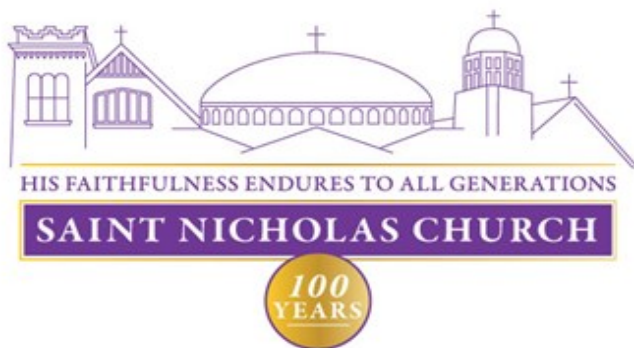


**SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
(THE GENEALOGY)**

DECEMBER 18, 2022



CLERGY

His All Holiness, JOHN X
Patriarch of Antioch and all the East

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

Very Reverend Elias Mitchell
Pastor Emeritus

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

Rev. Deacon Clement Nicoloff
Rev. Deacon John Kaufman
Subdeacon Nicholas Rock

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WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS

Thank you for attending today's Divine Liturgy. Please register your visit by completing the guest book and taking a visitor's packet both 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 Church is a worshipping community living and sharing the Faith Christ gave to the Apostles.

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 2)

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY (TONE 2)

Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their prayers, O Christ God, 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 PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY (TONE 3)

The Virgin cometh today to the cave to give birth, ineffably to bring forth the Word eternal. Therefore, rejoice, O earth at the message with the angels and shepherds give glory to him who shall appear by his own will as a young child, he who is from eternity God.

EPISTLE

*Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.
For Thou art justified in all that Thou hast done for us.*

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the 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 foundations, 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, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so 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 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.

**The Reading from the Holy Gospel
according to St. 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 Shealtiel, and Shealtiel 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 were 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 had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus.



HOLY OBLATIONS

For the Health and Blessings of Sandy Burgoyne and Kevin Mitchell, offered by Barbara Thomas.

For the Health and Blessings of Sienna Riley (one year), Joanne Nicola, Stephanie Thomas, Kinsley Riley (five years) on their birthdays, offered by Barbara Thomas. May God grant them many healthy and happy years!

For the Health and Blessings of Mimi Amash, Kara Amash, and Alexander Amash on the occasion of their birthdays, offered by their families with love. May God grant them many years!

For the Health and Blessings of Brian Lafranboise on his birthday, offered by his family. May God grant him many years!

In memory Amine Nicola, Rose Nicola, Lucille Thomas, Steve Thomas (three years), and Joanne Bitar (10 years) on their falling asleep in the Lord, offered by Barbara Thomas. May their memory be Eternal!

SYNAXARION

(LIVES OF THE SAINTS OF THE DAY)

On December 18 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs Sebastian and Zoe of Rome, and those with them.

On this day, the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, we have been enjoined by our holy and God-bearing Fathers to make commemoration of all them that from the beginning of time have been well-pleasing unto God, from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as Luke the Evangelist hath recounted historically; and likewise for the Prophets and Prophetesses, especially of Daniel the Prophet and the three holy youths.

It is also known as the Sunday of the Holy Genealogy. We remember the aforementioned names, those in the Old Testament who were related to Christ by blood, and those who spoke of His Birth as a man. In the Divine Liturgy, we shall read of Jesus Christ's lineage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew. In this way, the Church shows us that Christ truly became a man, taking on human nature. He was not a ghost, an apparition, a myth, a distant imagined god, or the abstract god of philosophers; such a god does not have a family tree. Our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has flesh and blood, human ancestors—many of whom sinned greatly, but like David, also repented greatly. Yet, all of these righteous ones in every age had been well-pleasing to God because they loved Him. By taking on human nature, the Son of God became like us in all ways, in flesh and blood, in mind and soul, and in heart and will. He differed from us in only one way: He could not sin. Since we know that Christ's human nature remained sinless, He is also fully divine, and He shows us the way in which we can avoid sin, and so improve and transform our human nature.

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

