





## THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

**A** refrain often heard during one of the services at the Nativity of Christ is: "GOD IS WITH US!" It is the meaning of the word "EMMANUEL." This proclamation provides us with a capsule definition of the Nativity.

This feastday means that God Himself has come to earth, that God has taken upon Himself human flesh, that He has become Man, not ceasing to be God. This is what we might call an unbelievable concept, but it is precisely what we believe is true. This is the glory, wonder and joy of Our Lord's Birth.

There is so much that goes on during this holyday season that takes our gaze off Christ, that makes our ears less attuned to His Word, and even our hearts less yearning for things holy. But the cry - God is with us! - brings the day back into focus. It points to the true significance of the festival: the Birth of the Christchild.



The origin of the exclamation "Emmanuel" is a unique story. It was first used by the great Prophet Isaiah some 750 years before the birth of Jesus. The Book of Isaiah has been called "the Gospel of the Old Testament," for it speaks so eloquently about the forthcoming Saviour. In 7:14 we have this clear prophecy: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel."

That is exactly what happened on the day of Nativity. When Christ was born, God became "flesh, and dwelt among us," as St. John the Apostle says. St. Paul picks up the theme: "Christ Jesus Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men . . ." Yes, indeed, we proclaim: GOD IS WITH US!



## ST. RAPHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

*Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of the South*

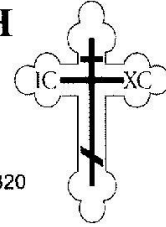
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Fr. Sergious Gerken, Parish Priest

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Please Visit: [www: straphaelchurch.org](http://www.straphaelchurch.org) Church: 352-201-1320

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**SUNDAY, DEC. 19, 2021 - 26<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 1.**

**Sunday before the Nativity. Martyr Boniface at Tarsus in Cilicia.**

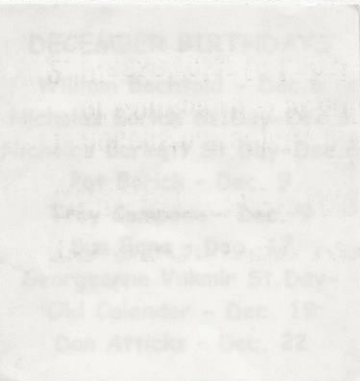
HOLY WORSHIP THIS WEEK		Please join us after Divine Liturgy for a Coffee Fellowship in Myrrhbearers Hall Confessions - Ask Fr. Sergious for a time	DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS
Sat: Great Vespers	4:00 PM		Mon: 1 Timothy 5:1-10, Mark 9:42-10:1
Sun: Reading of The Hours	9:45 AM		Tue: 1 Timothy 5:11-21, Mark 10:2-12
Divine Liturgy	10:00 AM		Wed: 1 Timothy 5:22-6:11, Mark 10:11-16
Sunday before Nativity			Thu: 1 Timothy 6:17-21, Mark 10:17-27
Thu.: Akathist to St. Herman	4:00 PM		Friday: See sheet
Fri.: Nativity Great Compline - Vespers/Matins	4:00 PM		Sat: Matthew 1:18-25, Galatians 4:4-7, Matthew 2:1-12
Sat.: Divine Liturgy - Nativity of Christ	10:00 AM		
MERRY CHRISTMAS!			

+EPISTLE, *Sunday Before* (Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40) Brethren: By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.



**+GOSPEL, *Sunday Before*+** (Matthew 1:1-25) The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abius, Abius begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us.'" Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

***Choir Practice Sunday at 9 AM and Monday at 2:30 PM***

<p><b>THE GIFTS - DEC. 12</b></p> <p>Attendance 34  Regular Offerings 2361  Candles 71</p> <p><b>The 2022 Annual Parish Meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, January 30, 2022 after Divine Liturgy.</b></p> <p><i>We sincerely thank and bless Charles and Lou Ellen Davis for their ongoing generous donations.</i></p>		<p><b>VIGIL CANDLES - DEC. 12</b></p> <p><i>Fr. Sergious</i> - Calm, Peaceful and Courteous Season.</p> <p><i>Nancy Kinley</i> - Health of Bill, Julianna &amp; Fam., Andrew &amp; Fam., Mary Ann H., Patricia, Joel, Judy, Patty, Pat &amp; Nick.</p> <p><i>Zina Juskin</i> - Memory of husband Vladimir.</p> <p><i>Nick Borick</i> - Eva, Olga, Mary Ann H., Ryan, Richard, Nick &amp; Pat.</p>
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## Scripture Readings

Friday, December 24, 2021

- Micah 5:2-4
- Hebrews 1:1-12
- Matthew 1:18-25
- Jeremiah (Baruch 3:35-4:4)
- Galatians 3:23-29
- Luke 2:1-20
- Isaiah 7:10-16; 8:1-4, 9-10
- Hebrews 1:10-2:3
- Matthew 2:1-12
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Hebrews 2:11-18
- Matthew 2:13-23
- Genesis 1:1-13
- Numbers 24:2-3, 5-9, 17-18
- Micah 4:6-7; 5:2-4
- Isaiah 11:1-10
- Jeremiah (Baruch 3:35-4:4)
- Daniel 2:31-36, 44-45
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Isaiah 7:10-16; 8:1-4, 9-10
- 2 Timothy 1:1-2, 8-18
- Mark 10:23-32
- Hebrews 1:1-12
- Luke 2:1-20