you have a whole slew of to-be gift ideas. Let's rethink this. There are children (adults, too!) out there who don't get Christmas presents. Ever.

This year you can change that for those people and give a gift to those who need it most, like Jesus did. You can help families on an international level with a program called Heifer International (www.heifer.org/giftbetter), where you can give the gift of a farm animal of your choice to a family in need. Those animals, whose milk, eggs, wool, and strength, can literally be the difference between life or death for some families. Another bonus to Heifer International is that you can give the gift of

giving to your friends/family by saying, "Dear Aunt, I donated an animal in your name to a family in need."

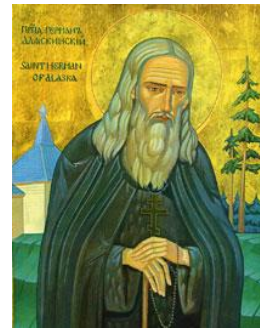
If you want to help on a more local level, though, you could try donating new toys for needy children through Toys for Tots (check out their website to find the location nearest you) or giving much needed items to a family through "Adopt-a-Family", a program that our church has done in the past to give requested gifts to specific families in need. Also, keep an eye out for more St. Michael happenings that you can help with!

Take action on what you want to give. Commit this list to paper, and try to help at least one family have a better Christmas. Someone, whether they live on Cape Cod or in another country entirely, will be grateful for the gift that you have wrapped in the love of Christ.



ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA Anders Kjendal

Our Holy Father, Saint Herman of Alaska, was born in Russia in 1757 to an Orthodox family. At the age of sixteen he became a monk for the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery. Father Herman then entered Valaam Monastery. In the September of 1794, St. Herman traveled to Alaska with nine other monks. He lived on a small island near Kodiak Island. He built a hut, a house for the orphans, and a chapel. He departed this life on the small island named Little Valaam in 1836. On August 9, 1970, St. Herman was canonized an Orthodox saint, and he is commemorated both on that day and on December 13. During his life he worked many miracles, including stopping a tidal wave and forest fire, and also gave many prophesies. Even after his death, Saint Herman performed many miracles.



IN STEP WITH OUR CHOIR DIRECTOR David Easa



In August I ran the Falmouth Road Race with an old friend - Randy Pierce, who is blind. I cannot stress enough how this is not about me because without Randy, I never would have done that. Randy has not always been blind, when I first met him in the early 90's he could see fine but because of a nerve problem he has lost 100% of his sight – he doesn't even see light and shadow. Randy has done some pretty amazing things since losing his sight, from running marathons (including Boston) to mountain climbing, skiing, tough mud competitions and more. He is a motivational speaker and he has started a non-profit organization called 20/20 Vision Quest that provides aid for kids with disabilities. He was also named New England Patriots Fan of the Year back in 2001 and Bud Light's 2016 Patriot's Super Fan!

So how did we hook up for the Falmouth road race? Well, having followed Randy and his accomplishments for years, I made a comment to him one day saying: "Randy, I wish I had the kind of commitment necessary to do some of the stuff you do". Apparently when someone says "I wish" to Randy it flips a switch in his mind, so he sent me a message back, saying basically, 'if you're serious, I'll do it'. Well, when someone like Randy makes you an offer like that, you get serious pretty quick. I started running in May. I had not run more than a handful of times since high school, so I had to train pretty seriously just to be able to finish the race, and what kept me going was the opportunity to do something I'd always wanted to do since moving to Cape Cod – that is, running the Falmouth Road Race, which has always seemed like an impossible aspiration for me – combined with the opportunity to do it with someone who had been a legitimate hero of mine for years!

We trained together once, before the race, using what is called a "rigid tether" system. I hold the front of his cane and he follows. My job is to steer, avoiding any hazards that I can, and to let him know about any obstacles that we have to encounter. Jumping ahead to the Race, what can I say, we made it! We finished the seven miles in One Hour and sixteen minutes which is an average of just under 11 minutes per mile, about the middle of the pack. The race was a lot of fun. We talked a lot, before, during and after the race, it was great catching up with an old friend. The health benefits of running have been

great as well, and hopefully the little bit of exposure for his organization will have some positive results. In addition, I've been in contact with an organization called "United in Strides" which matches up blind runners with guides, so that I could offer my services as a guide to blind runners both locally and who may be travelling to our area, and I've run a charity 5k race (3.1 miles, I finished 4th in my age group!) and I'm running in a charity 5k with my step-daughter Sam in November which is a great 'stride' in our relationship.



SOYO RETREAT RECAP

Three of the youth from our parish enjoyed a beautiful weekend this past month at the Saint Methodios Faith and Heritage Center in Contoocook, NH for the annual SOYO (Society of Orthodox Youth) gathering. The retreat was held in conjunction with the Diocese of Worcester and New England's first Family Camp. The youth and families worshipped and prayed together, as well as had opportunity to share time in fellowship canoeing, playing basketball, fishing, creating arts & crafts, and much more. The youth helped run a carnival for the Family Camp children, as well as spent time with their peers deepening their understanding of our Faith and how to live their lives as Orthodox youth.

"Amazing! I would love to go there again!" - Chase Clough

"It was an awesome and amazing experience! I hope I can go next year." - Anders Kjendal

"I had a blast canoeing on the lake enjoying the fall scenery and taking in the peaceful atmosphere filled with the love of God." - Erika Kjendal

Let me put it all together by saying this: One little statement, "I Wish", has led to amazing things, none of which would have happened if the statement had been made to anyone other than Randy Pierce. So all I can say is keep your ears open, because you might be that person for someone else, and if there are goals you want to accomplish, say something, and don't be afraid to get serious. There's no limit to what you can accomplish if you set your mind to it!

PARISH WIDE PLANNING SESSION DRIVEN BY PARISHIONER INPUT George Sowpel/ Joe Rahal

On Saturday September 30th parishioners met together in a half day workshop to help plan specific goals and activities that will enable our parish community to carry out our mission and vision in the years ahead. Ideas and goals ranged from the short term - distributing prayer books and icons to our parishioners so they can expand their liturgical life, to the long term such as forming a committee as a way to broaden the inclusion of various ethnic traditions in our spiritual lives. Although we had advertised for a long period looking for parish wide participation in this session, turnout could have been much better – but the passion and interest of those attending was incredible. Our kids got involved as well, and the sense of collaboration among everyone was uplifting. The next step will see the Council leadership meeting to coordinate the ideas and activities developed. Everyone is always welcome at Parish Council meetings – so feel free to come and share your ideas and thoughts. All members are encouraged to lend support to these upcoming projects – for in working together we find strength in our own lives. This planning process is a key element of stewardship – giving of our time and talent, not just money. Too often we think of stewardship only in terms of giving money. Getting involved in one or more of these is an opportunity to expand our role as a steward of St Michael’s – please consider giving of your time and talent as we implement the many ideas and activities (some listed below) from our September 30 meeting. It is easy and rewarding to share with others what God has provided each and everyone one of us. Please talk to one of the team leaders, Fr. Ben or those on the Parish Council for more info.

Vision Statement 1. Advance spiritual and charitable outreach
Goal 1.1 Beginning in 2018 partner with local charitable organizations to build relationships, learn about fundraising opportunities
Goal 1.2 By September 2018, become part of a monthly rotation of serving dinners at faith family kitchen in Hyannis
Goal 1.3 By Lent 2018 establish an “Adopt-a-Seminarian” program for men within our Diocese

Vision Statement 2. Promote generational parish growth
Goal 2.1 Grow the present membership by 10% every year over the next five years
Goal 2.2 Determine if there is a need for the physical expansion of the church by the 2019 annual meeting.
Goal 2.3 Continue to grow and build an active youth group with 90% participation of all eligible parish youth.

Vision Statement 3. Foster fuller participation in the liturgical life of the parish
Goal 3.1 Create 50 liturgical kits for parishioners by February 6 that include an icon, candle, prayer book, and a calendar
Goal 3.2 Bible Study monthly by January 2018
Goal 3.3 Use social media to improve communication around the liturgical life of the parish and church year and spiritual topics

Vision Statement 4. Embrace the cultural diversity of the parish
Goal 4.1 By May 2018 begin a series of quarterly workshops/teaching events led by different members of our church, to teach us about their unique culture and place in church history
Goal 4.2 On a consistent basis, begin, to use the term ‘Pan-Orthodox’ on all materials and discussions related to St. Michael.
Goal 4.3 Create a closed online group for sharing things, thoughts, questions, prayers, in three months.



INTERNATIONAL BAKE SALE



Please join us for the annual International Food Festival which will be held on Saturday, November 18 from 10:00am to 2:00pm. There will be many ethnic specialty foods packaged "to go" for you to bring home to share with your family and friends over the holiday. Bring your friends and stay

to enjoy a delicious lunch!!! This is the St Michael the Archangel Women's Group's major fundraiser for the year. The profit from your purchases goes to support our parish. This is an excellent opportunity to fill your freezer with amazing "Home Made" specialties to serve your guests over the next busy weeks!!! For information on how you can join the effort call Elaine Burke at (540) 272-0433.

PARISH LEADERSHIP			
President – Joe Rahal jrahal@rahalconsulting.com	Treasurer – Soraya Bandeli sbandeli@pegasus3logistics.com		
Vice President – John Abodeely	Asst. Treasurer – Pauline Rassias	Secretary – Pam Hitchins	Corresponding Secretary – Patti Sowpel
Choir Director – David Easa	Church School – Natalie Leva	Women’s Group President – Elaine Burke emacburke@gmail.com	
Council Members at large – Paul Manikas, Anastasia Klokova			

NATIVITY OF CHRIST



Image from OCA website

From the OCA website – description of the Feast of Nativity:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in the city of Bethlehem during the reign of the emperor Augustus (Octavian). Caesar Augustus decreed that a universal census be made throughout his Empire, which then also included Palestinian Israel. The Jews were accustomed to be counted in the city from where their family came. The Most Holy Virgin and the Righteous Joseph, since they were descended from the house and lineage of King David, had to go to Bethlehem to be counted and taxed.

In Bethlehem they found no room at any of the city’s inns. Thus, the God-Man, the Savior of the world, was born in a cave that was used as a stable.

“I behold a strange and most glorious mystery,” the Church sings with awe, “Heaven, a Cave; the Virgin the Throne of the Cherubim; the Manger a room, in which Christ, the God Whom nothing can contain is laid.” (Irmos of the 9th Ode of the Nativity Canon).

Having given birth to the divine Infant without travail, the Most Holy Virgin “wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger” (Luke 2:7). In the stillness of midnight (Wisdom of Solomon 18:14-15), the proclamation of the birth of the Savior of the world was heard by three shepherds watching their flocks by night.

An angel of the Lord (Saint Cyprian says this was Gabriel) came before them and said: “Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). The humble shepherds were the first to offer worship to Him Who condescended to assume the form of a humble servant for the salvation of mankind. Besides the glad tidings to the Bethlehem shepherds, the Nativity of Christ was revealed to the Magi by a wondrous star. Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Theophylactus, commenting on Saint Matthew’s Gospel, say that this was no ordinary star. Rather, it was “a divine and angelic power that appeared in the form of a star.” Saint Demetrius of Rostov says it was a “manifestation of divine energy” (Narrative of the Adoration of the Magi). Entering the house where the Infant lay, the Magi “fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh” (Mt. 2:11).

The Nativity of Christ has long been counted as one of the Twelve Great Feasts. It is one of the greatest, most joyful and wondrous events in the history of the world. The angel said to the shepherds, “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, glorifying God and saying: Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Those who heard these things were astonished at what the shepherds told them concerning the Child. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen” (Luke 2:10-20).

Thus the Nativity of Christ, a most profound and extraordinary event, was accompanied by the wondrous tidings proclaimed to the shepherds and to the Magi. This is a cause of universal rejoicing for all mankind, “for the Savior is Born!”

Concurring with the witness of the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church, in their God-inspired writings, describe the Feast of the Nativity of Christ as most profound, and joyous, serving as the basis and foundation for all the other Feasts.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



Image from Neil Ward

Church of the Nativity – Bethlehem



Location within the Church where tradition says Jesus was born – an altar stands above it



Artist drawing of the Church as it looked in 1833