

THE ST. ELIZABETH NEWS

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EDITION

Christ is Born!!!



Glorify Him!!!



St. Elizabeth Orthodox Mission Church
2265 E. Cherokee Drive Woodstock, GA 30188
*A parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*

Reverend Father Matthew Dutko Pastor/Administrator
Father Deacon Steven Hanes
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Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Welcome to St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church! Thank you for your prayers as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on this joyous Christmas Morning! If you have never been to an Orthodox Church before, you are about to participate in the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Sunday of the year. Liturgy means the work of the people.

That means that we all have special and holy work to do this morning, and that all of your prayers are necessary! We hope you will stay and join us for some coffee, cookies, and some other Christmas treats in the Church Hall next door. Please feel free to ask Fr. Matthew any questions you might have! May the light of the newborn Christ child shine upon you and may God's blessing be with you all!

The Nativity of Our Lord, God & Savior Jesus Christ

Epistle: [Galatians 4:4-7](#) **Gospel:** [Matthew 2:1-12](#)

All of the special hymns for today's Festal Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ can be found starting on page 132 in the Pew Book, including special Antiphons, Little Entrance, Cherubic Hymn, and Birthgiver Hymn. *Christmas Carols are on the back of the bulletin.*

The Sunday After Christmas 12/30

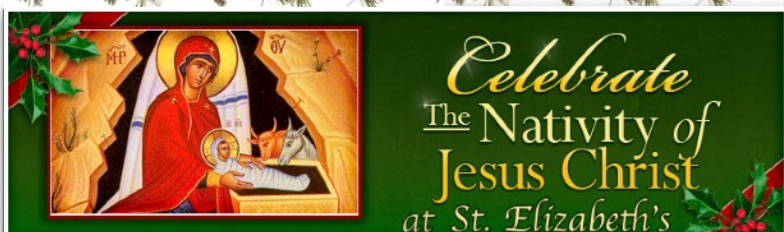
Epistle: [Galatians 1:11-19](#) **Gospel:** [Matthew 2:13-23](#)

The Tropars and Kondaks for today can be found on page 140 in the Pew Book. All other special hymns for the Christmas season, including a special Cherubic Hymn, can be found starting on page 132 in the Pew Book.

The Sunday After Theophany 01/07

Epistle: [Ephesians 4:7-13](#) **Gospel:** [Matthew 4:12-17](#)

Antiphons for Theophany page: 145
Tropar and Kondak Tone 5- Page 93
Tropar & Kondak for the Sunday After Theophany Page 145



Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 12/25

using the Blue Pew Book

"Blessed Is the Kingdom"	;2
The Great Litany of Peace	2
First Antiphon.....	132
Second Antiphon.....	132
Hymn of the Incarnation.....	10
Third Antiphon	133
Hymn at The Little Entrance	133
Tropar and Kondak.....	133
As Many in Christ.....	21
Prokimenon (Tone 8)	133
Epistle	<u>Galatians 4:4-7</u>
Alleluia (#2)	23
Verses	134
Glory to You, O Lord.....	24
The Gospel	<u>Matthew 2:1-12</u>
The Sermon.....	Fr. Matthew
The Triple Litany.....	25
Cherubic Hymn.....	134
The Great Entrance.....	134
The Creed	37
The Anaphora	39
Holy, Holy, Holy (#2).....	42
The Hymn of Praise	45
Hymn to the Birthgiver of God.....	135
The Litany of Supplication.....	50
The Lord's Prayer (#1).....	53
The Communion Prayer	58
Communion Hymns.....	135
In the Fear of God Come Forward.....	63
The Reception of Communion	61
We have seen the True Light (#1).....	64
Thanksgiving Hymn (#1)	65
Thanksgiving Litany	67
Amvon Prayer.....	135
Blessed be the Name of the Lord (#4). 70	
Announcements.....	Fr. Matthew
The Dismissal.....	71
Intonation for the Living.....	72
Post Communion Prayers of Thanksgiving.....	73

Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves, non-Orthodox visitors and inquirers are invited to come forward at the end of the Liturgy to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread).

Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom 12/30

using the Blue Pew Book

"Blessed Is the Kingdom"	;2
The Great Litany of Peace	2
First Antiphon.....	132
Second Antiphon.....	132
Hymn of the Incarnation.....	10
Third Antiphon	133
Hymn at The Little Entrance	133
Resurrection Tropar and Kondak.....	93
Tropar and Kondak.....	138
Trisagion #2.....	19
Prokimenon (Tone 4)	139
Epistle	<u>Galatians 1:11-19</u>
Alleluia (#2)	23
Verses	134
Glory to You, O Lord.....	24
The Gospel	<u>Matthew 2:13-23</u>
The Sermon.....	Fr. Matthew
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Office of the Metropolitan

*312 Garfield Street
Johnstown, PA 15906*

December 25, 2023

Protocol No. 22/2022

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

Dear Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today I greet you with great joy and love in the Name of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us give thanks to Almighty God, by whose grace we have been given this opportunity to celebrate the Birth of His Son.

As we look around ourselves, we find mistrust, suffering, hatred, homelessness, drug overdoses, crime, and senseless killings and the absence of peace and love in our homes, neighborhoods, cities, country and in fact the whole world. This reality in our lives makes us to want to cry out for God's help, assistance and intervention.

My beloved ones, despite all the suffering, sorrow and injustice in our world, today we rejoice because hope comes to us once again. This is why at this blessed time of the year we look forward to the arrival of the new born King.

Therefore, let us celebrate the miracle of His Birth. Let kindness come with every gift. Let compassion, forgiveness and love come with every greeting. Let our hearts be filled with prayer, charity, and reconciliation for one another.

May all of us, Priests, Panis, Deacons, Sub-Deacons, Readers, Acolytes, Archons, Parish Officers, Teachers, Parishioners (young and old), Friends and Supporters of our God-protected Diocese experience the joy and wonders of the Shepherds and the awe and respect of the Three Wise Men at the arrival of the Messiah, our new born King. Christ is Born!

Greetings from Johnstown with much love,

+ Metropolitan Gregory
+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa



The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- Tuesday 12/26 9 am-** Divine Liturgy: Synaxis of the Mother of God - 2nd day of Christmas
- Wednesday 12/27 9 am-** Divine Liturgy: The Feast of St. Stephen- 3rd Day of Christmas
- Saturday 12/30 4 pm-** Great Vespers
- Sunday 12/31 10 am-** Divine Liturgy
- Monday 1/01 9 am-** Divine Liturgy- Feast of Saint Basil the Great & The Circumcision of our Lord
- Friday 1/05 6 pm-** Vigil Service of Theophany & the Great Blessing of Water
- Saturday 1/06 9 am-** Divine Liturgy: The Theophany of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ
- Sunday 1/07 10 am-** Divine Liturgy
- Tuesday 1/09 9 am-** Divine Liturgy
- Wednesday 1/10 5:30 pm-** Moleben & Class
- Thursday 1/11 9 am-** Divine Liturgy
- Saturday 1/13 4 pm-** Great Vespers
- Sunday 1/14 10 am-** Divine Liturgy
- Tuesday 1/16 9am-** Divine Liturgy
- Wednesday 1/17 5:30 pm-** Moleben & Class`

ONLINE ARTICLES

- ✦ [Nativity of Christ Proclamation of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch +Bartholomew of Constantinople](#)
- ✦ [Celebrating Christmas In The Shepherds' Fields Of Beit Sahour by Paul Calvert](#)
- ✦ [Homily for Theophany by St. John Chrysostom](#)

THANK YOU ALL

Thank you to all who have helped our Church in anyway throughout the year. To those who give so generously, to those who work with their hands, and especially to those who work with their prayers.

Thank you to those who serve on the Altar and those who sing so beautifully.

Thank you to all the children for your efforts in Sunday School and in our Christmas play.

Thank you to all of our bakers, cooks, and cleaners!

Thank you all for all your hard word and dedication to Christ and His Church all throughout the year! May the love and blessings of the infant Christ Child

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

When this greeting was originally used, the word *merry*, did not mean "joyful, cheerful, or festive", as it does today.

In olden days "merry" meant "blessed or peaceful", expressing spiritual joys rather than earthly happiness.

The famous Christmas carol "God rest yea merry, gentlemen" is a great example to show the original meaning of the word. Look at the comma after merry and before gentlemen. The position of the comma shows that the word merry is not an adjective describing the gentlemen. Imagine it then as "God rest yea peacefully, gentlemen".

Happiness and cheer fade away like a withering flower, but the peace and joy that Christ gives us this day is eternal. So

I say to you all, in the Light of Christ's birth, Merry Christmas!

Don't forget to get your home blessed in the New Year after

we
celebrate
Theophany
and bless
Holy
Water!



ST. ELIZABETH ORTHODOX CHURCH

CHRISTMAS GREETING FROM FR. MATTHEW, PANI KATHRYN, LAZARUS, & ISAIAH

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Dearest Parish Family & Friends,

May God bless all of you with his abundant mercies, peace, and Grace this Christmas! May the joy of God's love shown to all of creation on Christmas be with you and your loved ones!

Christmas greetings to our beloved Metropolitan Gregory, diocesan clergy & their families, all the faithful of our diocese, to those visiting with us here today, to all Christians who celebrate this feast, and of course to all of the members of our parish family at St. Elizabeth's- **Christ is Born! Glorify Him!** To those who are near and those who are far away; to those who are sick in their homes or in the hospitals – today, through our prayers and by the grace of God we are all together, united in Christ. Today heaven meets earth; angels and people rejoice, for **Christ is Born! Glorify Him!**

This year was special for our community in so many ways. It has been a joy to see so many new faces and to share the beauty, richness, and mystery of the Orthodox Faith with the world around us. What a gift from God it is to see our beautiful parish family grow. Glory to God for all things!

To those of you who are celebrating your first Christmas here at St. Elizabeth's with your Parish Family, thank you for being part of this family, what a joy it is to have you here; we are truly blessed to know you and have your prayers to God added to our own. Thank you to those of you who's work over the years has established and planted this beautiful Orthodox Church in Woodstock, Georgia. Thank you to all of you who work so hard to maintain this parish with all of your love, sacrifices, stewardship, generosity, and hard work in so many ways, but especially through your prayers. Thank you to the parish council members, the cleaners, singers, nut-rollers, pirohi pinchers, dish washers, Sunday School teachers, singers, parents, children, and all of you who give back your unique talents to Christ as thanksgiving in so many ways. Every one of you has a part and role to play in this family; a vocation to serve Christ. Thank you for answering that call and serving our Lord here at Saint Elizabeth's!

Our love and prayers are with the members of our parish family who are experiencing their first Christmas without a loved one at the table. As we gather in the Church and celebrate the feast, heaven and earth celebrate the feast, heaven and earth are united and our loved ones offer their praise and thanksgiving to God along with each of us. May God grant eternal rest and blessed to all the members of our parish family and loved ones who have departed this life for eternal life.

May the peace that the infant Christ brings into the world stay with you throughout the year. May the light of the Christ-Child brighten your soul. May the love of God guide all of our thoughts and actions and heal us from all pain and sorrow. Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

With much gratitude and love to all of you in the newborn Saviour Christ our God,

Fr. Matthew, Pani Kathryn, Lazarus, and Isaiah



Fr. Matthew Dill

Where was Christ born?

If we look around this time of year we will see manger scenes, crèche's, and Icons everywhere; all depicting the birth of our Saviour. But with all these different Icons, images, and displays it can get a bit confusing. It might make you wonder, where was Christ actually born? Do we really know? Does it even matter? While all of these beautiful depictions point us to Christ and His Incarnation, the truth of where Christ was really born has beautiful theological significance.

Manger scenes, or crèche's usually depict Christ being born in a stable, or a barn. Whereas most Orthodox Icons show Christ being born in a cave. So why is there all this confusion. Shouldn't we know where Christ was born? Maybe if we look to Holy Scripture we can get some clarification.

Scripture mentions neither a barn (stable) or a cave as the place where Christ is born. However, we do know that Christ was laid in a manger (Luke 2:7). A manger is typically a place where animals eat out of. Because of this, western scholars, in latter centuries assumed that Christ must have been born in a stable. After all, if there was no room in any of the inns it makes sense that Mary and Joseph would just go out back to the barn right?

Well actually long before anyone ever had this idea, the first century Orthodox Christians taught that the Christ child was born in a cave. Orthodox Tradition has preserved this idea throughout the ages into the Church today. This is why the Icon of the Nativity shows Christ's birthplace as a cave.

This is important because Christ's birth in a cave teaches us many things. The cave where Christ is born foreshadows the tomb where His Crucified Body will be laid; the tomb that after three days will be found empty by the Myrrh-Bearing Women. Myrrh was used to anoint the departed, and if you remember, it was also a gift of one the Wise Men, again foreshadowing Christ's sacrifice on the Cross for our Salvation.

This is not the only reason why the cave being the place where Christ is born is theologically significant. Think of what a cave is. It is a dark place, empty of light. Just like the world before Christ's incarnation was a dark place, empty of light. But Christ is "the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." (John 8:12). Just as Christ lights up the whole world, through His birth in the cave, he makes that which is dark filled with light. In the Icon of the Nativity we see that very light!

The oldest-functioning Christian Church in the world is the Church of the Nativity. The Church is found at the site of a cave in Bethlehem and was constructed by St. Helen and the Emperor St. Constantine the Great in 327, two years after the First Ecumenical Council. The cave below the surface is the very spot where Christ's birth took place. This spot is revered by thousands of faithful every year!



THE MIRACLE OF THE CHRISTMAS KONDAK

At Christmastime in the Church we sing a special *Kondak*, the hymn we sing after the Little Entrance: "Today the Virgin gives birth to the highest Being; and the earth provides the inaccessible One with a cave. The angels with the shepherds glorify Him; the Wise Men journey with the star, because for our sake is born a little Child, the Pre-Eternal God."

These are the words of the Christmas Kondak and their origin from the mouth St. Romanos the Melodist in the 5th century is miraculous.

St. Romanos was simple man, uneducated in worldly things, but filled with faith in his heart and love for Christ and His Church. He lived in Constantinople and went to the great Orthodox Cathedral, the Hagia Sophia or the Church of the Holy Wisdom. St. Romanos' job at his Church was to be the bell ringer. Yet because of his love for the Church and devout attendance, St. Romanos became fluent in the music of the Church. The saint joined the Cathedral Choir and His angelic voice was heard throughout the Church. His talent was so renowned that he was assigned a solo to sing on Christmas.

St. Romanos was overcome with great fear at the thought of singing alone, but he so greatly wanted to serve God. He returned to his humble hut and began praying to the Holy Birthgiver of God, asking her to help him. The Virgin Mary appeared to St. Romanos and assured him that she would help him.

The time came. It was the Christmas Eve Service in the great Cathedral of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. St. Romanos went to the center of the Church and with his angelic voice sang the melodious hymn of the Christmas Kondak for the very first time.

Tears of joy rolled down the cheeks of the Patriarch, clergy, and the faithful present in the great Church. They were filled spiritual joy having heard this hymn for the first time. And yet they wondered..."How could this illiterate bell ringer compose such a spiritual classic?"

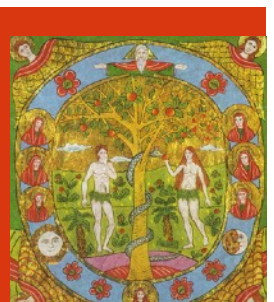
After the service St. Romanos told them what happened; how the Mother of God promised that she would help him with his task. The intercession of the Mother of God helped St. Romanos that day, and through the grace of the Holy Spirit he became literate.

St. Romanos was later ordained a deacon and composed many hymns we still sing in the Church today. His tender hymns continue to inspire the believers to worship God with all their heart. Because of his beautiful voice and composition of many hymns, St. Romanos is called *The Melodist*.



A little boy and girl were singing their favorite Christmas carol in church the Sunday before Christmas. The boy concluded "Silent Night" with the words, "Sleep in heavenly beans." "No," his sister corrected, "not beans, peas."

What did Adam say to his wife on Christmas?
It's Christmas, Eve!



Christmas is a Time for Healing

"Christmas is a time for healing, when disagreeers and disagreements meet, when long-time wounds are mended and love moves from hatred to retreat." - Fred Bauer

We should all take this poem to heart this Nativity Season. If you have a grievance against another, let this Christmas day be the day that love moves our hatred to retreat. Think of the love our newborn Saviour has for each of us, and the love we all have for Him. Let that love surround us, penetrate us, and heal any wound which may be planted within our souls.



IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

Something you may have missed in this classic Christmas story, are the words inscribed under the portrait of George Bailey's father. The plaque reads, *"All you can take with you, that which you've given away."* As George is confronted with the dilemma we all face every day, to be selfish and serve himself, or to be like Christ and serve others, he looks to the portrait of his father and reads those words. In that moment he gains the courage to do the right thing, to be like Christ; to be selfless. In the end, George is declared the "richest man in town". Not because of the riches of this world, but because of the enteral treasures that await those who love and serve one another as Christ loves and serves us all. We cannot take the things of the world with us, they wither like a cut flower. However, what we *can take with us* is the selfless love we give in humility and in the fear of God; it is the gift that lasts eternally, the flower that never withers.



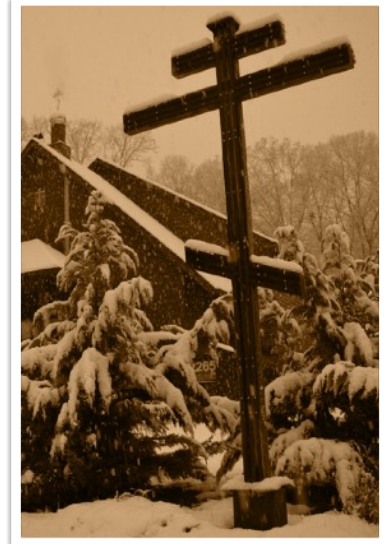
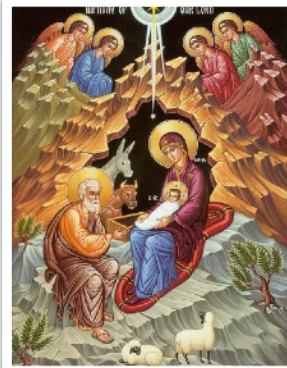
THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

The Wise Men teach us by their example the way in which we should approach and worship Christ. These earthly kings come humbly, bowing before the newborn Savior, Jesus Christ the Creator and King of the Universe. They teach us what it looks like to truly worship God. Coming before Christ they fall before him, bringing their whole self in humility, The Magic worship Christ and revere Him with all their heart. They show us how to fully give ourselves to God - our time, our talents, and our treasures, all laid down in Thanksgiving before the crib of the infant Christ Child. Let us be like them and give ourselves wholly to our Lord!





Christmas Crossword



Created using TheTeacherMaker

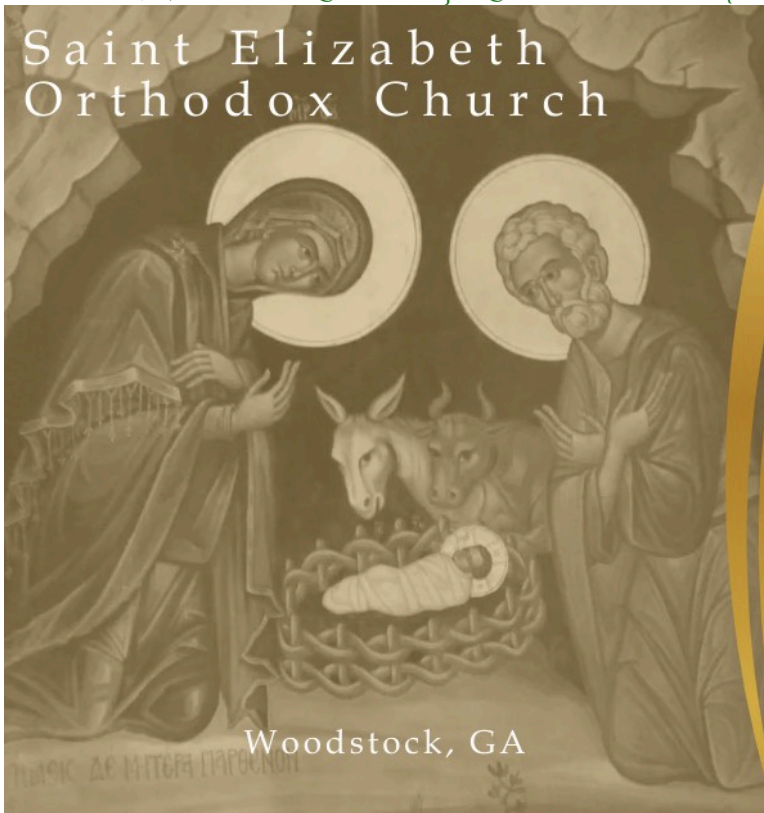
Across

- 3. The Birthgiver of God was a virgin before, during and _____ Christ's birth.
- 7. 'Glory to God in the _____'
- 8. 'Hear the wondrous tiding, God became _____'
- 10. On Christmas '_____ & people join in celebration'
- 11. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is the _____ - functioning Orthodox Church.
- 13. Because Christ became man, we can become like _____.

Down

- 1. Josph (sic) was a widower and was betrothed to Mary. He was significantly _____ than Mary/
- 2. On Christmas Heaven meets _____.
- 4. 'God with us'
- 5. Merry means...
- 6. Christmas used to e (sic) celebrated on the same day as _____.
- 9. St. _____ wrote the Christmas Kondak.
- 12. The cave where Christ was born foreshadows the...

Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church



Woodstock, GA

The reasons why Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world are these: 1. The love of God for the human race: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). 2. The restoration in fallen humanity of the image and likeness of God, as the holy Church celebrates it: "Man who, being made in the image of God, had become corrupt through sin, and was full of vileness, and had fallen away from the better life Divine, doth the wise Creator restore anew" (First Canon of Matins for the Nativity of Christ). 3. The salvation of men's souls: "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). And so we, in conformance with the purposes of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, should spend our life in accordance with this Divine teaching, so that through it we may obtain the salvation of our souls.

- St. Seraphim of Sarov (The Reasons Why Jesus Christ Came into the World)

Become a Member of Saint Elizabeth's!

www.stelizabethga.org

December at Saint Elizabeth's! - Thank You All!

"You must know that there is nothing higher and stronger and more wholesome and good for life in the future than some good memory...if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may sometime be the means of saving us." -Dostoyevsky - The Brothers Karmazov



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PRAYERFUL POINTS

IN BLESSED REPOSE GRANT ETERNAL REST O LORD, TO THE SOULS OF GOD'S DEPARTED SERVANTS, IN THE PLACE WHERE THE SOULS OF THE RIGHTEOUS DWELL, WHERE THERE IS NO PAIN, SORROW, OR LAMENTATION, BUT LIFE EVERLASTING!

In Memory of: Boris+, Frank+, Mary+, Anastasia+, Tamara+, George+, Theodora+, Violet+, baby George+, Helen & Lewis Knuth+, Bob & Patricia Knuth+, Peter & Wanda Blannar+, Anna Blannar+, Jeanne McAuliff+, George Page+, Lorraine Solinko+, Robert Stirk+, John Haddad+, Fred & Helen Mileszko+, Charles Salome+, Ernie+, Eddie+, Maria+, Carl+, Mark+, Maria+, Christine+, Helen+, Fr. Hazuda+, Fr. William, Fr. Paul+, Fr. Larry, Fr. Michael & Pani Elenor, Fr. Gido, Yvonne Sajem+, John Sajem+, Ellis & Mabel Sajem+, Pani Blaschak+, Fr. Stephen & Pani Mary Dutko+, George & Margret+, Steve+ & Catherine+, Betty+, Madeline+, Mike+, Ted+, Tom+, Helen+, Fr. John Baranek+, Michael+, Mary+, Veronica+, Louise+, Cleaston+, Stephanie+, Betty+, Steve+, Marcia+, George+, Helen+, Art+, MaryJane+, Dave+, David+, Kenny+, Sally+, Claudia+ **& May the Lord God Remember in His Kingdom all of our departed loved ones!**

LORD OF POWERS BE WITH US, FOR IN TIMES OF DISTRESS WE HAVE NO OTHER HELP BUT YOU

For the Health of: Metropolitan Gregory, Evelyn Melnikoff & the Melnikoff Family, Marilyn Haddad, Sandy, Deacon Steven, Michelle, James, Fr. Matthew, Pani Kathryn, Lazarus, & Isaiah, The Dutko & Szapka Family, Robert & Sandy, Pani Baranek, Fr. Andy, Pani Davina & Alexandra, Nectarios, Simon, Teddy, Athanasia Page, The Page Family, The Sparks Family, The Prince Family, Micky & The Gdovid Family, The Rodgers Family, Mike, Dolores, & the Kundrat & Korchak Families, Mike, Elaine, Roy, The Gaspersons, Ethan, Stephen & **for all the members of The St. Elizabeth Parish Family & all of our loved ones!**

ST. ELIZABETH'S PARISH FAMILY PRAYER LIST

For the Health of: Evelyn & the Melnikoff Family, Pani Betty Jean Baranek, Fr. James Gleason, The Paccio Family, Kara, Joanna, James, Anna, Basil, Dianna, Denise, Alex, Jason, Athanasia, Ethel, Tyler, Maria, Page Family, Dean, Margaret, Metropolitan Gregory and his family, Rick, James, David, Joseph, Maria Starcova, David & Paulette Novak, Suzette, Bob, David, Marilyn & family, Mark, Fr. Dcn. Stephen, Michelle, James, Rachel, Kate, Fr. Blaschak & Family, Larry, Alexandra, Tammy, Trahan & Skiba Family, The Hood Family, the Mileszko Family, the Blannar Family, Burt, Sandy, Stephanie, Mary, Tommy, Stephen, Emilia, Simon, Alisha, & Aaron Zak, the Puziculiks Family, Fr. Andy, Davina, & Alexandra, Stan, Fr. Dcn. Charlie & Family, Justin, Charlie, Herbert and Mary Schleining, Spencer, Julie, Anna, Galina & Family, Irinia & Family, Fr. Jim & Pani Kathy Dutko, Rick, Katlain, Elenor, Teddy, Mark, Robert & Cindy, Melissa, Ben, Anthony, Rachel, Christine, Cora, Rick, Michelle, Tim, Robert, Tripp, Rachel & Family, The Kelemecz Family, Leonard, Leo, & the Olaru Family, Joanna Price, Kim, Isaiah, the Wells Family, Dave, Ashley & family, Mary, Tim, Andrew, Robert, Derrick, Michael, Eli, Ean, Ellie, Amber, Christopher, Deborah, Ethan, Rosemary, Mike, Elaiane, Roy, Lin, Dave, Sarah, George, & Edward, Stephen, Caleb, Amelia, Simon, David, the Gdovin Family, the Rodgers Family, Mike & the Kundrat Family

For the Departed: Patricia+, James+, Stephen+, Anna+, Charles+, Robert+, Loraine+. Helen+, Lewis+, Jeane+, Vera+, George+, George+, Ernie+, Eddie+, Maria+, Carl+, Mark+, Barry+, Josphe+, Phillip+, Jenny+, Peter+, Bryan+, Rebecca+, Fr. Paul+, Maria+, Fr. Hazuda+, George Smisko+, Helen Spanovich+, Bob+, Alma+, Bo+, Saddle+, Fr. William George+, Violet+, Fr. Kozar+, Benjamin+, John Haddad+, Fred & Helen Mileszko+, Anna+, Natalie+, Lilly+, Christine+, Anna+, Tamara+, Anastasia+, Yvonne+, John+, Betty+, Ada+, Peter+ & Wanda+, George+, Jerry+, Barb+ & Harry+, Beth+, Louise+, Nikolay+, Boris Melnikoff+, David+, Fr. Michael+, Natalie+, Helen+, Ted+, Tom+, Mike+, Madeline+, Tim+, Fr. John Baranek, Reader Stephen+, Dean+, Fr. Larry+, Kris+, Wathen+, Pani Elenor+, Fr. Michael+, Sally+, David+, Gene+, Kenny+, Ava+, Fr. Tony Josphe+ & Pani Patsy+, Anatoly+, Fr. Scott+, Steve+, Claudia+, Dave+, Fr. John Duranko

Through the prayers of the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, St. Elizabeth, The Holy Fathers & Mothers, and all the Saints, may our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ have mercy on us and save us!



**HOLY SAINT ELIZABETH
PRAY FOR US!**

ST. ELIZABETH ORTHODOX CHURCH

STEWARDSHIP LETTER 2023

St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church *A Mission Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*
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Pastor/Administrator
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Christmas Day 2023

Dear Beloved Parish Family,
Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

As we joyfully embrace the arrival of the Christmas season, I am filled with immense gratitude and awe at the countless blessings we have received throughout the passing year. By the Grace of God and through your unwavering dedication, generosity, and commitment to Christ and His Holy Church, 2023 has been a year of profound growth and abundant blessings for our Parish.

Our mission as a parish family extends beyond our walls, and this year has seen the fruits of our efforts as many new faces have joined us in our journey towards the fullness of the Orthodox Faith. Families and individuals seeking Christ have found a welcoming home in our community, and we look forward to more souls drawing nearer to Christ and receiving Chrismation in His one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

We have been blessed in so many ways all throughout 2023. The installation of outdoor lighting has added a touch of warmth and security to our parish grounds, creating a welcoming atmosphere for all who enter. Soon. We will enjoy a renovated narthex, which will be the very first place to welcome new members to our parish family when they come to Saint Elizabeth's. These projects stand as a testament to the beauty of our faith, and the efforts of each of us who take up our cross daily and follow after Christ.

Your faith, devotion, and dedication have been the seeds from which these projects have blossomed, and God has shown us the miraculous growth that follows. As we approach the new year, I encourage you to continue trusting and loving Christ with all your heart, soul, and mind, giving cheerfully to the Church as Christ calls us to do. Let us prayerfully consider what more we can offer of ourselves to Christ and His Church in the coming year.

On Christmas Day, we celebrate the greatest gift in the history of the universe: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The gift of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a reminder of God's boundless love and the immeasurable blessings He freely bestows upon us. Every moment of our lives is a precious gift, and we cherish that gift by giving back freely to our Lord.

In reflecting on the gifts presented to the Christ Child by the Wise Men and the shepherds, let us recognize that, like them, we are called to offer ourselves to Christ. While worldly treasures are valuable, the most precious gift we can give is the gift of ourselves, offered in humility and awe, just as Christ offered Himself for our salvation on the Cross.

Stewardship Letter Continued on Next Page...

God has blessed each of us with unique talents, and He calls us to use them for His glory and the uplifting of His Church. Everything we have in this life is a gift from our Creator, and we are called to give back freely, as Christ instructs us: "Freely you have been given, freely give" (Mt. 10:8). As we approach the new year, let us prayerfully consider how we can contribute to the life of the Church and fill out a stewardship/membership card for 2024.

Every Orthodox Christian needs a spiritual home, and if Saint Elizabeth's is your home, I encourage you to fill out a stewardship/membership card for the upcoming year. Thoughtful and generous contributions enable us to continue the work of Christ and support the needs of our growing parish family.

As we express our deepest gratitude for everything you have done in the past year—your kindness, generosity, and, most importantly, your prayers for our community—I am confident that Christ will continue to be our source of light and strength, guiding us towards a bright future. There is much to be excited for in the years ahead, but to accomplish all that God has planned for us, Saint Elizabeth's needs your continued support and stewardship offerings.

Addressing you as my Parish Family is not merely a formality; it is a heartfelt recognition of the love and unity that define our community. Your love for each other and for God shines brightly, like the Star of Bethlehem, illuminating our journey together. In the year ahead, may our love for Christ, the head of our family, be evident in the joys and sorrows we share. May our lives reflect the love poured upon us and the world on Christmas morning—a light that can never be extinguished.

Our Lord offers us hope, peace, and mercy in the coming year. Receive these gifts with open hearts, hold tightly to them, and return them to God. Our life is a precious gift, and let us freely give back that which we have been freely given.

I extend an invitation to all to fill out a stewardship commitment/membership card for 2024, available on the next page and online stelizabethga.org.

With much love and blessings in Christ,

Fr. Matthew Dutko



Saint Elizabeth
Orthodox Church

**Become a
Steward**

I chose you and
appointed you that you
should go and bear fruit.
John 15:16

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY
God Grant You Many
Blessed Years!

Fill out a Stewardship
Offering Card Here!
www.stelizabethga.org

ST. ELIZABETH ORTHODOX CHURCH

STEWARDSHIP OFFERING / MEMBERSHIP CARD 2024

Everyone in our community is invited and encouraged to fill out a Stewardship Offering / Membership Card. All Orthodox Christians need to be the member of a parish.

Name: _____

Family Members: _____

Birthdates: _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

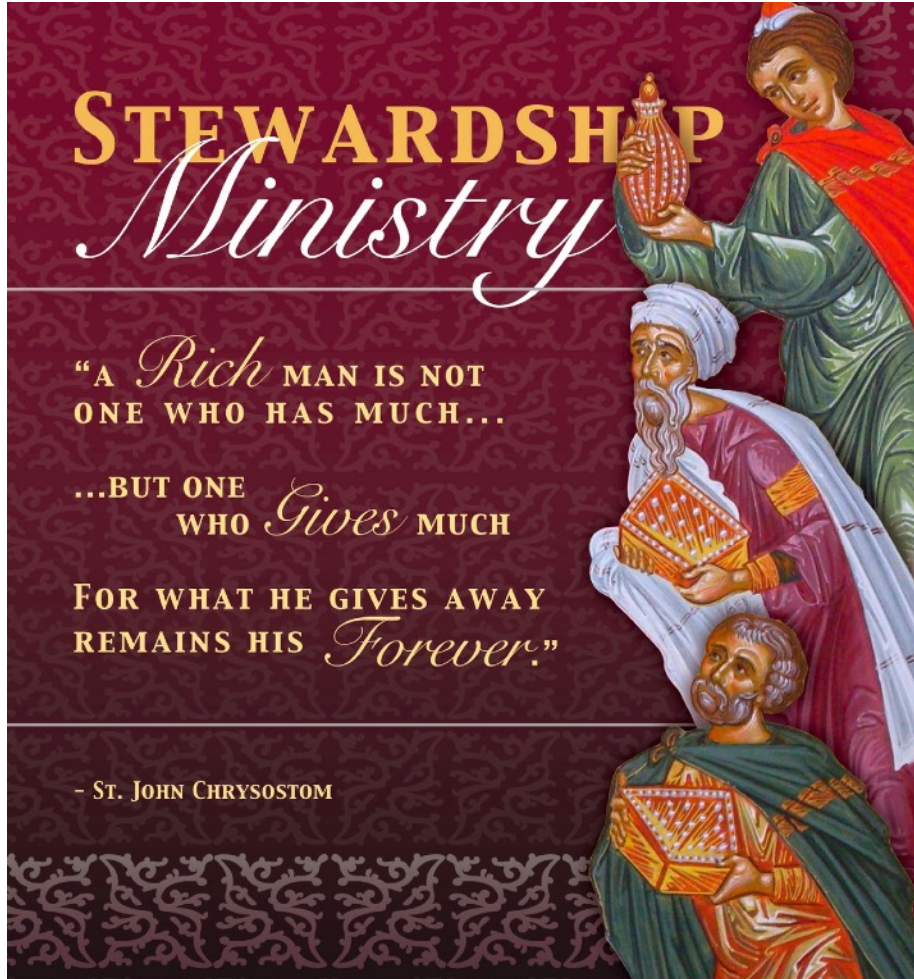
In gratitude for God's blessings, I/we are offering to God, through St. Elizabeth's, the following amount:

\$ _____ weekly \$ _____ monthly \$ _____ quarterly \$ _____ annually \$ _____ one-time

Donations can also be made online at www.stelizabethga.org

Please use this space to write how you/members of your family would like to offer your time and talent to serve Christ and His Church:

Signature:



Please Turn in Your Stewardship Offering Card in a Envelope Directly to Fr. Matthew, Email the information to fatherdutko@gmail.com, or you may Mail it to Rectory at 2263 East Cherokee Drive

Thank You So Much For Your Offering to Saint Elizabeth!

Don't Forget about Theophany!

Originally in the Church, the feast of Theophany coincided with the Feast of Christ's Nativity. Theophany is one of the oldest and most important Feast Days in the Orthodox Church. The Church marks the moment of Christ's Baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist as the beginning of Christ's Public Ministry. Christ's Public ministry is when he shared with us the truths that lead us to communion with God. When Christ teaches us the beatitudes, how to pray, to forgive and to love one another as He loves us. The Gospel of Luke tells us that Christ was about thirty years old when he begin this all important ministry to mankind. However this is not what marks Theophany as such an important feast in the Church.

This feast is also known as Epiphany— which basically means a revelation, like the light bulb above a cartoon character: or an “ah ha!” moment. Theophany means Divine revelation. This feast is so important because it commemorates the Divine Manifestation of the Holy Trinity at Christ's Baptism in the Jordan. The Fathers voice bore witness to Christ, His Divine Son and the Spirit in the form of a Dove confirmed the truth of these words. Theophany marks the beginning of Christ's public ministry, the Divine Revelation of the Holy Trinity, and through the water of the Jordan River one more thing.

The water of the Jordan River represents all of creation itself. Through Christ's baptism in the Jordan River He shows us that all of creation itself is destined to share in the glory of His redemption.

This is why we bless water on Theophany, just as Christ will redeem all of the cosmos, the Holy Water is restored to it's original composition through the sanctifying Grace of the Holy Spirit.

This same water from the Jordan was blessed on Thursday January 5th at 5:30 pm ; it will be bless the Church, all of us, and it will soon bless and sanctify all of your homes!

Why Bless a Home? - By Fr. Matthew Stagon

The Orthodox Church teaches that we do not have two separate lives—a secular one and a spiritual one—but one-human life, and that all of it must be holy. We must not be Christians for just a few hours on Saturday and Sunday, spending the rest of our life godlessly, that is to say, without God. The person who has united with Christ in the sacrament of baptism cannot be a part-time Christian, but must be faithful to Christ everywhere and at all times—in church, at work, at home, in relationships with other Christians, and in those with non- Christians—we must be faithful to Christ in the fullness of our life.

The Holy Orthodox Church teaches us that a temple is not only a building in which we worship, but that we are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16); that the Body of Christ is not only that of which we partake at the Divine Liturgy, but that we are the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). And just as the Gifts of the Eucharist are treated with reverence and kept in sanctified vessels in the altar, so should every Christian's life be full of reverence and sanctity not only during a church service, but likewise outside the walls of the temple. A Christian's home must become a small temple, work—labor for the glory of God, and family—a small Church.

The Orthodox Church helps her children strive for holiness in their lives and brings sanctification to every Christian home—a small temple. The Church blesses the very foundation of a home in the same way that it blesses the foundation of a church, it blesses a new Christian home in the same way that it blesses a new temple, and yearly, after the blessing of a parish temple with the water of Theophany, the Church brings this holy water into the homes of the faithful. The prayers for the blessing of a temple are different from those for the blessing of a home, because the function of a home is different from that of a temple, but the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit is one. And just as in the baptism of our Lord all of creation is washed clean and sanctified, every year after the feast of the Baptism of the Lord (January 6) Christians sanctify themselves and their homes with the water of Theophany.

The Church teaches us to sanctify everything: dwellings, places of work, all our pursuits, and the fruits of our labor. And just as a temple and sacred vessels, once sanctified and set aside for sacred use, can no longer be used for anything profane, in the same way a Christian washed in the baptismal waters, and his home, and all his works can no longer be the dwelling of sin and the works of satan, but only and always—the temple of the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of the will of our Heavenly Father. This is why the Church blesses every- thing that can be found in a Christian home; and if something is not worthy of being blessed, then there should not be a place for it in the home of a Christian.



THE CHRISTMAS ICON

"The icon is also a theology, a theology in color, expressing the experience of God with lines and paints rather than with discursive language. The goal of the icon and that of written theology are the same – to lead others to the mystical experience of God. The icon artistically depicts the experience so that others may approach the mystery and be invited to share in it." - Anton Vrame, *The Educating Icon*

The Three Wise Men

All generations are represented in the wise men who travel to bring their gifts to God: the young (beardless), the grown (black-bearded), and the elderly (white-bearded). –Showing that Christ Incarnation is for all mankind!

The Midwives

Midwives are shown bathing the Child, providing care that all newborns need, to emphasize His humanity. Though not mentioned in the Gospels, according to the tradition of the time, two midwives would attend a childbirth. St. Joseph the Betrothed would likely have arranged for this.



Christ and His Mother

The Virgin Mother is seen reclining—she has just endured real childbirth. + The cave foreshadows the tomb wherein Christ will open eternal life to all. + His swaddling prefigures His grave clothes. + Even the animals offer Him gifts of awe and the simple warmth of their breath.

The Angels

Countless angels are shown doing the many works that we are all called to do as God's creation. These works include worshipping God, offering their service, singing hymns of praise, and announcing the Good News of His birth.

The Shepherds

Humble shepherds respond to the angel's words and to the star showing the way. They come through the barren wilderness...a reminder of the inhospitable world as it has been since man was expelled from Paradise.

St. Joseph

St. Joseph the Betrothed is seen at a distance from the central image of the Panagia (The Mother of God) and her Child, reinforcing that he is not the father of the Newborn. He faces out into the darkness, troubled with doubts about Christ's Virgin Birth. In some icons, he is shown listening to an old, bent man representing the Evil One, who makes these troubling suggestions.

CHRISTMAS ICON COLORING PAGE

See if You Can Match The Colors!





CHRISTMAS CAROLS



Hear the wondrous tidings

Hear the wondrous tidings.
God became incarnate,
Christ is born,
in Bethlehem
Mary is His Mother

Not in a rich palace
But among the lowly
Let all know that,
in a manger
God came as a stranger.

Heaven and Earth

Heaven and earth (2)
now sing in triumph.
Angels and people (2)
join in celebration.
Christ the Lord is born
Come and behold Him
Choirs of angels singing
Wise men appearing
Christ they are greeting
Shepherds are retelling
Joyfully the wondrous story.

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon, Virgin Mother &
Child, Holy Infant so tender
and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace..
Sleep in heavenly peace.

On this Bright Day

On this bright day,
was born to us
Saviour and King, God of all,
Comforter of all mankind,
Christ the Son of God.
In Bethlehem,
was born this day,
The Messiah foretold,
By the prophets of old,
Christ the Son of God.

There was Great Rejoicing

There was great rejoicing,
On this Christmas morning,
O'er the manger, softly glowing,
The bright star was shining.
Christ was born in glory,
Of the Virgin Mary,
Let us humbly like the
shepherds,
Kneel in adoration.

Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature
sing.

Joy in Bethlehem

There is joy in Bethlehem,
Christ the Lord to us is Born
Angels singing, shepherds
kneeling, Wise Men following a
star, For Christ is Born!
God fulfilled His promised word,
Sent the Saviour, Christ the
Lord. Angels gloriously
proclaiming, Peace on earth,
good will to men, For Christ is
Born.

O Come all ye Faithful

O come all ye faithful, joyful and
triumphant Oh come ye O come
ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him born the
King of angels;
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him, O come
let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Hark! the herald angels sing

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, Join the
triumph of the skies; With angelic
host proclaim, "Christ is born in
Bethlehem!" Hark! the herald
angels sing, "Glory to the
newborn King!"



Merry
CHRISTMAS

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

The Parish Family at Saint Elizabeth's wishes you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!
