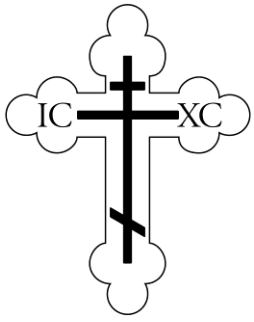
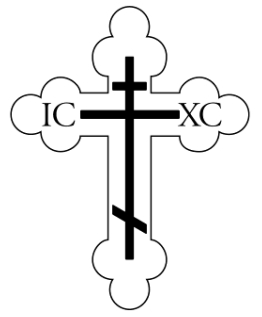


# Protection of the Virgin Mary



## Orthodox Church



A Parish of the  
Diocese of Chicago  
and the Midwest  
Orthodox Church  
in America



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Rev. Dr. Jacob Van Sickle  
(219) 384-6826 • [frjacobvansickle@gmail.com](mailto:frjacobvansickle@gmail.com)

Great Vespers: 6pm Saturdays

Divine Liturgy: 10am Sundays

Confessions are heard before or  
after Vespers or by appointment.

**Welcome visitors!  
Please join us in  
the parish hall after  
Divine Liturgy for  
coffee hour.**

## December 23, 2018 Forefeast of the Nativity of our Lord

The Forefeast of the Nativity of the Lord began on December 20. From now on, most of the liturgical hymns will be concerned with the birth of the Savior.

The Sunday before the Nativity of the Lord is known as the Sunday of the Holy Fathers. On this day the Church commemorates all those who were well-pleasing to God from all ages, from Adam to Saint Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, those who are mentioned in the genealogy of Luke 3:23-38. The holy prophets and prophetesses are also remembered today, especially the Prophet Daniel and the three holy youths who survived the fiery furnace.

# HYMNS OF THE DAY

## **Tone 5 – Resurrectional Troparion**

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.

## **Tone 4 – Troparion of the Forefeast**

Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all!  
Adorn yourself, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life blossoms  
forth from the Virgin in the cave!  
Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit;  
if we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.//  
Christ comes to restore the image which He made in the  
beginning.

## **Tone 2 – Troparion for the Fathers**

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!

## **Tone 1 – Kontakion of the Fathers**

Rejoice, O Bethlehem! Prepare yourself, 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.

## **Tone 3 – Kontakion of the Forefeast**

Today the Virgin comes to the cave  
to give birth to the Eternal Word.  
Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!  
Glorify with the angels and the shepherds  
the Eternal God, Who is willing to appear as a little child!

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### **Epistle: Hebrews 11.9-10, 17-23, 32-40**

Brethren: It was by faith that Abraham dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise; for he awaited the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; the receiver of the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," determining that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

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 worshiped, leaning on 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 command.

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through 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 aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not receiving deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others were tried by mocking and scourging, yes, and by chains and imprisonment. They were stoned; they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the

world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, because God had provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

### **Gospel: Matthew 1.1-25**

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, desired to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

So all this was done that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us.'"

Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

## WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

<b>Repose:</b>	Daniel Hite
<b>N.Dep.</b> Mary Shocaroff	Vaso Popovich
Karen Peterson	<b>Ev.Mem.</b> Maxim Konoratik
Joseph Huddleston	Melania Zorro
Kadee Huddleston	Mary Maruszko
Brandi Vail	Alex Hammond
Swayzee Hite	Stavre Ristovich
Rhylie Hite	Nick Guba
Marshall Hite	Dorothy Christoff

<b>Health &amp;</b>	Andrew	Barbara
<b>Salvation:</b>	Gideon	Theodore
Protopr. George	Kevin	Michael
Mat. Anna	Jon	Julia
Archpr. Peter	Tanya	Warren
Archpr. William	Kimberly	Loretta
Mat. Jean	Gail	Gilbert
Pr. John	William	Carol
Pr. Christopher	Jovan	Peter
Mat. Jennifer	Charles	Janie

Tom	John	Jennifer
Elizabeth	Joey	David
Tina	Carisa	Roger
Adam	Natalia	Tina
Myah	Elizabeth	Chris
Margaret	Tom	Sheila
Diane	Alexander	Brandon
Madelin	Darlene	Benjamin
Villian	Mira	Juliana
Deborah	Kristin	Lennox
Jovan	Mitchel	Laila
Claudia	Brittany	N.Ill. Sophia

\*If you know someone who needs prayer, please give their name to Fr Jacob

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Women's Book Group will start up again on Jan 7. The book, **Becoming a Healing Presence** by Dr. Albert Rossi, is available in the book store.

Remember to **purchase your holiday gift cards through Scrip** (available during coffee hour). Also, if you shop on Amazon, start at **smile.amazon.com** and select "Protection of the Virgin Mary Church" as your charity of choice.

The 2019 **parish directory** is being finalized. If you did not receive a Nativity mailer from the Church last week, we don't have a current address for you. Please fill out a form in the narthex.

### Mark your calendars:

Dec 24: **Vesperal Christmas Liturgy @ 9am;**  
**Christmas Vigil @ 6pm**

Dec 25: **Christmas Divine Liturgy @ 9am**

Dec 30: **Church School Yolka** during coffee hour

Dec 31: Great Vespers for the **Circumcision of the Lord @ 6pm**

Jan 1: Divine Liturgy for the **Circumcision of the Lord @ 10am**

Jan 5: Vigil of Theophany with Great Blessing of Water @ 4pm

Jan 6: Theophany – Divine Liturgy @ 10am as usual.

## 2018 Nativity Message of His Grace, our Bishop Paul

*“For today I see equality of honor between heaven and earth, and a way for all those below to things above, matching the condescension of those on high. For nothing done by God from the beginning of time was more beneficial to all or more divine than Christ’s nativity, which we celebrate today. He Who is by nature Lord of all is now ranked with the servants and enrolled with them, clearly making humble service to others no less honorable than the exercise of lordship, or rather, showing the servants as having greater honor than the earthly ruler at that time.”*

—*St. Gregory Palamas, Sermon on the Nativity*

TO ALL CLERGY, MONASTICS, AND LAITY OF THE DIOCESE  
OF THE MIDWEST:

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

These words of St. Gregory Palamas portray a wonderful icon of earth and heaven. They point to the supreme act of condescension where the Uncontainable God, contained in the Virgin’s womb is now born into the world “for us men and for our salvation.” For “nothing was more beneficial to all or more divine than Christ’s nativity.”

This is why we fast, say our prayers, go to Confession, attend services, and give alms during the fasting season; it is to do away with the false dichotomy between the earthly and the spiritual. One is not lesser than the other; the created things of this world are not sinful. We don’t embrace spiritual things as good while hating what is of the earth.

By gazing into the Cave and beholding the Incarnate God, a transformation occurs in uniting ourselves to Him. All we have becomes an offering to Him in gratitude. In Christ we

now become Kings of Creation and no longer slaves of Creation. In Christ we become Prophets of Creation and no longer fools of Creation. In Christ, we as Priests become intercessors of Creation and no longer desecrators of Creation. It is only through Christ we can ever realize this reality because He is the King, the Prophet, and the Priest of Creation. He once again reveals the “very good” of Creation in His Nativity.

Passions that are self-oriented now can become offerings to God the Father, through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. They are offerings in gratitude for the many gifts He has given, whether they are gifts of food, safety, security, or knowledge. Finally, a man and woman offer their desire to be united to each other, and to have that union blessed by the Church, and thus become an icon of a common witness between a husband and wife towards the Kingdom and of Christ’s love for the Church.

Our participation in the Cave is realized and renewed through our Baptism and Chrismation. It is fulfilled in the Cave of the Eucharistic Assembly where we touch earth and encounter heaven. Let us rejoice this day and be glad; for the glory of our earthly life, what we sense, feel, and touch, now points to the glory of that which is beyond what we see, feel and touch—a glory that has no ending!

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

With love in Christ, the unworthy,

+PAUL

Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest

**Glory to God for all things!**