



Established 1918

St. George Orthodox Church

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*Metropolitan SABA, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
Rt. Rev. Archimandrite Jeremy, Archiepiscopal Vicar Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest*



Sunday, December 22, 2024 Forefeast of and the Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ The Genealogy

Tone 1/Eothinon 4

8:45am - Matins, 10:00am - Divine Liturgy
Followed by Fellowship, Adult Education
and Sunday School

Fr. Jeremy Finzel, Pastor

Coming Up at St. George:

Tuesday, December 24

9:00am - Royal Hours for Nativity

4:00pm - Nativity Vespersal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Wednesday, December 25

8:00am - Nativity Festal Orthros

9:00am - Nativity Festal Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Thursday, December 26 at 8:30am - Hours, 9:00am - Liturgy for Synaxis of the Theotokos

Friday, December 27 at 8:30am - Hours, 9:00am - Liturgy for St Stephen

Saturday, December 28 at 8:30am - Hours, 9:00am - Liturgy
and at 5:30pm - Great Vespers

Sunday, December 29 at 8:45am - Orthros, 10:00am - Divine Liturgy,
Followed by Fellowship, Adult Education and Sunday School

Monday, December 30 at 8:30am - Hours, 9:00am - Liturgy

Tuesday, December 31 at 8:30am - Hours, 9:00am - Liturgy

Wednesday, January 1 at 8:00am - Orthros, 9:00am - Divine Liturgy for St. Basil the Great and
the Circumcision of Christ

Thursday, January 2 at 8:30am - Hours, 9:00am - Divine Liturgy for St. Seraphim of Sarov

Friday, January 3 at 9:00am - Royal Hours for Theophany

Saturday, January 4 at 8:30am - Hours, 9:00am - Liturgy
and at 5:30pm - Great Vespers

Sunday, January 5 at 8:45am - Orthros, 10:00am - Divine Liturgy and Indoor Blessing of Waters,
Followed by Fellowship
and at 6:30pm - Great Vespers for Theophany

Services available on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@St.GeorgeSpringValleyOrthodox>

Please follow along in the booklet for Divine Liturgy

- *The Glory hymns at the end of Matins:*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Verily, the collection of Mosaic teachings maketh plain the divine Nativity of Christ in the flesh to those to whom was preached the Grace before the Law, having transcended the Law by faith. Wherefore, since the Nativity was the cause of salvation from corruption, they foretold Thy Resurrection to the souls imprisoned in Hades, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Both Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Thou hast transcended all blessings, O Virgin Theotokos! For Hades hath been spoiled by Him who was incarnate of thee. Yea, Adam was recalled, the curse was abolished. Eve was delivered and death was caused to die, and we were made to live again. Wherefore, with praise we cry: Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, who hast thus shown Thy pleasure. Glory to Thee!

- *The service continues with the Great Doxology, Page 2.*
- *The Troparion after the Great Doxology:*

Today hath salvation come into the world. Let us sing praises unto Him who rose again from the grave, the Author of our life. For in that by death He hath destroyed death, He hath given us the victory and great mercy.

- *The Liturgy continues with the Opening Prayers, Page 3.*
- *The First Antiphon:*

Through the prayers of the birth giver of God, O Savior, save us.

- *The Second Antiphon:*

Save us, O Son of God, Who didst rise again from the dead; we who sing unto Thee. Alleluia.

- *The Third Antiphon and the Little Entrance:*

Troparion for the Resurrection (Tone 1): The stone being sealed by the Jews, and Thy pure body being guarded by the soldiers, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. Wherefore, the heavenly powers acclaimed Thee, O giver of life, crying, Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy kingdom! Glory to Thy gracious providence, O thou only lover of mankind.

- *The Entrance Hymn:*

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and God. Save us, O Son of God, Who didst rise again from the dead, we who sing unto Thee: Alleluia!

- *Hymns of the day, following the Little Entrance:*

Repeat the Troparion for the Resurrection (from above)

Apolytikion of the Forefeast (Tone 4): Make ready, O Bethlehem, for Eden hath been opened for all. Prepare, O Ephratha, for the tree of life hath blossomed forth in the cave from the Virgin. For her womb did appear as a supersensual paradise, in which is planted that holy Vine. If we should eat thereof we shall live, and not die as Adam of old. Christ shall be born, raising the image that fell at the beginning.

Apolytikion of the Sunday Before Nativity (Tone 2): Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And

the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their prayers O Christ God, save our souls.

Troparion for St. George the Great-Martyr (Tone 4): Since thou art a liberator and deliverer of captives, a help and succour of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender and fighter for kings, O great among martyrs, the victory-clad George: Intercede with Christ God for the salvation of our souls.

Kontakion of Preparation of Christ's Nativity (Tone 3): Today the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth in an ineffable manner to the Word before the ages. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest, and glorify with the angels and shepherds Him who shall appear by His own will as a new babe, being God before the ages.

- *The Trisagion Hymn:*

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal One: Have mercy on us! (three times)

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

Holy Immortal One: Have mercy upon us!

Louder! Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal One: Have mercy upon us!

The Epistle for the Sunday Before Nativity

Clergy: Let us attend!

Reader: Blessed are Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers. For Thou art justified in all that Thou hast done for us.

Clergy: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews (11:9-10, 32-40).

Clergy: Let us attend!

Reader: 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 foundations, 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, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so 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 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.

Clergy: Peace be to thee who redest.

Reader: And to thy spirit.

Chanter: O God, with our ears have we heard, for our fathers have told us. For Thou hast saved us from them that afflict us, and them that hate us hast Thou put to shame.

All: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The Gospel for the Sunday Before Nativity: The Genealogy

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (1:1-25).

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 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 Aram, and Aram 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 Amon, and Amon 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 were 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 had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus.

- *The Liturgy continues with the Homily, Page 12.*

The Litany of the Catechumens:

Priest: Pray to the Lord, ye catechumens.

People: Lord, have mercy. (*repeat after each petition*)

Let us, the faithful, pray for the catechumens, that the Lord will have mercy on them.

That He will teach them the word of truth.

That He will reveal to them the gospel of righteousness.

That He will unite them in His holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Save them; have mercy on them; help them; and keep them, O God, by Thy grace.

Priest: Bow your heads unto the Lord, ye catechumens.

People: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: *(Quietly)* O Lord our God, who dwellest on high and regardest the humble, who hast sent forth as the salvation of the race of men thine only-begotten Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ; Look down upon thy servants the catechumens, who have bowed their necks before Thee; make them worthy in due season of the laver of regeneration, the forgiveness of sins and the robe of incorruption. Unite them to Thy holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and number them with Thine elect flock. *(Louder)* That with us they may glorify Thine all-honorable and majestic name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: As many as are catechumens, depart. Depart, catechumens. As many as are catechumens, depart. Let none of the catechumens remain.

- *The First Litany of the Faithful:*

Priest: As many as are of the faithful, again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. *(Very slowly while the Priest prays quietly.)*

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Wisdom!

Priest: For unto Thee are due all glory, honor and worship to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

- *The Second Litany of the Faithful:*

Priest: Again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. *(Very slowly while the Priest prays quietly.)*

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Wisdom!

Priest: That guarded always by Thy might we may ascribe glory unto Thee to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

- *The Cherubic Hymn:*

Let us who represent the Cherubim mystically, as we sing with them the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity, the thrice-holy chant intoning. All cares terrestrial, now lay aside. We raise on high the King of All.

- *The Liturgy continues with the Great Entrance, Page 12.*

Birthdays & Anniversaries

December 23 – Stephanie Kinard

December 24 – Kim Leonard

December 26 – Grant Leonard

December 27 – Gabriel Leonard

December 28 – Richard Malooley and Melissa Malooley

Parish Council Representatives

Elected & Appointed Members

Wayne Sanders, *Chair*
Mark Kerasotes, *Vice-Chair & Order of St. Ignatius*
Melanie Thompson, *Treasurer*
Rdr. Michael Baum, *Secretary & Ecclesiarch*
Sbdn. David Anderson, *Sunday School*

Organization Representatives

Genie Sanders, *Chanters/Choir*
Allyson Scandale, *Antiochian Women*
Maxwell Colby, *Young Adults*
Robert Abraham, *Facilities*

Information & Announcements

The Nativity Fast: We are in the midst of the Nativity Fast until the Feast of Nativity on December 25th. The Archdiocese guidelines are posted downstairs, but please consult with Fr. Jeremy if you have questions about the fast. Please be mindful of the fasting guidelines when bringing food to coffee hour. For more information, please see the archdiocese website here: <https://www.antiochian.org/dashboard?name=The%20Nativity%20Fast>

Christmas Road Game: There is a Christmas Road board game available for sale for \$25 each from the church, which Metropolitan +Saba has encouraged us to consider. Please see Fr. Jeremy or Kh. Jordan with any questions!

Collection for Hall Township Food Pantry: Throughout the Nativity fast, we are collecting alms, financial donations, for the food pantry here in Spring Valley. You can place your contribution in the alms box at the back of the church.

You're invited! To kickoff the new year, our Senior Share group is hosting a Children's Concert featuring the Finzel family on Thursday, January 2nd at 1:00pm. All are welcome and refreshments will be served!

British Isle Presentations: Mike Baum has put together slideshows of his and Ruth's recent pilgrimages to England and Ireland. There's an amazing amount of ancient Christian heritage, sites, and stories, and they brought back a lot of pictures! Starting January 8th and running through the 29th, presentations and refreshments will start at 7:30 pm, right after Daily Vespers at 6:30 pm.

The Nativity and Almsgiving, Part Two

by His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Ispere)



This simple reflection on Christmas leads us to the Christian concept of giving. The first attitude required of Christians is to be open to the gift of God, because when they accept the divine gift and appreciate its importance and role in their life, they become worthy to practice giving in turn. "By this we know love, that He laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).

The Bible urges us to give and places great importance on giving. In the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 26), giving tithes was an expression of man's gratitude to God for the gifts He has given us. In the New Testament, this concept extends beyond tithes to giving everything. The Lord says, "Give to anyone who asks of you" (Matthew 5:42), meaning that Christ asks His disciples to keep their hearts and hands open. Ears unwilling to hear are a sign of hardness of heart, unbecoming of a disciple of Christ.

Christian giving does not have a certain limit; it is open to perfection. Humans give according to their ability. But this ability is determined by their love for the Lord, and their appreciation for what He has done and is doing for them. It is also determined by the degree of their freedom from the love of possession, and their awareness of the importance of almsgiving to the extent where almsgiving will become their joy.

Many people give in order to fulfill the divine commandment, while others give to gain God's blessings and to please God. Both types of giving are acceptable, but incomplete. Giving is linked to the spiritual level that the giver has reached. There are those who have reached the point of imitating Christ literally by giving everything, even offering their entire lives. The love of almsgiving grows in us exponentially as we grow in the love of God.

Some refrain from giving for many reasons. These people have not experienced the joy of giving and its effect on them. People often think that giving gladdens the hearts of those who receive it. This is undoubtedly true, but does it not gladden the heart of the giver more? The Bible says: "A generous soul will be enriched, and he who waters will himself be watered" (Prov. 11:25). It has been said: "The Lord loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). The joy of the gift's recipient is a double joy for the givers, because God blesses them.

Giving does not stop at material things. It is a state that believers experience constantly, until it becomes permanent. Do not deprive yourself of giving, and do not make any excuses, lest you remain closed to yourself. Your sincere smile may provide refreshment for a sad soul. Your look of tenderness and compassion may revive a suffering person who lacks love and care. The warm touch of your hand may restore the spirit of someone feeling neglected and lonely.

No one is exempt from the virtue of giving. Let us remember the widow's mite. The lesson lies in your willingness to give before the quality and quantity of gifts. Imitate your incarnate Lord for your sake and for your salvation. Respond to His amazing giving by imitating it as much as you are able, and you will see how many blessings you will reap for yourself. Giving frees you from selfishness, isolation, self-love and fear, which can kill. Christ did not come to keep you captive; He came to liberate you and give you the fullness of life. Throw yourself before Him and pile the dust of your selfishness at the feet of the Divine Child. Open your hands to be filled with His gifts, so that you can happily pass them on to your brethren, and the celebration of the feast will truly begin.

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Saba Isper is the Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch and All the East and the Holy Synod of Antioch elected His Eminence to lead the Archdiocese during its extraordinary session on Feb. 23, 2023, in Balamand, Lebanon.

His Eminence will lead and oversee the Archdiocese's parishes, missions, departments, institutions and organizations in the United States and Canada from the headquarters in Englewood, New Jersey. The auxiliary bishops aid him in his administration across the continent.

For more information on His Eminence and his teachings, please visit <https://www.antiochian.org/dashboard?name=MetSaba>

