

Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:**For health of:**

Aunt **Jean** and **Sandra** on their birthdays, offered by Linda and Richard.
Maribeth Romanofsky on her birthday, offered by her family.
MaryAnn Kuzemchak on her birthday, offered by her family.

Readings:

- **Colossians 3:4-11** (2 Sundays before the Nativity)
- **Luke 14:16-24** (2 Sundays before the Nativity)

BRETHREN, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

Saturday service: Vespers – 6:00 PM**Sunday service:**

Hours - 9:40 AM **Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM**
(Private Confession – Half hour before any service. Please don't delay the service.)

(General Confession – 9:45 AM on the first Sunday of each month)

(Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3rd Sunday of each month)

Church School – 9:30 AM

No Church School on the first Sunday of each month.

Coffee hour - after Liturgy

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy, downstairs, for Coffee hour.

Announcements:

- **There will be a second collection today for Nativity flowers and decorations.**
- **Our annual St Nicholas Day Celebration will be held today.** There will be a short Sunday School presentation followed by a pizza party and a visit from St Nicholas. If you would like your child to receive a gift from St Nicholas, please bring that gift, wrapped and with their name on it, in on that day. Again, all children are invited to participate.
- **Christmas Celebration -** We will celebrate the *Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ in the Flesh* with a **Vigil on Monday Dec. 24 at 6:30 PM**, and a **Liturgy on Tuesday Morning Dec. 25 at 10AM**. This is a very important Holy Day in the course of human Salvation, and Father hopes everyone will be here for all the services.
- Thank you to Tammy Zimmerman for conducting the cheesecake fundraiser. The Sisterhood made a profit of \$144.50. Thank you to all who purchased cheesecakes to support our church.
- To make a donation to the **Hurricane Sandy Diocesan Relief Fund**, please make checks payable to "Diocese of New York and New Jersey" with "Hurricane Relief" in the memo. **Mail to:** Hurricane Sandy Diocesan Relief Fund, c/o Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church, 285 French Hill Rd, Wayne NJ 07470-3976
- **The next meeting of the Parish Council will be December 30th**, after coffee hour.

Sunday of the Forefathers:

Two Sundays before the celebration of Christmas, the Orthodox Church rejoices in the festival of the **Holy Forefathers of the Old Covenant**, including those who came before the giving of the Law. The foretold the coming of the Messiah and are redeemed by his saving Pascha.

There is a great difference between *existing* and *living*. Many people exist. Very few really live. Only those who seek God have life. Only those who delight in His commandments and rejoice in accomplishing His will pass beyond mere existence and actually find life. *"Seek God, and your soul shall live"* (Ps 69:32, LXX). This is the cry of the psalmist David who is especially hymned on this Sunday and on the Sunday after Christmas. His exhortation is in perfect harmony with the words of God given to Moses in His revelation of the divine Law.

"See I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying His voice, and cleaving to Him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." (Deut 30:15-20)

The holy forefathers and mothers, together with all their descendants, have chosen life. They find it in God's Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is Life itself, God's incarnate Word. The celebration of the Winter Pascha is a celebration of Life in God's Word. For *"Christ who is our life"* has already appeared (Col 3:4). We have *"beheld His glory"* (Jn 1:14). Now that glory is hidden in the *"form of a slave"* (Phil 2:7), but it will be revealed at the end of the ages in power for those who *"have loved His appearing"* and *"live in Him"* (2 Tim 4:8; Col 2:6).

*You shone as heaven's lights upon the earth
Enkindling the light of piety.
You called forth the choir of all creation
As you sang to the Master who saves all from temptation,
"Bless Him, O children! Exalt Him, O priests!
Praise Christ, all people, throughout all the ages!"*

(An excerpt from *The Winter Pascha*, by Fr. Thomas Hopko)

See us on the web at: ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin
E-Mail us at: Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

Sunday Bulletin

Church of the Mother of God

"The Joy of All the Sorrowful"

115 Hudson St. Mays Landing, New Jersey 08330

**Very Reverend Doctor Matthew Searfoorce,
Temporary Rector**



**Glory to Jesus
Christ**

**Glory
Forever**

*You did not worship the graven image,
O thrice-blessed ones,
but armed with the immaterial Essence of God,
you were glorified glorified in a trial by fire.
From the midst of unbearable flames you called on God, crying:
Hasten, O compassionate One!
Speedily come to our aid,
for You are merciful and able to do as You will*

- Kontakion

Today the Church remembers:

Sunday of the Forefathers

- Prophet Haggai (Aggæus—50 B.C.) • Martyr Marinus of Rome (3rd c.)
- Bl. Empress Theophano (Theophania—893-4)

December 16, 2012

Nativity Fast

Tone 3 of the Octoechos

**2nd Sunday before Nativity
28th Sunday after Pentecost**