

From the Divine Office for St. Spyridon (Dec. 12)

O heir of the land which is the inheritance of the meek, glory of the Fathers, O Spyridon: by the power of your wise words and divine grace, you boldly routed the deadly error and madness of Arius. In the Spirit, you promoted the divine and saving teachings which give light to all orthodox Christians, teaching them to glorify the only-begotten Word, who is truly consubstantial to the unbegotten Father, who grants great mercy to the world. (Vespers)

Today, let us celebrate Spyridon, a hierarch of the Lord, sanctified from his childhood. Having received from the divine glory the tablets of the new law of grace, he was known to all by his miracles as a witness to the divine radiance, a fervent defender of the poor, and a reconciler of sinners. By God's will, he has become a hierarch capable of beseeching the Lord that He may enlighten us all. (Orthros)



SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS DECEMBER 12, 2021



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (3rd)

1: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka. Hale-loueya.

3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ.

People: **O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You. Alleluia.**

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 4) pg. 40

The women disciples of the Lord, having learned from the angel the joyful announcement of the resurrection, and having rejected the ancestral sentence, proudly told the apostles: Death is despoiled. Christ God is risen, bestowing to the world great mercy.”

Troparion of the Forefathers (Tone 2)

Through faith, You have justified Your Ancestors, O Christ our God, and through them You have espoused in advance the Church set apart from the Gentiles. The saints rejoice in glory because, from the seed of these Ancestors, has come forth the glorious fruit, who gave You birth without seed.

Through their intercession, O Christ God, save our souls.

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1) pg. 15

In giving birth, you preserved your virginity, and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life, being the Mother of Life. Through your intercessions, save our souls from death.

Kondakion of the Preparation of the Nativity of our Lord (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth to the Eternal Word of God in an ineffable manner. Rejoice, therefore, O Universe, when you hear this news, and glorify with the angels and the shepherds, Him who shall appear a new Child being God from all eternity.

The Promised Land 1400-1375 BC – Joshua leads the Israelites to conquer parts of the “Promised Land” (Joshua). **1375-1050 BC** – Israelite tribes settle in the Promised Land. Governed by tribal elders or Judges, they extend their control of the area at the expense of the Philistines (Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel 1-7).

The United Kingdom 1050-931 BC – The Israelites form a united kingdom under Saul, David and Solomon. This is the Golden Age of the Israelite nation. Saul was chosen by God and anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the first king. In 1007, during a losing battle with the Philistines, he fell on his sword to avoid capture. God chooses the righteous although flawed David to succeed Saul through the prophet Samuel. God makes a covenant with him that his throne would be established forever. David would be the ancestor of the Messiah, promised to come from the house of David. The third king, Solomon, was renowned for his wisdom and power. He is considered author of the earliest Biblical Wisdom Literature. Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem but ultimately turned to the idolatry of his foreign wives (1 Sam 8-31; 1 Kings 1-11, 1 Chronicles). **Breakup of the United Kingdom 931-.860 BC** – The kingdom is divided in two: north and south, Israel and Judah. Unity and monotheism give way to squabbling and pagan influences (1 Kings 12- 17, 2 Chronicles. **860-722 BC** – Prophets Elijah, Elisha, Joel, Amos, Hosea and Isaiah insist on a return to monotheism, justice among the people (1 Kings 17-22; 2 Kings 1-17; Joel, Amos, Hosea and Isaiah. **722 BC** – Kingdom of Israel defeated. The victorious Assyrians settle foreigners in the land. The intermingling of Israelites and pagans gives rise to the Samaritans (2 Kings 17-24). **700-590 BC** – Prophets Naoum, Zepheniah, Jeremiah, Habbakuk and Ezekiel warn the Kingdom of Judah that they too have forsaken God and face destruction. The Babylonian Captivity 588-586 BC – The Babylonians attack Jerusalem, conquer it and deport the elite to Babylon. Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesy a return. **537 BC** –The Persians defeat the Babylonians and allow the Jews to return to their country and rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 1-6). Many Jews remain in Babylon and prosper there (Esther). **535-430 BC** – Judea is restored, the temple scrolls become the basis of the Old Testament and Jewish life is revived (Ezra, Nehemiah) under nominal Persian rule. **Greek and Roman Rule 333 BC** – Alexander the Great defeats the Persians and extends Greek rule throughout the Middle East. Jews become an important colony in Alexandria, Egypt. **250 BC** – Jews in Alexandria translate the Old Testament into Greek. Others books written in Aramaic, Greek or Hebrew are included (Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, and parts of Daniel) in what is called the Septuagint (LXX). The books of Maccabees, written later in Hebrew, were translated into Greek and added to the Septuagint. **175-164 BC** –The Jews in the Holy Land are suppressed by the Greek ruler of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes, who defiles the temple and tries to abolish the Jewish religion. The Jews, led by the Maccabees, revolt and recover Jewish independence. (1 to 4 Maccabees), which lasts until 63 BC. **63 BC** – The Romans seize control of Syria. The Jewish kingdom becomes the Roman province of Palestine. Prophecies Written in the Old Testament Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, begins with the stories of the creation and the fall of Adam and Eve. Genesis concludes their tragic story with these words addressed to the serpent: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will strike at your head while you strike at his heel” (Gen 3:15). Many Fathers saw this as the first heralding of the Messiah’s victory over sin and death (the “proto-gospel”). Satan’s seeming defeat of Christ on the cross is but a striking of His heel while Christ’s striking at his head is His ultimate defeat of Satan. It would take countless generations – from the beginning of humanity, through the years of both Old and New Testaments and the subsequent history of this age – for this event to be fulfilled. The Prophets Read in the Church At the time of the Hebrew kingdoms (the six or seven hundred years before Christ) prophets were periodically calling the people to trust in God despite the troubles of their nation. Despite conflicts with the Philistines or the Assyrians, and even in the midst of defeat and exile by the Babylonians and occupation by the Romans, the prophets encouraged the people to trust in God who would provide a deliverer. After the death and resurrection of Christ the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit came to see these prophecies fulfilled in a decisive way by Jesus Christ, who delivers all mankind – not just the Jewish people – from its ultimate enemies, sin and death, not just foreign oppressors. Around the Old Testament prophecies of a deliverer the apostles built their preaching of the true Messiah (Anointed One) of God, Christ Jesus the Savior. What we call the Old Testament was the Bible for the early Church as well as for Judaism and its prophecies shaped the presentation of the incarnation in the New Testament. As the following quotations show, the apostles considered these prophecies as clearly pointing to the coming of Christ: • His Conception (Isaiah 7:14, cited in Mt 1:23) - “A virgin shall conceive and bear a son.” • The Place of His Birth (Micah 5:2, cited in Mt 2:6) - “Bethlehem...out of you shall come a ruler...” • The Flight into Egypt (Hosea 11:1, cited in Mt 2:15) - “Out of Egypt I called my son.” • The Slaughter of the Infants (Jeremiah 31:15, cited in Mt 2:18) - “A voice was heard in Ramah...” • His home in Nazareth (possibly Judges 13:5, cited in Mt 2:23) - “He shall be called a Nazarene.” Other prophecies were frequently cited as pointing to Jesus as the Messiah: • Numbers 24:17 - “a star shall come forth out of Jacob...” • Isaiah 11:1 - “There shall come forth a shoot from the root of Jesse...” • Isaiah 60:5-6 “...they shall bring gold and frankincense” While there are no verbatim quotations of prophecies in Luke’s infancy narratives, there are allusions to Old Testament scriptures throughout. In Luke 1:17, for example, John the Baptist is described by the angel as going “before him in the spirit and power of Elijah.” This alludes to Malachi 4:5-6: “Behold I am sending to you Elijah the Thesbite before the great and notable day of the Lord comes.” These allusions, and others throughout the Gospels, reflect the early Church’s belief that the entire Old Testament leads us to see Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Healing of Archie Opatka**
 HS Helen Melchione. Requested by Nick Rahall
 +Raymond Kalil, Louise Kalil, Charlotte Ghiz, Eva Ghiz, Louis Ghiz, Lena Kouri. Requested by Robert Ghiz

December 24 Healing of Archie Opatka
Health and Salvation of our families and friends.
Deceased members of our families and friends.
 +Raymond Yanni (3 Yr.). Requested by Mae Yanni

December 25 Healing of Archie Opatka
Health and Salvation of our families and friends.
Deceased members of our families and friends.

This morning's coffee is hosted by Antoinette Arraj



CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGIES

Fri 12/24, 4PM - Vesper/Liturgy of St. Basil
Sat 12/25, 10AM—Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

UPCOMING LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Fri 12/17, 6PM - Service of Anointing
Wed 1/5, 6PM—Great Vespers for the Feast of the Theophany
Thu 1/6. 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Theophany followed by the Great Blessing of Water.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$2,310
Candles	\$ 55
Coffee Hr.	\$ 51
Donations	\$ 20
Christmas Flowers	\$ 195
Christmas Donations	\$ 650
TOTAL	\$3,281



Please go to archiesarmy.net to see updates on Archie Opatka's battle heptoblastoma. "O Christ, Physician of our souls and bodies, heal, bless and have mercy on Your child Archie!"

FINANCIALS

<u>11/2021</u>		<u>YTD(10/2021-11/2021)</u>	
Income	\$7,015	Income	\$11,944
Expenses	\$5,321	Expenses	\$10,302
Net	\$1,694	Net	\$ 1,642



THE BISHOP'S APPEAL: As we travel with the Virgin to Bethlehem where she will give birth to the Only-Begotten Son of God—let us not forget our Melkite Catholic Church by which Christ comes to our families and loved ones. **Please give an end-of-year, tax-deductible gift to the Melkite Church** in America and help our Church in countless ways. Help produce *SOPHIA* magazine, assist in the faith education of our young people, support the training of new priests and deacons, expand our missions and start new ones, and give support to our elderly priests. And remember those in the homelands of our Church. Please give generously so these vital works can continue and grow.

Sunday of the Forefathers (Second Sunday before the Nativity)

THE LITURGICAL PREPARATION for the feast of Christ's Nativity begins today with the Sunday of the Forefathers, which commemorates all those whose lives set the stage for the coming of the Messiah. Next week we observe the Sunday of the Ancestors of Christ, when we hear St Matthew's genealogy of those who were Christ's physical ancestors. From December 20 to 24 we observe a five-day "holy week" during which Christ's birth seems ever closer. As we sing during those days, "Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth." This fore-feast of the Nativity culminates on December 24, the Paramony of the feast. Usually translated as vigil or eve, paramony actually refers to the uninterrupted nature of the Church's prayer on this day. During the day the lengthier Great Hours or Royal Hours are chanted, followed by the Typika and a more elaborate than usual Great Vespers, to which is attached the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. A special service of Great Compline with a Litia for the feast ends the day. Sometimes this leads directly into the Orthros and Divine Liturgy of December 25. In some countries of Eastern Europe it culminates with a Holy Supper prior to the Liturgy. The same cycle of uninterrupted prayer is also prescribed for the Feast of the Theophany on January 5.

Prophecies of the Messiah

THE SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS intensifies the countdown to the feast of Christ's Nativity. During the Nativity Fast we celebrate the memorials of several Old Testament prophets – Obadiah (Nov. 19), Nahum (Dec. 1), Habbakuk (Dec. 2), Zephaniah (Dec. 3), Haggai (Dec. 16), and Daniel (Dec. 17). Today we reflect on how the entire Old Testament period has been a preparation for Christ and how we are called to be ready for His ultimate triumph. It is appropriate today to reflect on what the Scriptures tells us preceded the Incarnation. The following timeline and reading guide may be helpful in doing so. All the dates older than 1000 BC are approximate.

Before Time – The Word was with God before anything material came to be (John 1:1-4). It is through this eternal Word that our material creation comes into being.

The Pre-History of the Israelites Before 4000 BC

The creation of our universe, the human race falls away from communion with God, life on earth as we know it begins (Genesis 1-3). Genesis actually contains two creation stories. The first (Gen 1:1-2:3) is a version of an older Babylonian myth re-edited to teach that creation is by the will of the only true God, not the result of warring gods and demons. It is cast in the form of a single week to promote the character of the Sabbath as a day of rest. Its narrative (creation begins with a burst of light followed by the creation of the planets, etc.) harmonizes with the modern Big Bang theory and subsequent discoveries. **Before 3000 BC** – Sin prevails and increases, illustrated by Cain and Abel and Lamech, Noah and the Great Flood, (Gen 4-9). According to Jewish tradition, God makes a new covenant with Noah after the flood. Man is committed to observe the seven Noahide Laws prohibiting idolatry, murder, theft, sexual immorality, blasphemy, and the eating of meat with its blood (i.e. while the animal is still alive). They are also enjoined to establish courts of law. **Before 2100 BC** – The rise of Middle Eastern peoples, the Tower of Babel (Gen 10, 11). Jewish tradition sees the tower as an act of arrogance aimed at world domination by a particular people which God rejects. **Before 1991 BC** – Abraham and his sons Isaac and Jacob (Gen 12-36). God calls the Mesopotamian Abram, renames him and promises that his offspring will be as numerous as the stars and that they will inherit the land of Canaan. He establishes circumcision as the sign of that covenant.

Israel in Egypt

1900-1806 BC - Joseph and his brothers: the descendants of Abraham in Egypt (Gen 37-50). Sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, Joseph becomes the most powerful person in Pharaoh's court when he favorably interprets the sovereign's dream, averting a famine in Egypt. He is then able to rescue his father and brothers and insure the Israelites' survival. **1800-1446 BC** – The Israelites prosper, then are enslaved (Exodus 1, 2). **1450-1400 BC** – The call of Moses, the exodus from Egypt, beginnings of Judaism: the Ten Commandments, the establishment of the priesthood and erection of the tabernacle (Ex 2-40, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). This is the formative experience of Israel, celebrated each year at the Passover: their liberation from slavery in Egypt and passage through the Red Sea to freedom in the Land promised by God to Abraham and his descendants.

Prokimenon

Reader: Let the saints triumph in glory and let them sing for joy on their couches.

People: Let the saints triumph in glory and let them sing for joy on their couches.

Verse: Sing to the Lord a new song: His praise in the assembly of the saints.

People: Let the saints triumph in glory and let them sing for joy on their couches.

Reader: Let the saints triumph in glory

People: And let them sing for joy on their couches

Epistle: Eph. 5:8-19

Alleluia Verses

Your priests, O Lord, shall be clothed with holiness, and Your saintly ones shall shout for joy.

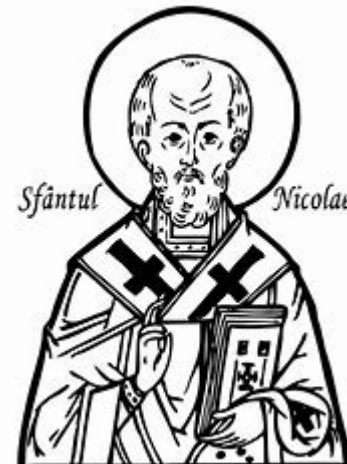
Verse: For the Lord has elected Sion, He has chosen it for His dwelling.

Gospel: Lk. 14:16-24, Sunday of the Forefathers

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We will have religious education this morning. Please get something to eat and I will meet you in the Hall.

Fr. Bryan



ORDER OF SAINT NICHOLAS

Bishop Nicholas has reactivated the Order of Saint Nicholas. The Order has done much to support the work of the Eparchy over the years. Please see the flyers in the back of the church for the bulletin boards for more details. Please prayerfully consider joining the Order.