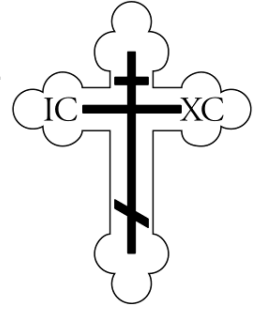
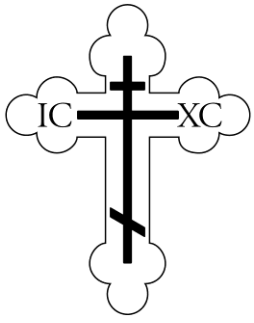


Protection of the Virgin Mary

Orthodox Church



Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America

8600 Grand Blvd.
Merrillville, IN
(219)947-4748
www.ptvm.com

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

Great Vespers: 6pm Saturdays

Divine Liturgy: 10am Sundays

Confession is available before or
after Vespers or by appointment

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

December 29, 2024

Sunday after Nativity:

Sts Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 2 – Resurrectional Troparion

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal,
You slew hell with the splendor of Your Godhead.

And when from the depths You raised the dead,
all the powers of heaven cried out://

“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!”

Tone 4 – Troparion of Nativity

Your 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 You,
the Sun of Righteousness,
and to know You, the Orient from on high.//
O Lord, glory to You!

Tone 2 – Troparion of the Day

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph,
to David, the ancestor of God;
you have seen a Virgin great with child;
and you gave glory with the shepherds;
you worshipped with the Magi,
and received the news from the Angel.//
Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

Tone 3 – Kontakion of the Day

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 You!”

Tone 3 – Kontakion of Nativity

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!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 2 – Resurrectional Prokeimenon (Psalm 117)

The Lord is my strength and my song; / He has become my salvation!

Tone 4 – Prokeimenon of the Saints (Psalm 67)

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of Israel!

Epistle: Galatians 1.11-19 (Sunday after Nativity)

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 (Sunday after Nativity)

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."

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. William Harbison

Faryn Valdez

Marie Snodgrass

Ev.Mem. William Krochta ('40)

Eva Sinchuk ('51)

James Eltow ('63)

Walter Mosak (2005)

Steven Sarafin (2014)

Health & Salv.

Priest Jan & St.

Theodosius

parish

Archpr. Peter

Mat. Cynthia

Hierom. John

Archpr. Jonathan

Mat. Vera

Pr. Patrick

Pr. Gregory

Mat. Beverly

Pro.dn. Nicholas

Mat. Anne

Nun Theodora

Brendan

Rollie

Claudia

Mary Ann

Raymond

Edward

Charlotte

Joseph

Janice

Klaudia

Maja

Raymond

Anne

Desiree

Robb

Basil

Emmelia

Gerald

Janet

Gerald

Rebecca

Christopher

Brianna

Logan

Olga

Janie

Sharon

Tanya

Renee

Ashton

Michael

Chris

Nina

Carissa

Carol

Snezana

Ryan

Nathan

Kara

Karen

Alisa

Michael

Moses

Helena

James

Elijah

Lydia

Nina

George

Linda

Kimberly

Steven

Jamie

Kyleigh

Lauren

Kyle

Linda

Denise

Sergei

John

Cindy

Ron

Matthew

John

Erin

Aaron

Marcietta

Galina

Maria

Alla

Elizabeth

Samuel

Joseph

Dwight

Renee

Dominik

Monica

Charles

Kimberly

Abigail

Charles

Rosemary

Nicholas

Natalie

Jovan

Michael

Daniel

Abram

Zoë

Brenda

Sergei

Connie

Lisa

Mazzy

John

Terry

Erin

Everett

Angie

Irina

Elizabeth

Vitaly

Maria

Viktorina

To add the name of a loved one recently departed or for the anniversary of their repose, or someone living and in particular need of prayer, please speak to Fr Jacob

Special Petition at the Augmented Litany:

We pray, O Lord our God, for all those who suffer from acts of war, especially the victims in Ukraine, Russia, Israel, and Palestine. We pray for Your peace and Your mercy in the midst of the great suffering of Your people. Vouchsafe to accept the prayers of the Church, so that by Your goodness, peace may return to all peoples; O Lord, hearken and have mercy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There is no Bible Study tomorrow.

2025 Church Calendars are in the narthex for pick-up. Please observe **the limit of one calendar per adult** until everyone has had a chance to pick theirs up.

2025 stewardship envelopes are also ready for pick-up in the Narthex. It is a great help to our volunteers who count and record your gifts to use the numbered envelopes assigned to you. If you are a member of this parish and have not received a box of envelopes, our treasurer Mike Gruszyk will get you one.

The **Women's Book Club** is reading ***Do not Judge*** by Hieromonk **Gregorios of Mount Athos**. The book is available in our bookstore at a reduced price of \$5. Discussion is Thursday, January 23 at 6pm.

Mark your calendars:

- Dec 31: Festal Vespers for the Circumcision of the Lord @ 6pm**
- Jan 1: Divine Liturgy for the Circumcision of the Lord at Descent of the Holy Ghost in Merrillville @ 10am**
- Jan 3: Royal Hours of Theophany @ 10am**
- Jan 5: Theophany Vespers with Great Blessing of Water @ 1pm**
- Jan 6: Divine Liturgy of Theophany w/Blessing of Water @ 10am**
- Jan 7: Guys' Night Out at Maxim's in Merrillville @ 6pm**
- Jan 11: Women's Group self-defense class in the hall @ 11am**

Jan 14: **Men's Breakfast** at Bob Evans, Valparaiso @ 7:15am

Jan 17: **Red Cross Blood Drive**, 12-6pm

Jan 18: **Priestly Ordination of Protodeacon Nicholas** at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Chicago @ 9:30am

Jan 23: **Women's Book Club** @ 6pm

Last Week's Gifts to the Lord: \$4,827

Nativity Message 2024

from His Beatitude, our Metropolitan Tikhon

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, my Beloved Children in the Lord,

Christ is born! Glorify him!

Let the heavenly fires burn silently and let them fearfully gaze upon a humble corner of the universe, upon the black earth, and upon the most precious part of that corner—the grotto that is giving birth to God.

– *St. Nikolai Velimirovic, Prayers by the Lake 49*

Today is the bright and wonderful, yet secret and humble, culmination of a season spent in hidden anticipation. Unlike Great Lent, when we blow the trumpets to announce a fast (Joel 2:15), the forty days of the Nativity Fast are spent quietly, in the darkness of night—the same night by which the shepherds once kept watch over their flocks (Lk. 2:8). In this darkness, the darkness of the shadow of the Law (Heb. 10:1), we kept company with the holy prophets—Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Daniel, and the Three Holy Children. We heard the first strains of song celebrating Christ's Nativity on November 21, as the *katavasiae* at the canon. On St. Andrew's Day, St. Nicholas Day, here and there, a hymn sang of the one who is to come. Our expectation mounted during the forefeast, and crescendoed with the Vespereal Liturgy and Vigil of Christmas Eve.

Now, upon us who sat for those forty days in great darkness, an even greater Light has shone forth (Is. 9:2). Our Hope has come; our Expectation has arrived.

The one whom we awaited in the dark and silence is now manifest to us in the same dark and silence—the dark and cold of midnight, in the black and moonless night of our sin, in the deep cleft of the cave, contained in the trough of the manger. But, despite the darkness pressing all around, he shines, a clear and pure and innocent Light. Despite the pressing silence, his very presence, his very identity, is that of Word, the Word, the Word that was in the beginning (Jn. 1:1).

He is the Light shining on us from the Father; he is the Father's Word to the human race. He is the fulfillment, source, and sustenance of all our hopes.

His light is the light of purity, of unearthly and all-giving love. His word is a word of peace—not a duplicitous, hypocritical, self-serving peace full of false comfort such as the world gives (Jn. 14:27), but true peace, peace with God, the peace of the Cross. And his hope, unthinkable to the earthly-minded, is the hope of unending life that is not like this life: it is a life fully given to the Other, fully given to God, a life unconcerned with passing pleasures and fading achievements, but solely with self-giving communion and self-emptying love.

The birth of this holy Infant, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, the Light and Word and Peace of God, takes place not only in a cave of stone: it is also takes place in the soul of every one of the elect. To become worthy dwelling-places for this hidden light, we have spent forty days in preparation, and today, Christ is born unto us; unto us a Child is given (Is. 9:6). And, in him, all our hopes are fulfilled. The One born of the Virgin speaks to us in one of St. Nikolai Velimirovic's *Prayers by the Lake*:

I am thy tomorrow, from today until the end of time. Everything good that thou hast been expecting from the days of tomorrow is within me. Today, thy tomorrow is fulfilled in me. And no day, from now until the last day, will bring thee what I am bringing thee. Lo, I am the day that has no beginning and no end.

I am the treasury of every future that exists and I am the way to that treasury. The future in its entirety cannot give thee so much as a kernel of good, unless it borrows from me.

Thus, with his Nativity—in Bethlehem and in the heart—Christ is with us, bringing every good, every blessing, with him.

But, in another sense, we are still waiting: our entire life is a period of Advent, a period of watching for the coming of Christ. If he

is born in a hidden way in our soul in this age, nevertheless we await the full and definitive revelation of his unimaginable splendor in the age to come, when the elect will be revealed as shining vessels of his presence forever. Thus, our whole life is a period of joyful waiting, expecting the fullness of the Joy which we already know in part.

“Hopelessness sits idle. But my hope cleans and washes continually; it airs out and censes the quarters where it will receive thee,” says St. Nikolai in another of his prayers. And the greatest expression of this expectation of ours is precisely prayer itself. Again, as St. Nikolai says: “Prayer is necessary for me lest I lose sight of the salvation-bearing star, but the star does not need it to keep from losing me.” Moreover, prayer is not merely an expression of expectation, of longing, of hope: it is also the path to fulfilling those expectations. The more we pray, the more we open ourselves up to the action of the divine energies, to communion with the Divinity, the more our expectations are fulfilled, even in this life.

Therefore, as we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, let us gather in spirit before his crib and pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, come and make thy presence known in us.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, born of the Virgin for our salvation, come and be born anew in our heart.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, born in our heart through thy holy Mysteries, come and dwell with us forever.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Child given unto thy faithful, who art with thy Church always, even unto the end of the age, make us to be worthy dwelling-places for thee in the endless ages to come, when thou, together with thy Father and thine All-Holy Spirit, shalt abide in thine elect as Light and Peace unto the ages of ages. Amen.

With my blessing and prayers for all of you on this most joyous feast, sincerely yours in the newborn Christ,

+ Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Glory to God for all things!