Sunday, December 27, 2020
Saturday Vespers, 7:00 pm
Sunday Matins, 8:30 am • Sunday Divine Liturgy, 9:30 am
St. Stephen the First-Martyr • The Holy Innocents of Bethlehem

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VARIABLE HYMNS

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 4): Having learned the joyful message of the resurrection from the angel, the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the disciples, saying: “Death hath been spoiled! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!”

Troparion of the Nativity (Tone 4): Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shown to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

Troparion for the Sunday after the Nativity (Tone 2): Proclaim, O Joseph, to David, the grandparent of God, the amazing wonders; for thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; for with the shepherds thou didst give glory, with the Magi thou didst worship, and by the angel it was revealed to thee. Wherefore, plead thou with Christ God to save our souls.

Troparion for St. Stephen (Tone 4): The crown of the Kingdom hath adorned the brow of thy head because of the contests that thou hast endured for Christ God, thou first of the martyred saints! For when thou hadst censured the Jews’ madness, thou saw Christ thy Savior standing at the right hand of the Father. O Stephen, ever pray Him for us, that He would save our souls.

Kontakion for the Nativity (Tone 3): On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in Essence. To the Unapproachable One, the earth doth offer a small cave. Angels join in choir with shepherds in giving glory; and with a star the Magi travel upon their journey. For our sakes is born a young Child, He who existed before the ages as God!

Troparion of All Saints (Tone 4): Adorned in the blood of Thy martyrs, throughout all the world as in purple and fine linen, Thy Church through them doth cry unto Thee, O Christ God: Send down Thy compassion upon Thy people; grant peace to Thy habitation and great mercy to our souls.
THE EPISTLE

For St. Stephen

His voice has gone out into all the earth. The heavens declare the glory of God.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (6:8-7:5, 47-60)

In those days, Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men, who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us.” And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

The high priest said, “Is this so?” And Stephen said: “Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, ‘Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.’ Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot’s length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, though he had no child. But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says, ‘Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool. What house will you build for me’, says the Lord, ‘or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?’

“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they grinded their teeth against him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.” But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.
When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him.” And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt have I called My Son.”

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region, who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more.”

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.” And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”
Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and services at All Saints, see our website www.allsaintsorthodox.org

This week at All Saints:

- **Sunday**: Fr. Pat’s Zoom Bible class, 1pm.
- Fr. Andrew will be available most of the week for church visits, sacraments, or pastoral visitations. Please call, email, or text to set up an appointment.
- **Wednesday, Dec. 30**: Morning Prayers, 9am. Christmas carol sing-a-long, 7pm. *(See note below)*
- **Thursday, Dec. 31 and Friday, Jan. 1**: Morning Prayers, 9am.
- **Saturday, January 2**: Vespers, 7pm. No Saturday Liturgy this week, but Holy Communion will be available after Vespers for those who desire to partake.

**A NOTE OF THANKS FROM FR. ANDREW AND KH. PATTY**

Many thanks for all of your cards, gifts, and Christmas greetings! We deeply appreciate your generosity and look forward to many more Christmases with you here at All Saints. God’s blessings to one and all!

**CHRISTMAS CAROLING SING-A-LONG**

*From Paul S.*: Come celebrate Christ's birth with a night of Christmas caroling this Wednesday, December 30, at 7pm. We will all sing Christmas carols together (we might even be joined by a few instrumentalists!) followed by a few light refreshments.

**ADVENT FOOD DRIVE**

Many thanks to all who donated food or funds to our annual Advent food drive, and especially to Sandy Abraham for organizing it. We collected 351 pounds of food (last year was 406), and raised $850.66 (up from last year’s $699.96). Let us always continue to remember the poor in the name of our Lord Jesus, who became poor for our sakes.

**MAKE ALL SAINTS CHURCH A BENEFICIARY ON AMAZON**

Here’s how to add All Saints as a beneficiary of the Amazon Smile program:

1. Go to https://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-3936145. Select All Saints Orthodox Church.
3. Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases at no cost to you
## Volunteer Schedule

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When the time came for the Incarnation of the Son of God and His Birth of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Magi in the East beheld a new star in the heavens, foretelling the Nativity of the King of the Jews. They journeyed immediately to Jerusalem to worship the Child, and the star showed them the way. Having worshipped the divine Infant, they did not return to Jerusalem to Herod, as he had ordered them, but being warned by God in a dream, they went back to their country by another way. Herod finally realized that his scheme to find the Child would not be successful, and he ordered that all the male children two years old and younger at Bethlehem and its surroundings be killed. He thought that the divine Infant, whom he considered a rival, would be among the dead children.

The murdered infants thus became the first martyrs for Christ. The rage of Herod fell also on Simeon the God-Receiver (February 3), who declared before everyone in the Temple that the Messiah had been born. When the holy Elder died, Herod would not give permission for him to be properly buried. On the orders of King Herod, the holy prophet and priest Zachariah was also killed. He was murdered in Jerusalem between the Temple and the altar (Mt. 23:35) because he would not tell the whereabouts of his son John, the future Baptist of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The wrath of God soon fell upon Herod himself: a horrid condition struck him down and he died, eaten by worms while still alive. Before his death, the impious king murdered the chief priests and scribes of the Jews, and also his brother, and his sister and her husband, and also his own wife Mariam, and three of his sons, and seventy men of wisdom who were members of the Sanhedrin. He initiated this bloodbath so that the day of his death would not be one of rejoicing, but one of mourning.

The Christian Church very rightly proclaimed these murdered children as saints, because they died at an innocent age, and were, in some way, the first martyrs of Christianity. They may not have been baptized in water, but they were baptized in the blessed blood of their martyrdom.

Last but not least, the relics (or perhaps some) of the Holy Infants are found in Constantinople, in the Church of Saint James the Brother of the Lord, which was built by Emperor Justin. Most of their Holy Relics are at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Portions of their Holy Relics are also to be found in the Pantokrator Monastery on Mount Athos.

~ Entry for December 29, www.oca.org
Daily Bible Readings
December 27-January 2
Adapted from the
St. James Daily Devotional Guide

Sunday, Dec. 27: St. Stephen the First-Martyr
Psalms 139, 141, 142 / Isaiah 62
Acts 6:8-7:5, 47-60 / John 21:24-25

Monday, Dec. 28: 20,000 Martyrs burned in Nicomedia
Psalms 140, 143 / Isaiah 63
Revelation 20:11-21:8 / Matthew 2:1-18

Tuesday, Dec. 29: The Holy Innocents of Bethlehem
Psalms 144, 145 / Isaiah 64
Revelation 21:9-27 / Matthew 2:19-23

Wednesday, Dec. 30: Anysia the Virgin-martyr of Thessaloniki
Psalms 146, 147 / Isaiah 65

Thursday, Dec. 31: Melania the Younger, Nun of Rome
Psalms 148, 149, 150 / Isaiah 66
Revelation 22:12-21 / Matthew 25:31-46

Friday, Jan. 1: Circumcision of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Psalms 1, 2, 3, 4 / Genesis 1

Saturday, Jan. 2: Seraphim the Wonder-worker of Sarov
Psalms 5, 6, 7 / Genesis 2
Hebrews 3:1-11 / Matthew 3:1-12

All Saints is a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
The Most Reverend Metropolitan Joseph
The Right Reverend Bishop Anthony, Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest
www.antiochian.org