

# Ambo

ST. THEODOSIUS ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

733 Starkweather Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

[www.sttheodosius.org](http://www.sttheodosius.org)

Father Jan Cizmar  
1(440) 732-8182  
[st.theodosiuscathedral@gmail.com](mailto:st.theodosiuscathedral@gmail.com)

Office Hours TWTh  
9AM-2PM, please call ahead

Subdeacon Michael Tabeling,  
Sacristan

Subdeacon Igor Gajewsky  
Sacristan

Reader Julius Kovach,  
Ecclesiarch & Choirmaster

Denise "Nisi" Pozderac  
[dpozderac.tlc@gmail.com](mailto:dpozderac.tlc@gmail.com)  
Parish Council President

Mary Swit, Parish Secretary  
1(216) 574-4886

[StTheodosiusCathedral@protonmail.com](mailto:StTheodosiusCathedral@protonmail.com)

Office Hours MTWTh  
10:00AM-2:00PM

Paul Zawolowycz  
Ambo Editor

## Divine Services

Eve Sundays & Feast Days

5:00 PM Confessions

6:00 PM Great Vespers

Sundays and Feast Days

8:40 AM 3rd and 6th Hour

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Please check weekly schedule  
for specific days (last page).

Previous Ambos on website.

Articles for publication  
should be submitted to:

[ambo-theodosius](mailto:ambo-theodosius)

[@googlegroups.com](mailto:@googlegroups.com)

DECEMBER 24, 2023

29TH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF  
OUR LORD



Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in the city of Bethlehem during the reign of the emperor Augustus (Octavian). Caesar Augustus decreed that a universal census be made throughout his Empire, which then also included Palestinian Israel. The Jews were accustomed to be counted in the city from where their

family came. The Most Holy Virgin and the Righteous Joseph, since they were descended from the house and lineage of King David, had to go to Bethlehem to be counted and taxed.

In Bethlehem they found no room at any of the city's inns. Thus, the God-Man, the Savior of the world, was born in a cave that was used as a stable.

"I behold a strange and most glorious mystery," the Church sings with awe, "Heaven, a Cave; the Virgin the Throne of the Cherubim; the Manger a room, in which Christ, the God Whom nothing can contain is laid." (Irmos of the 9th Ode of the Nativity Canon).

Having given birth to the divine Infant without travail, the Most Holy Virgin “wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger” (Luke 2:7). In the stillness of midnight (Wisdom of Solomon 18:14-15), the proclamation of the birth of the Savior of the world was heard by three shepherds watching their flocks by night.

An angel of the Lord (Saint Cyprian says this was Gabriel) came before them and said: “Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11). The humble shepherds were the first to offer worship to Him Who condescended to assume the form of a humble servant for the salvation of mankind. Besides the glad tidings to the Bethlehem shepherds, the Nativity of Christ was revealed to the Magi by a wondrous star. Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Theophylactus, commenting on Saint Matthew’s Gospel, say that this was no ordinary star. Rather, it was “a divine and angelic power that appeared in the form of a star.” Saint Demetrius of Rostov says it was a “manifestation of divine energy” (Narrative of the Adoration of the Magi). Entering the house where the Infant lay, the Magi “fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh” (Mt. 2:11).

The present Feast, commemorating the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, was established by the Church. Its origin goes back to the time of the Apostles. In the Apostolic Constitutions (Section 3, 13) it says, “Brethren, observe the feastdays; and first of all the Birth of Christ, which you are to celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month.” In another place it also says, “Celebrate the day of the Nativity of Christ, on which unseen grace is given man by the birth of the Word of God from the Virgin Mary for the salvation of the world.”

In the second century Saint Clement of Alexandria also indicates that the day of the Nativity of Christ

is December 25. In the third century Saint Hippolytus of Rome mentions the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, and appoints the Gospel readings for this day from the opening chapters of Saint Matthew.

In 302, during the persecution of Christians by Maximian, 20,000 Christians of Nicomedia (December 28) were burned in church on the very Feast of the Nativity of Christ. In that same century, after the persecution when the Church had received freedom of religion and had become the official religion in the Roman Empire, we find the Feast of the Nativity of Christ observed throughout the entire Church. There is evidence of this in the works of Saint Ephraim the Syrian, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Ambrose of Milan, Saint John Chrysostom and other Fathers of the Church of the fourth century.

Saint John Chrysostom, in a sermon which he gave in the year 385, points out that the Feast of the Nativity of Christ is ancient, and indeed very ancient. In this same century, at the Cave of Bethlehem, made famous by the Birth of Jesus Christ, the empress Saint Helen built a church, which her mighty son Constantine adorned after her death. In the Codex of the emperor Theodosius from 438, and of the emperor Justinian in 535, the universal celebration of the day of the Nativity of Christ was decreed by law. Thus, Nikēphóros Callistus, a writer of the fourteenth century, says in his History that in the sixth century, the emperor Justinian established the celebration of the Nativity of Christ throughout all the world.

Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople in the fifth century, Sophronius and Andrew of Jerusalem in the seventh, Saints John of Damascus, Cosmas of Maium and Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople in the eighth, the Nun Cassiane in the ninth, and others whose names are unknown, wrote many sacred hymns for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, which are still sung by the Church on this radiant festival.

During the first three centuries, in the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Cyprus, the Nativity of Christ was combined together with the Feast of His Baptism on January 6, and called "Theophany" ("Manifestation of God"). This was because of a belief that Christ was baptized on anniversary of His birth, which may be inferred from Saint John Chrysostom's sermon on the Nativity of Christ: "it is not the day on which Christ was born which is called Theophany, but rather that day on which He was baptized."

In support of such a view, it is possible to cite the words of the Evangelist Luke who says that "Jesus began to be about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23) when He was baptized. The joint celebration of the Nativity of Christ and His Theophany continued to the end of the fourth century in certain Eastern Churches, and until the fifth or sixth century in others.

The present order of services preserves the memory of the ancient joint celebration of the Feasts of the Nativity of Christ and Theophany. On the eve of both Feasts, there is a similar tradition that one should fast until the stars appear. The order of divine services on the eve of both feasts and the feasts themselves is the same.

The Nativity of Christ has long been counted as one

of the Twelve Great Feasts. It is one of the greatest, most joyful and wondrous events in the history of the world. "The angel said to the shepherds, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' Then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, glorifying God and saying: 'Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' Those who heard these things were astonished at what the shepherds told them concerning the Child. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen" (Luke 2:10-20).

Thus the Nativity of Christ, a most profound and extraordinary event, was accompanied by the wondrous tidings proclaimed to the shepherds and to the Magi. This is a cause of universal rejoicing for all mankind, "for the Savior is Born!"

Concurring with the witness of the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church, in their God-inspired writings, describe the Feast of the Nativity of Christ as most profound, and joyous, serving as the basis and foundation for all the other Feasts.

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!*

## VISITATIONS

**Fr. Cizmar would like to know who requires visitation. He is eager to visit those who might have gone a long time without visitation for any reason at all. A key duty of a priest's ministry is to visit the sick and confined, those unable to attend the holy services for any reason. His phone number and email address are printed on the front of every Ambo, and are repeated here:**

**Father Jan Cizmar - 1(440) 732-8182 - [st.theodosiuscathedral@gmail.com](mailto:st.theodosiuscathedral@gmail.com)**

## **Thank You!!**

On behalf of the seminarian families attending our three seminaries (St. Vladimir's, St. Tikhon's, St. Herman's in Alaska), we want to thank all parishioners who donated to the St. Nicholas Wish List Program. Your generosity is heart-warming and greatly appreciated. You will bring joy to many families this holiday season. May God grant you a blessed Nativity season.

## 2024 Church Calendars Available

The 2024 calendars have arrived. We thank our sponsors Yurch funeral home, Mallchock funeral home, Kotecki Family Memorials and Eternity Monuments. Everyone can pick his calendar from the vestibule with his favorite sponsor.

## Consider Sponsoring Coffee Hour!

For those who would like to HELP with Coffee Hour but don't cook, you can now *sponsor* a Coffee Hour! By donating **\$65** you can sponsor a Coffee Hour, just put it in a white envelope marked "coffee hour" and place it in the collection basket or coffee hour basket in the Hall.

### Q4 2023 Coffee Hour Sign-Up

Questions/Concerns: Cathy Weber (412-215-1928)

Dec 24 M. Jana

Dec 31 Special Nativity Coffee Hour Celebration  
(Sponsored by Una & John, and two anonymous donors)

## The St. Theodosius Events Committee Requests Your Ideas!

Please share any ideas for events you might have with either Wayne Vidovich or Nicholas Zolikoff. We need your ideas!

The Events Committee  
invites all to  
**A MERRY LITTLE**  
*Coffee Hour*  
to celebrate the Joy of the Nativity together!  
**Sunday, December 31st after Liturgy**

## Church Kiosk

We have a little Church kiosk (shop) with some basic items for daily Orthodox life like prayer books, an Orthodox study bible, baptismal crosses, wedding/baptismal candles, icons, prayer rope, Nativity cards, thank you cards, etc. If you need anything from the kiosk, it will be available for 10min after the Sunday liturgy, or by request; see McKenna Athineo for more details.

Archpastoral Message of the Most Reverend

**DANIEL**

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest

on the Feast of the Nativity of Christ

2023

*Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, Venerable Monastics, and Beloved Faithful,  
“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light” (Isaiah 9:2)*

As we gather in the spirit of joy to celebrate the Nativity of Christ, these words of the holy Prophet Isaiah resound once again in our ears and in our hearts. Year after year, this ancient yet ever-new prophecy takes on renewed significance as we contemplate the mystery of Our Savior’s birth. In the Gospel of Saint Luke, we recall how the watchful shepherds, tending to their flocks in the dark of night in the hills of Bethlehem, suddenly experienced “the glory of the Lord shining on them” (*Luke 2:9*). The prevailing darkness of this world was pierced by a heavenly brightness: Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, who even now continues to enlighten the darkness of our earthly existence.

How do we today come to experience this Light, which dispels darkness and destroys it? We encounter it primarily as Divine Love: that Love which has altered the course of history, freed us from evil, filled our hearts with peace and joy, and brought life to the world. In the darkness of our night, the Love of God has been revealed to us: it is Jesus, the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary. He is “God’s love poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” (*Romans 5:5*).

Yes, “the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all people” (*Titus 2:11*): in our jubilant celebration of the Lord’s birth, we take to heart that Christ our Lord irrupted into human lives and affairs as we went about our usual business, and radically changed all things. The grace of God, this unmerited and transformative gift, continues to be given to us in the Person of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. The Feast of the Nativity poignantly reminds us that God’s love is unceasing, and that it outlasts the most harrowing circumstances and the worst instances of human sin. It is this love for mankind that we find encapsulated in the well-known words of the Gospel of St John: “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (*John 3:16*).

The love of God, revealed in his Son by the Holy Spirit, is neither conditional nor temporary, and does not depend on us or our “worthiness.” Even when we fall into sin, God continues to love us—but how often do we wrongly perceive God’s goodness as a response to our virtue, or divine punishment in our misfortunes! Yet despite our weakness and sinfulness, God’s love remains steadfast: it does not change nor is it fickle; it is faithful and ever patient. This is this incomparable gift that we encounter as we celebrate the Nativity of Christ. Each year, we remember and celebrate that the Lord has revealed himself to us as absolute, tender, and unfailing Love. His glory does not overwhelm us; rather, he is born in complete and utter poverty to bring all of his creation into the abundant wealth of his love.

Beloved Flock, “the grace of God has appeared” to shine forth in your life, in your hearts, and in the world we inhabit. Receive this grace as the unmerited gift of God’s love, and the light of Christ, born on this sacred night, will shine forth in you and through you, piercing the darkness that envelops this world.

Be assured of my fervent prayers and best wishes for you and all your loved ones during this holy season. May your celebration of the Lord’s birth may be adorned with radiance and joy, and may the coming New Year be enriched with abundant blessings, through the unceasing prayers and intercessions of our Most Holy and Most Pure Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary.

With love in the Newborn Savior,

+DANIEL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest

# *Celebrate*

*Join Us for Dinner  
To Honor*

## *Father Andrew Clements'*

*40 Years of service in the Priesthood  
And  
37 Years of Service to St. Nicholas Church*

*Where: Pine Ridge Country Club  
30601 Ridge Rd.  
Wickliffe, Ohio*

*When: Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup> 2024  
5:30 – 10:00 PM*

*Cost: \$30/person & Cash Bar  
\$15/child (ages 4-10)  
Vegan and Gluten-free options available*

*RSVP by January 14<sup>th</sup> To  
Evelyn Wick at [bobobskid@yahoo.com](mailto:bobobskid@yahoo.com) (440)-221-8265  
9372 Euclid-Chardon Rd.  
Kirtland, Ohio 44094*

*All reservations must be paid by January 14<sup>th</sup>.  
Checks payable to St. Nicholas*



# The Great Reindeer Hoax

Presented by: Get Away with Murder Inc.

Friday December 29, 2023

5:30 PM

St. Nicholas Banquet Center  
755 S. Cleveland Ave.  
Mogadore, OH 44260

Tickets: \$100 each



Sponsored by St. Nicholas RBO

Tickets on Sale: Friday Sept. 1st



## PRAYER REQUESTS

as of 12/24/2023

### **Deceased**

**Mark** Stepanovich

### **Special Intentions:**

**Fr. Micah** Chisholm

**Subdeacon Theodore** Lentz

**Subdeacon Roger** Pinta

**Subdeacon Leon** Felon

**Reader Paul** Pangrace

**Reader Frank** Tkacz

**Stephan** Chwalyk

**Horia** Dascalescu (*Lavinia's brother*)

**Diane** Kearsey (*Janice Tkacz's Sister*)

**Janice** Tkacz

**Eleanor** Wachovec (*friend of Karen Felon*)

**Rachel** Ohlin (*relative of Tatiana*)

**Erin** Zawolowycz

**Carol** Nielsen (*Paul Pangrace's sister*)

**Virginia** Medvec

**Jeffrey** Parhamovich (*brother of Karen Felon*)

**Margaret** Parhamovich (*sister-in-law of Karen Felon*)

**Margaret** Peyton (*Cathy's aunt*)

**Jean** Woycitzky Thompson (*Frank's cousin*)

**Anna Marie** Luvison (*daughter of Matthew & Katie Ellis Luvison*)

**Debra** Parhamovich (*sister of Karen Felon*)

**Grace Mary** Parhamovich (*mother of Karen Felon*)

**Gayle** Vidovich

**Elizabeth** Balasz

**Christina** Hile (*Nisi & Cindy's sister*)

**Lonnie** Ellis (*Husband to Debra Ellis*)

**Robert** Martin Prock

**Valentina** Zawolowycz (*mother of Paul Z*)

**Mark**

**Michael** Kapeluck (*friend of Cathy*)

**Jack Zimmerman** (*Uncle to Cindy Zdinak, Nisi Pozdarec and Father John Zdinak*)

**Robert McKay** (*friend of Andrew Myrtrohovic*)

**Gwyneth** Seddon (*daughter of Eric and Elisa*)

**Paul** Epele (*father-in-law of Lauren Epele*)

**Elena** Rich (*Jerry Czajkowski's daughter*)

**Aaron and Nadine** Drummond (Ellis) & unborn child

**Wasył** Miroewski (*Uncle of Tim Clos*)

**Amelia** Thombs (*Sister of Ethan*)

**Milan** Shumkaroff (*friend of Cindy Zdinak*)

**Jeanine**

**Martha** (*friend of Linda Kovach*)

**Elizabeth** Ballasz

**Andrea** Hochmann (*Clos*)

**Andrew** Mytrohovich

**Yonathan** and **Melissa** King (Wojnicz) & unborn child. (daughter of Alex Wojnicz)

**Please submit names to the Prayer List by emailing them to Fr. Jan Cizmar**  
[st.theodosiuscathedral@gmail.com](mailto:st.theodosiuscathedral@gmail.com)

Or calling at 1(440) 732-8182

Names remain on the list for 30 days unless requested otherwise.



## ST. THEODOSIUS IS A SUBSCRIBER TO TITHE.LY

In response to requests to be able to donate electronically, we have set up a Tithe.ly account so people can donate either regularly or for special occasions online. Click here to see: <https://www.sttheodosius.org/donate>



# St. Theodosius Orthodox Christian Cemetery

8200 Biddulph Rd., Brooklyn OH 44144 • Paul Webb, Cemetery Manager 216-296-9739

## Grave Prices

\*Effective January 2024\*

All graves \$2,100.00 + \$400.00 perpetual care fee = \$2,500.00 total

All infant graves \$ 1000.00

### Sunday, December 24

29th Sunday after Pentecost  
**Eve of the Nativity of Christ**  
Sunday before the Nativity  
Nun-martyr Eugenia of Rome  
8:40 AM 3rd and 6th Hours  
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy  
Vespers to follow Divine Liturgy  
Coffee Hour  
6:00 PM Vigil for the Nativity

### Monday, December 25

**The Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ**  
8:40 AM 3rd and 6th Hours  
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

### Tuesday, December 26

**Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God**  
Second Day of the Nativity  
8:40 AM 3rd and 6th Hours  
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

### Wednesday, December 27\*

Holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen (34)  
Third Day of the Nativity

### Thursday, December 28

Afterfeast of the Nativity  
The 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia (302)

### Friday, December 29

Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ  
The 14,000 Infants (Holy Innocents) slain by Herod at Bethlehem

### Saturday, December 30

Virgin Martyr Anysia at Thessalonica (285-305)  
Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ  
Saturday after the Nativity  
Saturday before Theophany  
6:00 PM Great Vespers

### Sunday, December 31

30th Sunday after Pentecost  
Leavetaking of the Nativity  
Sunday after Nativity  
Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord  
8:40 AM 3rd and 6th Hours  
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy  
A Merry Little Coffee Hour  
Special Celebration

### Monday, January 1

**The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**  
St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (379)  
Sunday before Theophany  
8:40 AM 3rd and 6th Hours  
9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE 2023



Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God