

# ***News from St. Nick's***

**Sunday, December 20, 2020**

## **The Sunday Before the Nativity**

*(Sunday of the Holy Forebearers of the Lord)*

***Apostolic Reading: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40***

***Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25***

*(The Genealogy of the Saviour)*

***Tone 3 • Matins Gospel 6***

➔ **For COVID Guidelines, [click here](#)**

➔ **For Live Streaming Link, [click here](#)**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT*** will be held this Sunday, December 20th. Thanks to the teachers and parents who helped organize it, in particular Gina Skaff. Special thanks to the children and young people who participated. God bless each of them.

***THANKS TO THE MUSTARD SEED VOLUNTEERS.*** On this past Friday, December 18th we prepared a bagged meal for 100 people. Thanks to George Demake who underwrote the meal for this month. Our next meal will be in February. If you would like to donate toward the cost of the meal (around \$300.00), or If you or your family would like to help with the preparation, please contact Deb Sedares — by e-mail: (dsedares@pinehills.com) or phone: 508-353-9449.

***SERVICES FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY.*** On Thursday, December 24th, Christmas Eve morning, Royal Hours will be at 9:30 am. On Christmas Eve, Great Vespers will be at 6:00 pm. On Friday, December 25th, Matins for the Nativity Feast will be a 9:00 am, with Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

***METROPOLITAN NICOLAE'S PASTORAL LETTER*** on the occasion of the Lord's Nativity is available for you to read in both [English](#) and [Romanian](#). Download by clicking the appropriate language.

**THE 2021 CHURCH CALENDARS** are here, in both English and Romanian. Pick them up at the candles. Please consider a small donation to cover the costs.

**A NEW PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION WILL BE HELD IN JANUARY.** Following Archdiocesan procedures, the Parish Council has formed a Nominating Committee to propose a slate of candidates. George Demake is the Chair of that Committee. If you would like to serve, or if you would like to nominate someone for the Parish Council, please email him.

**DON'T FORGET** to send in your 2020 Stewardship contribution. If you haven't done so already, please send it in as soon as possible.

**EVERYONE IS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN SERVICES.** You may attend Liturgy on Sundays at church. **Of course the usual COVID rules apply.** Here are the [Guidelines](#) for attending Church services. Please follow the directions of ushers for everyone's safety.

**WE ARE LIVE-STREAMING THE LITURGY.** If you can not physically attend church, you may access the live-stream of Divine Services. Go to: [www.stnicholaschurch.org](http://www.stnicholaschurch.org) and click on "**Live Streaming of Services.**" To view previous Services on our YouTube Channel, [click here.](#)

**WE HAVE A COVID FUND.** There are people both in our parish and in the larger community who are in need during this time. **If you need help**, whatever it might be, including financial assistance, please contact Fr. Nick. We'll find a way to assist you. **ALSO**, we are asking the faithful in our parish **WHO ARE ABLE**, to perhaps contribute toward this fund. We've set up a small committee, headed by Fr. Nick, to administer this fund, and distribute what we're able to give as equitably as possible. **May God keep us all!**

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**COVID-19 UPDATE** – Holy Trinity is experiencing residents and staff testing positive with Covid. Presently, there are 7 residents and 5 staff members positive. All residents and staff continue to be tested weekly. All test results from last week are negative. The main dining room will be temporarily closed to ensure residents are not mingling between floors. At this time Activities will continue on Courtyard and Hillside with social distancing. No new admissions are being accepted at this time.

**VISITATIONS** – For the protection of residents and family members, all in-person visits are being suspended.

**A WARM WELCOME** to the new interim CEO: Judith Nazaire. Given Covid protocols it will be a challenge for her to meet all of us, we can all offer her our prayers for her success.

**JOB OPENINGS** – We are hiring, and our staff is excellent to work with. We are hiring entry level housekeepers for multiple shifts. We are hiring nurses and CNAs all shifts. [Click here](#) for a

full listing with detailed job descriptions. People familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

**HOLIDAY DECORATING/ACTIVITIES** — Holy Trinity staff has and continues to brainstorm every day to think of activities that will help lift our resident's spirits during this difficult time of Covid-19. \* On this past Wednesday, December 16th, the staff organized a [Facebook live session](#) where the residents were featured [decorating gingerbread cookies](#) and delivering them to the staff and other residents. (They are getting it up as a video we can all link to.) \* Also, there's a new member of the staff: [NOVA](#). She is a St. Bernard pup who is providing lots of joy to our residents. She's part of a new activity called: "watch me grow." \* On December 21st there will be a [hot cocoa social](#). \* On December 23rd each unit will be hosting a [resident Christmas party](#) in their respective dayrooms, observing the proper distancing.

**TREASURED GENERATIONS ANNUAL APPEAL** – This year has been a difficult one for Holy Trinity's staff and residents. Now, more than ever, we need your help. If you wish to donate to the Treasured Generations fund please click [here](#). Every gift helps. And, we thank you for your support!

**DIVINE LITURGY** celebrations have been suspended until the current Covid spike has been contained.

## **A Prayer of Fr. Laurence**

*Let us pray to the Lord*

**We glorify you, Lord Jesus Christ, for allowing us to know you.** Everything we have belongs to you and we possess nothing of our own, for it is you who gave us all we have. By coming into our midst, you show us how to let go of everything, and by the poverty of your birth, you teach us to be attached to nothing. As we prepare for the celebration of your earthly birthday, O Christ, keep our hearts fixed only on you, so that we may always sing: Glory to God in the heights; on earth peace, and among all love and understanding.

For you are God and we give you glory together with your Father Who is without beginning, and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## ***Abraham was the Father of Isaac ...***

**The Gospel lesson for the Sunday before Christmas is the Genealogy of Jesus** and the story of how Jesus was conceived and born. It is the whole first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. There is another Genealogy of Jesus that appears in St. Luke's Gospel (3:23-38),

different from St. Matthew's. This requires an explanation of how genealogies were understood in the ancient world, different from our own time.

For us a genealogy is seemingly a fairly straight-forward thing — we track our ancestors, on both sides of our family, as far back as we can. We're just interested in knowing who they were, where they lived and died, and what they might have done. In the ancient world a genealogy served a very different purpose. Genealogies were written, or usually commissioned, to tell us something about the person. This was not simply a matter of tracing a family tree. It was meant to tell the person's story, like a biography.

The first thing that we learn from St. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus is that not only is Jesus a Jew, a son of Abraham, but more importantly he is son of David. Here, David is important not because he was King in Israel, but because God had promised him that the Messiah would be born to his house. To call Jesus "son of David" was to say that you considered him to be the Anointed of God. This is the most obvious aspect of the genealogical presentation, but there are more subtle aspects that tell us important things.

For example, right at the outset, we hear "... Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers" (v. 2). Why name Judah, and not the other eleven Patriarchs of Israel, each greater than Judah? Next St. Matthew mentions "... Judah the father of Perez and Zerah" (v. 3). But the line comes through Perez, Zerah is superfluous to Jesus' lineage, so why mention him unless there's another purpose? Judah is the least of the sons of Jacob. Perez and Zerah were twin brothers. Zerah stuck his hand out first but withdrew it, then Perez came from his mother and became the first born. Perez's name means "a division" or "a breach." Some have seen in this a "pre-figuring" of the two nations: Jew and Gentile. This is part of what St. Paul has in mind when he speaks of Christ having "broken down the dividing wall ... of hostility" (Ephesians 2:14).

Just a few lines later St. Matthew mentions two women, again, not strictly necessary for this genealogy: Rahab and Ruth. Rahab was a prostitute who helped Joshua conquer Jericho (Joshua 6:25). Ruth was a foreigner, and practically destitute, being a widow and living with her mother-in-law (Ruth 1:16ff). Boaz took neither her outsider status nor her poverty into account, but married Ruth and made her mother of kings. Similarly, when St. Matthew tells us of Solomon, he says that David was his father "by the wife of Uriah" (v. 6). David fell in love with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and had an affair with her (2 Samuel 11:1ff). She became pregnant, and when the fact could not be hid, David told his general Joab to put Uriah at the front of the battle so that he might be killed. It was this great sin that led David to compose the deeply moving penitential Psalm 50.

We could continue analyzing the lives of each of the persons mentioned in the genealogy, and why St. Matthew decided to include them. Each person in this genealogy gives us a deeper insight into the history of God's plan for our salvation. Each of these persons tells us a little more about this Jesus, this Messiah.

The message we are to take is that Jesus was born into a family line that represents all of the weaknesses and sins of humanity. The humility of his birth is not just the cave in Bethlehem, but

it is in embracing the poor, the weak, the foreigner, and the sinner in and through his very lineage. This is the point of St. Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus. Jesus, our Savior, takes on the whole of who we are, in all of our weaknesses and failings, even in his lineage. He doesn't tout his important ancestors, rather he embraces all of the ne'er-do-wells, all of the unfortunate souls God employed in His work of salvation.

Finally, we should not forget nor minimize Joseph, the last in Jesus' line. He is remarkable in so many ways. In spite of the public disgrace he faced by accepting to marry a pregnant Mary, he gave himself up to the will of God, trusting the angel's word (Matthew 1:20-24). It was Joseph who assumed the responsibility to nurture and protect the baby Jesus. To raise him as his own son. He became the earthly father to our Lord, the Anointed One, the Pre-eternal God.

— Fr. Nicholas Apostola

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## Orthodox Links

[Romanian Orthodox Metropolia](#) of the Americas  
[Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America](#) (Assembly of Bishops)  
[International Orthodox Christian Charities](#) (IOCC)  
[Orthodox Christian Mission Center](#) (OCMC)  
[Orthodox Christian Radio Network](#) (OCN)  
[Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches of Central Mass.](#) (CEOC)

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## Dates To Remember

*Thursday, Dec 17 — Parish Council, 7pm*  
*Friday, December 18 — Mustard Seed Meal Prep (1:30 PM - 3:30 PM)*  
*Sunday, December 20 — Children's Christmas Program*  
***Thursday, December 24 — Christmas Eve***  
*— Royal Hours, 9:30 am*  
*— Great Vespers, 6:00 pm*  
***Friday, December 25 — Feast of the Lord's Nativity***  
*— Matins, 9:00 am*  
*— Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am*

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*Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am*