

December 24
The Forefeast of the Nativity of Our Lord
Vesperal Divine Liturgy

Priest Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

Proemial Psalm (Psalm 103)

Come, let us worship and fall down before God, our King.

Come let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, the King and our God.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, You have been magnified exceedingly, You have put on confession and majesty: You Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment.

Who stretches out the heaven as if it were a curtain; Who supports His chambers in the waters.

Who appoints the clouds for His ascent, Who walks on the wings of the winds.

Who makes His Angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.

Who established the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back to the ages of ages.

The abyss like a garment is His mantle; the waters shall stand on the mountains

They will flee at Your rebuke, they shall be afraid at the voice of Your thunder.

The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, to the place where You have established them.

You appointed a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth.

He sends forth springs in the valleys; the waters will run between the mountains.

They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst

The birds of the heaven will lodge beside them, they will give voice from the midst of the rocks.

He waters the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Your works.

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men.

He brings forth bread out of the earth; and wine makes the heart of man glad.

To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengthens man's heart.

The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which You have planted.

There the sparrows will make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them.

The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares.

He has made the moon for seasons; the sun knows his going down.

You appointed the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad.

Young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God.

The sun arises, and they gather together, and they lay down in their dens.

But man shall go forth to his work, and to his labor until the evening.

How magnified are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is filled with Your creation.

So is this great and spacious sea, therein are innumerable creeping things, small living creatures with the great.

There go the ships; there this dragon whom You have made to play therein.

All things wait on You, to give them their food in due season; when You give it to them, they will gather it.

*When You open Your hand, all things shall be filled with goodness.

When You turn away Your face, they shall be troubled.

You will take away their spirit, and they shall cease; and they shall return to their dust.

You will send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created; and You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let the glory of the Lord be to the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works.

Who looks on the earth and makes it tremble, Who touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being; may my words be sweet to Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord.

Oh that sinners would cease from the earth, and that those who work iniquity should be no more.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. The sun knows his going down. You appointed the darkness, and there was the night.

How magnified are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have made them all.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to You, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to You, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to You, O God. Our Hope, O Lord, glory to You.

The Great Litany

Deacon In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For the peace from above and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For the peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord..

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For this holy house and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For pious and Orthodox Christians, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For our Archbishop (*Name*), the honorable presbytery, the diaconate in Christ, and for all the clergy and the laity, let us pray to the Lord..

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For the president of our country, for all civil authorities, and for our armed forces on land, at sea, and in the air, let us pray to the Lord

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For this city, for every city and land, and for the faithful who dwell in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For favorable weather, an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For travelers by sea, land and air; the sick, the suffering, the captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.

Lord, have mercy.

Deacon Commemorating our all-holy, pure, most-blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and all our life to Christ our God.

To You, O Lord.

Priest For to You belong all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

At the Kyrie Ekekraksa

Lord, I have cried to You, hear me: hear me, Lord; Lord, I have cried to You, hear me: attend to the voice of my supplication; when I cry to You, hear me, Lord. (*Psalm 140:1*)

Let my prayer be set forth as incense before You: the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice; hear me, Lord. (*Psalm 140:2*)

Prosomoia Stichera of the Feast

Tone 2
Of Germanos

If You should mark iniquities, Lord, Lord, who shall stand? For with You there is forgiveness. (Psalm 129:3)

Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord as we tell of this present mystery. The middle wall of partition has been destroyed; the flaming sword turns back, the cherubim withdraw from the tree of life, and I partake of the delight of Paradise from which I was cast out through disobedience. For the express Image of the Father, the imprint of His eternity, takes the form of a servant, and without undergoing change He comes forth from a Mother who knew not wedlock. For what He was, He has remained, true God; and what He was not, He has taken upon Himself, becoming man through love for mankind. Unto Him let us cry aloud: God born of a Virgin, have mercy on us.

For Your name's sake I have patiently waited for You, Lord; my soul has waited patiently for Your word, my soul has hoped in the Lord. (Psalm 129:4)

(Repeat) **C**ome, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord as we tell of this present mystery. The middle wall of partition has been destroyed; the flaming sword turns back, the cherubim withdraw from the tree of life, and I partake of the delight of Paradise from which I was cast out through disobedience. For the express Image of the Father, the imprint of His eternity, takes the form of a servant, and without undergoing change He comes forth from a Mother who knew not wedlock. For what He was, He has remained, true God; and what He was not, He has taken upon Himself, becoming man through love for mankind. Unto Him let us cry aloud: God born of a Virgin, have mercy on us.

From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel hope in the Lord. (Psalm 129:5)

When the Lord Jesus was born of the holy Virgin, all the world was enlightened. The shepherds watched in the fields, the Magi adored, and the angels praised in song; but Herod was troubled, for God has appeared in the flesh, the Savior of our souls.

Of Anatolios

For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities. (Psalm 129:6)

(Repeat) **W**hen the Lord Jesus was born of the holy Virgin, all the world was enlightened. The shepherds watched in the fields, the Magi adored, and the angels praised in song; but Herod was troubled, for God has appeared in the flesh, the Savior of our souls.

Praise the Lord, all you nations; praise Him, all you peoples. (Psalm 116:1)

Your Kingdom, O Christ God, is a Kingdom of all the ages, and Your rule is from generation to generation. Made flesh of the Holy Spirit and made man of the ever-Virgin Mary, You have enlightened us by Your coming. Light of Light, Brightness of the Father, You have made the whole creation shine with joy. All that has breath praises You, the Image of the glory of the Father. O God Who are, and Who has ever been, Who has shone forth from a Virgin, have mercy on us.

For He has made His mercy to prevail over us, and the truth of the Lord abides to the ages. (Psalm 116:2)

What shall we offer You, O Christ, Who for our sake has appeared on earth as man? Every creature made by You offers You thanks. The angels offer You a hymn; the heavens, a star; the Magi, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder; the earth, its cave; the wilderness, the manger; and we offer You a Virgin Mother. O pre-eternal God, have mercy on us.

Idiomelon of the Feast

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

When Augustus reigned alone upon earth, the many kingdoms of men came to an end; and when You were made man of the pure Virgin, the many gods of idolatry were destroyed. The cities of the world passed under one single rule; and the nations came to believe in one sovereign Godhead. The peoples were enrolled by the decree of Caesar; and we, the faithful, were enrolled in the Name of the Godhead, when You, our God, were made man. Great is Your mercy, glory to You.

*Entrance with the **Gospel**.*

O Gladsome Light

Deacon Wisdom! Rise!

O gladsome light of holy glory, the immortal Father, heavenly and holy, blessed Jesus Christ: now that we have come to the setting of the sun and see the light of evening, we praise You, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God. It is worthy at all times to praise You, with voices of holy song, • Son of God the Giver of life: the world glorifies You.

Prokeimenon

Deacon Evening. Prokeimenon.

Monday Evening

Tone 4

O Lord, answer me when I call, O God of my right!

O Lord, answer me when I call, O God of my right!

When I called upon You, O God of my righteousness, You heard me.

O Lord, answer me when I call, O God of my right!

Tuesday Evening

Tone 1

Your mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life.

Your mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life.

The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall not want; in a place of green pasture, there He has made me to dwell.

Your mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life.

Wednesday Evening

Tone Plagal 1

Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your might.

Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your might.

God, hear my prayer, give ear to the words of my mouth.

Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your might.

Thursday Evening

Tone Plagal 2

My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from where my help comes.

My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

Friday Evening

Grave Tone2

You, O God, are my fortress, the God Who shows me mercy.

You, O God, are my fortress, the God Who shows me mercy.

Rescue me from my enemies, O God, and liberate me from those who rise up against me.

You, O God, are my fortress, the God Who shows me mercy.

Old Testament Readings

First Reading

Genesis 1:1-13

The reading from Genesis.

Deacon Wisdom! Let us be attentive.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day.

Troparion and Verses

Troparion

Tone Plagal 2

You were born secretly in the cave, but heaven spoke through a star, and proclaimed You to all, O Savior. And it brought the Magi, who worshipped You in faith: have mercy on them and on us.

First Verse

His foundations are in the holy mountains; the Lord loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. (Psalm 86:1-2)

And it brought the Magi, who worshipped You in faith: have mercy on them and on us.

Second Verse

Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God; I will make mention of Raáb and Babylon to those who know Me. (Psalm 86:3-4)

And it brought the Magi, who worshipped You in faith: have mercy on them and on us.

Third Verse

And behold, the foreigners and Tyre and the people of the Ethiopians. (Psalm 86:4)

And it brought the Magi, who worshipped You in faith: have mercy on them and on us.

Fourth Verse

These were born there. A man shall say: Mother Sion; and: That man was born in her; and: The Most-High Himself has founded her. (Psalm 86:4-5)

And it brought the Magi, who worshipped You in faith: have mercy on them and on us.

Fifth Verse

The Lord shall tent in the writings of the peoples and princes, even those who were born in her. How joyous are all they who have their habitation in You. (Psalm 86:6-7)

And it brought the Magi, who worshipped You in faith: have mercy on them and on us.

Troparion

Tone Plagal 2

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

You were born secretly in the cave, but heaven spoke through a star, and proclaimed You to all, O Savior. And it brought the Magi, who worshipped You in faith: have mercy on them and on us.

Seventh Reading

Isaiah 9:6-7

The reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Deacon Wisdom! Let us be attentive.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even to the ages. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Troparion and Verses

Troparion

Tone Plagal 2

You have shone forth from a Virgin, O Christ, You spiritual Sun of righteousness; and star showed You, Whom nothing can contain, contained within a cave. You have led Magi to worship You, and joining them we magnify You: O Giver of life, glory to You.

First Verse

The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and He has girded Himself. (Psalm 92:1)

You have led Magi to worship You, and joining them we magnify You: O Giver of life, glory to You.

Second Verse

For He established the world which shall not be shaken. Your throne is prepared of old. (Psalm 92:1-2)

You have led Magi to worship You, and joining them we magnify You: O Giver of life, glory to You.

Third Verse

The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voices; the rivers will lift up their waves, at the voices of many waters. (Psalm 92:3-4)

You have led Magi to worship You, and joining them we magnify You: O Giver of life, glory to You.

Fourth Verse

Wonderful are the surgings of the sea, wonderful on high is the Lord; Your testimonies are made very sure. (Psalm 92:4-5)

You have led Magi to worship You, and joining them we magnify You: O Giver of life, glory to You.

Fifth Verse

Holiness becomes Your house, O Lord, unto length of days. (Psalm 92:5)

You have led Magi to worship You, and joining them we magnify You: O Giver of life, glory to You.

Troparion

Tone Plagal 2

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

You have shone forth from a Virgin, O Christ, You spiritual Sun of righteousness; and star showed You, Whom nothing can contain, contained within a cave. You have led Magi to worship You, and joining them we magnify You: O Giver of life, glory to You.

Eighth Reading

Isaiah 7:10-16; 8:1-4, 9-10

The reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Deacon Wisdom! Let us be attentive.

Moreover the Lord spoke again to Áhaz, saying, "Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above." But Áhaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!" Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel. Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings. Moreover the Lord said to me, "Take a large scroll, and write on it with a man's pen concerning Máher-Shalál-Hash-Baz. And I will take for Myself faithful witnesses to record, Uríah the priest and Zecharíah the son of Jeberechíah." Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said to me, "Call his name Máher-Shalál-Hash-Baz; for before the child shall have knowledge to cry "My father" and "My mother," the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria." God is with us. "Be shattered, O you peoples, and be broken in pieces! Give ear, all you from far countries. Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; speak the word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.

Thrice-Holy Hymn

Deacon Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Priest For You are holy, our God, and to You we send up glory, to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages.

Amen. **H**oly God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, Now and ever, and to the ages of ages.
Amen.

Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Deacon Dynamis.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Epistle

Hebrews 1:1-14; 2:1-3

The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear?

Deacon Let us be attentive.

The Lord is the Defender of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Deacon Wisdom.

The reading is from the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews

Deacon Let us be attentive.

BRETHREN, God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You”? And again: “I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son”? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.” But to the Son He says: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” And: “You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.”

Priest Peace be with you, the reader.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 2:1-20

Deacon Wisdom. Rise. Let us hear the holy Gospel.

Priest Peace be with all.

And with your spirit.

Deacon The reading of the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Priest Let us be attentive.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Deacon And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

If a Deacon read the Gospel, the First Priest:

Priest Peace be with you, herald of the Gospel.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

The Homily

The homily is delivered by the Priest or Hierarch. And then the rest of the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil