

*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,  
 a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

*Fr. Nikolay Khalimonov. Priest-in-Charge, 323-851-7898  
 Fr. Alexy Karlgut, Dean/Administrator, 607-759-1833*

*Please join us for prayer and fellowship.*

**Upcoming Services:**  
**Saturday, December 24, 31**  
**Great Vespers: 5pm**

**Sunday, Dec 25, Jan 1**  
**Divine Liturgy: 10am**

**Coffee and fellowship will  
 follow the service**

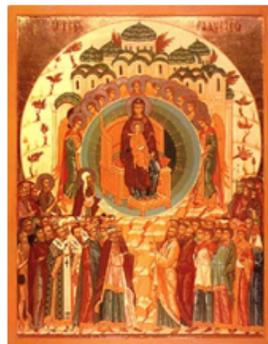
*The above services are at St.  
 Olympia Church  
 34 North Main Street  
 Norwood, NY, 13668*

*Mailing Address  
 St.Olympia Orthodox Church  
 PO Box 122 Canton, NY13617*

**Christ is Born! Glorify Him!**  
**December 25**

**Troparion**

Your Nativity, O Christ our God,  
 has shone to the world the Light of wisdom!  
 For by it, those who worshipped the stars,  
 were taught by a Star to adore You,  
 the Sun of Righteousness,  
 and to know You, the Orient from on High.  
 O Lord, glory to You!



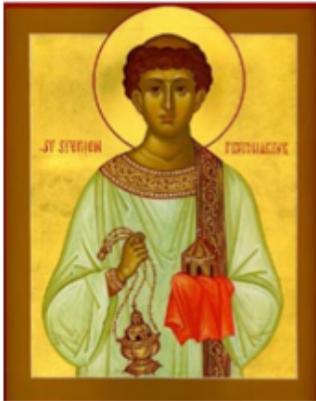
**Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos  
 December 26**

*He Who was begotten before the morning star  
 by the Father without a mother is incarnate of  
 you today on earth without a father. Therefore,  
 a star announces the glad tidings to the Magi,  
 while Angels and shepherds sing of your  
 undefiled child-bearing,  
 O you who are full of grace.*

*Kontakion*

*All days bear the imprint of thy goodness, but today thy goodness brims over. The other days of the year borrow their loveliness from this one; the coming festivals owe to it all their dignity and luster. Thy incarnation, Lord, is a treasure great enough to repay the common debt.*

**St Ephraim the Syrian**



**Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen  
December 27**

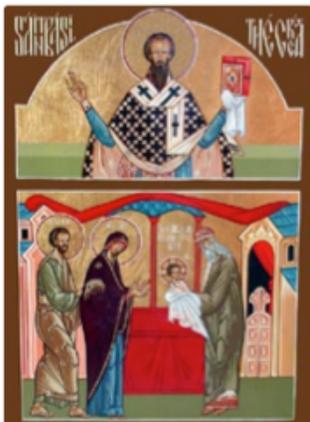
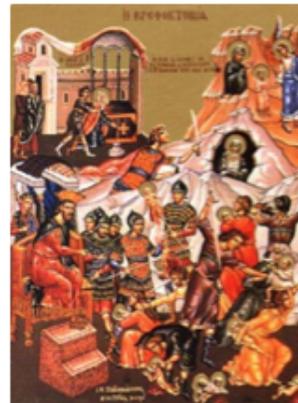
*Your head is crowned with a royal diadem, because of the struggles you endured for Christ God, O first of the Martyrs to suffer; for when you rebuked the fury<sup>1</sup> of the Jews, you saw your Savior at the Father's right hand. Always pray to Him for our souls.*

Troparion

**The Holy Innocents  
December 29**

*As acceptable victims and freshly plucked flowers, as divine first-fruits and newborn lambs, you were offered to Christ who was born as a child, holy innocents. You mocked Herod's wickedness; now we beseech you: "Unceasingly pray for our souls."*

Troparion



**The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ  
January 1**

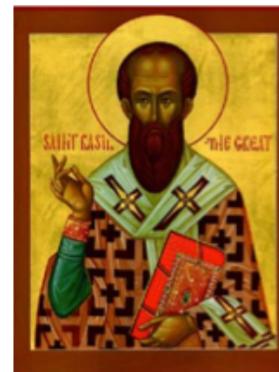
*Enthroned on high with the Eternal Father and Your divine Spirit, O Jesus, You willed to be born on earth of the unwedded handmaid, your Mother. Therefore You were circumcised as an eight-day old Child. Glory to Your most gracious counsel; glory to Your dispensation; glory to Your condescension, O only Lover of mankind.*

Troparion

**Saint Basil the Great,  
Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia  
January 1**

*Your proclamation has gone out into all the earth which was divinely taught by hearing your voice expounding the nature of creatures, ennobling the manners of men. O holy father of a royal priesthood, entreat Christ God that our souls may be saved.*

Troparion



## **The Holy Innocents slain by Herod at Bethlehem December 29**

Fourteen thousand Holy Infants were killed by King Herod in Bethlehem. 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.

## **The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ January 1**

On the eighth day after His Nativity, our Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised in accordance with the Old Testament Law. All male infants underwent circumcision as a sign of God's Covenant with the holy Forefather Abraham and his descendants [Genesis 17:10-14, Leviticus 12:3].

After this ritual, the Divine Infant was given the name Jesus, as the Archangel Gabriel declared on the day of the Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos [Luke 1:31-33, 2:21]. The Fathers of the Church explain that the Lord, the Creator of the Law, underwent circumcision in order to give people an example of how faithfully the divine ordinances ought to be fulfilled. The Lord was circumcised so that later no one would doubt that He had truly assumed human flesh, and that His Incarnation was not merely an illusion, as certain heretics had taught.

In the New Testament, the ritual of circumcision gave way to the Mystery of Baptism, which it prefigured [Colossians 2:11-12]. Accounts of the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord continue in the Eastern Church right up through the fourth century. The Canon of the Feast was written by Saint Stephen of the Saint Savva Monastery.

In addition to circumcision, which the Lord accepted as a sign of God's Covenant with mankind, He also received the Name Jesus (Savior) on the eighth day after His Nativity as an indication of His service, the work of the salvation of the world [Matthew 1:21; Mark 9:38-39, 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6, 16; Philippians 2:9-10]. These two events -- the Lord's Circumcision and Naming -- remind Christians that they have entered into a New Covenant with God and "are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" [Colossians 2:11]. The very name "Christian" is a sign of mankind's entrance into a New Covenant with God.

### **Colossians 2:8-12 (Epistle for the Circumcision of our Lord)**

***Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.***

***For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;***

***and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.***

***In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,***

***buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.***

## UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

### Presbyters' Council Meeting

Thursday, December 29 at 11:00 AM  
Diocesan Chancery, Bronxville NY

**THE LATEST ISSUE OF KOINONIA IS NOW AVAILABLE – 12/16/22**

### Have you heard of CrossRoad?

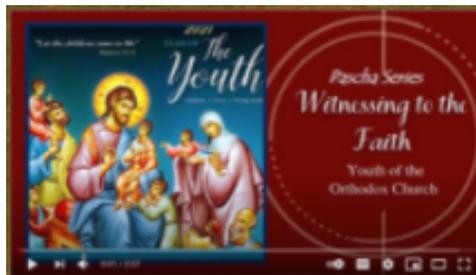
CrossRoad is a ten-day academic summer institute that prepares rising high school seniors and graduating seniors (current 11th and 12th graders) to make big life decisions and invites them to connect with the Orthodox Christian theological and spiritual tradition in a deep and meaningful way.

Please visit [www.CrossRoadInstitute.org](http://www.CrossRoadInstitute.org) to learn about their amazing summer sessions in Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco. The priority deadline for applying is January 18, 2023, so please spend a moment to learn more.

### Youth Witness to the Faith Series

**(Presented By Assembly Of Canonical Orthodox Bishops Of The USA)**

Includes an Introduction and Four Episodes on Pascha.



### WEEKDAY VESPERS AT THE HERMITAGE OF ST OLYMPIA

Weekdays at 4 PM

For information please contact Mother Sophronia at [mothersophronia@gmail.com](mailto:mothersophronia@gmail.com)  
or via Facebook: Nun Sophronia Hofstead



### Kontakion of the Nativity of Christ

*Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One,  
and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One!  
Angels with shepherds glorify Him!  
The wise men journey with a star!  
Since for our sake  
the Eternal God was born as a Little Child!*