



FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN.
UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN.

LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE

Let all mortal flesh keep silent. Habakkuk 2:20

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing worldly minded, For with blessing in His hand
CHRIST our GOD to earth descendeth, Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary, As of old on earth He stood.
LORD of lords in human nature, In the body and the blood.
He will give to all the faithful His own self for heavenly food.

At His feet the six-winged seraph; Cherubim with watchful eye,
Veil their faces to His Presence, As with ceaseless voice they cry,
Allelulia, Alleluia, Alleluia, LORD most high!"

"The Fruit of the Spirit..." Galatians 5:22



The **FRUIT**
BASKET

Love • Joy • Peace • Goodness • Kindness • Faith • Patience • Temperance • Gentleness

THE FRUIT BASKET

Published bi-monthly or so by An Orthodox Christian

The goal of this publication is to provide a friendly, light, Orthodox Christian 'Zine (a mini-magazine) that contains a blend of "something to exercise our minds, something to make us laugh, and something to make us meditate on spiritual matters." It is also a venue for sharing our insights and interests.

Articles or comments from our readers are welcome. We reserve the right to edit for suitability, clarity and space. Printing of items does not imply endorsement by the church or the priest or even the editor of this publication. Send comments or articles by email to **fruit36basket@yahoo.com**

or by snail mail to

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Strongsville, OH 44136**

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Dear Folks,

We would love to hear from you. **1.** Please **send in** (a) short items of interest, inspirational or otherwise; jokes, puzzles, other.

(b) **Original writing** that could be an encouragement to the rest of us in our Orthodox Christian walk—gleaned from reflection, or experience during your life as a practicing Orthodox Christian. It could be a passage from the Bible or from a sermon, and tell why it is meaningful to you.

Parish news is great, also, as well as your comments on how to improve *The FRUIT BASKET*. Share a traditional **holiday custom** or favorite **recipe**, or what have you!

2. Send by email or regular mail—typed or handwritten is fine.

Don't worry about spelling, grammar or punctuation— all material is proofed before printing.

3. If your submission has already been printed someplace, please include the **source of your material**, so credit can be given.

4. Indicate how we should acknowledge the person who submitted the item--should we use your whole name, first name only, initials only, or Anonymous? If no choice is given, your first name, and last initial will be printed.

Thanks again, M.K.

Minute Meditation

by M.K.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;

Psalms 111:10 NKJV

We often look for wisdom in secular places such as by going to college, but true wisdom is found in the Bible.



We can, of course, find many items to print from the many sources available, but a publication like this needs the heartbeat of the people—your wisdom, insight, humor, etc.—to make it come alive and become personalized for our readers. Together we can make this something worthwhile, enjoyable and upbeat, truly a "*Fruit Basket*" of goodies to send to others. I am looking forward to hearing from you and serving you.

The Editor

THREE WISE WOMEN

You do know what would have happened if it had been three wise WOMEN instead of three wise men, don't you? They would have asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole and brought practical gifts like diapers!

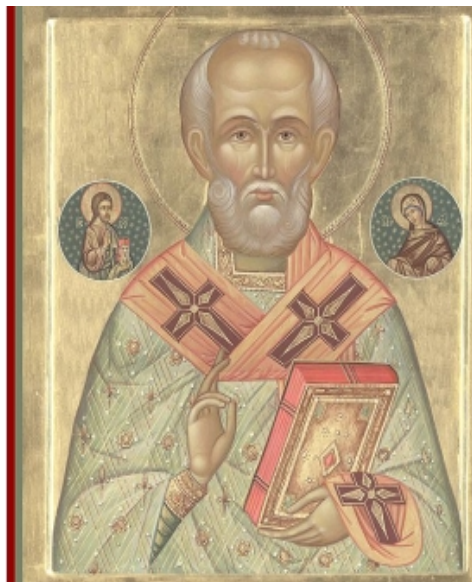
St Nicholas the Wonderworker and Archbishop of Myra in Lycia Commemorated on December 6

Saint Nicholas, the Wonderworker, is famed as a great saint pleasing unto God. He was born in the city of Patara, and was the only son of pious parents Theophanes and Nonna, who had vowed to dedicate him to God. From his childhood Nicholas thrived on the study of Divine Scripture; by day he would not leave church, and by night he prayed and read books, making himself a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Bishop Nicholas of Patara rejoiced at the spiritual success and deep piety of his nephew. He ordained him a reader, and then elevated Nicholas to the priesthood, making him his assistant. In serving the Lord the youth was fervent of spirit. Constantly at work and vivacious, in unceasing prayer, the priest Nicholas displayed great kind-heartedness towards all who came to him for help, and he distributed all his inheritance to the poor.

There was a certain formerly rich inhabitant of Patara, who had three grown daughters, and in desperation he planned to sell their bodies so they would have money for food. The saint, learning of the man's poverty and of his wicked intention, secretly visited him one night and threw a sack of gold through the window. With the money the man arranged an honorable marriage for his daughter. St Nicholas also provided gold for the other daughters, thereby saving the family from falling into spiritual destruction. In bestowing charity, St Nicholas always strove to do this secretly and to conceal his good deeds.

While on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land he decided to withdraw into the desert, but he was stopped by a divine voice urging him to return to his native country. "Nicholas, this is not the vineyard where you shall bear fruit for Me. Return to the world, and glorify My Name there." So he left Patara and went to Myra in Lycia. Upon the death of Archbishop

John, Nicholas was chosen as Bishop of Myra. After his consecration as archbishop, St Nicholas remained a great ascetic, appearing to his flock as an image of gentleness, kindness and love for people. This was particularly precious for the Lycian Church during the persecution of Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Bishop Nicholas, locked up in prison together with other Christians for refusing to worship idols, sustained them and exhorted them to endure the fetters, punishment and torture. Upon the accession of St Constantine (May 21) as emperor, St Nicholas was restored to his flock.



He worked many miracles, and struggled many long years at his labor. Having reached old age, St Nicholas peacefully fell asleep in the Lord. His venerable relics were preserved incorrupt in the local cathedral church and flowed with curative myrrh, from which many received healing.

St Nicholas is the patron of travelers, and we pray to him for deliverance from floods, poverty, or any misfortunes. He has promised to help those who remember his parents, Theophanes and Nonna.

Oh who loves Nicholas the Saintly,
Oh who serves Nicholas the Saintly,
Him will Nicholas receive,
And give help in time of need,
Holy father, Nicholas.

CHURCH SLAVONIC:

O kto, kto, Nikolaja lubit,
O kto, kto, Nikolaju sluzit,
Tomu svjatyj Nikolaj,
Na vsjakij cas pomahaj,
Nikolaj, Nikolaj. 🕯

WINTER'S GRACE

Yesterday, I shared a van ride with two women who had an appointment with the doctor. They bemoaned their conditions and said how lonely they were because of their decreased mobility. It brought to mind what I had heard about a woman named Nancy.

She put an ad in her local newspaper: *"If you are lonely or have a problem, call me. I am in a wheelchair and seldom get out. We can share our problems with each other. Just call. I'd love to talk."* The response to the ad was surprising — over a dozen calls every week.

What motivated this woman to reach out from her wheelchair to help others in need? Nancy explained that before her paralysis she had been perfectly healthy but in deep despair. She had tried to commit suicide by jumping from her apartment window. She didn't succeed in killing herself, but the fall left her paralyzed from the waist down. In the hospital, at first she was utterly frustrated. Then she began to sense that someone was telling her: *"Nancy, you've had a healthy body but a crippled soul. From now on you will have a crippled body but a healthy soul."* She thought about this continually.

When she was finally allowed to go home, she prayed for a way to share her experience with others. The idea of the newspaper ad occurred to her.

Everyone of us can do something to help others. Limited as we may be by sickness, old age, or disability, we can still pray, call others or write. No matter what our condition, we can follow the commandment of loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Lord, let me be a shining light
So others then may view
Your mercy and Your love
displayed



From *The Orthodox Herald*, Vol. 55, No. 7

Have a blessed,
healthy, happy
and prosperous
New Year.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Do you know how the song, *"The Twelve Days of Christmas,"* originated?

From 1558 until 1829, the Roman Catholics in England were not allowed to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. Each element in the carol is a code word for a religious reality, which the children could remember.

The **partridge in the pear tree** stood for Jesus Christ.

Two turtledoves were the Old and New Testaments.

Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.

Four calling birds were the four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Five golden rings recalled the Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.

Six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Eight maids a-milking were the Beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22.

Ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.

Eleven pipers stood for the eleven faithful disciples.

Finally, the **twelve drummers drumming** symbolized the twelve statements of faith in the Apostle's Creed.

And the reason for "12 days of Christmas" — the Christmas season (according to the old church calendar) starts on December 25th and ends on January 5th, the day before Epiphany—twelve days. 🔔

ON THE LIGHT SIDE

FOR THE ROOF FUND.....?

Father John answers the phone.

"Hello, is this Father John?" *"It is."*

"This is the IRS. Can you help us?" *"I can."*

"Do you know a George Teskovich?" *"I do."*

"Is he a member of your congregation?"

"He is."

"Did he donate \$10,000 to the church?"

"He will." 🔔

BIBLE QUIZ ON CONVERTS

1. What man, who suddenly became blind, became a convert when he regained his sight?
2. On the day of Pentecost, how many people were converted?
3. What Roman centurion was converted by Peter's message?
4. Who helped in the conversion of an Ethiopian eunuch?
5. Who was told he would become a convert after meeting a band of prophets playing musical instruments?
6. What sorcerer became a convert?
7. What king recovering from insanity became a convert?
8. What "seller of purple" became a convert?
9. To which of his disciples did Jesus say, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren"?
10. What proconsul became a convert after seeing a sorcerer punished with blindness?

[answers on page 9] 📖

NOT THE SHARPEST KNIFE IN THE DRAWER—Criminal Stupidity

1. Police in Oakland, California spent two hours attempting to subdue a gunman who had barricaded himself inside his home. After firing ten tear gas canisters, officers discovered that the man was standing beside them, shouting "Please come out and give yourself up!"
2. Police in Los Angeles had good luck with a robbery suspect who just couldn't control himself during a lineup. When detectives asked each man in the lineup to repeat the words, "Give me all your money or I'll shoot," the man shouted, "that's not what I said!"
3. In Modesto, CA, Steven Richard King was arrested for trying to hold up a Bank of America branch without a weapon. King used a thumb and a finger to simulate a gun, but unfortunately, he failed to keep his hand in his pocket. 📖

Hmmmm....

My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?"

I mentally polished my halo while I asked, "No, how are we alike?"

"You're both old," he said. 📖

SURVIVAL KIT FOR THE NEW YEAR

Items Needed:

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| * Toothpick | * Rubber Band | * Band Aid |
| * Pencil | * Eraser | * Chewing Gum |
| * Mint | * Candy Kiss | * Tea Bag |

Why???

- 1) **TOOTHPICK** - to remind you to pick out the good qualities in others. -*Matt. 7:1*
- 2) **RUBBER BAND** - to remind you to be flexible; things might not always go the way you want, but it will work out. - *Romans 8:28*
- 3) **BAND AID** - to remind you to heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else's. -*Col. 3:12*
- 4) **PENCIL** - to remind you to list your blessings everyday. *Eph.1:3*
- 5) **ERASER** - To remind you that everyone makes mistakes, and it's OK. - *Gen.50:15-21*
- 6) **CHEWING GUM** - to remind you to stick with it and you can accomplish anything. -*Phil 4:13*
- 7) **MINT** - to remind you that you are worth a mint! -*John 3:16-17*
- 8) **CANDY KISS** - to remind you that everyone needs a kiss or a hug everyday. - *1 John 4:7*
- 9) **TEA BAG** - to remind you to relax daily and go over that list of blessings. -- *1 Thess 5:18* 📖

One Liners

—"I told the doctor I broke my leg in two places. He told me to quit going to those places."— *Henny Youngman*

—Did you hear about the self-help group for compulsive talkers? It's called On & On Anon.

—If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague. 📖

RIDDLES

1. What do you call Santa Claus after he has fallen into the fireplace?
2. Who sings "Love Me tender," and makes Christmas toys?
3. Which of Santa's reindeer needs to mind his manners the most?
4. What did the Gingerbread Man put on his bed?
5. Which reindeer has the cleanest antlers?

Can you name Santa's eight reindeer?

(answers on page 9) 📖

STUFF

Author unknown

Every Fall I start stirring in my stuff. There is closet stuff, attic stuff, and basement stuff. I separate the good stuff from the bad stuff, then I stuff the bad stuff anywhere the stuff is not too crowded until I decide if I will need the bad stuff.

When the Lord calls me home, my children will want the good stuff, but the bad stuff, will be stuffed in bags and taken to the dump where all the other people's stuff has been taken.

Whenever we have company they always bring bags and bags of stuff. When I visit my son, he always moves his stuff and my daughter-in-law always clears a drawer of her stuff so I will have room for my stuff. It would be so much easier to use their stuff and leave my stuff at home, with the rest of my stuff.

This fall I had another closet built so I would have a place for all the stuff too good to throw away and too bad to keep with my good stuff.

You may not have this problem but I seem to spend a lot of time with stuff—food stuff, cleaning stuff, medicine stuff, clothes stuff and outside stuff.

Whatever would it be like if we didn't have all this stuff?

Now there is all that stuff we use to make us smell better than we do. There is the stuff to make our hair look good, stuff to make us look younger. Stuff to make us look healthier. Stuff to hold us in, and stuff to fill us out.

There is stuff to read, stuff to play with, stuff to entertain us and stuff to eat. We stuff ourselves with the food stuff.

Well, our lives are filled with stuff. Good stuff, bad stuff, little stuff, big stuff, useful stuff, junky stuff, and everyone's stuff.

Now when we leave all our stuff and go to heaven whatever happens to our stuff won't matter. We will still have the good stuff God has prepared for us in heaven.



WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME

by Stephen age 6

Christmas is for giving, not getting.
We should give love to our Lord,
parents, brothers and sisters.
Christmas is Jesus' birthday.
Merry Christmas to everyone.



WHAT THE EXECUTOR OF YOUR ESTATE SHOULD KNOW

Make sure your executor knows the location of:

- *durable power of attorney
- *durable medical power of attorney
- *living will
- *last will and testament
- *past agreement
- *burial instructions
- *deed for your cemetery plot
- *checking and savings accounts and the account numbers
- *credit card accounts/numbers
- *safe deposit and key
- *life insurance policies/numbers
- *birth certificate
- *car titles bonds stock certificates
- *social security card
- *names and phone numbers of:
accountant, banker, stockbroker, insurance agent, physicians and religious advisor. 🛎

[That should help to take care of all of your stuff! :-) The Editor]

Remember...

People will forget what you said.

People will forget what you did...

but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Give the gift that will never be forgotten by those you love...

Appreciation for their love, forgiveness for any hurts, a hug in time of need, and love—
"I love you just because you are you." 🛎



The Nativity Sermon

“I behold a new and wondrous mystery!

My ears resound to the shepherd’s song,
piping no soft melody, but loudly chanting
a heavenly hymn!

The angels sing!

The archangels blend their voices in
harmony!

The cherubim resound their joyful praise!

The Seraphim exalt His glory!

All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the
Godhead herein... on earth and man in heaven. He
who is above now, for our salvation, dwells here
below; and we, who were lowly, are exalted by
divine mercy!

Today Bethlehem resembles heaven, hearing from
the stars the singing of angelic voices and, in place
of the sun, witnessing the rising of the Sun of
Justice!

Ask not how this is accomplished, for where God
wills, the order of nature is overturned. For He
willed He had the powers He descended. He saved.
All things move in obedience to God.

Today He Who Is, is born ! And He Who Is
becomes what He was not! For when He was God,
He became man-while not relinquishing the
Godhead that is His...

And so the kings have come, and they have seen
the heavenly King that has come upon the earth,
not bringing with Him angels, nor archangels, nor
thrones, nor dominions, nor powers, nor
principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path,
He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Yet He has not forsaken His angels, nor left them
deprived of His care, nor because of His
incarnation has He ceased being God. And behold
kings have come, that they might serve the Leader
of the Hosts of Heaven; Women, that they might
adore Him Who was born of a woman so that He
might change the pains of childbirth into joy;
Virgins, to the Son of the Virgin...

by [Saint John Chrysostom](#)

Infants, that they may adore Him who became a little
child, so that out of the mouths of infants He might
perfect praise;

Children, to the Child who raised up martyrs through
the rage of Herod; Men, to Him who became man that
He might heal the miseries of His servants;

Shepherds, to the Good Shepherd who was laid down
His life for His sheep;

Priests, to Him who has become a High Priest
according to the order of Melchizedek;

Servants, to Him who took upon Himself the form of
a servant, that He might bless our stewardship with the
reward of freedom (Philippians 2:7);

Fishermen, to the Fisher of humanity;

Publicans, to Him who from among them named a
chosen evangelist;

Sinful women, to Him who exposed His feet to the
tears of the repentant woman;

And that I may embrace them all together, **all sinners**
have come, that they may look upon the Lamb of God
who takes away the sins of the world!

Since, therefore, all rejoice, I too desire to rejoice! I
too wish to share the choral dance, to celebrate the
festival! But I take my part, not plucking the harp nor
with the music of the pipes nor holding a torch, but
holding in my arms the cradle of Christ!

For this is all my hope!

This is my life!

This is my salvation!

This is my pipe, my harp!

And bearing it I come, and having from its power
received the gift of speech, I too, with the angels and
shepherds, sing:

**“Glory to God in the Highest! and on earth peace
to men of good will!”**



The Theophany of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. (Jan. 6)

The Feast of the Theophany (or Epiphany) of Our Lord Jesus Christ, is celebrated on January 6. After Pascha and Pentecost, this is the greatest Feast of the Orthodox Church, predating even the Nativity of Christ in importance. Here Our Lord Jesus Christ is baptized by John in the waters of the Jordan, this being the first public manifestation of God the Word Incarnate to the world.

As Holy Scripture tells us: In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins....

[And John said,] I baptize you with water for repentance, but He Who is coming after me is mightier than I, Whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire [Matt. 3:1-6, 11).

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of Whom I said, 'After me comes a man Who ranks before me, for He was before me' [John 1:28-30]. Then Jesus came...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 was 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" [Matt. 3:13-17].

And John bore witness, I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on Him. I myself did not know Him; but He Who sent me to baptize with water said to me, He on Whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God [John 1:32-34].

In commemoration of this event, the Church, on January 5, the Eve of Theophany, performs the Blessing of Waters in the church itself, and on January 6, the day of the Feast itself, the Blessing of Waters is performed at a site prepared outside the church (preferably a river or lake).



The Feast of the Epiphany reminds us of our own Baptism in the hymn sung just before the reading of the Epistle at the Divine Liturgy: As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia! For in the waters of Baptism, we put off the Old Man and put on the New, that is Jesus Christ, and strive to acquire the humility shown by the Lord Himself when He, the Creator, bowed His head under the hand of John, the creature, in the waters of the Jordan River.

Troparion of the Feast (Tone 1).

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest! For the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son! And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, Who hast revealed Thyself and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee!

Kontakion of the Feast (Tone 4).

Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, and Thy light, O Lord, has shone on us, who with understanding praise Thee: Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, O Light Unapproachable!



BIRTH OF JESUS

ANGEL	FRANKINCENSE	MANGER	STAR IN THE EAST
BABE	GIFTS	MARY	SWADDLING CLOTHS
BEAR A SON	GOLD	MYRRH	VIRGIN
BETROTHED	GOOD NEWS	NAZARETH	WARNED
BORN IN BETHLEHEM	GREAT JOY	NIGHT	WIFE
CHRIST THE LORD	HEROD THE KING	NO PLACE IN INN	WISE MEN
DEATH OF HEROD	HOLY SPIRIT	REJOICED	WITH CHILD
DREAM	JESUS	SAVIOR	WORSHIP
FLEE TO EGYPT	JOSEPH	SHEPHERDS	
FLOCK	KING OF THE JEWS	SON OF GOD	

Santa's Reindeer

Dasher, Dancer, Prancer,
Vixen, Comet, Cupid,
Donder, and Blitzen.
Rudolph was not one of the
original eight.

Riddle Answers

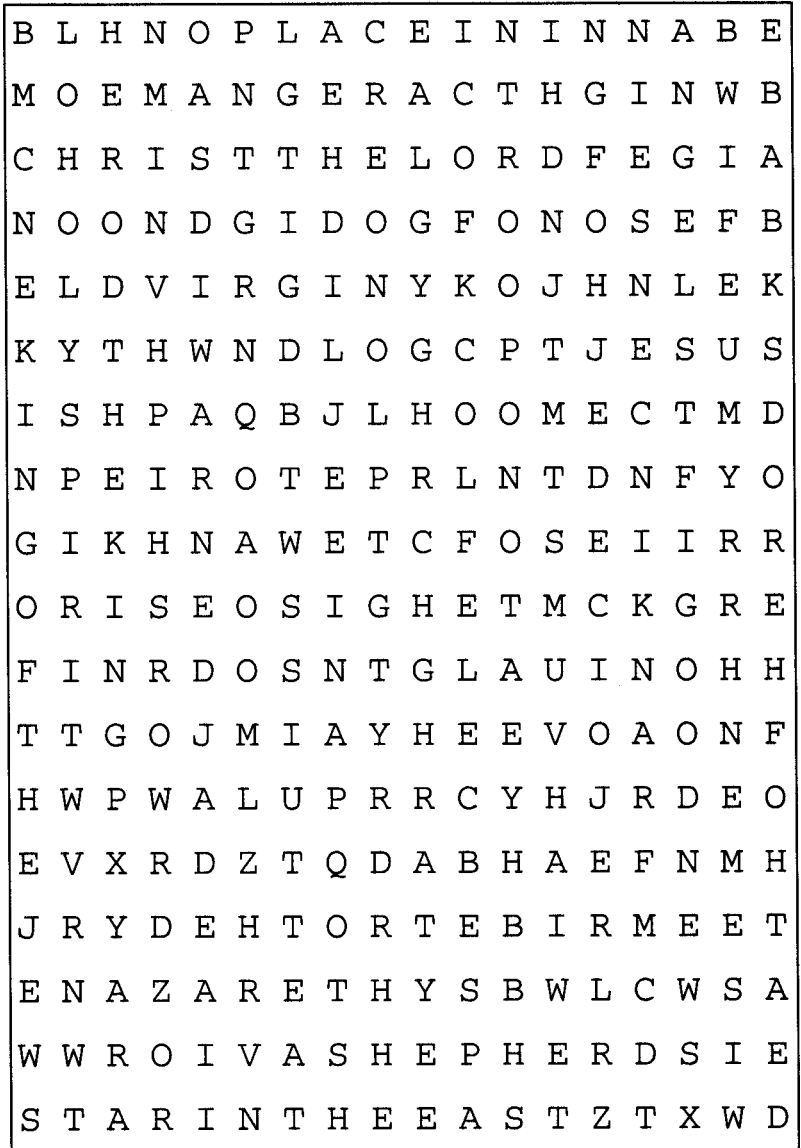
1. Krisp Kringle
2. Santa's little Elvis
3. "Rude"-olph
4. A cookie sheet
5. Comet

Bible Quiz Answers

*Read the passages to
find the people's names.*

1. Acts 9:1-20
2. Acts 2:41
3. Acts 10
4. Acts 8:26-38
5. I Sam. 10:5-7
6. Acts 8:9-13
7. Daniel 4:8-9-13
8. Acts 16:14, 15
9. Luke 22:31, 32
10. Acts 13:7-12

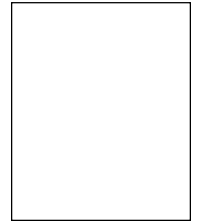
Scores: 10 or 9--Bible
Expert
8 or 7--Superior
6 or 5--Pretty good
4 or less--Better start
studying!



THE FRUIT BASKET

18893 Howe Road
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 Sunshine Greetings from
St. Theodosius Orthodox Cathedral



CALENDAR for Dec. 2006/Jan. 2007

Dec. 6 St. Nicholas
Dec. 25 Nativity of the Lord
Jan. 1 Circumcision of the Lord
Jan. 6 Theophany of the Lord
Jan. 6 Synaxis of the Baptist
Jan. 17 St. Anthony the Great



Addressee

Psalm 111

Liturgically this is used as a Christmas psalm. Verse 9a, "the Lord has sent redemption to His people," is the communion hymn on Christmas Day.

Praise the Lord!

I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, In the assembly of the upright and in the congregation.

The works of the Lord are great, Studied by all who have pleasure in them. His work is honorable and glorious, And His righteousness endures forever.

He has made His wonderful works to be remembered; The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He has given food to those who fear

Him; He will ever be mindful of His covenant.

He has declared to His people the power of His works, In giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of His hands are verity and justice; All His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.

He has sent redemption to his people;
He has commanded His covenant forever;
Holy and awesome is His name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.

NKJV