

NO. 27 | DECEMBER 2023

THE DELIVERER

A Monthly Newsletter of St. George Upper Darby



Nativity: The “Blessed Exchange” by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

Orthodox Christian Scriptures proclaim—and the Liturgy celebrates, the Sacraments realize, the Icons depict, the Canons protect, the Martyrs witness, the Fathers explain, and the Saints live—the Blessed Exchange that God accomplished in the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and glorification of His Son Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit’s power, for the salvation of humanity and the whole of creation:

God became human to make humans divine.
God became visible to allow humans to see Him.
God became touchable to allow humans to touch Him.
God spoke in human words to allow humans to hear Him.
God entered earthly time to make humans eternal.
God took flesh to make human bodies His dwelling.
God lived as a creature on earth to recreate the whole of creation.

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DECEMBER DATES TO REMEMBER

December 6: Orthros & Liturgy for St. Nicholas, 9:30 a.m.

December 12: Liturgy for St. Spyridon, 9:30 a.m.

December 20: Liturgy for St. Ignatius, 9:30 a.m.

December 22: Royal Hours, 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, December 24

9:30 a.m. Orthros

10:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy

3 p.m. Vespers

10:30 p.m. Orthros for Nativity

11:30 p.m. Divine Liturgy for Nativity

1 a.m. Agape Meal

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He was a human being so that by His humanity we could become gods by grace.
He was small so that by His smallness we could become divinely great.
He was poor that so by His poverty we could become divinely rich.
He was weak so that by His weakness we could attain God's power.
He was a fool in this world so that we could attain God's wisdom.
He emptied Himself so that by His emptiness we could be filled with all the fullness of God.
He became the servant of all so that by his servitude we could all reign with Him.
He became nothing so that through His nothingness we could become everything.

[Read More](#)

(Source: oca.org)

December Greeters and Readers

December 3

Greeter: Michael Solomon

Reader: Sheri San Chirico

December 10

Parish Council

Greeter: Jerry Burke

Reader: Alex Ibrahim

December 17

Teen SOYO

Greeters: Gabrielle G. & Randa I.

Reader: Randa Ibrahim

December 24

Greeter: Cynthia Long

Reader: Ben Daniel

December 31

Greeters: The Gordon Family

Reader: Alex Paskalis

DECEMBER EVENTS

- **Saturday, December 16: Advent Family Night**
for all members of our St. George Family
Vespers at 4:30 p.m.
Potluck Dinner at 5:30 p.m.
Christmas Carol Sing at 6:15 p.m.
Christmas Crafts | Ornament Making 7:00 p.m.

- **Sunday, December 17: Sunday School Presentation**
Nativity Program immediately following Liturgy



- **Sunday, December 31 & Monday, January 1**
Bishop THOMAS is visiting.

Interested in being a Greeter?

Contact the Office Administrator at
office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org

Interested in being a Reader?

If you're interested in reading the Epistle on
Sunday, please contact the church office.

Choir Appreciation

Adapted by C. Long from the Antiochian Department of Sacred Music



We are reminded in the words of the Divine Liturgy that the Choir and Chanters “mystically represent the Cherubim and sing to the life-giving Trinity the thrice-holy hymn. . .” Our choir and chanters lead us in praise fifty-two Sundays a year plus numerous special services; let us take time now to show them our deepest appreciation for their gifts and labor of love.

Each year in December, the Antiochian Archdiocese recognizes the contributions of all our church singers. Our chanters serve a vital role in communicating the theology and teachings of the Church through melody and maintaining the beauty and dignity of our divine services. It is a gift, indeed, to our parishes and missions. The Department of Sacred Music joins His Eminence, Metropolitan SABA, the clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese to say “Thank You” to our church musicians for their selfless commitment of time and talent.

Other jurisdictions celebrate church musicians in October, on or near the Feast of St. Romanos the Melodist. The Antiochian Archdiocese has chosen to honor our chanters in December. In December, the whole world is singing: believers and non-believers alike. Music is playing wherever we go. It is a good time to give thanks for this ministry.

The Nativity Sermon of St. John Chrysostom begins with much reference to song:

*“I behold a new and wondrous mystery!
My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but loudly chanting a heavenly hymn!
The Angels sing!
The Archangels blend their voices in harmony!
The Cherubim resound their joyful praise!
The Seraphim exalt His glory!
All join to praise this holy feast.”*

May God continue to bless our choir and chanters and grant them health and many years!

Thank you to all our chanters!





Flowers For Nativity & Theophany

If you would like to make a donation towards the Nativity / Theophany Season flowers, please make your offering by December 19th. You may donate by check, or to make an online donation, visit www.saintgeorgeupperdarby.org/donate.html or use the QR code on the left. Please mark your gift as "Flowers."

Holiday Gift Drive for **HopeP** **L** (formerly PEC)

Donate **new and unwrapped** gifts for struggling families in Philadelphia
Please include batteries for the toys that need them.
Please bring to church no later than **Sunday, Dec. 4**

Infants and Toddlers to age 2

- Blankets
- Board Books
- Clothing (Boys & Girls)
- Blocks
- Dolls (African-American)
- Pull and Push Toys
- Licensed Character Toys
- Musical Instruments
- See-n-Says
- Sesame Street Toys
- V-Tech Toys
- Wagons (Sturdy Plastic)

Pre-School age 3-5

- Illustrated Books
- Cars and Trucks
- Clothing (Boys & Girls)
- Dolls (African-American)
- Animal Toys
- Plush Toys
- Licensed Character Toys (Disney, Sesame Street, etc.)
- Puzzles
- Socks & Underwear
- V-Tech and Leapfrog Learning Toys
- Coloring Books and Crayons

Youth age 5-11

- African-American Dolls
- Arts & Crafts
- Board or Card Games
- Easy Bake Ovens
- Journals
- Legos, Magnetix, or Knex
- Remote Control Cars/Trucks
- STEM Kits
- Underwear (Thermal & Regular)
- V-Tech Notebook
- Walkie Talkies
- WWE Wrestling Items
- Action Figures
- African-American Fashion
- Dolls and Accessories
- Drawing pads and pencils
- Pokemon Cards and Toys

Teens and Young Adults age 12+

- Footballs, Basketballs, Soccer Balls
- Decorative Bedding Sets
- Board or Card Games
- STEM Kits and Art Sets
- Role Playing Games
- Robotic/Remote Control Toys (like Godzilla and Jurassic Park)
- Clothing, Sleepwear, & Slippers
- Hooded Sweatshirts
- Long Sleeve Tees
- Compact Mirrors
- Curlers & Hair Dryers
- Phone Accessories
- Gift Cards Grooming Kits
- Hats, Gloves, & Scarves Jewelry & Watches Journals
- Make Up Kits
- Grooming Sets
- Bath and Body Sets (like Axe or Bath & Body works)
- Socks and Underwear

Parents

- Bedding (Twin, Full, Queen) Books
- Cameras
- Clothing & Coats
- Compact Mirrors
- Flash Drives
- Gels & Bath
- Oils Gift Cards
- Grooming Kits
- Hair Dryers & Curlers
- Household Items
- Journals
- Make Up Kits
- Sleepwear & Slippers
- Towels/Washcloths Umbrellas
- Bath and Body Sets

Guidelines for the Nativity Fast

November 15 - December 24

The Nativity Fast is one of the four Canonical Fasting Seasons in the Church year. This is a joyous fast in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ. That is the reason it is less strict than other fasting periods. The fast is divided into two periods. The 1st period is November 15th through December 19th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Similarly, fish, wine, and oil are permitted on Saturdays and Sundays. The 2nd period is December 20th through 24th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil only on Saturday and Sunday during this period. Here are the guidelines:

Meat	Dairy	Fish	Wine	Oil
beef, chicken, pork, turkey, elk, veal, lamb, deer, rabbit, buffalo, and so forth	milk, eggs, cheese, butter, yogurt, cream, and so forth	fish with a backbone (not including shrimp, octopus, shellfish, squid, or other seafood)	(some include all types of alcohol in this category)	(some include all types of oil in this category)
Abstain	Abstain	Permitted only on Saturdays and Sundays before 12/20 (Some permit fish on Tuesdays and Thursdays also)	Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, & Sundays before 12/20	Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, & Sundays before 12/20

Abstinence includes refraining from the food and drink mentioned above, as well as from smoking. The Eucharistic Fast means abstaining from at least the previous midnight for communing at a morning Liturgy.

The Purpose of Fasting

The purpose of fasting is to focus on the things that are above, the Kingdom of God. It is a means of putting on virtue in reality, here and now. Through it we are freed from dependence on worldly things. We fast faithfully and in secret, not judging others, and not holding ourselves up as an example.

- Fasting in itself is not a means of pleasing God. Fasting is not a punishment for our sins. Nor is fasting a means of suffering and pain to be undertaken as some kind of atonement. Christ already redeemed us on His Cross. Salvation is a gift from God that is not bought by our hunger or thirst.
- We fast to be delivered from carnal passions so that God's gift of Salvation may bear fruit in us.
- We fast and turn our eyes toward God in His Holy Church. Fasting and prayer go together.

- Fasting is not irrelevant. Fasting is not obsolete, and it is not something for someone else. Fasting is from God, for us, right here and right now.
- Most of all, we should not devour each other. We ask God to "set a watch and keep the door of our lips."

Do Not Fast

- between December 25 and January 5 (even on Wednesdays and Fridays);
- if you are pregnant or nursing a newborn;
- during serious illness;
- without prayer;
- without alms-giving;
- according to your own will without guidance from your spiritual father.



Icon image from Ancient Faith Store;
<https://store.ancientfaith.com/the-nativity-large-icon-shaped-garrett/>

DECEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9:30 a.m. 3rd Hour					1 <i>Nativity Fast</i>	2 SKW Theatre Trip meet at Church at 8:50 a.m. <i>Nativity Fast</i>
3 9:30 a.m. Orthros 10:30 a.m. Liturgy 12:30 Choir SS 9 <i>Nativity Fast</i>	4 8 p.m. Maintenance Mtg <i>Nativity Fast</i>	5 <i>No Matins</i> 7 p.m. Akathist (online) <i>Nativity Fast</i>	6 9:30 a.m. Liturgy for St. Nicholas <i>Nativity Fast</i>	7 9:30 a.m. 3rd Hour 8 p.m. Twelve Baskets <i>Nativity Fast</i>	8 7 p.m. Teen SOYO Party <i>Nativity Fast</i>	9 3:30 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Vespers <i>Nativity Fast</i>
10 9:30 a.m. Orthros 10:30 a.m. Liturgy 12:15 Parish Council Mtg 12:30 p.m. Choir 1:30 p.m. LTP Mtg <i>Last Day: Toy/Gift Drive</i> SS 10 <i>Nativity Fast</i>	11 Deliver Gifts to Hope-PHL 8 p.m. FSMB <i>Nativity Fast</i>	12 9:30 a.m. Liturgy for St. Spyridon 6:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 7 p.m. Akathist (online) <i>Nativity Fast</i>	13 <i>Nativity Fast</i>	14 <i>Nativity Fast</i>	15 <i>Nativity Fast</i>	16 3:00 p.m. Bible Study 4:30 p.m. Vespers 5:30 p.m. Family Night with Potluck & Crafts <i>Nativity Fast</i>
17 9:30 a.m. Orthros 10:30 a.m. Liturgy 12:30 Choir Sunday School Program <i>Nativity Fast</i>	18 <i>Nativity Fast</i>	19 9:30 a.m. Matins 6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal <i>Nativity Fast</i>	20 9:30 a.m. Liturgy for St. Ignatius of Antioch <i>Nativity Fast</i>	21 9:30 a.m. 3rd Hour <i>Nativity Fast</i>	22 9:30 a.m. Royal Hours <i>Nativity Fast</i>	23 3:30 p.m. Bible Study 5:00 p.m. Vespers <i>Nativity Fast</i>
24 9:30 a.m. Orthros 10:30 a.m. Liturgy <i>No Sunday School</i> <i>No Choir Practice</i> 3 p.m. Vespers 10:30 p.m. Orthros 11:30 p.m. Liturgy	25 Nativity of Christ	26 <i>No Matins</i> 7 p.m. Akathist (online)	27	28 <i>No 3rd Hour</i>	29	30 NO Bible Study NO Vespers
31 BP. THOMAS 9:30 a.m. Orthros 10:30 a.m. Liturgy <i>No Sunday School</i> <i>No Choir Practice</i> Potluck Coffee Hour	January 1, 2024 9:30 a.m. Orthros 10:30 a.m. Liturgy for Circumcision of our Lord / St. Basil BP. THOMAS					

“On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child Who before the ages is God.”

-- Kontakion of the Preparation of Christ’s Nativity

Family Advent Night

for our entire Parish family



DECEMBER 16th

4:30 VESPERS

followed by

POTLUCK DINNER,
CAROL SING &

ORNAMENT CRAFTS FOR KIDS

Sign Up: tinyurl.com/bdpehrjt