The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians (4:4–7)

Brethren, when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (2:1–12)

At that time, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.'" Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

Saints Peter & Paul
Orthodox Church

Meriden, Connecticut

website: sspeterpaul.org

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America

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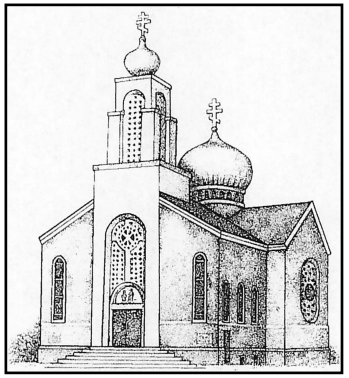

The Nativity According to the Flesh of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ
December 25, 2022

The Adoration of the Magi: Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar. Commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem who were watching their flocks, and went to see the Lord.

Christ is born! Glorify him!

We welcome everyone who has come to this house of the Lord. We especially welcome all guest and newcomers.

Holy Communion is a solemn responsibility: Orthodox Christians who have prepared through Confession, prayer, and fasting may participate. At the end of the Liturgy, everyone is welcome to come forward for a blessing and to share in the blessed bread (called "antidoron," this blessed bread is used in our prayers but is not itself a sacrament).

Afterward, please join us downstairs for fellowship and refreshment. We look forward to greeting you personally, and we are glad that you are here.

An additional note: Today, we are celebrating the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil since Christmas falls on a Sunday. This older, somewhat longer service is used for the most holy days in the year. If you want to follow along, the Liturgy of St. Basil is found on page 101 in the books at the doors of the church.

Upcoming Events in Parish Life

We invite anyone to participate in our services online. Visit our website (sspeterpaul.org) for details.

Friday, Dec. 23	Vespers from the Eve of the Nativity	6 PM
	At this service, we will hear from the Old Testament concerning our Savior's birth.	
Saturday, Dec. 24	Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord	5 PM
Sunday, Dec. 25	Divine Liturgy—Nativity of the Lord	9:30 AM
	Christ is born! Glorify him! The days following Christmas through Jan. 4 are **free from fasting**. Jan. 5, the eve of the Theophany of the Lord, is a strict fast.	
Saturday, Dec. 31	Great Vespers, Prayer for the New Year	5 PM
Sunday, Jan. 1	Divine Liturgy—Circumcision of the Lord	9:30 AM
	We will bless pledges of support for 2023 at the conclusion of the service.	
Thursday, Jan. 5	Great Vespers of Theophany, Great Blessing of Water	6 PM
Friday, Jan. 6	Divine Liturgy of Theophany	9:30 AM
	The Feast of the Theophany (**"manifestation as God"**) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ celebrates that, when our Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended upon him and the Father proclaimed that Jesus was his Only-Begotten Son. Though in America it is overshadowed by Christmas, the Theophany is at least as important to us as Christians. As part of the feast, we have the Great Blessing of Water, which recalls all the ways God has worked salvation through water, culminating in the Lord's baptism—which points to his descent into death and rising on the third day.	

We are looking well ahead to **"Souper Bowl Sunday," Feb. 12.** We are planning to resume this fun fund-raiser and we are asking for your help. Please let Donna Leonowich or Fr. Joshua know by Dec. 28 if you are willing to prepare soup for sale on that day. We will be including a flyer in the January newsletter.

Please remember that, if conditions force **church service or event cancellations,** announcements will be posted on WFSB (channel 3) and WNBC/WVIT (channel 30), as well as on our website: **sspeterpaul.org** .

The cross is lit on Christmas morning for the health of the **Alex Mathiasen and Boris families**.

The flowers on the altar are donated by the Lombardi family for the health of **David and Irene Zavednak** and in loving memory of **Paul Nichols** by the Massaro family.

We Ask Your Prayers

For those celebrating birthdays: Adrian Weidmann (Dec. 24). Melina Gabriella Milner (Dec. 25). Linda Craig (Dec. 26). Ellen Uliase (Dec. 27). Anita Propheter and Robert Barra (Dec. 31).

For the Sick & Suffering:

William (Waas)—family of Sarah Massaro
Corey (Knap)—nephew of Valentina Knap, recovering from a serious accident
Alexander (Mankevich)—Alzheimer's Disease
William (Weidmann)—husband of Adrian, suffering from a chronic immune condition similar to multiple sclerosis
Steven (Cardillo)—local Neighborhood Association organizer

Gregory (Mankevich)	Paul (Leonowich)	
Christopher (Sullivan)	Rosemary (Delaney)	
Irene	Drew	
Veronica	Jacob	
Katelyn		
Cyprian and Dana	Nicole and Naaman	
Helen and Helene		

For Our Shut-Ins:

Yvonne (Rutcho)	Jennie (Padick)	
Margaret (Savchik)	Ann (Kreshik)	Jill (Zadar)

To share news in the bulletin, or to add someone to our prayer list, please contact Fr. Joshua: priest@sspeterpaul.org or 203-237-4539.

If you would like to commemorate loved ones by lighting the cross in church, please contact Alexia Tassmer: 203-284-0856.

The First Antiphon

I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will make all Your wonders known. *(Ps. 110:1a)*

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

In the company of the upright, in the congregation, great are the works of the Lord. *(Ps. 110:1b-2a)* ***(Refrain)***

They are sought out according to His will. *(Ps. 110:2b)* ***(Refrain)***

Full of honor and majesty is His work, and His righteousness endures forever. *(Ps. 110:3)* ***(Refrain)***

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. ***(Refrain)***

The Second Antiphon

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments. *(Ps. 111:1)*

Refrain: O Son of God, born of the Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

His descendants will be mighty in the land, the generation of the upright will be blessed. *(Ps. 111:2)* ***(Refrain)***

Glory and wealth are in His house and His righteousness endures forever. *(Ps. 111:3)* ***(Refrain)***

Light rises in the darkness for the upright; the Lord is merciful, compassionate, and righteous. *(Ps. 111:4)* ***(Refrain)***

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

("Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God... ")

The Third Antiphon

The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand." (Ps. 109:1a)

Tone 4 Troparion

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!

"Until I make Your enemies Your footstool!" *(Ps. 109:1b)*

Troparion of the Feast

The Lord will send You the scepter of power from Zion: "Rule in the midst of Your enemies!" *(Ps. 109:2)*

Troparion of the Feast

With You is dominion on the day of Your power, in the radiance of holiness. *(Ps. 109:3)*

Troparion of the Feast

Entrance Verse

Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten You. The Lord has sworn, and will not change His mind: "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." *(Ps. 109:4)*

Tone 4 Troparion

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 3 Kontakion

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.

Instead of the Trisagion, we sing:

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Tone 8 Prokeimenon

Let all the earth worship You and praise You; / let it praise Your Name, O Most High! *(Ps. 65:3)*

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth! Sing of His Name, give glory to His praise! *(Ps. 65:1)*

Epistle Galatians 4:4-7

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. *(Ps. 18:1)*

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. *(Ps. 18:2)*

Gospel Matthew 2:1-12

Instead of "It is truly meet...," we sing:

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos,
more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly hosts.

I behold a strange, most glorious mystery:
heaven—the cave;
the cherubic throne—the Virgin;
the manger—the place where Christ lay:
the uncontainable God, Whom we magnify in song.

Communion Hymn

The Lord has sent redemption to His people. *(Ps. 110:8a)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Notes on the Week

Christ is born—glorify him! This Christmas night bestowed peace on the whole world; so let no one threaten. This is the night of the Most Gentle One—let no one be cruel; this is the night of the Humble One—let no one be proud. Now is the day of joy—let us not revenge; now is the day of good will—let us not be mean-spirited. In this day of peace, let us not be conquered by anger. Today the Bountiful One impoverished himself for our sake; so, rich one, invite the poor to your table. Today we receive a Gift for which we did not ask; so let us give alms to those who implore and beg us. This present Day cast open the heavenly doors to our prayers; let us open our door to those who ask our forgiveness. Today the Divine Being took upon himself the seal of our humanity in order for humanity to be decorated by the seal of divinity. *—a meditation by Saint Isaac the Syrian*

St. John Chrysostom on the Star of Bethlehem:

For if we learn what the star was, and of what kind, whether it was one of the common stars, or strange and quite unlike the others, ... we shall easily know all the other things too. From where will these things be clear? From the texts themselves. Thus, that this star was not an ordinary one, or rather not a star at all, in my opinion, but some invisible power transformed into this appearance, is in the first place evident from its course. For not one of the stars moves like this, but whether you take the sun, or the moon, or all the other stars, we see them going from east to west; but this one was carried from north to south—for Palestine lies south of Persia. Next, one can also see this from the time. For it does not appear at night, but at midday, while the sun is shining; and no a star can do this, not even the moon. For when the sun appears the moon immediately disappears. But this star overcame even the beams of the sun by its own splendor, appearing brighter than them. Thirdly, from its appearing, and disappearing. For on their journey to Palestine it appeared leading them, but after they reached Jerusalem, it hid itself. But when they had left Herod and were about to leave, it shows itself; all of which is nothing like the motion of a star, but of some highly rational power. It did not even have a direction of its own, but when they moved, it moved; when they stopped, it stopped, like the pillar of the cloud for the Israelites. Fourthly, one can see this clearly, from its way of indicating. For it did not remain high up to point out the place — for they couldn't have found it from that — but it came down and did so.... For because of its immense height, it could not accurately indicate so confined a spot, and reveal it to those who wished to see it. And this any one may see from the moon, which is far larger than the stars, yet seems equally near every one that lives on the whole wide earth. How then, tell me, did the star point out a spot so confined, just the space of a manger and a hut, unless it left that height and came down, and stood over the very head of the young child? And this is what the evangelist was hinting at when he said, "The star went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was."

Do you see then, by what a large number of proofs this star is shown not to be one of the many, nor to have shown itself according to the order of the visible creation?

—from Homily 6 on the Gospel of St. Matthew