



## —CHRISTMAS BULLETIN—

*December 21, 2025-January 3, 2026*

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*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!  
Christós Razhdáyetsya! Slavíte Yehó!  
Christós gennátai! Doxásate!  
Chrístos se ródi! Váistinu se ródi!*

**–Christmas Sponsors–**

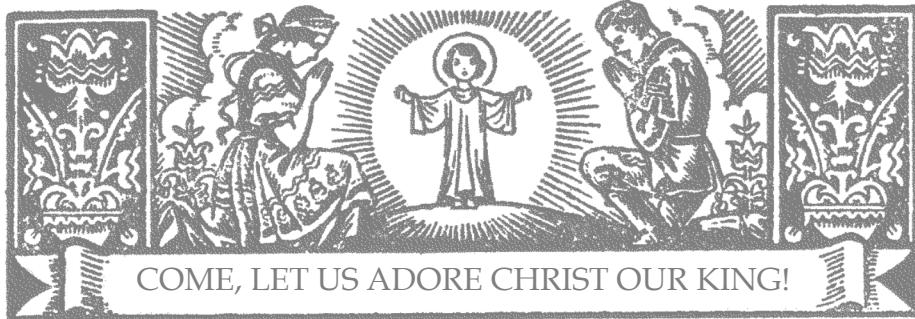
**CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS**  
*Donated Through the Generosity of ALL Parishioners*

**CHRISTMAS ALTAR FLOWERS**  
*In Blessed Memory of our parents  
Proto. Michael & Pani Eleanor Polanichka  
by Valerie, Justine, Michael and their families*

***Thank You for Your Financial Stewardship!***

*The generous support of our parishioners and friends allows us to effectively continue our ministry here at Saint John's. **We are grateful for your contributions throughout 2025.***

*At the time of publication, we have received **37 pledges for 2026, totaling \$57,119.** Thank you for your support! If you haven't filled out and returned your 2026 Pledge Card, please do so as soon as possible. God bless you!*



### ***—A Word of Thanks for the Christmas Season—***

As we celebrate Our Lord's Nativity and the festive season which follows, we take this opportunity to thank **YOU** for what you have done and continue to do within our parish, both during Christmastime and throughout 2025.

We thank you for...

Your presence in worship

and your voice raised in song to praise the Lord...

Your kindness towards one another

and your welcoming attitude to guests and newcomers...

Your gifts of time and talent...

Your 2025 Stewardship contributions and other donations...

Your hard work indoors and outdoors,

whether in the church, the office, the hall, the kitchen, and the cemetery...

Your baking and cooking...

Your cleaning of our facility and grounds...

Your odd-jobs that go unnoticed by most of us...

Your service on our Church Board, on committees, and in other capacities...

Your chairing of events and fundraisers...

Your volunteering at our fundraisers and events...

Your gifts of adornments for this holiday...

**May Our Lord, born in a manger for our salvation, bless and keep you  
at Christmas and in 2026 and grant you many, blessed years!**



## — SCHEDULE OF SERVICES & EVENTS —

SUN	<b>12/21/2025</b>	<b>SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST – HOLY FATHERS</b>
	9:00 AM	Divine Liturgy <i>Panachida: +Protopresbyter Michael Polanichka (4th Anniversary of Repose)</i>
WED	<b>12/24/2025</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b> <b>STRICT FAST DAY – NO MEAT OR DAIRY</b> 7:00 PM Vigil Service for the Nativity of Christ
THURS	<b>12/25/2025</b>	<b>THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST – CHRISTMAS DAY</b> 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy <i>Fellowship to Follow</i>
FRI	<b>12/26/2025</b>	<b>2ND DAY OF THE NATIVITY</b> <b>COMMEMORATION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD</b> 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
SAT	<b>12/27/2025</b>	<b>3RD DAY OF THE NATIVITY</b> <b>ST. STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR</b> 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy
*SUN	<b>12/28/2025</b>	<b>SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST</b> 9:00 AM <i>Panachida: +Eleanor Cooper</i>

*Perpetual Commemorations for the Week of December 28-January 3:  
REPASKY, Mary Jane  
LATCHERAN, Michael, Julia, Charles, Anna, John*

<b>TUES</b>	<b>12/31/2025</b>	
	4:00 PM	Vespers for the Holyday
<b>WED</b>	<b>1/1/2026</b>	
	9:30 AM	<b>CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD SAINT BASIL THE GREAT</b> Divine Liturgy of St. Basil <i>With Prayers for the New Year &amp; Weekly Perpetual Commemorations Sharing of St. Basil's Bread (Vasilopita)</i>
<b>SUN</b>	<b>1/4/2026</b>	
	9:00 AM	<b>SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY</b> Divine Liturgy
		<i>Perpetual Commemorations for the Week of January 4-10, 2026: WALKO, John Sr., Mary, John Jr., Ann, Patricia, George, Joseph, Ruth SEKERAK, John</i>

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## STEWARDSHIP

*From Dan Hromyak*

"When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home." - Matthew 1:24

Putting our complete trust in the Lord without expecting anything in return. Striving to put God first in all things and follow Him wherever He may lead us. Joseph was the model of these pillars of our faith. As we prepare for the birth of our Lord, pray for the strength and courage to be a model of discipleship, just as Joseph was.

"And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." - Colossians 3:17

Giving thanks to God and using our words and actions to give all glory to God is the foundation of living a stewardship lifestyle. We were made in God's image and likeness, gratitude and generosity is in our DNA. As beloved sons and daughters of God, we are all part of God's family. Using our gifts to help others is our gift back to God and helps grow the Body of Christ here on earth and establishes a pathway to Heaven for each of us.

## — ANNOUNCEMENTS —

### ■ Seasonal Christian Greeting

The greeting used in church for the period from the Nativity until Theophany is “Christ is born!” with the response “Glorify Him!”

### ■ Feasting and Fasting

The “12 Days of Christmas” are days of celebration! There is no fasting from Christmas Day through January 4th (*even on Wednesdays and Fridays*). January 5th—the eve of Theophany—is a strict fast day when no meat or dairy is eaten.

### ■ Services on December 31 & January 1

The “Eighth Day of Christmas” commemorates the Circumcision of Christ, and the holyday of St. Basil the Great. Vespers on Wednesday, December 31 will be at 4:00 PM, with prayers of thanksgiving for the past year. Divine Liturgy on Thursday, January 1 will start half an hour later, at 9:30 AM (to give those up at midnight a little extra sleep!). It will be followed by the blessing and cutting of a *Vasilopita*—St. Basil’s Bread—to celebrate the New Year.

### ■ Theophany Services on January 5 & 6

*Theophany*—the Baptism of Christ—is the third most important feast on the Church’s calendar. It is the “twelfth day” of celebrating after the Nativity. Please note the special schedule of services and events both on the eve and on the day of the feast:

#### Monday, January 5, 2026

5:30 PM: Compline Service and Great Blessing of Water (~6:00 PM)

~6:30 PM: Pot-Luck “Holy Supper”

*Please bring a STRICT FAST (no meat or dairy) item to share!*

#### Tuesday, January 6, 2026

9:00 AM: Divine Liturgy

### ■ House Blessings Begin January 6, 2026

Starting on the holyday of Theophany, Fr. David will be available to bless homes with the newly-sanctified water. As usual, house blessings will be *by request only*. An online form is available on our website [stjohnacroc.org](http://stjohnacroc.org). Fr. David will communicate with you directly to set up a day and time—he will not simply show up. *This is a wonderful tradition and a great way to begin the year with faith in Christ!*

### ■ 2026 Traveling Icon Sign-Up Now Available

Each week, we ask one household in our parish to take this special icon home and offer daily prayers for our parish and community. Stop by the Information Table in the Hall to add your name to the list!

### ■ 2026 Sponsorships

The Sponsorship Book has been updated for 2026! The following sponsorship possibilities are available:

Bulletin Sponsor: \$15.00

Eternal Lamp: \$10.00

COMING SOON! St. John (Right Side) Candelabrum: \$5.00

COMING SOON! St. Nicholas (Left Side) Candelabrum: \$5.00

Altar Flowers (*Except Lent, Easter Sunday, Advent, and Christmas*): \$60.00

### ■ Some Important Dates in the Next Few Months...

Tuesday, January 6: Theophany — Baptism of Christ

Sunday, January 25: Installation of Officers and Annual Parish Meeting

Monday, February 23: First Day of the Great Fast — Lent

Friday, March 6: March Pirohi Sale

Friday, April 3: April Pirohi Sale

Sunday, April 5: Palm Sunday

Sunday, April 12: PASCHA (Easter) — Resurrection of Christ

## *In Memoriam*

***“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” (John 11:25)***

***+Eleanor Cooper*** passed away on November 21, 2025. As a parish community, we extend our condolences to all her family and friends. May Eleanor's memory be eternal!

***Blessed Repose — Eternal Memory!***

## ***Services for the Nativity: Christmas Eve & Christmas Day***

### **Wednesday, December 24, 2025: Christmas Eve Vigil Service at 7:00 PM**

“Vigil” means to keep watch, and we keep watch like the shepherds as we begin the celebration of Christmas. This service includes many hymns and prayers celebrating the birth of Our Savior. We hear the Gospel of the Nativity announced. We will also sing a selection of familiar carols after the service.

### **Thursday, December 25, 2025: Christmas Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM**

Did you know that Bethlehem is Hebrew for “House of Bread”? We celebrate the Nativity of Christ “the Bread of Life” by offering the Holy Eucharist. As they say, *“If you want to keep ‘Christ’ in CHRISTmas, then keep the ‘Mass’ in ChristMAS!”* Can you imagine someone celebrating YOUR birthday without you? Presents and cookies can wait—don’t ignore the invitation to the house of the King of Kings on His birthday!

***Christmas doesn't end on December 25th—that is just beginning!***

*There will be Liturgy on Friday, December 26 and Saturday, December 27 at 9:00 AM. We also continue the celebration through January 1st (the Circumcision of Christ) and January 6th (the Baptism of Christ).*

## ***Christmas Day Refreshments & Fellowship***

*As is our parish custom, we will have an opportunity for festive celebration in the hall after our Christmas Divine Liturgy. Please plan to stay for a few moments and share the joy of the Nativity with your brothers and sisters in Christ! (For some of our parishioners, this is the only time they have to celebrate with others on Christmas.)*

***You are invited to bring some savory “finger foods” or sweets to share for Christmas Day Fellowship!***

## ***Prepare for the Nativity at Home with Prayer...***

*Prayer accompanies everything in our life as Christians. Below are hymns taken from the services of our church which you can include in your daily prayers in these final days leading up to Christmas. If you have children at home, say these together before bed. If you have a Nativity Scene or icon of the Nativity at home, say them there!*

Today, the virgin comes to the cave \* to give birth in an ineffable manner to the Eternal Word. \* O universe, having heard this news, rejoice; \* and together with the angels and shepherds glorify Him, \* Who though He be the Eternal God,\* has willed to appear as a newborn Babe.

What shall we give to You, O Christ, \* Who for our sake did appear on earth as a man? \* Every creature You created offers You thanksgiving: \* the angels sing praises; \* the heavens – the star; the Magi – gifts; \* the wilderness – a manger; \* and we – a virgin mother. \* Therefore, O Eternal God, have mercy on us!

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## **Read the Scriptures Related to the Nativity**

*Fill your heart and home with God's Word as we prepare to celebrate the Nativity. These are some suggested passages to inspire us during this holy season:*

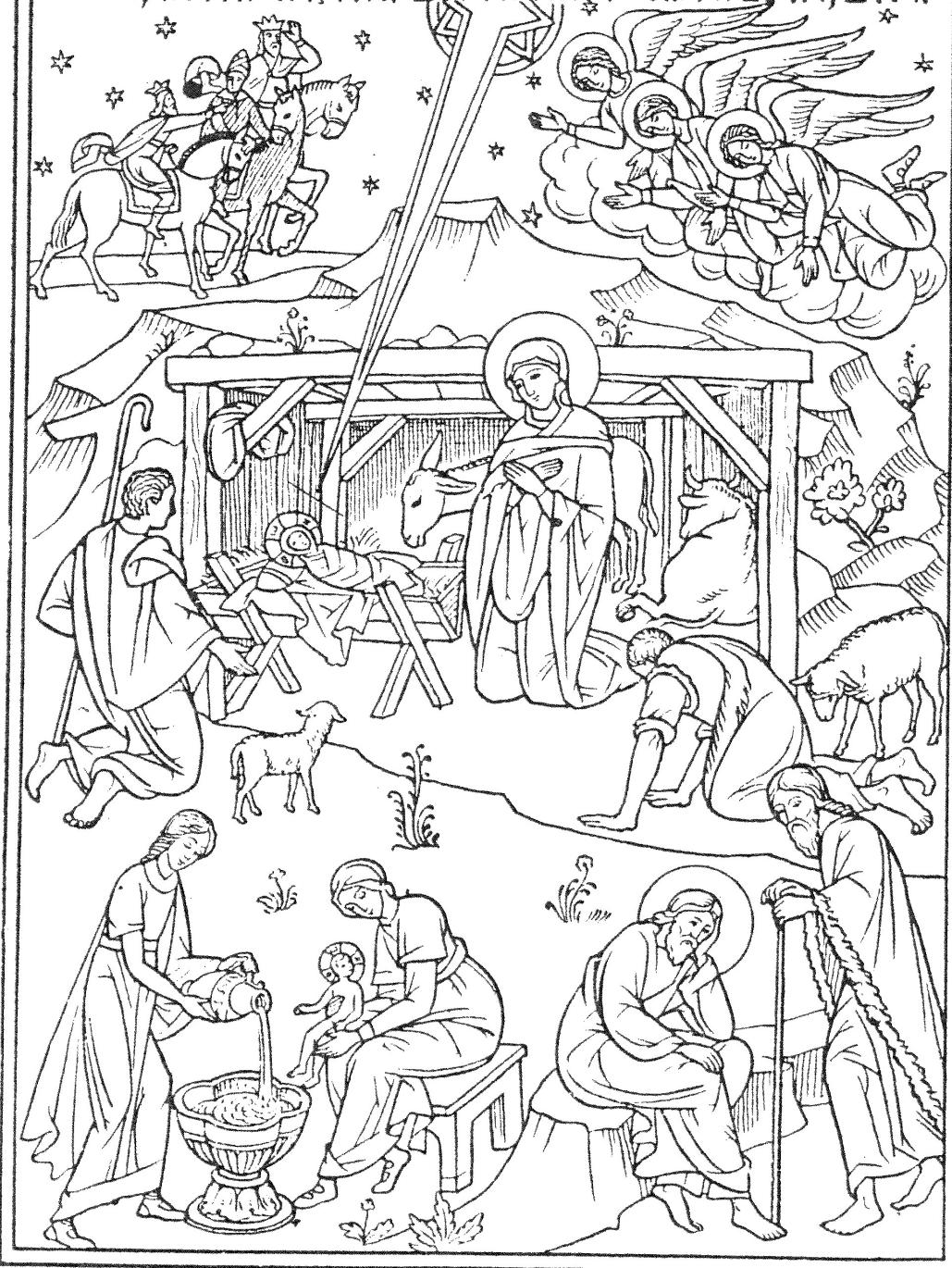
### **Old Testament**

Micah 5:2-5  
Isaiah 9:2-7  
Isaiah 11:1-10

### **New Testament**

Matthew 1:18-25  
Matthew 2:1-12  
Luke 2:1-20  
Hebrews 1:1-12  
Hebrews 2:11-18

»SLAVĂ INTRU CEI DE SUS LUI DUMNEZEU ȘI PE PĂMINT  
PĂCE, ÎNTRE OAMENI BUNĂVOIRE!« SF. EV. LUCA, II.14.



**KID'S CRAFT:** Color this icon of the *Nativity of Christ!*

# SAINT JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

3180 Morefield Road  
Hermitage, PA 16148

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E-mail: [father.david@stjohnacroc.org](mailto:father.david@stjohnacroc.org)  
Website: [www.stjohnacroc.org](http://www.stjohnacroc.org)*

*Rev. Father David Mastroberte, Pastor*

*A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese – Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*

## Sacramental and Membership Information

**Sick Calls** can be made at any time. Please phone the rectory (724-346-4457) when a family member is admitted to the hospital, or to request a home visit to receive Confession and Communion. Hospitals do *not* call to alert the parish when someone is admitted.

**Marriages** are solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays. Circumstances may require a dispensation from the diocesan bishop. Consult the pastor at least six months in advance and before any plans have been made for the wedding reception. Marriages cannot be celebrated during the fasting seasons of the church, or on Fridays.

**Baptisms** are usually scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays, but other days are possible as well. Consult the pastor. Two godparents (godfather and godmother) are required, at least one of whom must be a practicing Orthodox Christian in good standing at an Orthodox parish, and the other (at least) a practicing, baptized Christian.

**Church Funerals** are, under ordinary circumstances, provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual and material obligations to the parish; otherwise, the funeral service is conducted at the funeral home. **The Church does not permit cremation.**

**Parishioners in “good standing”** are those Orthodox Christians who, as members of Saint John’s Orthodox Church, strive to live according to the teachings of the Orthodox Church; participate in the life of the parish through regular church attendance, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (and receive these sacraments no less than once a year); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and financially support the parish (especially through an annual “pledge”).

**Prospective members and returning members** are asked to fill out an application form, copies of which are available in the church office.

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**Our Church’s Website:**

[stjohnacroc.org](http://stjohnacroc.org)

**Our YouTube Live Stream:**

[youtube.com/user/saintjohnsharon](https://youtube.com/user/saintjohnsharon)

**Our Facebook Page:**

[facebook.com/SaintJohnHermitagePA](https://facebook.com/SaintJohnHermitagePA)

**Our Diocesan Website:**

[acrod.org](http://acrod.org)

For Online Giving Options, please visit our website: [stjohnacroc.org](http://stjohnacroc.org)

### ***Coffee Hour***

*Our thanks to Sue VanZanten  
for sponsoring Coffee Hour  
on Sunday, December 21, 2025!*

### ■ Our Sponsors ■

December 21, 2025

#### *Eternal Lamp*

*In Memory of +Joseph & +Mary Chupak  
by Jerry, Patti & Ryan Chupak*



December 28, 2025

#### *Eternal Lamp*

*In Memory of +Stephen Yonchak Jr.  
by Gary & Kathy Yonchak*

### ***Pray for Our Seminarians***

*Fr. Peter Sodini, Deacon Maximus  
Cannaverde, Fr. Alexander Hurtsellers,  
Bradley Shaffer, Nicholas Cizin,  
John Bonnewicz-Coffey, John Fedor-  
nock III, Spyridon Clay Raburn and  
Ignatius Leonardo*

### ***Schedule of Men to Hold Candles During the Gospel***

#### **December 21**

John Lenhart  
Ken Maceyko  
Emil Maurer  
Randy Martin  
Paul McMahon

#### **December 28**

Robert Miller  
John Moon  
Gus Redick  
Dan Ristvey  
Joel Ristvey

#### **January 4**

Matt Ristvey  
Tom Ristvey  
Thomas Ristvey  
Steve Saluga  
Milan Shumkaroff