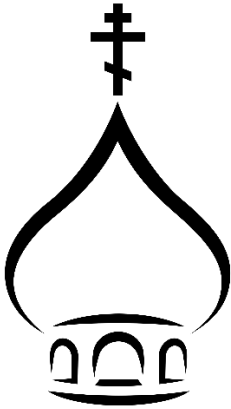


# **Divine Liturgy**

December 25, 2024

**The Nativity according to the Flesh of  
Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ**



**SAINT NICHOLAS**  
**RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**



# SAINT NICHOLAS

## RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Deacon Geoffrey LoBalbo

Patricia Stetz Grammes, Parish Council President

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### **Note to our Guests and Friends Visiting St. Nicholas:**

We offer a most sincere and heart-felt welcome to St. Nicholas Church! Please be advised that according to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves to receive the Holy Sacrament.

*(Please note - Information to be included in next Sunday's bulletin must be submitted by noon on Thursday. Thank you! ~ Jennifer N. Bzik)*

***Please turn off or silence your electronic devices  
before entering the church. Thank you.***

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# Divine Liturgy

December 25, 2025

## The Nativity according to the Flesh of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ

### The First Antiphon

I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will make all Thy wonders known. *(Ps. 110:1a)*

*Refrain:* Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

In the company of the upright, in the congregation, great are the works of the Lord. *(Ps. 110:1b-2a) (Refrain)*

They are sought out according to His will. *(Ps. 110:2b) (Refrain)*

Full of honor and majesty is His work, and His righteousness endures forever. *(Ps. 110:3) (Refrain)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever,  
and unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Refrain)*

### The Second Antiphon

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments. *(Ps. 111:1)*

*Refrain:* O Son of God, born of the Virgin, save us who sing to Thee:  
Alleluia!

His descendants will be mighty in the land, the generation of the upright will be blessed. *(Ps. 111:2) (Refrain)*

Glory and wealth are in His house and His righteousness endures forever. *(Ps. 111:3) (Refrain)*

Light rises in the darkness for the upright; the Lord is merciful, compassionate, and righteous. *(Ps. 111:4) (Refrain)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*("Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God... ")*

### **The Third Antiphon**

The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand." (*Ps. 109:1a*)

#### **Tone 4      Troparion**

Thy 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 Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

*"Until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool!" (Ps. 109:1b)*

*Troparion of the Feast*

The Lord will send Thee the scepter of power from Zion: "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies!" (*Ps. 109:2*)

*Troparion of the Feast*

With Thee is dominion on the day of Thy power, in the radiance of holiness. (*Ps. 109:3*)

*Troparion of the Feast*

### **Entrance Verse**

Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord has sworn, and will not change His mind: "Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." (*Ps. 109:4*)

#### **Tone 4      Troparion**

Thy 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 Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

### **Tone 3      Kontakion**

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 was born as a little Child.

*(Instead of the Trisagion)*

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

### **Tone 8      Prokeimenon**

Let all the earth worship Thee and praise Thee; let it praise Thy Name, O Most High! *(Ps. 65:3)*

*Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth! Sing of His Name, give glory to His praise! (Ps. 65:1)*

### **Epistle**

Read by John Heitzenrater

**(Galatians 4:4-7)** But when the fullness of the 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. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

### **Tone 1**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. (Ps. 18:1)*

*Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. (Ps. 18:2)*

### **Gospel**

**(Matthew 2:1-12)** Now after 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 when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'" Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

*(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing:)*

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly hosts.

I behold a strange, most glorious mystery: heaven—the cave; the cherubic throne—the Virgin; the manger—the place where Christ lay: the uncontainable God, Whom we magnify in song.

*(or, the ninth heirmos of the second canon)*

Out of fear, we should choose to love silence, for that is a safer course; so difficult it is lovingly to compose intricately woven songs to thee, O Virgin. But grant us strength, O Mother, equal to our natural calling.

## **Communion Hymn**

The Lord has sent redemption to His people. *(Ps. 110:8a)*  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

# Christmas Poinsettia Donations

## Red Poinsettias

In Memory Of Felix & Haney Families, Offered by Patricia Felix

In Memory Of Michael Stafiniak, Offered by Wife, Dorothy

For Health Of Family & Friends, Offered by Michael & Shirley Isbansky

In Memory Of Guydan/Dupay & Antoniak/Kaminsky Families  
Offered by Michele Guydan

For Health Of Guydan/Dupay & Antoniak/Kaminsky Families  
Offered by Michele Guydan

In Memory Of Yarastaw Tatusko

In Memory Of Richard Stevenback

In Memory Of Philip Stefanov

In Memory Of Cudlic, Fedora & Gall Families

For Health Of Cudlic & Eck Families

For Health Of Pasquel Family

In Memory Of Michael & Mary Stetz, Offered by Pat & Tom

In Memory Of Joan Stetz & Mary Stetz Strohecker, Offered by Pat & Tom

In Memory Of William & Bernard, Offered by Pat Telepchak

In Memory Of Peter & Anna, Offered by Pat Telepchak

In Memory Of Nicholas Roberts, Offered by Damian Drasher

In Memory Of Family & Friends, Offered by Damian Drasher

# Christmas Poinsettia Donations

## White Poinsettias

In Memory Of Michael Stafiniak  
Offered by Children Michele, Joseph, Stephen & Families

In Memory Of Departed Family & Friends  
Offered by Michael & Shirley Isbansky

Offered by Nancy Sabol

In Memory Of Huts & Bretz Families, Offered by Ann Marie & Barry

In Memory Of Metz & Radick Family Members, Offered by Peter & Patricia Metz

In Memory Of Selar & JoAnn Konsevitch  
Offered by Roberts & Konsevitch Families

In Memory Of Reade & Mary Roberts, Offered by The Roberts Family

In Memory Of Margarita Martinez, Offered by The Heitzenrater Family

For Health Of Heitzenrater Children, Offered by The Heitzenrater Family

In Memory Of Peter Kohudic

In Memory Of Peter & Mary Baker, Offered by Fr. James & Mat. Pat Mason

In Memory Of John, Anna & Kathryn Mason  
Offered by Fr. James & Mat. Pat Mason

In Memory Of Departed Family & Friends, Offered by Peter & Sarah Jubinski

For Health Of Family & Friends, Offered by Peter & Sarah Jubinski

In Memory Of Natalie & Stefan Danchenko, Offered by Halina Danchenko

In Memory Of Natalie & Stefan Danchenko, Offered by Halina Danchenko

In Memory Of Natalie & Stefan Danchenko, Offered by Halina Danchenko





# DIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA AND EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

*The Most Rev. Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia • Orthodox Church in America*

*December 4, 2024*

*Feast of the Nativity of our Lord*

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!*

*Dear Rev. Frs., Matushki and Faithful,*

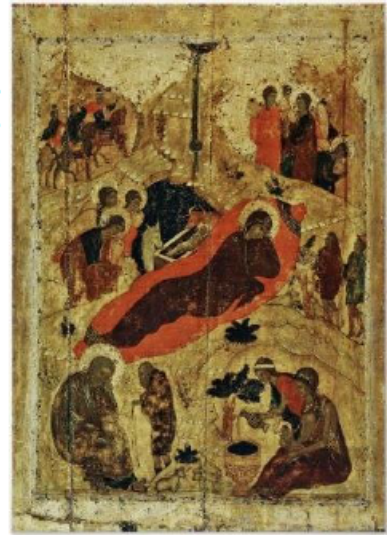
*Come, let us rejoice in the Lord, proclaiming the present mystery; for He has broken the middle wall of partition, and the flaming spear will turn about, and the cherubim will admit all to the tree of life. As for me, I will return to enjoy the bliss of paradise from which I was driven away before, 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*





# Christ Is Born!

December 25, 2024

12/001

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Children in the Lord,

Christ is born! Glorify him!

*Let the heavenly fires burn silently and let them fearfully gaze upon a humble corner of the universe, upon the black earth, and upon the most precious part of that corner—the grotto that is giving birth to God.*

– St. Nikolai Velimirovic, *Prayers by the Lake* 49

Today is the bright and wonderful, yet secret and humble, culmination of a season spent in hidden anticipation. Unlike Great Lent, when we blow the trumpets to announce a fast (Joel 2:15), the forty days of the Nativity Fast are spent quietly, in the darkness of night—the same night by which the shepherds once kept watch over their flocks (Lk. 2:8). In this darkness, the darkness of the shadow of the Law (Heb. 10:1), we kept company with the holy prophets—Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Daniel, and the Three Holy Children. We heard the first strains of song celebrating Christ's Nativity on November 21, as the *katavasiae* at the canon. On St. Andrew's Day, St. Nicholas Day, here and there, a hymn sang of the one who is to come. Our expectation mounted during the forefeast, and crescendoed with the Vespers Liturgy and Vigil of Christmas Eve.

Now, upon us who sat for those forty days in great darkness, an even greater Light has shone forth (Is. 9:2). Our Hope has come; our Expectation has arrived.

The one whom we awaited in the dark and silence is now manifest to us in the same dark and silence—the dark and cold of midnight, in the black and moonless night of our sin, in the deep cleft of



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the cave, contained in the trough of the manger. But, despite the darkness pressing all around, he shines, a clear and pure and innocent Light. Despite the pressing silence, his very presence, his very identity, is that of Word, the Word, the Word that was in the beginning (Jn. 1:1).

He is the Light shining on us from the Father; he is the Father's Word to the human race. He is the fulfillment, source, and sustenance of all our hopes.

His light is the light of purity, of unearthly and all-giving love. His word is a word of peace—not a duplicitous, hypocritical, self-serving peace full of false comfort such as the world gives (Jn. 14:27), but true peace, peace with God, the peace of the Cross. And his hope, unthinkable to the earthly-minded, is the hope of unending life that is not like this life: it is a life fully given to the Other, fully given to God, a life unconcerned with passing pleasures and fading achievements, but solely with self-giving communion and self-emptying love.

The birth of this holy Infant, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, the Light and Word and Peace of God, takes place not only in a cave of stone: it is also takes place in the soul of every one of the elect. To become worthy dwelling-places for this hidden light, we have spent forty days in preparation, and today, Christ is born unto us; unto us a Child is given (Is. 9:6). And, in him, all our hopes are fulfilled. The One born of the Virgin speaks to us in one of St. Nikolai Velimirovic's *Prayers by the Lake*:

*I am thy tomorrow, from today until the end of time. Everything good that thou hast been expecting from the days of tomorrow is within me. Today, thy tomorrow is fulfilled in me. And no day, from now until the last day, will bring thee what I am bringing thee. Lo, I am the day that has no beginning and no end.*

*I am the treasury of every future that exists and I am the way to that treasury. The future in its entirety cannot give thee so much as a kernel of good, unless it borrows from me.*

Thus, with his Nativity—in Bethlehem and in the heart—Christ is with us, bringing every good, every blessing, with him.

But, in another sense, we are still waiting: our entire life is a period of Advent, a period of watching for the coming of Christ. If he is born in a hidden way in our soul in this age, nevertheless we await the full and definitive revelation of his unimaginable splendor in the age to come, when the elect will be revealed as shining vessels of his presence forever. Thus, our whole life is a period of joyful waiting, expecting the fullness of the Joy which we already know in part.

"Hopelessness sits idle. But my hope cleans and washes continually; it airs out and censes the quarters where it will receive thee," says St. Nikolai in another of his prayers. And the greatest expression of this expectation of ours is precisely prayer itself. Again, as St. Nikolai says: "Prayer is necessary for me lest I lose sight of the salvation-bearing star, but the star does not need it to keep from losing me." Moreover, prayer is not merely an expression of expectation, of longing, of hope: it is also the path to

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fulfilling those expectations. The more we pray, the more we open ourselves up to the action of the divine energies, to communion with the Divinity, the more our expectations are fulfilled, even in this life.

Therefore, as we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, let us gather in spirit before his crib and pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, come and make thy presence known in us.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, born of the Virgin for our salvation, come and be born anew in our heart.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, born in our heart through thy holy Mysteries, come and dwell with us forever.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Child given unto thy faithful, who art with thy Church always, even unto the end of the age, make us to be worthy dwelling-places for thee in the endless ages to come, when thou, together with thy Father and thine All-Holy Spirit, shalt abide in thine elect as Light and Peace unto the ages of ages. Amen.

With my blessing and prayers for all of you on this most joyous feast,  
Sincerely yours in the newborn Christ,

+Tikhon  
Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

