



# ST. ELIA'S NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2018

**ХРИСТОС РОЖДАЄТЬСЯ!  
СЛАВІМО ЙОГО!**

**CHRIST IS BORN!  
LET US GLORIFY HIM!**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ▪ **EVE OF THEOPHANY**

**January 18, Thursday at St Eila**

**Blessing of water at 5:30pm**

followed by our Blessed Jordan Supper.

- Adults: \$15.00

- Youth 6~18: \$10.00

- Children under 6: Free

\* *Please buy your tickets at the church office in advance so the caterer can be advised of the number to prepare for.*

### ▪ **KOLYADKY CONCERT**

**January 28, 2018 at 6:00pm**

at St Michael by the Cantors Association

### ▪ **Mid-month fellowship**

**January 14, after Divine Liturgy**

\* Details on page 8

**Alex Werstiuk** donated the poinsettias decorating our church for Christmas in memory of his family. Thank you Alex!

*"Come, let us wonder at the virgin most pure, wondrous in herself, unique in creation, she gave birth, yet knew no man; her pure soul with wonder was filled, daily her mind gave praise in joy at the twofold wonder: her virginity preserved, her child most dear. Blessed is He who shone forth from her!"*

+St. Ephraim the Syrian, Songs of Praise

## CONTACTS

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St. Elia: [www.uocc-stelia.ca](http://www.uocc-stelia.ca)

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada: [www.uocc.ca](http://www.uocc.ca)

Western Eparchy: [www.uocc-we.ca](http://www.uocc-we.ca)

### • **CLERGY**

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[geopod@telusplanet.net](mailto:geopod@telusplanet.net)

Rev. Fr. Dr. Roman Shiyani

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\* *If you want to share an event, story, or photos with our Ukrainian Orthodox community, please send the information to [bpanchuk52@gmail.com](mailto:bpanchuk52@gmail.com)*

## PATRIARCHAL PROCLAMATION FOR CHRISTMAS

**Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, dear children,**

By the grace of God, we are once again deemed worthy to reach the great feast of the birth of the divine Word in the flesh, who came into the world to grant us “well-being,” remission of sin, of captivity to the works of the law and death, in order to grant us true life and great joy, which “no one can take from us.”

We welcome the “all-perfect God,” who “brought love into the world,” who becomes “closer to us than we to ourselves.” Through kenosis, the divine Word condescends to the created beings in “a condescension inexplicable and incomprehensible.” He “whom nothing can contain” is contained in the womb of the Virgin; the greatest exists in the least. This great chapter of our faith, of how the transcendent God “became human for humankind,” while remaining an “inexpressible” mystery. “The great mystery of divine Incarnation ever remains a mystery.”

This strange and paradoxical event, “which was hidden for ages and generations,” is the foundation of the gift of human deification. “There is no salvation in anyone else; for there is no other human name beneath heaven through which we must be saved.”

This is the supreme truth about salvation. That we belong to Christ. That everything is united in Christ. That our corruptible nature is refashioned in Christ, the image is restored and the road toward likeness is opened for all people. By assuming human nature, the divine Word establishes the unity of humanity through a common divine predestination and salvation. And it is not only humanity that is saved, but all of creation. Just as the fall of Adam and Eve impacts all of creation, so too the Incarnation of the Son and Word of God affects all of creation. “Creation is recognized as free when those who were once in darkness become children of light.” Basil the Great calls us to celebrate the holy Nativity of Christ as the “common feast of all creation,” as “the salvation of the world-humanity’s day of birth.”

Once again, the words that “Christ is born” are unfortunately heard in a world filled with violence, perilous conflict, social inequality and contempt of foundational human rights. 2018 marks the completion of seventy years since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which, after the terrible experience and destruction of World War II, manifested the common and noble ideals that all peoples and countries must unwaveringly respect. However, the disregard of this Declaration continues, while various abuses and intentional misinterpretations of human rights undermine their respect and realization. We continue either not to learn from history or not to want to learn. Neither the tragic experience of violence and reduction of the human person, nor the proclamation of noble ideals have prevented the continuation of aggression and war, the exaltation of power and the exploitation of one another. Nor again have the domination of technology, the extraordinary achievements of science, and economic progress brought social justice and the peace that we so desire. Instead, in our time, the indulgence of the affluent has increased and globalization is destroying the conditions of social cohesion and harmony.

The Church cannot ignore these threats against the human person. “There is nothing as sacred as a human being, whose nature God Himself has shared.” We struggle for human dignity, for the protection of human freedom and justice, knowing full well that “true peace comes from God,” that the transcendent mystery of the Incarnation of divine Word and the gift of human deification reveals the truth about freedom and humanity’s divine destiny.

In the Church, we experience freedom through Christ, in Christ and with Christ. And the very summit of this freedom is the place of love, which “does not seek its own” but “derives from a pure heart.” Whoever depends on himself, seeks his own will, and is self-sufficient-whoever pursues deification by himself and congratulates himself-only revolves around himself and his individual self-love and self-gratification; such a person only sees others as a suppression of individual freedom. Whereas freedom in Christ is always oriented to one’s neighbor, always directed toward the other, always speaks the truth in love. The aim of the believer is not to assert his or her rights, but rather “to follow and fulfill the rights of Christ” in a spirit of humility and thanksgiving.

This truth about the life in Christ, about freedom as love and love as freedom, is the cornerstone and assurance for the future of humankind. When we build on this inspired ethos, we are able to confront the great challenges of our world, which threaten not only our well-being but our very survival.

The truth about the “God-man” is the response to the contemporary “man-god” and proof of our eternal destination proclaimed by the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church (Crete, 2016): “The Orthodox Church sets against the ‘man-god’ of the contemporary world the ‘God-man’ as the ultimate measure of all things. “We do not speak of a man who has been deified, but of God who has become man.” The Church reveals the saving truth of the God-man and His body, the Church, as the locus and mode of life in freedom, “speaking the truth in love,” and as participation even now on earth in the life of the resurrected Christ.”

The Incarnation of the divine Word is the affirmation and conviction that Christ personally guides history as a journey toward the heavenly kingdom. Of course, the journey of the Church toward the kingdom, which is not realized remotely or independently of historical reality-or its contradictions and adventures-has never been without difficulties. Nevertheless, it is in the midst of these difficulties that the Church witnesses to the truth and performs its sanctifying, pastoral and transfiguring mission. “Truth is the pillar and ground of the Church ... The pillar of the universe is the Church ... and this is a great mystery, a mystery of godliness.”

Brothers and sisters, children in the Lord,

Let us celebrate together with the grace of the divine Word, who dwelt in us, as well as with delight and fullness of joy the feasts of the Twelve Days of Christmas. From the Phanar we pray that our Lord and Savior who was incarnate out of condescension for all people may in this coming new year grant everyone physical and spiritual health, along with peace and love for one another. May He protect His holy Church and bless the works of its ministry for the glory of His most holy and most praised Name.

X Bartholomew of Constantinople  
Your fervent supplicant before God

### **Greetings from Metropolitan YURIJ for the New Ecclesiastical Year**

**Your Graces, Reverend Clergy, God-loving Brothers and Sisters,  
Dear Youth and Children!  
Glory to Jesus Christ!**

We greet you on the occasion of the beginning of the New Ecclesiastical Year (September 14 according to the Gregorian Calendar) which we are entering with the blessing of “The Father, God Almighty, Master of heaven and earth, all things visible and invisible (Symbol of Faith).

The Ecclesiastical Year is not only a special calendar which encompasses part of 2017 and 2018 of the state calendar but is a certain order of moveable and immovable feast days around which we organize our prayer-life.

We begin this New Ecclesiastical Year with hope we as individuals, parishes, society will attain that which we did not attain in the past that there will be development and progress in our “visible and invisible” life. The new Ecclesiastical Year coincides with the beginning of the New School Year and we see, at best among our youth, progress in that ,they enter into a higher class on the way to higher learning. And we wish them success and great achievements in their studies and all encompassing development.

This is the time when our parishes, organizations and institutions again reactivate after the summer’s rest. This is the time of harvest when the earth gives its bountiful fruits to feed humanity and live-stock. In all of

this the Lord, God the Creator gives us wide possibilities to utilize our free will to create for ourselves as individuals and as a society paradise or hell on earth. With unlimited love toward us He allows us to see and feel the consequences of our choices. He does not limit our will. Whether we love our Creator and express that love with respect towards our environment and towards our neighbours depends on ourselves.

In this year on September 1, 2017 His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I, and His Holiness Pope Francis issued a joint epistle regarding respecting our environment. All of us should familiarize ourselves with this important document.

Already, at the beginning of this year we are witnesses of various natural disasters—earthquakes, hurricanes, forest fires. We are witnesses of wars, genocides, acts of terrorism, mass killings. All of these are the result of human sinfulness.

The New Ecclesiastical Year calls on us to turn away from sinful living to take a different path closer to the Holy Commandments. In all of these crimes and tragedies we also see the goodness of those who come with help for the needy. These tragedies cause humanity to ponder about good and evil.

This New Ecclesiastical Year includes a historical anniversary for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. This is the centenary of the historical assemblies in 1918 that led to the organization of the Ukrainian "Greek-Orthodox Church of Canada"

In August 2018 in the City of Saskatoon the Celebratory Sobor and appropriate program will take place to worthily celebrate the centenary of our Church.

We ought to prepare ourselves appropriately for these commemorations and come to Saskatoon in great numbers to complete the centenary and begin the second centenary of our UOCC. Throughout the whole year we should also mark the anniversary at the parish, regional and eparchy levels.

Throughout this New Ecclesiastical Year we wish you good health, spiritual growth and certainty in the love and care of the Heavenly God for the world and everyone of us.

With love in Christ and Hierarchical blessing,  
† Yurij, Archbishop of Winnipeg and the Central Eparchy,  
Metropolitan of All Canada, Primate of the UOCC

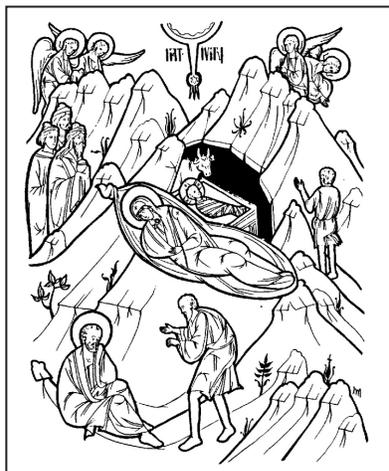
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### **Nativity Greetings from His Grace Bishop ILARION**

З нами Бог!

Вітаю вас з Різдвом  
Христовим!

Нехай  
Новонароджений  
Христос принесе Вам  
добре здоров'я,  
добробут, душевний  
спокій та радість у  
Новому Році.



God is with us!

I greet you on this  
occasion of the Great  
Nativity Feast.

May the newborn  
Lord bring good health,  
prosperity, inner peace,  
and joy to all of you  
in the New Year!

**Message from Parish Priest, Father Georg Podtepa**

**CHRIST IS BORN!                    LET US GLORIFY HIM!**

**ХРИСТОС РОЖДАЄТЬСЯ!            СЛАВІМО ЙОГО!**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

The birth of the Saviour Jesus Christ — this is the subject and the greatest event of world history.

According to St. Basil the Great. Rejoice, O Brethren, with great joy. Sing, glorify Him, be thankful, and come to the cave in order to venerate the Lord of glory. "The Word became flesh,"

St. Athanasius wrote, "in order to make man receptive of divinity. He became poor in order that we through his poverty might become rich. He descended, that He might raise us up. He was tempted, that we might conquer. He accepted the worst, to give us the best."

Christ the Savior was born in the town of Bethlehem. The Prophet Isaiah, with his prophetic eyes, sees Him being born of a virgin in a cave. Moreover, Isaiah sees Him being accepted in the manger by the irrational animals and being rejected by the people of Israel.

Micah foretold that the Redeemer would be born in Bethlehem. Hosea foretold that after His birth, He would flee to Egypt, and from Egypt that He would be recalled to Israel. "From Egypt have I called my Son."

David, with his prophetic eyes, saw the Kings of the East bringing gifts to the only King.

Zachariah saw Him as a peaceful King entering the city of Jerusalem, sitting on the colt of a donkey.

Isaiah sees Him in His passion without form or comeliness, and coming to His martyrdom, as a voiceless lamb.

Joel saw the power of the Church and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

And we, brethren, cry out with the angels of Bethlehem, that "unto us a Son is born, unto us a Savior is given, which is Christ the Lord."

Вітаю вас всіх з радісним Різдрвом Христовим і бажаю вам щасливого нового року.

От. Юрій Подтепа  
Fr. Georg Podtepa

## Message from Parish President, Rev. Father Roman Shiyar

### **Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!**

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, fellow parishioners,

Behold the great Mystery of Incarnation of Our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ!

These days, God becomes Incarnate and dwells amongst us both as God and a perfect Man. We see, and feel, His divine presence in our lives while witnessing a newborn child lying next to His mother in the manger, surrounded by His living creations, who witness Him in awe. We, ourselves, are in awe and rejoiced standing next to His crib, beholding the wondrous sight. And, with this, God is vividly abiding in our lives: He is no longer just an unreachable God of Heavens of the Old Testament, but He is also ever-present on earth, dwelling amongst us. He is the Living God, Who inspires our adoration and prayers. He is the One, Who inspires and strengthens our faith. It is with His Incarnation that the eternal message of Salvation is no longer conveyed through law and the prophets only, but is established through the majestic reality of us witnessing this with our own eyes and touching with our own hands: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14). And, these days, I join your prayers and your adoration, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, celebrating the Nativity of Our Lord. It has been and remains a great privilege and tremendous joy to glorify Him co-serving and co-working with you in the Lord's house, at the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of St. Elia.

With this, I would like to congratulate all of you with this great feast and to wish you God's grace, health, and a long life in the Lord.

With Christian greetings,  
Rev. Fr. Roman Shiyar, Parish President

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## Major Feasts

### **January 6/7: The Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Flesh**



The Feast of the Nativity of Jesus is one of the most joyful days of the Orthodox Church. It ranks next to the greatest holiday, the Resurrection of Jesus. The Feast of the Birth of Jesus is also known as the "Incarnation of Christ." This means that Jesus became a man and came into the world to save us. We also refer to this joyous feast as Christmas.

The icon of the Nativity tells the story of Christ's birth from the Scriptures. It also shows that all creation is taking part in Christ's birth. The angels give thanks with their song; the heavens give the star; the Wise Men give their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The poor, humble shepherds give their praise and amazement; the earth gives the cave, and humanity gives the Virgin.

This Holy Icon is an icon stresses the importance of the Theotokos, the Mother of Jesus. She is placed in the center and is the largest figure in the icon. In this icon, she is kneeling with crossed arms, looking at the Christ child. The three stars, denoting her virginity before, during, and after the Nativity, are on her garments. The Christ Child, in the center of the icon, is in swaddling clothes and is lying in the manger. In the background is the dark cave where He was born. In the cave are an ox and a donkey guarding the newborn Babe. Even though the Gospels say nothing of the cave, this information is from Holy Tradition.

Neither do the Gospels speak of the ox and the donkey, but all icons of the Nativity include these animals. Including the animals in the icon fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 1:3, “The ox knows his master, and the donkey his master’s crib; but Israel does not know me, and the people have not regarded me.” The long ray of light from the star points directly to the cave. This ray comes from the star and travels to all parts of the world. It teaches that this bright star is an astronomical happening, and is a messenger from heaven announcing the birth of Jesus.

On the left hand side of the icon is another scene. The Wise Men, who were led by the star, are riding horses to bring their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus. The Wise Men are of various ages. One is without a beard. In those days, young men did not wear beards. The other Wise Man has long hair and a long beard, which indicates that he is much older. These details teach that regardless of age and appearance, the Good News was given to each and everyone.

Opposite the Wise Men is the scene with the humble shepherds. An angel proclaims the glad tidings. A young shepherd plays a reed instrument. This scene reveals that the music of the humans was added to the hymn of the angels. Across from the shepherd’s scene is the heavenly choir of angels. They are giving glory to God. The angels serve two purposes in the Nativity of Christ. They give glory to God and announce the good news to all mankind.

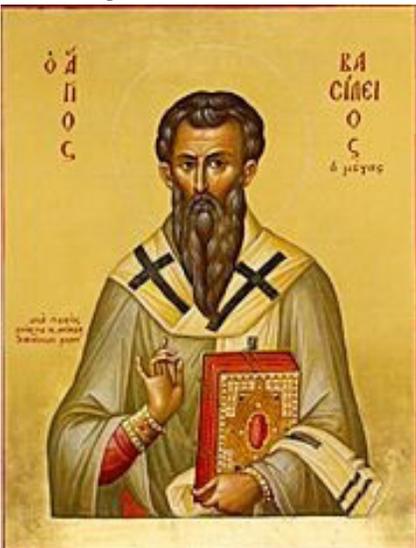
In the lower part of the icon sits a sad and worried Joseph. He is not part of the central group the Christ Child and the Theotokos. Joseph is not the natural father. Joseph is troubled and despondent. There is an old man talking to Joseph. The old man is Satan. Satan can appear in many forms. Here he is as an old man who is tempting Joseph and disturbing him. Satan is telling Joseph that virgin birth is impossible. He’s telling Joseph that he’s a fool if he believes this. This story comes to us from Holy Tradition. The sad Joseph shows us not only his personal predicament but the dilemma of all mankind the difficulty of accepting that which is “beyond words or reason.”

The tree, which is in the middle of the lower part of the icon, is a symbol of the Tree of Jesse. This tree refers to Isaiah 11:1-2, “But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him.” King David was often mentioned as the son of Jesse and Jesus was from the House of David.

The Holy Icon of the Nativity reminds one to praise and glorify the Birth of Christ. The celebration of Christmas each year serves to remind each and every one of us that Christ came for you and me.

<https://www.goarch.org/nativity>

## January 14: Feast of St Basil the Great



Our father among the saints Basil the Great (ca. 330 - January 1, 379), was bishop of Caesarea, a leading churchman in the 4th century. The Church considers him a saint and one of the Three Holy Hierarchs, together with Saints Gregory the Theologian (Gregory Nazianzus) and John Chrysostom. Basil, Gregory the Theologian, and Basil’s brother Saint Gregory of Nyssa are called the Cappadocian Fathers.

Basil came from a wealthy and pious family which gave a number of saints, including his mother Saint Emily (also styled Emilia or Emmelia), grandmother Saint Macrina the Elder, sister Saint Macrina the Younger and brothers Saints Gregory of Nyssa and Peter of Sebaste. He seems to have been brought up by his grandmother Macrina. Eager to learn, he went to Constantinople and spent four or five years there and at Athens, where he became friends with Gregory the Theologian.

It was at Athens that he seriously began to think of religion, and resolved to seek out the most famous hermit saints in Syria and Arabia, in order to learn from them how to attain enthusiastic piety and how to keep his body under submission by asceticism.

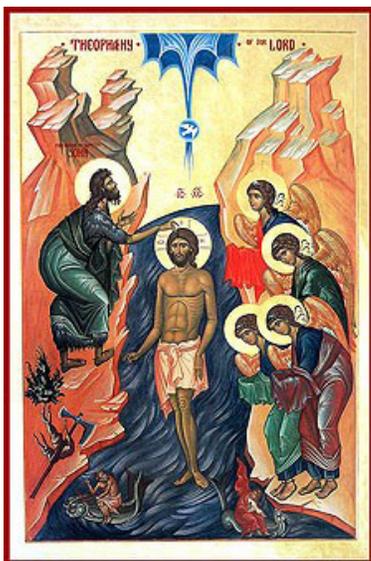
After this we find him at the head of a convent near Arnesi in Pontus, in which his mother Emily, now a widow, his sister Macrina and several other ladies, gave themselves to a pious life of prayer and charitable works. He was ordained presbyter of the Church at Caesarea in 365. In 370 Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, died, and Basil was chosen to succeed him.

Hot-blooded and somewhat imperious, Basil was also generous and sympathetic.

He suffered from liver illness and his excessive asceticism seems to have hastened him to an early death. A lasting monument of his episcopal care for the poor was the great institute before the gates of Caesarea, which was used as poorhouse, hospital, and hospice.

[https://orthodoxwiki.org/Basil\\_the\\_Great](https://orthodoxwiki.org/Basil_the_Great)

### January 18/19: Feast of Theophany



Theophany is the Feast which reveals the Most Holy Trinity to the world through the Baptism of the Lord. God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptized by the Saint John the Forerunner, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a dove. From ancient times this Feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since God is Light and has appeared to illumine “those who sat in darkness,” and “in the region of the shadow of death” (Mt.4:16), and to save the fallen race of mankind by grace.

On the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, the Holy Church proclaims our faith in the most sublime mystery, incomprehensible to human intellect, of one God in three Persons. It teaches us to confess and glorify the Holy Trinity, one in Essence and Indivisible. It exposes and overthrows the errors of ancient teachings which attempted to explain the Creator of the world by reason, and in human terms.

The Church shows the necessity of Baptism for believers in Christ, and it inspires us with a sense of deep gratitude for the illumination and purification of our sinful nature. The Church teaches that our salvation and cleansing from sin is possible only by the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, therefore it is necessary to preserve worthily these gifts of the grace of holy Baptism, keeping clean this priceless garb, for “As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ” (Gal 3:27).

<https://oca.org/saints/lives/2012/01/06/100106-feast-of-the-theophany-of-our-lord-and-savior-jesus-christ>

## Message from the Outreach Mission Committee

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

We were happy to host you at the December mid-month Fellowship. Please join us January 14 after Liturgy for something to eat, for conversation and for more about St Paul as he makes his journeys to the Gentiles (DVD From Christ to Constantine)

Thanks to your generosity, we were able to send a “January Blues” cheque for \$85 to the Edmonton Food Bank towards their January hampers. Last Sunday Subdcn Evan and I hoped to deliver groceries and gift cards to our Eritrean neighbours but did not find anyone at home. We will try again. (As mentioned before, the Committee will make special deliveries to our neighbours at Christmas and Easter from the accumulated funds in the Food Basket account that our treasurer, Walter Marcenuik, keeps track of for us. Thanks once more for your generosity: currently about \$400 sits in the account, waiting to be built up for Pascha.)

We have received this note from Larysa Kuchta of CYMK Alberta after she received our November Mission Outreach donation of \$100.00:

*We greatly appreciate your involvement with our CYMK and Western Eparchy Project for the Orphanage! Thank you again for your involvement, and patience finding a way to get the cheque to us!*

A couple of weeks ago, I met with Brad Burns, principal of Highlands School (11509 62 St) to tell him about our Outreach Mission and asked him how we could go about becoming one of the school’s “community members,” given that we are such close neighbours. (You will recall that our Committee and parish once had a fruitful relationship with Lauderdale kindergarten and we are trying to set up another such relationship.) Examples of current community members are Metis Child and Family, Bon Ton Bakery, Edmonton Public Library and The Arts on the Ave Edmonton Society.

Brad has sent me a “laundry list” of the kinds of things that we might help with. I have emphasised with Mr Burns that our contributions will necessarily be modest but heartfelt. And imaginative! One of the things that makes Highlands special as an inner city school is its Arts Core programming that “incorporates the visual and performing arts into everyday learning. Students explore their creativity and self-expression through art, music, dance and drama”. The school also daily feeds 90 to 120 students a hot, healthy lunch, free to all kids.

Stay tuned!

Myrna K., and Lesia S., Tanya P., Betty C. Dobr. Natalia and Fr Roman.

## Upcoming news and events at our sister parishes and in the Ukrainian Community

- **St. John’s Cathedral**

**January 12, 2018** – Malanka at St. John’s Cultural Centre

**6:30 pm, January 18, 2018** – Theophany Holy Supper

**5:00 pm – 7:00 pm, January 26, 2018** – Pyrohy Supper

- **St. Michael’s**

**January 13, 2018** – MALANKA (Supper & Dance)

**5:30 pm - 12:00 am** Refreshment / **6:30 pm - 8:00 pm** Supper

- **Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village**

**Jan. 19, 2018 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.** Feast of Jordan

Attend a water blessing ceremony at an ice cross to help observe the church holy day according to the Julian calendar that commemorates the baptism of Christ.

Schedule of Activities: 10 a.m. – Divine Liturgies / 11:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. – Water Blessings – Ice Cross

12 p.m. - Blessing of Homes / 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. - Burning of the Didukh (Sheaf of grain)

**UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. ELIA.**

**ORDER OF SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2018.**

6. - SATURDAY..... EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST ..... 4:30 P.M.
7. - SUNDAY..... THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD ..... 10:00 A.M.
14. - SUNDAY..... SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY ..... 10:00 A.M.
18. - THURSDAY..... EVE OF THEOPHANY. BLESSING WATER ..... 5:30 P.M.  
(JORDAN BLESSED MEAL AFTER SERVICE)
19. - FRIDAY..... HOLY THEOPHANY. BLESSING WATER ..... 10:00 A.M.
21. - SUNDAY..... ZACCHAEUS SUNDAY ..... 10:00 A.M.
28. - SUNDAY..... PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE ..... 10:00 A.M.