

St. Maximus the Confessor Orthodox Mission, Denton
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Bulletin for Sunday December 21st, 2014

Schedule of Services

December 21st Sunday Before Nativity

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
noon Basics of Orthodox Class
3:00 p.m. Vespers

December 22nd Monday

6:00 a.m. Hours
6:15 a.m. Divine Liturgy
8:00 a.m. Church Decoration

December 23rd Tuesday

6:00 a.m. Matins, Confession
3:00 p.m. Vespers, Confession

December 24th Wednesday Nativity Eve

9:00 Royal Hours
noon Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
6:00 p.m. Vigil

December 25th Thursday Nativity of Our Lord in the Flesh

8:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

December 27th Saturday

10:00 a.m. *Divine Liturgy and Festal Meal at Nativity Monastery*
7:00 p.m. Vigil, Confession

December 28th Sunday After Nativity

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

"And precisely today—here and now, for the two thousandth time—we celebrate and remember the event that divides history in two; the event so significant that we count the years from it, and now complete the second millennium. Two thousand years have passed since that night when history's greatest miracle took place in that cave near Bethlehem, when the Son of God Himself came and put on flesh and became like one of us and 'dwelt among us' [John 1:14]. He is none other than the eternal and uncreated Son, the Word or Logos of God, through Whom all things were made. Since that night, nothing in human life and history is as it was before. The 'Sun of Righteousness' [Malachi 4:2] was born to us, and all the depths of human fallenness and struggle against God have been filled by His warmth and light. From that night on, all human life and the history of every nation comes down to only one dilemma—to one simple question: Are you for or against Christ? One simple question, but a question so crucial that our entire life, and the future of our people, hinges upon it. That question overshadows and defines every historical period of the past twenty centuries." *Patriarch Pavle of Serbia, 1999*

Announcements for December 21

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 if we are communing), and not leave until the dismissal at the end.

The Special Offering this week will be for alms.

Temple Oil given in memory of Archbishop Dmitri.

Classes this Week

No Basics of Orthodoxy class today due to Mission Council.

Wednesday, 8:00 p.m. Writings of St. Athanasius of Alexandria:
On the Incarnation

Vigil next Saturday will be served at 7:00 p.m. to accommodate those who wish to attend the Feast at Holy Nativity Monastery.

Today, we honor the Resurrection of Christ and the Fathers of the Old Testament. O Holy Forefathers, pray to Christ for us!

Nativity Monastery in Kemp celebrates its patronal feast this Saturday with the Hours at 9:30, Divine Liturgy at 10:00, reception at noon. Hieromonk Alexii Altschul, a monk with the Serbian Orthodox Church, will speak on "The Significance of Mt. Athos for the World: Reflections on Monasticism and Pilgrimage."

All-Night New Year's Vigil: For the first time at St. Maximus, you have the opportunity to ring in the New Year while keeping vigil in the church. Vigil will begin at 10:00 p.m., and we'll finish Liturgy about 3:30 a.m.—a much better way to start *Anno Domini 2015* than watching a silly ball drop and blowing party horns. If you wish to receive Holy Communion, begin the Eucharistic fast by 9:00 p.m.

Nativity Services this Week: include the Royal Hours, the Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, and Vigil on December 24 and the Divine Liturgy of the Feast on December 25.

Almsgiving is an essential part of our Christian lives, and God gives much grace in response to our giving alms to those in need. For the Nativity Fast, you may give money in the alms box, but you may also

bring non-perishable food for our modest food pantry, which goes to help both parishioners and those outside the Church who come with need. Please give generously with joy!

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 \$1868.46 in tithes and offerings; this month we have given \$3734.85 our monthly budget is \$9502 (\$2192 per week). Candles \$66; Special offering for Nativity Monastery \$36.03; Renovation (soda) \$12.31. Attendance: Liturgy 83, Vigil 25.

Please Pray: for catechumens Holly Bellan, Seth Williams, and Rick Hollembeak who will be received into the Church by Holy Baptism on Saturday, January 3 at 2:30 p.m., the novice Elias, the novice Svetlana, and Elizabeth (Chandler) Jones. Pray for Joe Fincher and Olga, for Joanna (Sherri) Hale, for Patricia, Perpetua, and James Lydon. Please pray for former parishioners: the newly departed Stephen and Natalya (daughter) Perrin, and for Natalya (mother) in hospital in stable condition.

From Saint Maximus

Do not say, 'I do not hate my brother', when you simply efface the thought of him from your mind. Listen to Moses, who said, 'Do not hate your brother in your mind; but reprove him and you will not incur sin through him' (Lev. 19:17. LXX).

If a brother happens to be tempted and persists in insulting you, do not be driven out of your state of love, even though the same evil demon troubles your mind. You will not be driven out of that state if, when abused, you bless; when slandered, you praise; and when tricked, you maintain your affection. This is the way of Christ's philosophy: if you do not follow it you do not share His company.

Do not think that those who bring you reports which fill you with resentment and make you hate your brother are affectionately disposed towards you, even if they seem to speak the truth. On the contrary, turn away from them as if they were poisonous snakes, so that you may both prevent them from uttering slanders and deliver your own soul from wickedness.

Do not irritate your brother by speaking to him equivocally; otherwise you may receive the same treatment from him and so drive

out both your love and his. Rather, rebuke him frankly and affectionately, thus removing the grounds for resentment and freeing both him and yourself from your irritation and distress.

400 Chapters on Love, 4.29-32

Troparia and Kontakia for Sunday, December 21

Resurrectional Troparion, Tone 3

Let those in Heaven rejoice, / let those on Earth be glad; / for the Lord hath wrought a mighty act with His arm. / He hath trampled down death by death; / He hath become the first-born of the dead. / From the womb of hell hath He delivered us, // and hath granted the world great mercy.

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.