

Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:**For the health of:****Bill D. Kuzemchak** on his birthday, offered by his parents.**Eternal Memory of:****Vyacheslav Markevich**, offered by his daughter Tatsiana Markevich**Adam Danish**, father of Linda Jankowski, Birthday 12/25**Readings:**

- Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40 (Sunday Before)
- Matthew 1:1-25 (Sunday Before)

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 foundation, 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, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, 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 tempted, 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 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 Ram, and Ram 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 Amos, and Amos 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 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 commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Saturday service: Vespers – 6:30 PM**Sunday service:****Hours – 9:40 AM****Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM****Private Confession – Half hour before any service.**

See Fr Matthew for other times.

General Confession – 9:45 AM on the first Sunday of each month**Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3rd Sunday of each month****Coffee hour – after Liturgy, downstairs in the Community Room****Church School - Sunday 9:30 AM (no classes 1st Sunday of each month)****We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.****Announcements:**

- **The Sisterhood would like to thank everyone who supported the Nativity basket raffle.** The raffle was a big success and the basket was won by Richard Dantine Jr.
- **There will be a meeting of the Parish Council** today after coffee hour.
- **Christmas Service: We will celebrate the Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ in the Flesh with a Liturgy on Thursday Morning December 25th at 10:00 AM.** This is a very important Holy Day in the course of human Salvation, and everyone should be here for the service.
- **On December 28th,** the Sunday after the Nativity, we will welcome **His Grace, Bishop Michael.** A dinner is planned in Bishop Michael's honor, to be held immediately after the Liturgy. Tickets for the dinner will be \$10.00 each. If you wish to contribute an item to the dinner, please check the sign-up sheet downstairs.
- **There will be a meeting of the Parish Council God** today after coffee hour.

Special Announcements:

- **Any Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail to:** Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

Sunday before the Nativity:

The Sunday before the Nativity of the Lord (December 18-24) is known as the **Sunday of the Holy Fathers**. On this day the Church commemorates all those who were well-pleasing to God from all ages, from Adam to St Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, those who are mentioned in the genealogy of Luke 3:23-38. The holy prophets and prophetesses are also remembered today, especially the Prophet Daniel and the three holy youths (December 17).

The Troparion to the Prophet Daniel and the three holy youths ("Great are the accomplishments of faith...") is quite similar to the Troparion for St Theodore the Recruit (February 17, and the first Saturday of Great Lent). The Kontakion to St Theodore, who suffered martyrdom by fire, reminds us that he also had faith as his breastplate (see I Thessalonians 5:8).

What are we celebrating on Christmas Day?

For us Orthodox Christians, Christmas is the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. It is the joyous celebration of the Birth of the Word of God as a child. The Birth of Christ to the Virgin Mary is proclaimed in the Kontakion of the 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 a star!*

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

On Christmas we celebrate what we proclaim in the Nicene Creed: "... for us and for our salvation (the Son of God) came down from Heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man"

The Nativity of Our Lord fulfills what was first revealed nine months before, in the Annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel to the Most Holy Mother of God: the Second Person of the Holy Trinity assuming flesh and becoming human. As St. John declares in the fourth Gospel: " ... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the Only - Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

(From: *The Nativity of Christ -- Seven Questions, Seven Answers* The Nativity of Christ--Seven Questions, Seven Answers His Grace, Michael ~ Bishop of New York & the Diocese of New York and New Jersey)

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

Founded 1966

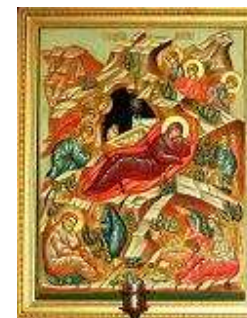
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Sunday before the
Nativity

Glory to
Jesus Christ

Glory
Forever

*Rejoice, 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 — Tone 1

Today the Church remembers:**Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ • Sunday before the Nativity**

- Virgin Martyr Juliana of Nicomedia, and with her 50 men and 130 women (304)
- Repose of St. Peter, Metropolitan of Moscow and Wonderworker of All Russia (1326) • St. Juliana, Princess of Vyaz'ma (1406) • Repose of Bl. Procopii (Procopius) of Vyatka, Fool-for-Christ (1628) • Martyr Themístocles of Myra in Lycia (251).

December 21, 2014

28th Sunday after Pentecost
Tone 3 of the Octoechos

Nativity Fast