

St. Maximus the Confessor Orthodox Mission, Denton
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Bulletin for Sunday December 22nd, 2013

Schedule of Services

December 22nd Sunday Before Nativity 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 12:00 p.m. Mission Council
December 23rd, Monday 7:30 a.m. Matins, Confession 10:00 a.m. Church Decoration 6:00 p.m. Vespers, Compline, Confession
December, 24th Tuesday Nativity Eve 8:00 a.m. Royal Hours 12:00 p.m. Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil 6:00 p.m. Vigil
December 25th Wednesday Nativity of our Lord in the Flesh 8:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
December 26th Thursday Synaxis of the Theotokos 7:30 a.m. Matins
December 27th Friday No Fast 7:30 a.m. Matins, Confession
December 28th Saturday 9:30 a.m. <i>Feast Day Liturgy and Holy Nativity Monastery</i> 5:00 p.m. Vigil, Confession
December 29th Sunday After Nativity 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

The Optina Elders on Union with God

Every person is a house of God. He is destined to be a dwelling of the Holy Spirit so that in him there might be offered unceasing doxology to God. But God can abide only in a pure heart; one must prepare a place for Him. How to do this? We purify ourselves of the passions and pray. Then our heart will be a temple—the house of God. We will then see God's care for us and we will unceasingly glorify Him.

St. Nikon

Announcements for December 22

To Our Visitors: Welcome! Please join us after the service for coffee, food, and conversation. If you would, fill out a visitor's card for us and leave it in the basket on the table by the door. We invite you to go first through the food line and join the priest at the table.

To All: Please be aware that Holy Communion is open only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves for worthy participation in the Mystery through prayer, fasting, and a recent confession to a priest (within the last month or so). We should be modestly dressed (so as not to distract others) and present to hear "Blessed is the Kingdom" at the beginning of the Liturgy (in *unusual* circumstances no later than the Gospel reading), and not leave until the dismissal at the end.

The Special Offering this week will be for debt reduction.

Temple oil given for the health and salvation of William and Carolyn.

The Mission Council will meet today (after being postponed twice!) to plan for the upcoming diocesan pastoral conference in February which will be held here and to consider the design for our new church as it now stands. Parishioners are welcome to attend council meetings if they desire.

Iconographer Vladimir Grygorenko, resident iconographer at St. Seraphim's Cathedral, will have his work displayed at Lovers Lane United Methodist Church in Dallas tonight at 6:00 as part of their program "Candlelight Carols & John Rutters' Magnificat" with reception following (9200 Inwood Road at Northwest Highway).

Church Decoration: We'll decorate the church for Nativity this Monday at 10:00 a.m. Please bring a few evergreen boughs if you can.

No Classes this Week

Nativity of Our Lord: We break the fast after Liturgy on the 25th. We greet one another during the twelve days of Christmas thus: "Christ is born!" "Glorify Him!" No fasting is permitted after the 25th until January 5th.

All-Night New Year's Vigil: Remember to ring in the New Year keeping vigil in the church, the first time we'll have done this. Vigil will begin at 10:00, and we'll finish Liturgy about 3:30 a.m.—a much better way to start A.D. 2014 than watching a silly ball drop and blowing party horns.

Please Pray: Holly Bellan, catechumens Shannon Goodson, Holly Bellan, and Sean Chaney, for inquirers Destiny Marcott, Rebecca

Marcott, Kathy Wells and her family, Amber Payne, Leah Saunders, and Joseph; the novice Svetlana, Elizabeth (Chandler) Jones, and Paraskeve. Pray for Joe Fincher and Olga, for Joanna (Sherri) Hale, and for Patricia.

Holy Nativity Monastery in Kemp will celebrate its feast day this Saturday with services starting at 9:30 a.m. Please RSVP by calling the monastery at 903-498-4474 or by sending an email to nativitymonastery@gmail.com When you RSVP, please let us know how many children will be attending with you as we prepare special gifts for children.

Tithes, Offerings & Attendance: Bringing our tithes and offerings to the temple of God is part of our worship of God, which also supports our efforts to proclaim the fullness of the Gospel of Christ in Denton through the establishment of a permanent Orthodox parish and new missions in Denton County and north Texas. Checks should be made out to St. Maximus Orthodox Church and placed in the basket on the candle table, where there is also a box for alms (those in need) and a box for our building fund.

Last week, we gave \$3180.09; In December we have given \$4648.09; Our monthly budget is \$8700 (\$2008 per week.) Candles \$79.50; Renovation (soda) \$5; Special Offering for chalice \$48.58. To build a church will require a monthly income in the neighborhood of \$11,000 a month.) Attendance: Saturday Vigil 36, Sunday Liturgy 101, Holy Unction about 60.

From Saint Maximus

Certain things stop the movement of the passions and do not allow them to grow; others subdue them and make them diminish. For instance, where desire is concerned, fasting, labor and vigils do not allow it to grow, while withdrawal, contemplation, prayer and intense longing for God subdue it and make it disappear. The same is true with regard to anger. Forbearance, freedom from rancor, gentleness, for example, all arrest it and prevent it from growing, while love, acts of charity, kindness and compassion make it diminish.

When a man's intellect is constantly with God, his desire grows beyond all measure into an intense longing for God and his incensiveness [anger, aggressive faculty] is completely transformed into divine love. For by continual participation in the divine radiance his intellect becomes totally filled with light; and when it has reintegrated its passible aspect, it redirects this aspect towards God, as we have said, filling it with an incomprehensible and intense longing for Him and with unceasing love, thus drawing it entirely away from worldly things to the divine. *400 Chapters on Love, 2.47-48*

Troparia and Kontakia for Sunday, December 22

Resurrectional Troparion, tone 1

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews / and the soldiers were guarding Thine immaculate body, / Thou didst rise on the third day, O Saviour, / granting life to the world. / The powers of heaven, therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of life: / Glory to the Resurrection, O Christ! / Glory to Thy Kingdom! / Glory to Thy dispensation, O only Lover of man.

Troparion, Holy Forefathers, tone 2

By faith, Thou didst justify the forefathers, / when through them didst betroth Thyself aforetime / to the Church from among the nations. / The Saints boast in glory / that from their seed, there is a glorious fruit, / even she that bare Thee seedlessly. / By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Troparion of the Forefeast, tone 4

Once Mary, bearing in her womb an Offspring conceived without seed, / was registered in Bethlehem with the elder Joseph, as being of the seed of David. / And while they were there, / the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. / But there was no room for them in the inn. / But the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, // and Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Kontakion, Holy Forefathers, tone 6

Ye would not worship a hand-wrought image, O thrice blessed ones; / but armed by the Undepictable Essence, / ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire. / Standing in the midst of the irresistible flame, ye called upon God: / Speed Thou, O Compassionate One, since Thou art merciful, / and hasten to come unto our aid; for Thou art able, if it be Thy will.

Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave / to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word. / Hearing this, be of good cheer, O inhabited earth, / and with the angels and the shepherds glorify Him // whose will it was to be made manifest a young Child, the pre-eternal God.