

THE CHOIR

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GOD IS WITH US! SNAMI BOH!

Soon we will hear the singing of “God Is With Us!” These words are found in the book of Isaiah and are sung at the Nativity services and Theophany as a refrain to words chanted from the prophesy of Isaiah. “God Is With Us!” These simple words instantly convey a profound meaning.

Our lives are very busy. Though there are many time saving devices, our lives actually seem busier than ever. This is true in our personal lives and in our lives in the Church. Wherever we turn our calendars are full of commitments and activities and responsibilities. In the midst of our time consuming activities, it is easy to lose sight of deeper meanings, to forget the goal and purpose of our lives. In our preoccupations we forget God.

In the winter celebrations of the Nativity and Theophany, we are once again reminded that Jesus Christ is the Presence of God in our midst. “God Is With Us! Snami Boh!” As we chant in the Matins service, “God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!”

The message of the church at all times is that God is present. This presence is a wonderful reality and a beautiful gift. Let our labors and our prayers and lives as Orthodox Christians be such that the presence of God is made evident in our churches, in our parish communities, in our homes and in our families.

“God Is With Us”, therefore no fears or anxieties can overcome us. “God Is With Us”, therefore we have a gift to share with humanity. “God Is With Us”, therefore we are given the grace to love God with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds and to love our neighbors as ourselves. “God Is With Us”, therefore light overcomes darkness and Christ is our joy. “SNAMI BOH”. (Father Leonid Kishkovsky)

CHRISTMAS CONCERT ON DECEMBER 5

Our sincere and grateful thanks to our St. Peter and St. Paul Choir, the Orthodox Concert Choir and to our Children’s Choir for a truly outstanding Christmas Concert performance on December 5th. We were truly fortunate and blessed to bring together all our singers for this presentation.

This concert was the debut for our children. They worked on the music, on the words and the pronunciation of the carols that were done in their original languages. The children felt good about all that they had accomplished at our rehearsals and at the performance. We, too should be proud of what these children continue to do and with the progress that they continue to make.

The children will also sing carols during the recessionals after Divine Liturgies in December and January.

Post-concert remarks included “When can we do this again?” The answer is very simple. As long as the singers are willing to rehearse and to prepare the music and as long as the people want to hear this beautiful music, we will continue to sing in concerts, in programs, in appearances, etc. **OUR ORTHODOX MUSIC IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MUSIC IN THE WORLD.** That means we should sing it as much as we can and that we should share it with others as often as we can.

Again, God bless all of our singers, parishioners and our guests who contributed to the success of this special concert performance.

WHAT AM I TO DO? FOR SINGERS AND OTHERS

“For I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.” (1st Corinthians 14: 14-15.)

COMPOSER CORNER

PETER IVANOVICH TURCHANINOV (1779-1856) was born in Kiev. When he was a lad of 8 years of age, because of his beautiful alto voice, he was allowed to join the renowned Kiev choir. While there, he was heard by the great music director Petemkin, who took him to St. Petersburg and placed him in the hands of the famous Italian/Russian composer Sarti. Sarti was given the responsibility of teaching the young boy and giving him a complete music education. When Petemkin died suddenly, Turchaninov became the pupil of the famous composer A. L. Vedel.

In 1804, at the age of 25, Turchaninov was ordained into the priesthood and appointed choirmaster of the St. Petersburg Metropolitan Choir. In 1827, he was appointed music instructor at the Court Cappella.

Turchaninov focused his attention on the rubrical chants of the Russian Orthodox Church. These chants were sung just by the cantors and were being neglected by church choirs. Because of Western and Italian influences on the music of the church these chants seemed to be doomed to oblivion.

Turchaninov began to write the Kievan and Znamenny chants in chordal harmony. These hymns, written by Turchaninov, called the attention of composers of liturgical choral music to the Kievan and Znamenny chants and enhanced the advancement of a new so-called Moscow stylistic direction in Russian Orthodox singing. These chants continue to be sung even today in Russian churches.

Two brilliant exponents of this old school chant revived by Turchaninov were Katal'sky and Tchesnikov in the 20th century.

We have several compositions by Turchaninov in our St. Peter and St. Paul music library. Two that we have sung by him include "Noble Joseph" and "In Thee Rejoiceth All Creation" which is sung during Great Lent.

NATIVITY GREETINGS

CHRIST IS BORN.....GLORIFY HIM
Carpatho RussianChristos Razdajetsja
Greek.....Kala Christoujena
PolishWesolych Swiat
RussianS Rozhestvom Khistovym
Serbian Christos SeRodi
SpanishFeliz Navidad

THE RUSSIAN CHRISTMAS by Sarah Halko

Hi, I am Sarah Halko and I am going to talk about my family traditions at Christmas time. Our Christmas season begins 40 days before Christmas. We say special Christmas prayers in church and I get to perform a Yolka which is a Christmas season play.

Each year my family celebrates Russian Christmas Eve on the night of January 6th (December 24th). This is known as "Svjatij Vecher". On that night my whole family gets together at my grandparents' house to celebrate. Everyone helps out with the cooking.

We make traditional foods for the feast. The food we make is made from scratch and includes cheese/potato pierogi (piroha), homemade white bread, barley soup with mashed potatoes and kolacky for dessert. Honey is put on the table for two reasons. My grandma uses it to put the sign of the cross on each family member's forehead for good luck. This is done after the prayer. Then my grandpa takes one slice of bread, breaks off a piece, dips it into the honey and eats it. He then passes this slice of bread around the table and everyone does the same thing. We also dip homemade bread in honey during our meal. We get to pick our own pierogi (piroha) out from a big bowl that is placed in the center of the table.

The table has to be set in a certain way. We put a white tablecloth on the table. This is to remind us of the cloth that Jesus was wrapped in. If available, we put hay under the tablecloth to remind us of the manger that Jesus was laid in. A candle is lit in the center of the table to represent the Christmas star. The prayer is said in Old Slavonic. We cross ourselves three times, once for God, once for Jesus and once for the Holy Spirit.

Our church (St. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church) holds a special service on Russian Christmas, January 7th (December 25th). The Liturgy is held early in the morning.

In Russia they have a twelve course supper in honor of the twelve apostles on Christmas Eve. Some of the food is fish, beet soup or Borsch, stuffed cabbage and cooked dried fruit. On Christmas day people go to church and sing hymns and carols. The churches are decorated with Christmas trees and colored lights.

I really like my family traditions. This celebration is very important and special to me.

(Sarah Halko is a member of our Children's Choir.)