

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

www.orthodoxbutler.org

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31st Sunday after Pentecost (26 December 2010).

Second day of Christmas: Synaxis of the Theotokos. We commemorate Euthymios the Confessor, bishop of Sardis; Hieromartyr Constantios the Russian of Mt. Athos.

FIRST ANTIPHON

I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart, in the council of the upright, in the congregation. Great are the works of the Lord!

Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

Sought out in all the things that he hath willed; confession and majesty are His work, and His righteousness abideth unto ages of ages! (Refrain)

Glory... Now and ever... (Refrain)

SECOND ANTIPHON

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight. His seed shall be mighty upon the earth; the generations of the upright shall be blessed! Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who art born of a Virgin, who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

Glory and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness abides unto ages of ages! (Refrain)

There hath risen up in darkness a light for the upright; he is merciful and compassionate and righteous! (Refrain)

Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son and Word of God ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet; the Lord shall send to you a scepter of power from Zion; With thee is dominion in the day of thy power, in the splendor of thy saints. TROPARION OF THE NATIVITY (Tone 4): see below.

THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 6): When Mary stood at Thy grave looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou hast led Hell captive and wast not tempted by it. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world. O Thou who art risen from the dead: O Lord, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF THE NATIVITY (Tone 4): Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world! For they that worshipped the stars did from the star learn to worship Thee, O Sun of Justice, and to know Thee, the East from on High: O Lord, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT, tone 4 (Russian): Like the zealous Elijah thou didst become, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. A dweller in the wilderness, thou didst steady the world by prayer. O Father Anthony, intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation.

KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY, Tone 3: The virgin brings forth today the Omnipotent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One. Angels give glory with shepherds, and the magi journey with the star. Since for our sakes was born as a new babe He Who is from eternity God.

LIVING: Sula, Dolores (Sipos), Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Diane, Karyn, Rodolphe, Brian, Maria, Marius, hieromonk Alexander, and the baby Christina.

DEPARTED: Michael, William, Mariana, James, Mary Ann, Joseph, Katherine.

PLEASE NOTE THE VARIABLES OF THIS SUNDAY'S SERVICE!

➤ **Trisagion:**

Instead of “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal ...”, sing:
As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Alleluia!

➤ **The Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos):**

Instead of “It is truly meet ...”, sing:
(Tone 1): *Magnify, O my soul, her that is more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly powers! A strange and marvelous mystery do I behold: the cave is a heave, and the Virgin is cherubic throne; the manger is a grand space wherein Christ our God, whom nothing contain, is laid as a babe—Him do we praise and glorify!*

➤ **Koinonikon (Communion verse):**

The Lord hath sent redemption to his people, Alleluia!

➤ **After communion:**

Instead of “We have seen the true Light ...”, sing:
TROPARION OF THE NATIVITY (Tone 4): *Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world! For they that worshipped the stars from the star did learn to worship Thee, O Sun of Justice, and to know Thee, the East from on High: O Lord, glory to Thee!*

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon:

God is wonderful among his saints. Bless God in the congregations!

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

(Gal 1:11-19)

Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, for was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my own people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But

when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I do up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew

(Matthew 1:13-23)

When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned of Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. and he went and dwelt in the city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

A WORD ON TODAY'S CELEBRATION

On the second day of Christmas, the calendar notes that we are celebrating “the Synaxis of the Theotokos.” In plain English, we come together (“synaxis” means “gathering”) to meditate on the Mother of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ: Mary, the all-pure virgin and mother. And why wouldn't we? Christmas is about the almighty God becoming a baby in her womb, and now being fed at her breast. Let us then meditate on the mystery revealed in her!

One of the principles of the Orthodox faith is that whatever we see in Christ, our Lord, is destined for us, his followers. If He is God-made-man, we are called to be humans-made-God: we are called to “deification.” If God takes on himself the frail and sinful human nature, and becomes a baby, it is—as the hymn says—*for our sake*. And what it is exactly that God has been done *for us* becomes understandable when we look at Mary, the Theotokos.

One of the hymns of Christmas reads as follows: *What shall we offer to Thee, O Christ, for having appeared on earth as a man for our sake? Verily, each of the creatures made by Thee offers Thee thanksgiving: the angels—their praise; the heavens—the star; the Magi—gifts; the shepherds—wonder; the earth—the cave; the wilderness—the manger. And we, a Virgin Mother. O God before the ages, have mercy on us!*

This inspired poem raises a deep question: when the Creator comes down to his creation, how do we meet Him? What do we, the host, offer this heavenly guest who wants to be with us not only for a night, but forever one of us? The angels and the shepherd give glory, and the magi bring their gifts to Bethlehem, the earth itself offers a cave. As for us, we show forth Mary the all-pure, Mary the virgin. She is our representative, the best we have to offer as a welcome gift to the Creator. Of course, God is Himself directly involved in preparing His coming by “engineering” this most pure receptacle—a sort of human temple for God. Last Sunday the Gospel presented us with a very long list of ancestors of Jesus: well, Mary is the flower, the fruit, the end-point of that genealogy—she is the distillate of Israel, and of all humanity.

As we meditate today on the Theotokos, we must realize that Christmas is not a yearly commemoration of some event that happened long time ago, in a distant place. We celebrate the Nativity as the beginning of our own journey with Christ. If you want to know how that looks like, look at the Theotokos!

The Church calls her “the new Eve” because instead of the ancient disobedience, she responds to God: “behold, the handmaiden of God!” This is why what we see in the Theotokos today is God’s intention for all of us: a most tender union between God and humanity, a never-tiring and ever-surprising dialogue of love and peace and joy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- FRI, 12/31: 6PM - Vespertal Liturgy
(*St Basil & Circumcision of the Lord*)
- SAT, 1/1: Note: no Vespers!
- SUN, 1/2: 9:30AM - Choir practice; 10AM Divine Liturgy
- **HOUSE BLESSINGS: Sun, 1/2, Mon 1/3, Tu 1/ 4, Wed 1/5**
- WED, 1/5: 6:30PM - Vespertal Liturgy
(*Theophany: Baptism of the Lord*)

- **SUNDAY, JANUARY 16: Celebration of Saint Anthony, our patron saint. Pan-Orthodox service:** Matins (9 AM), followed by Divine Liturgy (10 AM). We can probably count on 80-100 persons eating with us after the service, so please bring lots of food! The categories to which you can contribute are as follows: 1. meat; 2. potatoes /rice /pasta; 3. veggies; 4. salad; 5. sweets/ fruit.
- Fr. Bogdan and family express their gratitude for the generous gifts received from the parish. May God bless you all!



TODAY, 3PM: Christmas Concert!

Ss. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church
(Arbor Street and Evergreen Drive, Lyndora)

UKRAINIAN CULTURAL TRUST CHOIR OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Refreshments

No Admission Fee

