



# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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**BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 22, 2013**

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup>

### **Sunday Before the Nativity**

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
 Coffee Hour

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>

### **Eve of the Nativity**

9:00a.m. Vespers  
 7:00p.m. Festal Vigil

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>

### **Nativity of the Lord**

#### *One of the Twelve Great Feasts*

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
 7:00p.m. Vespers

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>

### **Synaxis of the Theotokos**

9:00a.m. Akathist

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>

5:00p.m. No Class  
 6:00p.m. Great Vespers

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup>

### **Sunday After the Nativity**

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
 St. Basil's Bread  
 Open House @ Rectory

*"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)*

### **READER SCHEDULE**

**Sunday, Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>**

Kathy Parrish

**Sunday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>**

Joanne Patrick



### **A Warm Welcome!**

We warmly welcome all of our visitors! It's good to have you with us!

### **Helping a Needy Family**

Today is the last Sunday you are invited to make a donation to help buy Christmas presents for a needy family, with nine children, whose house recently caught fire, destroying much of their possessions. To help, please earmark your check "Gifts for Family".

### **The Schedule of Services for Christmas**

Christmas Eve: Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

- ❖ 9:00am – Vespers  
 ❖ 7:00pm – Vigil

Christmas Day: Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>

- ❖ 9:00am – Festal Divine Liturgy; Coffee hour  
 ❖ 7:00pm – Great Vespers

Thursday, December 26<sup>th</sup>

- ❖ 9:00am – Akathist for the Nativity

### **About Confession Before Christmas**

With all the hustle and bustle that revolves around Christmas preparations, let's not forget to prepare our innermost chamber for Christ. It is not too late – please just speak with Fr. John.

### **Christ is born! Glorify Him!**

During the celebration of Christmas, it is the custom of Orthodox Christians to greet one another with the joyous exclamation, "Christ is born!", to which the one greeted responds, "Glorify Him!"



### **Suggestions for Celebrating Christmas**

- 1) Give thanks to God by attending Church.
- 2) Seek peace with those we may be at odds with.
- 3) Give an anonymous gift to a stranger in need.

### **Fast Free Period**

During the twelve days of Christmas, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, through Theophany, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, we do not fast, even on Wednesday and Fridays. A one day fast is observed on January 5<sup>th</sup>, the Eve of Theophany.

### **The Sunday After Christmas – December 29<sup>th</sup>**

St. Basil's Bread, Open House in the Rectory, and Christmas Carols

### **2014 Calendars & Pocket Planners**

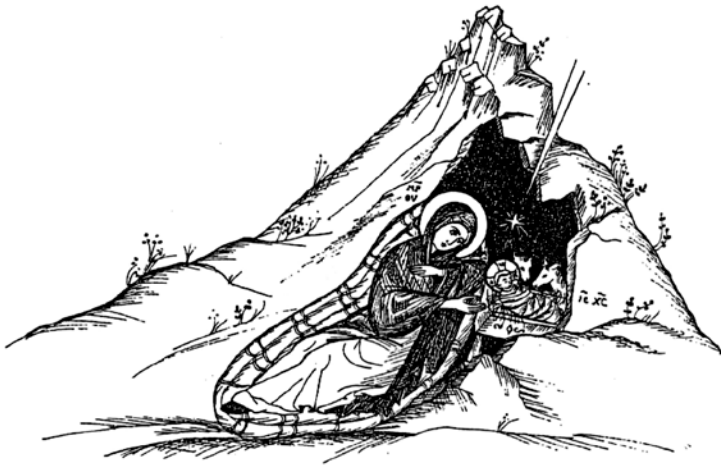
The new calendars and pocket planners are available for pickup at the candle stand. Please earmark your payment "Bookstore". The calendars are \$5.00 and the pocket planners \$4.00.



CASH FLOWS THROUGH 11/30/13					CASH FLOWS IN DECEMBER 2013					FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT		
OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	ASSETS & LIABILITIES – 12/22		
Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Net	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Net	Checking	Overdue	Due 2/2014
62,318	55,022	45,652	27,119	+25,892	4,502	3,547	3,360	375	+3,940	+3,690	0	-1,713

## ON THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

By Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos



The Birth of Christ is a historical event, because it took place at a specific moment in history, when Caesar Augustus was Emperor in Rome and Herod was ruler of Judea. The Evangelists insist on emphasizing the historicity of the event, because they want to say that Christ is a historical person. This means that Christ assumed real human flesh, and the Incarnation was not merely seeming or imagined.

In spite of its historicity, this event remains a mystery. We know that the Godman, perfect

God and perfect man, exists, but it remains a mystery how the divine nature united with human nature in the person of the Logos. Moreover, what happened to the person of Christ, that the divine nature was united hypostatically with human nature, happened just once. Therefore St. John of Damascus said that Christ is "the only new thing under the sun." This means that since the creation of the world and man, nothing new has happened in the world. Everything is repeated [according to the natural order and rules which govern the universe]. The [successive] birth of human beings is a consequence and result of God's words: "Let us make man in our image and likeness", and "Be fruitful and multiple; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:26-28). The only new thing is the Godman Christ.

Thus the fact that the event is historical does not remove the mystery, but also the mystery does not do away with the historicity. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Christ, but at the same time we experience mysteriously in our hearts all the events connected with it, for when we are alive in the Church, we are participating in and experiencing all the stages of the divine Incarnation.



### Troparion (Tone 4)

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!

### Kontakion (Tone 3)

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 a star! Since for our sake the Eternal God was born as a Little Child!

### A MEDITATION: YEAR OF THE LORD, VOLUME 2

During the Christmas season God's love and His message of new hope comes to us through the beauty and peace of the incarnate Christ. Yet the Good News of God's love may be entirely missed, and Christmas may be an unfulfilled dream, amidst the hectic bustle of cleaning, shopping, writing, calling, decorating, banking and visiting. The basic reason for an unfulfilled Christmas is that we focus on ourselves, how to please each other, how to feel good and how to secure happiness with all the things we regard necessary. Yet only Christ can give us a true Christmas. Only His presence in our hearts can bring happiness, peace, joy, warmth and security. Cling to Christ ever more closely during the Christmas season. Take time to pray and to establish your spiritual and practical priorities. Let Christ come with you from home to school, from kitchen to shopping center, from Church to business office.





### ST. BASIL'S BREAD

The tradition of Saint Basil's Bread dates to the fourth century, when St. Basil the Great, the father of philanthropy, wanted to distribute money to the poor in his diocese. He commissioned some women to bake sweetened bread, in which he placed gold coins. Thus the poor families in cutting the bread to nourish themselves were pleasantly surprised to find the coins. This custom is kept to this day among Orthodox Christians, who on Saint Basil's Day, January 1st, place gold coins inside a loaf of sweetened bread in honor of the Saint's care for the poor. The one who finds the coin in his or her piece is considered commissioned by St. Basil to carry on his work for the poor, and in exchange he will ask the Lord for whatever is needful for the New Year.

***We will keep this beautiful custom on Sunday, December 29, 2013.***

### REFLECTION ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

*From the Prologue of Ochrid by St. Nikolai Velimirovich*

The Lord Jesus, born in Bethlehem, was first worshiped by shepherds and wise men (astrologers) from the east—the simplest and the wisest of this world. Even today, those who most sincerely worship the Lord Jesus as God and Savior are the simplest and the wisest of this world. Perverted simplicity and half-learned wisdom were always the enemies of Christ's divinity and His Gospel. But who were these wise men from the east? This question was especially studied by St. Dimitri of Rostov. He claims that they were kings of certain smaller regions or individual towns in Persia, Arabia and Egypt. At the same time, they were erudite in the knowledge of astronomy. This wondrous star appeared to them, which announced the birth of the New King. According to St. Dimitri, this star appeared to them nine months before the birth of the Lord Jesus, i.e., at the time of His conception by the Most-holy Theotokos. They spent nine months in studying this star, in preparing for the journey and in traveling. They arrived in Bethlehem shortly after the birth of the Savior of the world. One of them was called Melchior. He was old, with long white hair and beard. He offered the Lord the gift of gold. The second was called Caspar, of ruddy face, young and beardless. He offered the Lord the gift of frankincense. The third was called Balthasar, of dark complexion and a very heavy beard. He offered the Lord the gift of myrrh. After their deaths, their bodies were taken to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Milan, and from Milan to Cologne. It can be added that these three wise men were representatives of the three main races of men that descended from Noah's three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. The Persian represented the Japhethites, the Arabian represented the Semites, and the Egyptian represented the Hamites. Thus it can be said that, through these three, the whole human race worshiped the Incarnate Lord and God.



### ON SPIRITUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

One day, while St. Antony was sitting with a certain Abba, a virgin came up and said to the Elder: 'Abba, I fast six days of the week and I repeat by heart portions of the Old and New Testament daily.' To which the Elder replied: 'Does poverty mean the same to you as abundance?' 'No', she answered. 'Or dishonor the same as praise?' 'No, Abba.' 'Are your enemies the same for you as your friends?' 'No', she replied. At that the wise Elder said to her: 'Go, get to work, you have accomplished nothing.'

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## THE 'NEW' TOLERANCE IS ACTUALLY INTOLERANT

From OrthodoxyToday.org / December 3, 2013 / by Mark Driscoll

### The Old Tolerance vs. the New Tolerance

The old view of tolerance assumed that (1) there is objective truth that can be known; (2) various people, groups and perspectives each think they know what that objective truth is and (3) as people/groups disagree, dialogue and debate their conflicting views of the truth, everyone involved will have an opportunity to learn, grow, change and possibly arrive together at the truth.

The new tolerance is different from the old tolerance. The new view of tolerance assumes that (1) there is no objective truth that can be known; (2) various people, groups and perspectives do not have the truth but only what they believe to be the truth and (3) various people, groups and perspectives should not argue and debate their disagreements because there is no truth to be discovered, and to assume otherwise only leads to needless conflicts and prejudices.

### Absolutely No Absolutes

A few things are perhaps most curious about the new tolerance. One, it denies moral absolutes while holding to the moral absolute that there is no moral absolute. I know that's confusing. It's like saying, "There is no such thing as absolute truth"—to which the question should be asked, "So does that mean you're lying when you want us to believe your absolute statement that truth does not exist?" You cannot say absolutely that there are no absolutes. I hope you see that the statement itself saws off the very limb it's sitting on.

Two, the new tolerance is dreadfully intolerant. Ask average people arguing that every moral view is equally valid and respectable whether they think it's right for big corporations to destroy the planet,

that women at one time could not vote or that people once smoked on airplanes, and see if they are willing to truly welcome, embrace, celebrate and tolerate everyone and everything.

I'm pretty sure if an old guy smoking a cigarette while buying stocks in oil companies and gun makers and bemoaning it was a big mistake to let women learn to read was sitting on a plane next to a feminist on staff with Greenpeace, she would not

defend his equally wise and welcomed alternative lifestyle to the flight attendant who was being intolerant for asking him to put out his cigarette.

### Morality as Wine Tasting

Today morality is more like wine tasting than banking. In banking, there is a right and wrong answer. If you deposit \$1,000 in a new bank account and a week later try to withdraw \$80,

you would not be willing to agree to disagree when the teller says your account is empty.

But we don't see morality like banking anymore. Instead, we see it more like wine tasting. In wine tasting, everyone has their favorite blends and no one is necessarily right or wrong—it all depends on individual palates. No one has the right to declare as an absolute truth that simply because they prefer a specific grape or vintage, it is superior to all other wines.

The problem is, the God of the Bible sees morality like banking, not wine tasting. This is why Jesus referred to sins as "debts" in the world's most famous prayer (Matt. 6:12).

Today there are not sins. There is only one sin, and that is calling anything a sin.

