

## ST. MARY ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

A PARISH OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA

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PARISH WEB PAGE S [www.stmaryorthodox.com](http://www.stmaryorthodox.com) S

### CLERGY

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

His Grace Bishop THOMAS, Auxiliary Bishop of Charleston, Oakland & the Mid-Atlantic

Very Rev. Fr. George Alberts, Pastor

Very Rev. Fr. Dr. David Hester, Pastor Emeritus

Subdeacon William Obeid + Subdeacon N.D. Namey + Subdeacon John Moses Jr.

Sub-deacon David Rayahin + Seminarian Mark Makarios + Seminarian Christopher (Cody) Vest

WELCOME to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. We are the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Christian Church whose roots trace directly back to the first century Antioch, the city in which the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).

The Orthodox Church is the oldest and second-largest Christian group in the world. We are called by God, our Creator, to worship and follow Him and to proclaim to the world His message of love, peace and salvation.

God loves all mankind and desires that all human beings should believe in Him, know Him, abide in Him, and receive eternal life from Him. To accomplish this God Himself came into the world as a man in Jesus Christ --- becoming man that we might become like God.

The Parishioners of St. Mary Parish welcome you and are pleased that you have decided to worship Almighty God with our Parish family today. We encourage you to learn about our Orthodox faith and our Parish if you are not yet Orthodox.

Although the non-Orthodox may not receive Holy Communion, which may only be given to the Orthodox faithful, we invite you to come forward at the close of the Liturgy to receive a blessing from the Priest and blessed bread. Please also come downstairs to the Parish Hall join us for our fellowship hour.

Our Patronal Feast is the DORMITION (FALLING-ASLEEP) OF THE THEOTOKOS, which is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church and is celebrated each year on August 15. The Theotokos, the Virgin Mary, was "blessed amongst women," and she was chosen "to bear the Savior of our souls." Orthodox Christians consider her to be the Queen of all the saints and angels. Knowing she is eternally present at the throne of God interceding for mankind, we pray for her love, guidance, and protection.



PLEASE NOTE

All our services can be watched as they occur on our Parish Face Book page at <https://www.facebook.com/StMaryAO/>

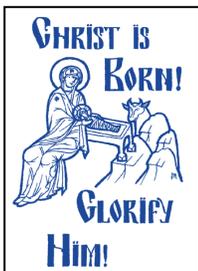


SCHEDULE OF PARISH LIFE AT ST. MARY

Tuesday	December 29	Father George at the Church from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Friday	January 1	Celebration of the Circumcision in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ & also the giving of the Name of Jesus *** HAPPY (CIVIL) NEW YEAR!
Sunday	January 3	Matins at 9:00 am & Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am

COMMEMORATIONS

- ☞ Today None Today
- ☞ Jan 17, 2021 Holy Bread and Bulletin offered in loving memory of Hal Morrash on the four year anniversary of her repose by her family also Trisagion Prayers are for Hal Morrash
- ☞ Jan 25, 2021 Holy Bread and Bulletin offered in loving memory of Thomas Yuhas Jr on the two year anniversary of his repose by Tom and Rose Yuhas



Brothers and Sisters In Christ .....

We Greet Each Other After The Nativity By Exclaiming "Christ Is Born" and Responding "Glorify Him!" When Meeting Each Other And Also During The Liturgy When Offering Each Other The Sign Of Peace ... Greet each other by exclaiming ...

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

**DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2020**  
**Proto-martyr Stephen the Archdeacon & Sunday after the Nativity of Christ**  
**Commemoration of Joseph the Betrothed, David the Prophet and King, and**  
**James the brother of the Lord**



**RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FOUR**

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

**APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE FOUR**

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.

**APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY IN TONE TWO**

Proclaim, O Joseph, to David, the grandparent of God, the amazing wonders; for thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; for with the shepherds thou didst give glory, with the Magi thou didst worship, and by the angel it was revealed to thee. Wherefore, plead thou with Christ God to save our souls.

**APOLYTIKION OF ST. STEPHEN IN TONE FOUR**

The crown of the Kingdom hath adorned the brow of thy head \* because of the contests that thou hast endured for Christ God, thou first of the martyred Saints; \* for when thou hadst censured the Jews' madness, thou sawest \* Christ thy Savior standing at the right hand of the Father. \* O Stephen, ever pray Him for us, that He would save our souls.

**APOLYTIKION OF THE DORMITION**

In giving birth thou didst keep thy virginity and thy repose thou didst not forsake the world O Theotokos, for thou art the mother of life and thou didst pass over into life. And through thine intercessions from death thou dost redeem our souls.

**KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE THREE**

On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in Essence; \* to the Unapproachable, \* the earth doth offer a small cave; \* Angels join in choir with shepherds \* in giving glory; \* with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; \* for our sakes is born a young Child, \* He Who existed \* before the ages as God.

**THE EPISTLE**  
**(For St. Stephen)**

*His voice has gone out into all the earth. The heavens declare the glory of God.*

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (6:8-7:5, 47-60)

In those days, Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." And gazing at him, all who sat in the council

saw that his face was like the face of an angel. The high priest said, "Is this so?" And Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.' Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, though he had no child. But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says, 'Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool. What house will you build for Me', says the Lord, 'or what is the place of My rest? Did not My hand make all these things?' You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, Whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they grinded their teeth against him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

## **THE GOSPEL**

**(For the Sunday after Nativity of Christ)**

**The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (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 until 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 fulfill 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."

## **THE SYNAXARION**

On December 27 in the Holy Orthodox Church, the second day of the After-feast of the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the Venerable-confessor Theodore the Branded; and the holy Apostle, First Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen, one of the Seven Deacons.

*With crowns of words, as it were with stones most precious, I now crown Stephen, whom the stones crowned before time. On the twenty-seventh a stony destiny took Stephen away.*

Stephen was the first and archdeacon of the seven deacons whom the holy apostles ordained and appointed to the service of assisting the poor in Jerusalem. Among the Proto-martyr's persecutors was his kinsman Saul, who became the Apostle Paul. At that time, the Most-holy Theotokos, standing at a distance with John the Theologian, witnessed the martyrdom of this first martyr for the truth of her Son and God. Gamaliel, a prince of the Jews and a secret Christian, clandestinely took Stephen's body and buried it on his own estate.

On the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the holy and just Ancestors of God: Joseph the Betrothed of the Holy Virgin, our Lady the Theotokos; James the Brother of the Lord and the First Bishop of Jerusalem; and David the Prophet and King.

*I honor Joseph, the Betrothed of the Virgin, who to be her protector was alone chosen. Thou art a carpenter's son, but also the brother of the Lord that built all with a word, O blest James. What shall I say, seeing that the Lord testifieth, as a man after Mine own heart, I have found David.*

David committed adultery and murder, yet God forgave him and glorified him above all the kings of Israel. He gave him the great grace to compose the most beautiful penitential prayers (the Psalms) and to prophesy the coming of Christ. God designated Joseph to protect the Most-holy Virgin, and imparted to him great honor in the plan of the salvation of mankind. The Apostle James is called the "Brother of the Lord" because he was the son of the righteous Joseph the Betrothed. James greatly loved Jesus and, according to tradition, he traveled to Egypt with the Most-holy Virgin and Joseph when Herod sought to slay the newborn King.

*By their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.*



On January 1 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we celebrate the Circumcision In The Flesh Of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ; it being the eighth day after his birth, we commemorate also the giving of the name of Jesus.

The Divine Child was presented in the Temple and circumcised according to the law existing in Israel since the time of Abraham. The Old Testament circumcision was the prototype of the New Testament baptism. The circumcision of Our Lord shows that He received upon Himself the true body of man and not just seemingly, as was later taught of him by heretics. Our Lord was also circumcised because He wanted to fulfill the entire law which He himself gave through the prophets and forefathers. Thus, the Apostle Paul declares: "for neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation" (Gal. 6:15).

We also commemorate our Father among the Saints Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia on January 1.

While still unbaptized, Basil spent fifteen years in Athens where he studied philosophy, rhetoric, astronomy and all other secular sciences. His colleagues at that time were Gregory the theologian and Julian, later the apostate emperor. In his mature years he was baptized in the River Jordan. He was bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia for almost ten years. He was a great defender of Orthodoxy, a great light of moral purity, a great theological mind, a great builder and pillar of the church of god. Basil fully deserved the title "Great." In liturgical services, he is referred to as the "bee of the church of Christ

which brings honey to the faithful and with its stinger pricks the heretics.” Numerous works of this Father of the church are preserved; they include theological, ascetical and canonical writings as well as the Holy and Divine Liturgy named after him. Basil reposed peacefully in 379 A.D.

On this day, we also commemorate the New-Martyr Peter of the Peloponnesus.

*Excerpted from the Synaxarion for January 1*

## PARISH NEWS

- ✘ Please note that Father George will be at the Church from 10 am to 2 p.m. on Tuesday this week
- ✘ As you know, the Parish Council recently met and discussed how the Parish will address the Parish General Assembly and the election of officers for 2021. The Parish normally holds the Parish General Assembly and elections in January. After discussion and in consideration of the present COVID restrictions, it was decided by unanimous vote of all cast that we will delay our Parish General Assembly for 6 months in the hope restrictions will be lifted by then. At that time, we will hold our assembly and elections. Until then, the present Parish Council will remain in place and will continue to work diligently.
- ✘ Our Metropolitan JOSEPH has a video Advent message for all of us. This special message may be accessed through this link: [VIDEO: His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH'S Advent Message, 2020 Metropolitan Joseph shares a message of hope and transcendence as we prepare for and anticipate, the Nativity of our Lord.](#)
- ✘ Please take note the Church envelopes, for the Parishioners who request them are in the Narthex (vestibule) of the Church. Please take your envelopes and if you see envelopes belonging to your family, please take them and safely deliver those too ...
- ✘ Please remember there will be NO Spaghetti dinners in December but that we will resume these great takeout dinners – God Willing -- in January, 2021. Who knows – with God’s blessings and His Grace we may be able to sit together again in the Parish Hall and enjoy the traditional spaghetti dinners early in the new year.
- ✘ Please let us know if there is anyone who can be removed from the prayer list. Please contact either Father George or Subdeacon Norman.

### \*\*\*\* Baklava Sale \*\*\*\*

We have Baklava for sale just in time for Christmas. The cost is as follows:

*Full Tray of 96 cuts---\$76.00*

*Half Tray of 48 cuts--\$38.00*

*Quarter Tray of 24 cuts--\$19.00*

To place your order, please call Eileen at 570-829-7090

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### COVID-Related Reminders to Consider .....

We remind everyone to wear their masks while in Church. Please remember to wear your mask over both your nose and mouth. This may be uncomfortable at times but the CDC recommendations mandate wearing the mask over your nose and mouth. Please also observe social distancing while in Church to help avoid the spread of the virus.

We ask everyone to observe proper hygiene practices – no hugging, handshakes, or kissing ...Honor/veneration is to be shown to the Holy Icons and the Holy Cross by making the sign of the cross and bowing, keeping in mind not to kiss or to touch the Holy Icons and the Holy Cross. Please also use the hand sanitizer provided for your convenience.

Finally, please report to us if you learn you have been exposed to anyone who has tested positive or believes they may have been exposed themselves. We owe it to each other to be vigilant and warn of any potential exposure, no matter how inadvertent or innocent it may be ....