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Archpriest John Jillions, Retired – Attached

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Good Morning and Welcome!

December 22, 2024

Sunday before the Nativity



- Sunday, December 22nd* 9:00 a.m. [*Divine Liturgy \(In-Person/Virtual - Click for Zoom Link\)*](#)
- Tuesday, December 24th* 5:00 p.m. [*Nativity Vigil \(In-Person/Virtual - Click for Zoom Link\)*](#)
- Wed., December 25th* 9:00 a.m. [*Nativity Divine Liturgy \(In-Person/Virtual - Click for Zoom Link\)*](#)
- Saturday, December 28th* 5:00 p.m. *Vespers*
- Sunday, December 29th* 9:00 a.m. [*Divine Liturgy \(In-Person/Virtual - Click for Zoom Link\)*](#)
Holiday Party – During Fellowship Hour

Welcome

*Welcome to all those visiting All Saints today!
Please join us downstairs for Fellowship after Liturgy!*

Happy Birthday

*Father Constantine – December 24th
Caleb Hayashida – December 26th*

News

All Saints Orthodox Church Annual Parish Meeting will be Sunday, February 16th.

If any parishioner would like to *serve on the Parish council*, please see Cathy Vargas. *Thank you!*

Parish By-Laws have been approved by His Grace Bishop Benedict. If you would like a copy, please contact Father Constantine.

Help Wanted

If you are interested in being a member of the Facilities Committee for the Parish, please see either Greg Belekewicz or Mark Ranstead. *Thank You!*

2025 Stewardship Form

2025 Stewardship Form and Letter were mailed to our membership on December 10th. Blank forms are available at Church and a link is available on the Church Website – under the Stewardship Tab. *Please return completed forms by January 10, 2025.* Any questions, please see Tom Denisky. *Thank you!*

Adult Education

Wednesday Vespers/Adult Education will meet next on January 8th – at which time we will be discussing Chapter 6 of *Acquiring the Mind of Christ* by Archimandrite Sergius.

Theology Café

The next gathering of the Theology Café will be January 14th - all are welcome, bring a friend! 7:30 PM at 107 Elizabeth St., Hartford CT. Please RSVP to Amy Hayashida by January 10th. (937-631-5989).

Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be Tuesday, January 21st beginning at 6:00 p.m. - Zoom meeting.

Fellowship Hour Sign-Up

Hosts and Hostesses needed for Fellowship Hours – please see the clipboard/sign-up sheet at the coffee window – please sign up for a Sunday or two that are convenient for you! Any questions, *please see Monica Kapral. Thank you!*

Church Metrics – Memory Eternal!

Eva Bantle – 12/22/01; Helen Kulawy – 12/23/93; Nicholas Kononchik – 12/23/99; Ann Scarchuk – 12/26/79; Gerasim Uwarow – 12/26/81; Emilian Zihailo – 12/27/76

Commemorations

Living:

Margaret, Roger, Daniel, Nicholas, Diane, Susan, Eileen, Mike, Ron

Departed:

Alina, Jozef, Theresa, James, Genevieve, Patrick, Shotiko, Glenn, Andrew, Ann Marie

All Saints Bookstore – December Sale

Beginning next Sunday, December 1st through to Sunday, December 29th all items in the bookstore will be **15% off!** If you are looking for a unique gift for someone, please stop by after Liturgy. Any questions, please see Cathy Vargas or Michael Stenko. *Thank you!*

Words from Father Constantine

Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in the city of Bethlehem during the reign of the emperor Augustus (Octavian). Caesar Augustus decreed that a universal census be made throughout his Empire, which then also included Palestinian Israel. The Jews were accustomed to be counted in the city from where their family came. The Most Holy Virgin and the Righteous Joseph, since they were descended from the house and lineage of King David, had to go to Bethlehem to be counted and taxed.

An angel of the Lord (Saint Cyprian says this was Gabriel) came before them and said: "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). The humble shepherds were the first to offer worship to Him Who condescended to assume the form of a humble servant for the salvation of mankind. Besides the glad tidings to the Bethlehem shepherds, the Nativity of Christ was revealed to the Magi by a wondrous star. Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Theophylactus, commenting on Saint Matthew's Gospel, say that this was no ordinary star. Rather, it was "a divine and angelic power that appeared in the form of a star." Saint Demetrius of Rostov says it was a "manifestation of divine energy" (Narrative of the Adoration of the Magi). Entering the house where the Infant lay, the Magi "fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Mt. 2:11).

During the first three centuries, in the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Cyprus, the Nativity of Christ was combined together with the Feast of His Baptism on January 6, and called "Theophany" ("Manifestation of God"). This was because of a belief that Christ was baptized on anniversary of His birth, which may be inferred from Saint John Chrysostom's sermon on the Nativity of Christ: "it is not the day on which Christ was born which is called Theophany, but rather that day on which He was baptized." The joint celebration of the Nativity of Christ and His Theophany continued to the end of the fourth century in certain Eastern Churches, and until the fifth or sixth century in others.

The Nativity of Christ has long been counted as one of the Twelve Great Feasts. It is one of the greatest, most joyful and wondrous events in the history of the world. "The angel said to the shepherds, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' Then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, glorifying God and saying: 'Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' Those who heard these things were astonished at what the shepherds told them concerning the Child. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen" (Luke 2:10-20). Thus the Nativity of Christ, a most profound and extraordinary event, was accompanied by the wondrous tidings proclaimed to the shepherds and to the Magi. This is a cause of universal rejoicing for all mankind, "for the Savior is Born!"

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Troparion/Kontakion

Troparion — Tone 2

Great are the accomplishments of faith, / for the Three Holy Youths rejoiced in the source of the flame, as if by restful waters,¹ / and the Prophet Daniel appeared / as a shepherd of lions as of sheep. / By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Kontakion — Tone 6

(For when the Sunday before the Nativity falls on December 18-19)

You would not worship an image made by hands, O thrice-blessed youths; / but shielded by the ineffable Essence, you were glorified through your ordeal by fire. / In the midst of the unbearable fire you called upon God, crying: / "Hasten, O compassionate One, / and in Your mercy come to our aid, / for if You will, You can do so."²

Kontakion — Tone 1

(For when the Sunday before the Nativity falls on December 20-24)

Be glad, O Bethlehem! Prepare yourself, O Ephratha; / for the Lamb is on her way to give birth to the Great Shepherd she carries in her womb. / The God-bearing Fathers will rejoice, beholding Him, / and with the shepherds, they will praise the Virgin who nurses Him.

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

<https://www.oca.org/readings/daily/2024/12/22/5>

Gospel according to Matthew 1:1-25

<https://www.oca.org/readings/daily/2024/12/22/6>

Outreach Opportunitites

Foodshare

There is a basket for donations of nonperishable food items for Foodshare in the “Donations Corner” in the Church Hall! We are also in need of brown bags with handles. Also, please avoid food items in glass containers. *Please remember to thank God for your blessings by helping those in need. God Bless and Thank you!*

Golden Elephant

Golden Elephant Update: She is in need of cleaning supplies, hangers, dog toys, a cat box with liter and gift cards (VISA, grocery stores). Golden Elephant is also asking for prayers come January, as she will be starting school. *Thank you!*

Reminder - Feed a Friend – Sunday – January 12th

Please put your lunches into refrigerator in the Church Hall (Thank You!)

Help the poor, the hungry, the homeless, and the victims of domestic abuse here in the Greater Hartford region by giving them something that's hard to come by: A Free Lunch! We'll deliver bagged lunches to Loaves and Fishes in Hartford, beginning today and every second Sunday of each month, who has numerous men, women, and children, who will appreciate the food you provide and the love that you show in making it. This is a great opportunity to get your kids to help and discuss with them the words of Christ: "When I was hungry, you fed me...."

To participate - Make & bring a brown-bag lunch to Church which includes all of the following:

- 1) Sandwich,
- 2) Piece of Fruit
- 3) Bag of Chips/pretzels
- 4) Canned/Bottled Drink &
- 5) Desert (pudding, cookie, etc.)

Important Note: For the purpose of uniformity, please include all/only the items above. Also PLEASE write type of sandwich (and the presence of any allergens) on bag.

Sixth Sunday of Advent – Wreath Reading

Light Green Candle – which expresses faith.

Light Blue Candle – which expresses hope.

Light Gold Candle – which expresses love.

Light White Candle – which signifies peace.

Light Purple Candle – which signifies repentance.

Light Red Candle – which signifies Holy Communion.

The sixth candle reminds us that Christ, Who came in Bethlehem and Who will come again at the end of time, comes to us now in the great Sacrament of His Presence, Holy Communion. The reason He was born in Bethlehem was that we might allow Him to come and be born in the manger of our hearts.

Lord, we thank You that You not only came in Bethlehem but that You continue to come in every Eucharist. Amen

Please Note

Any photos taken at Church events may be used on the Church website or Facebook page. If you have any questions on this, please see or contact Father Constantine. <https://www.oca.org/files/PDF/official/2018-1024-socialmediaguidelines-clergy-lay-leaders.pdf>

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

