

**Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

The celebration of the feast of the **Nativity of Christ** in the Orthodox Church is patterned after the celebration of the feast of the Lord's Resurrection. A fast of forty days precedes the feast, with special preparatory days announcing the approaching birth of the Saviour. Thus, on St Andrew's Day (November 30) and St Nicholas Day (December 6) songs are sung to announce the coming birthday of the Lord:

*Adorn yourself, O Cavern. Make ready, O Manger. O Shepherds and wisemen, bring your gifts and bear witness. For the Virgin is coming bearing Christ in her womb*  
(Vesperal Hymn of St Nicholas Day)

The **Christmas Liturgy** begins with psalms of glorification and praise. The troparion and kontakion mark the entrance with the Book of the Gospels. The baptismal line from **Galatians 3:27** once again replaces the Thrice-Holy. The Epistle reading is from **Galatians**:

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So through God, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir  
(Gal 4:4-7).

The Gospel reading is the familiar Christmas story from **Matthew (2:1-12)**, and the liturgy continues in the normal fashion. A specific two-day celebration follows, dedicated to **Mary the Theotokos** and **St Stephen, the First Martyr**. The period of Christmas rejoicing extends to Epiphany during which time the Christmas songs are sung and fasting and kneeling in prayer are not called for by the Church.

The feast of Christmas is formally entitled the **Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ**. At Christmas we celebrate the birth as a man of the Son of God, the one who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit is truly God from all eternity. Thus, we sing in the Church.

*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 is born as a little child* (Kontakion).

The feast of Christmas was not a separate Church feast for the first four centuries of Christian history. It was celebrated with **Epiphany** in the one great feast of God's appearance on earth in the form of the human Messiah of Israel. The Nativity began to be celebrated as such on the twenty-fifth of December in order to offset the pagan festival of the Invincible Sun which occurred on that day. It was established by the Church quite consciously as an attempt to defeat the false religion of the heathens. Thus, we discover the troparion of the feast making a polemic against the worship of the sun and the stars and calling for the adoration of Christ, the **True Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2)**, who is himself worshiped by all of the elements of nature.

*Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshiped the stars were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness and to know Thee, the Orient from on high* (Lk 1:78, translated as Dawn or Day spring). *O Lord, glory to Thee!* (Troparion).

Thus, the feast of Christmas is the celebration of the world's salvation through the Son of God who became man for our sake that, through him, we might ourselves become divine, sons of God the Father by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit in us.

See us on the web at:

[ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin](http://ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin)

E-Mail us at:

[Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org](mailto:Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org)

Sunday Bulletin

**Church of the Mother of God**  
*"The Joy of All the Sorrowful"*

115 Hudson St.  
Mays Landing, New Jersey 08330

**Rev. Boris Slootsky, Rector**

2B Pembroke Lane  
Manchester, New Jersey 08759  
(732) 350-9588



Christ is Born,

Glorify Him

**Nativity of Christ / Adoration of the Magi**

*Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshiped 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!*

Troparion- Nativity

*"God is with us! Understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us!"*

**On this day the Church remembers:**

**The Nativity According to the Flesh of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ • The Adoration of the Magi: Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar • Commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem who were watching their flocks, and went to see the Lord • Massacre of Monk Martyr Jonah and with him 50 Monks and 65 Laymen at St. Tryphon of Pechenga Monastery, by the Swedes (1590).**

**December 25, 2011**

Tone 3 of the Octoechos.

28<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

**Great Feastday: Nativity of Christ**

**Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:****For eternal memory of:**

**Jacob**, father on Matushka Galina, offered by Matushka and Fr. Boris

**For health of:**

Fr. **Boris**, Matushka **Galina**, and **all our parishioners**, offered by Linda and Richard. Christ is Born, Glorify Him.

**Robert** Morris, on his birthday, grandson of Lore Stefy

**Nicholas** Naumov (police officer), on his birthday, grandson of Elena Wolff

**Billy** Kuzemchak, on his birthday, son of MaryAnn and Bill Kuzemchak

**Readings:** (Sunday)

- **Galatians 4:4-7 (Nativity)**
- **Matthew 2:1-12 (Nativity)**

**BRETHREN**, when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir of God through Christ.

**Now when Jesus was born** in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

**Sunday service:**

**Hours - 9:40 AM**

**Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM**

**(General Confession – 9 50 AM on the first Sunday of each month)**

**(Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month)**

**Church School - 9:30 AM**

(no classes 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month)

**Coffee hour** after Liturgy

- **No Sunday School on December 25<sup>th</sup>.**

**We would like to welcome all parish visitors.**

**Announcements:**

- **Theophany service** - On Thursday, January 5, 2012, at 6:00 pm we will have a service for the eve of Theophany.

**Special Announcements:**

- **Parish dues have been increased for the 2012-year by \$25. The Parish Membership Fee will now be \$200.** This was needed because our monthly income has constantly been below our monthly expenses. (The Parish Membership Fee is the total of the \$55 parish dues, and the \$145 diocesan assessment.)
- **Toys for Kids** The church school students thank everyone who donated to the "*Toys for Kids*" campaign this year.
- **Please look on our website** for pictures of our holiday celebration. [ChurchMotherOfGod.org](http://ChurchMotherOfGod.org)

**Reminder:**

- Upcoming bulletins can be sponsored; this can be done with the signup sheet at the candle stand.
- Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail to: [Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org](mailto:Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org)