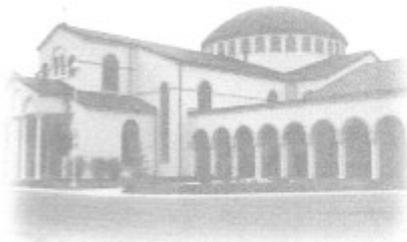


**PROTO-MARTYR STEPHEN THE ARCHDEACON &  
SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST**

**DECEMBER 27, 2020**



**ST. NICHOLAS  
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

2250 East Paris Ave, Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
616-954-2700 ▪ [info@stnicholasgr.com](mailto:info@stnicholasgr.com) ▪ [www.stnicholasgr.com](http://www.stnicholasgr.com)

**CLERGY**

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH  
*Archbishop of New York & Metropolitan of all North America*

His Grace Bishop ANTHONY  
*Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest*

Very Reverend Michael Nasser  
*Pastor of St. Nicholas ▪ 616-216-3537 ▪ [frmichael@stnicholasgr.com](mailto:frmichael@stnicholasgr.com)*

V. Rev. Fr. Elias Mitchell  
*Pastor Emeritus*

Reverend Theodore Sirotko  
Rev. Archdeacon David Khorey  
Rev. Deacon Justin Adolphson

Rev. Deacon Clement Nicoloff  
Subdeacon Nicholas Rock



## WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS

Thank you for attending today's Divine Liturgy. Please register your visit by completing the guest book located on the table in the narthex. We would appreciate getting to meet you, so feel free to join us for refreshments & fellowship in the Cultural Center.

We believe **Holy Communion** to be a sign that in Christ we have all things in common, share an identical faith, and are united fully to the Orthodox Church. Anyone interested in learning more about our faith is encouraged to speak with one of our clergy. Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting, & regular confession are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

## WHO WE ARE

St. Nicholas is a worshipping community in the Antiochian Orthodox Christian tradition that preserves, proclaims, and practices the Faith given by Christ to the Apostles, serving Him, one another and our neighbors. We manifest His love through sacramental and liturgical life, education, hospitality, works of mercy, and fellowship.

Our parish exists to seek and share Christ's love so that ALL will find Eternal Life in Him.

We would love to share more about our Orthodox Faith with you. Our website and our bookstore are great resources to assist you in learning more about us and what we believe! Also, feel free to make an appointment with our pastor.

We trust that you will experience Christ's presence as you worship with us today.



# HYMNS AND READINGS OF THE DAY

## HYMNS

### ***RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION (TONE 4)***

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

### ***APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (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 learn therefrom to worship Thee, O Sun of Justice, and to know that from the east of the Highest Thou didst come. O Lord, glory to Thee.

### ***APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY (TONE 2)***

Proclaim, O Joseph, to David, the grandparent of God, the amazing wonders; for thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; for with the shepherds thou didst give glory, with the Magi thou didst worship, and by the angel it was revealed to thee. Wherefore, plead thou with Christ God to save our souls.

### ***APOLYTIKION OF ST. STEPHEN (TONE 4)***

The crown of the Kingdom hath adorned the brow of thy head because of the contests that thou hast endured for Christ God, thou first of the martyred Saints; or when thou hadst censured the Jews' madness, thou sawest Christ thy Savior standing at the right hand of the Father. O Stephen, ever pray Him for us, that He would save our souls.

### ***APOLYTIKION OF ST. NICHOLAS (TONE 4)***

Thy work of justice did show thee to thy congregation a canon of faith, the likeness of humility, a teacher of abstinence, O Father Bishop Nicholas. Wherefore, by humility thou didst achieve exaltation, and by meekness richness. Intercede, therefore, with Christ to save our soul.

### ***KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (TONE 3)***

On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in Essence; to the Unapproachable, the earth doth offer a small cave; Angels join in choir with shepherds in giving glory; with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; for our sakes is born a young Child, He Who existed before the ages as God.

## EPISTLE

*His voice has gone out into all the earth.  
The heavens declare the glory of God.*

### **The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles 6:8-7:5, 47-60**

In those days, Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel. The high priest said, "Is this so?" And Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.' Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, though he had no child. But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says, 'Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool. What house will you build for Me', says the Lord, 'or what is the place of My rest? Did not My hand make all these things?' You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and

ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, Whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.” Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they grinded their teeth against him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.” But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

## GOSPEL

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew 2:13-23**

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 until 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 over 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 a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

## SYNAXARION

On December 27 in the Holy Orthodox Church, the second day of the After-feast of the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the Venerable-confessor Theodore the Branded; and the holy Apostle, First Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen, one of the Seven Deacons.

### Verses

With crowns of words, as it were with stones most precious,  
I now crown Stephen, whom the stones crowned before time.  
On the twenty-seventh a stony destiny took Stephen away.

Stephen was the first and archdeacon of the seven deacons whom the holy apostles ordained and appointed to the service of assisting the poor in Jerusalem. Among the Proto-martyr's persecutors was his kinsman Saul, who became the Apostle Paul. At that time, the Most-holy Theotokos, standing at a distance with John the Theologian, witnessed the martyrdom of this first martyr for the truth of her Son and God. Gamaliel, a prince of the Jews and a secret Christian, clandestinely took Stephen's body and buried it on his own estate.

On the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the holy and just Ancestors of God: Joseph the Betrothed of the Holy Virgin, our Lady the Theotokos; James the Brother of the Lord and the First Bishop of Jerusalem; and David the Prophet and King.

### Verses

I honor Joseph, the Betrothed of the Virgin, who to be her  
protector was alone chosen.  
Thou art a carpenter's son, but also the brother of the Lord that  
built all with a word, O blest James.  
What shall I say, seeing that the Lord testifieth, as a man after Mine  
own heart, I have found David.

David committed adultery and murder, yet God forgave him and glorified him above all the kings of Israel. He gave him the great

grace to compose the most beautiful penitential prayers (the Psalms) and to prophesy the coming of Christ. God designated Joseph to protect the Most-holy Virgin, and imparted to him great honor in the plan of the salvation of mankind. The Apostle James is called the “Brother of the Lord” because he was the son of the righteous Joseph the Betrothed. James greatly loved Jesus and, according to tradition, he traveled to Egypt with the Most-holy Virgin and Joseph when Herod sought to slay the newborn King.

By their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.



### TRISAGION PRAYERS OF MERCY

In memory of the 40-day falling asleep in the Lord of the handmaiden of God Samira Ajlouny offered by her daughter Joanne Ajlouny Nicola and husband Nick Nicola and family, Lena and Derek Alley, Alexandra and Nick Ellis, Nicholas Nicola, and Sonia Nicola. May her memory be Eternal!

In memory of the six-month falling asleep in the Lord of the servant of God George Zain offered by Lorraine and family. May his memory be Eternal!

In memory of the one year anniversary of the falling asleep in the Lord of Steve Thomas. Also for Aminee Nicola, Rose Nicola, and Joanne Bitar offered by Barbara Thomas. May their memories be Eternal!

In memory of the 17-year falling asleep in the Lord of the Servant of God Awwad Haddad by Nihad Haddad and Rami Haddad. May his memory be Eternal!

## HOLY OBLATION IS OFFERED

For the Health and Blessings of Father Michael on the occasion of his 55th birthday by your St. Nicholas family. May God grant you many more years!

For the Health and Blessings of Marve Halbert on the occasion of his birthday by Pat Halbert. May God continue to bless you with good health and much happiness. With love always, Pat.

For the Health and Blessings of Pat and Diane Coleman on the occasion of their 40th wedding anniversary by Andrew and Sarah; Patrick, Lindsey, Luke, and William; and Ben, Ashley, and Isabella. Thank you for the wonderful example you have set for all! May God continue to bless them and grant them many more years!

For the Health and Blessings of Steve Zain by his mother Lorraine. May God grant him many years!

For the Health and Blessings of Joanne Nicola and Stephanie Thomas on the occasion of their birthdays by Barbara Thomas. May God grant them many healthy years!

For the Health and Blessings of Luke McCloskey on the occasion of his 6th birthday by Pat, Lindsey, and William. Let your light continue to shine bright! May God grant you many more years!

In memory of Lucille Thomas, offered by Barbara Thomas. May her memory be Eternal!

In memory of the members of St. Nicholas who departed in the upcoming month of January. May their memory be Eternal!

## REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS

*If you desire a name to be added to this prayer list, Holy Oblations may be offered, with the option of being added to the bulletin Prayer List for 40 days.*

### LIVING

Metropolitan Paul      Archpriest George  
Archbishop John      Archpriest Joseph

And all the victims of tragedy, violence, and poverty throughout our Nation, in Brazil, England, Russia and throughout the world.

### HOLY OBLATIONS

Marve	Steve	Stephanie
Pat	Joanne	Luke
Diane		

### ONGOING PRAYERS

Attallah Amash	Barbara Sielaff	Marge Simon
Audrey Nicoloff	Joe Corey	Roy Gurk
Vera Mijatovic	Laura Lee	David Francis
Ralph Thomas	Shirley Salhaney	Michael Cotter
David Corey	Hatem Karadsheh	



**DEPARTED**

**NEWLY DEPARTED**

Joy

And all the newly departed victims of tragedy, violence, and poverty  
throughout our Nation, in Brazil, Germany, England  
and throughout the world.

**TRISAGION/HOLY OBLATIONS**

Priest Jerome  
Samira  
George  
Steve  
Aminee  
Rose  
Joanne  
Awwad  
Lucille  
David  
Mahrouse  
Marian

Theodore  
Patricia  
Bea  
Nicholas  
Alexandra  
Nick  
Dennis  
Edward  
Nazema  
Essa  
Lambert

Lena  
Latife  
Minerva  
George  
Gazelle  
William  
Camille  
Abe  
America  
George  
Abe



