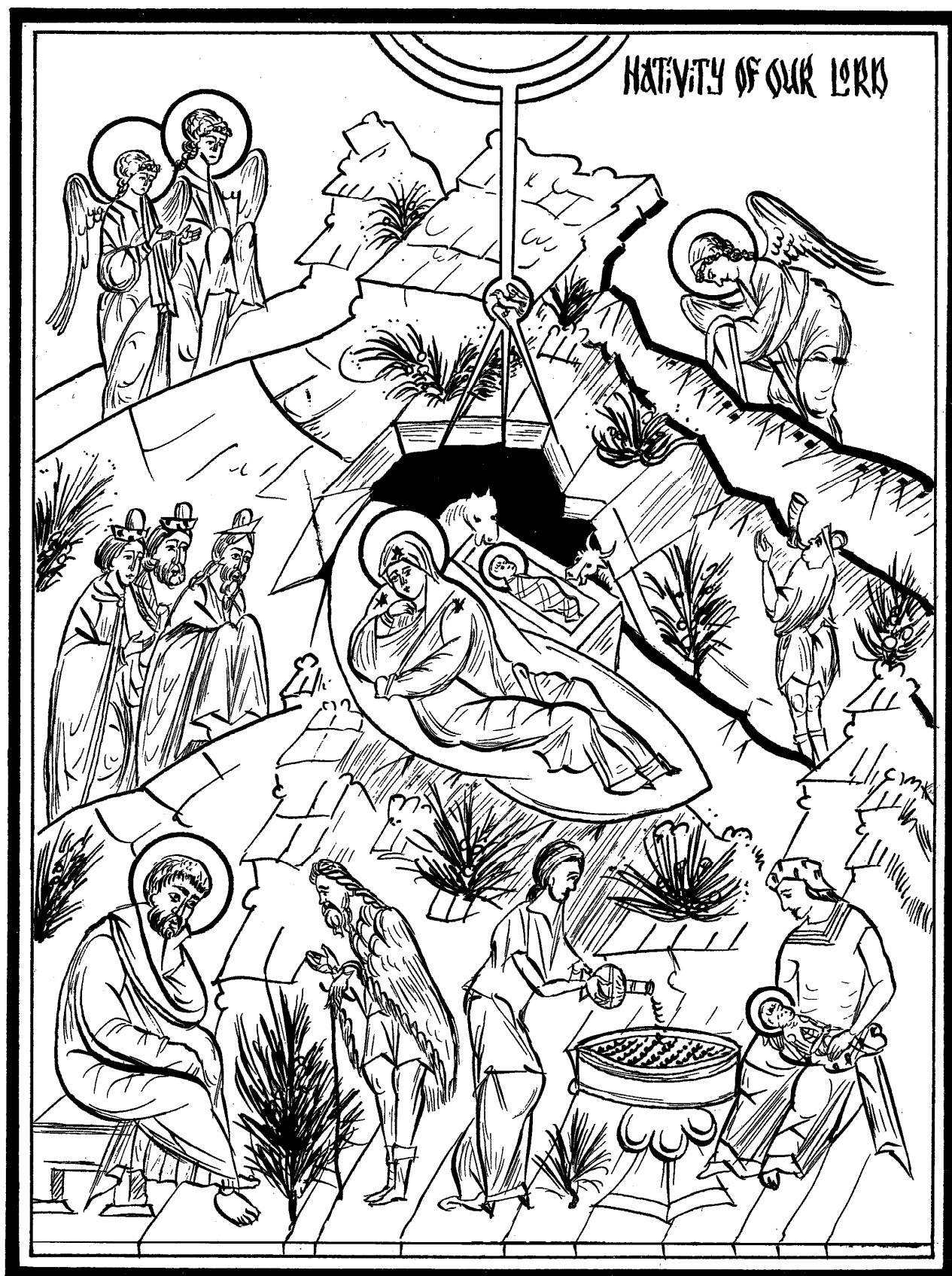


CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!



Icon by Fr Alexander Jasiukowicz

St Michael's Orthodox Church

A parish of the Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

305 Walnut Street, Jermyn, Pennsylvania 18433

<https://stmichaeljermyn.org/>

St Michael's Orthodox Church

Rev. John Black, *Acting Rector*
(570) 876-1241
johnmblack@gmail.com

Protodeacon Gabriel Petorak
(570) 876-0411

Vladimir Kitchura, *Council President*
(570) 903-3475

Vasili Dubee, *Reader & Cantor*

Church Basement Phone
(570) 876-4710



December 24, 2023
EVE OF THE NATIVITY. SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY.
The Ancestors of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Services and Events

*The Nativity Fast continues up until the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day.
(Today, Christmas Eve, is a strict fast similar to Good Friday.)
Please make every effort to honor the solemnity of this final day,
keeping a measure of stillness and giving thanks for our Lord's coming into the world.*

Saturday, Dec 23, 4:00 p.m. – Great Vespers and Confessions

Sunday, Dec 24, 9:30 a.m. – **Eve of the Nativity.** Divine Liturgy. NO COFFEE HOUR.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

Sunday, Dec 24, 6:30 p.m. – **Vigil of the Nativity** (*abbreviated Compline with Festal Matins*)

Monday, Dec 25, 9:30 a.m. – **Festal Divine Liturgy**

(*Confessions will not be heard at the Nativity Vigil or Liturgy.*)

Saturday, Dec 30, 4:00 p.m. – Great Vespers

Sunday, Dec 31, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy and Fellowship

Coffee Hour Schedule TBD.

Hymns of the Day

Sunday Troparion (Tone 4)

When the women disciples of the Lord / learned from
the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, / they
cast away the ancestral curse / and elatedly told the
apostles: “Death is overthrown! / Christ God is risen, //
granting the world great mercy!”

Holy Fathers (Tone 2)

Great are the accomplishments of faith, / for the three
Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain of flames as though
in the waters of rest; / and the Prophet Daniel appeared
/ a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. //
So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

Forefeast of the Nativity (Tone 4)

Mary was of David's seed, / so she went with Joseph to
register in Bethlehem. / She bore in her womb the Fruit
not sown by man. / The time for the birth was at hand. /
Since there was no room at the inn, / the cave became a
beautiful palace for the Queen. //
Christ is born, raising
up the image that fell of old.

Glory ...

Sunday Before (Tone 1)

Rejoice, O Bethlehem! Prepare thyself, O Ephratha! /
The Lamb is on her way to give birth to the Chief Shepherd
she carries in her womb. / The God-bearing Forefathers
will rejoice, beholding Him, //
and with the shepherds,
they will glorify the Virgin nursing Him.

Now & ever ...

Forefeast of the Nativity (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin comes to the cave / to give birth to the
eternal Word. / Hear the glad tidings / and rejoice, O
universe. / With the angels and shepherds, / glorify Him
who is made manifest // a little Child, the eternal God.

Today's Scripture

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Brethren, By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God...

...By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, to whom it was said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," accounting that God is able to raise him up, even from the dead, so to say, from which he also received him. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment...

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the other Prophets ... who by faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the enemies. Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain by the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, having obtained a good report through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect without us.

Gospel: Luke 14:16-24

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 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 commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Donations & Memorials

\$100 in memory of Nicholas Hanchak, by Kimberly Lasewicz. \$50 in memory of Rebecca Hanchak and \$50 in memory of Irene Gurka, by Ruthann & John Lasichak. \$100 for Vigil Lights in memory of Olga and Siegfried Palese and members of the Krenitsky and Palese families, by Camille Palese. \$300 for Christmas, by John Krisa. \$400 for Christmas, by Krisa & Krisa, PC. \$30 for Christmas, by Jon & Anna Marie Black.

Giving Opportunities: *We welcome the following donations. Please see Fr John if interested.*

- \$80 towards sacramental wine (approx. once every 2 months)
- \$64 for two embroidered cross-shaped liners for the Crosses on the Holy Table
- ✓ \$150 for new Bookmarks for the Holy Gospel (*Donated in memory of Rebecca Hanchak, by John Hockin*)

In your prayers...

Please pray for our **Protodeacon Gabriel** Petorak, who is now recovering at home. Greetings can be sent to: Pdn. Gabriel & Mat. Delores, 218 Walnut St, Jermyn, PA 18433.

Please also remember in your prayers those who are ill or recovering from illness or injury:

Fr Michael Evans, Fr Joseph Chupek, Fr Peter Telencio, Edward & Karen Hojnicki, Gregory Hansen, Olga Krutz, Maryanne Krisa, Michael Krisa, William Hummer, Barbara Mosley.

Please remember those who are alone or confined. If you haven't already, send them a Christmas card or letter.

- **Eileen Dance**, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation Center #202, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
- **John Drutarosky**, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation Center #307, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
- **Theresa Krenitsky**, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation Center #307, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
- **Nicholas Mattise**, Personal Care at Allied Terrace, Room 218, 100 Terrace Ln, Clarks Summit, PA 18411
- **Barbara Palubniak**, 629 Hill St, Mayfield, PA 19433
- **Peggy Petrilak**, 127 Petrilak Lane, Greenfield Twp, PA 18407
- **Peter Senio**, The Gardens of Green Ridge, 2751 Boulevard Ave, Scranton, PA 18509
- **Jerry & Marilyn Soroka**, c/o Glenmaura Senior Living, 11 Glenmaura National Blvd, Moosic, PA 18507
- **Paul Kostiak**, along with **Dolores Brophy**, 631 Jefferson Ave, Jermyn, PA 18433
- **Paul & Barbara Mosley**, 623 Cemetery St, Mayfield, PA 18433

If we truly understand the message of Christmas, which teaches us to love and serve the poor, let us first of all turn to Christ. Only He can teach us how to really love the poor, not for our own glory- not even for a social ideal—but **for the love of man** as He Himself has loved us. **Jesus Christ is the first among the poor**; no one has so totally impoverished himself as He did. And, moreover, He did so **voluntarily**. For let us never forget that He is the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, and that He has lowered Himself to the point of becoming a defenseless child, lying in straw at the feet of animals. As soon as He took our human condition upon Himself, He was rejected; there was no place for Him in any house: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner" (Ps 117 [118]:22). Rejected again and again, He was forced to flee into Egypt. We see Him there as a slave, poor and exiled, Him who is the King of the universe!

... Even for those who have forgotten Christ, or have never known Him, Christmas is a symbol of peace on earth and love among men, if only for twenty-four hours or for a single night (as in, for example, truces during wars, cease-fires, or messages of peace from all the governments of the world). This is appropriate, for Christ is the God of Mercy, the Prince of Peace, "and of his peace there will be no end" (Is 9:6).

The peace of this world is often only a period of calm between two wars. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, a peace without end. His Kingdom will not fall like all other kingdoms, reigns, governments, and dictatorships. The peace of Jesus Christ allows us to participate **now** in His Kingdom **which is to come**. Let us learn how to carry this peace of Christ within us from this moment on. Let us, like the shepherds, hear the exclamation of the angels during Christmas night: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men" (Lk 2:14). Let us be witnesses of this marvelous reconciliation between heaven and earth, between God and man! We shall never exhaust the Nativity message, its beauty and its mystery. We have spoken of peace and poverty. It is through Jesus that we can understand these two aspects: He is peace, and He is the poorest among the poor. Now we can look deeper into the meaning of the Nativity by studying the most essential aspect of this feast, its deepest meaning which reveals to us the mystery of the Incarnation: God made man.

– Olga Dunlop, trans., *The Living God: A Catechism for the Christian Faith*, vol. I (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 30-32.