

### The Nativity of Christ in the Flesh

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in the city of Bethlehem during the reign of the emperor Augustus (Octavian). Caesar Augustus decreed that a universal census be made throughout his Empire, which then also included Palestinian Israel. The Jews were accustomed to be counted in the city from where their family came. The Most Holy Virgin and the Righteous Joseph, since they were descended from the house and lineage of King David, had to go to Bethlehem to be counted and taxed.

In Bethlehem they found no room at any of the city's inns. Thus, the God-Man, the Savior of the world, was born in a cave that was used as a stable. Having given birth to the divine Infant without travail, the Most Holy Virgin "wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger" (Luke 2:7). In the stillness of midnight (Wisdom of Solomon 18:14-15), the proclamation of the birth of the Savior of the world was heard by three shepherds watching their flocks by night. The present Feast, commemorating the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, was established by the Church. Its origin goes back to the time of the Apostles. In the Apostolic Constitutions (Section 3, 13) it says, "Brethren, observe the feastdays; and first of all the Birth of Christ, which you are to celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month."

### St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church

*Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of the West*

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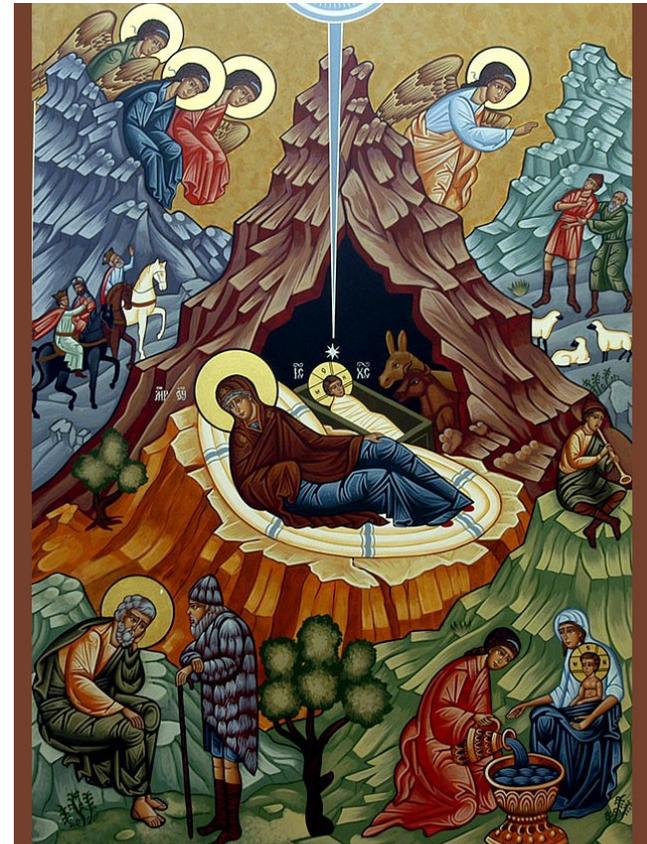
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# St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church

Port Townsend, WA



Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

*Sunday before Nativity; Holy Ten Martyrs of Crete*

30<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

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## Readings

Epistle Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40  
Gospel Matthew 1:1-25

Tone 5 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead// by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 2 Troparion (Fathers)

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!

Tone 4 Troparion of the Forefeast

Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all! Adorn yourself, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave! Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit; if we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.// Christ comes to restore the image which He made in the beginning.

Tone 5 Kontakion (Resurrection)

You descended into hell, O my Savior, shattering its gates as Almighty, resurrecting the dead as Creator, and destroying the sting of death. You have delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man,// and we cry to You: "O Lord, save us!"

Tone 1 Kontakion (Fathers)

Rejoice, O Bethlehem! Prepare yourself, O Ephratha! The Lamb is on her way to give birth to the Chief Shepherd she carries in her womb. The God-bearing Forefathers will rejoice, beholding Him, and with the shepherds, they will glorify the Virgin nursing Him.

Tone 3 Kontakion (Forefeast)

Today the Virgin comes to the cave to give birth to the Eternal Word. Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe! Glorify with the Angels and the shepherds the Eternal God, Who is willing to appear as a little child!

## This Week at St. Herman's

**Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> - Sunday before Nativity**

*Wine & Oil*

- 9:30 AM - Divine Liturgy
- Children's and Teenager's class after Liturgy
- Coffee Hour in the parish hall
- Christmas Caroling after coffee hour
- 7:00 PM - Vespers and Confession

**Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup> - Eve of Nativity**

*Strict Fast*

- 9:00 AM - Royal Hours and Vespers and Divine Liturgy
- 10:00 PM - Festal Vigil and Divine Liturgy followed by festal meal

**Tuesday, December 25<sup>th</sup> - Nativity of Christ**

**Wednesday, December 26<sup>th</sup> - Synaxis of the Most-Holy Theotokos**

*No Fasting*

- 7:00 PM - Great Vespers for Protomartyr Stephen

**Saturday, December 29<sup>th</sup> - 14,000 Holy Innocents**

- 6:30 PM - Jesus Prayer
- 7:00 PM - Great Vespers