



*Jesus Christ, our  
Saviour and Redeemer*

# Holy Protection Orthodox Church

Greetings on this blessed  
Lord's Day! Please take a  
green information sheet if this  
is your first time here. You can  
put in any collection basket or  
hand to greeter

**IN EMERGENCY CALL/TEXT**  
813-406-2620 (Fr.'s cell). If in  
middle of night and no answer,  
call 813-659-0123 or 813-451-  
9829 (Pani's cell). If they are  
off duty please call Parish

## Schedule

Today is Tone 4

### **Sunday, Dec 24**

10:30 am Divine Liturgy  
NOON Holy Supper  
10:45 pm Christmas Compline  
11:30 pm Christmas Liturgy

### **Sunday, Dec 31**

9:45 am Divine Liturgy  
11:15 am Christmas Pot Luck

### **Friday, January 5**

Theophany Eve  
6pm Liturgy of St. Basil with Blessing  
of Waters

### **Sunday, January 7**

9:45 am Divine Liturgy  
11:15 am Fellowship

Please remember to follow the  
preparatory guidelines for communion  
(see website [www.holyorthodox.org](http://www.holyorthodox.org)  
for details).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!



The council has voted that Monday and Saturday's will be Father's days off. Please, do not call or text on those days. If you have an emergency on one of those days, please call Pani at 813-451-9829 or one of the council members.

The 2018 envelopes are in the narthex, pick up yours today.

January shopping list: 12 oz coffee cups, hot chocolate, bagels and coffee. If you are at the store, pick up something and bring to church.

Please pick up complete schedule for Christmas and the month January.

December 31 fellowship will be our parish Christmas festive meal. If you can, please sign up to bring something.

The council will be putting up a board of parish needs in the hall. This will include volunteers for fellowship hour. There will no longer be stewardship teams after December. Fellowship can be very simple, just bagels or donuts.

Parish council contacts: Scottie (President): 813-629-6027, Brian (Vice President): (813) 763-5226, Rebecca (Treasurer): (813) 763-5225, Nancy (Co Treasurer) (727) 584-7907, You can text all, except Nancy

Stewardship Teams  
Dec 24 Nancy Holy Supper  
December 31 Christmas pot luck

Our Lenten Retreat is scheduled for February 23-25, 2018. Make sure you save the date!

**Prayer Corner:** Please pray for the ailing: Mary, Kathy, Susan, Helen, Neila, Olexander, Anna, John, Carol, Mat. Mary, P.Vera, SD. John, Randee, John, Ryan, Marie, Paul, Mary, Pangratios, Tikon, Vasili, Jeremiah, Dcn. Luke, Maria, John David, Elizabeth, Joshua, Alexander, Nicholas, Rebecca, Genevieve, Panteleimon, Vladimir, Margaret, David, Sarah, Jonathon, Simon, Gene, Judy, Fr. Michael, Fr. John, Anastasia, Demitrios, Alexandra, Israel, George, Michelle, George, Beth, Alex, George, Joseph, Jaqueline, Michael, Geverlyn, Thomas, Norma, Sally, Sarah, Derek, Susan, Lucy, Beth, Kathy, Phyllis, John, David, Shirley, Kalie, Madeline, Thomas, Patricia, Marie, Archimandrite David, Jake, Tom, Beverly, Taylor, Reghyn, Sylvia, Andreas, Josh, Nicole, Joyce, Sandy, Yamileth, Georgina, Kathy, Pam, Ann, Eli, Shay, Ocean, Lauren, Donna, Kim, Lori, Nancy, George, Sharon, Sylvia, Kristi, Gary, Keegan

*If you would like someone on the bulletin prayer list just let Pani know.* Please review the prayer list, if you know of someone who should be taken off, please let Pani know.

The celebration of the feast of the Nativity of Christ in the Orthodox Church is patterned after the celebration of the feast of the Lord's Resurrection. A fast of forty days precedes the feast, with special preparatory days announcing the approaching birth of the Saviour. Thus, on Saint Andrew's Day (November 30) and Saint Nicholas Day (December 6) songs are sung to announce the coming birthday of the Lord: *Adorn yourself, O Cavern. Make ready, O Manger. O Shepherds and wisemen, bring your gifts and bear witness. For the Virgin is coming bearing Christ in her womb* (Vespertal Hymn of Saint Nicholas Day). On the eve of Christmas, the Royal Hours are read and the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil is served with Vespers. At these services the Old Testament prophecies of Christ's birth are chanted, emphasizing the prophecy of Micah which foretells Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Saviour, and the prophecies of Isaiah about the appearance and character of the Messiah:

*The Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel, which translated is, God with us (Is 7.14–15).*

*God is with us, understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us (Is 8.9).*

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end (Is 9.6–7).*

The Vigil of Christmas begins with Great Compline, highlighted once again by the solemn chanting of God is with us and the words of the prophecy of Isaiah. At Compline there is also the singing of the Troparion and Kontakion of the feast along with the special hymns glorifying the Saviour's birth. There are also the special long litanies of intercession and the solemn blessing of the five loaves of bread together with the wheat and the wine of which the faithful partake and the oil with which they are anointed. This part of the festal vigil, which is done on all great feasts, is called the litya (in Greek, the *artoklasia* or the breaking of the bread).

At the beginning of the Christmas Matins, which together with Compline form the Christmas Vigil, the six matinal psalms begin as usual with the words: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will among men" (Lk 2.14). At the Christmas services these words of the angelic song are normally sung with great solemnity rather than being chanted as at the daily service. The Christmas Matins proceed as usual. The gospel reading from Matthew (1.18–25) tells of the birth of Christ, and all of the hymns and verses glorify His appearance on earth: *Christ is born, glorify Him. Christ is from heaven, go to meet Him. Christ is on earth, be ye lifted up. Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing out with gladness, all ye people. For He is glorified* (First Ode of the Christmas Canon).

The Christmas Liturgy begins with psalms of glorification and praise. The troparion and kontakion mark the entrance with the Book of the Gospels. The baptismal line from Galatians 3.27 once again replaces the Thrice-Holy. The Epistle reading is from Galatians: *But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So through God, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir* (Gal 4.4–7). The Gospel reading is the familiar Christmas story from Matthew (2.1–12), and the liturgy continues in the normal fashion. A specific two-day celebration follows, dedicated to Mary the Theotokos and Saint Stephen, the First Martyr. The period of Christmas rejoicing extends to Epiphany during which time the Christmas songs are sung and fasting and kneeling in prayer are not called for by the Church. The feast of Christmas is formally entitled the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. At Christmas we celebrate the birth as a man of the Son of God, the one who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit is truly God from all eternity. Thus, we sing in the Church: *Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One! Angels, with shepherds, glorify Him! The wise men journey with the star! Since for our sake the Eternal God is born as a little child* (Kontakion). The feast of Christmas was not a separate Church feast for the first four centuries of Christian history. It was celebrated with Epiphany in the one great feast of God's appearance on earth in the form of the human Messiah of Israel.

*Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshiped the stars were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness and to know Thee, the Orient from on high [Lk 1.78, translated as Dawn or Day spring]. O Lord, glory to Thee!* (Troparion). Thus, the feast of Christmas is the celebration of the world's salvation through the Son of God who became man for our sake that, through him, we might ourselves become divine, sons of God the Father by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit in us.