



## ***St. John Chrysostom Church***

A Mission of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America  
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## **December 2014 SJCC News**

My Joy in the Lord,

As we come to the season of the Nativity, let us give thanks that commemorating the birth of our Lord, we can celebrate our new birth into our home. But as we celebrate, let us also remember those in need: our Food Basket needs filling.

I pray that all of you may have a safe and healthy Winter. I want to thank you for your prayers during my illness, and hope that you will be spared all flus, colds and similar disabilities. I will be gone for a week after the Nativity. Fr. James Worth will serve for me on the 28<sup>th</sup>, Fr. George Shawareb will be available if you need a priest any other time. His number is (303) 949-5809. I will be back on Jan 3.

I wish all of you a blessed Nativity Fast, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

“May God bless us, every one!”

With love, in Christ,  
Fr. Seraphim

**St. Nicholas is coming!** We will have a visit from St. Nicholas this Sunday, Dec. 7. I hope you and your children will be there to see him.

**Beginning this month we will start having work parties once a month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday.** We will begin at noon and end for Vespers. This 1<sup>st</sup> work party will be to clear the Sunday school rooms so our children will have a place to play and our Parish Council will have a place to work! Many things need to be moved downstairs or around, others need to be assembled and organized for use. The painting of the main Sunday School room will be postponed until warmer weather. Bring lunch or snacks. Drinks are provided.

If you have not come to the Tuesday night “**A Different Bible Study**”, you have been missing out on a treat. Paul Saieg is presenting a way to make a difference in your life and your faith. Every Tuesday, from 7 to 8:30. **There will be a break over the New Year after Dec. 16 until Jan 13!**

**Prayer Circle:** If you wish to be part of the Prayer Circle or for more information, please contact Rebecca Ogden at [r.braaten@comcast.net](mailto:r.braaten@comcast.net).

**REMINDER:** If you have not submitted your pledge form, please give it to Jonathan Spencer, our Financial Secretary, as soon as possible.

We have an official online St. John Chrysostom Church Calendar on Google. The URL for browsers is:

<https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=stjohngoldenco%40gmail.com&ctz=America/Denver>

To add it to your iPhone or iPad or Mac :

<https://www.google.com/calendar/ical/stjohngoldenco%40gmail.com/public/basic.ics>

To add it as an RSS feed:

<https://www.google.com/calendar/feeds/stjohngoldenco%40gmail.com/public/basic>

This calendar will be used to show all current services and events – and cancellations when necessary.

The following was written by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann in the early 60's

### **The Nativity Cycle**

As Orthodox Christians, we begin the celebration of the Nativity of Christ on December 25 -with a time of preparation. Forty days before the feast of the birth of Our Lord we enter the period of the Christmas Fast: to purify both soul and body to enter properly into and partake of the great spiritual reality of Christ's Coming. This fasting season does not constitute the intense liturgical season that is characteristic of Great Lent; rather, Christmas Lent is more of an "ascetical" rather than "liturgical" nature. Nevertheless, the Christmas fasting season is reflected in the life of the Church in a number of liturgical notes that announce the coming feast.

Within the forty days preparation the theme of the approaching Nativity is introduced in the services and liturgical commemorations, little by little. If the beginning of the fast on November 15 is not liturgically marked by any hymn, five days later, on the eve of the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, we hear the first announcement from the nine "irmoi" of the Christmas Canon: "Christ is born, glorify Him!"

With these words something changes in our life, in the very air we breathe, in the entire mood of the Church's life. It is as if we perceive far, far away, the first light of the greatest possible joy -the coming of God into His world! Thus the Church announces the coming of Christ, the Incarnation of God, His entrance into the world for its salvation. Then, on the two Sundays preceding Christmas, the Church commemorates the Forefathers and the Fathers: the prophets and the saints of the Old Testament who prepared that coming, who made history itself into the expectation, the waiting for, the salvation and reconciliation of mankind with God. Finally, on December 20th, the church begins the Forefeast of the Nativity, whose liturgical structure is similar to the Holy week preceding Pascha -for the birth of the Son of God as child is the beginning of the saving ministry which will lead Him, for the sake of our salvation, to the ultimate sacrifice of the Cross.

### **The Eve**

The liturgical services of December 24th, the Eve of the Nativity, are:

1. The Hours
2. Vespers, and
3. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.

Coming at the end of the Forefeast, and indeed of the entire "Advent," the Hours summarize all the themes of the feast and make them into a last and solemn announcement. In the special psalms, hymns and biblical readings prescribed for each hour, the joy and power of Christ's Coming are proclaimed. It is one last meditation on the cosmical meaning of the Nativity, on the decisive and radical change it performed in the entire creation.

Vespers, which usually follows the Hours, inaugurates the celebration of the feast itself, for, as we know, the liturgical day begins in the evening. The tone of this celebration is given by the five stikhira on "Lord, I call . . . ." What they really are is an explosion of joy for the gift of Christ's Incarnation which is now fulfilled! Eight biblical readings show that Christ is the fulfillment of all prophecies, that His Kingdom is the Kingdom "of all ages," that all human history finds its meaning in it, and the entire cosmos its center. The Liturgy of St. Basil which follows Vespers was in the past the baptismal liturgy at which catechumens were baptized, chrismated and integrated into the Church, the Body of Christ. The double joy of the feast, for the newly-baptized and other members of the Church, is reflected in the prokeimenon of the day:

The Lord said to me: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten Thee.

Ask of me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth as

Thy possession.

Then, at the end of the Liturgy, the celebrant, taking a lighted candle to the very center of the Church, and surrounded by the entire congregation, intones the troparion and kontakion of the feast:

Thy 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 Thee,  
The Sun of Righteousness,  
And to know Thee, the Orient from on high.  
O Lord, glory to Thee!

### **The Vigil and the Liturgy**

Since Vespers of the feast already have been celebrated, the Vigil begins with Great Compline and the joyful proclamation from Isaiah "God is with us!" The order of Matins is that of a great feast. Now, for the first time, the full Canon "Christ is born ..," one of the most beautiful canons in Orthodox worship, is sung while the faithful venerate the icon of Christ's Nativity. The Praises follow, summarizing the joy and themes of the entire feast:

Make glad, O you righteous! Greatly rejoice, O heavens!  
Dance for joy, O mountains; for Christ is born!  
The virgin has become like the cherubic throne.  
She carries at her bosom God the Word, made flesh.  
Shepherds glorify the newborn child.  
Wise men offer the master gifts.  
Angels praise Him and sing:  
Lord, past understanding, glory to Thee!

Concluding the celebration of the Nativity of Christ is the Liturgy of the day itself with its festal antiphons proclaiming:

The Lord will send Thee the scepter of power from Zion: "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies."  
With Thee is dominion on the day of Thy birth, in the radiance of holiness.

### **The Post-feast**

On the second day of the feast, the Synaxis of the Theotokos is celebrated. Combining the hymns of the Nativity with those celebrating the Mother of God, the Church points to Mary as the one through whom the Incarnation was made possible. His humanity - concretely and historically - is the humanity He received from Mary. His Body is, first of all, her body, His life is her life. This feast, the assembly in honor of the Theotokos, is probably the most ancient feast of Mary in the Christian tradition, the very beginning of her veneration by the Church.

Six days of post-feast bring the Christmas season to a close on December 31. At the services of all these days, the Church repeats the hymns and songs glorifying Christ's Incarnation, reminding us that the source and the foundation of our salvation is only to be found in the One who, as God before the ages, came into this world and for our sake was "born as a little Child."

Rev. Alexander Schmemmann

### Parishioner Celebrations

**NOTE: If you don't see your day listed OR see your day listed on the wrong day  
PLEASE let Fr. Seraphim know – as soon as possible**

#### December

12/02	Namesday	Margo Waisanen
12/03	Birthday	Margo Waisanen
12/06	Namesday	Haley Bergren
12/06	Namesday	Nickolas Higgins
12/09	Namesday	Hannah Fox
12/11	Birthday	Micco Waisanen
12/16	Namesday	Jonathan Spencer
12/16	Namesday	Rebecca Ogden
12/12	Birthday	Jaimy Weddingfeld
12/16	Birthday	Samuel Wretling
12/18	Birthday	Rebecca Ogden
12/21	Birthday	Jacque Gisetti
12/26	Birthday	Christina Veselak
12/30	Anniversary	Nathan & Dana Berry
12/31	Namesday	Melia Weddingfeld

#### January

01/02	Namesday	Seraphima Rahe
01/17	Birthday	Nathan Berry
01/17	Birthday	Larissa Spencer
01/22	Namesday	Timothy Spencer
01/22	Namesday	Timothy Wretling
01/29	Anniversary	Rebecca & Michael Ogden

### PROSPHORA Baking Schedule

**REMINDER:** PLEASE make sure that you bring ONE (and only one) prosphora with names for commemoration -this includes both living and departed, if some of the living or departed are not Orthodox, I want them anyway - to church at least the night before the date on which it is due. You can bring it up to three weeks before and we'll freeze it until the date, but don't try to bring it that morning. I usually start the Proskomedia early and need the prosphora to be there. If it's not there by the night before, I will defrost a spare to use. Thank you for your consideration.

#### December

7	Jonathan Spencer
14	Rebecca Ogden
21	Jacque Gisetti
28	Seraphima Rahe

#### January

4	Open
11	Larissa Spencer
18	Timothy Spencer
25	Rebecca Ogden

**We will always need prosphora.** I will be happy to come to your house and bake them with you if you're not sure how to do it.

## Schedule of Services and Events

### December

6	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
7	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
			St. Nicholas visit	
9	Tue	7:00 pm	<u>A Different Bible Study</u>	
13	Sat	noon	<b><u>Work Party at church</u></b>	
		5:00 pm	Vespers	
14	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	<b>Sunday of the Forefathers</b>
16	Tue	7:00 pm	<u>A Different Bible Study</u>	final until next year
20	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
21	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	<b>Sunday of the Fathers</b>
24	Wed	9:00 am	Royal Hours	<b>Nativity Eve</b>
			Vesperal Liturgy	
		7:00 pm	Vigil	
25	Thu	9:00 am	Liturgy	<b>Nativity of our Lord</b>
27	Sat		<b>NO Vespers</b>	
28	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	

### January

3	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
4	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	<b>Sunday before the Theophany</b>
5	Mon	9:00 am	Royal Hours	<b>Theophany Eve</b>
		6:30 pm	Vesperal Liturgy with Blessing of Water	
6	Tue	6:30 pm	Liturgy	<b>Theophany</b>
10	Sat	noon	<b><u>Work Party at church</u></b>	
		5:00 pm	Vespers	
11	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	<b>Sunday after the Theophany</b>
13	Tue	7:00 pm	<u>A Different Bible Study</u>	
17	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
18	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
20	Tue	7:00 pm	<u>A Different Bible Study</u>	
24	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
25	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
27	Tue	7:00 pm	<u>A Different Bible Study</u>	
31	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	

House Blessing schedule will be sent out at the end of December.