



SS. PETER & PAUL UKRAINIAN  
ORTHODOX CHURCH

21 Evergreen Road  
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УКРАЇНСЬКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА  
ЦЕРКВА СВ. ПЕТРА І ПАВЛА

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**WELCOME All!** Welcome to the God-Loving and God-Protected Parish of Saints Peter and Paul! A Parish of the UOC of the USA and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Our warmest greetings are extended to all visitors and guests, and to all of our beloved parishioners who are participating in today's Divine Liturgy. We are blessed to have you with us today! If you are with us for the first time, PLEASE introduce yourself to Father Yurii – he is looking forward to meeting you! Also, please feel free to email or call Father Yurii with any questions and let him know what is going on in your life, especially if you need spiritual guidance. We hope that you will find peace and comfort in Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church. You are very welcome to come every Sunday and on feast days, make yourself at home, and to become a part of our parish family. Through your prayers and dedication of time, talents, and donations, this can become a reality in all faith and love.

## JANUARY 4 2026

**Sunday, January 4**  
**The Theophany of Our Lord and Savior**  
**Jesus Christ**

Epistle Reading: Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7;  
Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:13-17  
**Divine Liturgy – 9:30**

**Sunday, January 11**  
**Sunday after Theophany**  
Epistle Reading: Eph 4:7-13;  
Gospel Reading: Matt 4:12-17  
**Divine Liturgy - 9:30**

**Sunday, January 18**  
**32<sup>nd</sup> Sun, St Athanasius the Great**  
Epistle Reading: 1 Tim 1:15-17  
Gospel Reading: Luke 18:35-43  
**Divine Liturgy – 9:30**

## CONTACT

**Father Yurii Bobko, Pastor**

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Parish Board President:

Lydia Rudolf

Choir Director:

Lydia Rudolf

# SAINTS PETER AND PAUL UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX PARISH

## **Tone 4            Prokeimenon**

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord. / God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. (*Ps. 117:26b, 27b*)

V. O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever. (*Ps. 117:1*)

## **Tone 4**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. *Bring to the Lord, O sons of God, bring to the Lord young rams. (Ps. 28:1a)*

V. *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord is upon many waters. (Ps. 28:3)*

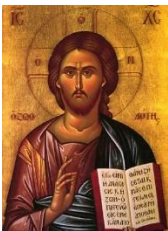
## **The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7**



TITUS, my son, the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

## **The Gospel According to Matthew 3:13-17**



At that time, Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

## PARISH NEWS AND UPDATES

**January 13** – Ss. Peter and Paul Fellowship meeting at 6 pm.

**January 20** – Executive Board Meeting at 6 pm.

### Home Blessings

As we continue the celebration of Theophany, we will also begin the Blessing of Homes, a cherished tradition of this holy feast. Through this blessing, we invite Christ to dwell among us and to sanctify our homes and daily lives. Please contact Fr. Yurii to schedule your home blessing or for any additional information.

**Our Parish Calendars for 2026** are now available in the back pew of the Church. We offer special thanks to **Martin Funeral Home** for their continued generous sponsorship and donation, making these calendars possible. Special thank you to **Martin Funeral Home** for their support to all our Bake and Pirohi Sales. Your support is truly appreciated!

### *Pirohi Sale Announcement*

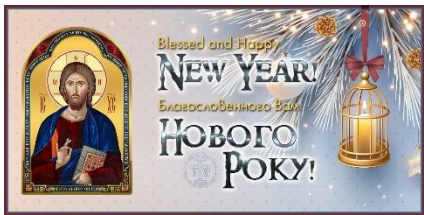
A heartfelt thank you to all who helped with our last Pirohi Sale! Your hard work and dedication made it a great success, and we couldn't have done it without the effort from our volunteers. ***Our next Pirohi sale will be on Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>.*** We look forward to seeing everyone back in the kitchen as we continue this beloved tradition!

## PARISH CELEBRATION

From the bottom of Ss. Peter and Paul parish family heart we wish **Rob Prokopchak (Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>)**, **Pavlog Pawluk (Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>)**, **Halyna Bobko (Jan. 27)** Happy Birthday! May God's awesome blessings be upon you this day and for the future years ahead for many happy and blessed years!

Memory Eternal, **Pani Matka Sonia (Jan 3)**, **Protopresbyter William Diakiw (Jan 20)** . May their souls dwell with the righteous, and may their memory be eternal in the hearts of their loved ones and the Church. **Vichnaya Pamyat!**

## A New Year Greeting at the Dawn of the Year of Our Lord 2026



Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, As we stand at the threshold of the New Year of our Lord 2026, still embraced by the sacred light of the Nativity, we bid farewell to 2025, a year of God's grace, with gratitude upon our lips and humility in our hearts. We thank the Lord for every blessing received - seen and unseen - for the strength granted to endure trials, and for the sacred privilege to serve, to offer help, and to extend

compassionate assistance to those in need.

This past year reminded us that service is born not of comfort, but of love; not of abundance, but of faithfulness. Even amid pain, uncertainty, and the wounds of war, the Lord allowed us to become instruments of His mercy - touching lives through acts of kindness, words of encouragement, and steadfast prayer.

As we enter the New Year, our hearts carry a profound and urgent hope: that the war in Ukraine may come to an end and that peace may prevail. Yet the peace for which we pray is not merely the absence of violence. It is the peace proclaimed by the angels over Bethlehem - the peace that Christ Himself brings into our lives during this sacred season of Christmas. He comes not with force, but with humility; not as a ruler of this world, but as the Prince of Peace, who enters human suffering to heal, restore, and renew.

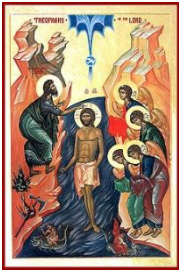
This peace cries out from the manger and reaches all who are wounded, displaced, grieving, or weary. It is a peace rooted in truth and justice, strengthened by compassion, and sustained by love. For Ukraine - and for the entire world - we pray that this divine peace may overcome hatred, silence weapons, heal memories, and restore human dignity.

Looking forward to the coming year, we ask the Lord to continue blessing us with the same zeal, the same desire, and the same readiness to serve in His Holy Name. May He renew our hearts so that we do not grow weary in doing good, but remain faithful witnesses of the Gospel in a broken world.

May the New Year bring healing where there is brokenness, comfort where there is sorrow, unity where there is division, and renewed faith where hope feels distant. Strengthened by the joy of Christmas and guided by Christ's light, let us walk forward together - trusting that the Lord who has carried us thus far will continue to lead us.

*With archpastoral love, prayer, and unshakable hope for peace, I wish you a blessed, grace-filled, and spiritually renewing New Year. **Archbishop Daniel.***

## Feast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ



Theophany is the Feast which reveals the Most Holy Trinity to the world through the Baptism of the Lord (Mt.3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptized by 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.

In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptize catechumens at the Vespers of Theophany, so that Baptism also is revealed as the spiritual illumination of mankind.

The origin of the Feast of Theophany goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in The Apostolic Constitutions (Book V:13). From the second century we have the testimony of Saint Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this Feast.

There is a third century dialogue about the services for Theophany between the holy martyr Hippolytus and Saint Gregory the Wonderworker. In the following centuries, from the fourth to ninth century, all the great Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, John of Damascus, commented on the Feast of Theophany.

The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this Feast, which is sung at Orthodox services even today. Saint John of Damascus said that the Lord was baptized, not because He Himself had need for cleansing, but “to bury human sin by water,” to fulfill the Law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify “the nature of water” and to offer us the form and example of Baptism.

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 Undivided. 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). On the day of Theophany, all foods are permitted, even if the Feast falls on a Wednesday or Friday.

### **Troparion — Tone 1**

When You, O Lord were baptized in the Jordan / the worship of the Trinity was made manifest / for the voice of the Father bore witness to You / and called You His beloved Son. / And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, / confirmed the truthfulness of His word. / O Christ, our God, You have revealed Yourself / and have enlightened the world, glory to You!

### **Kontakion — Tone 4**

Today You have shown forth to the world, O Lord, / and the light of Your countenance has been marked on us. / Knowing You, we sing Your praises. / You have come and revealed Yourself, / O unapproachable Light.

### **Living Theophany: Holy Water, Home Blessings, and Our Daily Life**



The Feast of Theophany is not only a historical remembrance of Christ’s baptism in the Jordan River—it is a feast meant to be *lived* throughout the year. One of the most distinctive and meaningful aspects of Theophany in our tradition is the blessing of water and the sanctification of our homes, reminding us that God’s presence extends far beyond the walls of the church.

At Theophany, the Church celebrates the Great Blessing of Waters, a service unlike any other during the liturgical year. Through solemn prayers and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the waters are sanctified—not symbolically, but truly—becoming a vessel of God’s grace. This holy water is meant to be taken home, reverently kept, and used throughout the year as a source of blessing, healing, and spiritual strength.

Traditionally, holy water may be consumed prayerfully in times of illness, spiritual struggle, or important moments in life. It may also be used to bless oneself, family members, or personal spaces, reminding us that God’s grace accompanies us in everyday circumstances. Theophany teaches us that nothing in our lives is “outside” of God’s sanctifying presence.

Flowing naturally from the blessing of water is the Blessing of Homes, a cherished tradition that extends the feast into our personal lives. When a home is blessed, we are not simply following a custom; we are inviting Christ Himself to dwell with us. The priest’s visit, the prayers offered, and the sprinkling of holy water proclaim that our homes are meant to be places of peace, faith, and love.

In a world often marked by anxiety, division, and uncertainty, the Blessing of Homes is a quiet yet powerful witness that Christ is present with us. It reminds us that our daily routines, relationships, and struggles are held within God’s care. A blessed home becomes a small church—a place where faith is lived, forgiveness is practiced, and God is remembered.

Theophany also calls each of us to remember our own baptism. Just as the waters were sanctified when Christ entered the Jordan, our lives were sanctified when we entered the waters of baptism. This feast invites us to renew that identity—not merely as church members, but as people called to reflect Christ’s light in our families, workplaces, and communities.

As we continue the celebration of Theophany, may we approach holy water and home blessings not as routine traditions, but as living encounters with God’s grace. May Christ, who revealed Himself in the Jordan, continue to dwell in our homes and in our hearts.

**Christ is baptized! In the Jordan!**

## **The Wreath on Our Door: A Silent Gospel of Divine Vulnerability**



As the Feast of the Nativity is here, our homes are transformed. Doors are adorned with wreaths of evergreen branches, candles flicker against winter darkness, and familiar hymns begin to soften our hearts. These outward signs are beautiful and comforting, yet they also carry a profound and demanding message - one that challenges not only our emotions, but our way of life.

The wreath on our door is a circle without beginning or end, proclaiming eternity. The evergreen branches whisper of life that does not wither, even in the cold of winter. But when we gaze more attentively, another image emerges - interwoven branches shaped not unlike a crown. Inevitably, our thoughts are drawn forward from Bethlehem to Golgotha, from the joy of the manger to the suffering of the Cross. The Church never separates these mysteries, for they are one continuous revelation of God’s saving love.

The Child whose birth we await is not merely born *for* us - He is born *as* one of us. He is the eternal Word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, who freely chooses vulnerability as the language of salvation. He does not arrive surrounded by armies or wealth, but enters the world unseen, unheard, and unprotected. The Creator becomes dependent. The Almighty accepts weakness. The One who holds the universe in being is placed into human hands.

This is not sentimental vulnerability. It is deliberate, radical, and deeply unsettling.

From the very first moment of His earthly life, Christ exposes Himself to rejection, danger, and suffering. He is born in a cave because there is no room in the inn. He becomes a refugee in Egypt to escape the violence of Herod. He grows up in obscurity, misunderstood even by those closest to Him. Throughout His ministry, He allows Himself to be misunderstood, ridiculed, betrayed, and abandoned. And in the end, He accepts not only death, but death on a Cross - mocked, stripped, crowned with thorns.



The wreath of welcome we place on our doors quietly confronts us with a question we may prefer to avoid: *Do we truly welcome Christ as He comes, or only as we wish Him to be?*

It is easy to welcome the Christ who brings comfort, joy, and blessing. It is far more difficult to welcome the Christ who asks us to become vulnerable as He is vulnerable - to forgive when it costs us, to serve without recognition, to love those who wound us, to surrender control, and to trust God in uncertainty.

Christ does not save us by overpowering the world, but by entering into its brokenness. He does not conquer sin through force, but through obedience and self-offering. The crown of thorns reveals the inner meaning of the manger: love that refuses to protect itself at the expense of others.

And here the challenge becomes personal.

If Christ chose vulnerability as the path of salvation, what does this say about our own spiritual journey? We often measure success by strength, independence, security, and control. Yet the Gospel turns this logic upside down. In Christ, true strength is revealed in humility; true authority in service; true life in self-emptying love.

The wreath on our door is therefore not merely a decoration - it is a call to repentance. It asks whether our homes are places of hospitality not only in appearance, but in reality. Are the vulnerable safe among us? Do the poor, the lonely, the wounded, and the forgotten find warmth at our threshold? Or do we close our doors - physically or spiritually - out of fear, comfort, or indifference?

As we light candles in expectation of the newborn Christ, we must ask ourselves whether we are willing to allow His light to expose the darker corners of our hearts. The Nativity is not only a celebration - it is an invitation to transformation. To receive Christ means to allow Him to reshape our priorities, our relationships, and our understanding of what it means to live faithfully.

The Child of Bethlehem comes not to admire our wreaths, but to dwell within us. He comes to be born again in our lives through humility, patience, mercy, and sacrificial love. And just as His earthly life moved inexorably toward the Cross and Resurrection, so too must our spiritual life move beyond comfort toward communion, beyond sentiment toward surrender.

May this holy season teach us to recognize Christ not only in the beauty of our traditions, but in the vulnerability of His presence among us. And may the wreath upon our doors remind us daily that the way to the joy of the Resurrection passes through humility, self-offering, and the courageous love revealed in the manger and crowned upon the Cross.

*With archpastoral prayers for a deeply meaningful and spiritually transformative Feast of the Nativity,*

***Archbishop Daniel***