





# Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of the Holy Fathers

December 23, 2007

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor;  
Father John Cmur; Deacon Kenneth E. Ellis and  
Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris,  
Cantors

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

## We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

*It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 - 8.*

## GLAD TIDINGS

+++ We graciously invite all who join us in praise and prayer and celebration of the Lord's Birth to the Reception which follows in the Parish Center. Please make yourself available to enjoy Christian Fellowship as an opportunity to greet one another on this glorious feast of the Lord's Birth.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week-end: Tithe Offering, \$██████; Candles, \$██████; Kitchen, \$██████; Pennies From Heaven, \$██████; Candy Sales, \$██████; Nativity Flowers, \$██████; Nativity of our Lord, \$██████; Holyday, \$██████; Refund, \$██████; Christian Fellowship, \$██████; Building Fund, \$██████; Food Coupons, \$██████ for a total of \$██████. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 38 adults and 14 children last Sunday

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Bob Gorbich, Pani Lucas, Paul Szmaida, Father Lucas, and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$██████ from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish!

+++ **For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$██████. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.**

+++ Please check the Sign-Up-Sheet for the weekly Christian Fellowship for the coming weeks. Simple foods without need for preparation are the best. Marilyn Korba coordinates this vital apostolate. Please assist her in making it a success by bringing your donation early so that all are present at the worship of our God.

+++ Please be certain to see **Helen Karpiak** or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$██████ on this project to date!

+++ +++ **The weekly sponsor list for Christian Fellowship Food for this year is available to be filled out on the table in the kitchen. We appeal to ALL our parishioners to participate, not just a few, so that it is equitable and the responsibility shared by ALL.**

+++ **Confessions are hears prior to and after all the holyday celebrations. It is vitally important we prepare ourselves properly to celebrate this august fest with a cleaned soul and clear conscience.**

+++ **During this season of generous hearts, please do not forget the reason for the season and plan on a most generous gift to the new-born Child in the cave at Bethlehem. Remember it is HIS birthday, His celebration!**

+++ **Today at 9: 15 AM, we will celebrate a Memorial Service for the repose of the souls of +Paul Szmaida and +Peter Szmaida requested by George & Debra Szmaida. We pray the merciful Lord**



continues to comfort George and Debra in their loss and that He grants a blessed repose to the souls of +Paul and +Peter and that He creates for them Eternal Memory.

+++ The weekly sponsor list for Christian Fellowship Food for this year is available to be filled out on the table in the kitchen. We appeal to ALL our parishioners to participate, not just a few, so that it is equitable and the responsibility shared by ALL.

+++ The Bake Sale for the Nativity of our Lord was conducted the this past week on Friday and Saturday, December 14 and 15. Home-made cookies were prepared by Pani and daughters to be available at \$15.00 for a beautifully wrapped package at the Nativity Bake Sale. We thank all the good souls who appeared to prepare for, and to make a success of the event by securing orders and distributing them as well. We graciously invoke upon all the supporters and workers the plenitude of heavenly grace in good health for Many & Blessed Years.

+++ We continue to be in need of Web Site donor-sponsors. The amount is \$25.00 per month. Please see Father as soon as possible.

+++ Today the children of the Jesus School will meet after their class time to decorate the Jesse Tree in our church. We anticipate utilizing the big Nativity icon this year although our small chapel space is limited.

+++ We acknowledge with gratitude the sponsorship of the bulletin for this month of December by Paul & Eleni Pallas in thanksgiving for the many blessings received from our heavenly Father. May the gracious Lord continue to bless them and loved ones with good health for Many & Blessed Years!

+++ We remind our faithful early to plan on offering a seven day light to burn before the Nativity Icon as a sign of our prayerful welcome to the new-born Saviour.

+++ Please think about, pray and then act on the prompting of the Holy Spirit to be generous to our parish church and the Infant of Bethlehem for his birthday.

+++ Please remember no one has a reason for not being present at worship for the feast of the Nativity of our Lord. We will celebrate a Divine Liturgy at midnight and at the regular time in the morning. Father will celebrate at midnight and Father John will celebrate at 9: 30 AM in the morning.

+++ May all glory, adoration, worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

#### Web Site Address

Parish: [www.stpaul-freehold.com](http://www.stpaul-freehold.com)

Father's address: [fatherbob@stpaul-freehold.com](mailto:fatherbob@stpaul-freehold.com)



*Come*

*Let*

*Us*

*Adore*

*Him!*

## Sunday Of The Forefathers

Christ is about to be born in the flesh, so we glorify him! Christ comes down from heaven so we go out to greet him. Christ is on earth and we are exalted. So we sing to the Lord, as all the earth proclaims its joy at his coming. Heaven and earth together are about to rejoice and heavenly citizenry and that of earth is glad because of him who is of heaven becomes a citizen of earth. Christ is about ready to appear in the flesh, in our flesh, so with trembling we rejoice and our heart is elevated and our soul is exuberant because our unbounded hope is finally about to be satisfied and fulfilled. Christ is to be born of a Virgin and our lowly humanity is exalted. Enthralling splendor of our God which we cannot possibly in human sinfulness and limitation ever grasp.

The darkness is past; again Light is made anew. Again Egypt is punished with darkness and again Israel the faithful is enlightened by the pillar of light. The people that sat in the darkness of ignorance, of sinful limitation, let them see the Great Light full of knowledge. Old things are indeed passed away and behold all things are made new. The Law gives way and the Spirit enters with prominence. The shadows flee as Truth comes upon and overwhelms them.

This is indeed our festival of joy, of unlimited happiness when we bound up to heaven and join with the angels as they sing the praises of our God Who so loves us that He sends his only-begotten Son that we might have eternal life. We celebrate the coming of God to man that we might rightly return to God, that putting off the old man, we might put on the new, that as we all must die in Adam, so we might forever live in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Today we begin to follow the star and run with the Wise Men, gold and frankincense and myrrh in hand, we bring to a king and to our God and to the One who come to earth just for us. With shepherds, we glorify him; with angels we join in chorus of praise, with archangels we sing hymns. Join us then in celebration with the angelic powers of heaven and participate in our exaltation and keep this holy feast with seriousness today, tomorrow, and the days that follow.

The angels cannot contain their joy because of the magnanimity of our heavenly Father as they love us because they love God. Travel without fault through every

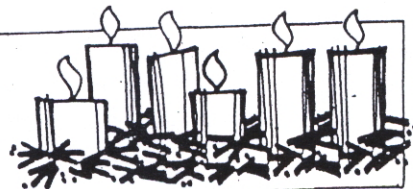


stage and faculty of love in this new born Prince of Peace. Be purified, be presented in the temple with him, strip off the veil which has covered you from birth. After that listen to him as He teaches in the temple and drives out the sacrilegious traders. Submit with us to be stoned if need be...if brought before Herod, answer not for the most part. If scourged, remind them if they should leave out the taste of gall, to eagerly drink the vinegar. Look to be spat upon; accept the beatings, be crowned gladly with thorns, that is, with the difficulties of a godly life pursued honestly and eagerly. Put on with anticipation the purple robe; take the reed voluntarily and receive the mock worship and seeming respect from those who would mock the truth. Lastly, be crucified with him and reign with him for all eternity.

Permit to begin, as He is placed in the manger, a new life which ends in eternity at His right side. Look upon the Infant of Bethlehem and allow yourself to be noticed by and looked upon by the Infant of Bethlehem, this great God of ours who did not count our human weaknesses for nothingness as an obstacle to expressing His love, Who in the Blessed Trinity is worshipped and glorified and whom we declare to be and set forth clearly before you as the chains of our sinful flesh attempt to pull us away from Jesus Christ our Lord. He is our God and we know no other and we bow before and worship no other. He is our God and we need no other. He is our God and we praise and serve and adore no other. We glorify him, we exalt and extol him and we praise and worship him and we honor him because of the unfathomable love with which He first loves us.

As we are about to celebrate the feast of the eternal generation of the Divine Son by our heavenly Father before all time began and as we glorify our heavenly Father for sending the Divine Son in human flesh to redeem and save us, we wish and pray all of you, with your family friends and loved ones, will be here tonight, tomorrow and the next few days to be overjoyed in heart and soul that salvation has come among us, that our God visits us, that we are reawakened from spiritual slumber by the Infant Son of God who never sleeps, to celebrate the beginning of eternal life for faithful followers and believers. Amen.

O, Come  
O, Come  
Emmanuel



## Feeling God's Glory

*The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them* Luke 2: 9. We all expect to experience in our lives the power, the peace and the loving presence of our Creator God. Though some have tended to minimize the experience of God, depicting faith as a journey in total darkness looking for and expecting the light that comes only after death. Believers take strong exception to this kind of faith experience.

Limited though they may be in this life, we need – and God is willing to provide – moments of Mount Tabor. It was on Mount Tabor that Peter, James and John saw for a brilliant moment the glory of God shining out of the person of Jesus Christ. It is this glory that is introduced into the darkened-by-sin world at the forthcoming feast of the Nativity of our Lord. There are transforming moments in the lives of each of us, when the light of God penetrates our darkness and the beauty of God delights our minds and our hearts. Otherwise, faith would mean a very lonely existence.

Despite the potential for delusion, a true spiritual experience remains not only a distinct possibility but an absolute need if one is to grow in the life of faith. Obviously, the experiences will always be unique to the individual. No two people will ever experience the reality of faith in precisely the same way.

How can we tell genuine from delusory religious experience? Three tests may be applied, the tests of time, of reality and of charity. If our heavenly Father touches people, the effects will endure and the people will never be the same again. The experience of our heavenly Father, by the working grace of the Holy Spirit is genuine if a person can say healthy “Amen” to the gift of life, if the person becomes more aware and sensitive to the beauty and pain of the real world. Finally, our heavenly Father enters human life on this glorious forthcoming feast with the Incarnation of his divine Son and the result must be that the person touched will become more loving and self-abandoning. Experiences that produce only complacency and self-righteousness are not from heaven, they are elementary and invited simple delusions.

*Do the experiences we have as we are about to celebrate the coming of salvation in God's only begotten Son stand the three tests of time, reality and charity? If not, what must we do to restore ourselves as created in God's image?*



body, an external physical appearance. But under the surface beauty or ugliness, in a deeper mode of existence, is a person, a person with broken dreams, and newborn hopes, a person of loneliness and in need of love. And somehow, in an even deeper way, in the very center of that person is the eternal Father in virtue of our Baptism.

*Lord God Almighty, help me during these last days of the Nativity Fast to see you in others, especially by your presence in my own life, that I might respectfully and positively respond particularly to those I would prefer to avoid, whether at home, at work or simply in the world you created and have given me to share with others.*

## **Kindness**

*Let us pursue what leads to peace and to building up one another* Romans 14: 19. In loving, there are three important stages: Kindness, a warm assurance that “I am on your side; I care about you”; Encouragement, a strong reassurance of your own strength and self-sufficiency; and Challenge, a loving but firm exhortation to action.

Kindness. Someone has wisely said that people do not care how much you claim to love them until they know how much you care. To build a relationship on any foundation other than kindness is to build on sand. I have to be assured you really want my happiness and fulfillment and my growth, that you are really there for me or I won't open myself up to you.

Encouragement. What all people need most is to believe in themselves. They need confidence in their own ability to take on the problems and opportunities of life. To “en-courage” means to put courage in. Encouragement instills into the recipient a new and fuller self-awareness of his or her own powers.

Challenge. Challenge is the loving and propelling push we give to others to use their strength, to employ God's grace imparted to them, to cooperate with it that we become all He expects of us, all He created us to become. “Go for it!” “Try again!” If you succeed or if you fail, I will be right at your side. You will not be alone.” Is this not the very message of our Saviour to each of us?

*Consequently, the three rules and requirements of dealing with others are kindness, kindness and kindness. Do we need to closely examine ourselves as we prepare to approach the manger in Bethlehem to see how well we fulfill these rules?*

## Love Is More Than A Feeling

*Let your 'yes' mean 'yes' and your 'no' mean 'no'* Matthew 6: 37. When the satisfaction, happiness and security of another is as real to you as your own, you truly love that person. This desire to see another satisfied, fulfilled, happy and secure is not just a fleeting feeling. Feelings are an emotional response, transient and ambivalent, depending on circumstances which always can change. Love is rather an act of the will, an actual decision as plain as "I am going to love you" and certainly an irrevocable commitment, "I will say and do and be whatever you need for your satisfaction, fulfillment, happiness and security." In other words, I decide that I am going to love you as I love myself because my love is based on God's actual love for me; I am reflecting God's love through my person. And I am going to provide as best I can whatever promotes your true and lasting happiness which actually means I desire your salvation just as zealously and ardently as I desire salvation for myself.

This is what true love is, not to be confused with the superficial nonsense we read about in our culture. This the way our God approaches us. And this is the love that must be the motive of all communication. Like many other things, a motive can be recognized by its consequences or results. "By your fruits you shall know them."

*Dear Lord, everything should be designed to generate enduring sentiments of love which abound during this sacred season which we use to prepare for your coming among us. Help us to put our commitment to others into acts of loving kindness.*

## Loving One Another

*Love one another as I love you* John 15: 12. We do not have anything that is worthy to give our God. Our heavenly Father already has everything. However, in the revelation of Christ to believers, we can clearly direct our love to God's first shown love in a form of authentic charity towards our neighbor by actually being an example of living faith to inspire and affirm them. In fact, Jesus calls this love which we have for another the badge of his discipleship. All this is perhaps obvious to anyone who has read the New Testament carefully and lived by the example of the Saviour. What is not as obvious, perhaps, is that the ability to love one another is God's distinct gift to each of us. We do not win the favor of God by loving one another, but rather it is the favor of God that enables us to love each other.

Only the eyes of faith can see beneath the surface of things. Faith deepens us not only in our unity with our heavenly Father, but in our unity with each other. The first thing we see is a



# Wisdom! Be Attentive

*Through faith, O Christ, You justified the patriarchs, for through them, You made a commitment to a Church with gentiles. These saint are glorified because from them descends the Virgin who gave You birth. Through their prayers, O Christ our God, have mercy on us* Troparion, Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, the Patriarchs.

*You did not worship a man-made image, O thrice-blessed youths! Protected by a power beyond description, you were glorified in the test of fire. From the searing flames you cried out to God, saying; "Hasten to help us, O merciful Lord, for in your greatness, You can do whatever You will* Kontakion of the Three Holy Youths.

*Blessed are You, and praiseworthy, O Lord, the God of our fathers and glorious forever is your Name* Prokimenon, Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, the Patriarchs.

*Great are the deeds performed with faith by three youths rejoicing in the flaming furnace as if they stood in refreshing waters; and Daniel the Prophet faced lions as though they were sheep. Through their prayers, O Christ our God, save our souls* Troparion, Sunday of the Holy Fathers.

*Rejoice, O Bethlehem and make ready O Ephrata! Behold a Virgin is on her way to give birth to the Great Shepherd she carries in her womb. The God-bearing forefathers will rejoice at his sight and together with the shepherds, they will glorify him in the Virgin's arms* Kontakion, Preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord.

*At that time, since Mary was of the house of David, she registered with the venerable Joseph in Bethlehem. She was with child, having conceived virginally. Her time was come, and they could find no room in the inn, but the cave seemed a joyful palace for the Queen. Christ is to be born to renew the likeness that had been lost of old* Troparion, Vigil of the Nativity of our Lord.

*Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth in a manner beyond understanding to the Word who is eternal. Rejoice, therefore, universe, when you hear it heralded together with the angels and the shepherds, glorify him who chose to be seen as a new-born Child, while remaining God for all eternity* Kontakion, Vigil of the Nativity of our Lord.



Wisdom Of  
The

Byzantine  
Fathers

The virgin did not later enter into physical relations for it is not possible that the one who bore God, who was worthy of carrying God in her womb, would subsequently have carnal relations with a man St. John Chrysostom.

Do not speculate beyond the text. Do not require of it something more than what it simply says. Do not ask, "But precisely how was it that the Spirit accomplished this in a virgin?" For even when nature is at work, it is impossible to fully explain the manner of the formation of a person. How, then, when the Spirit is accomplishing miracles, shall we be able to express their precise causes? Lest you should weary the writer or disturb him by continually probing beyond what he says, he has indicated what it was that produced the miracle. He then withdraws from further comments. "I know nothing more," he in effect says, "but that what was done was the work of the Holy Spirit." St John Chrysostom.





## **DON'T BE OBSESSED WITH POSSESSIONS!**

**I**t may surprise you to know that these very Christ-like words were uttered by the pagan Greek philosopher Socrates, who lived some 400 years before our Lord came into the world! It is said that Socrates loved to visit the market place, where he would spend considerable time admiring the great abundance of wares for sale and on display. When asked by a friend why he did this, Socrates replied: "I love to discover how many things I am perfectly happy NOT having!"

Sadly, we live in a society that is totally the opposite in its thinking. The more we have, the more we seem to want. Advertisers easily convince us that we need a bigger home, a faster car and every new electronic gadget imaginable if we are to be truly happy. But what does our Lord say about this? Read Matthew 6:19-20: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But rather lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . ." Our Lord also warns us about worrying too much about what to eat, drink and wear, reminding us that our Heavenly Father is very much aware of our needs. Listen to what St. Paul writes to his young disciple Timothy: "Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and into a snare and into many foolish and harmful lusts . . . for the love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim. 6:9-10)

Indeed, don't be obsessed with possessions, but rather, "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteous, and all things will be given to you." (Matthew 6:33)

*The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin* . . . . . Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey . . . . . Litho in U.S.A.