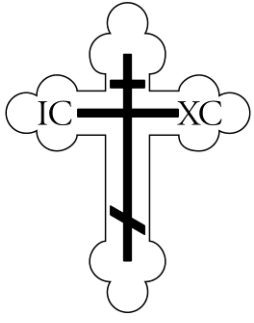
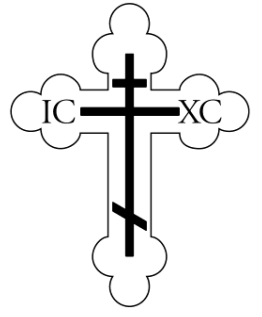


Protection of the Virgin Mary



Orthodox Church



A Parish of the
Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America



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Merrillville, IN 46410
(219)947-4748
Hall: (219)730-4698
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Rev. Dr. Jacob Van Sickle
(219)384-6826 • frjacobvansickle@gmail.com

Great Vespers: 6pm Saturdays
Divine Liturgy: 10am Sundays
Confessions are heard before or
after Vespers or by appointment.

**Welcome visitors!
Please join us in the
parish hall after
Divine Liturgy for
coffee hour.**

December 29, 2019

Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ Righteous Joseph the Betrothed, James the Lord's Brother, and David the King

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 3 – Resurrectional Troparion

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,

and has granted to the world//

great mercy.

Tone 4 – Troparion of Nativity

Your Nativity, O Christ our God,
has shone to the world the light of wisdom.
For by it, those who worshipped the stars,
were taught by a star to adore You,
the Sun of righteousness,
and to know You, the Orient from on high.//
O Lord, glory to You!

Tone 2 – Troparion of the Day

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph,
to David, the ancestor of God;
you saw a Virgin great with child;
you gave glory with the shepherds;
you worshipped with the Magi;
you received the news from the Angel.//
Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

Tone 3 – Kontakion of the Day

Today godly David is filled with joy;
Joseph and James offer praise.
The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ fills them with
great joy.
They sing praises to the One ineffably born on earth,//
and they cry out: “O Compassionate One, save those who
honor You!”

Tone 3 – Kontakion of Nativity

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One,
and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One.
Angels with shepherds glorify Him;
the Wise Men journey with the star,//
since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 3 – Sunday Prokeimenon (Psalm 46)

Sing praises to our God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

Tone 4 –Prokeimenon for the Saints (Psalm 67)

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of Israel!

Epistle: Galatians 1.11-19 (Afterfeast)

Brethren: I make known to you that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Gospel: Matthew 2.13-23 (Afterfeast)

At that time, when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."

Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Ephrem Talley
Mary Dula
Mat. Nadia Metulynsky
Diane Rosco
Julia Karp
Archiman. Ephraim
Margaret Vogrin

Martin Svihra
Pr. George Pappas
Ev.Mem Walter Mosak ('05)
James Eltow ('63)
Eva Sinchuk ('51)
William Krochta (1940)
Anatol Meuch

Health & Salvation:

Archpr. Peter
Pr. John
Pr. Christopher
Mat. Jennifer
Andrew
Gideon
Kevin
Jon
Tanya
Jovan
Julia

Warren
Carol
Tom
Elizabeth
Tina
Brittany
Jennifer
Lennox
Laila
Paula
Stacey
Jeramie
Olivia

Parker
Melissa
Jonathan
Matthew
Gail
Maria
Barbara
Thomas
Carol
Jessica
Eduardo
Christine
Nicholas

| | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| Natalie | Joseph | Rachel |
| Barbara | Martin | Kathleen |
| Kristin | Mark | Paul |
| Linda | Alexa | William |
| Phyllis | Paula | Michael |
| Kay | James | Frederick |
| Fred | Joanne | Janet |
| Larry | Michael | Lea |
| Rollie | Joseph | Hania |

*If you know someone who needs prayer, please give their name to Fr Jacob

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There is no **Bible Study** this week. We resume on January 8.

Next Sunday, Jan 5, we will celebrate a **Baptismal Liturgy** for Brian and Jeffrey Armstrong. Prayers of initiation begin at 9:45. Liturgy will begin promptly at 10am.

Following coffee hour next Sunday we will serve the **Vespers of Theophany** and **bless the holy water** for the new year.

2020 Calendars from St. Tikhon's are available in the Narthex.

Stewardship envelopes for 2020 are now available. If you have been a regular steward of this Church, there should be a box with your name on it for pick-up in the Narthex. If you want to become a steward but do not have a numbered box, please tell Mike Gruszyk, our treasurer, and he will get you one. It is much easier for us to account for your giving if you use assigned envelopes.

The parish council has contracted with the engineering firm DVG to address the perennial **water drainage issues** on our property. They have already performed a topographical survey and designed solutions which will **prevent further damage to our building and parking lot**. We do not yet know what this project will cost. We are in the process of securing bids for the work, which, God willing, should commence this Spring. Until further notice, all gifts marked "**Building Fund**" will be put toward this project.

Mark your calendars:

**Dec 31: Great Vespers for the Circumcision of Christ @
Descent of the Holy Ghost @ 6pm**

Jan 1: Divine Liturgy for the Circumcision of Christ @ 10am

**Jan 5: Vespers of Theophany with the Great Blessing of
Water after coffee hour**

Jan 6: Divine Liturgy for the Theophany of our Lord @ 10am

Feb 9: Annual Parish Meeting after Divine Liturgy

Last week's offerings to the Lord: \$4,395

The 2019 Nativity Message of His Beatitude, our Metropolitan Tikhon

To the Honorable Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Pious
Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Brethren and Blessed Children in the Lord,
Christ is born! Glorify Him!

As we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ in the flesh and
His baptism in the River Jordan, we call to mind the important
roles that his mother, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary,
and his Forerunner, John the Baptist, had in bringing about
these events that manifested Christ to the world. For the
Theotokos and the Baptist are indeed excellent examples for
us, as we share their same calling to make Christ present in
the world.

When Mary received the glad tidings that she was to
become the Birth-giver of God, she humbly responded:
“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me
according to thy word.” She then visited her relative
Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant, and when she
greeted Elizabeth, the babe in Elizabeth’s womb leaped for
joy. This babe, as we well know, was Saint John the Baptist,
the Forerunner of Christ.

The importance of John the Baptist in the Gospels cannot be overemphasized. As the Forerunner of Christ, he not only proclaimed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, but also died a martyr's death for speaking the truth, foreshadowing that Christ, the Truth, would die for the Salvation of the world. In dying for the truth, John is not only the Forerunner to Christ, but also the Forerunner to all those who have died for Christ throughout the centuries, the countless martyrs who have struggled and been slain for Christ for more than two thousand years.

Some Christians are still called to this level of witness, to this level of dying in martyrdom for the sake of Christ. The twentieth century saw more Christian martyrs than any century beforehand, in places such as Russia, Romania, and Turkey. The twenty-first in turn is seeing many Christian martyrs in places like Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Syria. We pray for strength and steadfastness for all Christians suffering persecution for the sake of Christ, and in turn we ask for the intercessions of those who have died martyr's deaths in witness of Christ.

Yet certainly, not all Christians are called to be slain for Christ, to be beheaded like John the Baptist or many of the later martyrs. Neither are all called to be like the Baptist as public preachers or wandering ascetics. For those who do not have the Baptist's calling, another route is provided: the calling to live like the Virgin Mary. For while John made Christ known to the world, it was through the Virgin Mary that Christ came to be born in the flesh. She is the Theotokos, the bearer of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the same way, Christians can "bear Christ" and make Him present. Instead of preaching God's works across hills and dales, we can keep them close and ponder them in our hearts (see Luke 2:19). By thus meditating on God's works, we will become authentically humble, gentle, and kind like Mary. And in this process of contemplating what Christ has done for us, we will gain boldness before Him in our private conversations with Him. Forging a personal relationship with Christ, we will have

boldness to ask Him and His servants for what is needed, just as Mary His Mother did at the wedding in Cana.

These two great figures, John the Baptist and Mary the Theotokos, thus help us grapple with a perennial problem of Christians: how do we keep the winter feasts of the Nativity and Theophany meaningful throughout the year? The Church's calendar points us to the solution: the day after the Nativity of the Lord, December 26, is dedicated to the Lord's Mother, and January 7, the day after the Theophany of the Lord, is dedicated to the Lord's Forerunner. Hence the Church tells us that imitation of the Forerunner and the Theotokos are the keys to making Christ's winter feasts more than just a few days of celebration. The Baptist shows us the way of outward witness, of forceful and defiant objection to the falsehood propagated in the world, while the Theotokos shows us the way of inner stillness, of contemplation of the mystery of Christ. And Christians can imitate the lifestyle of either one, because ultimately both John and the Theotokos are doing the same thing: both are witnesses to Christ, and steadfastly remain eternal witnesses to His death and resurrection.

So, give glory to Christ on the feasts of His Nativity and Theophany, while honoring and magnifying in song the Theotokos and Mother of the Light, and praising the Baptist as is his due. For they reveal to us the different ways in which Christians can witness to Christ, and are our primary examples of how to live a Christian life, not only at this festal season of Nativity and Theophany, but throughout the entire year.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

With love in the New-Born Christ,

+ Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada