



Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

What a strange year! 2020 did not look like we expected when we began it. Everything we took for granted we no longer could, and regardless of how we felt about what was happening, nobody was left unaffected, in one way or another. The question is—where have we arrived, and what are we moving towards? The time of the pandemic, as I have stated before, is not “accidental,” in that it is not interrupting God’s will—while it certainly interrupts the flow of “normal” life, God allows us to undergo these trials to reveal what is truly in us. We should be prepared to ask ourselves: in this time, have I gained love, for Christ and my fellow man, for those directly in my life? Or have I lost love?

In a year of the question of what is “essential,” my hope is that through what we have experienced, many of us can confirm: our faith is beyond essential. Being together in worship is essential, offering praise in God’s house is essential. To be the body of Christ, we have to be united not merely through prayerful solidarity with those

quarantined at home, which can carry us for a season, but through the Eucharist, the Heavenly banquet by which we become the Body of Christ. How beautiful and fitting, then, that the end of the calendar year brings our focus as Orthodox Christians back to that Icon of that Nativity, to that cave, that manger, that feeding trough, where our Lord became the Heavenly Bread to satisfy our hungry souls. As the year closes with reflections on the past and debates about the future, may we find ourselves here, in the present, eternal moment, ready to come and bow down before the Christ-child, in His awesome humility.

In a year of much suffering, there has also been much beauty and growth. Joy is mixed with grief, laughter with sorrow. This mixture is an icon of our Lord in His incarnation, who united Heaven and earth, flesh and divinity—and ultimately, life and death, conquering death in the process. In a year where death and illness have been so prevalent, we can come to more deeply love the God who became man in order to save us from the fear of illness and the permanence of death. In a year of such division, paranoia, and fear, we can come to bow down before the Christ-child who came to unite mankind and grant us the peace of His eternal presence.

May God grant you His peace, on earth, Goodwill towards mankind!

In Christ,

Fr. John Parker, Matushka Nadia & baby Jonah

(Nativity Service Times listed on the back)



Nativity Services at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Donora PA

Tues. Dec. 22nd

**6:30pm—Compline & Canon (or Vespers), followed by
confession**

Wed. Dec. 23rd

**6:30pm—Compline & Canon (or Vespers), followed by
confession**

No Zoom Book Club this Week

Thurs. Dec. 24th

10:00am—Royal Hours, followed by confession

**8:00pm- Compline and Matins for the Feast of the Nativity of
our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ**

Fri. Dec. 25th

**10:00am—Divine Liturgy, Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and
God and Savior Jesus Christ**

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***Communion is only for baptized/Chrismated Orthodox Christians who have prepared with prayer, fasting from midnight prior to Liturgy, and a recent confession (i.e., during the advent season). If you need confession, Fr. John is available in the days preceding Nativity, before and after the evening service, and by appointment. Contact @ frjohndonora@gmail.com or 724-379-4827.**