

# Light of Christmas candle in Church of All Saints

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko visits All Saints' Memorial Church in Minsk, for holy feast of Christmas

The Head of State, joined by the Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk, the Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, Filaret, lit a Christmas candle in Honour of St. John the Baptist Memorial Church.

Mr. Lukashenko and the Metropolitan Filaret exchanged gifts: a wall clock for the Metropolitan, decorated with carved lace ornamentation in unique Sozh filigree style; and an icon of the Nativity of Christ for the President.

Mr. Lukashenko listened to a choir of Sunday school students from All Saints' parish and looked over plans for the completed construction, inside and out, of the Memorial Church. The President then joined the Metropolitan Filaret for an informal chat over a cup of tea.

Mr. Lukashenko was joined by his youngest son, Nikolay, in laying flowers at the monument of Patriarch Alexy II, before visiting the Church, whose foundation

stone was consecrated on June 4th, 1991.

On September 26th, 2006, three large bells were consecrated in the new belfry, with the President joined by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Alexy II, and the Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk, the Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, Filaret. On July 2nd, 2010, Mr. Lukashenko also took part in a ceremony to bury the remains of unknown soldiers, in the crypt of the Memorial Church.



At the All Saints' Memorial Church in Minsk

# Game which unites

National team of Belarus wins 9th Christmas International Amateur Ice Hockey Tournament for the Prize of the President of Belarus, beating Gazprom Export from Russia in final match



Belarusian President's hockey team wins Christmas Tournament Cup

By Dmitry Komarov

Oleg Antonenko was the hero of the match at Minsk-Arena. The former Belarusian national team forward may have retired but has clearly kept in good shape. He scored three goals himself and set up another two for team mates. Including preliminary matches, he earned 11 points over four games (6+5).

The Russian squad scored only twice in the final, allowing Belarus to claim the cup for the seventh time. Belarus also won the Cup in 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012; Russia celebrated success in 2007 and 2011, defeating Belarus in the finals. The Canadian team took bronze

for the first time, having defeated Austria in the match for third place.

Commenting on the results of the tournament, Oleg Antonenko notes that the level of skill of those taking part improves every year. He explains, "Few matches see high scores. The fact that the Swiss were crushed by both us and the Canadians is rather a coincidence. Maybe, they weren't on form physically because their level of skill and tactical training is pretty good. For those over 40, the Christmas Tournament is a real challenge."

Such a competition is, without exaggeration, the equivalent of an amateur world championship. Next year, it's likely to surprise us

once again, having featured not just goals and struggle but charitable visits this year.

Organised by the President's Sports Club and the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation, teams visited seven orphanages in Minsk and a family-type children's home in the Minsk Region. On the first day, squads from Austria, Canada, Russia and Slovakia congratulated children on the New Year and Christmas holidays, giving such gifts as a music centre, a large 'Air Hockey' game, books and toys, MP3-players and cosmetics.

On the second day, the Swiss team visited children at the socio-pedagogical centre in Minsk's Pervomaisky District, singing their national

song in their native language. The German team went to an orphanage in Borovlyany while the Czechs visited a socio-pedagogical centre in the Frunzensky District of Minsk. The President's team, comprising Oleg Antonenko, Vladimir Tsyplakov, Sergei Shitkovsky, Nikolay Vladykin and Denis Kurdeko, took gifts to the largest orphanage in the capital — located in Minsk's Zavodskoy District. They presented a microwave oven and video camera as well as sweets and soft toys.

The Chairman of the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation, Yevgeny Vorsin, who also took part, feels confident that such meetings should become a tradition.

# Hockey players and children exchange gifts

Canadian hockey players recently took part in the 9th Christmas International Amateur Ice Hockey Tournament for the Prize of the President of Belarus

They then joined children from the socio-pedagogical centre in Minsk's Tsentralny District for the Christmas Tradition charity event, handing out special prizes to twelve of the youngsters: MP3-players to the boys and cosmetics to the girls. Others received toys, dolls and art sets, as well as puzzles, while all were given sweets and a souvenir T-shirt bearing the team's logo. A camera

was also presented to the centre.

The hockey players' congratulations on the New Year holidays were returned warmly, with the children presenting them with hand-made postcards and a performance of dance and song around the New Year tree.

The Christmas Tradition charity event was organised by the President's Sports Club and the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation. Teams from Germany, Austria, Russia, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Canada, as well as the team of the President of Belarus also took part in similar meetings.



During Christmas Tradition charity event