

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

المسيحُ وُلِدَ! فمجدوه!



Nativity (Birth in the Flesh) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

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December 24/25, 2023

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST/ NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Welcome to St. George! Thank you for attending today's Divine Services. If you are a first-time visitor, please register your visit by completing the guest book located in the narthex. We would appreciate getting to meet you after liturgy, so feel free to join us during Coffee Fellowship! Every Sunday we remember the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The word "*Liturgy*" means *work of the people* that means everyone participates through singing, praying, hearing the teaching, and opening our hearts to allow God's grace to enter. Anyone interested in learning more about our faith are encouraged to speak with one of our clergy.

Guidelines for Receiving Holy Communion for Orthodox Christians: Orthodox Christians fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist by receiving Holy Communion in fulfillment of Christ's command *to eat His Body and drink His Blood*. In order to be properly prepared to receive Holy Communion, the faithful should fast (no food or drink from midnight the night before), the Sacrament of Confession (7 years and older) within the last 2 months, being at peace with others, and striving to always love God and their neighbor. Frequent communion and regular confession are recommended for all faithful Orthodox Christians.

For other Christians: We welcome you to this celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Unfortunately, we cannot extend to you a general invitation to receive Holy Communion. Orthodox Christians believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community signifying a oneness in faith, life, and worship of our community. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united with us would imply a oneness which does not yet exist, but for which we must all pray. All, however, are welcome to partake of the blessed bread (*antidoron*) which will be given when coming forward to venerate (kiss) the Holy Cross and receive the final blessing from the priest. Again, welcome!

Live Streaming of Divine Services

St. George is open for all parishioners and visitors. If you cannot attend, please pray with us through our livestream which can be seen on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SaintGeorgeOrthodoxChurchFlintMI>

If you have a smart TV, you actually have a web browser and YouTube app built in. All you have to do is start the browser app for YouTube and put the link in the address bar.

Nativity Poinsettia Offerings

(Remembered during the Service of Preparing the Holy Gifts [bread and wine])

- **Anwar** and **Janet** Abueita for their health and the health of **Tony, Chrissy, Haleena, Maliyah, Tony, Michael, Iliyana, John, Jacqueline, Leah, Tony, Jenny, Mathew, Lukas, and Georgette** and in loving memory of **Peter, Alice, Asmahan, Nasim, Basim, and Yacoub**.
- **Hiam** Bathish for her health and the health of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and in loving memory of husband **Emil, Dannie, Jose, Naif, Julia, Yacoub, and Mary**.
- **Ayman** and **Wafaa** Elias for the health of their family here and abroad and in loving memory of **Elias, Joselyn, Ibrahim, Thourayah, Salim, Radia, Najah, Tony, and Gaith**.

- **Subdeacon Salim** and **Dania** Hanna for the health of **Hanna, Alghanim, Elias, Joubran,** and **Khoshaba** Families in loving memory of **Tony, Joselyn, Elias, Ghais, Rosa, Zahwee,** and **Badia**.
- George and Hiam Ishaq for the health of **Nusta, George, Hiam, Nida, Nidal, Samer** Ishaq and in loving memory of **George** Bannoura.
- **Edward** and **Feryal** Joubran for the health of their family especially children **Jasmine** and **Eddie** and in loving memory of **Francois, Frank,** and **Joyce** Joubran.
- **Najwa** Joubran for the health of her family especially **Jennifer, Martin, Emma,** and **Ava**.
- **Martin** and **Jennifer** Khoshaba and Family for their health and the health of the **Khoshaba, Hanna, Joubran, Elias,** and **Krinock** Families and in loving memory of **Hermes** Khoshaba, **Emil** Joubran, **Ghais** Hanna, **Joselyn** Elias, **Elias** Elias, and **Badia** Khoury.
- **Karam** and **Aida** Nassar for the health of their family especially **Fred, Omar, Sarah,** and **Salam,** and in loving memory of **Nicholah** and **Rasmeya** Kaileh.
- **Mousa** and **Amanda** Rishmawi for the health of their family especially children **Jonathan, Julia, Lily, Sophia,** and **Nicholas** and in loving memory of **all departed family members**.
- **Richard** Shaheen for the health of his family and in loving memory of **JoAnn** Merrelli, **Fred & Mamie** Shaheen, and **Harry** and **Patricia** Haddad.
- **Doug** and **Sandy** Thomas for the health of their family especially **Laney, Morgan, Jordan,** and **Landon** Thomas and in loving memory of **Jean** and **Alex** Khouri, **Virginia, Marvin,** and **Ken** Thomas.
- **John** and **Lauren** Zerka for the health of their family especially **Daniel** and **Nazera** Czerniak, **Lindsay, Korey, Sullivan** and **Bennett** Lester, **Milad** and **Georgette** Zerka, **Danny, Asmahan, Christopher, Michael,** and **Joseph** Zerka, **Joyce, Ryan, Alexander, Alivia,** and **Adriana** Schlee, and **Kameel** Ansara and in loving memory of **Leonard** and **Evelyn** Czerniak, **Andrew** and **Jeanette** Cassis, **Antoine** and **Layla** Nehme, **George** and **Nazera** Zerka, and **Michael** Zerka.

Thank you and may God grant you all many years!

Holy Bread Oblations (Offerings)

- (12-24) Ric and Martha Shahin health of the **Shahin, Hawkins, Rhinehart, Moore,** and **Durant** families, and in memory of the departed members of the **Shahin, Brackett, Hawkins, Rhinehart, Moore,** and **Durant** families.
 - (12-24) Hiam Bathish for the health of her **children, grandchildren,** and **great-grandchildren** especially **Rudaina, Lubna,** and **Amer** on the occasion of their birthdays ~ *May God grant them many years!* ~ and in loving memory of husband **Emil, Dannie** Jones, **Jose** Ramirez, **Yacoub** and **Marie** Farah (parents), and **Naif** and **Julia** Bathish.
 - We also pray for the servants of God who have fallen asleep in the Lord: **Sue** Brady-Dingo (+November 21st, aunt of Jason Dine) and **Gena** Basnett, (+November 28th, friend of Fr. Michael) ~ *may their memory be eternal!*
 - Prayers are offered for our parishioners who are ill, recovering, or in need, especially His servants: **Archbishop Alexander** (bishop of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Nicholas), our **Bishop Anthony, Fr. Joe** Abud, **Sahar** Abdallah, **Reader Fouad** and **Soad** Abuaita, **Philip** and **Janett** Abuaita, **Rasha** Abuaita, **Shafiq** Abuaitah, **Laila** Abud, **George** Abueita, **Georgette** Abueita, **Jane** Abueita, **Mary** Abueita, **Youssif** Abousamra, **William** Alsahouri, **Naila** Banna, **Vera** Daoud, **Said** Farah, **Elias** Gantos, **Subdeacon George** and **Suad** Gantous, **Phyllis** Good, **Ronald** Haddad, **Daisy** Isaac, **John** Joseph, **Karen** Mortensen, **Karam** Nassar, **Laura** Nassar, **Jeanette** Nassif, **Adam** Odeh, **Rahmeh** Rashmawi, **Elaine** Shaheen, **Michael** Silpoch, and **Sandy** Thomas.
 - We also pray for our expectant parents: **Ambur** (daughter of Joseph Haddad) and **Matt** Allison, **Gabriella** (daughter of Joseph & Mary Jo Ghattas) and **David** Ayyash, Drs. **Lindsey** and **Ryan** Brunner, **Casandra** and **Danial** Burbar, **Amira** and **Abdulla** Farah, **Andrea** and **Josh** Jones, **Christine** (daughter of Ayman & Wafaa Elias) and Dr. **Matthew** Krinock, **Kari** (daughter of John & Theresa Farah) and **Panagiotis** Mikroudis, **Vera** and **Luay** Sababa, & **Jacqueline** (daughter of Anwar & Janet Abueita) and **John** Timm.
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

No Fasting December 25th until January 5th ~ the 12 Days of Christmas!

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES AND CHURCH CALENDARS Please pick up yours (and other family members and friends) so we do not have to mail them! If your name is not listed, let Fr. Joe know. The calendars (*please take 1 per family*) are a gift from our Ladies Auxiliary ~ thank you, Ladies! Our children will receive their envelopes in Church School. **Parents**, please make sure your children get their *Offering Envelopes*!

PLEASE HELP ~ KIDNEY NEEDED!

One of our parishioners is in desperate need of a kidney. Everyone has 2 kidneys, but only need 1 to live. Both of this parishioner's kidneys are not working properly. If you are interested and want more information, please speak with Fr. Joe ~ *thanks!*

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## NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

The incomprehensible and inexplicable Nativity of Christ came to pass when Herod the Great was reigning in Judea. He was in every way foreign to the royal line of David; rather, 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.

Our Savior was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea, where 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 Mary to give birth, and since there was no place in the inn, the Virgin's circumstance forced them to enter a cave which was near Bethlehem. Having as shelter a stable of animals, she gave birth, 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*" (Habbakuk 3:2), and "*The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib*" (Isaiah 1: 3).

But while the earth gave the new-born Savior 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 new-born 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 immediately, 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, good will towards men*" (Luke 2:8-14).

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COMING EVENTS

Wednesday	St. George Women's Christmas Dinner	4pm
Saturday	<i>Great Vespers</i>	4pm
Next Sunday, Dec. 31 st	<i>Matins</i> 8:50am	<i>Divine Liturgy</i> 10am as normal

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan SABA



Archbishop of New York
and Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Prot. no.: 486/2023

Nativity 2023

Reverend Hierarchs, Priests and Deacons, Esteemed members of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees, Beloved Sons and Daughters of our Antiochian Archdiocese of North America,

On this blessed occasion, I recall the familiar phrase we hear in the Advent prayers:

“Christ is born, glorify Him!”

It is the Church’s call to us since the beginning of the Nativity Fast. We remember it to keep the question alive: How do we glorify Christ? Present in our minds, the answer remains clear: we glorify Him through our actions, our lives, and our conduct. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). Remember, the answer depends on each person’s readiness and response to this divine calling.

Many believe that Christ calls us to be good and nothing more. However, our Orthodox Christian faith teaches us that Christ came for us, and became man, not merely to make us good but to adorn our nature with His divinity. Good deeds are necessary, not as an end in themselves, but as the path to conform to Christ, striving for divine perfection.

Christian theology has succinctly summarized the theology of the Incarnation since the second century with the phrase: “God became man so that man might become God.” Our Lord took unto himself what was not His original nature to clearly show us that it is possible for us to forsake our sinful nature. He opened the heavens and descended to us, teaching us to open the gates of our hearts and forgiveness of sins, offering mercy to our brethren through the likeness of His love toward us.

My prayer for you in these blessed days is that may you always be prepared to receive the birth of Christ within you, to be a warm manger for Him, and to be blessed by His constant presence within you. May He increasingly mold you into His likeness day by day.

May God bless your days and your lives, and may everyone taste the peace of His Nativity.

Wishing you a blessed festal season and a new year filled with His blessings, I remain,

Yours in the Incarnate Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Saba'.

+SABA

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

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