

Dear Beloved clergy, brothers and sisters in Christ:

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

As we thank God for giving us His Son at Christmas, I thought to remember what Jesus taught His disciples about little children. He said that the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven is a little child. That is true because He is a child; a child, here, at Christmas, and an eternal Child of His Father forever. He said children have angels who are close to the throne of the Father in heaven. Who is closer to God than His Child and Son?

Jesus' love for His Father showed itself with such pure openness and humility in the Gospels. He said He did nothing without the Father and could do nothing without Him. He did all that He did to please His Father and, then, said on the Cross, after having loved us and saved us with the same love the Father has for us: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." (Luke 23:46) He spread His arms out on the Cross like little ones open their arms to be picked up and held by their parents. He was going home.

For Jesus dependency didn't mean deficiency. He is forever the Image of His Father. Let us be forever dependent on God. For us to be ourselves we need God Himself. As we look at our Lord at Christmas He is a baby, a lamb who will take away the sins of the world. Because He is the Lamb He becomes the Shepherd. Let us know what He knows: we come from Someone to be in some place to go somewhere.

We must follow the Star of Bethlehem on our own journey in life. Let's not use this earthly time of preparation as our real destination or we will miss the celebration!

May the blessings of the Nativity be with His Eminence Metropolitan Philip, the bishops Holy Synod, and each of us,

+Bishop ANTHONY

**Bishop of Toledo and the Midwest
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America**

Any announcements for the Sunday bulletin? Please submit by Wednesday each week to Fr. Andrew, by email or phone.



**St. George Orthodox Church of
Spring Valley**

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Tuesday, December 24, 2013 – The Eve of the Nativity of Christ

**Orthros Prayers for Christmas, 6:00 pm
Divine Liturgy, 7:00 pm**

Troparion of the Nativity (Tone 4):

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world; for they that worshipped the stars did learn therefrom to worship Thee, O Sun of Justice, and to know that from the east of the Highest Thou didst come, O Lord glory to Thee!

Entrance Hymn (Psalm 110):

From the womb before the morning star I begat Thee. The Lord has sworn, and He will not repent; Thou art a Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. Save us, O Son of God, O Thou who wast born of the Virgin, even us who sing unto Thee: Alleluia!

Kontakion of the Nativity (Tone 3):

Today the Virgin giveth birth to the Transcendent in Essence; the earth offereth the cave to the unapproachable One; the angels with the shepherds glorify Him; and the Magi with the star travel on their way; for a new Child hath been born for our sakes, God before the ages.

St. George is a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
The Most Reverend Metropolitan PHILIP, primate
The Right Reverend Bishop ANTHONY, Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest
www.antiochian.org

Orthros Gospel Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

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 for thy 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.

Epistle Reading: Galatians 4:4-7

Brethren, when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, are by no means least among the rulers of Judea; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern My people Israel.'"

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found Him bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him."

When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

May God grant all of you the blessings of the Christmas season and the "peace that passes all understanding," which can only come to us from the Prince of Peace, our Lord Jesus Christ, whose birthday we celebrate today. Kindly remember in your prayers all of our brothers and sisters in Syria, Egypt, and elsewhere who continue to face persecution and suffering during this time. Remember all of those who are homeless, or who mourn the loss of family or loved ones during this time.

May God bless all of you with a new year of peace, happiness, and prosperity in 2014.

Yours in the peace of Christ,

Fr. Andrew, Khouria Patty, Maggie, Susannah, John and Isaac Kishler

Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and services at St. George, consult the calendar on our website, www.stgeorgeorthodox.org.

Looking ahead, we will celebrate the **Baptism of our Lord (Theophany)** on **Sunday, January 5**. The waters will be blessed after the Divine Liturgy. Fr. Andrew will also begin blessing homes at that time; more information is forthcoming.

Fr. Patrick Kinder of St. Ignatius Church in Madison, WI has graciously donated to us a box of CDs of their "Akathist of Thanksgiving" recording. The CDs are available in the basement for a suggested donation of \$15 each; all proceeds will go to St. George Church. Please see Fr. Andrew or Kh. Patty if you are interested in purchasing one.

A Christmas Meditation, by His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP

Lord, the only thing I can offer you on your birthday is myself.

Drown me in the ocean of your love.

Feed me with your heavenly bread, for the bread of this world will never satisfy my hunger.

Quench my thirst with your divine fountain, for the water of this earth will never satisfy my thirst.

Give me your eyes to see what you see, your ears to hear what you hear and your heart to love what you love.

Take me with you to Mount Tabor and let me bathe in your eternal light.