

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS



*Icon of Saint Stephen Protomartyr -- December 27th*





***December 27, 2015***

**SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY: DAVID, JOSEPH AND JAMES – *Tone 6***  
**OUR VENERABLE FATHER AND CONFESSOR THEODORE THE BRANDED,**  
**BROTHER OF ST. THEOPHANES THE HYMNOGRAPHER**

***SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 28 – JANUARY 2***

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1 – *THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST; OUR HOLY FATHER BASIL THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For all parishioners

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2

6:00 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3 – 32ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: PREFEAST OF THEOPHANY; THE HOLY PROPHET MALACHI; THE HOLY MARTYR GORDIUS

8:45 AM – Divine Praises

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

---

*If you are reading the bulletin during the Liturgy (including the homily),  
please **stop** and be attentive – будьмо уважні!*

---

**2016 Liturgical Calendars** are available in the parish hall. A special “Thank You” to *Goodbody Mortuary* for one again sponsoring our calendars. The calendar gives the appointed scriptures readings for each day of the year.

***Read the scripture daily!***

**Thank You! - to all those who helped to clean and decorate the church for the feast of the Nativity. Special thanks go to Martha McMurtry and Vladimir Bachynsky for their cleaning of the tile floor of the church. May God bless you all for your generosity!**



***Mary consoles Eve***

# HOW TO WORSHIP

19 December 2015

*<http://pemptousia.com/2015/12/how-to-worship/>*

Every priest is asked questions about behavior during worship, both what should be done to show proper respect in the Lord's temple and what can be done to achieve more meaningful participation in the services. This article will attempt to address some of the more common questions and concerns; it draws on a variety of sources. These should not be taken as laws to be obeyed, but as aids to an attitude or frame of mind which will make our parish's worship more meaningful to each of us.

Whenever we enter or leave the temple we should do so as quietly as possible, so as not to disturb the prayers of our brothers and sisters.

As we enter or leave the temple, we should first face the altar and cross ourselves. Before going to our place, we should venerate the icon of the Patron Saint or of current Feast in the center of the temple and the icons of our Lord and the Theotokos (after buying and lighting candles, if we so desire).

It is best to avoid traffic in and out of the church during services. Especially do not enter or leave during a censing, an entrance, the Scripture readings, or the sermon; coming and going is especially distracting at these times. Being late for services is a common failing among Orthodox of all sorts, but it is not something we should be proud of. Leaving services early without a very good reason is just as bad.

While in the temple we should try to maintain an attitude of prayer and a spirit of humility, like the tax collector of the Gospels (Luke 18:10-14). Our purpose for coming is to approach our Lord and King in company with our brothers and sisters; we come together to constitute God's Church. These facts should

govern our attitudes and behavior.

We should avoid conversation in the church even if the service has not yet begun. We should spend the time before services preparing for worship; necessary conversation should be conducted quietly so as not to disturb the meditations of others.

We will get more out of the services if we pray rather than merely attend them. Allow the hymns to enter your heart, and make their words your own. Remember that the services are not a time for private prayers but for sharing in the common worship of the Church.

Follow the service with your body as well as your mind. Orthodox piety is rich in actions which enable the whole person to worship. We should cross ourselves at the proper times (on hearing an invocation of the Trinity, and at any prayer or petition which personally affects you). At censings and blessings the proper response is to bow to the priest (crossing oneself is not necessary). During Great Lent there are times when we kneel or do prostrations; follow the priest and altar servers in this matter. Kneeling is not proper on Sundays, since each Sunday is a feast of the Resurrection, a weekly Pascha. (The reader or choir is exempted from certain actions if performing them disrupts the service.)

Let us remember above all that the temple must be filled with an attitude of mutual love and respect. We have assembled to share in the Church's worship, to unite with each other and our Lord, to anticipate the joyful time when we are gathered into His Kingdom. Our attitude toward one another should reflect that of the Lord, who loves us all and desires nothing more than our spiritual growth and our salvation.

## CHRISTMAS LETTER OF HIS BEATITUDE SVIATOSLAV

*To the Most Reverend Archbishops and Metropolitans, God-loving bishops, honourable clergy, reverend religious, and beloved brothers and sisters in Ukraine and throughout the world.*

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased! (Luke 2:14)*

***Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!***

The evangelist Luke proclaims the words spoken by the angel who appeared to the shepherds: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2: 10-11)

The joy of the Nativity of Christ, the good news of the birth in human flesh of the Son of God Himself, is like a powerful beam of eternal sunlight that descends today from heaven to earth.

**Christ is born!** These are the words with which the heavenly powers gladdened the hearts of the shepherds who stood watch over their sheep. **Christ is born!** These tidings transformed night into day, sadness into consolation, waiting into the fulfilment of hope. Christ is born! This joy, which comes down from Heaven, inspires a person to act: to seek the Eternal God in a new-born babe, to serve Him as a neighbour, and to share this joy with others.

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.*

These are words from the Heavenly Liturgy, in which the angelic choirs praise God for His love towards His people. As participants and witnesses of this supernatural reality, the shepherds learn the true reason for the joy of Christmas. The Saviour has been born; in Him is disclosed the very core of our faith – faith in God's merciful love towards His creation, which makes us people upon whom His favour rests.

So it is that this heavenly hymn relates to each one of us! The angels glorify God on high for the simple reason that He eternally bestows His good will upon His people, that is, He desires for them what is good. He is our highest benefactor. The eternal active love of God the Father flows throughout the history of the whole world and is incarnated in the person of His beloved Son, who is born today in Bethlehem. The Evangelist John teaches us about the good will of God in these words: "the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins." (1 John 4: 9-10)

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace...*

Peace is one of the essential expressions of God's love for His people. No wonder the Old Testament prophets foretold that the coming of the Messiah on earth would bring peace on earth, grant people the gifts of love and justice, eliminate all evil and hatred, and restore harmony throughout the world. And so today we hear that Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Eternal King, upon whose shoulders rests all authority and honour, is the very same One of whom Isaiah spoke, now born at last. The peace, which the Lord brings, does not mean a temporary truce or a simple absence of war. A person obtains true peace only by reconciling with God and personally uniting with Him. The new-born Jesus unites and reconciles within Himself both God and mankind. As a result of this union and reconciliation, Christ becomes the source of peace in the whole world. The Apostle Saint Paul teaches us this about Christ – "For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Ephesians 2:14)

How long God's people awaited this peace, which Christ brought with His Nativity! With what eagerness the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, and with what persistence the wise men from the East journeyed to the place of His birth. But how they must have been awed by the fact that they found that long-awaited peace, not in an earthly ruler, not in the cleverness of a skilled diplomat, not in the power of a well-formed army, but in a fragile new-born homeless infant. And what's more, the foretold Prince of Peace, upon the moment of His birth, was forced to become a displaced person, a fugitive fleeing to escape the persecution of King Herod. This Wondrous Divine Wisdom, through the Mystery of the Nativity, teaches us that God's love, heavenly peace and glory come only when we humble ourselves before the least one among us, and that only in serving the needy will we meet God.

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!*

With God's help, we have lived through yet one more year – one more year of war. The suffering of our people has not ended; our trials have not come to an end. But we have survived and we carry on. To the surprise of the whole world, we have survived in the midst of immeasurable pain, loss of blood, and tears. In a war situation we've had to rethink the value and meaning of the words "peace" and "mercy", "courage" and "humanity", "allegiance" and "responsibility." We have learned that such zeal is found in prayer. By releasing the power of prayer, together with the whole world, we sincerely and persistently continue to entreat God for peace.

The road to peace has become for us the road to our neighbour. We are learning to be in solidarity. We are learning to recognize the needs of our soldiers at the front as our needs. We are learning to be concerned about the pain of those who have lost family members and friends, and the pain of the wounded and imprisoned, as if it were our own pain. In the midst of ever greater needs, economic hardships, corruption still present everywhere and lack of effective political management, we have not lost compassion for our neighbour, but have become more responsible and bolder in defending dignity. We continue to share with those in need: what we have, what we know and can do, what we believe in – and what we are. The way to our victory in Christ is that which unites, reconciles and makes us community. Solidarity, compassion and trust give us hope in God and reveal to us the true road to peace.

It is in this nationwide solidarity in faith, hope and love that we feel the active presence of God among us and His real birth in our homeland. The path to our neighbour has become for millions of Ukrainians the path to God's love. We might say that in this wondrous good will of God for us, in this solidarity, we have discovered the key to victory, for, as the Apostle Paul teaches us: "When God is with us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

Let us celebrate this Christmas together with those who have become displaced, those who have lost their loved ones, their possessions and their homes. In this Holy Year of the Mercy of God, may the doors of our homes, open to the needy, be, in the words of Pope Francis, the doors of the mercy of God. Hence whoever walks through them may experience the flow of God's merciful love, love which forgives our sins, heals the wounds of our souls and bodies, transforms sadness into joy, and makes all that is weak strong and invincible.

By welcoming the refugees, the poor and the suffering, we welcome into our homes, into our families and into our communities the Son of God Himself- the Font of God's peace. Let us not ask what language they speak, what church they attend, or what beliefs they hold. Rather let us be interested in what hurts them, where their loved ones are, and how we may help them. With our prayers and acts of mercy let us approach together with them the manger in which Christ is resting. It is in them, precisely, that we will be able to welcome the new-born Saviour. And it is precisely in this way that we will enter into reconciliation with God and with our brothers and sisters, and bring God's peace to our greatly suffering Ukrainian land.

On this joyful bright feast of the Nativity of Christ, I wish to express to all of you, dearly beloved in Christ, heartfelt greetings. I desire to convey this joy to every home, to the dugouts at the front, to the hospitals where the wounded are recovering, to the dwelling places of hundreds of thousands of displaced brothers and sisters, to those in Ukraine, and those in the diaspora- to all I desire today to send a word of comfort and hope, the source of which is the birth of the Saviour.

With the good news of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, I wish to visit those of you who have opened the doors of your hearts to God and neighbour, and I wish to pass through the Doors of Mercy together with you in this Holy Year. While sharing the joyful news of the birth of Christ-God, I long to shake the hands of our brave soldiers who safeguard our Christmas, to comfort the sorrowful, to wipe the tears of those who are weeping, to strengthen the faith of those who doubt that good will triumph over evil.

Standing today before the altar of God, I sense an extraordinary solidarity with the vast family of our particular Church, which has gathered together around the Lord's Table here on earth and in God's glory on high. May the new-born Saviour hear all our prayers, keep our nation and our leaders in peace and wellbeing and bestow upon them His heavenly blessing.

Wishing you a blessed Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, a tasty kutia and a happy new year!

***Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!***

+ SVIATOSLAV

*Issued in Kyiv,*

*at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ,  
on the feast of the praiseworthy First-Called Apostle, Saint Andrew,  
and the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Divine Mercy  
December 13, 2015*



## Sunday offering for December 20

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$10.00	1
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	2
\$30.00	1
\$40.00	1
\$43.00	1 (loose)
\$50.00	3
\$80.00	1
\$85.00	1
\$300.00	1
<hr/>	
\$818.00	

Parishioner Total: \$813.00

Visitor Total: \$5.00

Average / parish household (42): \$9.80

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2200.00

**Deficit: (\$1312.00)**

**Year-to-date deficit: (\$49,491.00)**



### LET'S GO CAROLING!

ON JANUARY 2ND, LET'S GATHER AT THE CHURCH AT 10:00 AM TO GO CAROLING AT THE HOMES OF OUR SHUT-INS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO GO CAROLING DEPENDING UPON INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION. PLEASE CONTACT FR. JAMES IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING, WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED OR KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED.

## Going to the Hospital?

Please let your Father James know, so that he can add you to the prayer list, or, if you like, pay you a visit. If you know someone else is in the hospital please let Fr. James know.

## New American Religions...

### #1 Sporticism



**Sunday Liturgy:** Sunday Game  
**Saints & Apostles:** Coaches & players

**Scriptures:** Team Statistics

**Vestments:** Team colors & gear

**Holy day:** Opening game day

**Relics:** Signed memorabilia

**Pilgrimage:** Super Bowl

**Mardi Gras:** Half-time

**Devotional Statues:** mascot toys  
& player action figures

**Liturgical chant:** Team anthem

**Jihad:** Street riots

*When men stop  
worshipping God, they  
substitute something else  
in His place.*

– G.K. Chesterton

### Pastor:

Fr. James Bankston: (619) 905-5278

### Pastoral Council:

Vladimir Bachynsky: (619) 865-1279

Mark Hartman: (619) 446-6357

Luke Miller: (858) 354-2008

### Social Committee Chair:

Megan Hartman (619) 540-4291

### Finance Committee:

Bohdan Knianicky: (619) 303-9698



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква  
Святого Йоана Хрестителя  
St. John the Baptizer  
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

4400 Palm Avenue  
La Mesa, CA 91941  
Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

**Website:** [stjohnthebaptizer.org](http://stjohnthebaptizer.org)

**Pastor:** Fr. James Bankston  
[frjames@mac.com](mailto:frjames@mac.com)  
Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

***Stephen Protomartyr***

Now Stephen, filled with grace and power, was working great wonders and signs among the people. Certain members of the so-called Synagogue of Freedmen, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and people from Cilicia and Asia, came forward and debated with Stephen, but they could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke. Then they instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and God." They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes, accosted him, seized him, and brought him before the Sanhedrin. ...

When they heard this, they were infuriated, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked up intently to 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 in a loud

voice, covered their ears, and rushed upon him together. They threw him out of the city, and began to stone him. The witnesses laid down their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them;" and when he said this, he fell asleep.

Now Saul was consenting to his execution. On that day, there broke out a severe persecution of the church in Jerusalem, and all were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made a loud lament over him. Saul, meanwhile, was trying to destroy the church; entering house after house and dragging out men and women, he handed them over for imprisonment.

*Acts of the Apostles 6:8-12; 7:54-60; 8:1-3*

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit  
[www.ecpubs.com](http://www.ecpubs.com)**