



Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

Schedule This Week

Sunday, December 25: Nativity of Christ

10:00 am Festal Nativity Liturgy *(no Church School)*

Monday, December 26

9:30 am Divine Liturgy Synaxis of the Theot.

Tuesday, December 27

No Matins or Office Hours

Wednesday, December 28

6:30 pm Daily Vespers

7:00 pm Bible Study

Thursday, December 29

No Matins or Office Hours

Saturday, December 31

4:00 pm Community Food Pantry

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Great Vespers/Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, January 1: Circumcision/St Basil

10:00 am Divine Liturgy *(No Church School)*

To our Visitors: Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to come forward to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) at the conclusion of the service.

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, Rector

Deacon Luke Loboda, Attached

Deacon John Skowron, Attached

Rdr James Wargo and Danielle Bartko, Choir Dirs

The Nativity of Christ

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

December 25, 2022

Announcements

➤ Nativity Greeting: **Christ is Born! Glorify Him!**

➤ The Period from the Nativity of Christ through January 4 is **fast free**.

➤ **Icon Project News:** Fr Theodore and John Jurewicz will begin painting and applying the new icons for the ceiling beginning this week. The work will require a significant amount of scaffolding in the front half of the Church, to be erected on Tuesday or Wednesday. The scaffolding will be up for approximately three weeks. *(There will be no Matins or Office Hours this week.)* Our regularly scheduled services will continue but we will ask **patience and flexibility on everyone's part** as we find appropriate solutions to accommodate our worship.

➤ **Please consider a generous year-end donation to our church!** This is the last week to make a gift which would apply to the 2022 tax year. You can give online (orthodoxpittsburgh.org/support), you can give via check (send to 320 Munson Ave, McKees Rocks PA 15136), or you can give via debit or credit here at church today. **We appreciate your financial contributions.** May God richly bless you in return!



Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized;* (none). *Home:* George Shaytar. Natalie Tooch. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Michael Soroka.

➤ **Vigil Lights** From **Mat. Nancy K. Mell & Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, for Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. From **Doris M. Wasilko** for the departed servant, Fr. Igor Soroka; for the health of the Wasilko family. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, Rev. Igor Soroka. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family. From **Mat. Joni Soroka** for the departed servant, Mat. Olga; for the health of our family & friends; safe travels. From **John & Olga** for the health of Galina Vilkova and for the health & salvation of our family From **Richard & Sonia Blaha** for the departed servants, Uncle Eddie, Aunt Rose, Lou, Ken, Pete, Dorothy, Betty, and Robert; for the health of family, friends, siblings, and serving soldiers; for anniversaries, birthdays, special intention and peace. From **Theodor** for the departed servant, Nicholas. From **Donya Yewisiak** for the departed servants, Archpriest Igor Soroka and Barbara Naiser.

Thank You

➤ Thank you to our **December** donors: from **Sandi Tirpak** (Bulletin \$60) in memory of Amelia Kuck, (Communion Wine \$40) in memory of grandparents Nicholas, Marie, Frank, and Ann, (Incense \$10) in memory of parents Amelia and John; from Donya Yewisiak (Holy Bread \$50, Altar Candles \$50) in memory of Matushka Olga Soroka.

On the Nativity

The people who sat in the darkness of ignorance, let them see the great Light full of knowledge. Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new. The letter gives way, the Spirit comes to the front. The shadows flee away, the truth comes in on them. Melchizedek is concluded. He who was without Mother becomes without Father (without mother of His former state, without father of His second). The laws of nature are upset; the world above must be filled. Christ commands it, let us not set ourselves against Him. O clap your hands together all you people, because unto us a Child is born, and a Son given unto us, whose government is upon His shoulder (for with the cross it is raised up), and His name is called The Angel of the Great Counsel of the Father. Let John cry, prepare the way of the Lord; I too will cry the power of this Day. He who is not carnal is Incarnate; the Son of God becomes the Son of Man, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Let the Jews be offended, let the Greeks deride; let heretics talk until their tongues ache. Then shall they believe, when they see Him ascending into heaven; and if not then, yet when they see Him coming out of heaven and sitting as Judge.

This is our present Festival; it is this which we are celebrating today, the Coming of God to Man, that we might go forth, or rather (for this is the more proper expression) that we might go back to God – that putting off of the old man, we might put on the new; and that as we died in Adam, so we might live in Christ, being born with Christ and crucified with Him and buried with Him and rising with Him. For I must undergo the beautiful conversion, and as the painful succeeded the more blissful, so must the more blissful come out of the painful. For where sin abounded grace did much more abound; and if a taste condemned us, how much more does the passion of Christ justify us? Therefore let us keep the Feast, not after the manner of a heathen festival, but after a godly sort; not after the way of the world, but in a fashion above the world; not as our own, but as belonging to Him who is ours, or rather as our master's; not as of weakness, but as of healing; not as of creation, but of re-creation. *(St Gregory Nazianzus)*

St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, December 25

First Antiphon (Psalm 112)

I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will make all Thy wonders known.

R. 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! *R*

They are studied by all who have pleasure in them. *R*

His work is glory and beauty, and His righteousness endures forever.

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

Second Antiphon (Psalm 112)

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments!

R 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! *R*
Glory and wealth are in His house, and His righteousness endures forever! *R*

Light rises in the dark for the upright; the Lord is merciful, compassionate and righteous. *R*
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. *R*

Third Antiphon (Psalm 110)

The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool!"

R Troparion of the Feast

The Lord sends forth from Zion Thy mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of Thy foes. *R*
Authority shall be with Thee on the day of Thy power, among the splendor of Thy holy ones!
R

Tone 4 Troparion of the Feast

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!

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

Tone 3 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 the star, since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child!

In Place of 'Holy God' (Galatians 3:27)

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

Tone 8 Prokeimenon of the Feast (Psalm 65:4)

Let all the earth worship Thee and praise Thee; let it praise Thy name, O Most High!

Epistle of the Feast (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.

Gospel of the Feast (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.

Hymn to the Theotokos of the Feast

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure virgin Theotokos, more honorable 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!

Communion Hymn (Psalm 111:9)

The Lord hath sent redemption to His people. Alleluia!

“The eternal God was born as a little child.”...It is the words “child” and “God” which give us the most striking revelation about the Christmas mystery.

Christ said “become like children” (Mt 18:3). What does this mean? What are adults missing, or better, what has been choked, drowned or deafened by a thick layer of adulthood? Above all, is it not that capacity, so characteristic of children, to wonder, to rejoice and, most importantly, to be whole both in joy and sorrow? Adulthood chokes as well the ability to trust, to let go and give one’s self completely to love and to believe with all one’s being. And finally, children take seriously what adults are no longer capable of accepting: dreams, that which breaks through our everyday experience and our cynical mistrust, that deep mystery of the world and everything within it revealed to saints, children, and poets. The child in that distant Bethlehem cave has no desire that we fear him; He enters our hearts not by frightening us, by proving his power and authority, but by love alone. He is given to us as a child, and only as children can we in turn love him and give ourselves to him. The world is ruled by authority and power, by fear and domination. The child God liberates us from that. All He desires from us is our love, freely given and joyful; all He desires is that we give him our heart. And we give it to a defenseless, endlessly trusting child.

Through the feast of Christmas, the Church reveals to us a joyful mystery: the mystery of freely given love imposing itself on no one. A love capable of seeing, recognizing and loving God in the Divine Child, and becoming the gift of a new life. (Schmemmann)