

Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:**For health of:****Robert Morris Jr.**, 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:**

- **Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40** (Sunday Before Nativity)
- **Matthew 1:1-25** (Sunday Before Nativity)

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.

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 – 6:00 PM**Sunday service:****Hours - 9:40 AM****Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM****(Private Confession – Half hour before any service. Please don't delay the service.)****(General Confession – 9:45 AM on the first Sunday of each month)****(Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3rd Sunday of each month)****Church School – 9:30 AM**

No Church School on the first Sunday of each month.

Coffee hour - after Liturgy

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy, downstairs, for Coffee hour.

Announcements:

- **Christmas Celebration -** We will celebrate the *Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ in the Flesh* with a **Vigil on Monday December 24th at 6:30 PM**, and a **Liturgy on Tuesday Morning Dec 25th at 10:00 AM**. This is a very important Holy Day in the course of human Salvation, and Father hopes everyone will be here for all the services.
- **Paul and Linda will be playing Christmas Carols at coffee hour today.**
- **The next meeting of the Parish Council will be December 30th**, after coffee hour.
- **The next Sisterhood meeting will be Sunday, January 6th**, after coffee hour.

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.

(An excerpt from *The Orthodox Faith*, by Fr. Thomas Hopko)

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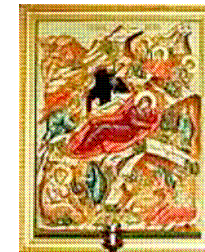
Sunday Bulletin

Church of the Mother of God

"The Joy of All the Sorrowful"

115 Hudson St. Mays Landing, New Jersey 08330

Very Reverend Doctor Matthew Searfoorce,
Temporary Rector



Glory to Jesus
Christ

Glory
Forever

Sunday before the Nativity

*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

Today the Church remembers:

Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ • Sunday before the Nativity

- Holy Ten Martyrs of Crete: Theodulus, Saturninus, Euporus, Gelasius, Eunician, Zoticus, Pompeius, Agathopus, Basilides, and Evaristus (3rd c.)
- Martyr Euporus (3rd c.)
- Repose of St. Theoctist, Archbishop of Novgorod (1310)
- St. Niphon, Bishop of Cyprus (4th c.)
- St. Paul, Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea (4th c.)

December 23, 2012

Nativity Fast

Tone 4 of the Octoechos

Sunday before Nativity
29th Sunday after Pentecost