

# Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized* Nancy Shaytar (Sewickley); *Home:* John Mahalchak (son). William Warnak, , Natalie Toooh. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Bob Brewster (Whitehall Skilled Nursing), Natalie Popovich, Michael Soroka.

➤ **Vigil Lights** From **Mat. Nancy K. Mell & Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servant, Fr. Igor Soroka; for the health of the Wasilko family. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, Fr. Igor Soroka; for the health of sisters, Doris and Marsha. From **Donya Yewisiak** for the departed servant, Amelia Tempalski-Memory Eternal. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of the Scott and Hamilton families; special intentions. From **Mr. & Mrs. Richard Blaha** for the departed servants, Aunt Peggy, Jerry, Debbie, and John, parents, brother, and relatives; for the health of family, friends, siblings, and serving soldiers; for special intentions, peace, anniversaries, and birthdays. From **Mat. Joni Soroka** for the departed servants, parents-John & Barbara, and Mat. Olga Soroka; for the health of our daughters. From **John Mahalchak family** for the departed servants, John, Veronica, Jerome, Margaret, Dimitri, Anna, and Helen; for the health of friends & family, John, Cheryl, John, Gregory, Cindy, Daniel, Mary, Joseph, Margaret, and Mark; Happy Retirement to wife, Cheryl. From **Tatyana Sechler** for the departed servants, Polina, Galina, Slava, Diana, Bruce, Valentina, Andrei, Tony, Rob, Luby, and Tonya; for the health of Noreen, Tatyana, Veronika, Thomas, Christopher, Tatiana, Dan, Sergei, Jaxe, Sam, and Valeny.

## Thank You

➤ to our **December** donors: **Donya Yewisiak** (\$50 for Festal Altar Candles) in memory of arents, Fr Vladimir and Matushka Olga Soroka. **Jan and Chuck Widel** (\$60 for Bulletin) in memory of departed members of the Puskar and Morris families. **Fr Thomas and Matushka Joni Soroka** (\$10 Incense) in memory of our departed parents, Fr Vladimir and Mat Olga Soroka and John and Barbara Naiser.

***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.***

## This Week in Church School

**Today's lesson:** Joshua, Judges, and Gideon

**Scripture reference:** Joshua and Judges

**Questions to ask/review:**

- Who was Joshua? What was his role?
- Why was Canaan important to Israel?
- How did Joshua become the successor to Moses?
- Who was Rahab? How did she help the Israelites?
- How did Israel conquer Jericho?
- How do we decide if something is worth fighting for? Do we ever get tired of fighting “battles”? Why or why not?
- Joshua did not fight each battle the same way, but, with God’s help, His people won battle after battle. Is there one “battle” right now you’re fighting that you feel you must win?
- Why was God angry with the Israelites?
- Why did God bother to save them after their consistent rebellion?
- How did God call Gideon?
- How did Gideon destroy Baal? Why?
- What was the purpose of the fleece?
- How did Gideon select his men? How did he win the battle?
- Why did the Hebrews prosper when a judge was alive?
- Should Christians expect all good times simply because they believe in God? Why?
- What similarities do you see between yourself and Gideon? Differences?
- In what ways was God at work in Gideon’s life? In yours?
- How did he speak to Gideon? To you

**Suggested Activities at home:**

- Get out all your instruments and march around your house 7 times, then shout and play. Read the story of Jericho at bedtime.
- Have fun by practicing drinking water like Gideon’s 300 men.

**Prayer:** Lord, lead us and teach us as You did Gideon.



Whether you’re searching for a new church home or just visiting, we’re 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 use the QR Code as your offering today. Please join us downstairs following the service. We want to get to know you! God bless you!



## This Week

**Sunday, December 29**

**10:00 am** Divine Liturgy / Church School

**Tuesday, December 31**

*No Services or Office Hours (see announcements)*

**Wednesday, January 1**

**9:30 am** Festal Divine Liturgy

**Thursday, January 2**

**9:00 am** Daily Matins

**9:30 am** Office Hours

**Saturday, January 4**

*No Classes or Services (see announcements)*

**Sunday, January 5**

**10:00 am** Divine Liturgy / 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*

*Rdr James Wargo and Danielle Bartko, Choir Dirs*

**Sunday After the Nativity of Christ**

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

December 29, 2024

## Announcements

➤ Please note that **the schedule for this week has been modified** to accommodate Fr Thomas’s upcoming pre-surgery doctor’s appointment (Tuesday) and surgery, which is tentatively scheduled for Friday, January 3. The nature of the rupture to his left bicep (detached from the elbow) is that it must be repaired within two weeks of the injury. During the rehabilitation period (of up to six months), his ability to use his left arm will initially be limited but should increase with time. We ask for your prayers and patience as he undergoes this surgery.

➤ As the end of the year approaches, **please consider offering a year-end financial gift** to our parish. The need is great as we receive a greater number of inquirers who are seeking the truth of the Orthodox Christian faith. May God bless you for your faithfulness!

**Thank you to everyone** who makes our parish so special and who works so hard to make all the various aspects of our parish operate so smoothly: to our Deacons and altar servers, our Parish Council and officers, to our Choir and the directors, readers, and bell ringers, to our custodians, to our Food Pantry ministry, to our men’s and women’s ministries, to our Sisterhood, to our prosphora bakers, to those who decorate the icons and temple, to those who maintain the vestments and covers, to our coffee hour hosts, and to all of you who faithfully support and attend: may God grant you during this bright and radiant season: good health, salvation, prosperity and many blessed years!

# Hymns and Readings for Sunday, December 29

## **Tone 2 Troparion** (Resurrection)

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal,  
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead.  
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead,  
all the powers of heaven cried out://  
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”

## **Tone 4 Troparion** (Feast)

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!

## **Tone 2 Troparion** (Righteous Ones)

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph,  
to David, the ancestor of God;  
thou hast seen a Virgin great with child;  
and thou didst give glory with the shepherds;  
thou didst worship with the Magi,  
and didst receive the news from the Angel.//  
Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

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

## **Tone 3 Kontakion** (Righteous Ones)

Today godly David is filled with joy;  
Joseph and James offer praise.  
The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ  
fills them with great joy.  
They sing praises to the One ineffably born on  
earth,//  
and they cry out: “O Compassionate One, save  
those who honor Thee!”

*Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

## **Tone 3 Kontakion** (Feast)

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!

## **Tone 2 Prokeimenon** (Resurrection)

The Lord is my strength and my song; / He has  
become my salvation. (Ps. 117:14)

## **Tone 4 Prokeimenon** (Righteous Ones)

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of  
Israel. (Ps. 67:35a)

## **Epistle** Galatians 1:11-19 (Sunday After)

But I make known to you, brethren, that the  
gospel which was preached by me is not  
according to man. For I neither received it from  
man, nor was I taught it, but it came through  
the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For you have heard of my former conduct in  
Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God  
beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I  
advanced in Judaism beyond many of my  
contemporaries in my own nation, being more  
exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my  
fathers.

But when it pleased God, who separated me  
from my mother’s womb and called me through  
His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might  
preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not  
immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor  
did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were  
apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and  
returned again to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to  
see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.  
But I saw none of the other apostles except  
James, the Lord’s brother.

## **Gospel** Matthew 2:13-23 (Sunday After)

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel  
of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream,  
saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His  
mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I  
bring you word; for Herod will seek the young  
Child to destroy Him.”

When he arose, he took the young Child and His  
mother by night and departed for Egypt, and  
was there until the death of Herod, that it might  
be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord  
through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I  
called My Son.”

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived  
by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he  
sent forth and put to death all the male children  
who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts,  
from two years old and under, according to the  
time which he had determined from the wise  
men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by  
Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

“A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
Refusing to be comforted,  
Because they are no more.”

Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of  
the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in  
Egypt, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and  
His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for  
those who sought the young Child’s life are  
dead.” Then he arose, took the young Child and  
His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning  
over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was  
afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a

dream, he turned aside into the region of  
Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called  
Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was  
spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a  
Nazarene.”

## **Hymn to the Theotokos** (Feast)

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin  
Theotokos, more honorable and more glorious  
than the heavenly hosts.

I behold a strange, most glorious mystery:  
heaven—the cave;  
the cherubic throne—the Virgin;  
the manger—the place where Christ lay:  
the uncontainable God, Whom we magnify in  
song.

## **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!

**T**his Nativity night bestowed peace on the  
whole world - So let no one threaten;  
This is the night of the Most Gentle One -  
Let no one be cruel;  
This is the night of the Humble One - Let no one be  
proud.  
Now is the day of joy - Let us not revenge;  
Now is the day of Good Will - Let us not be mean.  
In this Day of Peace - Let us not be conquered by  
anger.  
Today the Bountiful impoverished Himself for our  
sake - So, rich one, invite the poor to your table.  
Today we receive a Gift for which we did not ask -  
So let us give alms to those who implore and beg  
us.  
This present Day cast open the heavenly doors to  
our prayers - Let us open our door to those who  
ask our forgiveness.  
Today the DIVINE BEING took upon Himself the  
seal of our humanity - In order for humanity to be  
decorated by the Seal of DIVINITY.

— St. Isaac Syrian, Nativity Sermon