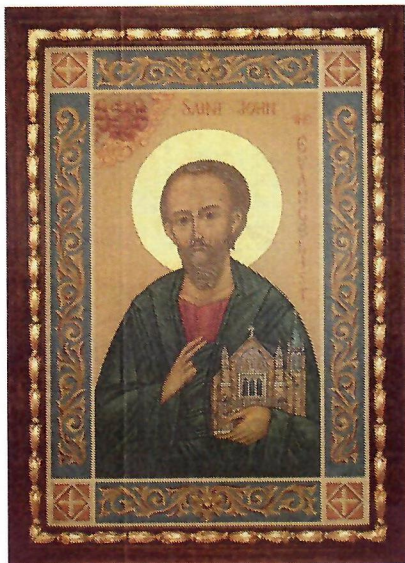




THE FEAST OF OUR LORD'S NATIVITY

December 22, 2024



***ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH***

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BEAVER FALLS, PA. 15010**

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WWW.SAINTJOHNCHURCH.ORG

**HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN SABA , ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK
AND**

**METROPOLITAN OF ALL NORTH AMERICA
HIS GRACE BISHOP THOMAS, AUXILIARY BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON, OAKLAND , AND MID-ATLANTIC**

REVEREND FATHER SERAPHIM MOSLENER

***Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. (John 16:23)
When a new person is baptized or Chrismated we say to that person, "Welcome Home!" The Church is where each person voluntarily belongs as one who believes in and belongs to Christ .***

We take this opportunity to welcome those guests worshipping with us.

***Anyone wishing to request prayers for Health and Well-being, or a Trisagion prayer,
please contact Fr. Seraphim***

The Orthodox Church understands that the sacraments we experience are a fundamental part of the sacred life of a worshipping community that shares in "one body...one faith". (Eph. 4:5). Thus, we can only share Communion with those who are Orthodox and who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting and Confession. If you are not Orthodox, or are not properly prepared, you are welcome to come forward and receive a blessing and then to take a piece of the blessed bread.

DIVINE LITURGY ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024

TONE 1 / EOTHINON 4; FOREFEAST OF &

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (THE GENEALOGY)

Great-martyr Anastasia the deliverer from potions and her teacher the Martyr Chrysogonos

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE ONE

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN TONE FOUR

*(**Joseph was amazed**)*

Be thou ready, Bethlehem, Eden hath opened unto all. * Ephratha, prepare thyself, for now, behold, the Tree of Life * hath blossomed forth in the cave from the holy Virgin. * Her womb hath proved a true spiritual Paradise, * wherein the divine and saving Tree is found, * and as we eat thereof we shall all live, * and shall not die as did Adam. * For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforetime.

APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY IN TONE TWO

Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

O beloved Apostle of Christ God, Come quick and save a people with no recourse. He who let you rest your head on his breast, will not reject your pleas on our behalf. Beseech him then, O wise and holy theologian. Dispel from us the dark and omanous clouds of disbelief. Grant us all of his peace and great mercy.

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TRISAGION PRAYER TODAY

STANLEY SASSIC (d12-22)— FATHER OF PERRY SASSIC

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY IN TONE THREE

*(**The original melody**)*

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to * God the Word ineffably, * Who was before all the ages. * Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing * the gladsome tidings; * with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him * Who is willing to be gazed on * as a young Child Who * before the ages is God.

THE EPISTLE

(For the Sunday before the Nativity)

Blessed are Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

For Thou art justified in all that Thou hast done for us.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11:9-10, 32-40)

Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

THE GOSPEL

(For the Sunday before the Nativity: "The Genealogy")

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (1:1-25)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ were fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus.

DECEMBER/JANUARY SERVICES

December 21st Saturday — Great Vespers 5PM

December 22th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM

DECEMBER 24th Tuesday— Royal Hours 9AM / Matins 9PM /

CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGY 10:00 PM

Fellowship to follow in Hall / All are invited for our Christmas meal.

December 28th Saturday — NO Great Vespers

December 29th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM

December 31st Tuesday — Divine Liturgy 6PM

CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST— St. Basil Liturgy

January 4th Saturday — NO Great Vespers

January 5th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM

THEOPHANY OF CHRIST — ST. BASIL LITURGY

“ Indoor Service of Great Blessing of the Water”

January 11th Saturday — NO Great Vespers

January 12th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM

COUNCIL MEETING 12Noon

Prayers are offered for the health and well-being of:

Fr. Steven, Kh. Paraskeva, Ann, Carol, Debbie, Shannon, Aiden, Justin, Sassic Family, Harriet, Jan, Fr. Andrew, Frank, Charlene, Trish, Cindy, Joann, Marlene, Julianna, Ray, Lori, Patrick, Dionisia and Labrini.

Catechumens Breana, Jessica, Nicholas

For Thou are the Resurrection, the Life, and the Repose of Thy servants who have fallen asleep especially:

Prayers are offered in memory of Infant Micah, Eleanor and Charlie.

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HOUSE BLESSING SCHEDULE

FR. Seraphim to bless houses on Jan. 8,10,11 and other days by appointment. Sign up for house-blessings on Table in narthex and you will be called as to day and time that works for you. (Leave a phone number with your name.)

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“Learn here, before the manger, your vanity. Thus, let us humble ourselves, let us fall down in the dust before the boundless humility and exhaustion of the Sovereign of all, of God, Who has come to the heal our infirmities, to save us from pride, vanity, corruption, and every sinful impurity.” (ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT)

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Wednesday, January 22nd: DAILY VESPERS 6PM followed by fasting meal and Study of the Great Lent. Brochures will be on table in narthex. Print pages off website one time and use for 6 weeks prior to Lent.

"LET US NOW GO TO BETHLEHEM"

Some five miles south of Jerusalem, a small, unassuming town sits nestled among the rugged Judean hills. Its residents live in poverty today, as they have for centuries. Ordinarily, history would barely give such a place a passing glance, but this is no ordinary city of which we speak. This is BETHLEHEM, the site chosen by God to manifest Himself to the world in the Divine Person of Jesus Christ.

The word "Bethlehem" literally means "house of bread." Numerous references to this city are found in both the Old and New Testaments. It was the home of Ruth and the setting of the tender story of love and devotion related in the Book of Ruth. King David spent his youth in the hills around Bethlehem, and was anointed here by Samuel to be King of Israel. The tomb of Rachel, Jacob's wife, who died giving birth to Benjamin, is located just north of Bethlehem. Bethlehem was also one of the strongholds fortified by Solomon's son, Rehoboam, to guard the approaches to the city of Jerusalem.

All of these things, however, are greatly overshadowed by Bethlehem being the birthplace of Christ. Christians of all generations know every detail of the "Christmas Story" as related in the Gospel accounts of St. Matthew and St. Luke. The image of an exhausted Mary and Joseph, finally finding lodging in a stable on the outskirts of Bethlehem after their long journey from Jerusalem will forever be imbedded in the hearts and minds of all faithful believers. It was here, amidst the animals and in the stillness of the night that our Saviour was born!

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.

CHECK WEBSITE FOR FEAST DAY SERVICES

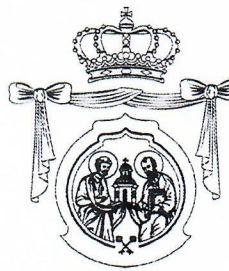
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OFFICE HOURS

By Appointment Only

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan SABA

The Right Reverend
Bishop THOMAS



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Headquartered in the
Mid-Atlantic States

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

2024 Greeting for the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

Beloved in Christ,

On this joyful occasion of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we greet you with all spiritual love and blessings. The Blessed Child who is born in a manger for our salvation, gladdens the whole universe and by his condescension takes on our fallen human nature and sets us free from the powers of sin, death, and the devil. Through Him, we have been lifted from darkness to light, from despair to hope, from sorrow to joy!

St. Ephraim the Syrian (4th century) wrote a significant number of hymns, poems and homilies during his life lived as an ascetic. One of his collections of hymns is titled "19 Hymns for the Nativity of Christ." The following is an excerpt from Hymn 2:

Blessed be that Child, Who gladdened Bethlehem today!
Blessed be the Babe, Who made manhood young again today!
Blessed be the Fruit, Who lowered Himself to our famished state!
Blessed be the Good One, Who suddenly enriched our necessitousness and supplied our needs!
Blessed He Whose tender mercies made Him condescend to visit our infirmities!

Blessed be He Whom our mouth cannot adequately praise, because His Gift is too great for skill of orators [to tell]; neither can the faculties adequately praise His goodness. For praise Him as we may, it is too little.

And since it is useless to be silent and to constrain ourselves, may our feebleness excuse such praise as we can sing.

How gracious He, Who demands not more than our strength can give! How would Your servant be condemned in capital and interest, did he not give such as he could, and did he refuse that which He owed! Ocean of glory Who needs not to have Your glory sung, take in Your goodness this drop of praise; since by Your Gift You have supplied my tongue a sense for glorifying You.

May we lift our voices in praise of our incarnate Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and through our lives may we magnify Him with the heavenly hosts! Blessed Feast!

Yours in Christ,

Rt. Rev. Bishop THOMAS (Joseph)
Auxiliary Bishop
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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