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Father Frost to Greet Space Crew

By The Moscow Times

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Two artists from St. Petersburg working on Christmas-themed ice sculptures in front of Christ the Savior Cathedral. Father Frost, the Russian equivalent of Santa Claus, will visit the flight control center in Korolyov later this week to wish the crew of the International Space Station a happy new year. **Vladimir Filonov**

The Russian equivalent of Santa Claus, Father Frost, will pay a visit to the Flight Control Center in the Moscow region town of Korolyov on Sunday to wish the crew of the International Space Station a happy new year, the Flight Control Center said Monday.

During his visit to the center on Dec. 29, the fairy-tale character known for his white beard and penchant for gift-giving will hold a 30-minute talk with the station's crew, Interfax reported.

Father Frost will be accompanied by children from the town of Vologda as well as children of Russian cosmonauts, children of the Flight Control Center's and space corporation Energia's personnel and representatives of the local administration.

Visits by Father Frost to the Flight Control Center in Korolyov have become a tradition over the years. Earlier, holiday greetings from Father Frost to cosmonauts and astronauts currently in orbit were sent by the head of the Federal Space Agency and heads of leading space industry companies.

On New Year's Eve, friends and relatives of crew members will be able to communicate with them personally to extend their holiday greetings.

Meanwhile, Patriarch Kirill will use a secure communication channel to speak with the space station's crew on the eve of Orthodox Christmas on Jan. 7 from his residence outside Moscow.

The current crew of the International Space Station includes Russian cosmonauts Oleg Kotov, Sergei Ryazansky and Mikhail Tyurin, as well as U.S. astronauts Michael Hopkins, Richard Mastracchio and Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata, the report said.

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