

Holy Spirit Byzantine Catholic Church
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Monsignor Lawrence A. Dominik, Celebrant

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021
THE SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
(THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE HOLY PHILIPPIAN FAST)

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE HOLY FATHERS WEEK

Sunday, December 19:	11:00 a.m. – Sunday Divine Liturgy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• * <i>For the Intention of our Holy Spirit Parish</i>• + <i>John Kepich (1st Anniversary) by Mrs. Theresa Carr</i>
Saturday, December 25	<i>The Feast of the Holy Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ (HOLY DAY)</i> 9:00 a.m. – Christmas-Day Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom * <i>For the Intention of our Holy Spirit Parish</i>
Sunday, December 26:	<i>The Sunday of the Holy Forebears of God & Synaxis of the Most Holy Godbearer</i> 11:00 a.m. – Sunday Divine Liturgy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• * <i>For the Intention of our Holy Spirit Parish</i>• * <i>God's Blessings for New Pastor Father Michael Kunitz</i> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>by Catherine J. Warhola</i></p>

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10 & 32-40 Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

TODAY IS THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE HOLY NATIVITY FEAST....

On this **Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the Old Testament** as we await Jesus' holy nativity, we establish the historical context for the messianic birth-event. We remember today all of the old-testament people from Abraham to Mary's spouse Joseph, who form the ancestral family tree of **Jesus**, and who waited with firm **HOPE** for the promised Messiah, the Christ, Who would redeem God's chosen people, Israel. These ancients anticipated the Savior's coming. They were Jesus' blood relatives, and they never gave up hope. However, God's promise of sending a Deliverer for our eternal salvation has now been fulfilled in our time. The Messiah came! Therefore, **God is with us! S nami Boh!**

THE EVE OF THE HOLY NATIVITY: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24TH....

Nativity Eve is the day of preparation for the Holy Christmas Feast, and it is customarily a day of *strict fast*. The daytime service of the Church, the **Royal Hours**, readies us for the nativity event by emphasizing God's promise to send a Savior as all of the details of the Messiah's birth are recounted. This special evening is called the **Holy Evening (Svjatjy Večer)**, and the traditional meal of Nativity Eve is a sacred and festive observance known as the **Holy Supper (Svjata Večerja)**. It has a solemn and spiritual character to it as the Christmas Feast is ushered-in. The nighttime service of **Great Compline** portrays the presence of Emmanuel by reiterating the fact that now "*God is with us!*" At the **Nativity Vigil Divine Liturgy** on the night of Christmas Eve, the actual birth of Jesus is celebrated, together with the proclamation of the angels, and the visitation of the shepherds. Truly *Christ is born*, and we all must *glorify Him!*

SATURDAY IS THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NATIVITY OF THE LORD.....

On **Saturday, December 25th**, we solemnly and festively celebrate **The Feast of the HOLY NATIVITY of our Lord JESUS CHRIST**. The mystery of Emmanuel (God-is-with-us) should create in us a feeling of gratitude to Jesus, the new-born Babe of Bethlehem, Who was born humbly in a cave to the Most Pure Virgin Mary for our redemption. At the Divine Liturgy on the Nativity Feast, we commemorate the epiphany event with the coming and the adoration of the Magi. Like them, let us also arrive spiritually at the lowly manger in the dark cave at Bethlehem and encounter there our newly born Savior, demonstrating our profound worship and paying our deep respect to Him. We must never despair, for divine hope must prevail in our lives.

The Holy Christmas Feast gives us God's greatest Gift: His Son **Jesus**. Like Isaiah, we now are to proclaim the reality that **God-is-with-us, s-nami-Boh**, because **Christ is born!**

THE SYNAXIS OF THE GODBEARER NEXT SUNDAY: DECEMBER 26TH.....

Next **Sunday**, the 2nd day of Christmas, we shall observe **The Synaxis of the Most Holy Godbearer**, as we honor the Holy Virgin **MARY**, who is the central figure connected with the mystery of the birth of God's Son. This marian feast accentuates the role played in salvation history by Jesus' Most Holy Mother whom we extol as the **Godbearer**, the woman who actually gave flesh to the eternal Son of God. Because Mary is the earthly mother of the divine Son, she thus becomes our heavenly mother, and we always can invoke her special maternal intercession with her Son Jesus.

HOLY DAY ON DECEMBER 27TH – THE FEAST OF SAINT STEPHEN.....

The Feast of the Holy Protomartyr Saint Stephen will be commemorated next **Monday**, the 3rd day of Christmas. Among all those who would surround the Bethlehem manger, the place of honor goes to **STEPHEN**, the first Christian martyr. He was the first of the original seven deacons, and he became the first person to give up his life as a witness to his faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Stephen thus paid back to the Savior the death that He suffered for all of us on the tree of the cross of Golgotha. Like Saint Stephen, we all must be Christian witnesses and testify to our faith in Jesus.

THE TRADITIONAL THREE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS.....

In the custom and tradition of the Byzantine Catholic Church, the Nativity Feast is observed for a three-day period with the second and third days of Christmas celebrated as major holy days. Do not neglect your obligation to sanctify these festive days by participating in the Divine Liturgy and thus emphasizing the spiritual manner of celebrating the Christmas holidays. The Church grants the bestowal of special graces, blessings, and indulgences to those who observe the three Christmas holy days. Make the *sacrifice* to attend church and thereby receive these distinct spiritual rewards.

CHURCH ENVELOPES AND LITURGICAL CALENDARS FOR 2021 NOW AVAILABLE.....

The new boxes of church offertory envelopes and the 2021 ecclesiastical wall calendars. are now available in the vestibule of the church. Anyone who wishes to be issued church envelopes and thus be listed as a parishioner should contact the parish office. The calendars have been donated through the generosity of the **John N. Elachko Funeral Home**. Kindly take home your church calendar today, and begin using it to obtain various liturgical information.