



ST. MARY'S

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

December 24, 2023 — *Sunday before Nativity*

THE DIVINE LITURGY

Commemoration

Sunday before Nativity; Eve of the Nativity of Christ; Eugenia the Righteous
Nun-martyr of Rome and those with her

Morning Gospel: John 20:1-10

Tone: Fourth

Variable Hymns and Readings in the Liturgy

At the Second Antiphon

Save us, O Son of God, who rose from the dead,
save us who sing to you: Alleluia!

At the Small Entrance

Resurrection Hymn, Third Tone

The joyful news of your resurrection was proclaimed by the angel to the women disciples. Having thrown off the curse that fell on Adam, they ran elatedly to tell the apostles: Death has been vanquished; Christ our God is risen from the dead, blessing all the world with his great mercy.

Hymn of Entrance

Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God, who rose from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

Repeat the Resurrection Hymn, Above

Hymn of the Eve of the Nativity of Christ, Fourth Tone (Hard Chromatic)

Having been from David's seed, Joseph and Mary were recalled to the town of Bethlehem, where for the census they enrolled. As she was seedlessly with child, they sought the inn for lodgings, but since the inn was full, there was a cave they might use, the cave that proved to be a most befitting place, a lovely palace of delight for her the most pure Lady and Queen of all. For Christ is born now, to raise the Image that had fallen beforehand.

Hymn for the Sunday before the Nativity of the Lord, *Second Tone*

How great is the power of faith. By faith three young men rejoice in flames as if in refreshing water, and Daniel in the lions' den is like a shepherd with his sheep. Through their prayers, Christ our God, save our souls.

Hymn of the Dormition of the Theotokos, *First Tone*

In giving birth, you preserved your virginity, O Theotokos; in falling asleep you did not forsake the world. You passed over into life, O Mother of Life; and by your prayers you deliver our souls from death!

Kontakion of Preparation for the Birth of Christ, *Third Tone*

Today the Virgin cometh, cometh unto the cave to give birth to the Word who was born before all ages, Begotten in a manner that defies description.

Rejoice, therefore, Oh universe if thou should hear and glorify with the angels and the shepherds. Glorify him who by his will shall become a new-born babe and who is our God before all ages.

Epistle*.....*Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40

BRETHREN, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundation, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets - who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

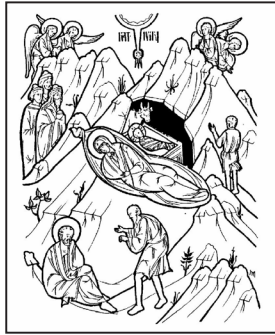
Gospel*.....*Matthew 1:1-25

The book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and

Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

The Communion Prayers are found on page 40 of the hymnal.





Prayer Ministry

Please remember the sick, the suffering, and those in need, especially:

All victims of wars throughout the world; Our brothers and sisters living through the aftermath of disaster; For the victims of violence; Metro Hope Ministries; Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry; Families Moving Forward; FOCUS Minnesota; Our brothers and sisters serving in the Armed Forces throughout the world especially John Ellis; San Miguel Del Lago Orphanage; Cleopatra, Demetra, Milton, Maureen, Andrea, Bryan, Haben (Matthew), Nausika, Ron, Phillip Hibberd, Maria, Matt, Laura, Dorla, Susan, Elias, Constance, Peter, Evdoxia, Marina, Dion, Annali, Sofia, Juan Cruz & family, Charlie, Stan, Helena, Byrdie, Jennifer, John S., Becky, Noel, Stephen, Alexey, Alexandra, Ray, Christina, Joanne, Athena, the Muñoz family, Charlie, Nuala, Pamela, Avgi, Elena, Speranta, Liz, Efstratia, Jordan, David, Nino, Joe, Gigi, Zossima, Donnarae, Samira, Mary K., Monte, Bethany, Mark, Owen, Chrysanthy, Estelle, Justine, Melissa, Megan, Dallas, Lisa, Michael, Robbie, Judi, Evonne, James, Nichole, Constantine, Theodora, Mary, Irene Maria, Apostolos, Olivia, Lincoln, Carole, Patty, Karrisa, Corina, Tom, George R., Ken, Nancy and Tim, Olga, Peter, Cora and family, Bo, Lynn, Deb, Sarah, Maia, Travis, Kassie, Tahnlee, Lois, Kalli, Annie, Sue & Jim, Steve, Sue, Jane, Pat, Nancy, Dave, Pam, Gilbert, George P., Danielle, Jenny, John L., Steven E., Julia, Presvytera Janis, Sandra, Rick, Nancy, Alex, Eryn, Phil, Karen, Linda, Fr. Elias, Vicki, Bill, Diana, Doria, Mike, Stephanie, Tyler, Ben, Amy, Christy, Karen, Anastasia, Jamie, Alex and Alexander, Toni, Gina, Julie, R.J., Allie, Vickie, Petra, Bob, Joseph, Christopher, Elizabeth, Jaxon, Judi, Bodil, Ole, and others known to you.

Today

Please stop by the Great Hall after Liturgy this morning for a time of refreshment and fellowship. A number of parishioners provided cookies (Lenten, of course!), fruits, and nuts for our enjoyment.

Announcements

Food Shelf Needs for December 31

Toothpaste

December's recipient is Community Emergency Service (CES). Please do not bring opened packages. They will be discarded.



Coffee Hour Opening Next Sunday

Host an early New Year's Eve party during coffee hour next Sunday, December 31! The Sunday just became available this past week, so we are seeking some folks to host coffee hour. Questions? Contact David in the Church Office this week.



Donate Here

Year-End Giving Notice

Electronic donations, via online giving or Venmo, **must be made by Tuesday, December 26**. Online contributions take 3-5 days to process. Contributions made after December 26 cannot be guaranteed of being recorded as 2023 contribution. Please plan ahead when making your year-end contributions. Contributions placed in the offering tray on Sunday, December 31, will be credited as 2023 contributions.



Registration

Register for the Annual YAL Conference

February 16–19, 2024 in Chicago

Registration is underway for the annual YAL conference open to young adults ages 18–35. Limited spots remain for the early registration pricing. Register Today!



YAL Ball — Mark your Calendar

Saturday, January 13, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Young adults, ages 18-35, are invited! Watch for details in upcoming emails and on social media.

Calendar of the Week

Sunday, December 24: Sunday before Nativity

8:30 a.m. – Matins; 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy; *No Church School Classes*
4:00 p.m. – Vespers of Nativity

Monday, December 25: Holy Nativity

9:00 a.m. – Matins; 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, December 26: Synaxis of the Theotokos

Church and Office closed.

Wednesday, December 27: Saint Stephen

9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 30

10:45 a.m. – Women’s Basketball Practice, Great Hall
5:00 p.m. – Great Vespers

Sunday, December 31: Sunday After Nativity

8:30 a.m. – Matins; 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy; Church School classes will meet

Monday, January 1: Circumcision of our Lord; Saint Basil

9:00 a.m. – Matins; 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy



Christmas Offering

Consider making a special Christmas offering to St. Mary’s. An envelope was included with the holiday mailing sent to all members this past week. You may also donate online (scan code or use the link in weekly email) and select “Christmas Donation” from the dropdown menu.

Text to Give • Text **smgoc** to **73256** • *This number will never send unsolicited texts.*



Registration

Intro to Orthodox Christianity Catechism Course

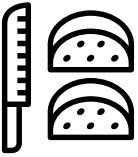
Join us for our MEOCCA catechism course, Intro to Orthodox Christianity, **beginning on Monday, January 22**, from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Catechism is open to all; people interested in learning more about Orthodox Christianity, inquirers, catechumens, and current Orthodox Christians as well! Classes will be held on Monday evenings from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in person (1111 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN) or online via Zoom. Register today by using the code or learn more at www.meocca.org

Philoptochos News



Vasilopita Sales and Pickup Today

Philoptochos is selling loaves of Vasilopita (sweet bread) for the New Year. Proceeds from the sales of the bread helps support St. Basil's Academy in Garrison, New York. The cost is \$15 per loaf. Cash and checks are accepted. Stop by our table to purchase a loaf or two.



Vasilopita Cutting—Saturday, January 6

Following the *Blessing of the Waters* Divine Liturgy on January 6, we will be cutting the loaves of bread for distribution on Sunday. Please stop by the Philoptochos table to sign up to help. Many hands lighten the load! All volunteers are welcome.



Our Little Orthodox Library Needs You

We are looking for several volunteers to help with the management of our new Little Library outside the church. Sign up for a month, check it weekly, make sure it is stocked and that only Orthodox materials are there. Please stop by the Philoptochos table on Sundays to see how you can help. We would also love additional Orthodox books to help keep our stock full.



Registration

Register for Winter Camp Today!

January 12 – 15, 2024 at Camp Courage

Winter Camp is for kids grades 6 through 12. It will be held at Camp Courage in Maple Lake, MN. This year's theme is, "Relentless, In our pursuit of faith, spiritual discipline, and seeking God." Use the registration code to register online. **The deadline to register is December 30.** The cost for attendance, per student, is \$270. Payment can be made through Venmo or send a check to:

St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral
c/o Lisa Tucci
414 – 17th Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55413



Venmo
Payment

For questions contact Matushka Lisa Tucci at 612.599.0814 or at lisatucci71@gmail.com

On Holy Communion...

“Christ, Who came in Bethlehem, and Who will come again at the end of time, comes to us now in the great Sacrament of His Presence, i.e., Holy Communion. The reason He was born in Bethlehem was that we might allow Him to come and be born in the manger of our hearts.”

— Fr. Anthony Coniaris

(*Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home*, p.183)

Daily Bible Readings

Monday, December 25

Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

Galatians 4:4-7 • Matthew 2:1-12

Tuesday, December 26

Synaxis of the Holy Theotokos

Hebrews 2:11-18 • Matthew 2:13-23

Wednesday, December 27

Saint Stephen, Archdeacon & First Martyr

Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60 • Matthew 21:33-42

Thursday, December 28

Hebrews 10:35-39; 11:1-7 • Luke 14:25-35

Friday, December 29

Hebrews 2:11-18 • Matthew 2:13-23

Saturday, December 30

Timothy 6:11-16 • Matthew 12:15-21

Sunday, December 31

Sunday After Nativity

II Timothy 4:5-8 • Mark 1:1-8



Saint Mary's Greek Orthodox Church

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Fr. Timothy Sas, Fr. Jason Houck, Fr. John Kostas
Fr. Paul Kalina, Deacon; Fr. Luke Twito, Deacon