

*Today in Bethlehem hear I
Sweet angel voices singing;
All glory be to God on high,
Who peace on earth is bringing.
The Virgin Mary holds more
Than highest heaven most holy:
Light shines on what was dark before,
And lifts up the lowly.
God wills that peace shall be on earth,
And holy exultation:
Sweet babe, I greet Thy spotless birth
And wondrous Incarnation.
Today in Bethlehem hear I
Even the lowly singing:
With angel-words they pierce the sky;
And earth with joy is ringing.*

St. John of Damascus



CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

THE TRINITARIAN

Published Weekly by the
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Divine Liturgy on Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Vespers on Saturdays at 5:00 p.m.

BULLETIN 8 - VOLUME LXI

TONE 4

DECEMBER 24, 2023

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

*Sunday of the Holy Fathers
Nun-Martyr Eugenia of Rome, and with her Martyrs Philip, her father,
Protus, Hyacinth, Basilla, and Claudia;
Ven. Nicholas the Monk, of Bulgaria*

Be glad, O Bethlehem! Prepare yourself, O Ephratha; for the Lamb is on her way to give birth to the Great Shepherd she carries in her womb. The God-bearing Fathers will rejoice, beholding Him, and with the shepherds, they will praise the Virgin who nurses Him.

Kontakion, Tone I

Inspired by the Divine Spirit, you sang the praises of God, receiving the light of divine knowledge, O Eugenia, Christ's beautiful virgin. You shone forth in the choirs of monastics, and in your contest you triumphed over the Enemy. O glorious Martyr, entreat Christ God to grant us great mercy.

Kontakion, Tone III

TODAY'S EPISTLE: HEBREWS 11:9-10,17-23,32-40

TODAY'S GOSPEL: MATTHEW 1:1-25

HOLY WORSHIP THIS WEEK:

Today, December 24	7:30 p.m. Festal Vigil
Monday, December 25	9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
Saturday, December 30	5:00 p.m. Great Vespers

THIS IS A FAST-FREE WEEK.

WELCOME GUESTS!

We are very glad you have come to worship the Holy Trinity with us this morning! Please participate in the services at your comfort level. Our greeters will kindly assist you with whatever questions or needs you may have. During each Sunday service we offer Holy Communion. If you are a practicing Orthodox Christian and have come prepared to receive Christ's Body and Blood through fasting and prayer, please come forward to partake. All guests are invited to come forward at the end of the service to greet Fr. Christopher and receive the blessed bread. Please stay after the Divine Liturgy for coffee hour in the Fellowship Hall so we can get to know you better!

Families with children: we encourage children of all ages to be present and participate as they are able during worship. We know sometimes kids need a break, so please take good advantage of our Rest and Refocus Room located on the south side of the lobby/narthex when coming in the main entrance. If you have pre-school and school age children, we invite you to send them to Church School directly after the Divine Liturgy throughout the academic year. May God bless you!

Daily Scripture Readings can be found in the St. Tikhon's Wall Calendar or at www.oca.org/readings.

COMING EVENTS

JANUARY:

7, Sunday	9:00 a.m. Chrismation of Meagan Brill
11, Thursday	7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
14, Sunday	11:00 a.m. Book Study—conclusion Second Sunday Food Sale
21, Sunday	11:00 a.m. Parish Council meeting
25, Thursday	7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
29, Monday	Cooking for St. Herman’s House
31, Wednesday	Serving dinner at St. Herman’s House

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Greek:

Χριστὸς γεννᾶται, δοξάσατε
Khristos gennátai! Dhoxásate!

Slavonic:

Христос раждается! славите!
Khristos razhdayetsya! Slavite!

HOME BLESSINGS:

Fr. Christopher will be offering home blessings in 2024, between Theophany and the beginning of Lent, January 7—March 17. There is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall; or you can call Janene in the church office Mon. or Thurs. mornings; or email your name address, phone no. to jmhatch8@gmail.com; or leave a message on the machine. 216-524-4859.

CALENDARS:

2024 Lectionary Wall Calendars are available in the vestibule.

IN SEARCH OF SEAMSTRESSES:

Some of our altar servers robes are in need of minor mending. If you are able to assist in this project, please see Protodeacon Anthony.

NEEDED FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION:

Please save your plastic grocery bags (all colors). Bring them to church and place them in the plastic bin marked “Plastic Bags for St. Mary of Egypt.” These bags will be used for food distribution to the needy.

BOOK STUDY:

The final class has been rescheduled for Sunday, Jan. 14, at 11:00 a.m. Discussion will cover Chapter 13-conclusion.

COFFEE HOUR:

The refreshments today are hosted by the Stone Soup Group.
The sign-up sheet is in the kitchen for future dates. Feel free to get a group together for hosting a coffee hour. Refreshments do not have to be elaborate.

TRINITARIAN COVERS:

The covers today are offered by William and Becky Spak.

FR. ANDREW CLEMENTS:

Fr. Andrew, pastor of St. Nicholas Church in Mentor, is celebrating 40 years of service in the Priesthood. He will be honored with a dinner on Sunday, Jan. 28, at 5:30 p.m.; Pine Ridge Country Club in Wickliffe. See details on the bulletin board. Reservations must be made by January 14, 2024.

THE GIFTS WE OFFER TO THE LORD WE LOVE

REGULAR COLLECTION, 12/17/2023	\$ 7088.00
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FUNDS	3147.00
CANDLES	190.00
CHRISTMAS FLOWERS	215.00
FUNDS FOR ALTAR VESTMENTS	10000.00
IN MEMORY OF HELE CHWALYK	2000.00
PETRYKOWSKI TRUST FUND	265.93
SECOND SUNDAY FOOD SALE	362.00
COFFEE HOUR, 12/1	66.00

St Ephrem the Syrian – Hymn 21 on the Nativity

1 About the birth of the First-born on His feastday let us speak.

On His day He gave hidden helps.

If the unclean one on his feast and in commemoration of his day

gave a gift of anger, a head upon a platter,⁴⁶⁹

how much [more] will the Blessed One give blessings to one who sings on His feast.

Refrain: Blessed is He Who became small without limit to make us great without limit.

2 Let us not count our vigil as everyday vigils; it is a feastday whose wage increases a hundredfold.

For it is a feast that attacks sleep with its vigil, a speaker who attacks sleep with his voice.

He snatches all good things; he is head of the hosts of the feasts and of all joys.

3 Today the angels and even the archangels came down to sing a new song of praise on earth. by this mystery they come down and rejoice with vigils. At that time when they sang praise, blasphemy filled [the earth].

Blessed is the birth on which a generation thundered with hallelujahs of praise.

4 For [this] is the night that mingles heavenly Watchers with vigilants.

The Watcher came to make watchers in creation. Behold vigilants have been made partakers with the Watchers.⁴⁷⁰

Praisegivers have been made companions with the Seraphim.

Blessed is he who became a lyre for Your praise, and whose wage was Your mercy.

5 But let us sing the birth of the First-born—how Divinity in the womb wove herself a garment.⁴⁷¹ She put it on and emerged in birth; in death she stripped it off again.

Once she stripped it off; twice she put it on.

When the left hand snatched it, she wrested it from her, and she placed it on the right hand.⁴⁷²

6 The Power that governs all dwelt in a small womb. While dwelling there, He was holding the reins of the universe.

His Parent was ready for His will to be fulfilled.

The heavens and all the creation were filled by Him.

The Sun entered the womb, and in the height and depth His rays were dwelling.

7 He dwelt in the vast wombs of all creation.

They were too small to contain the greatness of the First-born.

How indeed did that small womb of Mary suffice for Him?

It is a wonder if ... sufficed for Him.

Of all the wombs that contained Him, one womb sufficed: [the womb] of the Great One Who begot Him.

8 The womb that contain Him, if it contained all of Him, is equal to the wonderful womb that is greater than [the womb] of His birth.

But who will dare to say that a small womb, weak and despised, is equal to [the womb] of the Great Being?

He dwelt [there] because of His compassion and since His nature is great,

He was not limited in anything.

9 Reconciling Peace, sent to the peoples, Gladdening Flash, Who came to the gloomy, Powerful Leaven, conquering all in silence Patient One, Who has captured the creation little by little. Blessed is he who makes Your joys dwell in His heart and forgets his griefs in You.¹

⁴⁷¹ The feminine pronouns refer to "Divinity," which is grammatically feminine in Syriac; since weaving is a feminine task in antiquity, it is appropriate to preserve the feminine rather than shifting to a neuter or masculine. On the imagery of the body as a garment, cf. Nat. 4.187–88, 5.4.4–5, 16.11–13, 17.4.

⁴⁷² The death, resurrection and ascension of Christ are meant.

⁴⁶⁹ Mark 6:14–29 et par. For a longer comparison with Herod's birthday, cf. Nat. 4.60–83.

⁴⁷⁰ Christ is the Watcher who by his incarnation makes it possible for humans to participate in the angelic service of praise, that is, to make them "watchers in creation." On watchfulness, cf. Nat. 1.61, 4.195, 6.22–23, 7.9, 21.4.

¹ Ephrem the Syrian, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, ed. Bernard McGinn, trans. Kathleen E. McVey, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 173–175.