



Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

Friday, December 25, 2020
Nativity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ



Hymns for Today's Service

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. // O Lord, glory to thee!

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One. Angels with shepherds glorify Him; the Wise Men journey with the star, // since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child!

Epistle Reading - Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 2:1-12

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from

the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'" Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

THURS, Dec 24: 8:00 AM Royal Hours

THURS, Dec 24: 6:30 PM Compline & Matins w/
Litya

FRI, Dec 25: 8:40 AM Hours, **9 AM** Divine Liturgy

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Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God

SAT, Dec 26: 8:40 AM Hours, **9 AM** Divine Liturgy

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SAT, Dec 26: 5 PM Great Vespers

SUN, Dec 27: 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy,
Special Parish Council Meeting, 11:15 AM ZOOM
Christmas Caroling

UPCOMING FEAST DAYS SERVICE SCHEDULE

St. Basil the Great / Circumcision of Our Lord

THURS, Dec 31: 6:30 PM Great Vespers w/ Litya

FRI, Jan 1: 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

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Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

TUES, Jan 5: 6:30 PM Great Vespers w/ Litya

WED, Jan 6: 8:40 AM Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

Dec 27: SPECIAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Because we weren't able to have our meeting on the 13th it has been moved to the 27th. The special meeting will be for the election of new parish council members. The meeting will be in the Church immediately following Divine Liturgy.

Dec 27: ZOOM Christmas Caroling/Fellowship

We are putting together a ZOOM Christmas Carol & Fellowship Event for a few of our shut ins. We are hoping to do this following Divine Liturgy and a very brief special meeting on Dec 27. This will be accessible by phone OR you can stay at church. We will keep you posted should the day or time need to be adjusted.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

To the Venerable Hierarchs, Esteemed Clergy, Reverend Monastics, and Beloved Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Brethren and Blessed Children in the Lord, on this the glorious and light-filled Feast of the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, I greet you with the words that resound throughout our Churches and homes during this season: Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

By the grace of God, we have come through an extraordinary year fraught with challenges and trials that none of us could have expected. We have found ourselves confused, scared, and anxious. As we realized the frailty of our earthly life and the many fleeting things of this world to which we so often cling, more than anything, we have found ourselves in need of a Savior.

It is especially in these challenging moments that we are strengthened by God's promise, spoken in the book of Deuteronomy, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be in dread of them: for it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you (Dt 31:6)." As children of God, as children of the promise, we should remain steadfast in hope. We should never let our hope waiver, because, as the present feast reminds us, we are strengthened continually by the presence of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus, who saves us from our sins and weaknesses, and reconciles us with our heavenly Father. The scripture, hymns, and rites of the feast testify that Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, is He who has also died on the Cross, and become the first-born of the dead, raised us all by the Power of God, and opened the gates of the kingdom to us.

The great Prophet Isaiah, speaking of this kingdom, tells us:

Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever (Is 9:7).

Beloved hierarchs, clergy, monastics, and faithful, let your hope be renewed at the Nativity of Christ! Be assured that God is with us! Perceiving the mystery of this feast, difficulties and trials in this life will become bearable, as your faith is strengthened, and your hope remains firm.

With all the blessings of the feast, I remain

Sincerely Yours in Christ,
+ **Tikhon**

Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Understanding the Icon of the Nativity

The icon of the Nativity tells the story of Christ's birth from the Scriptures. It also shows that all creation is taking part in Christ's birth. The angels give thanks with their song; the heavens give the star; the Wise Men give their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The poor, humble shepherds give their praise and amazement; the earth gives the cave, and humanity gives the Virgin.



This Holy Icon is an icon with many scenes. First, it stresses the importance of the Theotokos, the Mother of Jesus. She is placed in the center and is the largest figure in the icon. In this icon, she is kneeling with crossed arms, looking at the Christ child. The three stars, denoting her virginity before, during, and after the Nativity, are on her garments. The Christ Child, in the center of the icon, is in swaddling clothes and is lying in the manger. In the background is the dark cave where He was born. In the cave are

an ox and a donkey guarding the newborn Babe. Even though the Gospels say nothing of the cave, this information is from Holy Tradition. Neither do the Gospels speak of the ox and the donkey, but all icons of the Nativity include these animals. Including the animals in the icon fulfills the prophecy of [Isaiah 1:3](#),



"The ox knows his master, and the donkey his master's crib; but Israel does not know me, and the people have not regarded me." The long ray of light from the star points directly to the cave. This ray comes from the star and travels to all parts of the world. It teaches that this bright star is an astronomical happening, and is a messenger from heaven announcing the birth of Jesus.

On the left hand side of the icon is another scene. The Wise Men, who were led by the star, are riding horses to bring their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus. The Wise Men are of various ages. One is without a beard. In those days, young men did not wear beards. The other Wise Man has long hair and a long beard, which indicates that he is much older. These details teach that regardless of age and appearance, the Good News was given to each and everyone.

Opposite the Wise Men is the scene with the humble shepherds. An angel proclaims the glad tidings. A young shepherd plays a reed instrument. This scene reveals that the music of the humans was added to

the hymn of the angels. Across from the shepherd's scene is the heavenly choir of angels. They are giving glory to God.



The angels serve two purposes in the Nativity of Christ. They give glory to God and announce the good news to all mankind.

The background shows a very rugged terrain. This is not a true representation of the land in this area. Joseph could not find room in Bethlehem, so they went outside of Bethlehem to a cave. This rocky mountain formation only serves as a background for the event.

In the lower part of the icon are two more scenes. In the right hand corner are the two women Joseph brought to take care of the Christ child. They are bathing Him just as any baby is bathed. The humanity of Jesus is clearly shown in this setting.

Opposite the bathing of Jesus scene sits a sad and worried Joseph. He is not part of the central group the Christ Child and the Theotokos. Joseph is not the natural father. Joseph is troubled and despondent. There is an old man talking to Joseph. The old man is Satan. Satan can appear in many forms.



Here he is as an old man who is tempting Joseph and disturbing him. Satan is telling Joseph that virgin birth is impossible. He's telling Joseph that he's a fool if he believes this. This story comes to us from Holy Tradition. The sad Joseph shows us not only his personal predicament but the dilemma of all mankind the difficulty of accepting that which is "beyond words or reason."

The tree, which is in the middle of the lower part of the icon, is a symbol of the Tree of Jesse. This tree refers to [Isaiah 11:1-2](#), "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him." King David was often mentioned as the son of Jesse and Jesus was from the House of David.

The Holy Icon of the Nativity reminds one to praise and glorify the Birth of Christ. The celebration of Christmas each year serves to remind each and everyone of us that Christ came for you and me.