



SS. PETER AND PAUL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

"All Things Are Possible to Him Who Believes" (Mark 9:23)

Metropolitan SABA
Primate of the Antiochian
Archdiocese

PRIEST

Rev. Fr Luke Toumi
frluke@peterpaulpotomac.org
(301) 765-3400 office
(610) 844-2583 cell

DEACON

Dn. Christian Manasseh
DnChristian@peterpaulpotomac.org

PASTORAL ASSISTANT

Steven Roberts
Steven.Roberts@peterpaulpotomac.org

COUNCIL

Chairperson

Ken Bailey

Vice Chairperson

Jamil Hermes

Treasurer

Scott George

Secretary

Ulisses Santamaria

Members

Ron Cook

Elizabeth El-Hage

Michael El-Hage

Wissam El Hage

Abraham Fannoney

Joe Gavin

Amjad Khalil

Richard Mahan

Vanessa Mourad

Nicholas Nahas

Alexa Tsintolas

Maria Zacharias

CHURCH OFFICE MANAGER

Nidale El Achkar
office@peterpaulpotomac.org
(301) 765-3400 ext. 0
WhatsApp 301-755-0320

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28TH, 2025

AFTER-FEAST OF & SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST COMMEMORATION OF JOSEPH THE BETROTHED, DAVID THE PROPHET AND KING, AND JAMES THE BROTHER OF GOD

****Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom****

When a family is devout and raises its children in the Christian way of life, grace itself creates peace within them, and they grow up to be gentle, humble, obedient, kind, God-pleasing and filled with the fear of God. Examples of this are to be seen everywhere.

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

Great Vespers: Saturday 6:00 pm
Check the Calendar
for possible cancellation or changes
Matins: Sundays 9:20am
Divine Liturgy: Sundays 10:30am
Confessions: By appointment

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Kristopher Reese
choir@peterpaulpotomac.org

ASSISTANT CHOIR DIRECTORS

Marie Hyder
Mark Buchko

BYZANTINE CHOIR

Led by Amjad Khalil

USHERS

Jerry Audi
Michael El Araj
Abe Fannoney
Sam Khalil
Steve Simon

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Sam Khalil

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

Svitlana Sweat

CHURCH SCHOOL

Directors

Samia Zolnerowich
Jennifer Montgomery
SundaySchool@peterpaulpotomac.org

TEEN SOYO & YOUNG ADULTS

Advisors:

Tia Saah
Lina Saah

President: Cynthia Nasser

Vice President: Tala Tohmeh

Secretary: Angelina Kehdy

Treasurer: Gabriel Shames

Social Media & Comms

Coordinator: John Khoury

KOGOK HALL RENTAL

Manager

George Rados

Sales Coordinator

Nidale El Achkar

CHARITIES COORDINATOR

Paula Massouh

ORDER of ST. IGNATIUS

Jumana Misleh

GIFT SHOP

Antiochian Women

Please note that we livestream our services on the Church's YouTube channel

@SaintsPeterPaulAntiochian

We welcome all our guests worshipping with us at the Divine Liturgy. Please let our ushers know that you are visiting with us today. We would love to stay in touch!
Please know that we take Holy Communion very seriously and is offered to Orthodox Christians, **after** preparing themselves through prayers, fasting, & confession. **Non-Orthodox** visitors are welcome to receive blessed bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy & share food with us at coffee hour. The reason is simple following the advice of Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11: 27-31:

"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning

THE SYNAXARION (Plain Reading)

On December 28 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the twenty thousand martyrs burned in Nicomedia; and Venerable Simon the myrrh-streaming, founder of Simonopetra monastery on Athos

On the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the holy and just Ancestors of God: Joseph the Betrothed of the Holy Virgin, our Lady the Theotokos; James the Brother of God and the First Bishop of Jerusalem; and David the Prophet and King.

Verses

I honor Joseph, the Betrothed of the Virgin, who to be her protector was alone chosen.

Thou art a carpenter's son, but also the brother of the Lord that built all with a word, O blest James.

What shall I say, seeing that the Lord testifieth, as a man after Mine own heart, I have found David.

David committed adultery and murder, yet God forgave him and glorified him above all the kings of Israel. He gave him the great grace to compose the most beautiful penitential prayers (the Psalms) and to prophesy the coming of Christ. Thus, God was not ashamed to take upon Himself flesh from David's seed. God designated Joseph to protect the Most-holy Virgin, and imparted to him great honor in the plan of the salvation of mankind. Although Joseph was of the royal lineage of David, he was a humble carpenter in Nazareth. At the age of 80, Joseph took the Most-holy Virgin from the Temple in Jerusalem and into his home. He entered into rest at the age of 110. The Apostle James is called the "Brother of the Lord" because he was the son of the righteous Joseph the Betrothed. James greatly loved Jesus and, according to tradition, he traveled to Egypt with the Most-holy Virgin and Joseph, when Herod sought to slay the newborn King.

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

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FOUR

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE FOUR

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world; for they that worshipped the stars did learn there from to worship Thee, O Sun of justice, and to know that from the east of the Highest Thou didst come. O Lord, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY IN TONE TWO

Proclaim, O Joseph, to David, the grandparent of God, the amazing wonders; for thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; for with the shepherds thou didst give glory, with the Magi thou didst worship, and by the angel it was revealed to thee. Wherefore, plead thou with Christ God to save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF SS. PETER AND PAUL IN TONE FOUR

O foremost in the ranks of Apostles, and teachers of the world, Peter and Paul, intercede with the Master of all to grant peace unto the world, and to our souls the Great Mercy.

KONTAKION THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE THREE

On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in Essence; * to the Unapproachable, * the earth doth offer a small cave; * Angels join in choir with shepherds * in giving glory; * with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; * for our sakes is born a young Child, * He Who existed * before the ages as God.

For the Health of these Parishioners

Mike & Dorothy Marge	Victor & Family	Hanneh Daoud
Michael Shihadi	Ibrahim Saah	Vilma Bellone
Nadim Zarour	Michael Amouri	Jennifer Brown & Family
Ann Marie Moses	Asma Ayoub	Nour & Anastasia
Mary Ishak	Yousef & Ghada	Abdallah, Christiane & Family
Isabel Threded	Zakieh Jweied & family	Christo & Mary Christakis
Shakeh Kerjilian & Family	Hind, Habib & Family	Margo, Sam & Family
Frank & Barbara Ellis	Paul Misleh	Barbara Zamer & Family
Brian, Caroline & Family	Fadia, Rich & Family	Edward & Eleanor Husson
Mary Sahouri & Family	Allison Ayoub	Elizabeth Albinger & Family
Saydeh Shaheen	Michael & Leila	John & Bette Adam
Jesse Daumit	Heidi Saba & family	Antoinette Najmeh

DEPARTED

Ala Ewies
 Naim Issa
 Izzat I. Ghurani
 Hany E. Ghurani
 Hazel P. Ghurani
 Sami Khalil Jabbour
 Nora Bader
 Abdallah Bader

Special Prayer this Week for

Stacey Franetzki	Abdalla, Jackline Ewies & Family
Lisa & Family	Jeff & Family
Len & Family	Brad & Family
Michele	Charles & Family
Fran & Family	Gordon & Family
David & Family	Sawsan
Gail, Ken & Family	
Ziad (Mais), Lana (Camille), Laureen (Serge), Rami and their families.	

MEMORIAL

Nora Bader (1 year)
 Izzat I. Ghurani (32 years)
 Hany E. Ghurani (11 years)
 Hazel P. Ghurani (1 year)
 Sami Khalil Jabbour (8 years)

Coffee Hour, Holy Bread, and Memorial Wheat are offered by **Ziad (Mais), Lana (Camille), Laureen (Serge), Rami and their Families** in loving memory of **Nora Bader** for her 1-year memorial.

Holy Bread & Memorial Wheat are offered by **Suzy Ghurani** in loving memory of her father **Izzat I. Ghurani** for his 32-year memorial, her mother **Hazel P. Ghurani** for her 1-year memorial, and her brother **Hany E. Ghurani** for his 11-year memorial.

Holy Bread is offered by **Gail Jabbour Bailey** in loving memory of her father **Sami Khalil Jabbour** for his 8-year memorial.

If you want to offer Holy Bread or host Coffee Hour please use the QR Codes on the side.

Coffee Hour Available Dates

January 18	February 22
January 25	March 8
February 1	March 15

Host Coffee Hour

Offer Holy Bread



Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

Wednesday, Dec 31, **Circumcision, St. Basil, and New Year** Matins and Liturgy
@ 6 PM

Sunday, Jan 4th @ 4 PM, **College Students at Fr Luke & Kh Rezanne**

Saturday, Feb 7th @ 5 PM, **Dancing through the Decades**, Forever Youngsters & Friends Party

Saturday, Feb 14th @ 6:00 PM, **Speed Dating for ages 28-37**, Westwood Country Club. Only 10 Ladies & 10 Gentlemen.

Saturday, Feb 28th, 1-6 PM, **Lionheart Men's Retreat** (15+).

LITURGICAL TEXTS

Scan the QR Code To Follow
Along the Service

Got a Question about
Orthodox Christianity
or Our Faith & Worship

Join Us every Sunday
in the social hall
after the Divine Liturgy
for a Catechism Class

Join the Order of St Ignatius

Scan the QR Code To Submit your
interest in the Order

Ss. Peter & Paul WhatsApp Community

Join a Variety of Chat Groups
And Receive Parish Announcements

Scan the QR Code To Join

St. Raphael's Table First Saturday of the Month

Preparing and distributing meals and
toiletries to our neighbors in need.

Scan the QR Code To Participate

Forever Young!

First Friday of the Month

Scan the QR Code To Register

Prayer Request

For Living and/or Departed

Scan the QR Code To Request a Prayer

Pursuing Christ as a Community

Bible Study
(8:30 PM/ZOOM)

Jan 20

Feb 3, 17

Mar 3, 17

April 21

May 5, 19

June 2, 16

Parenting Toward the Kingdom Project

Join us for a discussion/workshop titled
Parenting Toward the Kingdom, based on a
bestselling book by the same name.

Thursdays at 8 PM Via Zoom

Jan 15 April 16

Feb 12 May 14

March 12 June 11

Scan the QR Code To Participate

Archdiocesan Choir Christmas Sing-Along

December 28th @ 6:45 PM
at St. Luke Orthodox Church
6801 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA
22101

Tickets are \$15 in advance
and \$20 at the door

Scan QR Code for Tickets

December Charity Drive Orthodox Christian Mission Center

Dedicated to galvanizing Orthodox Christians in the United States to
advance Orthodox missions around the world. We deploy both human and
financial resources to establish Christ's Church through a uniquely Orthodox
approach to missionary work.

Ultimately, we aspire to bring people into the
fullness of life in Christ.

Scan the QR Code
For Online Donations

MULTILINK QR CODE

For your online donations, registration for events,
and participation in activities

- 1- Use **your phone's camera** to scan the QR code
- 2- Click on the Appropriate Link



THE EPISTLE

God is wondrous in His saints. Bless God in the congregations.

The reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (1:11-19)

Brethren, I would have you know that the Gospel, which was preached by me, is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people; so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

THE GOSPEL

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (2:13-23)

When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him." And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region, who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child's life are dead." And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."



**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Nativity 2025

My esteemed brothers, the right reverend bishops of the Archdiocese,
My beloved sons, the priests and deacons of the Archdiocese,
My children in Christ, the dearly loved in the Lord, the sons and daughters of the
Archdiocese,

In these blessed days, the Holy Church reminds us of the great event accomplished by God
for our salvation: the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Church calls this feast “the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh.”
The emphasis is not so much on birth as it is on the Incarnation. The One who is born is
Emmanuel, which means “God with us.” By the birth of Christ, “the Word became flesh and
dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Let us therefore not be satisfied with the outward
expressions of the feast, but enter into its depth and its reflection in our lives and growth,
so that we may come to know the “abundant life” which He came to give us.

I greet you on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, and I pray that
your days may be blessed and your lives made holy by His abiding presence within you and
among you. I place before you some sayings of the French Orthodox theologian Olivier
Clément (+2009), hoping they may help you reflect on some of the essential meanings of
the Feast of the Nativity, so that you may live it more deeply.

Olivier sees the Nativity as a call to allow the incarnate Word to dwell within us, so that we
in turn may become words of consolation and hope. Thus, the feast becomes more than a
season or beautiful rituals; it becomes a daily journey of discipleship, through which the
world is renewed from within, the logic of domination is replaced by the logic of giving,
and the night of humanity is illumined by a light that never fades.

Among his sayings:

- The Nativity is the beginning of the revolution of divine love, in which God enters into human fragility in order to transform it into glory. *(The Song of Tears)*
- God did not come to Bethlehem to assert power, but to reveal a weakness stronger than all power: the power of love. *(The Roots of Christian Mysticism)*
- The Nativity is not an event of the past, but a mystery present at every moment, for God continues to be born in the heart of the one who opens himself to Him. *(The Transfiguration of Death)*
- Christ came so that we might fulfill our humanity in Him, that He might raise it to its full stature in love and freedom. *(The Song of Tears)*
- The Incarnation of Christ proclaims that time is no longer a closed circle, but has become a path to eternity, because God has entered our history. *(The Song of Tears)*
- The cave is no longer merely a place, but the human heart when it opens itself to the presence of God. *(The Song of Tears)*
- In a world consumed by nothingness and despair, the light of the Nativity shines forth to say to us: You are not alone—God is with you, God is within you. *(The Roots of Christian Mysticism)*

On this blessed feast, my prayer for you is that God may remain with you, that you may always be aware of His presence, and that you may respond to Him.

May every Nativity find you in all goodness.

With my love and prayers,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T. Saba". The "T" is large and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke that extends to the left and then curves down to the right. The "Saba" is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+SABA

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America

By the mercy of God Almighty

John X

the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

To

My brethren, the pastors of the Holy Church of Antioch

And my sons and daughters, wherever they are across this Apostolic See:

"O heavens, rejoice and be glad, O mountains, at the birth of Christ."

By these words, borrowing from the hymnographer, the Church touches each of our hearts and invites us to contemplate the birth of that Child Who chose a cave, although the whole world is His. By these words, the hymnographer addresses not only human beings but even lifeless creation, asking it to break its silence, to rejoice with the angels, to exult with the shepherds, and to bow before the manger of Bethlehem. As if the joy of humanity alone is not enough to describe the encounter of mankind with Christ, the hymnographer calls upon creation itself to cast off its stillness and to be clothed with the joy of the Nativity—the joy of meeting that Child whose eyes ignite all our hope and whose serenity inspires ours.

Here is a call for each of us to cast off the burdens of the world and lay them before the manger of Bethlehem. Here is a call for each of us to rejoice despite the trials that surround us. Here is a call for man to rejoice even in the depths of distress. A call not to surrender to despair despite everything. The Nativity of Christ is a call to wipe away the dust that has gathered over the spark of our hope, so that His hope may shine within us as hope, and His light as light.

Each year, humanity awakens from the slumber of its pride to behold this Child, humble and radiant in the darkness of His cave. He came silently, yet His silence spoke more eloquently than orators. He came in weakness, yet within Him was a strength that strips weakness off the weak. He came resting in the womb of the Virgin, though He rides upon the shoulders of the cherubim. He came as a Child lying upon the straw of a manger, though He is the eternal God resting upon the glory of His heights. He went into a cave to dig into the cave of the human heart and place within it something of the sweetness of His Gospel and the fragrance of His humility, while it suffers from the bitterness of its pride.

His Nativity evokes the memory of hope that is born in our hearts. It reminds us of every poor and needy person—not a memory in words, but using the language of action. We recall the Nativity today while being aware, in the Church of Antioch, that we are the cradle of His Gospel, just as Bethlehem and Jerusalem are the place of His Nativity, His Crucifixion, and His Tomb. We contemplate the light of His countenance within the cave and pray that this light may be incarnate in our lives, in the life of His Church, and all over His world.

During these days, we remember our departed brothers, who have preceded us and met with the bright countenance of that Child. We ask Him, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, to embrace them and cover them with His mercy.

May God grant many happy returns of these blessed days to all of you—our children in the homeland and overseas, and to all peoples. May He fill you with goodness, prosperity, and blessings from the Father of lights and the Source of gifts, the Child of the cave, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the Lord of mercies and the God of all consolation. Amen.

Damascus, December 20, 2025