



## 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

See *Insert* in Today's Bulletin for Festal Services

It has become fashionable in recent years with many heterodox churches not to schedule Christmas Day services. **We strongly encourage everyone to entirely reject this notion** and to attend the Christmas Day Festal Divine Liturgy with your family. Christmas is about Christ!

### Saturday, December 28

**4:30 pm** Confessions

**5:00 pm** Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

### Sunday, December 29

**10:00 am** Divine Liturgy

**After Services** Yolka (Christmas Program)

**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*  
Mat. Janet Mihalick, *Choir Director*

### Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org December 23, 2019

## Announcements

### ➤ Tuesday, Christmas Eve, is a strict fast day.

Even if you have not been following the fast to the fullest extent, everyone should make every effort to keep Tuesday as a fast day. This prepares us to celebrate feast the Nativity of Christ in an appropriate way. We encourage everyone to gather with their families to celebrate this special night by attending the **Christmas Eve Vigil service at 8:00 pm**. In the Slavic Tradition, this is preceded by the "Holy Supper" tradition of fasting foods.

We will then gather in Church on **December 25 at 10:00 am**. It is fitting that we would gather around the Lord's Table before we gather around our own dining room tables to celebrate His Birth.

The festal period **from December 25 to the January 4 is a fast-free period**. May the Lord bless you and yours during this festal time!

➤ **St. Nick's Corner News:** Newly discovered items from St. Nick's Corner will be on sale at reduced prices in the church hall for the next few Sundays. There are many small icons, kitchen towels, an amber pendant, music boxes, and bells. Stop by for some last minute gifts!

➤ **We are in need of your** generous donations for Christmas flowers which adorn our temple. You may use the envelopes earmarked for Christmas flowers, or give your donation at the candle desk. Thank you and God bless you!

## Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* Paul Yewisiak. *Home:* Georgiann Robes. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Olga Tryszyn, Mary Zapp.

➤ **From Mat. Nancy K. Mell and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family and Michelle Bittner. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servant, (grandmother) Katherine Dyczko; for the health of Michelle Bittner and the Wasilko family. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servant, (grandmother) Katherine Dyczko (12/15/68). **From Michelle Bittner** for the health of Georgiann Robes, Eleanor Kovacs and Greg. **From John Kowalcheck** for the health of Olga Cozza Kowalcheck. **From George & Nancy Shaytar** for the health of Michelle Bittner. **From Mat. Joni Soroka** for the departed servant, (mother) Barbara (12/24/16); for the health of (father) John and safe travels for Natalie. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the health & salvation of my family; special intentions. **From John & Olga** for the health and salvation of our families and the health of Galina Vikova. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, (grandmother) Katherine Dyczko. **From Donya Yewisiak** for the departed servant, Barbara Naiser; special intention.

## Thank You

to our December donors! Bulletin (\$60) **Jan and Chuck Widel**, in memory of departed members of the Puskar and Morris families. Holy Bread (\$50) and Communion Wine (\$40) from **Alex and Olga Noskov** for the health and salvation of newly wed couple Ilya and Kara Noskov. Candles (\$50) from **Donya Yewisiak** in memory of mother, Matushka Olga Soroka. Incense (\$10) from **Jim and Leslie Wokutch** in memory of Deacon Joseph Mell. May God richly bless all of our donors for thoughtfulness and generosity!

## Today's Commemoration

On this day, the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ in the Holy Orthodox Church, we have been enjoined by our holy and God-bearing Fathers to make commemoration of all them that from the beginning of time have been well-pleasing unto God, from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as Luke the Evangelist hath recounted historically; and likewise for the Prophets and Prophetesses, especially of Daniel the Prophet and the three holy youths.

It is also known as the Sunday of the Holy Genealogy. We remember the aforementioned names, those in the Old Testament who were related to Christ by blood, and those who spoke of His Birth as a man. In the Divine Liturgy, we shall read of Jesus Christ's lineage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew. In this way, the Church shows us that Christ truly became a man, taking on human nature. He was not a ghost, an apparition, a myth, a distant imagined god, or the abstract god of philosophers; such a god does not have a family tree. Our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has flesh and blood, human ancestors—many of whom sinned greatly, but like David, also repented greatly. Yet, all of these righteous ones in every age had been well-pleasing to God because they loved Him. By taking on human nature, the Son of God became like us in all ways, in flesh and blood, in mind and soul, and in heart and will. He differed from us in only one way: He could not sin. Since we know that Christ's human nature remained sinless, He is also fully divine, and He shows us the way in which we can avoid sin, and so improve and transform our human nature.

By their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

**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 Today

## **Troparion of the Resurrection Tone 2**

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!”

## **Troparion of the Prefeast Tone 4**

Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all!  
Adorn thyself, O Ephratha, for the tree of life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave.  
Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit:  
If we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.  
Christ comes to restore the image which He made in the beginning.

## **Troparion of the Fathers Tone 2**

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!

## **Kontakion of the Fathers Tone 1**

Rejoice, O Bethlehem! Prepare yourself, O Ephratha!  
The Lamb is on her way to give birth to the Chief Shepherd she carries in her womb.  
The God-bearing Forefathers will rejoice, beholding Him,  
and with the shepherds, they will glorify the Virgin nursing Him.

## **Kontakion of the Prefeast Tone 3**

Today the Virgin comes to the cave to give birth to the Eternal Word.  
Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!  
Glorify with the Angels and the shepherds the Eternal God, Who is willing to appear as a little child!

## **Prokeimenon of the Fathers Tone 4**

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name forever

## **Epistle of the Sun. bef. Nativity** (Heb 11:9-19,17-23, 32-40)

By faith he 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 Sun. bef. Nativity** (Mt 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** (Psalm 148)

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest! Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just!



Weekly Series begins Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 9:00 pm on the TALK station of AncientFaith.com

† ANCIENT FAITH  
**TODAY**  
*Live*  
WITH  
**Fr. Tom Soroka**



# Celebrate the Season!

*WORSHIP THE GOD WHO BECAME INCARNATE FOR US*

Monday, December 23 10:00 am  
Royal Hours of the Nativity of Christ

Tuesday, December 24 9:30 am  
Vespers Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, December 24 8:00 pm  
Vigil for the Nativity of Christ

Wednesday, December 25 10:00 am  
Festal Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of Christ

Thursday, December 26 9:30 am  
Divine Liturgy in Honor of the Mother of God

