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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Church in Northern Virginia Nearing Completion; Unique Design Reflects Historic Wooden Churches of Eastern Europe

Annandale, VA (Oct. 3, 2011)—After 20 years of planning, fund-raising, and prayer, the parishioners of Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church will finally be able to worship in their new church—just in time for Thanksgiving.

When parishioners walk through the custom made wood doors on Sunday, November 20, they will be transported back to the 17th and 18th centuries, to the Carpathian Mountains in Eastern Europe. That is where the inspiration for the new Epiphany church began. It is there, in Western Ukraine, Eastern Slovakia, and Southwestern Poland that the unique wooden churches with tall spires served as the liturgical home for Eastern Rite Catholics.

Although the new church is built with brick, concrete, and steel, the design and architecture retained the spirit of the wooden churches, bringing a bit of the Carpathian Mountains to Northern Virginia. And it was no easy feat to find an architect and a builder who could reproduce the look and feel of an “Old World” wooden church using modern materials.

The unique roof angles and intersections required intricate fabrication and installation, and, simulating a wood façade with brick called for very specialized masonry skills. Replicating the shadows of the exterior posed yet another design and build challenge, solved by an uncommon process of laying bricks of different sizes in a unique way to create vertical and horizontal shadows, which enhance the wood-like coloration.

Although wood is not the primary material on the exterior, it is used liberally on the inside, from the entry doors to wooden rails with interesting carpenter cuts, and the icon screen.

“The entire building is very intricate, like a watch,” said Father John Basarab, Pastor of Epiphany. The goal, Father Basarab said, was to reflect the history of wooden churches in the original territory of the Eparchy of Mukachevo and in the Archeparchy of Presov, but more importantly, to create a church that felt like home both to the Eastern Rite Catholics here in the U.S., and to Eastern Christians visiting from Europe. Father Basarab added that the mayor of Novoselytsia in Ukraine expressed the sentiment of Epiphany parishioners eloquently in a July 15, 2011 *New York Times* article: “This isn’t our culture, this is everyone’s culture. It belongs to the world.”

Now, Father Basarab and Epiphany's 853 parishioners are making plans for the blessing of the bell tower on November 19 and the church itself on November 20. And those plans—every bit as intricate and steeped in history as the design—involve ancient traditions and ingredients from the passion, crucifixion and burial of our Lord according to the gospels. Parishioners are busy collecting a wide array of items needed, from the myrrh, incense, marble dust, and beeswax needed to make mastic wax to natural sponges and rose water, and the bishop's apron, which will customarily be cut into small pieces and distributed on November 20.

Father Basarab extends a warm welcome to all Eastern and Roman Rite Catholics in the U.S. and around the world as well as historians, architects/builders, and other interested individuals to attend any Sunday liturgy.

Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Annandale, Virginia was formed in 1970 and is part of the Eparchy of Passaic. Learn more about the Byzantine-Ruthenian Catholic Church at <http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com/history.htm>

Photos of the new church construction and other events at Epiphany can be found at www.epiphanyofourlord.org

Learn more about wooden churches in Eastern Europe at http://www.derev.org.ua/index_e.html and

*Article co-authored by Epiphany parishioner Ambassador Vincent Obsitnik, former U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia
[Click here: Wooden Wonders of the Carpathians | World Monuments Fund](#)*

*New York Times "Travel" section article "In Ukraine, Churches With a Distinctive Allure" July 15, 2011
<http://travel.nytimes.com/2011/07/17/travel/ukraines-wooden-churches.html>*

SCHEDULE OF BLESSINGS

Blessing of the Bell Tower by Bishop William

4:00 pm, Saturday, November 19, 2011

Church Blessing and Divine Liturgy

2:00 pm, Sunday, November 20, 2011

PHOTOS



Installation of the cross on center dome, May 11, 2011



The new church as of July 2011