

# THE TROPHYBEARER

## *Pastoral Thoughts*

As created beings we are stuck in time. We have a past, a present and a future, and in no normal way are we allowed to undo the past or see the future. It is suited to our limitations; we have no inkling what chaos we would bring, if we could only go back and change some moment in our past.

We should also be leery of wanting to see or know the future. Would we be able to face the inevitable losses and heartache if we saw them before their time? What dread we would feel, to know when a parent will pass, or the hard times that inevitably come in some way or another.

We believe that God does not live in that sequential time as we do. He sees it all, which is not the same as causing it. It may be well with us to not dwell on that too much.

It is important that the birth of the Savior happened at a specific time and place, when Augustus was Caesar and Quirinius was governor of Syria, in the city of David, Bethlehem. That isn't an origin myth buried in the mists of legend, or in some mystical realm.

But what happened there didn't end there. Christ taking on humanity is an action initiated in time, and yet present. It didn't end.

Listen to the hymns of our church at this precious time: 'Christ is born, glorify Him!' start the katavasia of the Nativity. 'Christ is come from heaven! Go and meet Him!'. Now the action is taking place. We don't find our hearts full over mere historical facts, nor pleasant or moving myths. We reach out with joy to Christ who is here now, before us, drawing us to Him and to His work.

The Kontakion for the season expresses the same reality. 'On this day the Virgin maid goes to the grotto to give birth' an act immediate and compelling. The open heart is compelled to awe and worship. It makes the actions firmly planted in history, in our past in one sense, compelling drama now.

Because of this event, of the Incarnation and Nativity, and the years that followed, we can trouble ourselves less about the future. The Christ who came in time is coming back. His will is for all things good. The troubles, and grief we have and will have will come to an end, and that end will be seen to be as it should.

Christ is born, and nothing will ever be the same. Christ came among us, and we can never be the same. Christ is among us, for our salvation and to bring us home. With that knowledge, and the comfort of the Body of Christ, our brothers and sisters in Christ, we can look past the hard times to glorious eternity with Him.



## This issue:

Pastoral Thoughts  
PAGE 01

Parish News  
PAGES 02

Lives of Saints  
PAGES 03

Parish Happenings  
PAGES 04-07

Church Calendar  
PAGES 08

# PARISH NEWS

## Epistle Readers for December

Anyone wishing to become an Epistle Reader, Please Contact Father Michael

Sunday, December 7, 2025: 10th Sunday of Luke: Alexa Florence

Sunday, December 14, 2025: 11th Sunday of Luke: Kim Eastland

Sunday, December 21, 2025: Sunday before the Nativity: Aletheia Hadjis

Sunday, December 28, 2025: Sunday after the Nativity: Loukia Constantinides

## Evening Meal Volunteers

December 18, 2025: (Thursday)

Deacon Paul and Deaconess Romilie Speed

Anyone interested in taking part in this worthwhile ministry should contact Mary Winters at 563-726-2880

## PARISH COUNCIL SUNDAY DUTY SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Sunday, December 7, 2025: Kathy Begyn, Joe Burmeister, Dennis Spurgetis, and Mary Rankin

Sunday, December 14, 2025: Kim Eastland, Mary Kay Eckert, Gus Pappas, and Ted Pitsoulakis

Sunday, December 21, 2025: Tom Bakeris, Nick Coin, Mariellen Crosson, and Pete Hadjis

Sunday, December 28, 2025: Kathy Begyn, Joe Burmeister, Dennis Spurgetis, and Mary Rankin

## PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Parish Council elections will be held on Sunday, December 14, 2025. Please remember to cast your vote.

## Clothing Collection

We are collecting hats/gloves/mittens/coats for the less fortunate...

If you would like to donate, please place them on the Christmas tree in the Narthex until January 7, 2025.

## Donation Opportunity

We accept donations for our Poinsettias to decorate the Solea this Christmas. The Poinsettias we will have will be in two sizes: Medium: \$10.00 (8), and Large: \$20.00 (4). Please see Father Michael to make your Donations!

## PROSPHORA MAKERS

**Sunday, December 7, 2025:**  
**Open**

**Sunday, December 14,**  
**2025: Open**

**Sunday, December 21,**  
**2025: Open**

**Sunday, December 28,**  
**2025: Open**

## COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

**Sunday, December 7,**  
**2025:**

**Drs. Gus and Irene Harb**  
**Sunday, December 14,**  
**2025:**

**Connie Zeroth**  
**Sunday, December 21,**  
**2025:**

**Drs. Michael and Vickie**  
**Pyevich**  
**Sunday, December 28,**  
**2025:**

**Harry and Susan Coin**



# LIVES OF THE SAINTS

## The Nativity according to the Flesh of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ (December 25)

The incomprehensible and inexplicable Nativity of Christ came to pass when Herod the Great was reigning in Judea; the latter was an Ascalonite on his father's side and an Idumean on his mother's. He was in every way foreign to the royal line of David; instead, he had received his authority from the Roman emperors and had ruled tyrannically over the Jewish people for some thirty-three years. The tribe of Judah, which had reigned of old, was deprived of its rights and stripped of all rule and authority. Such was the condition of the Jews when the awaited Messiah was born. It truly thus was fulfilled the prophecy which the Patriarch Jacob had spoken 1,807 years before: "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; and he is the expectation of the nations" (Gen.49:10).

Thus, our Saviour was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea, whither Joseph had come from Nazareth of Galilee, taking Mary his betrothed, who was great with child, that, according to the decree issued in those days by the Emperor Augustus, they might be registered in the census of those subject to Rome. Therefore, when the time came for the Virgin to give birth, and because of the great multitude, there was no place in the inn, the Virgin's circumstances constrained them to enter a cave which was near Bethlehem. Having as a shelter a stable of irrational beasts, she gave birth there, and swaddled the Infant and laid Him in the manger (Luke 2:1-7). From this, the tradition has come down to us that when Christ was born He lay between two animals, an ox and an ass, that the words of the Prophets might be fulfilled: "Between two living creatures shalt Thou be known" (Abbacum 3:2), and "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib" (Esaias 1: 3).

But while the earth gave the newborn Saviour such a humble reception, Heaven on high celebrated majestically His world-saving coming. A wondrous star, shining with uncommon brightness and following a strange course, led Magi from the East to Bethlehem to worship the newborn King. Certain shepherds who were in the area of Bethlehem, who kept watch while tending their sheep, were suddenly surrounded by an extraordinary light, and they saw before them an Angel who proclaimed to them the good tidings of the Lord's joyous Nativity. And straightway, together with this Angel, they beheld and heard a whole host of the Heavenly Powers praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men" (Luke 2:8-14).

Stephen, Archdeacon & First Martyr  
(December 27)

Saint Stephen was a Jew by race and, as some say, a disciple of Gamaliel, the teacher of the Law mentioned in Acts 5:34 and 22:3. He was the first of the seven deacons whom the Apostles established in Jerusalem to care for the poor and distribute alms. Being a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, he performed great signs and wonders among the people. While disputing with the Jews concerning Jesus, and wisely refuting their every contradiction, so that no one was able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit whereby he spoke, he was slandered as a blasphemer and was dragged off to the Sanhedrin of the elders. There, with boldness, he proved from the divine Scriptures the coming of the Just One (Jesus), of Whom they had become the betrayers and murderers, and he reproved their faithless and hardheartedness. And finally, gazing into Heaven and beholding the divine glory, he said: "Lo, I see the Heavens opened and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." But when they heard this, they stopped up their ears, and with anger cast him out of the city and stoned him, while he was calling out and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then, imitating the long-suffering of the Master, he bent his knees and prayed in a loud voice for those who were stoning him, and he said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," And saying this, he fell asleep (Acts 6, 7), thus becoming the first among the Martyrs of the Church of Christ.



**ST. GEORGE  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
Rock Island, Illinois



**PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH** 2930 – 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Rock Island, IL  
*Monday, October 20th, 2025*

Dear Parishioners and Friends:

The St. George Philoptochos Society is sponsoring the 2025 Parish Christmas Card. As in previous years, each of us can send our Christmas greetings to all our Church members and friends for a great cause. A beautiful card with all the participants' names is sent to everyone on our mailing list. We hope that everyone will be included in the 2025 Christmas Card. Please send the portion below with your name, clearly printed, as you wish it to appear on the card, along with your generous donation to the Church office; return it to the Philoptochos mailbox on Sundays, or mail it to Alexa Florence (address below). Completed forms and donations must be received by Sunday, December 7th. A portion of the proceeds are used for benevolent projects of the Philoptochos Society. The proceeds of this year's Christmas card will be donated to the following local organizations: The Church of Peace in Rock Island, Ill, more specifically, to their food pantry drive that serves the community with breakfast, lunch, and dinner items along with household items, and The Third PlaceQC- a daytime homeless shelter in Rock Island. In this season of giving, please find it in your heart to give to those less fortunate.

Sincerely,

Georgjean Pitsoulakis, Chairman Philoptochos Christmas Card Committee

- Please email me a change of address and other contact info if you have moved in the past year to georgjean@gmail.com. Thanks!
- Send checks in the mail to St. George or directly to:  
Alexa Florence - 1023 Kimberly Ridge Rd, Bettendorf, IA 52722

-----  
**St. George Philoptochos Society 2025 Parish Christmas Card**  
NAME(S) (Please print clearly as you would like it to appear on the card)

**DONATION:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Checks payable to St. George Philoptochos Society)



YOU ARE INVITED TO

# CHRISTMAS

*Celebration*

SUNDAY  
**14**  
DECEMBER



METROPOLIS  
OF CHICAGO

4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

*The Carlisle*  
*435 E. Butterfield Road, Lombard, IL 60145*

This year, we are supporting Guardian Angel and Wings of Hope by collecting hygiene items for those in need. Please consider bringing travel-size toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, body wash, soap), washcloths, toothbrushes & toothpaste, and deodorant.

All donations will be packaged and delivered to these organizations.

Thank you for helping us spread Christmas joy!

*"Love each other with a warm love  
that comes from the heart"*

*1 Peter 1:22*



We are collecting  
hats/gloves/mittens/coats  
for the less fortunate...

If you would like to donate,  
please place them on the  
Christmas tree in the  
Narthex until January 7,  
2026

**CHRISTMAS/THEOPHANY  
SCHEDULE 2025-2026**

**Sunday, December 21, 2025**

**Sunday before the Nativity**

*8:30 a.m. Orthros/9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy*

*Sunday School Classes following Holy Communion*

**Wednesday, December 24, 2025**

**Eve of the Nativity**

*8:30 a.m. Royal Hours at Assumption Church*

*5:00 p.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil*

**Thursday, December 25, 2025**

**The Birth according to the flesh of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**

*8:30 a.m. Orthros/9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy*

**Sunday, December 28, 2025**

**The Sunday After the Nativity**

*8:30 a.m. Orthros/9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy*

**Thursday, January 1, 2026**

**Feast Day of the Circumcision of our Lord/Saint Basil the Great**

*8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil*

**Sunday, January 4, 2026**

**The Sunday before Theophany**

*8:30 a.m. Orthros/9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy*

**Monday, January 5, 2026**

**Eve of Theophany**

*5:00 p.m. Orthros Vespers Divine Liturgy followed by the Great Blessing of the Waters*

**Tuesday, January 6, 2026**

**The Holy Theophany of our Lord**

*8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Blessing of the Waters and the Divine Liturgy*

*\*Please Note: The Great Blessing of the Waters will occur following Orthros, as is the ancient Tradition of the Church*

**Wednesday, January 7, 2026**

**Synaxis of Saint John the Baptist**

*8:00 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Assumption*

# 2025 DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	<b>1</b> <b>Fish, wine and oil allowed</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Fish, wine and oil allowed</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Fast Day</b> 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA)	<b>4</b> <b>Fish, wine and oil allowed</b> 7:00 p.m. Book Study: Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology by Christos Yannaras both "in-person" and Zoom	<b>5</b> <b>Fast Day</b>	<b>6</b> <b>The Feast Day of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker</b> <b>Fish, wine and oil allowed.</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Assumption
<b>7</b> <b>10th Sunday of Luke</b> <b>Fish, wine and oil Allowed</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes following Holy Communion	<b>8</b> <b>Fish, wine and oil allowed</b>	<b>9</b> <b>Fish, wine and oil allowed</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Fast Day</b> 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA)	<b>11</b> <b>Fish, wine and oil allowed</b> 7:00 p.m. Book Study: Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology by Christos Yannaras both "in-person" and Zoom	<b>12</b> <b>Feast day of Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker</b> <b>Oil and Wine Allowed</b> 8:00 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George 9:00 a.m. Women's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA)	<b>13</b> <b>Oil and Wine Allowed</b>
<b>14</b> <b>11th Sunday of Luke</b> <b>Oil and wine Allowed</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes following Holy Communion Parish Council Elections following the Divine Liturgy 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Metropolis Open House	<b>15</b> <b>Oil and wine Allowed</b>	<b>16</b> <b>Oil and wine Allowed</b> 7:00 p.m. Zoom Orthodox Study Forum	<b>17</b> <b>Fast Day</b> 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. "In-Person" Orthodox Study Forum	<b>18</b> <b>Oil and wine Allowed</b> 7:00 p.m. Book Study: Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology by Christos Yannaras both "in-person" and Zoom	<b>19</b> <b>Fast Day</b>	<b>20</b> <b>Oil and wine allowed</b>
<b>21</b> <b>The Sunday before the Nativity</b> <b>Oil and wine Allowed</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes begin following Holy Communion	<b>22</b> <b>Oil and wine Allowed</b>	<b>23</b> <b>Oil and wine Allowed</b> 6:30 p.m. Parish Council Meeting	<b>24</b> <b>Eve of the Nativity</b> <b>Fast Day</b> 8:30 a.m. Royal Hours for the Nativity @ Assumption Church 5:00 p.m. Vespersal Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil	<b>25</b> <b>The Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ</b> <b>Fast Free</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy	<b>26</b> <b>Fast Free</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Fast Free</b>
<b>28</b> <b>Sunday after the Nativity</b> <b>Fast Free</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy No Sunday School classes! Family Worship	<b>29</b> <b>Fast Free</b>	<b>30</b> <b>Fast Free</b>	<b>31</b> <b>Fast Free</b> 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA)			