

# St Michael's Orthodox Church

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

305 Walnut Street, Jermyn, Pennsylvania 18433

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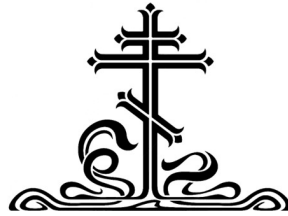
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**December 31, 2023: Sunday After the Nativity.**

***Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord***

## Services and Events

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

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

*Jan 1 is the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord; we also commemorate St Basil the Great.*

**Sunday, Dec 31** – (No Services)

**Monday, Jan 1, 9:30 a.m.** – Divine Liturgy at St Nicholas Church in Olyphant

**JAN 6: HOLY THEOPHANY, THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

**Friday, Jan 5, 6:30 p.m.** – Small Vigil with the Blessing of Waters

**Saturday, Jan 6, 9:30 a.m.** – Festal Divine Liturgy

**Saturday, Jan 6, 4:00 p.m.** – Great Vespers

**Sunday, Jan 7, 9:30 a.m.** – Afterfeast of Theophany. Synaxis of St John the Baptist. Divine Liturgy and Fellowship

### *The New Adam*

At the heart of the Feast of the Nativity is the proclamation that Christ has come to restore Adam to Paradise:

*Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord, as we sing of this present mystery: **The wall** which divided God from man has been **destroyed**; the **flaming sword** withdraws from **Eden's gate**; the Cherubim withdraw from the Tree of Life; and **I, who had been cast out** through my disobedience, now feast on the delights of Paradise: For today **the Father's perfect Image, marked with the stamp of His eternity, has taken the form of a servant**. Without undergoing change He is born from an unwedded mother; He was true God, and He remains the same, but through His love for mankind, He has become what He never was: true man. Come, O faithful, let us cry to Him: "O God, born of the Virgin, have mercy on us!" (Vespers of the Nativity)*

Jesus is called the **New Adam**. Adam disobeyed God, but Jesus was "obedient to the point of death" (Phil. 2:8). Through Adam death came into the world; through Jesus, eternal life (1 Cor 15:21-22). The first Adam was made by God from the earth; the new Adam was "begotten of the Father before all ages" and "came down from heaven" (Nicene Creed). The incarnate Christ is the one and only God-man. **He is what it means to be God, and He is what it means to be human**. We were children of Adam, but because of Christ we are now children of God.

A simple choice has been laid before us: to die to Adam—that is to [die to] sin, passion, and self—and live to Christ; or to go on living as though the Incarnation never happened. Will I accept the Image of Likeness of God that is given to me anew in the person of Jesus? Or will I continue to live for myself? Will I choose the tree of knowledge of good and evil over the Tree of Life? Or will I choose to become "dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus"?

– Fr Vassilios Papavassiliou, *Meditations for Advent* (Ancient Faith Publishing, Chesterton, 2013), 121-124.

## Today's Scripture

### *Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19*

Brethren, I make known to you, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

### *Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23*

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "*Out of Egypt I called My Son.*"

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

*"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
refusing to be comforted,  
because they are no more."*

Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "*He shall be called a Nazarene.*"

## Hymns of the Day

### *Sunday Troparion (Tone 5)*

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, / co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, / born for our salvation from the Virgin; / for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, / to endure death, / and to raise the dead // by His glorious Resurrection.

### *The Nativity of Our Lord (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!

### *Righteous Ones: Joseph, David, & James (Tone 2)*

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph, / to David, the ancestor of God; / thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; / and thou didst give glory with the shepherds; / thou didst worship with the Magi, / and didst receive the news from the Angel. // Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

### *Glory ...*

### *Righteous Ones (Tone 3)*

Today godly David is filled with joy; / Joseph and James offer praise. / The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ fills them with great joy. / They sing praises to the One ineffably born on earth, // and they cry out: "O Compassionate One, save those who honor Thee!"

### *Now & ever ...*

### *The Nativity of Our Lord (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 the star, // since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child!

## Donations & Memorials

- \$25 in loving memory of Rebecca Hanchak; by Delores, Mary, & John Sernak.
- \$50 for candles, in loving memory of Irene Gurka; by George, Marilyn, & Josh Petorak.
- \$25 for Poinsettias and \$25 for Altar Candles; in loving memory of Robert Telep and parents Nikita & Mary Hrichuk.

*THANK YOU for sponsoring the following items!*

- ✓ \$86 was offered for sacramental wine, and ✓ \$64 for the embroidered Cross napkins on Holy Table (in Burgundy), in loving memory of Kuzma and Irene Leschak, by Melanie Ringa.
- ✓ \$100 was *also* offered for sacramental wine; in loving memory of Joseph & Ann Marie Piwowarski, and with prayers for continued good health for Pdn. Gabriel & Mat. Dolores Petorak.
- ✓ \$150 was offered for the new Holy Gospel Ribbons, in loving memory of Rebecca Hanchak, by John Hockin.

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

- \$64 for a pair of embroidered liners for the Crosses on the Holy Table, in Purple (for Great Lent)
- \$64 for a pair of embroidered liners for the Crosses on the Holy Table, in Blue (for feasts of the Theotokos)
- \$64 for a pair of embroidered liners for the Crosses on the Holy Table, in Green (for Pentecost and after)

Donations are accepted for **Vigil Lights, in the Altar and in front of the Relics**. You may donate in memory of the departed, or for your health or the health of family members.

So that our Church can meet our growing financial obligations, we ask all parishioners, when not in Church, to send in your **weekly offering envelopes** to St. Michael's Church, 305 Walnut St., Jermyn, PA 18433. *Thank you!*

*Stay Tuned for a giving program in 2024,  
to fund the purchase of **Orthodox Study Bibles** for everyone in parish.*

## In your prayers...

*Please pray for our **Protodeacon Gabriel** Petorak, who continues to recover 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 Hojnicky, Gregory Hansen, Olga Krutz, Maryanne Krisa, Michael Krisa, William Hummer, Barbara Mosley.

*Please remember those who are alone or confined:*

- **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

*"We seek to rededicate ourselves to the teachings of the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church. We are here to provide a loving and caring community, by participating in the worship services, so we may reach-out to those who are lost and witness the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

*- Vision Statement, adopted October 17, 2022*

*Glory to God for all things!*

## Sunday After the Nativity: Holy Righteous Ones

The Holy Prophet-King David, Saint Joseph the Betrothed, and Saint James the Brother of the Lord are commemorated on the Sunday after the Nativity. (If there is no Sunday between December 25 and January 1, their commemoration is moved to December 26.)

### *Joseph the Betrothed*

The holy and righteous Joseph the Betrothed was the foster-father of Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament (Matthew 1:16; Luke 3:23). Not much is known of Joseph except that he was "of the House of David" and lived in the town of Nazareth. His date of death is unknown, though he was still living when Jesus was 12 years old. Jesus is described as being the "brother" of James, Justus, Jude, and Simon, and several sisters (Mark 6:3; Matthew 13:55). A tradition at least as early as the second century, still adopted by the Orthodox Church, explains that these "brothers and sisters" were from Joseph's first marriage to Salome who left him a widower before he was betrothed to Mary and so making them step-brothers and step-sisters. Joseph likely died before Jesus began his public ministry because only Mary was present at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, and he is not described at the crucifixion along with Mary (John 19:25). In addition, St. Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body of Jesus, a duty that would have fallen to St. Joseph the Betrothed had he been alive.

### *David the King*

The holy and righteous King David was the second king of all Israel, after Saul, around approximately 1000 B.C. He was also a prophet, having written a great number of the Psalms, and one of the Forefathers of Christ. A complete account of the life of King David can be found in the Old Testament starting in 1 Samuel 16, the entire book of 2 Samuel, and 1 Kings 1-2.

King David prefigures our Lord Jesus Christ in numerous ways. He was the Lord's Anointed One, or Messiah, a now title applied almost exclusively to Christ. Also, David was a shepherd before he was called to be king; likewise, Christ used herding imagery often in his earthly ministry, as in the Parables of the Good Shepherd, of the Lost Sheep, and of the separation of the sheep and the goats at the Last Judgment. When David was fleeing from Saul, he was an illustration of the Suffering Servant, most famously described in Isaiah 53; afterwards, though, he became the victorious king, gaining control over all Israel and defeating its enemies with ease. David's story is mirrored by Christ's persecution by the Jews and Crucifixion, followed by his glorious Resurrection and his eventual Second Coming. David's humble origins and the fact that he was the least imposing son of Jesse when Samuel anointed him also parallel Christ's humble earthly status.

### *James the Brother of the Lord*

The Holy Apostle James, the "Brother of God" (*Adelphótheos*) was the son of the Righteous Joseph before he was betrothed to the Most Holy Theotokos. Thus, James was called the Lord's brother. Saint James had been a Nazirite, a man or woman consecrated to God for a limited time. Saint James the Brother of the Lord is not to be confused with St James the son of Zebedee (and brother of St John the Evangelist), or Saint James the son of Alphaeus (and brother of St Matthew).

Saint James presided over the Council of Jerusalem and his word was decisive (Acts 15). In his thirty years as bishop, Saint James converted many Jews to Christianity. Angered by this, the Pharisees and the Scribes plotted together to kill the holy bishop. They led him up on the pinnacle of the Jerusalem Temple and asked him what he thought of Jesus. The holy Apostle bore witness that Christ is the Messiah, which was not the response the Pharisees were expecting. Enraged, the Jewish leaders threw him off the roof. He did not die at once, but gathering his final strength, he prayed to the Lord for his enemies while they were stoning him. Saint James' martyrdom occurred about 63 A.D.

The holy Apostle James composed a Divine Liturgy, which formed the basis of the Liturgies of Saints Basil the Great and John Chrysostom. The Church has preserved an Epistle of Saint James, one of the books of the New Testament. In it Saint James advises: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath" (James 1:19) and "Be doers of the word, and not just hearers, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).