



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Conservation Design Forum
Contact: Denice Shuty, Marketing Manager
PH. 630.559-2000
dshuty@cdfinc.com

New Christmas on the Prairie Event in Homer Glen is an “Unplugged” Holiday Celebration for the Entire Family

Homer Glen, IL – November 26, 2014 – The unique “church-in-a-prairie” located in southwest suburban Homer Glen will be hosting a special holiday event on Saturday, December 6, 2014 called *Christmas on the Prairie*. The free event combines the life and traditions of St. Nicholas with the life of earlier settlers on the pristine Illinois prairie for an “unplugged” afternoon of family fun.

Set on an award-winning 10-acre native landscape just 25 miles from downtown Chicago, the Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church invites the public to enjoy an array of fresh-air holiday activities for all ages, and explore the beauty that nature provides even in winter at their aptly-named *Transformation Prairie*.

Starting at **2:00 pm** on December 6, which is the traditional Feast of Saint Nicholas, there will be demonstrations illustrating the life of earlier settlers. Visitors can see how the pioneers celebrated Christmas when the gifts were simple and did not need electricity. Children will be able to make nature-inspired Christmas crafts, learn how to dip a candle, and see how the settlers completed everyday tasks like spinning wool or churning butter.

Adventuresome visitors can walk the quarter-mile path that meanders through the grounds of the award-winning native landscape, a project that was undertaken by the parish in 2004. The goal of the reconstruction was to create a healthy, self-sustaining environment that would bring people together and honor the Church’s sacramental view of nature. Landscape reconstruction efforts were led by Father Thomas Loya with the help of prominent ecological planning and restoration firm Conservation Design Forum. More than 75 native plant species thrive in what used to be degraded farmland and flooded lowlands. A picturesque natural pond along with hardy native wildflowers and grasses have resolved the flooding issues and created a unique setting for the church which encourages community utilization and outdoor worship. The project has been featured on an episode of a recent WTTW television series that highlights diverse Chicago communities. The show, entitled *Southwest Suburbs: Birthplace of Chicago* is hosted by Geoffrey Baer, a popular TV personality and contributor to the station’s *Chicago Tonight* news magazine show. A clip from the show can be viewed at:

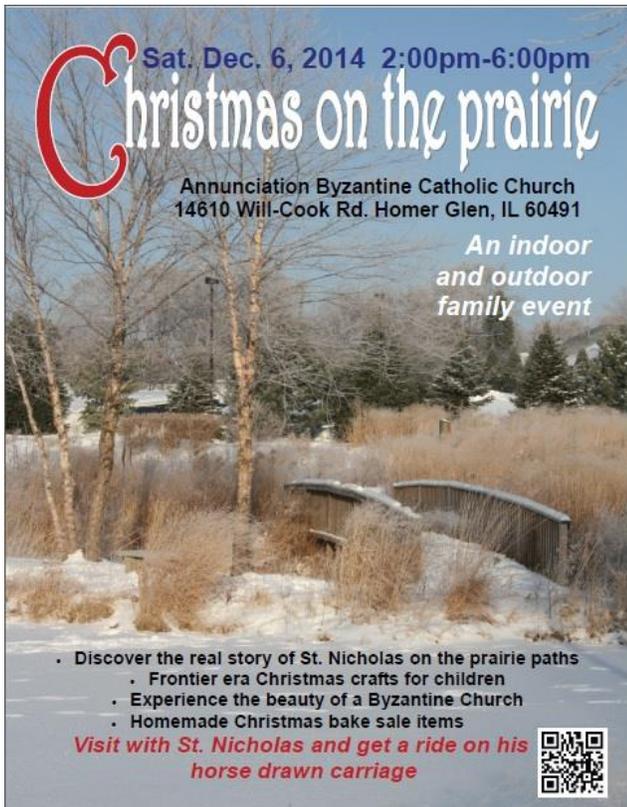
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBPbnLHsr0I>

Along the luminary-lighted path, visitors will encounter special story-station volunteers who will tell the real history of St. Nicholas and answer questions about the prairie, the outdoor art, and the traditions of the Byzantine Church.

The church building will be open for visitors to warm themselves with hot beverages, and taste special ethnic holiday cookies called *Medovniky*, which is a spiced honey cookie similar to a gingerbread.

At **5:00 pm**, St. Nicholas arrives in his traditional horse-drawn carriage. Visitors can enjoy carriage rides throughout the property, take in the dazzling floor-to-ceiling murals inside the church, or browse tables of sweet treats at the bake sale in the church rectory.

At **5:30 pm** St. Nicholas will greet children at the church *narthex* or lobby area, and give each a small goodie bag. A photo wall will be set up where children can get a picture taken with St. Nicholas. The annual Feast of Saint Nicholas, a fourth-century Bishop, is an important celebration in the Byzantine Church. It takes place on the 6th of December every year and usually includes some type of gift-giving.



Sat. Dec. 6, 2014 2:00pm-6:00pm
Christmas on the prairie
Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church
14610 Will-Cook Rd. Homer Glen, IL 60491
An indoor and outdoor family event

- Discover the real story of St. Nicholas on the prairie paths
 - Frontier era Christmas crafts for children
 - Experience the beauty of a Byzantine Church
 - Homemade Christmas bake sale items

Visit with St. Nicholas and get a ride on his horse drawn carriage



(more)

The event concludes around **7 pm** with evening Vespers in the church. The Church is located at 14610 S Will Cook Rd in Homer Glen. For more information about the event contact the Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church at: <http://www.byzantinecatholic.com/christmas-on-the-prairie/> or call 708-645-0241.

To see images of the church's award-winning prairie landscape or get more information about the reconstruction project, go to the project page on Conservation Design Forum's website: http://www.cdfinc.com/Project?project_id=62

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About Conservation Design Forum

CDF is an award-winning, full-service, multi-disciplinary firm providing integrated analysis and design utilizing ecologically-based, water-focused approaches to land-use planning, site/landscape design, civil/water resources engineering, and ecological restoration. The company is a privately held corporation founded in 1994 and headquartered in Elmhurst, Illinois. To discuss a project or possible collaboration with CDF, or for more information about their services, go to: www.cdfinc.com or call 630-559-2000.