



FROM THE AMBIVON

ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

512 WINTER ST., OLD FORGE, PA

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December 22nd, 2024 26th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 1. Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ. Sunday before the Nativity. Great Martyr Anastasia, “Deliverer from Poisons”, and her teacher, Martyr Chrysogonos, and with them Martyrs Theodota, Evodias, Eutychianus, and others, who suffered under Diocletian (ca. 304).

Birthdays & Anniversaries for December

Birthdays:

Nameday: Barbara Sevensky (12/4); Daniel Jones (12/17);

Baptism:

Anniversary:

Travelers:

Prospora Schedule: PLEASE HELP! We need families to start baking prospora at home. Please sign up. *The Church has a prospora kit if you would like to borrow it!* Thank you all for your offering “for the people by the people”.

Dec 22nd

Dec 29th

Counting: HELP! Please sign up to help us count weekly donations! We need help counting today.

Dec 22nd

Dec 29th

Visitors: PLEASE JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS for an Agape Meal. Thank you to everyone who donated! Please donate what you would spend for lunch at the agape meal to replenish our supplies.

PLEASE SING ALONG! Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies throughout the services is encouraged!

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive themselves by prayer, fasting, and a recent (monthly) confession. If you have questions please ask Fr Michael! Visitors, if you did not introduce yourself to Fr Michael at Vespers, please refrain from Holy Communion.*



Service Schedule

NATIVITY SCHEDULE

TUES, Dec 24th: @ 9:00 AM Nativity Royal Hours @ 5:00 PM Compline and Matins w/Litya

WED, Dec 25th: Divine Liturgy @ 9:00 AM - Nativity of Christ

TUES, Dec 26th: Divine Liturgy @ 9:30 AM - Second Day of Christmas Synaxis of the Theotokos **All Saints, Olyphant**

SAT, Dec 28th @ 5:00 PM Great Vespers

SUN, Dec 29th: Hours @ 9:10 AM Hours, 27th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 2. Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord. Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ. Sunday after Nativity.

TUES, Dec 31st @ 5:00 PM Compline and Matins w/Litya

WED, Jan 1s: Divine Liturgy @ 9:00 AM - The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia



Treasury

“... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. Jesus Christ

How Much is my tithe

Weekly	2%	4%	5%	10%
\$200	\$4	\$8	\$10	\$20
\$500	\$10	\$20	\$25	\$50
\$750	\$15	\$30	\$37	\$75
\$1000	\$20	\$40	\$50	\$100
\$1500	\$30	\$60	\$75	\$150

WEEKLY GIVING UPDATE: We thank you for your continued giving in gratitude for all that our loving God does for each of us, for His Holy Church, and all the blessings we receive through her.

Dec Donations: \$16,120.42

Dec Expense: \$5,409.91

Average Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$3,740.85

Average Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$14,963.58

Parish Prayer List

NEWLY DEPARTED: *Archpriest Michael Evans* (11/14); *Morgan Shepherd* (12/16)

DEPARTED: *Michael Toczko* (12/1); *Peter Mizgala* (12/2); *Helen Sorok* (12/9); *Dorothy Polanchik* (12/11); *Walter Buranich* (12/19); *Robert Sorok* (12/23);

Please remember in your prayers LIVING:

Ill-afflicted *Archpriest(s) John Nightingale*, & *Theodore Orzolek*

All those caring for the sick and suffering at this time throughout the world, especially our families and friends: *Christine Sevensky, Margaret Pregmon, Daniel*

Jones, Michael Sokol; Michael Krenitsky; Bernie Elko; Nadia Macheska; The child of God Abigail. Judith

Servants of God: *Mark Bezhuly, David Barsigian, Patricia Jones, Anne Buday, Emily Krenitsky, Gregory Krenitsky, Barbara Sevensky, Beverly Elko, Sandra Condon, Marie Pasternak, Nicole Earl, Anna Tyrpak, Sandy & Danny Pregmon, Walter Pritchuk, Michael & Euphemia Keklak, Justin & Elisabeth Kane, Maria & Vitaliy Rakovsky, Ekaterina & Anna, Joe & Kelly Cigna, George, Natasha, Rosa, & Lucia Coyoy, Mat. Emilia, Reader Blaise, Maximus, Rodion, Savina Shepherd, Joseph, Emilia, Judah, Nadezda, & Silas Hart, Eli & Paula Stavisky, Helen Wytovich, Tammy Wytovich,*

Paulette Ezbiansky, Jason Vo & Maura Elko, Mary Krevko, Elisabeth & Jacob Hallford

Seekers: Eugene, Gabriel, & Mike,

Catechumens: Paul Dunay, George McCandless, Christopher & Neva Yeisley



Announcements - Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events

Silent Prayers and Confession: Every Wednesday 11:00AM - 1:30PM or before/after Vespers. Or you can make an appt for confession.

Monthly Panikhida: Dec 28th, 4PM prior to Vespers.

Catechumen Classes: Every Sunday after Liturgy. All are welcome to sit in the classes. Today's class will be on vespers.

Church Work Day: Every Day is Church Maintenance day! A lot of cleaning can be done! If you have a day you would like to work in the church or even just a couple of hours please get with Fr Michael for what can be done. Sweeping, vacuuming, polishing. Monday the flowers arrive. Please get with Tammy to help decorate.

Parish Council Meeting to next Saturday: Jan 11th, 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM - All are invited. January we are preparing for the Annual Parish Meeting February 9th and the Diocesan Meeting 23rd & 24th of January (Vitaliy Rakovsky-Delegate) any motions to change the Parish By-laws must be submitted to Parish Council for discussion by mid January in order for His Eminence to bless off on the change prior to the Annual meeting. Reminder, in order to submit changes or to be a voting member, a parishioner will submit a signed "Statement of Intent" along with donation of Time, Talent, and Treasure along with frequent Communion and Confession. T3C2.

St. Michael's Greeters Ministry please sign up! Thank you Maura!

ChurchTrac Registration Please register and/or sign in to ChurchTrac and update your information. I am in the process of putting a church directory and this program will allow us to do so very easily. Please add your photo so when we use this directory for proskomide there will be a picture alongside your name.

<https://stmichaeloldforgepa.churchtrac.com/sign-in>

Angel Tree: Thank you to everyone who volunteered and took a tag! We will be delivering the gifts today after liturgy.

HOUSE BLESSING: During the days following the Feast of the Theophany (January 6th), it is customary for the Priest to visit the homes of his parishioners, bringing with him the "Jordan Water" for the traditional Theophany House Blessing. The First Great Sanctification of Water is performed at the end of the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Theophany (January 5th). While that water may be given to the faithful to drink on that day and throughout the coming year, traditionally it is only the water from the Second Great Sanctification, which is performed on the day of the Feast of Theophany (January 6th), that is called "Jordan Water" and used for the Theophany House Blessing. Please schedule with Fr Michael to have your house blessed.

The Great Entrance: With the Great Entrance, Christ enters the Holy Altar to offer Himself for us.

In singing the Cherubic Hymn, we are asked to lay "aside all earthly care that we may receive the King of all" (Matt 24:44). We are asked to leave this temporary world so that we may make the "great entrance" with Christ into His Kingdom. For this reason, during the Cherubic Hymn, the priest and the people pray for each with: "You and all Orthodox Christians, may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom, always now and ever and unto ages of ages."

And the people respond with "And to thy Holy Priesthood, may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom always now and ever unto ages of ages." This dialogue is expressing a prayer that God will acknowledge and reward the both

the priest and the people for their service in God's vineyard towards the kingdom of heaven, Essentially saying that God will remember them favorably in heaven due to their dedication.

The Holy Gifts are placed at the Altar and covered with a cloth. This represents the covering of Christ's body by Joseph of Arimathea after he took Christ's body down from the cross.

Now that Christ has made the "Great Entrance" into Jerusalem, we "complete our prayer" to Him. In a set of prayers, we are asked to focus completely on essential matters of our life. The simple response is:

"Grant this O Lord".

The priest offers peace to all of us. Peace is the provider of all good things and opens the door to love. Only with love and peace can we honestly confess "Father, Son and Holy Spirit".



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

Today's Readings

Epistle: (328) Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

Gospel: (1) Matthew 1:1-25

EPISTLE

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: Peace be unto all!

Reader: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 4th Tone, the Song of the Fathers: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

Choir: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

Reader: For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us!

Choir: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

Reader: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers

Choir: And praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews.

Deacon: Let us attend!

[(328) Hebrews 11:9-11,17-23,32-40] Brethren: By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. * For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. * By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful Who had promised. * By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, * of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall thy descendants be named." * He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead; hence, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. * By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. * By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. * By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones. * By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful; and they were not afraid of the king's edict. * And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets -- * who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, * quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. * Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. * Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. * They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted,

ill-treated -- * of whom the world was not worthy -- wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.. * And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, * since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Priest: Peace be unto thee, Reader.

Reader: And to thy spirit.

ALLELUIA

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: In the 4th Tone: AL-LE-LU-IA!

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: We have heard with our ears, O God, for our fathers have told us.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: For Thou hast saved us from them that oppose us, and hast put to shame them that hate us.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

GOSPEL

[(1) Matthew 1:1-25] The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. * Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, * and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, * and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, * and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, * and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, * and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, * and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, * and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, * and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, * and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. * And after the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, * and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, * and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, * and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, * and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, Who is called Christ. * So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. * Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; * and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. * But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; * she shall bear a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." * All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: * "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). * When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, * but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His name Jesus.

HEBREWS 11:32–40 TIME WOULD FAIL ME; THEY ACCOMPLISHED ALL BY FAITH. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM: "And what shall I more say? For time would fail me to tell." After this Paul no longer puts down the names, but, having ended with a harlot and put them to shame by the quality of the person, he no longer enlarges on the histories, lest he should be thought tedious. However, he does not set them aside but runs over them, doing both very judiciously, avoiding satiety without spoiling the closeness of the argument. He was neither altogether silent, nor did he speak so as to annoy, for he effected both points. For when a person is contending vehemently

in argument, if he persists in contending, he wears out the hearer, annoying him when he is already persuaded and gaining the reputation of vain ambitiousness. For he ought to accommodate himself to what is expedient. “And what more do I say?” he says. “For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets.”

Some find fault with Paul because he puts Barak, Samson and Jephthah in these places. What do you say? After having introduced the harlot, shall he not introduce these? For do not tell me of the rest of their life but only whether they did not believe and shine in faith. “And the prophets,” he says, “who through faith conquered kingdoms.” Do you see that he does not here testify to their life as being illustrious, for this was not the point in question; the inquiry thus far was about their faith. For tell me whether they did not accomplish all by faith?

“By faith,” he says, “they conquered kingdoms”—those with Gideon. “Enforced justice.” Who? The same. Plainly, he here means kindness. I think it is of David that he says “they received promises.” But of what sort were these? Those in which the Lord said that his “sons shall sit upon” his “throne.” “Stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword.” See how they were in death itself, Daniel encompassed by the lions, the three children abiding in the furnace, the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, in diverse temptations; and yet not even so did they despair. For this is faith. When things are turning out adversely, then we ought to believe that nothing adverse is done but all things in due order. “Escaped the edge of the sword.” I think that he is again speaking of the three children.

“Won strength out of weakness.” Here he alludes to what took place at their return from Babylon. For “out of weakness” is out of captivity. When the condition of the Jews had now become desperate, when they were no better than dead bones, who could have expected that they would return from Babylon, and not return only but also “become mighty” and “put foreign armies to flight”? “But to us,” someone says, “no such thing has happened.” But these are figures of “the things to come.” “Women received their dead by resurrection.” He here speaks of what occurred in regard to the prophets Elisha and Elijah, for they raised the dead. ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS 27.4. Heen, E. M., & Krey, P. D. W., eds. (2005). *Hebrews* (pp. 203–204). InterVarsity Press.

MATTHEW 1:18 HOW THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST CAME ABOUT THE SIMPLE MYSTERY OF THE CONCEPTION. St John CHRYSOSTOM: Do not speculate beyond the text. Do not require of it something more than what it simply says. Do not ask, “But precisely how was it that the Spirit accomplished this in a virgin?” For even when nature is at work, it is impossible to fully explain the manner of the formation of the person. How then, when the Spirit is accomplishing miracles, shall we be able to express their precise causes? Lest you should weary the writer or disturb him by continually probing beyond what he says, he has indicated who it was that produced the miracle. He then withdraws from further comment. “I know nothing more,” he in effect says, “but that what was done was the work of the Holy Spirit.”

Shame on those who attempt to pry into the miracle of generation from on high! For this birth can by no means be explained, yet it has witnesses beyond number and has been proclaimed from ancient times as a real birth handled with human hands. What kind of extreme madness afflicts those who busy themselves by curiously prying into the unutterable generation? For neither Gabriel nor Matthew was able to say anything more, but only that the generation was from the Spirit. But how from the Spirit? In what manner? Neither Gabriel nor Matthew has explained, nor is it possible. Do not imagine that you have untangled the mystery merely by hearing that this is the work of the Spirit. For we remain ignorant of many things, even while learning of them. So how could the infinite One reside in a womb? How could he that contains all be carried as yet unborn by a woman? How could the Virgin bear and continue to be a virgin? Explain to me how the Spirit designed the temple of his body. THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY 4.3. Simonetti, M., ed. (2001). *Matthew 1–13* (pp. 12–13). InterVarsity Press.

Donations in Memory of

In Memory Of: Harold & Rose Krenitsky
From: Gregory and Emily Krenitsky

In Memory Of: Ken Jerski, Hubiak, Arden, & Pregmon
Families
From: Danny & Sandy Pregmon

Christmas Flowers Donations

In Memory Of: Harold & Rose Krenitsky
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In Memory Of: Harold & Rose Krenitsky
From: Gregory and Emily Krenitsky

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In Memory Of: Helen, Walter, & Rose Buranich
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Christmas Vigil Lights

In Memory Of: Steve & Julia Hubiak, Harrison Hubiak
Peter Hubiak, John Hubiak, Michael and Nancy
Buday, Helen & Millie Krenitsky
From: Ann Buday

The Winter Pascha, Chapter 20: The Two Comings of Christ

*The following is an excerpt from **The Winter Pascha**, by Fr. Thomas Hopko*

During the Christmas prefeast season, the connection between the first coming of God's Son as the Suffering Servant, the Lamb of God who takes upon Himself the sins of the World, and His second coming as the triumphant King and Judge of the universe is not overtly stressed in any of the church services. But it is clearly implied in virtually all of the songs, hymns and lections. The Old Testament prophecies read at the hours, vespers and matins on the day before the Nativity quite specifically proclaim the messianic age which Jesus is born to bring, but which He will manifest in power only at the end of history. And several verses which are sung during the season directly refer to the interrelationship between the Master's two comings.

Christ our Judge commands us to be vigilant. / We wait expectantly for His visitation, / For He comes to be born of a Virgin. / At Your awesome second coming, O Christ, / Number me with the sheep at Your right hand, / For You took up / Your abode in the flesh to save us. / At Your first coming to us, O Christ, / You desired to save the race of Adam; / When You come again to judge us, / Show mercy on those who honor Your Holy Nativity.1

The Christmas prefeast hymns, especially the canons, consciously refer to the hymns of the services of Holy Week before the springtime Pascha. In many of them, Easter paschal themes are replaced by Winter paschal themes, with just a few words being changed in each verse. Thus, what is effected at these services is a sort of "triple connection." Christ's

Nativity, with His Epiphany in the Jordan, is referred to His Passion and Resurrection, which is then referred to His Coming at the end of the ages. In making the triple connection, the entire Mystery of Christ is placed before the believers for their contemplation and communion.

Christians live between the two comings of Christ. They remember His first coming to be sacrificed. They anticipate His second coming to reign. This is vividly portrayed in traditional Orthodox church buildings where the "royal gates" of the icon screen in front of the altar table are flanked by the icons of the Theotokos and Child on the one side, and the Lord Jesus in glory on the other. To the uninitiated it may seem as though these are simply pictures of Mary and Jesus put on the same level. This is not so. The icons which frame the Orthodox altar are images of the two comings of Christ. Mary is not alone in her icon; she is holding the Christ Child, who is not shown as a baby, but as the Son of God incarnate "in the form of a slave... in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:7). This is the icon of Christ's first coming. And the icon on the right of the doors is not a picture of Jesus as He was on the earth. It is His image in glory as King and Lord, the icon of His second coming. The two comings of Christ are held together in Christian thought, action, and prayer at all times. They cannot be separated. When they are, it is the end of Christian faith, life and worship. The first coming without the second is a meaningless tragedy. The second coming without the first is an absurd impossibility. Jesus is born to bring God's kingdom. He dies to prove His kingship. He rises to establish his reign. He comes again in glory to share it with His people. In the kingdom of God there are no subjects. All rule with the risen Messiah. He came, and is coming, for this purpose alone.

Royal hours

Canonical hours are a type of special, fairly brief divine offices that mark certain times of day, at which a certain important event of the Savior's earthly life occurred. There are four hours in the worship practice of the Orthodox Church, namely, the Ninth Hour, the First Hour, the Third Hour, and the Sixth Hour. The principal topic of the Ninth Hour is the death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on the Cross. The First Hour reminds of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, as well as the trial of the God-man at the Caiaphas' court and His Passion. The Third Hour is devoted to the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, while the Sixth Hour reminds of the Lord's Crucifixion. The names of the hours can be traced back to Jewish customs. The ancient Jews divided the day into four parts, hence the hours' names. The tradition of fixed prayers at regular intervals dates back to the Old Testament but it acquired a new meaning in Christianity.

The Ninth Hour is at 3 p.m., the First Hour is at 7 a.m., the Third Hour is at 9 a.m., and the Sixth Hour is at 12 p.m. Currently, the Hours are appended to longer services out of convenience. The Ninth Hour is appended to the Vespers, the First Hour is appended to the end of the Matins, and the Third and Sixth Hours are served before the Liturgy.

However, the worship practice of the Church includes Great Hours—alternatively referred to as Royal Hours—too. They are served on the greatest Orthodox holidays, three times a year: on Holy Friday, Christmas Eve, and Theophany Eve. They are called Great because they are served in an especially solemn manner. A priest wears a phelonion. The Royal Door is open. The beginning of each hour is marked by censuring, with the entire church censured at the first and the final hour, with a lit candle, like during the polielei. There are paroemias (Greek, 'proverbs' — special readings from the Old Testament) read at every hour, followed by the Epistle and the Gospel readings.

The Scripture readings are selected to match the holiday. Apart from that, Psalms, prokeimenons, troparions and kontakions—in fact, almost all prayers of the Great Hours—are dedicated to the celebrated event (the Nativity of Christ, the Baptism of the Lord, or the Passion of Christ). This service is called Royal because Byzantine emperors had a habit of attending them due to their grandeur. It underlined not only spiritual and liturgical importance of these services but also their public value. Heortologically (Greek root heortē means 'feast', thus, heortology is a branch of theology, which studies religious holidays), Christmas Eve and Epiphany Eve are twin holidays. Their liturgical structures are similar. It can be attributed to the fact that the Nativity of Christ and the Baptism of the Lord were celebrated as one holiday, called the Holy Theophany, in the past. Christmas was first celebrated as a separate holiday only in the 4th century.