



Newsletter

Of the Eastern Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

Backpack Buddies: Feeding Hungry Children

"I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat."

This well-known gospel passage about helping others (while simultaneously serving Christ in his "distressing disguise" of poverty) is what Backpack Buddies is all about. Our parish began its involvement several years ago when a North Clackamas School District coordinator reached out to Fr. Matthew asking for help, and we have been involved with this local program ever since.

We, along with other churches nearby, raise money, purchase food, and pack the food in take-home bags for select children from Bilquist Elementary School here in Milwaukie who come from homes with a food deficit. In other words, these families often don't have enough food to get through the weekend. So the food the children bring home can help sustain them until Monday comes. Usually, the bags are given out discreetly by the teachers to the needy children at the end of the school day on Fridays.

At COA, we have about 20 volunteers who help throughout the school year with shopping, packing, and delivering the bags to Bilquist. We try to buy healthy foods like tuna, canned chili, milk, and fresh fruit. Funding for the program comes from donations as well as from our parish mission budget.

If you're interested in helping (or if you feel drawn to help lead this ministry for our parish) please contact Lori Jensen at [503.236.7565](tel:503.236.7565) or [<sixmoges@gmail.com>](mailto:sixmoges@gmail.com). Monetary donations are also welcomed. Thank you!

- Lori Jensen

Children Stage Nativity Play

For the second year, the children of our parish learned their parts, donned beautiful costumes, and came to practice the afternoon before for their performance of The Nativity Play on December 17. It was a wonderful experience for all! The audience joined in with singing Christmas carols and Troparions, handed over their tax monies to the tax collector, and echoed the shepherd's praise in *Christ is Born, Glorify Him*.

We want to thank the parents for putting together some beautiful costumes, getting the children to practice, and helping the children at home in learning their parts. By acting out stories, children can more fully grasp the characters and events that took place during Christ's Incarnation. They will get the mystical levels later but, as children, it's very important that they are being exposed to the miraculous story of Mary and the Annunciation, Mary's betrothal to Joseph, their travels to



Bethlehem, the Angels and the Shepherds, and how All Creation worshiped the newborn babe. What better way for them to learn than participating in this annual event at our Church of the Annunciation.

Our musicians this year included Jon Moritz, who escorted the children with carols on his Scottish bagpipe, Aquilina Larkin on keyboard (who also transposed much of the music), and Maddie Reynolds on cello. Wonderful job! Thank you to the following cast for their performance:

- Narrator: Aurora Ross
- Prophecy: Reader Nathaniel
- Mary: Emma Ross
- Joseph: Shawn Wendell
- Angel Gabriel: Katelynn Reynolds
- Tax Collector: Christopher Baker
- Angel of Good Tidings: Alia Stout
- Angels: Anastasia Ross
- Miriam Pratt, Elsie Martinsen & Michaela Matta
- Chief Shepherd: Byron Baker
- Second Shepherd: Max Cazel
- King Melchoir: Byron Baker
- King Caspar: Alex Cazel
- King Balthazar: Christopher Baker
- Sheep: Paul Wolfberg & George Cazel
- Lighting: Roman Jensen

As always, the directors enjoyed this time with the children!

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Mat. Molly Shaw and Lori Jensen

Sacraments and Blessings

Baptisms

- 1/1: Joshua Wood (infant)
Godparents: David and Trisha Taylor
- 11/7: Zander Semko (St. John) (infant)
Godparents: Bogdon Bodroug and Hannah Yemelyanoy

Catechumens

- October: Adam and Ksenia Ross and daughters Aurora, Emma, Anastasia and Avamaria
- 11/7: Meisha Shaw (St. Anne)
- 11/7: Myles Dressler (St. David)

Calendar of Events

January

- 1/7-8 House Blessings
- 1/14-15 House Blessings
- 1/22 Annual Meeting
(after Sunday Liturgy)
- 1/29 Vigil of The Three Hierarchs,
6:30 p.m.
- 1/30 Liturgy of the Three Hierarchs,
9:00 a.m.

February

- 2/7-9 Mission Deanery Retreat
Speaker:
Fr. Timothy Pavlatos
- 2/11 Choir Retreat
- 2/19 Meatfare Sunday
- 2/26 Cheesefare Sunday
Forgiveness Vespers 6:00
p.m.
- 2/27 Lent Begins:
Vespers and Great Canon
6:00 p.m.



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2/28 Vespers and Great Canon,
6:00 p.m.

Hospitality Schedule

Jan 8	Tadesse / Martinsen / Sege
Jan 15	Broding / Selander / Johnson
Jan 22	Seraphina Green / Derugin
Jan 29	Shaw / Nash / McFadden
Feb 5	Jensen / McMichael
Feb 12	Shechenko
Feb 19	McConnell / Johnson / Asano
Feb 26	Walker / Boyd
Mar 5	Vallejos / Matta
Mar 12	Youth Group
Mar 19	Schulmans / Hesselink

If you have submissions for the newsletter,
please e-mail them to
Gail Cramer, islandtimezone@yahoo.com

Early Monday at Matins

Way up high I saw a flock of geese
churn the winter sky, jostling to find
a steady line behind their flapping leader at the
crease of the V. This special one, his neck
outstretched, must know the way. Who ordained
him? He calls and stragglers follow. He moves,
resolute, and he aims---somewhere.

Down here we, too, need a brave one
to rise early, stand forward in the dark hour,
hold a candle against it, and sift us trembling
into place at dawn for the long flight home. He
is an aged man with a beard of snow who holds
a well-worn book and faces to the east
and prays and prays.

by Fr. Dn. John Jensen