

Volume 2 Issue 1

Winter 2005



A Christmas Visit

With Bishop JOSEPH

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Parishes in Alaska eagerly look forward to the Christmas visit of our father Bishop JOSEPH. Starting in the summer of 1996 his visits have become an annual tradition. While in Alaska, he divides his time among St. John Cathedral in Eagle River, St. Herman Church in Wasilla, and All Saints of North America Church in Homer. He joins us for the Royal Hours that lead up to the candlelit Divine Liturgy of Christmas Eve and the festal Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of Christmas Day. He celebrates with us at parties which in the past have included sledding, horse-drawn sleigh rides and special presentations by the children. His visits always encourage us in our faith. His great love for the clergy and people especially warms our hearts during this winter Christmas season. This article is taken from letters written by Bishop JOSEPH after Christmas visits with us in Alaska. -Mary Alice Cook



Ordination of Dn. Dan Gray in 2004

When I first decided to spend Christmas with you, many people, clergy and laity asked me, "Are you crazy to go to Alaska during this cold and freezing time of the year?" My response was, "Yes, I am crazy!" You have to know and understand that my holy ministry is built upon love, and love overcomes all adversaries and hardships. My trips north have become an integral part of my ministry, as the memory of your kindness and generosity buoys my spirits throughout the rest of the year. My visits with you remind me of the life of the early Church where there was no other concern besides living together as a family and holy community, learning how to live the life of the Bible and how not to be deluded by modern idolatry. Remember that many saints came out of your land and remember also that you are asked to do everything possible to emulate those saints and to keep Alaska holy.

We have many changes ahead of us that we cannot avoid. Many of you are aware that you will eventually have a new Bishop in Eagle River, though it will be a long while before this happens. The unknown is always a source of fear to those parts of our lives that we have not utterly surrendered to God. Fear is a tool; it is the indicator of the need for change within us. The perfected man has no fear, for he is filled

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Fr. Paul welcomes His Grace to Homer in 2004



Visiting St Herman Church in 1997

Our Journey Together as Orthodox Christians
In Community

Community Cooks: Featuring: Judi Hoyt



Judi Hoyt grew up in Colorado. She met Gordon while working in Arrowhead Springs, CA at the headquarters of Campus Crusade for Christ. They married in 1967 and arrived in Fairbanks, Alaska six months later. They worked there for CCC for two years and then moved to Anchorage to continue the ministry with the Dunaways. After Crusade they remained in Anchorage where they each worked various jobs. When their daughter Corinne reached 5th grade, Judi became very involved in the founding of St John Community School. She worked as administrator, teacher, secretary or curriculum coordinator for many years. She has always been involved with the church music and choir. Judi quietly serves the church and her neighbors in so many capacities. Now however, instead of responding to the "Call of the Wild" they respond to the "call" of their five grandkids living in Pennsylvania.

Lime Meltaways

Cream together:

1 1/2 stick of butter

1/3 c. confectioners

sugar

Mix in:

Zest of 2 limes

1 T. vanilla

2 T. lime juice

Sift together:

1 3/4 c. flour

2 T. cornstarch

1/4 tsp salt

Welcome Home, our church cookbook, is available for \$18.00. Contact Maye Johnson to order. tommajej@mtaonline.net
Phone or fax: 907-696-3326

Add to make the dough. Form into two cylinders on waxed or parchment paper and refrigerate. (Can be frozen for later use.) Bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes. Shake in confectioners sugar.

Shelter from the Storm

"I've grown up here, surrounded by the church, our priests, family and friends. Sometimes I'm afraid my life has been way too sheltered!" Elyse's statement, made during our women's retreat last spring, inspired much discussion. The conversational ball bounced back and forth until finally Eloise, a strong woman who has fought her share of life's battles, asked, "What's wrong with being sheltered? It meets *my* needs."

Why, I wondered later, do some insist that "sheltering" children is a bad idea? The dictionary says that the word *shelter* is derived from "shield troop," literally a body of men protected by interlocked shields. A shelter is a thing that covers or protects one from danger or the elements. Scripture teaches that Adam and Eve were sheltered in the Garden, that Noah and his family took refuge in the ark, and that Moses was covered by God's own hand. Churches have always been places of refuge and in scripture God Himself is called a fortress.

The church shelters the suffering, the sick and dying, the homeless and all who are spiritually and emotionally needy. Strangers are welcomed and cared for. The connection between *hospital* and *hospitality* is as lovely as it is logical; *hospital* originally meant a place of shelter and rest for travelers. For all these vulnerable ones, the shelter they find is a protective edifice made up of the Eucharist, the prayers of healing, the intercessions of the saints and of the community.

So, too, our children, with their unformed intellect, immature powers of discernment and lack of physical strength, must be sheltered by parents and by the church community. The first protection we give them is the sacrament of baptism. They are brought to the font by godparents who represent the entire community when they promise to watch over the spiritual formation of the child. Immediately afterward, the child begins to receive the Eucharist, a powerful protector of soul and body. As she grows, she is given Christian education which arms her against the assaults of the devil. If she is fortunate, she will also attend school in her parish, an experience that, in Fr. Marc's words, allows her to learn in an atmosphere of "Christian immersion," where the lessons of reading and writing are integrated within an Orthodox view of God's creation.

Writing on this subject, Fr. Deacon James Hughes, Headmaster of St. Innocent's Academy in Kodiak said: "Our current culture is increasingly bold in its anti-Christian agenda and values. Simply going to an Orthodox Church on Saturday nights and Sundays is not enough to offset the influence of the secular culture. Children will naturally absorb the values and attitudes and language of the culture in which they live. A child exposed to a Christian community with an emphasis on courtesy, respect, service to others, orderliness, wholesome literature, uplifting music and beautiful art will be helped to develop tastes which will help them refuse the evil and choose the good." (*The Eagle*, May-June, 2004).

Sister Magdalen, during her visit here in 1996, went even further. "If there is an Orthodox school," she said, "it should be looked upon as a greenhouse for the cultivation of young and sensitive plants. They should grow here in preparation for later planting in the garden."

May God give us the wisdom and the will to provide our children with the shelter they need.

A commentary by Mary Alice Cook

"Simply going to an Orthodox Church on Saturday nights and Sundays is not enough to offset the influence of the secular culture."

Fr. Dn. James Hughes

A Christmas Visit With Bishop JOSEPH

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with God's love and mercy: *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. (1John 4:18)*

Love is not emotion. Love is not words embroidered on a satin pillow. Love is found on the Cross of our Lord. It is written with the blood of martyrs. It is



Adam and Anna Cook's wedding in 2003

smelled in the sweat of those who toil and sacrifice for others, building up the Body of Christ. It is heard in the hymns of the Church. It is felt in the last metania, and when we give mercy to one who has all but lost hope in God. Love says, "Sell everything, give it all up and rely only on the Lord. Completely abandon yourself to God, and this is when you discover what love really is."

In Community

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Fr. Marc receives the Gospel from His Grace.



Fr. Mike greets His Grace at St Herman Church

When you have taken me in under your roofs and fed me, you have shared with me the love God has for you. As I sit at your tables, I am, in a way, sitting at table with our Lord, for He has made sure a pilgrim like me is cared for in a strange land. When you share of what you have, you share yourself. This is important, since what you have is not yours but God's. When you share of what you are, then you share a divine gift. You have been made in the Image and Likeness of God; you receive His grace, and these are the things you share when you share yourselves.

Thank you for being eager to have me as a father, a bishop and a friend. Special thanks to all the beautiful children who visit me at Christmas through their cards, drawings and presents. Special thanks also to all the families who take care of me and for their Christmas presents and utmost hospitality. Finally, many thanks to all the clergy who are sacrificing their lives, efforts, and means to establish a holy community in the holy land of Alaska.

May God bless you all and keep you under His divine care. Remember His love for you and the good things He has in store for you.



KC & Gwyn Jones, Fr. Marc, Bishop JOSEPH and Tisha Dunham in 2002

A Family's Tribute

By Diana Truelson

Life was not easy for my mother, Marlene Dyal. She was a wife, mother, grandmother, friend and she was a strong woman. She contracted polio at age three, and the Shriners paid for her train ticket to a children's hospital where she spent several months recovering. Many children of that era died, many were in iron lungs, many wore leg braces and had to learn to walk again, and many were permanently paralyzed. My mother lost partial muscle control in her legs and her kidneys stopped growing. Nevertheless, disabled yet determined to live a full life, she did just that. She married my father, Bob, at age 16 and went on to become a wife of 46 years, mother of four and grandmother of 17 children, all of whom she loved ever so dearly. In fact, if any one thing stands out the most in our memories, it's probably that she loved us and forgave us and taught us to love and forgive. She did not just love us, she considered her children and grandchildren the cream of the crop.

By praying and begging God for help, she overcame many things in her life. This is what brought her, at age 57, to be baptized at St. John's.

She taught us to laugh. She loved to laugh and was very personable with everyone. Our father said she could make friends while she waited for him to bring the car around. Every one would talk and laugh with her. She had that gift which allowed her to touch so many people's lives.

Marlene had problems, just like everyone else. One thing we loved about her, though, was her willingness to confess sins and face them head on. Though she might at first weep and be afraid, she would see what she needed to do and then do it. By praying and begging God for help, she overcame many things in her life. This is what brought her, at age 57, to be baptized at St. John's. She knew she was weak but she counted on the mercy of God, her Father in heaven, and humbly proceeded on with her struggles. She never stopped struggling physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Nor did she ever stop praying, our mother prayed everyday for everyone in the family by name and for many other people as well.

In her final days, Marlene turned her face completely towards God, not caring anymore for the things of this world. After her cancer diagnosis, she said that she only wanted to spend time with her family and go to confession. Her family was with her constantly, laughing, crying, hugging, telling stories, playing Yahtzee, and praying.

At the end of her illness she slipped into a coma for six days. The family watched over her all week, day and night. After two days she became alert temporarily when some of her grandchildren cut their vacations short to come see her, and when her daughter and grandsons from Georgia arrived. At times when our father—her husband and best friend—talked to her and held her hand, she would become alert for a short while. When she was alert we knew that she could hear us because she would respond as well as possible, normally with sighs or groans. She was also alert for all the prayers and Pas-



chal Resurrection Hymns that the family joyfully sang each night.

The entire family was present on the night she left us and went to be with Christ, saying evening prayers and singing hymns of the Resurrection as we had done throughout the week. After the prayers, we all kissed her goodnight, and left her alone with her husband. She peacefully fell asleep into eternal rest while he was alone with her.

Our Dad misses our Mom and so do her children and grandchildren. And many others miss her also. Our prayer is that we should live our lives so as to be worthy to be with our Savior Jesus Christ and His servant Marlene. We know that we are all alive in Christ, so we are together now in a mystery. We love her and pray that her soul will dwell with the blessed.

Glory to God for all things!

GOD GRANT THEM MANY YEARS!

December 26, 2005 marks the milestone of a 50-year marriage for Fr Harold and Kh Barbara Dunaway. Without their commitment to each other and to their faith there would be no St John's. You will read more about their journey in the March newsletter. If you would like to send them a card their address is: PO Box 771108 Eagle River, AK 99577.



Advent Homily: Preparation for the Feast

By Fr. Marc Dunaway

The New Testament epistles frequently remind us as Christians – the elect of God – to be merciful, kind, humble, longsuffering and forgiving. And yet, as we enter into the weeks preceding Christmas, it often happens that we instead find ourselves becoming edgy, mean, irritable, short-tempered and grumpy. Why is this? Often it is because there is a conflict of purpose inside us as to what we are trying to do.

Then, after we have attentively worshipped the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, let our homes be filled with meaningful celebration and festivities.

On Thanksgiving Day I happened to watch the end of the Macy's parade and heard the commentator cheerfully announce that Santa was making his appearance in the parade, ushering in, he said, the "holiday season." Of course, this notion is completely at odds with the Orthodox Christian's understanding of the season we call Advent. For Orthodox Christians, these weeks before Christmas are not meant to be festive celebration, but rather quiet preparation. Since we live in an increasingly commercialized and secular culture, we always find our-

selves swimming against a very strong current during this season. And if we do not make a serious and sustained effort to align our lives according to the rhythm of the Church, we may be pulled too much into the current of the world and find within ourselves a conflict of purpose. Are we wishing to celebrate or are we slowing down to prepare?

Sometimes, unfortunately, we do a little of both, or perhaps we add a layer of new Orthodox preparations and customs on top of an already full season of family activities. All this effort and busyness would make anyone edgy, mean, irritable and short-tempered. And so that is why I encourage the faithful at St. John's to make a serious effort to keep the Advent spirit of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Do not let the buying of gifts become all-consuming. Let the decorating of houses lead up to Christmas without jumping far ahead of it. Make the effort to read the scriptures at home. Make your preparations so as to be able to enter into the full cycle of Christmas services that begin on Christmas Eve and continue with the Matins and Liturgy of Christmas morning. Then, after we have attentively worshipped the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, let our homes be filled with meaningful celebration and festivities.

Now let us return to the Santa in the Thanksgiving Day parade. His presence,

"ushering in the holiday season," says something. It says, "This is it. Festivity and happiness begin here and now. So

let's get going and have some merriment." In contrast, the Orthodox cycle of preparation and celebration which we see throughout all our church life, says something very different. It says that all these miniature cycles of preparation and celebration are pictures of our life as a whole. The goal of our life in this world is one of preparation for a much bigger celebration in the Kingdom of God that is to come. We do not always live only for the moment, but are rather always conscious that we are keeping our eyes on the age to come. This is another reason why it is good to observe carefully and deeply this festive cycle of first preparation and then celebration. Doing so can help us keep perspective on our life as a whole.

May Jesus Christ strengthen us and enable us all to grow, especially during days of preparation, in mercy, kindness, humility, longsuffering and forgiveness.



The Nativity of the Christ Child

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his troubled spirit leading up to this great mystery of the Incarnation. Continuing clockwise, we encounter three angels serving as guardians over the crib, and they will surround His person throughout His earthly life. In the upper left hand corner we find the magi on their journey to discover this King they have heard of by following the star. The magi are often depicted as different races and ages and they are indicative of believing pagans from all nations and stages of life.

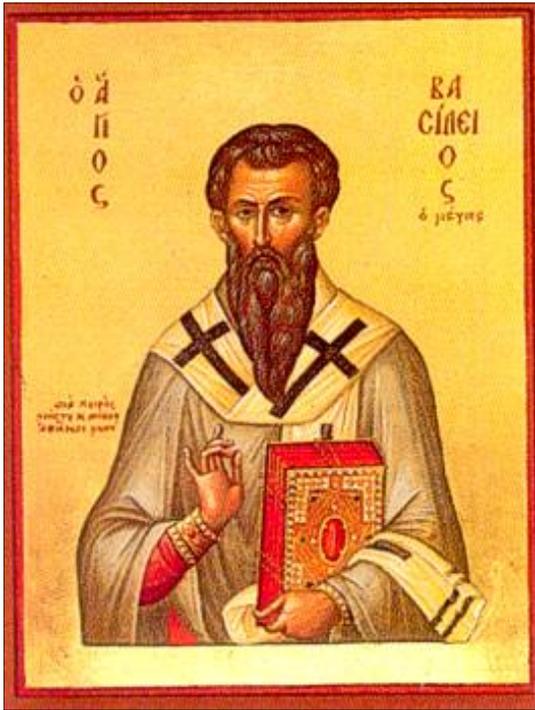
In the center of the icon we find the stable; these were located in caves on the outskirts of towns in those days. This cave represents the earth, and the earth's gift to this child, shelter for His Incarnation. The babe is swaddled in a manger with an ox and ass looking on. This image prefigures Christ's death and burial and links the Incarnation to the Resurrection. The ox and ass represent the whole animal world, and they recognize the Incarnation of the Son of God. In the center is the Virgin mother, whom we call Theotokos (God-Bearer). The Virgin is for us the most precious offering of humanity to God. The face of the Virgin is turned outward, comprehending Joseph's pain and uncertainty, and her gaze is compassionate. She is the new Eve, and she becomes the mother of a new humanity.

**Today the Virgin gives birth to the One above all.
The earth offers a cave to God, to the Unapproachable.
All heaven's angels join to sing with the shepherds praising Him.
Wise-men journey with a star for God Eternal comes.
For all mankind's sake is born the Eternal God, a little Child.
-Festal Kontakion**

Saint Basil the Great

On

The Love Needed in Community



No building can stand if the joints where its members are fitted together come apart. Neither can the Church grow and increase, if it is not bound together by the bonds of peace and love. Nothing is so natural as to live in peace with one another. Consider our own physical bodies, that no one part suffices by itself. Why, then, should I regard myself as sufficient for my own life? Each one of us needs the help of another more than one hand needs the other. One foot cannot move safely unless it is supported by the other. And one eye cannot see a thing well without the other looking at the same thing. And we hear more accurately when the sound comes into both ears. Even the grip of our hand is stronger when the fingers are joined together. In short, everything we do naturally and automatically employs all of our common members together in harmony. Even our prayer is stronger when we pray in common... For we have one Lord, one faith, and the same hope. If you think of yourself as the head, the head cannot say to the feet, "I have no need of you" (1 Cor. 12:21). Or if you think of yourself in another position, you cannot say to the rest of us who have been placed with you in the same body, "I have no need of you."

Do you know what you should do for your neighbor? That which you wish others would do for you. And do you know what an evil thing to do would be? That which you would not want to suffer from another. We have heard from God these words: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). And our Lord, when He was about to complete the work of His Incarnation, left His peace as a parting gift to His disciples by saying: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you" (John 14:27). Therefore unless I have love towards others, and unless I am, as far as in myself

it lies, at peace towards all men, I cannot say that I am worthy to be called a disciple of Christ.

Charity should be the same to all men, just as a man will naturally take care of each part of his body so that his whole body will be equally healthy, for pain in one part disturbs the whole. Likewise whoever loves one member of his community more than another reveals the imperfection of his own charity. There are two things unprofitable in a community or a family. These are quarreling and favoritism. Hurt feelings arise from the strife of quarreling, and envy and suspicion arise because of the favoritism of special friendships. For wherever things are unequal you have the beginning of envy and hate among those who are hurt or left out. And just as the good will of God has bestowed His light equally on all, and makes His sun to rise on the good and the bad alike (Mat. 5:45), so those who imitate God pour out on all alike the warm rays of their charity. For where charity fails and disappears, hate will undoubtedly takes its place. And if, as John says, "God is love" (1 John 4:16), it then must follow that the devil is hate. He therefore who has charity within himself, has God within him; and he who cherishes hate within himself, cherishes the devil within him.

Even our prayer is stronger when we pray in common...

For we have one Lord, one faith, and the same hope.

So we must show equal charity to all men, and at the same time show the honor and respect that is due to each. As I have already said, in our bodies the pain in one single member afflicts the whole, even though some members may be more important than others. For example, we are not equally injured by a hurt to the toes as by one to the eyes, even though the pain can surely be the same in both. Likewise we should show equal love and sympathy to all with whom we live together, even while we might show a certain proper esteem to those we think might be more deserving of it. Among those who are joined to one another in a spiritual community, let there be no greater affection between those who happen to be related, even if one is a brother or a sister of another, or a son or daughter. For whoever in this follows the impulse of his nature, this person is not yet perfectly withdrawn from merely natural affections, but rather is still ruled by the flesh.

St. Basil was born into a wealthy family in 330 and was educated in the best schools in Asia and Greece. He chose to be baptized and to become a monk. He founded several monasteries and at age 40 was called to be Bishop of Caesarea where he became an ardent defender of Orthodoxy against a resurgent Arianism. He organized hospitals and homes for the poor and wrote several important spiritual works, as well as the prayers of the Divine Liturgy which bears his name. He is remembered by the Church on January 1, the date of his death in 379. Because of his leadership, courage and holiness, he is called St. Basil the Great. The above instructions were given in a homily to monks and were excerpted here by Fr. Marc Dunaway from The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers, volume 4, page 45

Everyone's Home

By Gale Armstrong

I heard about Maranatha North from Robin, a young lady I worked with (and to whom I now have been married for 30+ years). I was a backslid Protestant Christian and the people and the community here looked good to me, so in the fall of 1973 I moved in with Dan Kendall and Russell Labreque. I lived near the Big House but not actually in it. Since I was the only one with a pickup, I got the call when there was a road killed moose to go after. The calls always came on dark, rainy or snowy nights because that's when moose get run over. I remember hanging the carcasses in the garage (the building that is now St. John's school) and butchering them.

Leadership at that time was in the hands of three elders: Harold

and his group, including Fr. Harold, started their search for the true church. Eventually, the worship

here began to be more organized and traditional and we formed Grace Community Church. We gathered on Sunday morning (instead of Saturday night) and everything was done together until after the homily when we broke up and went to six different house churches for Eucharist. The house churches had a more personal feel; it was important for people to feel cared for.



The Big House in the 1970's, now known as the Saint James House

Maranatha North was the name of the ministry established by Fr. Harold and Kh. Barbara Dunaway to be a discipleship program for young single adults. This was the beginning of the journey to the historical Orthodox Christian Church.

Dunaway, Tom Webster and Garland Peters. The elders were helped by a group of deacons (along with a few deaconesses). The intent was to make sure that everybody in the community received pastoral care. The people consulted with the elders about major decisions – jobs, houses and so forth. You have to understand that when we decided to try a thing here, we went at it full tilt.

Robin and I had been married a year when we decided to go to Georgia, her home state, for an indefinite stay. Fr. Jack Sparks was visiting here at the time, and he asked me if I had a blessing from Fr. Harold to go. I was 25 years old, had been in the military and was a little rebellious anyway. I remember thinking that I didn't need to be told what to do. We returned to Eagle River ten months later with our new baby, David.

In the late 70's, Fr. Peter Gillquist

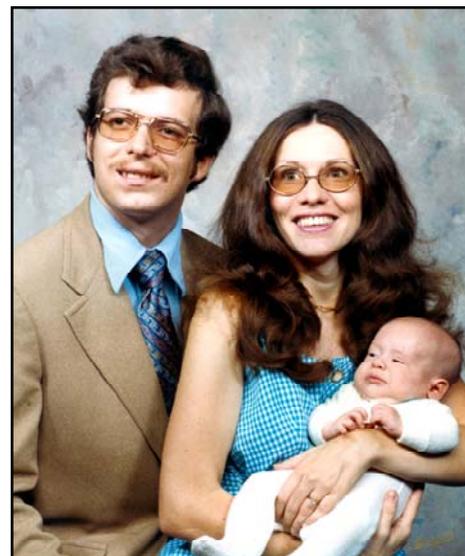
The study by Fr. Peter Gillquist and his group led us to the New Covenant Apostolic Order. It was at this time that Fr. Harold was ordained a bishop. He picked and ordained his own priests and deacons and I served as a deacon for a couple of years. The building of the cathedral and our reception into the Orthodox Church was a great event for our family, which by that time included our daughter Katie, and for the community as a whole.

There was never any "master plan" to create a community here. People just wanted to live close together. Fr. Mike Molloy was the first to buy a piece of land near the Big House and others followed suit. In the early days, there was some idea that living in the Big House was "better" than living someplace else, though I never particularly held to that. The old Big House days were

good times, mainly because everybody was young, energetic, and optimistic. I recall the people living there then were older; they had some experience with life and had inclinations to try to be committed Christians. I like the idea of the St. James House being like that again.

What has always brought people to St. John's is folks inviting friends and family to come and see what it is all about. We all came here looking for something. What we found was better than what we could have imagined.

Families stretch across many generations now. So many of us are near the same age. We all had children together and now we're aging together. I am looking forward to the young people who will be here to take over when we retire.



Gale & Robin Armstrong with son David in 1975

The Nativity of the Christ Child

By Mary Ann Northey

The Nativity icon is so familiar to me. My grandmother painted it onto a sheet of plywood and placed it in the front of our nondenominational church every Christmas. It is arranged in every crèche all around the world. It is acted out in every Christmas play. This wasn't apparent to me the first time I looked at the Orthodox Nativity icon, but all of these memories rush in when I look at it now.

If you start at the 12 o'clock position, you will see the sphere of heaven at the top of the icon. It is an opening into the world beyond, and a ray of the star connects us to what is happening in the stable. This is a real star, shining brightly that night on a real stable. I hope you will remember that as we look at this beautiful icon and talk about what the images in it represent. Moving clockwise, we find the angels. They represent the heavenly host, who glorify God and bring good tidings to the world. Next, we encounter shepherds who were in the fields caring for their flocks when they heard the angel's announcement. They were afraid, then filled with wonder and amazement. Sometimes the icon shows a shepherd holding an instrument that he can use to add human praise to the angel's choir. These shepherds represent believing Israel. In the bottom right hand corner we find midwives bathing the new babe. This detail comes from apocryphal sources and emphasizes the humanity of this God become man. In the bottom left hand corner we find Joseph, and a shaggy figure faces him. This figure actually represents a devil, tempting Joseph to unbelief. Joseph's expression and posture indicates

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