

Saint Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church Shrewsbury Massachusetts

Biserica Ortodoxă Română Sfântul Nicolae Shrewsbury Massachusetts

34 Gold Street, Shrewsbury, MA, 01545

Parish Priest Vasile Aileni

www.stnicholaschurch.org || tell (508) 320 0645

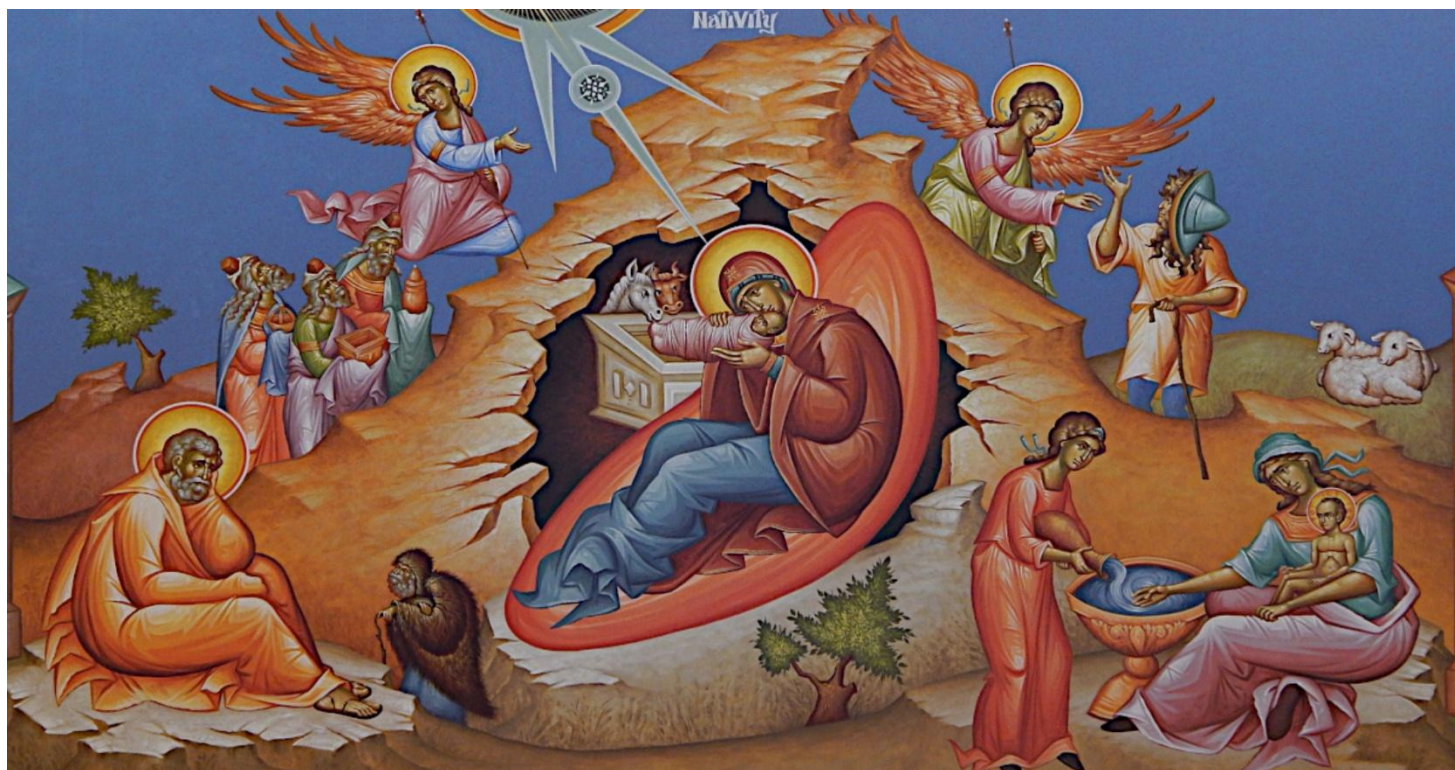


WEEKLY BULLETIN
Sunday December 24, 2025



The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

***“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” (Luke 2:10-11).***



***Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year!***

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On behalf ST. NICHOLAS community I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and a blessed Epiphany. Celebrating the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ is bringing us great joy and happiness. Christ came into the world to bring us hope and reconciliation with God the Father. Enjoy this blessed time with the loved ones and do not forget the poor and the lonely. God bless you all!

***Christmas, New Year and Epiphany
LITURGICAL SCHEDULE***

Wednesday, December 24 - Vespers 5:00 pm;

Thursday, December 25 - Matins 9:00 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am

(†) The Nativity of Our Lord - Christmas Pageant - Santa brings presents to our children.

Friday, December 26 - Matins 9:00 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am

(†) Synaxis Holy Theotokos

Saturday, Dec 27 - Matins 9:00 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am

(†) First Martyr Stephen

Sunday, December 28 - Matins 9:00 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am

The Sunday after the Nativity - The Prophet-King David; Joseph the Betrothed; James the Lord's Brother; Flight Into Egypt

Wednesday, December 31, 2025

Potluck 7 pm, Te-Deum 11:30 pm

Thursday, Jan 1 - Matins 9:00 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am

Circumcision of our Lord - Feast of St. Basil the Great

Sunday, Jan 4 - Matins 9:00 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am

The Sunday before Theophany of Christ

Tuesday, Jan 6 - Matins 9:00 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am

(†) The Theophany of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ

Great Blessing of Water at end of Liturgy

Wednesday, Jan 6 - Matins 9:00 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am

(†) Synaxis of John the Holy Glorious Prophet, Baptist, & Forerunner

WEEKLY NEWS

CHRISTMAS THE ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP APPEAL is underway. Our church relies upon the offering of time, talents and treasure from each of us. We ask that you prayerfully consider an offering of time, talents and treasure to sustain our beloved church for the glory of God. Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed Holiday Season. Please see the Stewardship Form below!

HOUSE BLESSINGS - The blessing of homes at Theophany will begin on January 5, 2026, and continue until all homes are blessed. As in the past, we will be setting times when we will be coming to bless your home. If there is a specific time that is more convenient for you, please call Fr. Vasile to arrange it 508.320.0645 or fr.vasileaileni@gmail.com

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to MATTHEW 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'" Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE FEAST OF THE LORD'S NATIVITY 2025

† NICOLAE

by the mercies of God

*Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America and
Metropolitan of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas*

*To our beloved Clergy and Orthodox Christians,
grace, peace and joy from Christ the Lord, and from us a hierarchical blessing.*

*“Christ is born! Glorify Him! Christ is come from heaven! Go and meet Him! Christ is
on earth! Arise to Him! Sing to the Lord, all you inhabitants of earth, and all you peoples, praise
Him, and with merriment extol Him who is glorified!”
(The Katavasias of the Lord's Nativity)*

Very Reverend Fathers, Beloved Faithful,

Together with all humankind and the heavenly hosts, we again bring praise to God this year, for He has blessed us to celebrate together the Lord's Nativity, the feast of hope and of joy, the feast of the family and of monastics, the feast of the descent of God to earth. This descent is a source of unspeakable joy, for *God is with us*.

St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite tells us that this song from the Katavasias of the Lord's Nativity, the author of which is St. Cosmas the Melodist, is taken from the great celebrant and panegyrist of feasts, St. Gregory the Theologian. Just as those without bread must seek bread from the one who sells it, so those who wish to celebrate the feasts of Christ must seek words of praise from their celebrator, in other words from Gregory the great theologizer.¹

So then what does St. Gregory the Theologian reveal to us? First he says: “Christ is born” and “Christ on earth” and interprets that Christ refers to the God-Man because the God-Man was born of the Virgin and because the God-Man appeared on earth. But when he says “Christ from heaven,” then Christ refers only to God, not also to man, because the Lord did not descend from heaven clothed in human nature, as the Apollinarians erroneously teach. For only with His divinity He descended and thus took on human nature from the pure blood of the ever-Virgin Mary, which He united with His hypostasis, becoming perfectly man.

“**T**hen he says that *Christ is born today*. Therefore you angels, who bring praise to God at the Lord's Nativity with the words *Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to men* are now bringing doxology to God. You who live an angelic life in a human and material body, praise Him as well. And you, righteous ones, greet Him imitating the Righteous Simeon who met the Lord when He was brought to the temple.”² Through these words St. Nicodemus thus exhorts angels and men to penetrate into the mystery of the descent of God to earth, the mystery of the **humility of God**, who “*being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*”³

¹ Sfântul Nicodim Aghioritul, *Eortodromion sau tâlcuire la Canoanele Sărbătorilor împărătești*, Editura Sfântul Nectarie, 2024, vol. 1, p. 132.

² Ibidem.

³ Filipeni 2, 6-7.

Christ is born “for us and for our salvation,” the Son of God becomes incarnate that He might make humans *sons of God*, in the language of the Holy Fathers. *Christ is born* in the soul of each of us, granting us that which is of the highest price on earth, **faith and hope in the power of His redemption**. Endeavoring to receive this revelation, it is right that we bring glory to God.

St. Nicodemus continues the explanation of the Katavasia—*Christ is on earth, arise to Him*: you men of earth, rise from earthly things pondering the heavenly things and arising with the wings of action and of contemplation, because for this God descended to earth, that those on earth might rise to the heavens. For the union of God with men could not otherwise have taken place, had not God descended for a short time from His exaltation and had not man been raised above his humility.”⁴ Here St. Nicodemus quotes St. Maximus the Confessor: “the soul could never reach for the knowledge of God unless God would touch him, lowering Himself, and raise him toward Himself. **For the human mind cannot traverse the long distance to arrive at the perception of any divine illumination, if God Himself does not draw it... and illumine it with the divine rays.**”⁵ Through these words these two holy fathers reveal to us “the mystery hidden from eternity,” the plan of God for the salvation of man: only the Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, according to Whose image man was created, could bring back man, estranged from God and with the image darkened through sin, to the **filial closeness** to God and to **the illumination of his image**. This is why at the Lord’s Nativity the whole earth should sing, and the peoples should joyously praise Him, “for He is glorified.”

St. Nicodemus concludes his commentary on the first Katavasia of the Lord’s Nativity with a challenge addressed to all Christians: “neither must you, brother, cease to praise Christ who is born, and not only with words but **much more with deeds**. When He descends from heaven, go out and meet Him, contemplating Him. Raise yourself up from the earth and from earthly things out of love for the One Who descended for you to earth. Sing to Him a new song, as David urges you. But sing many and numberless songs, without wearying of singing. For if you will sing thus, the Lord, the One to whom you sing, will remember you and will have mercy on you, as Isaiah teaches us: Sing many songs, that you may be remembered (Isaiah 23:16 LXX)!”⁶

My challenge at this glorious feast is ***that we sing to the Lord with our deeds***. In this past year the world has not changed. There are the same rumors of crises, turmoils, and war. The Christian must put his entire hope in the care and help of God. He must desire to partake of the illumination of the Son of God who is born in the manger of Bethlehem. And to share that light to all those close to him as well as to strangers, and especially to those found in the darkness of the absence of the knowledge of God! In this year dedicated to the *Centennial of the Romanian Patriarchate* and to the *Romanian Spiritual Fathers and Confessors of the 20th Century*, when the Romanian Orthodox Church has been adorned with 20 new saints (16 canonized by the Romanian Patriarchate and 4 by the Ecumenical Patriarchate), we should follow their example and learn from their lives how to be light for others. Some of them were theologians, others spiritual fathers known by the people; many of them witnessed in prison, some at the price of their lives, their **faith in Christ the Savior Who brings light, peace, and joy**.

⁴ Sfântul Nicodim Aghioritul, op. cit, p. 134.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 135.

I pray that Christ the Lord will strengthen us and illumine us, that He will bless every priest and believer, every parish and monastery of our Archdiocese. I give you a brotherly embrace in Christ the Lord and I wish you to enjoy the holy feasts of Christmas, the New Year, and Theophany with health, peace, and spiritual joys!

Your brother in prayer unto God,
† Metropolitan NICOLAE

Chicago, the Feast of the Lord's Nativity, 2025

HOLY TRINITY WEEKLY NEWS
December 29, 2025

From all the residents and staff at Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehab we hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and we wish you all the best in the New Year! Thank you for your continued support.

