



Saint Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church Shrewsbury Massachusetts
Biserica Ortodoxă Română Sfântul Nicolae Shrewsbury Massachusetts

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WEEKLY BULLETIN



Sunday December 22, 2024



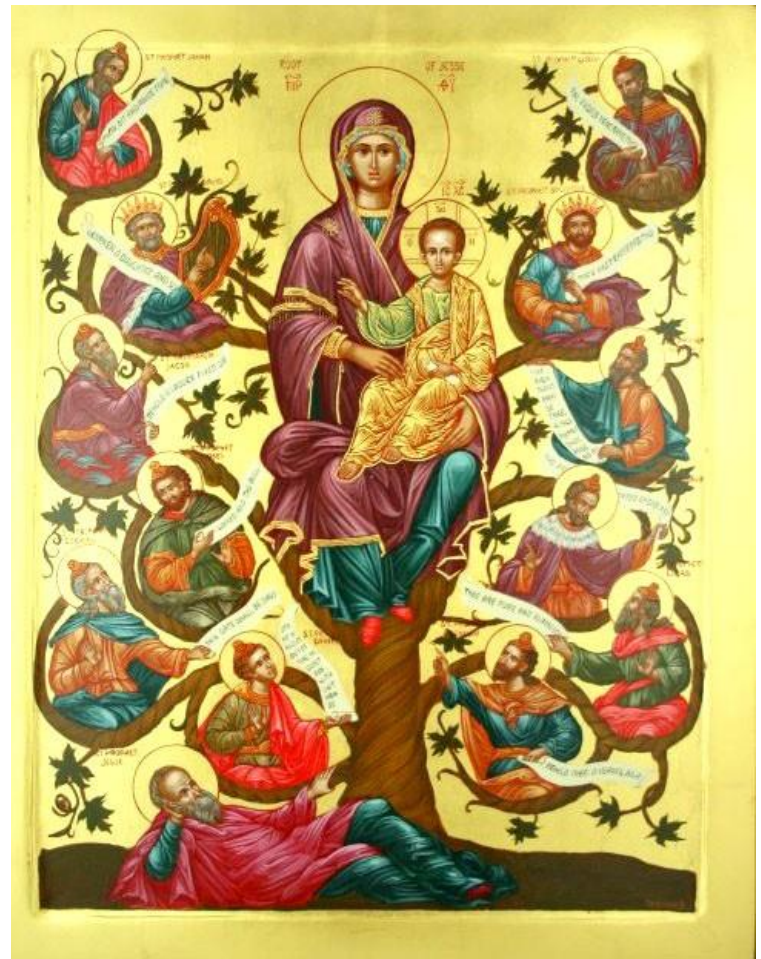
The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

Apolytikion of Holy Nativity

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world; for thereby they that worshipped the stars were instructed by a star to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. O Lord, glory be to Thee.

Kontakion of Holy Nativity

Today, the Virgin bears Him who is transcendent, and the earth presents the cave to Him who is beyond reach. Angels, along with shepherds glorify Him. The Magi make their way to Him by a star. For a new child has been born for us, the God before all ages.



The Sunday before the Nativity
(Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of the Lord)

Apostol: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40; Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

(The Genealogy of the Savior)

Tone 1 † Resurrection Gospel 4

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFATHERS

Thou hast justified by faith the ancient Forefathers, and through them Thou hast gone before and betrothed unto Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, take pride in glory; for from their seed sprouted forth a noble fruit, and it was she who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

This Week's News

THE ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP APPEAL is underway. Our church relies upon the offering of time, talents and treasure from each of us. We ask that you prayerfully consider an offering of time, talents and treasure to sustain our beloved church for the glory of God. Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed Holiday Season.

MUSTARD SEED MEAL – We need a sponsor/s for our next Mustard Seed Meal on Friday, December 20th. We could use this way of giving in memory of our loved ones, for someone's health, but beyond that is because we want to feed our hungry brothers and sisters. If you have it in your heart to contribute, please contact Betty Anderson (508) 353-9449.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT - DECEMBER 25th - The rehearsal will start this coming Sunday after liturgy, so if you would like for your child/children to participate, please bring them to church.

Here is the schedule for December:

December 21–at 6; December 22- after Liturgy

December 25th, Christmas Day- pageant after Liturgy.

THE 2025 CHURCH CALENDARS are here, in both English and Romanian. Pick them up at the candles.

Please consider a small donation to cover the costs.



"What is the most unshakable, unerring and trustworthy hope of the true Christian? The hope of eternal life and eternal reward. All those who have truly striven after the spirit of the Church and of all the saints have attained its fulfillment."

Saint John of Kronstadt
1829 - 1908

Happy Birthday! God Grant You Many More Years!

Dec 1 - Sophia Morris
Dec 4 - Irlu Ilie Durmillari
Dec 5 – Athina Ellis
Dec 6 - Nikolla Endriko
Dec 8 - Monika Maria
Durmillari
Dec 9 - Michael Anthony Prizio
Dec 15 – Dan Manescu
Dec 25 – Stefan Hortopan

SPECIAL DONATION

Ornela Belishta has donated \$ 100 in memory of her father Niko and brother Iliu. May their memory be eternal!

Ornela Belishta has donated \$ 100 for her and for her brother's health and salvation.

Ornela also has donated her \$200 winnings from the raffle for the health of herself and her brother. May God bless and preserve you for your generosity!

Dates to remember:

December 25 - The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

December 26 - Synaxis of the Holy Theotokos

December 27 - St. Stephen, Archdeacon & First Martyr

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!



Day	Date	Time	Service Type
December			
Sunday	22-Dec	9:00 AM	Matins
		10:00 AM	The Sunday before the Nativity - Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of the Lord. The Genealogy of the Savior

Wednesday	25-Dec	9:00 AM	Matins
		10:00 AM	(†) The Nativity of Our Lord .Pageant. Santa brings presents for the children.
Thursday	26-Dec	9:00 AM	Matins
		10:00 AM	(†) Synaxis Holy Theotokos - Divine Liturgy
Friday	27-Dec	9:00 AM	Matins
		10:00 AM	(†) First Martyr Stephen - Divine Liturgy
Sunday	29-Dec	9:00 AM	Matins
		10:00 AM	The Sunday after the Nativity - The Prophet-King David; Joseph the Betrothed; James the Lord's Brother; The Flight Into Egypt
Tuesday	31-Dec	7:00 PM	New Year Eve - Potluck
		11:30 PM	New Year's Te Deum
Wednesday	1-Jan	9:00 AM	Matins
		10:00 AM	New Year's Day - Circumcision of our Lord - Feast of St. Basil the Great

PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE FEAST OF THE LORD'S NATIVITY 2024

† NICOLAE
by the mercies of God

Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States and
Metropolitan of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas

To our Beloved Clergy and Orthodox Christians, grace, peace, and joy from Christ the Lord, and from
us hierarchical blessings.

“Make merry, O heaven and earth, as the Prophets foretold!
Celebrate in the spirit, O Angels and men!

God is born from a Virgin and appears in the flesh to those who sit in darkness and shadow.”
(Verse from the Litia of the Feast)

Most Reverend Fathers, Beloved Faithful,

The Feast of the Lord's Nativity again offers us an occasion for joy and for proclaiming the wonder that took place in the cave of Bethlehem, the descent of God to earth that He might bring mankind to Himself, free them from darkness and shadow, and renew and illumine the entire creation. The songs of the holy festal services and the Church Fathers declare and explain the miracle of the illumination of mankind and of all creation through the Incarnation of the Son of God.

The disobedience of Adam at Eve's prompting brought estrangement from God and death to mankind. This is the ancestral sin in which all mankind exists, from Adam to Christ. But God found a way to bring correction, again through woman, through the Virgin Mary: “You have borne the Savior, O Virgin Theotokos. You have overthrown Eve's ancient curse. You became the mother of the Son of God. The Father is well-pleased in Him. You carry at your bosom God, the Word, made flesh. We cannot fathom this mystery. We can only believe, and give glory with you: O Lord, beyond all explanation, glory to You!”¹ By a woman sin came and also by a woman deliverance, for the Virgin Mary turns the disobedience and pride of Adam and Eve into obedience and humility through the words “Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be unto me according to Your Word.”²

The Holy Confessor Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, until recently known as a professor and great Orthodox theologian, responds to the question: What has the full revelation that we have in Jesus Christ given us?³ His response clarifies in the first place the problem of mankind fallen into sin, a clarification with insights valuable for every person, of yesterday and today, who is separated from communion with God: “Man is thus in an abnormal state before rebirth (through Christ)... the man in whom the subject of communion has not been born... is in a state of evil. He consciously hinders the birth of the subject in his neighbor and his selfishness has no limits. Not only does he not know of communion, but he is against it. This enmity is a conscious opposition against God and has the character of sin, not of a simply incompleteness of nature. He does not love God, does

1 Stihira 3, Laude, Utrenia Praznicului.

2 Luca 1, 38.

3 Dumitru Stăniloae, Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului, Editura Basilica, București, 2013, p. 115.

not love his neighbor, he obstructs the path of God's intentions for man, and all this because he loves himself with a selfish, false love... In every possible way he sins against God, and his sin against God is unto his own destruction and that of his neighbor. His turning away from God toward himself as the center of his preoccupations automatically brings about his immersion in obscurity of mind, in weakening of the will, in selfish and torturous loneliness. 4 In this presentation of mankind fallen into sin, separated from God and isolated in egotistical self-love, we find the image of fallen Adam multiplied in every human being, from Adam to Christ, and after Christ in every person fallen, through sin, from the redemption brought by the Son of God Incarnated in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

The re-establishment of communion with God, of the re-strengthening of man's will, of liberation from selfishness, of the illumination of his mind and conscience, could not have been accomplished through the effort of man: "the initiative of the re-establishment of man's communion with God had to begin from God, coming first into maximum nearness to man, that man might be deeply shaken regarding his profound guilt... the Incarnation of the Son of God was the beginning of communion with men. It was not merely a passing means in the service of God's love, but the very supreme demonstration of love." 5

St. Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, also speaks of the humble love of God revealed in the Incarnation of His Son: "When the time previously decided for the salvation of mankind arrived, the Son of God entered into the lowest regions of this world, descending from the heavenly throne while not leaving the parental glory, being born of a totally new order... The Uncontainable One willed to be contained; the One before all time began to exist in time; the Lord of all, hiding the brilliance of His glory, received the appearance of a slave; the passionless God did not scorn to become a man subject to passion, and He Who is immortal willingly was subjected to death." 6 St. Leo explains the humble love of God revealed by St. Paul the Apostle in his beautiful hymn from the Epistle to the Philippians 2:5-11: "...Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

The revelation of this humble love of God for mankind is the cause of the joy of the celebration of the Lord's Birth, sung by angels and announced to all mankind: "Let us rejoice in the Lord, dearly beloved, and let us exult, celebrating spiritually, for the new day of salvation has dawned for us, a day that has long been prepared, a day of eternal blessedness. For the circling of the year again brings to us the mystery of our salvation, promised from the beginning, fulfilled in the end, which will remain forever. On this day it is fitting that we lift up our hearts and worship the divine mystery, for what is accomplished through a great gift of God should be treasured with great joy by the Church." 7

4 Ibidem, p. 116.

5 Ibidem, p. 120.

6 Sf. Leon cel Mare, Predici la Nașterea și Arătarea Domnului și la perioada Pentecostarului, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2016, p. 18.

My challenge to you at this glorious feast is that we lift up our hearts, that we not fear because of rumors of crises, upheavals and wars, but that we put all our hope in the care and help of God. He has sent us a Savior; He guides our steps in this complicated and troubled world. The Christian is the one who can inspire hope in his neighbor that our world will find peace. The Christian is the one who, with a heart peaceful and full of the joy of the Lord's Birth, can bring equilibrium into a society divided through politic, social, cultural, and religious motives. We Romanian Christians in America, together with our brethren who have accepted the Good News, can be the proclaimers of peace and understanding among humanity, imitating the angels from heaven who proclaimed to the shepherds the great wonder of the Incarnation of the Son of God. I pray that Christ the Lord, Who is born in the manger of Bethlehem, may strengthen us and illumine us, may bless every priest and believer, every parish and monastery of our Archdiocese.

With a fraternal embrace in Christ the Lord, my wish is that you experience the holy feasts of Christmas, the New Year, and Theophany with health, peace, and spiritual joys!

Your brother in prayer unto God,
† Metropolitan NICOLAE

Chicago, the Feast of the Lord's Nativity, 2024

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

December 22, 2024

THIS WEEK AT HOLY TRINITY

Sunday: Patriots vs Buffalo 1p, Coffee Social 1:30
Monday: Exercise 9:30a Dominoes 10:30a, Board Games Wii Bowling 2p
Tuesday: Card making 10a, FIT USA 2p, Adult color & music 2p.
Wednesday: Due to Christmas Day Liturgy will be on Friday December 27th 9:30am. Merry Christmas! Happy Hanukkah! Christmas Caroling fun 1:30p, Cookie Decorating w Coffee & Cheer 2p, 5:30 Movie Night
Thursday: Exercise 10:30a Movie Matinee 1:30p, Board Games & Cards social.
Friday: Liturgy/Orthodox 9:30am. Drama Club 2pm, Trivia, Scrabble, Wii Bowling starting at 2p, Movie Night 5:30p.

OUR RESIDENTS' WARM WISHES FOR OUR PARISH'S THAT SUPPORT HOLY TRINITY.

“Thank you for doing liturgy for us weekly. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year” “Καλά Χριστούγεννα, καλή χρονιά”

Joyce M

“Thank you for all your support.”

Sherry C

“Joy to the World”

Maryanne B

“Christ is Born” “Христос родился”

Barbara A

“Καλά Χριστούγεννα”

Phyllis P

Our Courtyard Residents would also like to thank you!

**We are Thankful for: “The children that came by to sing carols” |
“Father Chris visiting with the children” “Cakes and Coffee”
“Christmas Cards”**

WE ALL WISH YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

CHURCH & FACILITY NEEDS

The list below contains **ongoing needs for the Church as well as special needs that may arise**. Any and every offering is most appreciated. If you have any questions, or would like to donate for or towards one of these items, please speak with [Fr. Vasile](#), any member of the Parish Council, or use the [online giving](#) site.

\$25 - Box of Three Kings Charcoal (100 pieces)

\$100 - Beeswax Candles for the Holy Altar

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

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