

GENERAL SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Feast-Day Liturgy at 9:00am

Sunday Liturgy at 10:00am

Vespers Service on Saturdays: 5:00pm

Vespers Service on the eve of a Feast-Day: 5:00pm



Schedule of Upcoming Church Services

MONDAY - Jan. 6 *CHRISTMAS EVE DAY*

Divine Liturgy at 9:00 a.m.

MONDAY - Jan. 6 Vespers Service with the Blessing of the Yule Log at 6:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE - MATINS at 10:30 p.m.

TUESDAY – Jan. 7 - *CHRISTMAS*

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

WEDNESDAY – Jan. 8 - *Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God*

Divine Liturgy at 9:00 a.m.

Vespers at 5:00 pm (Blessing of the Slava Breads)

THURSDAY – Jan. 9 - *St. Stephen, Holy Apostle and Archdeacon*

Divine Liturgy at 9:00 a.m.

(Blessing of the Slava Breads)

SATURDAY - Jan. 11

Vespers at 5:00 pm

SUNDAY, Jan. 12

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

ST. GEORGE THE GREAT MARTYR SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

*905 E. Joliet Street*Schererville, IN 46375*

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January 5, 2025

Sunday before Nativity

Epistle Reading: Heb. 11:9-10; 17-23; 32-40

Gospel Reading: Matt. 1:1-25

Liturgical Message

On this day, the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ in the Holy Orthodox Church, our holy and God-bearing Fathers have enjoined us to commemorate all those who have been well-pleasing to God from the beginning of time, from Adam even to Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as Luke the Evangelist has recounted historically; and likewise for the Prophets and Prophetesses, especially Daniel the Prophet and the three holy youths.

It is also known as the Sunday of the Holy Genealogy. We remember the names above, those in the Old Testament who were related to Christ by blood, and those who spoke of His Birth as a man. In the Divine Liturgy, we shall read of Jesus Christ’s lineage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew. In this way, the Church shows us that Christ became a man, taking on human nature. He was not a ghost, an apparition, a myth, a distant imagined god, or the abstract god of philosophers; such a god does not have a family tree. Our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

He has flesh and blood, human ancestors—many of whom sinned greatly but, like David, also repented greatly. Yet, all of these righteous ones in every age had been well-pleasing to God because they loved Him. By taking on human nature, the Son of God became like us in all ways: flesh and blood, mind and soul, heart and will. He differed from us in only one way: He could not sin. Since we know that Christ’s human nature remained sinless, He is also fully divine, and He shows us how we can avoid sin and so improve and transform our human nature.

By their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy upon us and save us.

The Celebration of the Fathers' Day

On the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, the Church reminds us of the celebration of Fathers' Day. Today, we pray for our fathers and honor their vital role in the family and community. Fathers are called to be examples of love, sacrifice, and faith, just as our Heavenly Father is the perfect example of love and mercy. In the Holy Scriptures, we read: *"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him."* (Psalm 103:13) This verse reminds us that a father reflects God's love and mercy in the home and the father's responsibility to raise their children in the spirit of faith and goodness.

The priestly role of the father in the family is immeasurably important. Saint Paul offers advice to fathers in his letter to the Ephesians: *"And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."* (Ephesians 6:4)

This call reminds fathers to lead their families with love, patience, and wisdom, serving as spiritual guides.

Celebrating Fathers is an opportunity to remember the examples of righteous fathers in the Holy Scriptures, such as Saint Joseph the Betrothed. Saint Joseph demonstrated obedience and trust in God's plan throughout his life. As the guardian of the Lord and the Most Holy Theotokos, Saint Joseph teaches us about sacrifice and the strength of faith in challenging times.

This day also reminds us that the fathers in our lives deserve gratitude and respect. As Saint Nikolai Velimirovich said: *"The father is the pillar of the home upon which the family rests, and the family is a small church."*

We are called to pray for all fathers – that the Lord strengthens them and grants them health, wisdom, and the courage to be good examples to their children. Let this celebration be an opportunity to express love and gratitude to them and to remember that all fatherhood is a blessing and a reflection of God's grace.

Happy Father's Day! May the Lord fill our homes with love, peace, and blessings.

St. Stephen the First Martyr A Life of Faith, Service, and Forgiveness

St. Stephen, the Archdeacon, and First Martyr holds a special place in the Orthodox Christian faith as a profound example of unwavering faith, courage, and love in adversity. His feast celebrated on January 9, reminds us of the strength found in Christ and the ultimate victory of truth over falsehood.



St. Stephen was one of the seven deacons the Apostles chose to serve the growing Church, ensuring that practical needs were met while they focused on preaching the Word of God. As an archdeacon, Stephen served with humility, demonstrating how ministry should be rooted in love and compassion. His life was a testament to service, as he proclaimed Christ boldly, even to those who opposed him.

The story of his martyrdom, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 6–7), reflects the triumph of faith over fear. Stephen delivered a powerful testimony when brought before the Sanhedrin, recounting God's faithfulness throughout history and proclaiming Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. His words enraged his accusers, and he was condemned to death by stoning. Yet, even as he faced his execution, Stephen prayed for his persecutors, embodying Christ's command to love our enemies.

In his death, Stephen was granted a vision of heaven, seeing the glory of God and Jesus standing at the Father's right hand. This vision reminds us that faithfulness to Christ leads us to eternal life, no matter our challenges.

The celebration of St. Stephen encourages us to stand firm in our faith, serve others with humility, and forgive even those who wrong us. Through his life and martyrdom, he teaches us that true strength comes from trusting in God and living out the Gospel, no matter the cost. May his example inspire us to witness Christ faithfully in our lives.