



Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



THOUGHTS ON THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

THE PROPHET ISAIAH: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His Name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT: “The Feast of the Nativity of Christ reminds us that we are born of God, that we are sons of God, that we have been saved from sin, and that we must live for God and not sin.”

ST. PAUL: “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

ST. LUKE: “And Mary brought forth her first-born Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.”

THE PROPHET ISAIAH: “Behold, the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel.”

THE ANGELIC HOSTS: “Behold, I bring to you tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord.”

ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN: “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. Mary's Orthodox Church
217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218-1602
Phone.....570-645-2772
OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic
Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky
Reader Hours: Edward Pierson

Sunday, December 24, 2023

Choir Director: Wash King
Reader Epistle: Michael Ropitsky

TONE 4. 29th Sunday after Pentecost (14th of Luke), Sunday of the Holy Fathers
Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ, Eve of the Nativity of Christ

We welcome all our visitors today! We want to let you know that we are so glad you came to pray with us. Please come again; join us after the Divine Liturgy in the parish hall for fellowship. If you do not have a home church, we invite you to become a part of our parish family. Only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves may approach the Chalice and receive Holy Communion.

SERVICES:

Sunday, Dec. 24 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, **Strict Fast**, No Coffee Hour...
Sunday, Dec. 24 4:00 PM – Holy Supper in the Parish Hall (Eve of the Nativity)
Sunday, Dec. 24 6:00 PM – Great Compline and Matins (Eve of the Nativity)
Monday, Dec. 25 9:30 PM – Divine Liturgy, The Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ

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Saturday, Dec. 30 4:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sunday, Dec. 31 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, New Year Meal
Sunday, Dec. 31 **Youth Group New Year's Celebration**

On December 24, 2023, we will have **our first parish 'Holy Supper'** in our church hall with traditional strict fasting foods. Celebrating as a family of St. Mary's is important to prepare for the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ!

Prayer List*:

Fr. Michael Evans, Fr. James Weremedic, Sbdn. James Weremedic
Stephanie Chmel, Ilene Devine, Julia Forte, Michael & Julia Harahus, Karen & Rose Harkins,
Nancy King, Olga Kushnir, Anna Marie Mantey, Dorothy & Joseph Macenka, Anna Pierson,
Melissa Schmitt, Helen Sheers, Olga Sidoriak, Martha Stafiniak, Michael Teno, Elizabeth
Warcholak, Victoria Weremedic, Marie Yurchak

* Names will cycle off approximately every 30 days. You may request to have your name or the name of a loved one placed back on the list at any time by contacting Fr. James directly.

If anyone is in need of a priest, please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772. Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory. Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency.

Candles (December 24)

7-day Vigils-Altar... In memory of **Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & MaryJo Danchak
Altar Candles... In memory of **Mary & Andrew Yelsh** offered by William Yelsh
Eternal Lamp... In memory of **William & Helen Evetushick** offered by John & Mary Evetushick
7-day Vigils-Tetrapod... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel** offered by family members
Decorated Candles... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel** offered by family members
Vigil Crosses... In memory of **Marion Pickenheim** offered by William Yelsh

December Birthdays: 3- Izrael Bracero, 9- Odess Remington, 11- Stephanie Chmel,
16- James Weremedic, Jr., 18- Kathryn Jupin, 19- Ixsaviar Bracero, 28- Sophie James

Financials 12/17/2023: *Operating Acct:* Weekly Envelopes \$638, Non-envelope \$260,
Holy Day \$425, Altar Candles \$10, Candles \$92, Cemetery \$5

Fellowship Hour Hosts:

December 24 **No Fellowship Hour**

December 31 **New Year's Meal**

If you have any Redner receipts, please call or get them to Helen King.
Please use your Boyer's card when shopping at Boyers; if you need one call Helen King.

Troparion (Tone 4)

Your 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 You,
The Sun of Righteousness,
And to know You, the Orient from on High.
O Lord, glory to You!

Kontakion (Tone 3)

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 a star!
Since for our sake the Eternal God was born as a Little Child!

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 TONE 4 29th Sunday after Pentecost (14th of Luke)
Sunday of the Holy Fathers, Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ, Eve of the Nativity of Christ**

Tone 4 Troparion (Resurrection)

When the women disciples of the Lord, learned from the angel the joyous message of Your 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 2 Troparion (Holy Fathers)

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!

Tone 1 Kontakion (Holy Fathers)

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.

Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40 (Epistle, Sunday Before)

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.

Silent Prayer before the Gospel:

Illumine our hearts, O Master Who lovest mankind, with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Thy gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Thy blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto Thee. For Thou art the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thy Father, Who is from everlasting, and Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Matthew 1:1-25 (Gospel, Sunday Before)

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.

**God is with us, understand, O ye nations,
and submit yourselves: for God is with us.**

Priest: God is with us, understand, O ye nations, and submit yourselves: for God is with us.

Choir: God is with us, understand, O ye nations, and submit yourselves: for God is with us.

Priest: Hearken ye unto the ends of the earth.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US. (*Choir repeats softly*)

For if ye again strengthen yourselves, ye shall again be vanquished.
And whatsoever counsel ye shall take, the Lord shall bring it to nought.
And the word, whatsoever ye speak, shall not remain with you.
And of your fear we shall be neither afraid nor in dread.
But the Lord our God, Him will we hallow, and he shall be fear unto us.
And if I be trusting in Him, He shall be unto me sanctification.
And I will be hoping in Him, and shall be saved by Him.
Behold I and the children which God hath given me.
The people that walk in darkness have seen a great light.
Ye that dwell in the region and shadow of death, a light shall shine upon you.
For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.
Whose government is upon His shoulder.
And of His peace there is no end.
And His name shall be called Angel of Great Counsel.
Wonderful Counselor.
Mighty God, Ruler, Prince of Peace.
Father of the age to come.

Choir: God is with us, understand, O ye nations, and submit yourselves: for God is with us.

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

Choir: God is with us.

Priest: Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Choir: God is with us. For God is with us!

Christmas and Martyrdom

The Gospel reading for the Great Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord is Matthew 2:1-12. This passage proclaims the Good News that the Savior was born in Bethlehem according to the biblical prophecies. The star guides the Magi and they, in turn, bring their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the newborn Child in acknowledgment that He is unique and a true King, testified to by cosmic signs that even the Gentile Magi can properly interpret. Joyous as this is, there is already a hint of the ultimate destiny of Christ in that myrrh is used in the burial customs of the Jews.

On the Second Day of the Nativity, we complete the reading of the second chapter of Saint Matthew's Gospel—2:13-23, which immediately introduces us to the tragic reality of the massacre of the innocent boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or younger. The previous joy of the Savior's Nativity is replaced by the wailing and lamentation of the mothers of these innocent children, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah:

“A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more” [Jeremiah 2:18].

The shadow of the Cross lay across the infancy narratives in this Gospel, for in the immediate post-Nativity period, these male children become the first of many martyrs who must die because Christ has entered the world, as many of the powerful of this world—following the dark example of King Herod—will not receive Him; they will actually despise Him and turn against His followers. Thus, the suffering of innocent children is somehow taken up by God as an offering in a sinful world that fluctuates between light and darkness. We now understand that the cave of the Nativity anticipated the tomb of Christ's burial, and that the swaddling clothes anticipated the grave clothes with which Christ would eventually be bound following His death on the Cross.

On the Third Day of the Nativity, we commemorate the Protomartyr Stephen, the first to die for his faith in Christ in the post-Resurrection community of the newborn Church. Martyrdom has always been a distinct and powerful witness to Christ “from the beginning.” The kontakion for the Feast of Saint Stephen captures the movement between the joy of Christ's birth and the sobering reality of what Christ's coming meant for some:

Yesterday the Master assumed our flesh and became our guest;
Today His servant is stoned to death and departs in the flesh:
The glorious first martyr Stephen!

There is no greater witness to Christ than that of the martyrs—flesh and blood men, women and children who gave their lives for the Lord in the sure hope and assurance that eternal life awaited them in the Kingdom of God. If we exchange a “Merry Christmas” with others, we always need to be mindful of the commitment we are making to the newborn Christ. As we temporarily indulge in the days of the Feast, we realize that the Christian life is ultimately a commitment to discipline and restraint, even the “crucifixion” of the flesh with all of its desires, in order to “witness” to Christ as disciples who believe that His advent in the flesh, culminating in His death and resurrection, has prepared a place for us in His eternal Kingdom where there is “life everlasting.”

**2023 Poinsettias Donations
St. Mary's Orthodox Church
Coaldale, Pa 18218**

Memory

Richard York
Michael & Jennie Harb, Alexis Gancasz
Michael & Helen Bogosh & Peter Harahush
Parents, Husband, Sisters
William & Helen Evetushick
John & Mary Macenka
Harry Wyshosky Jr. Peter Wyshosky Sr. & Family
Mary Hudak
King Family Members
Pohlod / Kostin Families
King Family
Matuska Lovey Ropitsky
Nick & Mary Macenka, Peter & Anne Soley
Karen Macenka
Mary Ann Macenka
Matuska Lovey Ropitsky
Rosahac & Churrun Families
Mary & John Skripnek
Gertrude Tatusko
Terry, Redash & Pavuk Families
Church Families Shut-ins
Mary Harahuess
Mary Harahuess
Goida & Yaroma Families

Honor

Harkins Family

Requested

Tommy Shanosky
John & Jeanne Cannon
Teri & David Bogosh
Stephanie Chmel
John & Mary Evetushick
Mary Hertzog
Julia Forte
Bill & Lori Hudak
King Family
Gerri & Russ King
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Helen & Wash King
Joe & Dorothy Macenka
Paul J. Macenka
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Walter Rosahac
Marie Skripnek
Michael Tatusko
Thom Terry
Good Samaritans
Sharon Lewis
Gary Harahuess
Rose Harkins

Rose Harkins



The Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA AND EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
The Most Rev. Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia

December 25, 2023
Feast of the Nativity of our Lord

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Dear Rev. Frs., Matushki and Faithful,

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord, proclaiming the present mystery; for He has broken the middle wall of partition, and the flaming spear will turn about, and the cherubim will admit all to the tree of life. As for me, I will return to enjoy the bliss of paradise from which I was driven away before, by reason of iniquity; for the likeness of the Father, and the Person of His Eternity, which it is impossible to change has taken the likeness of a Servant, coming from a Mother who has not known wedlock; free from transubstantiation, since He remained as He was, true God, and took what had not been, having become Man for His love of mankind. Wherefore, let us lift our voices unto Him crying, O Thou Who was born of the Virgin, O God, have mercy upon us. (Idiomelon By Germanus from Great Vespers on the Eve of the Nativity)



Have a blessed Feast of the Nativity and a Joyous New Year! May our Lord bless you with good health, length of days and a happy and peaceful New Year!

Yours in Christ,

+ Mark

+ Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania



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Diocesan Treasurer: Mark Linnehan * treasurer@doepa.org

"Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee." Augustine



Teen Winter Retreat

February 9-11, 2024

REFRESHING MOUNTAIN RETREAT AND
ADVENTURE CENTER - STEVENS, PA

A weekend retreat for Orthodox teens featuring
prayer, fellowship, adventure, zip-lining,
campfires and more!

**COST: \$0 FOR ALL TEENS ACTIVE
IN DOEPA PARISHES!**

Campers and volunteer counselors
should register at
www.accounts.doepa.org by January 15

