



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

Saturday, December 26

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, December 27

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, December 29

No Services or Office Hours

Thursday, December 31

No Services or Office Hours

Friday, January 1: Circumcision of Christ

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Saturday, January 2

10 am Divine Liturgy

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, January 3

10:00 am Divine Liturgy



Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*
Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*

Saturday/Sunday After the Nativity

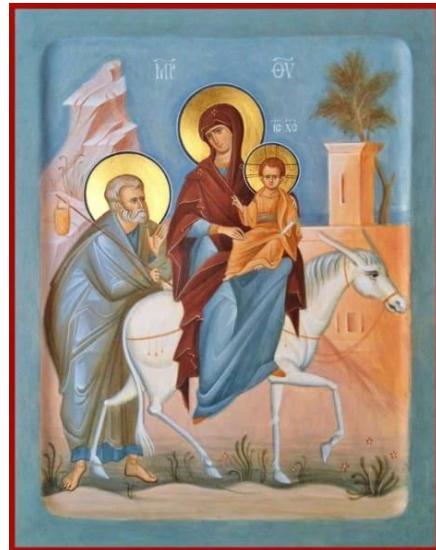
McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org December 26/27, 2020

Announcements

➤ **The St. Nicholas Food Pantry needs your donations!** Our monthly food pantry will be open to the community on the last Saturday of each month from 4-5 pm. Saturday, January 30th, 2020 will be the first day. Please help support this parish ministry and our local community by bringing non-perishable donations to stock our pantry. All donations can be placed in the donation box by the back door of the church basement. Please contact Mat, Ashley or Kate Skowron for additional information. May God bless you for your generosity!

➤ In response to the rising COVID-19 cases, His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek has directed that **masks be worn by everyone** during all services, meetings, and activities on church property, until further notice.



Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* (none) *Home:* Aaron Pease, Geroge Shaytar, Sandi Tirpak, Paul Yewisiak, *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Olga Tryszyn.

➤ **Vigil Lights** From **Charles Wasilko** for the departed servant Godfather Joe Dichko; for the health of Jack Saban and sisters Doris and Marsha. From **Mat Nancy and Gregory Mell** for departed servant Dn Joseph Mell; for the health of family. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family. From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants of the Wasilko and Dyczko families; for the health of the Wasilko family. From **Mat Joni Soroka** for the departed servants (mother) Barbara Naiser and (mother-in-law) Mat Olga Soroka; for the health of children. From the **John Mahalchak family** for the health of friends and family, especially John, Cheryl, Gregory, Mary, Daniel, Kevin, and Kayla. From **Tatyana Sechler** for the departed servants Polina, Slava, Galina, Valentina, Bruce, Marina, and Lida; for the health of Veronika, Sergei, Tatyana, Diana, Daniel, Bernadet, Adick, and Andrey.

Thank You

➤ to our **December** donors: Bulletin (\$60) from **Jan and Chuck Widel** in memory and for the health of the Puskar and Morris families; Altar Candles (\$25) from **Donya Yewisiak** in memory of Matushka Olga Soroka; Incense (\$10) from the **John Mahalchak family** for the health of their family.

On the Synaxis

On the second day of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church has established the celebration of the Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God. The name of today's festival signifies the gathering of the faithful in order to praise and glorify the All-Holy Virgin, who gave birth to our Savior.

On the first day of the Nativity of the Lord, the Church glorifies the Redeemer of the human race, and the blessed deliverance which freed the sinful world from the snares of the Enemy. On the second day of the Nativity of the Lord, which was such a great event for our salvation, the Church calls upon us to honor the Ever-Virgin Mary, the Mother of our Lord, in an appropriate manner.

The day after many of the Church's Feast Days is called the Synaxis - such as the day after the Nativity of the Theotokos, when the righteous Joachim and Anna are commemorated; or the day following the Feast of Theophany, when we honor Saint John the Baptist, etc.

The Feast of the Synaxis of the Mother of God dates back to very ancient times. In the IV century, some Holy Fathers, such as Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus (May 12), were already preaching about it.

In the ancient Menaia, the Feast of the Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos was called "the Nativity Gifts." This refers to the gifts which the Magi from the East brought to the newborn King of the Jews - the Divine Child Jesus. The Feast of the Synaxis of the Mother of God was also called "the Flight into Egypt."

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 Saturday, Dec 26

At the Little Entrance

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ,
O Son of God, *born of the Virgin*,
save us who sing to Thee: “Alleluia!”

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!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion (Synaxis of the Theotokos)

He Who was begotten before the Morning Star
of the Father without a mother,
today is made flesh of thee upon the earth
without a father.
A star announces the good tidings to the Wise
Men,//
while Angels and shepherds sing the praises of
thy most pure childbearing, O full of
grace!

Tone 4 Prokeimenon (Saturday After)

I shall make thy name to be remembered / in all
generations. (Ps. 44:16)

Epistle of the Synaxis (Hebrews 2:11-18)

For both He who sanctifies and those who are
being sanctified are all of one, for which reason
He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying:

“I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to
You.”

And again:
“I will put My trust in Him.”

And again:
“Here am I and the children whom God has
given Me.”

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of
flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in
the same, that through death He might destroy
him who had the power of death, that is, the
devil, and release those who through fear of
death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but
He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.
Therefore, in all things He had to be made like
His brethren, that He might be a merciful and
faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God,
to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
For in that He Himself has suffered, being
tempted, He is able to aid those who are
tempted.

Gospel of the Synaxis (Matthew 2:13-23)

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 of the 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 of Saturday

I will receive the cup of salvation and call on the
Name of the Lord. (Ps. 115:4) Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia!

Flight into Egypt

On December 26, the early Church
commemorated the Wise Men who came to
worship the Savior, and the flight into Egypt, as
well as the Synaxis of the Mother of God. That is
why some icons of the Nativity of the Lord
depict His Birth, the worship of the shepherds
and the Magi, as well as the Flight into Egypt.
Sometimes the inscription reads "The Synaxis of
the Most Holy Theotokos."

Now, however, we commemorate "the Adoration
of the Magi: Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthasar,
and also the shepherds in Bethlehem who were
watching their flocks and came to see the Lord"
on the first day of the Nativity (December 25),
but the Flight into Egypt is commemorated
separately on December 26, the second day of
the Nativity.

Before the massacre of the 14,000 Holy
Innocents (December 29), an Angel warned
Saint Joseph to take the Child and His Mother
and flee to Egypt and to remain there until the
Angel brought him word that it was safe for him
to return to Nazareth, "for Herod will seek the
child to destroy him" (Matthew 2:13).

In the icon of the Flight into Egypt there are
mountains. The Virgin sits on a donkey with her
Child, looking back at Joseph. He holds a staff,
and his cloak is thrown over his shoulder. A
young man (Tradition says this was Saint
Joseph's son James, the Brother of the Lord)
leads the donkey carrying a rush basket, and
looks back at the Virgin. Behind them is a
fortified town with idols toppling from the
walls. This event was prophesied by Isaiah:
"Behold, the Lord sits on a swift cloud,¹ and shall
come to Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved
at His presence, and their heart shall faint within
them" (Isaiah 19:1); and the Prophet Hosea alludes to
it: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son" (Hosea 11:1).
This is also mentioned in the Church's hymns.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, Dec 27

Tone 4 Troparion (Resurrection)

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: “Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen,// granting the world great mercy!”

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 4 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; / in wisdom hast Thou made them all. (Ps. 103:26)

Epistle of the Sunday (Galatians 1:11-19)

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 of the Sunday (Matthew 2:13-23)

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 of the 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 of Sunday

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!

Since King Herod ordered the Magi to return, in order to inform him concerning the newborn King, Who was indicated by the star which they followed, that he may also go and venerate Him: then, because the Magi did not return to Herod, as they were ordered to do so by the Angel, they returned to their homeland by another way. I say this because of what follows, for Herod felt played by the Magi, and he became enraged and very bitter. Thus having in mind what the Magi told him, that the star appeared less than two years prior: for this reason he sent his soldiers to kill all the children of Bethlehem, all those that is who were under two years of age. He vainly thought that if he killed all the babes, certainly he would kill also He who was to rule in the future, in order that He not contrive against him. However, the mindless one in vain toiled so, not knowing that man can never thwart the will of God. Thus, for the infants, he brought about the Kingdom of Heaven. For himself, the wretched one brought about eternal hell.

...services in the tabernacle in distinct order: he determined the number and order of the servers, he started a choir with many members of singers and he himself inspired by the Spirit of God composed many "psalms", or hymns for use in the Divine Services. For his piety and righteousness he earned such love and mercy from God that God confirmed to him all the promises given to Abraham. He promised him the sureness of his throne, the blessing and multiplication of his posterity and announced to him that from his posterity will be born the Deliverer of the world (Psalm 71:17; 88:29,36; Mt. 1:1, 20:31, 21:9; Lk. 1:32,33). Although, the deeply edifying life of King David was also darkened, due to the frailty of human nature, it was a heavy downfall (2 Kings 11), but also in this downfall he taught us the greatest example of repentant contrition and firm faith in God (see Psalm 50), which gave him the opportunity and power to throw off from himself the burden of sinfulness and raise himself up for a new spiritual life. The living and indestructible faith in God was the distinctive trait of King David. This faith gave him the opportunity to forcefully deflect all of Saul's animosity against him, to sustain the shock of various kinds of misfortunes of his multitested life, to deeply repent the union with sin, to humbly turn himself over to the watchful hand of God, to patiently endure all the punishments for this sin, to rise up higher after his downfall, rather than to where he was, and exhibit in himself a high example of penance, meekness, patience, hope and piety. And "the Lord took away David's sins, and exalted his horn forever, and He gave him a royal covenant, and a throne of glory in Israel" (Sir. 47:11). Being the greatest king of the Israelites, a fearless leader, a skilful governor, a high guide and a holy man, St. David was at the same time an inimitable poet and inspired prophet. He was the originator of psalm singing, and his psalms, in which he with inspiration poured out feelings of faith and hope in God, gratitude and doxology, joy and grief, exaltation and repentant contrition, with the

power and tenderness of expressions, with the highest and burning religious feeling, nothing like it exists in the books of the Old Testament. The Book of Psalms of Holy King David serves as an inexhaustible treasury of the best examples of prayers, supplications, petitions, thanksgiving to God, the healing consolations for suffering souls, for those living in poverty, for those consumed with passions, and for the down-trodden. As a God-inspired prophet (Acts 2:30), the Holy King David in his psalms proclaimed many clear and strong prophecies about Jesus Christ (see Psalms 2:2; 40:10; 21:1, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18, 22; 62:22; 87:15, 10)

One of the Seventy, in the opinion of the majority of the holy fathers of the Church, especially the Eastern, **St. James was the son of St. Joseph the Betrothed**, and needs to be distinguished from James, son of Zebedee (Apr. 30) and James, son of Alphaeus (Oct. 9). As his father Joseph is called the father of Jesus Christ, and thus he is called "the brother of the Lord in the flesh" (Gal. 1:19), and in this sense even the All-Holy Virgin Mary may be called his mother (Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3). According to tradition, he accompanied the All-Holy Theotokos when she with the Baby Jesus and Joseph fled to Egypt from the wrath of Herod. After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, he was worthy of the special appearance of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:7).



On the present Sunday after the Nativity of Christ the Holy Church commemorates St. Joseph the Betrothed and the protector of the virginity of the Most Holy Theotokos, and together with him is also commemorated his flight with the All-holy Virgin and newborn Child Jesus into Egypt (Mt. 2:13). The Holy King and Prophet David is commemorated on the present day as the ancestor of ancestors of the Lord Jesus in the flesh, and St. James, the brother of the Lord, because according to tradition he took part in travel with the holy family to Egypt.



The Holy righteous elder Joseph came from the royal line of David (Mt. 1:6; Lk. 1:27). The holy Evangelist calls him "righteous" (Mt. 1:18), and this name, according to the remarks St. John Chrysostom, demonstrates that the betrothed of the Most Holy Virgin "had all virtues". He lived in Nazareth and earned his living by working with his hands, being a woodworker, i.e. carpenter. As the man was strictly god-fearing, quite honorable, quiet, meek, humble, modest, sincere, peace loving, attentive to the voice of his conscience and to the announcements from above, Joseph was quite worthy of the great honor of living as the nearest spectator of the fulfillment of the "great mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16). He was already an eighty year old man and, according to the witness of St. Epiphanius, already "lived many years as a widower", when he was taken by his selection of the Providence of God to be the protector of the virginity of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. In the

opinion of some, St. Joseph died soon after his visit to Jerusalem with the twelve-year-old Jesus Christ (Luke 2:41-52), as he is not mentioned in the Gospels after that.

The Holy King David came from simple stock, and was the youngest son of Jesse, from the root of Judah, and was engaged in shepherding sheep, but he was distinguished by a rare mind, great courage, unshakable patience, great meekness, with a touching tenderness of heart, strict godliness, had a deep faith in God and truly loved Him, living with the constant feeling of the co-presence of the unseen God and complete dependence on His leadership, and he was "a man after the heart of God" (Acts 13:22), and that is why he was selected by God to the kingdom in Israel. He reigned a thousand years before the Nativity of the Savior and was the second king of the Israelites. Before his reign, when he was still a young man, he, when the strong nation of the Philistines warred against the Israelites, left, with his firm trust in the help of God, for a one on one struggle with Goliath and with a single hit with a stone struck down the Philistine giant. Glorified for this by his compatriots, the young David with unshakable patience, meekness, and magnanimity had endured various attacks and the evil intentions of Saul. Having become the king of the Israelites, David conducted various wars with the neighboring peoples, conquered them, and in his reign had extended the limits of the kingdom to a rather significant degree. He made Jerusalem the capitol of the state. He transferred the ark of the covenant there and resolutely was going to construct a permanent magnificent temple to the Lord to house the ark; but rather the will of God was declared to him, that he would not construct the temple, but that it would be his son (Solomon), that David only prepared all that was necessary for the building of the temple and entrusted to his son his intention and desire to carry out its fulfillment. He did many things for the glory of God and for the piety of the people. He led the divine...