

Ambo

ST. THEODOSIUS ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL



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- Protodeacon Daniel Boerio

- Subdeacon Theodore
Lentz, Sacristan

- Reader Julius Kovach,
Ecclesiarch & Choirmaster

- Reader Paul Pangrace,
Ambo Editor

Divine Services

Eve Sundays & Feast Days

5:00 PM Confessions

6:00 PM Great Vespers

Sundays and Feast Days

8:40 AM 3rd and 6th Hour

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

*AMBO: Articles for
publication should be
submitted to the office by
Wednesday of each week
before noon.

* CALENDAR: Event dates
must be submitted by the
15th of each month.

DECEMBER 23, 2018

**SUNDAY BEFORE
THE NATIVITY**

THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST



DECEMBER 25

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in the city of Bethlehem during the reign of the emperor Augustus (Octavian). Caesar Augustus decreed that a universal census be made throughout his Empire, which then also included Palestinian Israel. The Jews were accustomed to be counted in the city from where their family came. The Most Holy Virgin and the Righteous Joseph, since they were descended from the house and lineage of King David, had to go to Bethlehem to be counted and taxed.

In Bethlehem they found no room at any of the city's inns. Thus, the God-Man, the Savior of the world, was born in a cave that was used as a stable.

"I behold a strange and most glorious mystery," the Church sings with awe, "Heaven, a Cave; the Virgin the Throne of the Cherubim; the Manger a room, in which Christ, the God Whom nothing can contain is laid." (Irmos of the 9th Ode of the Nativity Canon).

Having given birth to the divine Infant without travail, the Most Holy Virgin "wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger" (Luke 2:7). In the stillness of midnight (Wisdom of Solomon 18:14-15), the proclamation of the birth of the Savior of the world was heard by three shepherds watching their flocks by night.

An angel of the Lord (Saint Cyprian says this was Gabriel) came before them and said: "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). The humble shepherds were the first to offer worship to Him Who condescended to assume the form of a humble servant for the salvation of mankind. Besides the glad tidings to the Bethlehem shepherds, the Nativity of Christ was revealed to the Magi by a wondrous star. Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Theophylactus, commenting on Saint Matthew's Gospel, say that this was no ordinary star. Rather, it was "a divine and angelic power that appeared in the form of a star." Saint Demetrius of Rostov says it was a "manifestation of divine energy" (Narrative of the Adoration of the Magi). Entering the house where the Infant lay, the Magi "fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Mt. 2:11).

The present Feast, commemorating the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, was established by the Church. Its origin goes back to the time of the Apostles. In the Apostolic Constitutions (Section 3, 13) it says, "Brethren, observe the feastdays; and first of all the Birth of Christ, which you are to celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month." In another place it also says, "Celebrate the day of the Nativity of Christ, on which unseen grace is given man by the birth of the Word of God from the Virgin Mary for the salvation of the world."

In the second century Saint Clement of Alexandria also indicates that the day of the Nativity of Christ is December 25. In the third century Saint Hippolytus of Rome mentions the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, and appoints the Gospel readings for this day from the opening chapters of Saint Matthew.

In 302, during the persecution of Christians by Maximian, 20,000 Christians of Nicomedia (December 28) were burned in church on the very Feast of the Nativity of Christ. In that same century, after the persecution when the Church had received freedom of religion and had become the official religion in the Roman Empire, we find the Feast of the Nativity of Christ observed throughout the entire Church. There is evidence of this in the works of Saint Ephraim the Syrian, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Ambrose of Milan, Saint John Chrysostom and other Fathers of the Church of the fourth century.

Saint John Chrysostom, in a sermon which he gave in the year 385, points out that the Feast of the Nativity of Christ is ancient, and indeed very ancient. In this same century, at the Cave of Bethlehem, made famous by the Birth of Jesus Christ, the empress Saint Helen built a church, which her mighty son Constantine adorned after her death. In the Codex of the emperor Theodosius from 438, and of the emperor Justinian in 535, the universal celebration of the day of the Nativity of Christ was decreed by law. Thus, Nicephorus Callistus, a writer of the fourteenth century, says in his History that in the sixth century, the emperor Justinian established the celebration of the Nativity of Christ throughout all the world.

Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople in the fifth century, Sophronius and Andrew of Jerusalem in the seventh, Saints John of Damascus, Cosmas of Maium and Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople in the eighth, the Nun Cassiane in the ninth, and others whose names are unknown, wrote many sacred hymns for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, which are still sung by the Church on this radiant festival.

During the first three centuries, in the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Cyprus, the Nativity of Christ was combined together with the Feast of His Baptism on January 6, and called "Theophany" ("Manifestation of God"). This was because of a belief that Christ was baptized on anniversary of His birth, which may be inferred from Saint John Chrysostom's sermon on the Nativity of Christ: "it is not the day on which Christ was born which is called Theophany, but rather that day on which He was baptized."

In support of such a view, it is possible to cite the words of the Evangelist Luke who says that "Jesus began to be about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23) when He was baptized. The joint celebration of the Nativity of Christ and His Theophany continued to the end of the fourth century in certain Eastern Churches, and until the fifth or sixth century in others.

The present order of services preserves the memory of the ancient joint celebration of the Feasts of the Nativity of Christ and Theophany. On the eve of both Feasts, there is a similar tradition that one should fast until the stars appear. The order of divine services on the eve of both feastdays and the feastdays themselves is the same.

The Nativity of Christ has long been counted as one of the Twelve Great Feasts. It is one of the greatest, most joyful and wondrous events in the history of the world. The angel said to the shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, glorifying God and saying: Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Those who heard these things were astonished at what the shepherds told them concerning the Child. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen" (Luke 2:10-20).

Thus the Nativity of Christ, a most profound and extraordinary event, was accompanied by the wondrous tidings proclaimed to the shepherds and to the Magi. This is a cause of universal rejoicing for all mankind, "for the Savior is Born!"

Concurring with the witness of the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church, in their God-inspired writings, describe the Feast of the Nativity of Christ as most profound, and joyous, serving as the basis and foundation for all the other Feasts.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

BIBLE READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 23

Dec. 23 Heb. 11:9-10,17-23
32-40
Matt. 1:1-25

Dec. 25 Gal. 4:4-7
Matt. 2:1-12

Dec. 28 James 2:1-13
Mark 12:1-2

Dec. 24 Heb. 1:1-12
Luke 2:1-20

Dec. 26 Heb. 2:11-18
Matt. 2:13-23

Dec. 29 Col. 1:3-6
Luke 17:3-10

Dec. 27 James 1:19-27
Mark 11:27-33



St. Vladimir Campground & Retreat Center
2795 Wakefield Creek Road
Farmdale, OH 44417

Maple Syrup Fund Raiser

Leon is selling maple syrup harvested by a commercial processor; a close neighbor of St. Vladimir Camp.

\$15/two 8oz. Bottles
Keep one & give one for the holidays

Thank you for your consideration



DECEMBER 23, 2018
CLEVELAND LANDMARK
CHRISTMAS CONCERT
42nd Annual Concert at 3:00 PM

Please join us for a special Christmas holiday program in the historic St. Theodosius Cathedral in the Tremont community on Cleveland's west side. Each year our program reflects the large repertoire of liturgical music from the Orthodox Christian Church. We sing a cappella, in English, and in concert format. Come experience the beauty of this national landmark and example of Eastern Orthodox Christianity in practice. Following the Cathedral Choir's program all are invited to participate in a sing-a-long of popular carols!

Tours: 1 PM
Concert: 3 PM

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This year the Cathedral Choir is joined by the Greater Cleveland Russian Male Chorus.

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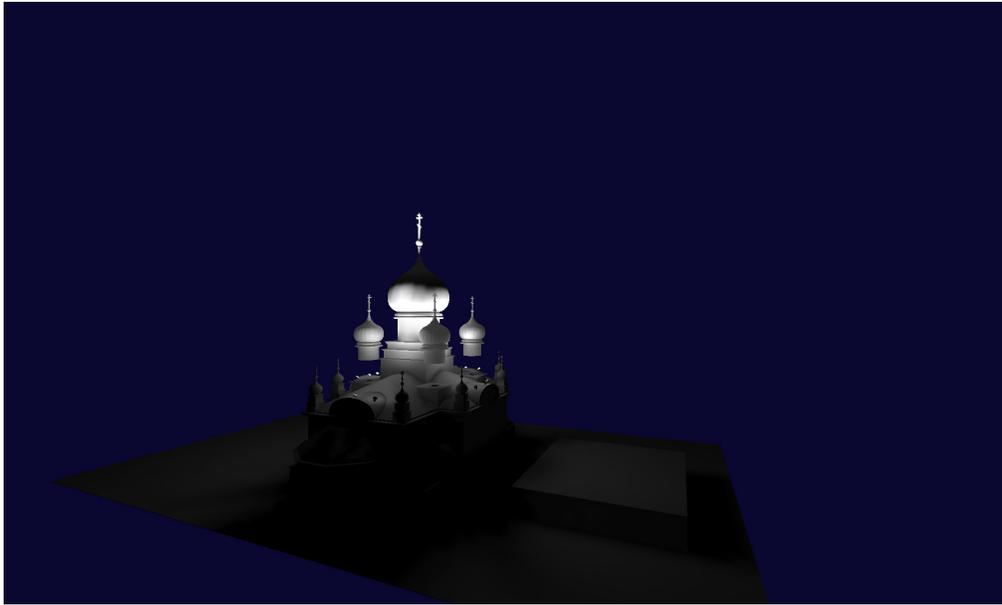
FREE AND OPEN TO ALL!

—

Reception after the concert.

ST. THEODOSIUS CATHEDRAL
733 Starkweather Avenue
www.sttheodosius.org
Telephone: 216-741-1310





We are proposing to change the dome lighting on the Cathedral from standard fixtures to LED fixtures.

There are many advantages of LED fixtures over standard ones. LEDs are difficult to damage with external shock. LEDs have a significantly longer lifespan when compared to traditional lighting solutions. The average LED lasts 50,000 to 100,000 operating hours or more. Less frequent replacement means two big things: lower maintenance costs in terms of labor and lower costs for replacement parts. To change any existing lamp that has burnt out, we are required to rent a lift AND hire an operator adding additional cost to the life of the existing fixtures. LEDs generally consume very low amounts of power. Most LED lighting retrofit projects result in a 60-75% improvement in the overall energy efficiency of the facility's lighting.

We are working on getting pricing for installation. The cost for the 12 new fixtures is just under \$18,000. This includes mounting the fixtures at the existing location (off of a single point mounting with a horizontal bracket on which will be mounted three fixtures per side of dome). PLEASE NOTE: lead-time for fixtures is 6 weeks from date order is placed. This cost, as stated above, does NOT include costs for installation.

We are looking for contributions to accomplish this LED project. One idea that has been suggested is to break the cost down into a per fixture cost to aid those considering making a donation. For example, each fixture will be approximately \$1,500. Perhaps a family could go in together and further break it down into smaller portions. The possibilities are endless!

As always we consider donations as did the widow and her mite: Christ, in commenting on her unselfish contribution, was looking not at how much she gave, but on how much she had left over.

Both Michael Tabeling and Fr. John are available to answer any questions you may have.

Departed:

Protodeacon Dennis Lucak
11-10-18

Helen Lucak
11-10-18

Love Ward (Susan Lentz's mother)
12-06-18

**Ill Afflicted &
Special Intentions:**

Fr. Basil Stoyka
Matushka Susanne Senyo
Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan
Archpriest Theodore Bobosh
Child Katie Repasky (friend of Fr. John)
Child Mary Kate Zweidunger
Melissa (cousin of Mary Ann Kovach)

Julia
Dan Aleksandrovic
Mollie Aleksandrovic
Christopher Baymiller (friend of Paul Pangrace)
Paula Baymiller (friend of Paul Pangrace)
Debbie Bazelides (Judy Schwind's cousin)
Carol Bohurjak
Marie Borland
Sandra Brello
Gregory Cervo
Elsie Conrad
Arlene Czajkowski
Jerry Czajkowski
Horia Dascalescu (Lavinia Morris's brother)
Debra Ellis



PRAYER REQUESTS

Gregory Galan
Joseph Gammalo
Aleksei Green
Don Hinkle
Matthew Hunly (Phyllis Gindlesperger's brother-in-law)
Tom Jacobson
Joy Jahans (friend of Paul Pangrace)
Stephen Jahans (friend of Paul Pangrace)
Diane Kearsy (Janice Tkacz's sister)
Lacey Kihn (friend of Michael Udell)
Mara Kilbane (Melissa McCutcheon's granddaughter)
John Kovalski (friend of Paul Pangrace)
Kathy Kuzmins
Janet Laganiak (cousin to Pogorily family)
Chris Magee (Erin Zawolowycz's brother)
Melissa McCutcheon
Michael McCutcheon
Marguerite Mihal (Paul Mihal's mother)
Paul Mihal
Natalya Miller (Arlene Neale's great-niece)
Andrew Mytrohovich
Bert Nielsen (Paul Pangrace's brother-in-law)
Carol Nielsen (Paul Pangrace's sister)
Daniel O'Donnell
Pat O'Donnell

Patricia Owens
Debra Parhamovich (Karen Felon's sister)
Grace Parhamovich (Karen Felon's mother)
Tala Pavicic
James Peter Petkac
Anastasia Pogorily
James Marshall Prock
Elena Rich (Jerry Czajkowski's daughter)
Julia Sankovic (Child)
Andrew Sykaluk
Elaine Sudnick (Joy Pfeiffer's mother)
Tony Sykaluk (friend of Lydia Mytrohovich)
Janice Tkacz
Gregory Verbick (friend of Paul Pangrace)
Eleanor Wachovec (friend of Karen Felon)
Robert Walsh (friend of The Felons)
Colleen Walsh (friend of the The Felons)
Elisabeth Wright (friend of Paul Pangrace)
Malcolm Wright (friend of Paul Pangrace)
Erin Zawolowycz
Theodore Zolikoff (Nick Zolikoff's father)

Jeremy (Nisi Pozderac's son) and Yvonne Pozderac & Unborn Child



Welcome Visitors

Our parish welcomes you and thanks you for joining us at today's Divine Liturgy. While only Orthodox Christians may approach the chalice for Holy Communion, everyone is welcome to partake of the Holy Bread after Liturgy. You are also invited to join us for fellowship in the Parish Hall following Liturgy.

COFFEE HOUR & GREETERS SCHEDULES

Coffee Hour:

12/23/18	Shawna Whitlock & Gayle Vidovich
12/30/18	Dan & Lavinia Morris
1/6/19	Michael Tabeling & Michael Udell
1/13/19	Joyce Tabeling & Judy Schwind
1/20/19	Paul & Deborah Finley
1/27/19	Lauren Miklos & Chanda Czaruk
2/3/19	Cathy Weber & Mat. Jenn Boerio

Greeters:

Tammy & Eva Ponomarenko
Igor Gajewsky & Michael Tabeling
Igor Gajewsky & Michael Tabeling
Paul Pangrace & Michael Tabeling
Sonia Vorell & Virginia Medvec
Karen Felon & Michael Tabeling
Tammy & Eva Ponomarenko



FOOD PANTRY

Our Food Pantry ministry continues through Merrick House. They currently use the bags in their Moms First program. We can always use your help by "sponsoring a bag". Envelopes are in the foyer, \$10 fills a bag. Thank you and God bless you for helping those in need. - Dan Morris



Dome Lighters

Donations to offset the cost of lighting the domes can be made for *The Health Of* or *In Memory Of* your loved ones. Contact the Parish Office if you are interested.

For the entire 2018 year:

In loving memory of Olga Fritskey

from John & Ruth Fritskey



Copper Stone
Catering & Event Center

New Year's Eve Party!!

Featuring Live Music from:
"FIRST CLASS BAND"

Monday, December 31, 2018 | 7:00 pm - 1:00 am

- ▷ Listening & Dancing to "First Class Band"
 - Fabulous Hors D'oeuvre Station starting at 7:00 pm
 - Elegant Prime Rib Dinner Buffet starting at 8:30 pm
- ▷ Mouthwatering Dessert & Sweets Station
- ▷ Traditional New Year's Buffet with Pork & Sauerkraut
- ▷ Open Bar ALL NIGHT with CHAMPAGNE TOAST at

MIDNIGHT!!!

ALL OF THIS AND MORE FOR ONLY \$69.00 PER PERSON
Call for Reservations and Information

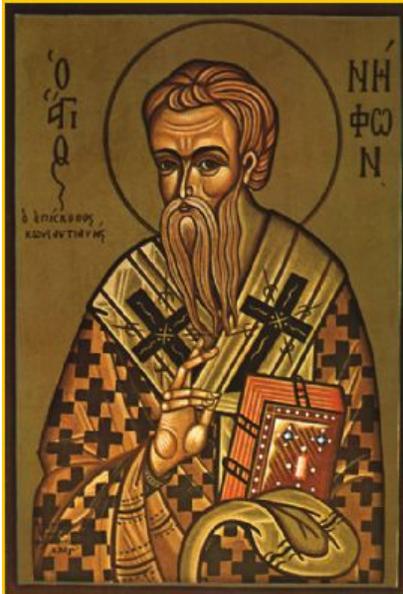
4630 Ridge Road
Brooklyn, Ohio 44144
Call 216-749-5509
info@copperstonecatering.com




Thank You! We thank all who supported our recent Soup Sale. Proceeds have been sent to the St. Nicholas Project of the FOCA which provides Christmas gifts for seminarian children from all three seminaries. And thanks to all the soup makers. We appreciate all your efforts. - Cathedral Chapter

Looking Forward to the Mansion While Living in Tents

This weekly bulletin insert complements the curriculum published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America. This and many other Christian Education resources are available at <http://dce.oca.org>.



The Church celebrates the memory of Saint Niphon, Bishop and Wonderworker.

Born in Paphlagonia, in the Asian part of modern Turkey, he had loving parents who took him to church and oversaw his education in Constantinople. The family was associated with the court of a military commander, so he knew the "proper" life of the court.

But as happens to some who are born with many advantages and little to strive for, Niphon was drawn to a life that was anything but proper. He indulged himself in all kinds of excess and vice. At times, when he remembered his upbringing, the ugliness of his life disgusted him. But the disgust only convinced him that he was a hopelessly lost soul. Feeling unable even to pray, he resigned himself to his vices.

A friend revealed the depth of Niphon's corruption to him in a startling way. He looked into Niphon's face for a long time with an expression of surprise and horror. When Niphon asked why he was staring so intently, the friend said, "Your face is completely changed. I have never seen it look like that before."

Niphon knew it was his sinfulness that gave his face its frightening appearance. Remembering again his early faith, he cried out to the Mother of God for help. He began to pray constantly for her intercession; sometimes he would see her smiling radiantly and other times—when he fell into sin again—he could not see her at all. But after years of struggle and prayer, he felt her guiding him toward monasticism, and was tonsured a monk.

His struggles did not end. He had visions of demons who continuously whispered, "There is no God! Why do you bother to strive so, when there is no God?"

But Niphon did strive, since he now knew he had something to strive for. He worked hard to purify his thoughts and to live in repentance. He was finally granted the ability to overcome the evil spirits that tormented him, and to confront the demons that he could see troubling other people.

Niphon was consecrated Bishop of Constantia, Cyprus when he was quite old, and served for just a short while. A young deacon who would become Saint Athanasius visited him before he died and reported that his face, that same face once distorted by sin, had shone like the sun.

Hebrews 11: 9-10 describes Abraham looking forward to the eternal mansion of God "while living in tents" on this earth. Abraham believed God's promises when it would have been easy to conclude that God Himself had forgotten them and had left His people to wander in this earthly desert forever.

Saint Niphon, too, had to guard his faith when demons told him that no mansion awaits. His struggle and final victory, like Abraham's, remind us that the tents of the desert are not our everlasting home.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE 2018

Sunday, Dec. 23

HOLY TEN MARTYRS
OF CRETE
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
3:00 PM Cleveland Landmark
Christmas Concert
5:00 PM Confessions
6:00 PM Daily Vespers & 9th Royal
Hour

Monday, Dec. 24

NUN MARTYR EUGENIA
AND HER COMPANIONS
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
6:00 PM Vigil for the Nativity
Parish Office Closed

Tuesday, Dec. 25

NATIVITY OF CHRIST
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
Parish Office Closed

Wednesday, Dec. 26

SYNAXIS OF THE
MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
Parish Office Closed

REMINDER:
 Please be sure
that cell phones
are turned off
before entering
the temple.

DECEMBER
Special Collection
THE DEANERY

**“Glory to God in
the highest!
and on earth,
peace to men of
good will!”**

Thursday, Dec. 27

PROTOMARTYR STEPHEN
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
11:00 AM Faith Enrichment @
Copper Stone

Friday, Dec. 28

20,000 MARTYRS
OF NICOMEDIA

Saturday, Dec. 29

14,000 HOLY INNOCENTS
VEN. MARCELLUS
6:00 PM Great Vespers

Sunday, Dec. 30

VIRGIN MARTYR ANYSIA
MARTYR ZOTICUS
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Nativity Fast ends
Dec. 24th



St. Theodosius Orthodox Cathedral
733 Starkweather Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

DECEMBER