

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF SAINT ELIZABETH THE NEW-MARTYR

Volume XXI

Number 17

23 December 2019 / 5 January 2020
SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST:
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY FATHERS

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES THIS WEEK

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY (Tone 4)

Sunday of the Fathers

Saturday, 4 January 22 December, o.s.)

6:00 PM Vigil Service;
Confessions

Sunday, 5 January (23 December, o.s.)

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy;
Trapeza (coffee hour)
12:30 PM Parish Council Meeting

EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Monday, 6 January 23 December, o.s.)

9:00 AM Royal Hours of the Nativity
10:30 AM Vespers of St Basil

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Monday, 6 January 23 December, o.s.)

6:00 PM Vigil Service;
Confessions

Tuesday, 7 January (25 December, o.s.)

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY (Tone 5)

Prophet-King David, St Joseph, Apostle James

Saturday, 11 January 29 December, o.s.)

6:00 PM Vigil Service;
Confessions

Sunday, 12 January (30 December, o.s.)

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy;
Trapeza (coffee hour)
12:00 PM Parish Christmas Party at Morrow's

FASTING DAYS Week of 5 January

Day of Week	Date	Commemoration and Type of Fast
Sunday	5 January (23 Dec, o.s.)	Ten Martyrs of Crete
		Fast: wine & oil permitted
Monday	6 January (24 Dec, o.s.)	Eve of Nativity; Martyr Eugenia
		Strict Fast: wine & oil permitted

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Week of 5 January

Su	Sunday before the Nativity: the Holy Fathers	
	Vespers Paramia: (1) Genesis 14:14-20 • (2) Deuteronomy 1:8-11, 15-17 • (3) Deuteronomy 10:14-21	
	Heb. §328 (11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40)	Mt §1 (1:1-25)
30TH WEEK after PENTECOST		
M	Eve of the Nativity of the Lord: Royal Hours	
	1st Hour: Micah 5:2-4 • Heb. §303 (1:1-12) • Mt §2 (1:18-25)	
	3rd Hour: Baruch 3:35-4:4 • Gal. §208 (3:23-29) • Luke §5 (2:1-20)	
	6th Hour: Isaiah 7:10-16a; 8:1-4, 8b-10 • Heb. §304 (1:10=2:3) • Mt §3 (2:1-12)	
	9th Hour: Isaiah 9:6-7 • Heb. §306 (2:11-18) • Mt §4 (2:13-23)	
M	Eve of the Nativity of the Lord: Vespers Liturgy	
	Vespers Paramia: (1) Genesis 1:1-13 • (2) Numbers 24:2-3, 5-9, 17-18 • (3) Micah 4:6-7; 5:2-4 • (4) Isaiah 11:1-10 • (5) Baruch 3:35-4:4 • (6) Daniel 2:31-36, 44-45 • (7) Isaiah 9:6-7 • (8) Isaiah 7:10-16a; 8:1-4, 8b-10	
	Heb. §303 (1:1-12)	Luke §5 (2:1-20)
Tu	NATIVITY OF THE LORD	
	Matins Gospel: Mt §2 (1:18-25)	
	Gal. §209 (4:4-7)	Mt §3 (2:1-12)
W	Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos	
	Heb. §306 (2:11-18)	Mt §4 (2:13-23)
Th	Heb. §326 (10:35-11:7)	Mark §52 (11:27-33)
F	Heb. §327 (11:8, 11-16)	Mark §53 (12:1-12)
Sa	Saturday after the Nativity of the Lord	
	1 Tim. §288 (6:11b-16)	Mt §46a (12:15-21)
Su	Sunday after the Nativity of the Lord	
	Gal. §200 (1:11-19)	Mt §4 (2:13-23)

THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A special collection for the Haiti Mission of ROCOR will be taken at St Elizabeth's during the Sundays of January. As you know, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and our Haitian Orthodox brethren are too poor to fully support the needs of their young church. They need the help of those of us who have more than enough. Please give generously.

The Parish Council will meet today (the First Sunday of this month) rather than the second Sunday, so as to conflict with our annual Parish Christmas Party.

During the last five days of the Nativity Fast, from the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ (2 January, n.s.) through the Eve of the Feast (6 January, n.s.), the Fast becomes a bit stricter. Weekday fasting rules are the same as during the rest of the Nativity Fast, but Fish is no longer permitted on Saturdays and Sundays, only wine and oil.

The Parish needs donations for flowers for the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord. Please mark flower donations clearly. You may include a Commemoration List with your donation and the names will be commemorated at the Proskomedie on the Holy Days.

We will have a full schedule of services at St Elizabeth's for the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord. On the morning of the Eve of the Nativity (6 January, n.s.), the Royal Hours of the Nativity will be served at 9:00. Immediately following the Vespertine Liturgy of St Basil the Great at about 10:30. The Vigil Service (Great Compline, Matins, and First Hour) will be served on the evening of 6 January at 6 o'clock. On the morning of the Feast (7 January, n.s.), the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom will be served at 9:30, preceded by the Hours at 9:10.

Father can provide written excuses for absence or lateness for students attending Liturgy for a Great Feast. Just let him know you need it in advance.

There will be no trapeza / coffee hour on Christmas Day (7 January, n.s.) at St Elizabeth's. Please plan accordingly. (We apologize for the misprint in the January Parish Calendar.)

for seven days, from the Feast Day itself through the *Apodosis* (Leave-taking) of the Feast on 13 January (n.s.). The festal period of this Feast is just short of the usual eight days, because the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord is celebrated on the eighth day after Christmas. The troparion and kontakion of the Nativity are chanted or read at all the services of the Church on each of the seven days. To celebrate the Feast at home, the troparion of the Feast (*'Thy nativity, O Christ our God ...'*) can be sung instead of the 'Our Father' before meals, while the kontakion of the Feast (*'Today the Virgin ...'*) can be sung instead of the usual thanksgiving troparion after each meal. It would also be most appropriate to sing the troparion and kontakion of the Feast at the end of our morning and evening prayers at home.

There is no fasting, nor prostrations or kneeling in prayer, from 7 January through 17 January (n.s.), even on Wednesdays and Fridays. This is because we joyfully celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord not just for one day, but throughout this period.

CONCERNING CONFESSION

Because of the great number of communicants at our parish, especially during the Lenten Seasons, the number of parishioners needing to go to Confession at St Elizabeth's Church is usually quite high. Having only one priest, who must serve in the altar as well as hear all the Confessions, presents practical difficulties in applying the usual rule of the Russian Church insisting on Confession before every Communion. The only workable solution seems to be applying the exceptional practice of Holy Week to the rest of the year. For those who desire it, or for those whom a Spiritual Father recommends or requires it, Confession before every Communion will certainly be provided. But for those who are able to lead a disciplined spiritual life, abstaining from serious sin, and fulfilling the other preparations for Holy Communion, a more relaxed rule is in order. Confession before the Liturgy of one weekend will suffice for all the Liturgies for the next two weeks, so that regular communicants will only have to go to Confession every other weekend. There may also be some cases when a Spiritual Father has allowed, in certain individual cases, for an even more relaxed rule on Confession before Holy Communion, so it is important for us to abstain from judging others regarding the frequency of their Confessions before Holy Communion.

If you have not gone to Confession and received Holy Communion during the course of the Nativity Fast, it is important to make the spiritual effort to participate in the Mysteries of Confession and Holy Communion during this Lenten season. The best time to go to Confession is during or following the Vigil Service on Saturday evenings and the Eve of Feasts. It is also always possible to make your Confession to a priest outside the time of the Divine Services by prior appointment. Going to Confession on a Sunday or Feast Day morning is difficult for the priest, who is very busy serving the Proskomedie, and inconsiderate of fellow parishioners, as it often delays the beginning of the Liturgy. Nevertheless there is usually time for three or four short Confessions during the Third and Sixth Hours prior to Liturgy. Those with good reason to come to Confession in the morning rather than the evening before should arrange in advance with Father to come before Liturgy begins, but they need to remember that the Confession should be as concise as possible.

Those who have been to Confession in the previous two weeks may receive Holy Communion at the Liturgies on Christmas Eve (6 January, n.s.) and Christmas Day (7 January, n.s.), provided that no serious sin has been committed which would require another Confession and that the other usual preparations for Holy Communion are observed (i.e. attendance of the Vigil Service the evening before Holy Communion, reading the Pre-Communion Prayers, and the forgiveness of others). Likewise, those who have been to Confession for the Feast of the Nativity may continue to receive Holy Communion through the Feast of Theophany under the same conditions.

