

Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Christian Church

A Parish of the Diocese of New England of the Orthodox Church in America

Fr. John Hopko, Pastor • Protodeacon Paul Nimchek

860.582.3631 • email: terryvilleorthodoxchurch@gmail.com

www.terryvilleorthodoxchurch.org • www.facebook.com/TerryvilleOrthodoxChurch



Sunday, December 27, 2020

29th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 4. Third Day of the Feast of the Nativity. Holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen (34). Sunday after Nativity. Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord. Ven. Theodore Graptus (“the Branded”), Confessor and brother of St. Theophanes the Hymnographer (ca. 840). St. Theodore, Archbishop of Constantinople (ca. 686).

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2020/12/27>

Letter of His Beatitude Metropolitan TIKHON

Feast of the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ

To the Venerable Hierarchs, Esteemed Clergy, Reverend Monastics, and Beloved Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Brethren and Blessed Children in the Lord, on this the glorious and light-filled Feast of the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, I greet you with the words that resound throughout our Churches and homes during this season: Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

By the grace of God, we have come through an extraordinary year fraught with challenges and trials that none of us could have expected. We have found ourselves confused, scared, and anxious. As we realized the frailty of our earthly life and the many fleeting things of this world to which we so often cling, more than anything, we have found ourselves in need of a Savior.

It is especially in these challenging moments that we are strengthened by God’s promise, spoken in the book of Deuteronomy, “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be in dread of them: for it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you (Dt 31:6).” As children of God, as children of the promise, we should remain steadfast in hope. We should never let our hope waiver, because, as the present feast reminds us, we are strengthened continually by the presence of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus, who saves us from our sins and weaknesses, and reconciles us with our heavenly Father. The scripture, hymns, and rites of the feast testify that Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, is He who has also died on the Cross, and become the first-born of the dead, raised us all by the Power of God, and opened the gates of the kingdom to us.

The great Prophet Isaiah, speaking of this kingdom, tells us:

Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever (Is 9:7).

Beloved hierarchs, clergy, monastics, and faithful, let your hope be renewed at the Nativity of Christ! Be assured that God is with us! Perceiving the mystery of this feast, difficulties and trials in this life will become bearable, as your faith is strengthened, and your hope remains firm.

With all the blessings of the feast, I remain

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+ **Tikhon**

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

PARISH PRAYER LIST

We pray for all victims of disease, disaster, difficulty, and senseless violence throughout the world, especially in this time of pestilence and civil unrest.

+ **THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED THIS LIFE: *Memory Eternal!***

First of all, we pray for all the thousands of victims of COVID-19. Memory Eternal!

Newly Departed

Patriarch IRINEJ of Serbia—head of the Serbian Orthodox Church	d. 11/20/2020
His Eminence, Archbishop David of Alaska	d. 11/27/2020
Luke H.—son of Fr. Steven and Mat. Anne H.	d. 12/17/2020
Maryann Kendall—well-known lay person in the CT Deanery	d. 12/16/2020
Mary Ellen Zobbi—wife of Robert Zobbi, of the Waterbury Parish	d. 12/12/2020

Anniversaries of Repose – Memory Eternal!

Joseph Pawelchak	12/27/1972
Afton Susidko	12/30/1963
Anna Baychuk	12/30/1967
Harry Leba, Sr.	12/31/1999
Afton Andrash	1/1/1937
Peter Duke	1/1/1956
Peter Markovich	1/2/2009

THOSE IN NEED OF GOD'S MERCY AND HELP

First of all, we pray for all those suffering due to the present pestilence which is COVID-19, and those working to alleviate their suffering.

Persons captive and suffering for the Faith

Metropolitan Paul and Archbishop John—hostages in Syria

Those who are sick and suffering

Archpriest Michael—former pastor of our parish; reoccurrence of illness
Archpriest John—Fr. John H.'s uncle through marriage; cancer
Fyodor (Frank) G.—suffering from Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
Dolores T.—permanent colon malfunction following colon cancer treatment
child Drew—grandson of friends of the Nimcheks; ongoing treatment for eye cancer
Darlyne—facing health challenges; daughter of Bob and Vera Martin
Donna—Ann S.'s niece, Deb W.'s cousin; kidney disease
Dayrl—Ann S.'s niece, Deb W.'s cousin; kidney disease
JoAnn—acquaintance of Jeanne Moore; ovarian cancer
MaryEllen—Louine K.'s daughter-in-law; suffering with Huntington's Disease
Yelena "Lenna" M.—overcoming, by God's grace, serious health challenges
Katie and Aubrey—a mother and daughter for whom we have been asked to pray
Tanya B.—suffering long-term and lingering effects of brain hemorrhage
Mary Lynn—friend of Donna O.; battling breast cancer
Barbara—friend of Patty N.; unwell and in need of prayerful support

James B.—husband of a Waterbury parishioner; chronically unwell
Dorothy F.—Waterbury parishioner; still recovering from a serious surgery
Vincent—relapse of cancer; relative through marriage of P. Oraschewsky
Rosie D.—ongoing health issues
Michael "Mike" L.—ongoing health issues
child George—9-year-old son of a Kenyan Orthodox priest; quite unwell
Bill M.—has experienced some health issues lately, please keep in prayer
Christopher—friend of Kathy M.; struggling with cancer
Paula—friend of Jim L.; struggling with cancer
Dimitri—brother of Carolyn P.; health issues
child Hattie—injured in freak accident; request of a family in our parish
Maryna B.—dealing with some health issues
Subdn. Joseph—recent issue with a painful hip joint
Thomas—Patty N.'s nephew; battling cancer
Wayne—Donna O.'s father
Vickie—a woman for whom we have been asked to pray
Sam—Vickie's husband, struggling with multiple health issues
Richard—a man struggling with cancer, for whom we have been asked to pray
Sue—friend of Macrina H.; quite unwell at this time
Jody—Jacob J.'s father; recovering from significant back surgery
Helen—acquaintance of Helena G; in long-term care
Candace—acquaintance of Helena G; in need of prayers
Elaine H.—hip replacement surgery upcoming in January; our fellow parishioner
Maria O.—dialysis three times a week; recently injured in fall
Anna—Rdr. John Paul Sz.'s mother; quite ill at this time

Shut-ins and those resident in long-term Care Facilities

Alex—John D.'s brother, suffering permanent effects of stroke
Dolores—Bob M.'s mother, resident in long-term eldercare

Expectant Mothers

Shelby (Sophia) G. and the child to be born of her
Katherine and the child to be born of her—Fr. John's nephew's wife

Travelers, Those Soon to be Traveling, and Those Apart from Us

All those who are traveling, soon to be traveling, or apart from us

Those from among us serving on active duty in the Armed Forces

Joel O.—U.S. Navy; hospital corpsman ("medic")
Joseph B.—a Terryville neighbor; U.S. Marine Corps
Joshua P.—husband of a niece of Fr. John's; U.S. Army officer and pilot
Alexander—relative of Carolyn P.; 82nd Airborne Division soldier now home from abroad
Derek—relative of Carolyn P.; serving in Afghanistan in the U.S. Army
Ian H.—Fr. David K.'s son-in-law; preparing for overseas deployment, U.S. Army

Anniversaries of Marriage

NONE THIS WEEK

Birthdays

Nina D. -- wife of John D.

12/29

Prayer Notes

Please pray for Maria Oraschewsky: Maria Oraschewsky, our fellow parishioner, who is already battling chronic health issues, has suffered a fall resulting in neck and arm injuries. She is now, for at least the time being, resident with her son Peter and his family, at Peter's home in Pennsylvania. Please, keep Maria in your prayers. Thank you.

Please pray for Anna Szepel: Reader John Paul Szepel's mother, Anna, is quite unwell. Reader John Paul is asking us, please, to keep her in our prayers.

News and Notes

Wednesday Morning Matins Services, via "Zoom", at 8:00 a.m.: Due to the increase in cases of COVID-19 here in our area, we have made the choice to limit in-person activities at the Church. This means that, for now, we are suspending our in-person Wednesday morning Matins services. We have replaced that in-person service with an on-line gathering for worship and prayer, Wednesday mornings at 8:00 a.m. Watch your email inbox for details.

Bible Study – Via "Zoom," Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.: We have been holding weekly Bible Study sessions, via video teleconference ("Zoom") on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This Tuesday, we will be continuing our reading and discussion of the First Letter to the Corinthians. Each week is an event unto itself, so, please, even if you haven't joined us before, feel free to join us this week, or at any time in the future.

Bible Study Companion Book: If you are interested in reading a book that will serve as a companion to the efforts we are presently making in Bible Study, this book may be a resource for you: *First and Second Corinthians: Straight From the Heart*. This book is written by Fr. Lawrence Farley, who is a priest in British Columbia, Canada, in a parish of the Orthodox Church in America's Archdiocese of Canada. It is published by Conciliar Press, Chesterton, Indiana (<https://store.ancientfaith.com/biblical-studies/>). Fr. Lawrence has written a whole series of accessible commentaries on parts of the Bible. In particular, his commentaries are written to be appreciated by and useful to Orthodox Christian lay people.

Support from the Parish: If you require financial or pastoral support during this vexing and challenging time, contact Fr. John, personally and confidentially, and he will endeavor to help you get the assistance that you need. All such contacts will be treated with strict confidentiality and great sensitivity. **Don't be shy: If you need help, please, do contact Fr. John.**

Donations to the Parish: Please, continue to support our parish during this challenging time. Donations to the Parish may be submitted via checks made out to and mailed to Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church, 34 Fairview Avenue, Terryville, CT 06786-6329. Also, a PayPal Donation "button" (<https://www.terryvilleorthodoxchurch.org/donatenow>) is located on our parish website to make online donations possible. Our parish is registered as a charity with PayPal, so we have slightly lower fees connected to the use of that means of receiving donations. For us, PayPal's fees are 2.2%, plus \$0.30 per transaction. (So, for example, a donation of \$100.00 given via PayPal will realize us actual income of \$97.50.)

Readings from Holy Scripture

Scripture Readings for the Sunday after Christmas, this year December 29

The Reading from the Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. 1:11-19)

Brother and Sisters: I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

The Reading from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew (Matt. 2:13-23)

When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

A Prayer on the Occasion of the New Year

O Master, Lord our God, the Fountain of Life and Immortality, the Creator of all things, both visible and invisible, who governs the seasons and the years and guides all things by Your wise providence; we thank You for all the blessings that You have poured out upon us during the past years of our lives, and we beg You, all-bountiful Lord, bless this coming New Year with Your Goodness, direct our civil authorities in the path of goodness, and bestow Your heavenly blessings upon all Your people, especially the blessings of salvation, health and growth in virtue. Deliver Your Church and this town and countryside from every assault of the Evil One, and grant us peace and tranquility; and grant, also, that we may always offer thanksgiving to You, the Father who is without beginning, together with Your only-begotten Son, and Your most-holy Spirit, God glorified in three persons, and may we joyfully praise Your all-holy Name: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, always, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.