# THE ST. ELIZABETH NEWS

# A loving Community of Orthodox Christians

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

Ruling Hierarch: His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa



Reverend Father Matthew Dutko Pastor/Administrator Father Deacon Steven Hanes

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Christ is among us! He is and always shall be! Welcome to St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church and thank you for celebrating the Divine Liturgy with us!! What a joy it is to be together in God's House. If you have never been to an Orthodox Church before, you are about to participate in the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy is the work of the people and that means that all of your prayers are necessary and you have a job to do this morning! We hope you will stay and join us for coffee hour in the atrium. Please feel free to ask Fr. Matthew any questions you might have! May God's blessing be with all of you!

## This Week's Music...

Tropar & Kondak Tone 2 - Page 84

**Tropar & Kondak for Saint Nicholas- Page 123** 

**Kondak of Preparation for the Nativity Tone 3-** Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave\* where she will give birth in a manner beyond understanding\* to the Word Who is in all eternity\* Rejoice, therefore, universe, when you hear it heralded.\* With the angels and the shepherds, glorify Him\* Who chose to be seen as a newborn babe\* while remaining God in all eternity.

Look on page two of the bulletin for more details on how to follow the order of the Divine Liturgy with the Blue Pew Book.



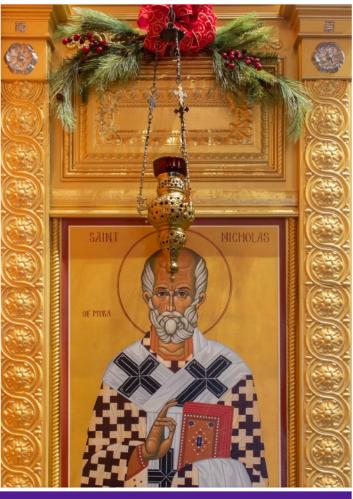


#### **27th Sunday after Pentecost**

**Epistle:** Ephesians 6:10-17 **Gospel:** Luke 17:12-19



# Christ is Among us!



Happy Saint Nicholas Day

The St. Elizabeth News Christ is Among us!



### **Monthly Schedule**

Monday 12/11 9 am- Halupki Making Tuesday 12/12 8:30 am- Divine Liturgy 10 am- Pirohi Making Wednesday 12/13 9 am- Divine Liturgy

This Weeks Class & Moleben are Canceled

Thursday 12/14 9 am- Food Prep Friday 12/15 3-7 pm- Food Sales

**Saturday 12/16 11:30-3:30 pm-** Food Sales

**4 pm-** Great Vespers

Sunday 12/17 10 am- Divine Liturgy followed by the Christmas Play

Monday 12/18 9 am- Divine Liturgy

Tuesday 12/19 9 am- Food Prep

Wednesday 12/20 9 am- Divine Liturgy

5:30 pm- Moleben & Class

Friday 12/22 9 am- Royal Hours of Christmas

**3-7 pm-** Food Sales

**Saturday 12/23 11:30-3:30 pm-** Food Sales

**4 pm-** Great Vespers

Sunday 12/24 10 am- Divine Liturgy

4:30 pm- Holy Night Supper (Potluck Strict Fast Community Dinner)

6:30 pm- Vigil Service of Christmas Eve

Monday 12/25 10 am- Divine Liturgy: The

Nativity of our Lord, God, & Saviour Jesus Christ

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

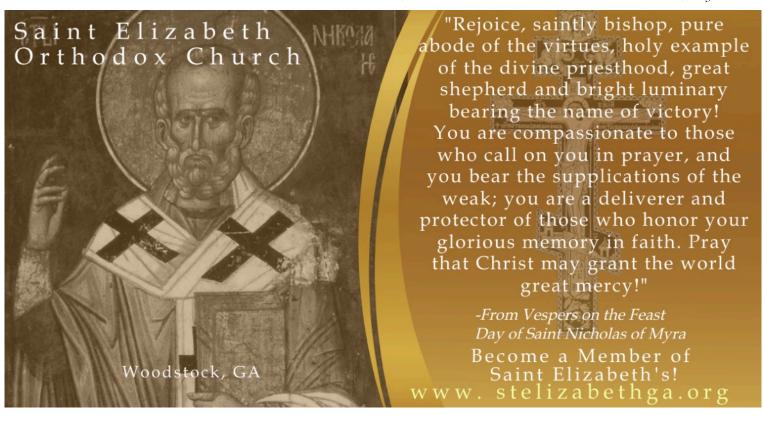
Woodstock, GA

## Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

using the Blue Pew Book

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prepared themselves, non-Orthodox visitors and inquirers are invited to come forward at the endif the Liturgy to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread).



#### **Announcements:**

- Children's Christmas Play Practice Today! Please text or email me this week your availability for Christmas Play Participation: The play will be preformed in two weeks, on Sunday 12/17 after the Divine Liturgy
- O Who Loves Nicholas the Saintly!- Thank you for everyone who helped to make this celebration of Saint Nicholas Day so beautiful! Through the prayers of Saint Nicholas may God bless you all and guide you the manger of our Lord!
- **Sisterhood of Saints-** This group is for any woman in the church! We will be meeting twice a month, one Wednesday morning and one Friday night. You do not have to make all the meetings to be a part of this group, please join as often as you are able! We will be reading "Seven Holy Women" and discussing the book together as a group. If you are interested in joining us please email Rachel Prince at <a href="Rachelbprince@gmail.com">Rachelbprince@gmail.com</a>. She would be happy to order you a book if needed! **Dates: Dec. 13th- 9am, and Dec. 29th 6:30 pm**.
- Christmas Food Sales- The time has come to get ready for this years Christmas food sale! Please take a look at the food making schedule in the bulletin and see how you might be able to help your Church with this years Christmas fundraiser. Can't help make food? Consider making a special donation to offset the cost of supplies for this years sale!
- Are You Receiving The Saint Elizabeth News and other important emails?- Sign up on our website or by using this QR code. If you are still not receiving emails please check your spam folder.



# Thank You! - Your Church Needs You!

A heartfelt thank you to everyone for your incredible efforts in making this year's Christmas food sales a phenomenal success! Your hard work has surpassed all expectations, and we are outpacing previous years' sales.

As we enter the final two weeks of preparations, let's keep the momentum going! Your continued participation is crucial in ensuring we meet the growing demand for our Christmas delights. Whether it's lending your talents in the kitchen, assisting with logistics, making a donation for supplies, coming on the weekend to serve our guests, or spreading the word, every contribution makes a significant impact.

Let's build on the success we've achieved together and make this year's Christmas food sale truly exceptional. Your dedication has set the stage for a memorable holiday season at Saint Elizabeth's.

Thank you for your commitment and passion. Let's make these last two weeks even more wonderful for our community!

May God continue to bless and guide us in all that we do for His glory at Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church!



# A Prayer to Saint Nicholas:

O holy father Saint Nicholas, the faithful protector of those who come to you and ask you for aid, I implore you: watch and guard me from all earthly misfortune, and even more, from spiritual harm, and from evil sin. O Saint Nicholas, just as you had compassion on those three captive soldiers and freed them from death, so also have compassion on me a sinner who is deserving of punishment. O holy father Saint Nicholas, intercede for me before the all merciful God and obtain for me the grace to pass through this world of tears in health and in pure innocence of soul, without sin, so that in eternity I may praise with you the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.



# Following the Star to the Cave: Journeying to Christ with Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving, and Repentance

As we find ourselves just a few weeks away from Christmas, our hearts turn to Bethlehem, and the timeless story unfolds once again—the journey of the Magi guided by the Star of Bethlehem to the humble cave where Christ is born. This journey serves as a profound example for our own spiritual pilgrimage, a trek toward the radiant light of Christ, our Savior.

Just as the Magi prepared for their journey, we too are called to equip ourselves for the spiritual expedition leading to the manger of our Lord. Our travel pack is not filled with earthly provisions but with the divine tools of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and repentance. These spiritual disciplines become our guiding stars, illuminating the path to the joyous celebration of Christ's birth.

### **Prayer: The Guiding Light**

In the stillness of prayer, we find the guiding light that directs us on our journey. Through intimate conversations with God, we align our hearts with His will, seeking His guidance and grace for the road ahead. Let us make prayer a constant companion, a compass that keeps us oriented toward our holy destination.

#### **Fasting: Clearing the Path**

Fasting is an act of self-discipline, a way to clear the clutter from our lives, making room for the presence of Christ. By abstaining from certain comforts, we cultivate a spirit of detachment and complete reliance on God, allowing us to focus on the true source of nourishment—the love of God. Let our fasting be a preparation of the heart, a decluttering of distractions that hinder our journey.

#### **Almsgiving: Sharing the Journey**

The journey to the cave becomes richer when we walk alongside our fellow pilgrims. Almsgiving is the extension of love and compassion to those in need, a reminder that we are all travelers on this earthly sojourn. Let our acts of kindness and generosity be a source of warmth and light for others on the path, creating a sense of community and solidarity.

## Repentance: Freedom for the Soul

Perhaps the most crucial tool in our travel pack is repentance. The Magi, upon reaching the cave, presented gifts, symbolizing the offering of our contrite hearts. In the sacrament of confession, we find the freedom from the weight of sin and the joyous release that comes from reconciliation with God. Let us prepare for the Christmas Liturgy by seeking the grace of repentance, embracing the mercy and forgiveness offered by our loving Father.

As we embark on this sacred journey, may the Star of Bethlehem guide us, and may our hearts be open to the transformative power of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and repentance. Let us approach the manger with anticipation and humility, ready to receive the greatest gift of all—the presence of Christ in our lives. May this Christmas be a celebration of newfound joy and spiritual renewal as we follow the star to the cave where our Savior awaits. May your Nativity Fast season be blessed with the light of Christ's love.





# O Who Loves Nicholas The Saintly....

During St. Nicholas' life he was known for many wonderful things. St. Nicholas was known to all and still remembered because of his love for Christ, his Orthodoxy, and for especially loving the poor and needy.

In the year 325 AD The Emperor Constantine called the very first Ecumenical Council, where Bishops and representatives from all the Orthodox Churches throughout

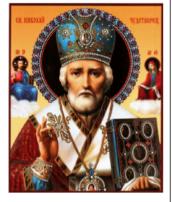


the world gathered. One of the major issues of the council came from the teachings of a heretical bishop named Arius. Arius taught that Jesus, the Son, of God was not equal with God the Father. St. Nicholas was outraged by this heresy and out of frustration he struck Arius across the face in front of all the other Bishops.

Because of St. Nicholas' violent outburst, the other Bishops had no choice but to strip him of his title and Episcopal robes. St. Nicholas was placed in prison and put in chains. Throughout the night St. Nicholas prayed for forgiveness, yet never wavered in his opposition to Arius and his devotion to the Orthodox faith. In the middle of the night Christ and the Theotokos appeared in a vision to St. Nicholas. Christ and His mother asked St. Nicholas why he was jailed, and the saint responded saying "because of my love for you." Christ then

gave to St. Nicholas the Book of Gospels and Mary gave him, an Omophorion (bishops vestments). This is why many Icons show Christ and Mary on the right and left of St. Nicholas.

The next day the guards and the other Bishops saw St. Nicholas unchained, reading the Scriptures, and dressed once again as a Bishop. When the emperor heard what happened he freed St. Nicholas, and he was fully reinstated as a Bishop.



In the end, the council of Bishops agreed with St. Nicholas over Arius and produced the Nicene Creed which we pronounce with faith at every Divine Liturgy.

Another story from the life of St. Nicholas is about what he did for three young maidens in the city of Myra, where he was the Bishop.

The city of Myra was located in what is now the southwestern coast of Turkey. Myra a very unforgiving place for many of the unfortunate people, especially the poor young women who lived there.

## O Who Love Nicholas the Saintly...Continued from page 3

Thankfully for three of those poor young women, St. Nicholas in his godly love looked upon the citizens of

Myra with great compassion; he felt called by the Lord to love all people as Christ dose.

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In 4th century Myra it was the custom for young maidens to pay a dowry in order to be able to get married. If your family could not afford to pay the often expensive price of the dowry, a terrible atrocity would befall your family. Young women of poor families who could not afford a dowry would sadly most often be sold into a life of slavery.



St. Nicholas knew of a particular unfortunate family and the love they shared for each other and for God. Filled with compassion he went out one night in secret and threw a sack of his own gold coins into the home of the poor young women, thereby saving them from a life of slavery. Legend tells us that the gold coins landed in a stocking or a shoe; and so, the tradition of

hanging stockings for St. Nicholas began!

Another story from the life of St. Nicholas took place when he was a young man and went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He boarded a ship with other pilgrims journeying to see the place where the Lord walked among us. One night, while aboard the ship, St. Nicholas had a dream that a great storm would place the pilgrims in great danger. When he awoke, St. Nicholas warned the crew and all the travelers about the peril that was coming their way, but he implored them not to worry, saying "God will protect us!" As St. Nicholas gave his warning the skies turned black and the seas began to rock the boat. One of the crew members climbed the mast of the ship to secure it, but as the waves rocked the sides of the boat the sailor fell to his death.



The pilgrims begged St. Nicholas to pray to Lord so that God might calm the stormy seas. The storm quickly vanished, and the travelers thanked God for St. Nicholas' intersection, but everyone was grieved by the loss of their crew-mate. St. Nicholas prayed over the man and he rose up with no pain as if he was only sleeping. This is why St. Nicholas is known to many as the *Patron Saint of Sailors*. We may not be traveling out at sea like those pilgrims, but when we ask for St. Nicholas to pray for us when the storms of life come our way, he always intercedes for us just as he interceded for those pilgrims so long ago.

These are just a few of the many beautiful stories about the life of St. Nicholas, but more beautiful is the person of St. Nicholas himself. St. Nicholas is an example for all of us, because all of St. Nicholas' acts of love, compassion, and kindness were inspired by Christ, Who is his example and all of ours. St. Nicholas was truly a good servant of the Lord, he was truly like-Christ. We love St. Nicholas because St. Nicholas loves Christ and is like Him as we are all called to be!

# O Who Loves Nicholas the Saintly...

## It's Not My Bag!

Father Matthew asked me to write about my experience as St. Nicholas. So here goes.

Now that I have reached a certain age and grown a thick white beard, people have been saying, "You know, you look like you could play Santa Claus." I always laughed it off, because I am not the outgoing type. Being Santa was not my bag, so to speak. Then Father Matthew came along and asked me to be St. Nicholas for St. Nicholas Day at the Church. I was hesitant at first, to say the least. "Don't worry," Father said, "I will be right there to help. I will fill in as needed...you can do it." To make a long story short, six hours later, I agreed to do it.

How can I do this? I always hear about actors who practice "method acting." Okay, so..." I AM St. Nicholas... I know who I am... I know I love God... I know I have great wealth... I know I love children... I AM ST. NICHOLAS!"

The big day arrived. I put on the robe. Father Matthew stuck the crown on my head and laughed (that didn't help!). I straightened the crown and Father handed me the staff and the Cross. He gave me a few instructions and left. There I stood: St. Nicholas.

Then I heard the children singing, "Oh Who Loves Ni-i-i cho-o-las t-h-e S-a-int-y!" Uh-oh! I guess that's me...

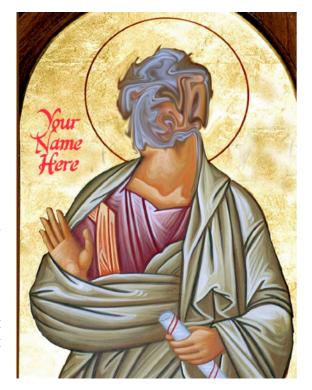
I walked out and there they were...sweet, innocent, excited children. Joy on their faces. Joy on the faces of their parents and grandparents. Love filled the room. What is this!? This is the way it should be...always!

For a brief period of time, I experienced what we should all experience all the time.

This WAS my bag! And my bag overflowed!

- Jonny Sajem 2019

This is the way it should always be and the way it should always feel. We are all called to sainthood, and acting like Saint Nicholas shows us just how good it feels to let our love overflow for our brothers and sisters.





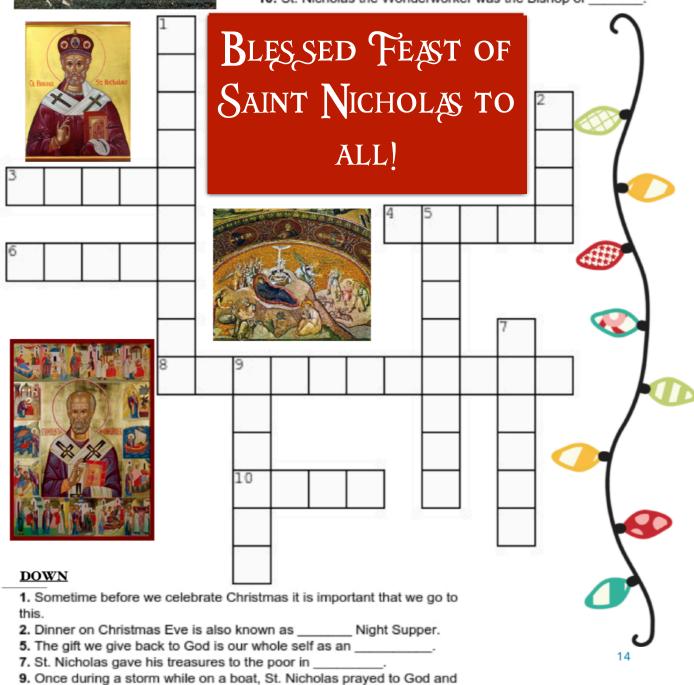
# St. Nicholas & Advent Crossword Puzzle



the seas.

#### Across

- We should offer gifts the Lord with our \_\_\_\_\_ heart.
- St. Nicholas gave gold to the three young maidens in order to pay their....
- This is the name of the bishop who taught false doctrine which was refuted by St. Nicholas.
- 8. St. Nicholas was present at the first Ecumenical Council were the \_\_\_\_\_ was formulated. \*Hint-I Believe\*
- 10. St. Nicholas the Wonderworker was the Bishop of









# St. Elizabeth's Orthodox Church Traditional Christmas Eve Holy Night Supper, Christmas Eve Vigil, and Christmas Day Divine Liturgy

Please be our guests and join with the St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church family for a traditional Christian celebration of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. In the Orthodox Church, the forty days before Christmas

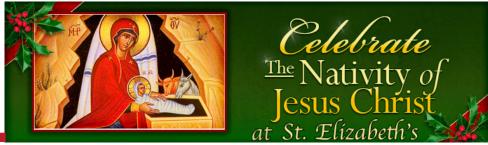
is known as the Nativity Fast, or Advent. Advent is a time of preparation for the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Orthodox Christians participate in a fast from certain foods during this time of preparation which includes abstinence from meat and dairy products on most days. The fast culminates on Christmas Eve with a meat and dairy free dinner known as Holy Night Supper. At this traditional dinner, born out of the mountains of eastern Europe, the family gathers together to celebrate and give thanks for the good tidings of great joy that the birth of Christ brings into the world. All are welcome to attend a similar dinner at no cost. hosted by the St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church Parish Family starting at 4:30 pm on Christmas Eve. Since St. Elizabeth's is an international community fasting dishes from all over the world will be represented at our version of the Holy Night Supper. In the Old



World, after finishing the Holy Supper on Christmas Eve, the family would walk over to the Church for the celebration of the Christmas Eve Vigil, at St. Elizabeth's you will have the same opportunity to walk next door to the Church and celebrate the birth of Christ with your family. On Christmas morning the faithful will gather together once again to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, which is the central liturgical service in the Orthodox church. Come and see this ancient Christian celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! St. Elizabeth's is located at 2265 East Cherokee Drive in Woodstock. The dinner will begin at 4:30 PM with the Christmas Eve Vigil Service to follow at 6:30 PM. Also, please join us on Christmas morning as we celebrate the Birth of our New Born King with the traditional Orthodox Divine Liturgy at 10AM! If you have any questions please call at 404-268-6359.

St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church 2265 East Cherokee Drive Woodstock, GA 30188





# Parish Family Prayer List

For the Health of: The Melnikoff Family, Pani Betty Jean Baranek, Fr. James Gleason, The Paccio Family, Kara, Joanna, James, Athanasia, Ethel, Tyler, Maria, Page Family, Dean, Margaret, Metropolitan Gregory and his family, 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 Mileshko Family, the Blanar 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, 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, Nick & Rosemary, Mike, Elaiane, Roy, Lin, Dave, Sarah, Gerorge, & Edward, Stephen, Caleb, Amelia, Simon, David, the Gdovin Family, the Rodgers Family, Mike & the Kundrat Family, Yvone, George, Amberly, & baby Stella, Jessie, Dexter, Julia, Dan, Cora, Gabriel, Ethan, Tripp, Rachel, Lilly, Emmie, Charlie, Michelle, Serge, Mark, Johnny, Yvette Christine, Johanna, Nicole, Caroline

For the Departed: Evelyn & Boris Melnikoff+, Patricia+, James+, Stephen+, Anna+, Charles+, Robert+, Loraine+. Helen+, Lewis+, Jeane+, Vera+, George+, George+, Ernie+, Eddie+, Maria+, Carl+, Mark+, Barry+, Jospeh+, Phillip+, Jenny+, Peter+, Bryan+, Rebecca+, Fr. Paul+, Maria+, Fr. Hazuda+, George Smisko+, Helen Spanovich+, Bob+, Alma+, Bo+, Saddie+, Fr. William George+, Violet+, Fr. Kozar+, Benjamin+, John Haddad+, Fred & Helen Mileshko+, Anna+, Natalie+, Lilly+, Christine+, Anna+, Tamara+, Anastasia+, Yvonne+, John+, Betty+, Ada+, Peter+ & Wanda+, George+, Jerry+, Barb+ & Harry+, Beth+, Louise+, Nikolay+, 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 Jospeh+ & Pani Patsy+, Anatoly+, Fr. Scott+, Steve+, Claudia+, Dave+, Fr. John Duranko, Michael+, Sarah Elizabeth+ Ester+, Iulie+

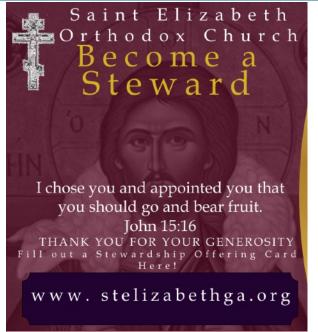
Through the prayers of the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, St. Elizabeth, The Holy Fathers & Mothers, and all the Saints, may our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ have mercy on us and save us!

## Holy Saint Elizabeth Pray for us!





## **Eternal Memory!**



Keep Your Parish Family in Your Prayers!

Christ is Among us!



# 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, 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! Round yon, Virgin Mother & Let every heart prepare Him room Child, Holy Infant so tender 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!"