



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!

Schedule This Week

Sunday, December 17

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Yolka

Tuesday, December 19

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am to 12:00 pm Office Hours

Thursday, December 21

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am to 12:00 pm Office Hours

Friday, December 22

10:00 am Royal Hours of the Nativity

Saturday, December 23

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Parish Vigil

Sunday, December 24

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

5:00 pm Communal Holy Supper

8:00 pm Vigil of the Nativity

Monday, December 25

10:00 am Festal Divine Liturgy of the Nativity

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

Rdr James Wargo and Danielle Bartko, Choir Dirs

Sunday of the Forefathers

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

December 17, 2023

Announcements

➤ Everyone is invited to join us downstairs for our **annual Christmas Program (Елка/Yolka)** presented by the students of the Church School Thank you to Matushka Joni and all the teachers and the students who prepared this program for the enjoyment of our parish. May God bless them!

➤ As we prepare for the conclusion of 2023, we express our gratitude to all those who have prayerfully supported our parish over the past year through offering your time and talents and your financial gifts. **Please consider offering a year-end gift to support our ministries.** Thank you!

Services for the Nativity of Christ

Friday, Dec 22 10:00 am Royal Hours

Saturday, Dec 23 5:00 pm Vigil

Sunday, Dec 24 10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Sunday, Dec 24 8:00 pm Festal Vigil

Monday, Dec 25 10:00 am Festal Liturgy

Tuesday, Dec 26 9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Thank you

➤ to all those who prepared the **St Nicholas Day Dinner** and made it a special event!

➤ to all those who donated gifts to help local children in our **Angel Tree**

➤ 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 Matushka Olga Soroka; **Mat. Joni Soroka** (Altar Candles \$50) in memory of Barbara Naiser; **Lindy Hamilton** (Communion Wine \$40) in memory of twin brother, Russell Hamilton; **John Mahalchak Family** (Incense \$10) for friends and family.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized* (none); *Home:* John Mahalchak (son). Donya Yewisiak. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Michael Soroka.

➤ From **Mat. Nancy K. Mell & Gregory Mell** for the departed servants, Dn. Joseph Mell, and newly departed, Mary Lou Mrvos; for the health of family and Donya Yewisiak. From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servant, grandmother, Katherine Dyczko; for the health of Michael Vanguard and Donya Yewisiak. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, Baba Dyczko. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servants, grandmother, Katherine Dyczko and Marie Baronyak. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Donya Yewisiak, Elaine Hamilton, and the Scott & Hamilton families. From **Nancy Shaytar & George M. Shaytar** for the departed servant, George, and Mark; for the health of Donya Yewisiak. From **Henry & Yelena Paclawski** for the departed servant, our loving son, Dylan, on his 20th birthday. From **Oliver Mertz** for the health of mommy. From **Richard & Sonia Blaha** for the newly departed servants, Olga, and Carole; for the departed parents, brother, Norma, Louise, grandparents, Stephen & Mary; for the health of family, friends, siblings, Donya, and serving soldiers; for special intentions, peace, and birthdays especially Aunt Peggy. From **John & Olga Sechler** for the departed servants, Polina, Galina, Slava, Valentina, Luba, Tony, Rob, Andrei, and Diana; for the health of Christopher, Thomas, Tatyana, Daniel, Veronika, Nina, Roman, Beth, Adrianna, Edward, and Stephen. From **Alexandria Tirpak** for the departed servants, Amelia, Nicholas, and Nicholas; for the health of Donya; special intentions.

Preserve Unity

Since therefore I have, in the persons before mentioned, beheld the whole multitude of you in faith and love, I exhort you to study to do all things with a divine harmony, while your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with your deacons, who are most dear to me, and are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the beginning of time, and in the end was revealed. Do ye all then, imitating the same divine conduct, pay respect to one another, and let no one look upon his neighbor after the flesh, but do ye continually love each other in Jesus Christ. Let nothing exist among you that may divide you; but be ye united with your bishop, and those that preside over you, as a type and evidence of your immortality.

Since therefore I have, in the persons before mentioned, beheld the whole multitude of you in faith and love, I exhort you to study to do all things with a divine harmony, while your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with your deacons, who are most dear to me, and are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ. He, being begotten by the Father before the beginning of time, was God the Word, the only-begotten Son, and remains the same for ever; for "of His kingdom there shall be no end," says Daniel the prophet. Let us all therefore love one another in harmony, and let no one look upon his neighbor according to the flesh, but in Christ Jesus. Let nothing exist among you which may divide you; but be ye united with your bishop, being through him subject to God in Christ.

- **St Ignatius of Antioch** (died early 100s)

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.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, December 17

Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,

and has granted to the world//

great mercy.

Tone 2 Troparion (Forefathers)

Through faith Thou didst justify the Forefathers,

betrotting through them the Church of the

gentiles.

These saints exult in glory,

for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit:

she who bore Thee without seed.//

So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on

us!

Tone 2 Troparion(*Pro. Daniel and the Holy Youths*)

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!

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

Tone 3 Kontakion (Prophet Daniel)

When thy pure heart was purged by the Spirit,

thou becamest a vessel of clear prophecy;

thou didst see things far away as though they

were near at hand.

When cast into their den, thou didst tame the

lions.//

Therefore, we honor thee, blessed prophet,

glorious Daniel.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion (Forefathers)

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 (Forefathers)

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, /

and praised and glorified is Thy Name

forever! (*v. 3*)

Epistle of the Sunday (*Colossians 3:4-11*)

When Christ who is our life appears, then you

also will appear with Him in glory.

Therefore put to death your members which are

on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion,

evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Because of these things the wrath of God is

coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which

you yourselves once walked when you lived in

them.

But now you yourselves are to put off all these:

anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language

out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another,

since you have put off the old man with his

deeds, and have put on the new man who is

renewed in knowledge according to the image of

Him who created him, where there is neither

Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised,

barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is

all and in all.

Gospel of the Sunday (*Luke 14:16-24*)

Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a

great supper and invited many, and sent his

servant at supper time to say to those who were

invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ But

they all with one accord began to make excuses.

The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of

ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to

have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have

bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test

them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still

another said, ‘I have married a wife, and

therefore I cannot come.’ So that servant came

and reported these things to his master. Then

the master of the house, being angry, said to his

servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and

lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and

the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ And the

servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you

commanded, and still there is room.’ Then the

master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the

highways and hedges, and compel them to come

in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you

that none of those men who were invited shall

taste my supper.’ ”

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in

the highest! (Ps. 148:1) Rejoice in the Lord, O

you righteous; praise befits the just! (Ps. 32:1)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Offering what is Broken

If we are ever tempted to think that God is

somehow remote from or unconcerned with our

brokenness and pain, we need only look at the

conditions in which the Son of God was born in

order to be delivered from such delusions. Perhaps

we have heard the story so many times that we no

longer see the details clearly. The One Who is fully

divine and fully human was born in a cave that

served as a barn, and He had an animal’s feeding

trough for His crib. He came into the world like a

homeless person as the Son of a transient Jewish

couple forced by the occupying Roman authorities

to take a long, difficult, and dangerous journey

from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The Theotokos

endured the ordeal in the latter stages of

pregnancy, accompanied by her elderly guardian

Joseph. Since the wicked Herod wanted to kill the

Messiah from His birth, the family fled for their

lives in Egypt. Their situation was as precarious

as that of people today who risk everything to

escape from death at the hands of brutal,

oppressive regimes. No doubt, some babies are

born in barns along the side of the road to this

very day.

In order to enter into the holy mystery of

Christmas, we must allow our hopes, fears, and

assumptions to be called into question by the Lord

Who became a vulnerable baby born in the most

dangerous of circumstances of the sort that remain

all too common in our world of corruption. Today

we celebrate nothing less than the eternal Word,

Who spoke the universe into existence, humbling

Himself beyond all human understanding in order

to heal every dimension of the human person. He

does so in order to make us all participants in His

divine and holy life by grace. He is born of His

Virgin Mother to make us sons and daughters who

shine brightly with the divine glory and share even

now in the peace of His Kingdom. He has united

divinity and humanity in His own Person for the

sake of all who bear the divine image and likeness.

This feast reveals both Who God is and who we are

called to become. Its meaning infinitely surpasses

mere sentimentality as a distraction from “the real

world.” Indeed, it is an entrance into what is

ultimately real and true.

Perhaps the Incarnation of the God-Man occurred

in such difficult circumstances in order to make

clear that His salvation is not an escape from the

grave problems posed by even the harshest

realities of life. Instead of looking for distractions

from our difficulties, let us entrust ourselves to

Him as we cooperate with His gracious purposes

for the healing of our souls and for the salvation of

the world. Jesus Christ became a human person so

that we might become nothing less than “partakers

of the divine nature” by grace. (*LeMasters*)