



# St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church

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*"An Orthodox Presence in Northeastern Summit County"*

[www.sainthermanchurch.org](http://www.sainthermanchurch.org)



## Important This Week

Monday, 23Dec, 6PM, Vespers of Nativity; Tuesday, 24Dec, 10AM, Royal Hours of Nativity

Tuesday, 24Dec, 1130PM All-Night Vigil/Liturgy of Nativity

Saturday, 28Dec, 6PM Vespers; Sunday, 29Dec, 10AM, Divine Liturgy

22Dec24

Sunday Before Nativity—Tone I

## Words on Christ from St. Ephraim the Syrian

*If he was not flesh, why was Mary introduced at all? And if he was not God, whom was Gabriel calling Lord? If he was not flesh, who was lying in the manger? And if he was not God, whom did the Angels come down and glorify? If he was not flesh, who was wrapped in swaddling clothes? And if he was not God, whom did the shepherds worship? If he was not flesh, whom did Joseph circumcise? And if he was not God, in whose honor did the star speed through the heavens? If he was not flesh, whom did Mary suckle? And if he was not God, to whom did the Magi offer gifts? If he was not flesh, whom did Simeon carry in his arms? And if he was not God, to whom did he say, "Let me depart in peace"? If he was not flesh, whom did Joseph take and flee into Egypt? And if he was not God, in whom were words "Out of Egypt I have called my Son" fulfilled? If he was not flesh, whom did John baptize? And if he was not God, to whom did the Father from heaven say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased"? If he was not flesh, who fasted and hungered in the desert? And if he was not God, whom did the Angels come down and serve? If he was not flesh, who was invited to the wedding in Cana of Galilee? And if he was not God, who turned the water into wine? If he was not flesh, in whose hands were the loaves? And if he was not God, who satisfied crowds and thousands in the desert, not counting women and children, from five loaves and two fishes? If he was not flesh, who fell asleep in the boat? And if he was not God, who rebuked the winds and the sea? If he was not flesh, with whom did Simon the Pharisee eat? And if he was not God, who pardoned the offences of the sinful woman? If he was not flesh, who sat by the well, worn out by the journey? And if he was not God, who gave living water to the woman of Samaria and reprehended her because she had had five husbands? If he was not flesh, who wore human garments? And if he was not God, who did acts of power and wonders? If he was not flesh, who spat on the ground and made clay? And if he was not God, who through the clay compelled the eyes to see? If he was not flesh, who wept at Lazarus' grave? And if he was not God, who by his command brought out one four days dead? If he was not flesh, who sat on the foal? And if he was not God, whom did the crowds go out to meet with glory? If he was not flesh, whom did the Jews arrest? And if he was not God, who gave an order to the earth and threw them onto their faces. If he was not flesh, who was struck with a blow? And if he was not God, who cured the ear that had been cut off by Peter and restored it to its place? If he was not flesh, who received spitting on his face? And if he was not God, who breathed the Holy Spirit into the faces of his Apostles? If he was not flesh, who stood before Pilate at the judgement seat? And if he was not God, who made Pilate's wife afraid by a dream? If he was not flesh, whose garments did the soldiers strip off and divide? And if he was not God, how was the sun darkened at the cross? If he was not flesh, who was hung on the cross? And if he was not God, who shook the earth from its foundations? If he was not flesh, whose hands and feet were transfixed by nails? And if he was not God, how was the veil of the temple rent, the rocks broken and the graves opened? If he was not flesh, who cried out, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me"? And if he was not God, who said "Father, forgive them"? If he was not flesh, who was hung on a cross with the thieves? And if he was not God, how did he say to the thief, "Today you will be with me in Paradise"? If he was not flesh, to whom did they offer vinegar and gall? And if he was not God, on hearing whose voice did Hades tremble? If he was not flesh, whose side did the lance pierce, and blood and water come out? And if he was not God, who smashed the gates of Hades and tore apart its bonds? And at whose command did the imprisoned dead come out? If he was not flesh, whom did the Apostles see in the upper room? And if he was not God, how did he enter when the doors were shut? If he was not flesh, the marks of the nails and the lance in whose hands and side did Thomas handle? And if he was not God, to whom did he cry out, "My Lord and my God"? If he was not flesh, who ate by the sea of Tiberias? And if he was not God, at whose command was the net filled? If he was not flesh, whom did the Apostles and Angels see being taken up into heaven? And if he was not God, to whom was heaven opened, whom did the Powers worship in fear and whom did the Father invite to "Sit at my right hand". As David said, "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, etc." If he was not God and man, our salvation is a lie, and the words of the Prophets are lies.*

**CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!!!**

## This Week's Prayer Requests

**For Health—St. Herman's:** Met. Joseph, Pat, Sandra, Richard, Sam, Judy, Mitchell, Joe, Christian, Al, Sam, Fr.Dn.Basil, Nikandra, Don, Nora & Bob

**For the Departed:** Patriarchs Maxim and Neofit, Metropolitans Theodosius

and Maximos, Archpriest Stephan, Popadia Marika, Matushka Illaria, Nun Theophania, Matushka Theodora, Stephen, Reader Charles, Betty Lou, Lainey Kay, Katherine, Jeanne, Margaret, Lenni

## Weekly Statistics

Saturday	Vigil CANCELLED	14Dec	6 faithful	
Sunday	Divine Liturgy	15Dec	22 faithful	9 views
Thursday	Adult Study	12Dec	7 faithful	

## In the News

Videos of services can be found at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfAOKICLMmH\\_FIDe8SoWOWw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfAOKICLMmH_FIDe8SoWOWw)

*"And the Star came and stood over the place where the young Child lay..."*  
 (Mat 2:9)

It is with these words of Scripture that YOUR offering is "completed" before every Divine Liturgy.

Today, let us "be there" - in Bethlehem, let us witness His birth and mingle our voices in praise with the angels!

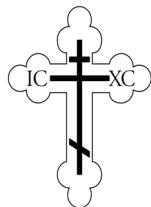
## God Became Man That We May Become Gods

*St Athanasius*



**CHRIST IS BORN!**

**GLORIFY HIM!!!**



*Whenever I stop  
praying,  
the amazing  
coincidences stop  
happening.*

**(Bishop Basil  
Rodzyanko)**

## God is Born [Pastoral Message on the Nativity of our Lord, 2024]

In no Faith other than Orthodoxy does this expression make sense in the manner that it does to us. By definition, God is He Who is eternal. Birth carries with it the understanding of a beginning in time. The two together are nonsensical when human understanding is applied.

But the acceptance of this non-sequitur, this understandable conjunction of definitions, is at the very heart of what we as Orthodox Christians profess and proclaim. Jesus Christ is both God and Man. Christ is born! God is born! The God-man takes on our flesh in His plan to effect salvation for all of mankind.

St. Gregory of Nyssa teaches this: *Let us utter the words of the Psalm, joining in chorus with the loud-voiced David: "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord." How*

*does He come? He crosses over into human life, not by boat or by chariot, but through the incorruption of a Virgin. This is our God. This is our Lord, Who appeared to us to ordain a Feast with thick branches, even unto the horns of the altar.*

God puts on matter. And His matter touches the matter of His Creation. Yes, this implies the matter of the earth, and His changing the nature of the waters through His baptism. But more importantly He left to us the matter of His precious Body and Blood. Through the mysteries of the Church that is His Bride, He has touched us as well. And He continues to do so every time we participate in the sacraments, the mysteries of His Church—each of them!

As we gather now to offer praise with the voices of the

Angels, Glory to God in the Highest!, we marvel at His dispensation and His unbounded love for us.

St. Jerome says this: *They will not find Christ unless they keep watch. This is the shepherd's duty. Christ is not found except by the alert. Psalm 121:4 says "Indeed the guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." The shepherds were keeping watch in the fields nearby. Herod was there; the high priests and the Pharisees were there; while they were sleeping, Christ is found by watchful shepherds in a lonely grotto.*

Let us together assume the vocation of shepherds. Let us be watchful so that we, like those shepherds of old, may be accounted worthy to behold God as Born!

**CHRIST IS BORN!  
GLORIFY HIM!**

**Sunday Before Nativity** (*orthochristian.com*)

Today's Gospel reading is taken from the Beginning of the New Testament, from the first chapter of the Gospel according to St Matthew. This reading begins with a long list of Hebrew names that give the family tree of Jesus on the human side. All in all, some 47 names are mentioned – the great, the near great, and the not so great. And it's this long list of names which are almost impossible for us to pronounce and seem to make for a rather dull reading. Yet the first chapter of St Matthew's Gospel is very important – so important that it is read in every Orthodox Church, every year on the Sunday before Christmas because it gives us the history of Christmas, the human story out of which Christmas came to us. All of those names are actually vivid images of living souls who prepared the way for Christmas.

Looking closer at this genealogy, one would think that Jesus would have come from a background that consisted, if not of royalty, then at least of saintly and holy persons. But what do we find in His family tree? We find sinners like ourselves. We find people who even when blessed by God, fell in times of weakness like King David. We find sinners of all kinds! An invented family tree would have been different. But yet again we see the truthfulness of the Gospel writers. They don't lie about Jesus' ancestry, but tell it like it is. It was from this family tree that the holiest person to walk the earth came from. He was a descendent of sinful humanity. And what this means for us is that if Jesus is to be born in your soul, if He is to become a part of our daily lives and not just someone we are acquainted with only on Sunday mornings, He is to be born into our souls in spite of the accumulation of our sins. Because He came from this family tree full of sinners we find we have something in common with Him. He is not a Creator who separates Himself from us. His family tree is our family tree. He is one of us. He has compassion for sinners who are part of His own family. And yet He rises above His ancestry.

St Matthew deliberately shatters the custom of his day by introducing into the long series of male names the names of 5 women at a time when women were simply not included in genealogies. By doing this he indicates that "in Christ there is neither male nor female"; all are equal; all are one in Christ. The 5 women are Tamar and Rahab; Ruth, a non-Jew; Bathsheba, and finally Mary, the Panagia, the Mother of Jesus. We find in the genealogy people who are constantly missing the mark. Yet out of these short comings arises a dazzling flower of purity, the Theotokos, of whom our Savior was to be born.

So Jesus has a lot of dark spots in His ancestral history. Who doesn't? Often we think of our ancestors whoever they may be, as noble people, even heroes of their time. We desire our ancestors to be heroes of the rebellion or even saints. And yet everyone has a dark past somewhere in his or her ancestry. In pointing out the sinners that comprise Jesus' ancestry, it just goes to show how much like us Jesus really is. The holy Fathers of our Church, who we may also call our ancestors, always emphasized the perfect balance between the humanity of Jesus and His divinity. Sometimes it is us who steal Christ's humanity from Him making Him distant from us, more God than human. But more often it is the faithless society around us who robs Jesus of His divinity making Him a mere man. It is the God-man that we Orthodox Christians need to acquaint ourselves with. And there's no better time than now before the holy feast of His birth. Acquaint yourselves with Him through the message of the Gospel. Acquaint yourselves with Him personally through Holy Communion. He knows us; He wants us to get to know Him.

We Christians can now claim a new ancestry. Jesus is the beginning of a new blood stream, a new inheritance, a higher race of people. Through our baptism we can now have the source of our blood line, not in the tainted past of our inherited ancestry, but in a new, pure source of inherited life.

Brothers and sisters, our ancestry may have its dark spots, because our lives certainly do. Yet through turning back to God and receiving His forgiveness we can step into a new genealogy from a new ancestor. "Drink of it all of you; this is my blood" He says. His blood flowing in our veins gives us a new ancestry, a new heritage, a new sense of belonging, a new life. God can see that we come from different physical parents, different families, that we all have our own brothers and sisters. But essentially God knows us as one big family. We are all brothers and sisters in His eyes, we are all related to each other with a common Father who loves and cares and nurtures His children who know their Father. Your own family is a lot bigger than you may think.



We welcome you to our humble church, and we pray that your experience here will be spiritually rewarding, calling you back to pray with us at our next scheduled service.

St. Herman of Alaska Eastern Orthodox Church is established with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH of New York, and is one of approximately 30 parishes or missions that are all part of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada and Australia, Bulgarian Patriarchate.

Our worship is exclusively in English, and we use "contemporary" English translations of liturgical texts wherever possible. Singing is congregational. The Divine Liturgy is literally "the work of the people", and as such your presence and participation in the service are essential parts of our worship. The worship of others here present is diminished when you are absent or unable to participate.

Participation in the Eucharist is important to us, and as such we ask you to recognize that it is limited to Orthodox Christians who have prepared for receiving the very Body and Blood of our Lord. Preparation includes fasting from the previous evening and recent confession. If you are not known to our priest, please let him know as you approach that you are Orthodox and prepared to receive! Please do not be offended if the priest so questions your approach—this is important, truly "our Life"!

**Troparion for the Day:** (Tone 1) *When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure body, You arose on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life: 'Glory to Your Resurrection, O Lord! Glory to Your Kingdom! Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of mankind!'*

**Troparion/Holy Fathers:** (Tone 2) *Great are the accomplishments of faith, for the three Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain of flames as though in the waters of rest; and the Prophet Daniel appeared, a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!*

**Glory to the Father....**

**Troparion to Saint Herman:** *O blessed Father Herman of Alaska,/ north-star of Christ's holy Church,/ the light of your holy life and great deeds/ guides those who follow the Orthodox way./ Together we lift high the Holy Cross/ you planted firmly in America./ Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ,/ singing His holy Resurrection.*

**Now and ever....**

**Kontakion/Holy Fathers:** (Tone 6) *You did not worship the graven image, O thrice-blessed ones, but armed with the immaterial Essence of God, you were glorified in a trial by fire. From the midst of unbearable flames you called on God, crying: "Hasten, O compassionate One! Speedily come to our aid, for You are merciful and able to do as You will!"*

**Epistle:** Heb 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

**Gospel:** Mat 1:1-25

### Monthly Financial Tracker

November Total Income	\$ 5428
November Total Expenses	\$ 1436
November Net Income (Loss)	\$ 3992

### Web Tracker

StHerman Google Bus Site	513	interacts/28 days
Blog Site Views	49367	Total Views
Web Site Views	16686	Total Views
Facebook Followers	5455	Total

**St. Herman of Alaska  
Eastern Orthodox Church  
VRevFrBasil Rusen, Pastor**

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StHermanHudson

**CURRENT WEEK  
HIGHLIGHTED**

December 2024													
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday							
23rd Sunday 11th Luke Divine Liturgy 10AM Eph 2:4-10 Luke 18:18-27	1 T6 1Thes 2:20-3:8 Luke 20:27-44	2 1Thes 3:9-13 Luke 21:12-19	3 Grt Martyr Barbara Gal 3:23-29 Mark 5:24-34	4 Vespertal Liturgy 6PM 1Thes 5:1-8 Luke 21:28-33	5 St. Nicholas Heb 13:17-21 Luke 6:17-23	6 Vigil/Conf 6PM 2Cor 11:1-6 Luke 13:18-29							
24th Sunday 11th Luke Divine Liturgy 10AM Eph 2:14-22 Luke 17:12-19	8 Conception of Theotokos Gal 4:22-31 Luke 8:16-21	9 2Thes 1:10-2:2 Mark 8:22-26	10 2Thes 2:1-12 Mark 8:30-34	11 St Spyridon Vespertal Liturgy 6PM Heb 13:17-21 Luke 6:17-23	12 St. Herman 2Thes 3:6-18 Mark 9:33-41	13 NO VIGIL Gal 1:3-10 Luke 14:41-11							
25th Sunday Holy Forefthr Divine Liturgy 10AM Col 3:4-11 Luke 14:16-24	15 T8 1Tim 1:7 Mark 9:42-10:1	16 1Tim 1:8-14 Mark 10:2-12	17 1Tim 1:18:20;2:8-15 Mark 10:11-16	18 1Tim 3:1-13 Mark 10:17-27	19 1Tim 4:4-8,16 Mark 10:23-32	20 Saturday Before Nativity Vigil/Conf 6PM Gal 3:8-12 Luke 13:18-29							
Sun Bef Nativity Holy Fathers Divine Liturgy 10AM Heb 11:9-10,17-23,32-40; Mat 1:1-25	22 T1 Nativity Vespers 6PM 1Tim 5:1-10 Mark 10:46-52	23 Eve of Nativity Royal Hours 10AM AllNightVigil/Lit 1130P Heb 1:1-12 Luke 2:1-20	24 Nativity of our Lord and Savior Gal 4:4-7 Mat 2:1-12	25 Synaxis Holy Theotokos Heb 2:11-18 Mat 2:13-23	26 First Martyr Stephen Acts 6:8-15, 7:1-5,47-60; Mat 21:33-42	27 Saturday After Nativity Vespers 6PM 1Tim 6:11-16 Mat 12:15-21							
Sun Aft Nativity Divine Liturgy 10AM Gal 1:11-19 Mat 2:12-23	29 T2 2:Tim 2:20-26 Mark 12:13-17	30 Leave of Nativity 2Tim 3:16-4:4 Mark 12:18-27	31 Circumcision St Basil Divine Liturgy 10AM Col 2:8-12 Luke 2:20-21, 40-52	1 Titus 1:5-2:1 Mark 12:28-44	2 Titus 1:15-2:10 Mark 13:1-8	3 Vespers 6PM 1Tim 3:14-4:5 Mat 3:1-11							