



# Weekly Bulletin

## St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

Witnessing to the Apostolic Faith in Lake County for over 45 Years

*Father Andrew Clements*, Pastor

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<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Dec 5</b>	<i>24th Sunday after Pentecost / Tone 7 / St Nicholas the Wonderworker</i>
		10:00 am      Divine Liturgy      Coffee Hour
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Dec 8</b>	<i>Conception of the Theotokos</i>
		6:30 pm      Vespers      Confession
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Dec 11</b>	<i>Ven Daniel the Stylite</i>
		4:00 pm      Confession
		5:30 pm      Great Vespers
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Dec 12</b>	<i>25th Sunday after Pentecost / Tone 8 / Sunday of the Forefathers of the Lord</i>
		Readings:      Col 3:4-11      Luke 14:16-2
		10:00 am      Divine Liturgy      Coffee Hour

### ST NICHOLAS CELEBRATION UPDATE

The Children's Program will take place on Sunday, Dec 19 along with a Potluck Diner and a visit from St Nicholas. There will be no Church School.

### CONFESSION NOTE

Confession is in order for everyone during the Advent Season. Please note the additional times scheduled and approach in a timely manner throughout the rest of Christmas Lent.

### CLEANERS NEEDED FOR 2022

Please contact Jessica Chongris if you can become part of the Church Cleaning Crew for 2022. We have 'open dates' that we need to fill.

### EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

The Class will meet this week on Tue, Dec 7 at 6:30 pm.

### PRAYER CORNER + + + + +

Perry (Capitan), Julian, John Clements, Sarah Crivella, Joella (LuAnn D's dghtr), Dr Mike Soroka, the Furman family, Tim Price, Francis James (Anna D's frnd), Kim H (Maryann S's friend), Paris Santone (Debbie C's nephew), Bob Joss, Subdeacon Leonard, Kristin & Cameron Robinson, Evelyn (Maureen M's mom), Dave Renda (Jim's bro), Rosemary Bagley, suffering Christians in the Middle East.

**Birthdays:** Alexandra Tintor (12/7), Alexander Kozikov, Jean Murphy (12/8).

**New Borns:** Wyatt (Brian & Katya), Seraphina (Bobby & Juliana).

**Expecting:** Mario & Beth (Val C's son & dr-n-lw), Brad & Katie, Peter & Katie (Clements frnds), Ryan & Jessica.

**Newly Illumined:** William (John) Walker

**Newly Departed:** James Asimou (Ken & Peggy's frnd, 11/29), Dr Mike Soroka (11/24), Nick D'Amato (11/20 Jerry L's close frnd), Michelle Blocksom (Fr Zdinak's csn 11/13), Joanne Michshaw (Paula T's sister, 11/6), Joan Maty (Fr A's frnd 11/4).

O holy Nicholas, true servant of Christ, you are truly a protector of your faithful flock; and whenever you were asked for help, you gladly assisted those who sought your aid. Now you are also ready, by day or night, to deliver us from all distress and sorrow.

— Vespersal Hymn for St Nicholas —

# Happy Saint Nicholas Day

# The Beatitudes Part VI — Mercy

by Fr Thomas Hopko

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt 5.7). To be merciful is to be like God, for “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” (Ps 103.8).

The Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin . . .” (Ex 34.6–7). This also is the teaching of Christ in His Sermon on the Mount:

. . . love your enemies and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful (Lk 6.35–36). (Exodus 34:6-7)

To be merciful does not mean to justify falsehood and sin. It does not mean to be tolerant of foolishness and evil. It does not mean to overlook injustice and iniquity. God is not this way, and does not do this.

To be merciful means to have compassion on evil-doers and to sympathize with those who are caught in the bonds of sin. It means to forego every self-righteousness and every self-justification in comparison with others. It means to refuse to condemn those who do wrong, but to forgive those who harm and destroy, both themselves and others. It is to say with utter seriousness, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us” (Mt 6.12).

According to Jesus, the spiritual person will be merciful because he himself is in need of mercy. The spiritual person will be merciful because he knows that he himself is a sinful man in need of God’s mercy and help. There is no one without sin, no one who can claim righteousness before God. If one claims to have no sin, says Saint John, he is a liar, and makes God a liar as well (1 Jn 1.10,2.4). The spiritual person, because he is in union with God, acknowledges his sin and his need for forgiveness from God and from men. He cannot condemn others for he knows, but for the grace of Christ, that he himself stands unworthy and condemned.

If Thou O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayst be feared (Ps 130.3–4).

The merciful person is merciful toward himself as well as others. This does not mean that he makes light of his sins and takes God’s forgiveness for granted. It means rather that he does not plague himself with neurotic guilt and remorse, surrendering to sinful scruples which are the death of the soul. It means that he trusts in the loving-kindness of God and knows, as Saint Paul has said, that no works of his own will ever deliver him from the need of God’s mercy and love.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Eph 2.8–10).

Thus it is the continual reception of the mercy of God and nothing else which empowers the soul to good works. And it is only the merciful who attain mercy from God. For all eternity man will be at the disposal of God’s mercy. At whatever stage of development he will reach, man’s prayer will always remain the central prayer of the Church: Lord have mercy on me a sinner! The holier the person, the greater is his sense of sinful unworthiness, the stronger is his dependence on the mercy of God, and the more he is merciful to the weaknesses of others.