

**Week of
December 19, 2016**

You can reach Fr. Luke for
pastoral reasons at
frlukacs@gmail.com or at
(613) 925-3004

Leave a clear message
with your phone number.



Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church, a young and, God willing, growing community of worshippers. Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday at 123 Main Street in Potsdam and are primarily in English. You can learn more about us on Facebook and at www.saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org

Stewardship Forms –Please Return by Year End

Please fill out a stewardship form by the end of the year and either return it by mail or give it to a parish council member. This will help us plan for growth during the coming year. In addition to whatever financial support is appropriate for you, the form asks what time and talent you will share with the parish. **All donations to St. Olympia Orthodox Church are now tax exempt.** As 2016 draws to a close, please also consider giving a tax-exempt donation for the growth of our parish. Greg Kalicin, Parish Council Treasurer, will issue receipts upon request.

Holiday Service Schedule:

December 24th 4:00 pm
(Saturday)
Christmas Eve Vigil

December 25th 10:00 am
(Sunday)
Christmas Liturgy

January 1st 10:00 am
(Sunday)
**Liturgy of St. Basil &
Circumcision of our Lord**

January 6th 10 am
(Friday)
**Liturgy for Epiphany
and Blessing of the
Waters**

Sanctified Time – The Nativity of Our Lord

The importance of the Nativity of the Lord is beautifully summed up in the hymnography and iconography. On this day before Christmas, the focus is on the Theotokos. The historical stage as well as Mary's lineage is set in the Apolytikion sung at Vespers of December 24th:

Mary was of David's seed,
so she went with Joseph to register in Bethlehem.
She bore in her womb the Fruit not sown by man.
The time for the birth was at hand.
Since there was no room at the inn,
the cave became a beautiful palace for the Queen [of Heaven].
Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of old.

In this hymn from the same service, the Virgin speaks to the Christ-child:

"You, my Son, are the all-perfect God,
yet You accept the form of Adam.
In my hands I hold You, yet You hold all creation!



How shall I wrap You in swaddling clothes?
 How shall I wonder at Your ineffable poverty?
 How shall I name You, since I am Your servant?"
 Your Mother cried: "I can only bless and praise You in song,
 for You grant the world great mercy."

In the next hymn, the Cosmos is addressed since the redemption that Christ brings for mankind is also for the entire fallen world in which we live:

The time of our salvation draws near.
 Prepare, O cave!
 The Virgin draws near to bear the Christ.
 Be glad, and rejoice, O Bethlehem, land of Judah,
 for our Lord has come from you!
 Harken, O mountains and hills, and lands around Judea,
 for Christ, the Lover of mankind, is coming to save those whom He
 created!

The Aposticha hymns found at the end of this service. Here, after Christ is addressed, the Theotokos is given a voice by the hymnographer.

The Kings of the East have come
 to see You, the King, being born.
 They have brought You gifts from afar
 and are standing outside the doors bearing frankincense, gold and
 myrrh.
 "Command them to enter and see
 the Infant Whom I hold in my arms,
 Who is older than Adam!"

*v. God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the
 mountain overshadowed by the forest.*

The Virgin said to the Wise Men:
 "Come and enter with haste!
 Behold the invisible God, visible now as a man!"
 They entered with zeal and worshipped Him, //
 thus fulfilling the divine prophecy.



v. Lord, I have heard the report of You, and Your work, Lord, do I fear.

I support You in my arms as a babe;
 yet You support all creation.
 How can I provide for You,
 for You provide for the whole world?
 I glorify Your boundless condescension
 by which You are saving the perishing world.

More Additions to our Parish Library

365 Meditations for Young Adults ed. by Sally Sharpe. From the back cover:

As young adults, it's so easy for us to get caught up in striving to become educated, employed, financially secure, physically fit, outstanding in our field, well-liked—the list goes on and on. But as the writer of Ecclesiastes says, all of these things “are meaningless, a chasing after the wind” (1:14 NIV). There's really only one pursuit worthy of our full attention, our complete focus, and that's to become all that God wants us to be.

This book from the publisher of the series **20/30: Bible Study for Young Adults** is intended to help you do just that. As you make your way through the year...encountering a different writer or writing team each month, you will find practical and spiritual insights, encouragement, and a sense of camaraderie for the challenge of walking with God day by day. Though the writers have diverse backgrounds and personalities, there is a common theme among them: God is with us.

The Melody of Prayer: How to Personally Experience the Divine Liturgy by Stanley S. Harakas. From the Introduction:

Do you know that prayer is one of the most varied practices in which people get involved? People pray and worship in many different ways, even within the same church. In the Orthodox Church there are various forms of prayer, with different styles and approaches to prayer and worship.

An ancient Christian writer Patriarch Nicephoros of Constantinople coined a phrase in the early ninth century when he spoke of the variety of practice in theology, calling it “the melody of theology.” In the same manner, we can speak of “the melody of prayer.” Just as a variety of musical instruments—each with its distinctive and unique sound—join to make the harmonious melodies of an

*I have held many
things in my hands,
and I have lost them
all; but whatever I
have placed in
God's hands, that I
still possess.*

--Anonymous

orchestra, so it is that the wide variety of prayer practices and experiences form a "melody of prayer" in the Church.

In invite you to learn about this melody in the pages which follow, especially as it relates to your participation in the Divine Liturgy of St. Joh Chrysostom of the Eastern Orthodox Church. What follows is a guide on how to join your own oice to the Orthodox Church's "melody of prayer."

Save the Dates

Archbishop Michael's next visits to Potsdam will be:

- Wednesday, March 22, 2017, for Presanctified Liturgy
- Saturday-Sunday, September 9-10