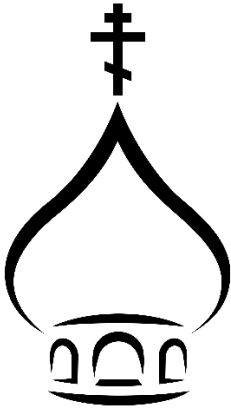


Divine Liturgy

December 25, 2025

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



SAINT NICHOLAS
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



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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 Reader 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

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

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

In Memory Of Subdeacon Michael, Offered by Michele Guydan

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

In Memory Of Wallitsch & Radio Families, Offered by Greg & Rosalie Radio

In Memory Of Felix Family, Offered by Patty Felix

In Memory Of Yarastaw Tatusko

In Memory Of Richard Stevenback

For Health Of Nicholas, Austin, Marissa, Timmy

In Memory Of Peter Keimer, Offered by Kay Keimer & Gowarty Family

In Memory Of Barbara Horsky, Offered by Kay Keimer & Gowarty Family

Offered by The Dorosh Family

White Poinsettias

For Health Of Radio/Tomsic Families, Offered by Greg & Rosalie

In Memory Of Mom, Dad & Joan, Offered by Pat & Tom

In Memory Of Peter Kohudic

Offered by Stef Livesey

Offered by David Artim

Offered by David Artim



His Eminence, the Most Reverend

+ **MARK**

Archbishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania
Orthodox Church in America

December 25, 2025

The Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

I greet you all with much joy as we celebrate the feast of the Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ!

Throughout the liturgical life of our faith, the kliros is the classroom of our Church. The words used throughout the Christmas services can be described in one word: Joy. As our Lord takes on the human flesh, we are invited to rejoice with bodiless powers in praising the Word who dwells amongst us. *"God is with us, understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us!" (Isaiah 8:9-10).*

Is the birth of our Savior filled with great mystery? Yes. The Virgin gives birth, yet remains a virgin. God takes on our human nature, yet He remains that which He is from all eternity. The King of All is born in a cave. The manger is His throne. Simple shepherds are His court. The angels are His messengers. The kings of this world are His enemies. The Messiah comes quietly. Despite centuries of anticipation, they fail to recognize Him as the Living Word, the Prince of Peace, and the Father of the world to come.

However, dear ones, *"For unto us a Son is born, unto us a Child is given."* This is why we rejoice! The love God offers us through the Incarnation of His Son transcends all knowledge, yet it is genuine, it is freely offered as a gift to all who accept and share and delight in it. By the eyes of faith alone do we discover that which is beyond all comprehension and rejoice in the reality of the Lord's love for you, for me, and for us, despite how sinful and unworthy we all are. This is the abundant mercy of our God.

May the understanding of the Incarnation renew us and refresh us now, in the new year to come, and in every moment of our lives. I prayerfully extend to you and your families every blessing for a peaceful and joyful Nativity season.

Your unworthy father in Christ,

+ Mark

+MARK

Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania



December 25, 2025

12/001

To the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, beloved children in the Lord,

When it was time for thy coming upon earth, the first taxation of the world was held; and then thou madest ready to enroll the names of all who believed in thy birth. For this cause Caesar published such a decree, since thy timeless and eternal kingdom was newly made manifest.

– St. Germanus, Doxastichon at the Praises, tone six

Christ is born! Glorify him!

In one of her most famed hymns, the venerable Cassia draws parallels between the reign of Caesar and the reign of Christ: “When Augustus reigned alone upon earth,” she says, “the many kingdoms of men came to an end,” and when Christ was born in that reign, the many gods of the nations were done away. As the many cities of the world passed under one rule, all the nations came to believe in one God.

The relationship between these two reigns, two rules – that of Rome and that of Christ – goes beyond poetic parallels, however. Divine providence arranged for the birth of the Lord at precisely the right moment, when the Pax Romana, the peace secured by the ascendancy of the Roman Empire, ensured that the Good News of Jesus Christ could travel freely throughout the Mediterranean world, from Jerusalem to Italy, to Gaul and North Africa, and beyond it, to barbarian lands and the Persian Empire.

At the same time, we must not forget the role played by Roman rule also at the end of the Savior's earthly life, when the Lord gave himself up for the life of the world: he was flogged by Roman soldiers, condemned by a Roman governor, pierced by a Roman lance. In the end, it was a Roman officer who recognized what had taken place: “Truly this was the Son of God.”

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Roman imperial authority paved the way for the coming of Christ in the flesh and made possible the apostolic preaching of the Gospel; this same authority sentenced God himself to death. Thus, Rome occupies an ambivalent place in the tradition of the Church; as a symbol, it is bivalent. On the one hand, we speak of the New Rome and the Third Rome: the reign of Christ established on earth in Roman garb. Our bishops, with their eagle rugs and their sakkoi, still bear the trappings of Eastern Roman emperors.

On the other hand, in New Testament—in St. Peter's first epistle and St. John's Apocalypse (1 Pet. 5:13; Rev. 17–18 et passim)—we see Rome equated with Babylonian harlotry, with the old Jerusalem that kills the prophets and rejects those sent to her. Rome appears both as the city of God on earth and the supreme city of the world, the dominion of the flesh and of the devil.

However, St. Germanus of Constantinople, in the doxastichon I quote above, offers a new and higher perspective. He does not only draw parallels, as does St. Cassia; neither does he assign Roman rule an incidental, albeit providential, role. Instead, he views Rome as the direct instrument of God: "For this cause Caesar published such a decree," so that the kingdom of God might appear and Christ might enroll his faithful in the book of life. Whatever else Caesar's decree may have done, whatever Caesar may have intended, the cause for that decree was determined by God, and it was part of his holy design, his plan; God's providence was the agent, the decisive factor.

When God made the world out of nothing, he did so in order that the world might come to know him and love him, and so that he could show his love to the world—so that he could love the world. This does not apply only to the world as an abstract whole; it applies to each of us, who are microcosms, little worlds unto ourselves. God loves each of us with his whole love; in love, he made everything for each of us—for me and for you. As St. Paul says, "all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21–23).

All of history points toward the coming of Christ; all the actors on the world stage, all the empires of men, all the civilizations from furthest antiquity to the end of the world: all of this has existed, exists, and will exist solely for the sake of his First and Second Coming. Moreover, since his Coming was for our sake—not his own, since, in his divine aseity, he has no need of anything—this means that all the world exist for us, for each of us—for me and for you. All of history took place, takes place, will take place, for your sake.

Rome stands as a potent symbol of all this history, of the entire world of human events. Thus, it is inevitable that Rome both serves as a vehicle of the Gospel and an instrument of the Passion, both as an ally and an enemy of Christ. The Church, in her earthly sojourn, has known the two aspects of Rome as well: the Rome of Diocletian and the Rome of Constantine; the Rome of the catacombs and the Rome of the Hagia Sophia.

So it is in our own lives. Sometimes the circumstances of life bring us joy, sometimes they bring us pain. But no matter what happens to us, we must know, as the great spiritual testament attributed to St. Seraphim of Vyritsa says, that all of this was from the hand of the loving God. Every weal, every

woe, every ease, every hardship: all of this was from him. Without all these events, known and unknown, past, present, and future, you would not be who you are. All of this is a gift from God to you, so that you could receive a still greater gift: God himself.

Today he appears as a newborn Child in the arms of his most pure Mother; soon she shall bear him to the temple of sacrifice, and thence to exile in Egypt. Thus, both in happiness and in trials, let us imitate her in always extending to him our heart's embrace. Holding him close, we will come to understand, with St. Germanus and St. Seraphim, that everything that has taken place, from the very beginning of time, has happened so that we could come to this moment, to this cave, to this manger, and experience the Advent of God in the flesh. Everything has happened so that he could be ours, and we could be his.

To our infant Savior, the Creator and Sustainer of all, the true Love of our hearts, our deepest Desire, the Fulfillment of our being: to him be all love and adoration, together with his Father and his All-holy Spirit, throughout the ages of this world and unto endless eternity.

Greeting you with the joy of Christ's Nativity,
With my primatial prayers and blessing,

+Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada