



Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

This Week

Sunday, December 19

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

Tuesday, December 21

9:00 am Daily Matins

10:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Wednesday, December 22

Vespers and Bible Study cancelled

Thursday, December 23

10:00 am Royal Hours

Friday, December 24

9:30 am Vesperal Divine Liturgy

8:00 pm Vigil of the Nativity of Christ

Saturday, December 25: Nativity of Christ

10:00 am Festal Divine Liturgy

No Vespers in the evening

Sunday, December 26

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

No Church School

To our Visitors: Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to come forward to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) at the conclusion of the service.

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*

Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*

Deacon John Skowron, *Attached*

Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

December 19, 2021

Announcements

➤ Please make every effort to attend the services this week celebrating the Nativity of Christ. In the busyness of this season, ensure that you're taking time to worship the Creator of the Universe who became a child for the sake of our salvation.

➤ Everyone is invited downstairs after the Divine Liturgy to sing Christmas carols and greet a special "Visitor from the North!" While we won't be having our Yolka (Christmas program) today, all children are invited to stay to receive a special gift.

➤ Archpriest Igor Soroka, uncle of Fr Thomas, fell asleep in the Lord on the morning of Saturday, December 18, after a brief illness. Fr Igor was rector of St Nicholas Church in Donora PA for 52 years before retiring in 2017. Fr Igor was a leading Orthodox musician during his service to the church along with his brother, Fr Vladimir. He published numerous service books, many of which are still in use today. He directed the former Cathedral Choir of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Russian Male Chorus. He was also a leader in the FOCA and on the diocesan and national level. A many of many gifts and talents, he was most of all a valuable image of a humble and dedicated priest. He is preceded in death by his wife, Matushka Irene, and is survived by three sons and one daughter. Services will be held at St Nicholas Church, 1 St Nicholas Drive, Donora PA 15033. Tuesday: Visitation at 3:00 pm, Funeral at 6:30 pm. Wednesday: Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am. Burial will be at St Tikhon's Seminary in South Canaan PA.

Prayers

➤ Ill and infirm: *Known to be hospitalized:* (none) *Home:* George Shaytar. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Michael Soroka, Olga Tryszyn

➤Vigil Lights From Dawna Beckett for the health of Paul Petkash and my family. From Nancy Shaytar for the health of husband, George, and our family. From Tatyana Sechler for the departed servants Polina, Slava, Galina, Bruce, Diana, Marina, Valentina, Luba; for the health of Tatyana, Veronica, Sergei, Kristia, Adick, Kristofer, and Andrea. From Alexandria Tirpak for the departed servant, beloved grandfather, Nicholas; for the health of brother John, for blessings from St Nektarios and for special intentions. From Suzy and Larry Polny for the health of Fr Tom and his family.

Thank You

➤ to our December donors: Jan Widel (Bulletin \$60) in memory of departed members of the Puskar and Morris families; Donya Yewisiak (Holy Bread \$50) in memory of Mat Olga Soroka; Soroka Family (Altar Candles \$50) in memory of Barbara Naiser (5 yrs), Albena Ivanova (Communion Wine \$40) in memory of father, Rumen Iosifov and Archpriest George Livanos; John Mahalchak Family (Incense \$10) for the health of friends and family.



St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

Christ Rescues Us

There is an old tale that demonstrates how the Lord accomplished our deliverance. A man learned that his beloved friend had been slashed with the poisoned blade of an enemy's sword. He frantically tried to do everything he could to save the dying man's life, but physicians told him that the wound was fatal, the poison having spread throughout his friend's body. There was only one way, they said, to save him, and that was for someone to suck out all the poison through the wound. In that case, the rescuer would himself be poisoned and certainly die. Without hesitation, the man put his lips to the gash and drew out the deadly substance, sacrificing his own life for his friend.

Similarly, when we were wounded by our hellish foe, no one could heal us except by extracting the devil's deadly venom. No physician capable of doing this could be found, so the Most High, the Creator and perfect Healer of souls and bodies, Who has His throne upon the cherubim, out of love for the race of man bent down and pressed His mouth, that is, His beloved Son, against human nature's wound; for God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son. Just as the Holy Spirit is called in Scripture the Father's finger (as Christ says, I with the finger of God cast out devils), so the Son of God is referred to as the Father's mouth, for it is written: By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them by the Spirit of His mouth.

Joining His lips to our wounded nature, God the Son removed from it the poison of transgression; taking the sin of the world upon Himself, He freed us from our iniquity; restoring us to health, He gave up His own life. The kiss He gave us at His Incarnation was the beginning of a new life of grace for us. In His infancy, He is our Saviour, our wise father, a skilled physician, and a dear friend to us.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, December 19

Tone 1 Troparion (Resurrection)

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life:
“Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ!
Glory to Thy Kingdom!//
Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!”

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

Tone 2 Troparion (Holy Fathers)

Great are the accomplishments of faith, for the three Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain of flames as though in the waters of rest; and the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep.//
So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion (Holy Fathers)

You did not worship the graven image, O thrice-blessed ones, but armed with the immaterial Essence of God, you were glorified in a trial by fire. From the midst of unbearable flames you called on God, crying:
“Hasten, O compassionate One!
Speedily come to our aid,//
for Thou art merciful and able to do as Thou dost will!”

Tone 4 Prokeimenon (Holy Fathers)

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, / and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever! (*Song of the Three Holy Children, v. 3*)

Epistle of the Sunday (Heb 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40)

By faith [Abraham] dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted,

were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Gospel of the Sunday (Matthew 1:1-25)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and

from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

Communion Hymn of Sunday

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just! (*Ps. 32:1*) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

