

**The Sunday which occurs on or after the 18<sup>th</sup> of December,  
Sunday before the Nativity of Christ; the Commemoration of  
the Holy Fathers.**

**Small Evening Service**

**At “Lord, I call...,”** the stikhera to the Resurrection and to the Theotokos, as usual.

**Great Evening Service**

After the Introductory Psalm, “Blessèd is the man...,” the first Kathisma.

If this Sunday is the **18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of December**, at “**Lord, I call...**,” **10 stikhera**, 6 stikhera to the Resurrection and 4 to the Fathers.

If, however, this Sunday falls between the **20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of December**, then we sing 4 stikhera to the Resurrection, 3 to the Forefeast (*by Anatolius*), and 3 to the Fathers.

If, however, the Sunday before the Nativity and the **24<sup>th</sup> of December** coincide, then see the special instructions given on that day.

**The 3 stikhera to the Forefeast, in Tone 6:** *Special melody: “Having set all aside...” (by Anatolius — Different stikhera for the Forefeast are given in the Greek Menaion)*

**T**he never-setting Sun /  
Cometh forth from the Virgin’s womb /  
To shine forth and enlighten the world. /  
Let us hasten to meet Him in purity [of mind] and deed, /  
And prepare to receive Him in spirit, /  
Who cometh into His own through a wondrous birth /  
As He wast well pleased to do /  
To lead us forth, who have been exiled from Eden; /  
In that He is compassionate, ///  
To be born in Bethlehem.

**H**e Who is carried on-high by the Cherubim, /  
God the Word, /  
Who united Himself to the flesh in hypostasis /  
Hath made His abode in the all-pure womb /  
And hath become a man /  
Coming to earth to be born of the tribe of Judah. /  
Adorn thyself, O holy cavern, /

As a beautiful palace for the King of all, /  
And thou, O manger, blaze forth like a fiery throne /  
For the Virgin Mary layeth down upon thee ///  
The Ineffable One, as an infant, for the renewal of all creation.

**H**e Who in a manner beyond all understanding /  
Hath no beginning, /  
The Unoriginate Word of God, /  
Is laid in a manger of dumb beasts, /  
To set aside the senseless foolishness /  
That through serpent's envy I had assumed; /  
He cometh wrapped in swaddling clothes /  
To tear asunder the ragged clothes of my transgressions, /  
As the only Good Lord Who loveth mankind. /  
Therefore I praise and glorify Thee /  
And most joyfully I worship Thee ///  
And Thy coming in the flesh whereby Thou hast set us free.

**The 3 stikhera to the Fathers, Same Tone: and melody.**

**T**he memory of the Forefathers is revealed to the ends of the world /  
Truly filled with light and radiating with the rays of grace /  
For Christ, the brilliant Sun shining from above, /  
Leads them forth as an assembly of stars /  
Shining together with them, /  
And the Nativity of the God-Man is revealed in Bethlehem. /  
Therefore, we all piously clap our hands with faith ///  
And rejoice with pre-festal praises. (*Twice, if this Sunday falls before the 20<sup>th</sup>*)

**A**dam rejoices today /  
As the foundation and confirmation of the wise fathers of old /  
Being adorned with the glory of divine communion: /  
Abel also leaps for joy, /  
And Enoch is glad, /  
Seth rejoices and Noah together with them; /  
Abraham sings with the all-praised patriarchs, /  
And Melchizedek beholds the Nativity without [human] father, from above. /  
Therefore, we who are celebrating the divine memory of the Forefathers of Christ ///  
Beseech Him to save our souls.

**T**he assembly of the divinely-wise children, /  
Danced with joy amidst the flames in the furnace /  
Proclaiming the Nativity of Christ on earth. /  
For the Lord descended as a precious dew /  
Upon her that gave Him birth /  
And she, like the bush, remained unburnt by the fire, /  
Maintaining her chastity and enriching all with divine gifts. /  
Therefore, the God-pleasing Daniel rejoices /  
And clearly foreseeing the Stone from the unhewn mountain, he makes glad ///  
And now with boldness he ever prays for our souls.

**Glory..., to the Fathers, in Tone 6:**

**D**aniel, known as the man of desires, /  
When he saw Thee, O Lord /  
The Stone cut without [human] hands  
Prophesied Thee an infant born without seed, /  
The Word Incarnate from the Virgin, ///  
The Eternal God and Savior of our souls.

**Now and ever..., to the Forefeast, same Tone.**

**M**ake ready, O cavern, /  
For the Ewe-lamb approaches thee /  
Bearing Christ in her womb. /  
Receive, O manger, Him Who by a word hath released the earth-born from lawlessness. /  
Ye shepherds abiding in the fields, /  
Bear witness to the fearful wonder; /  
Ye Magi from Persia, offer to the King gold, frankincense and myrrh, /  
For the Lord hath appeared from the Virgin Mother, /  
And she, bending over Him as a handmaiden, /  
Worships Him as He lays in her arms, saying to Him: /  
“How wast Thou sown in me? /  
How didst Thou spring forth from me, ///  
O my Deliverer and my God?

*Note: If this is either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> of December, we sing instead the Dogmatic Theotokion, in the Tone of the Week.*

**The Entrance and the Prokeimenon of the day.**

### Three Readings:

#### The Reading from Genesis (Chapter 14: 14-20):

<sup>14:14</sup> And when Abram heard that his nephew Lot was taken captive, he numbered his own homeborn servants, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. <sup>15</sup>And he came upon them by night, he and his servants, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hoba, which is on the left hand of Damascus. <sup>16</sup>And he brought back all the horse of Sodom, and brought back again his nephew Lot, and all his goods, and the women, and the people. <sup>17</sup>And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after he returned from

the slaughter of Chodollo-gomór, and of the kings that were with him, in the valley of Shaveh: this was the plain of the kings. <sup>18</sup>And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth loaves of bread and wine: and he was a priest of the Most High God. <sup>19</sup>And he blessed Abram, and said, “Blessèd be Abram of the Most High God, Which made the heaven and the earth, <sup>20</sup>and blessèd be the Most High God, Which hath delivered up thine enemies under thy hands unto thee”.

#### The Reading from Deuteronomy (Chapter 1: 8-11, 15-17):

<sup>1:8-11</sup> In those days, thus saith Moses to the sons of Israel: Behold, God hath delivered the land before you: go in, and inherit the land, which I swore unto your fathers, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to give it to them, and to their seed after them’. <sup>9</sup>And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I shall not be able to bear you myself alone. <sup>10</sup>The Lord your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for number. <sup>11</sup>The Lord God of your fathers increase you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as He hath spoken unto you!

standing and prudent, and made them to be rulers over you, captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties, and captains of tens, and officers unto your judges. <sup>16</sup>And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. <sup>17</sup>Thou shalt not have respect unto the person in judgment; thou shalt judge according to small and great; thou shalt shall not shrink before the face of man; for the judgment is God’s.

<sup>15</sup>So I took of you wise men and under-

#### The Reading from Deuteronomy (Chapter 10: 14-21):

<sup>10:14-21</sup> In those days, thus saith Moses to the sons of Israel: <sup>14</sup>Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heaven is the Lord thy God’s, the earth also, with all that therein

is. <sup>15</sup>Only the Lord chose thy fathers, to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. <sup>16</sup>Circumcise therefore the foreskin of

your heart, and *be no longer* stiff-necked.

<sup>17</sup>For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and terrible, which accepteth not persons, nor taketh reward. <sup>18</sup>He doth execute the judgement of the stranger, and the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, giving him food and raiment.

<sup>19</sup>Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye

were strangers in the land of Egypt.

<sup>20</sup>Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; Him shalt thou serve, and to Him thou shalt cleave, and swear by His Name. <sup>21</sup>He is thy praise, and He is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and *wondrous* things, which thine eyes have seen.

**At the Litya, the stikhera of the Temple, and then:**

**The following stikheron for the Fathers, Tone 1:**

The illustrious and God-pleasing prophets /  
Now rest in eternal rays of Light /  
Having lived wondrous lives and attained a blessèd repose, /  
As their words spoken by the Spirit continue bearing fruit ///  
Proclaiming the message of the ineffable Birth of Christ to all!

**Glory..., Tone 3: (by Germanus)**

**C**ome all ye who love the feast /  
And let us praise the assembly of the fathers [of old], /  
Adam, the forefather [of us all], /  
Enoch, Noah and Melchizedek, /  
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; /  
And those who came after the Law: /  
Moses, Aaron and Joshua, /  
Samuel and David /  
Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, /  
And with them the twelve prophets: /  
Elijah, Elisha, and the rest; /  
Zachariah and the Baptist, John; ///  
Who all preached Christ, the Life and Resurrection of mankind.

**Now and ever... for the Forefeast, Same Tone:**

**M**ake ready, O Bethlehem, /  
For Eden is opened; /  
Prepare thyself, O Ephratha, /  
For Adam and Eve are renewed. /

Salvation doth enter the world and the curse is destroyed; /  
Make ready, O ye hearts of the righteous, /  
And bring your offerings of wisdom instead of myrrh. /  
Receive salvation and immortality of your souls and bodies. /  
So commandeth us the Master lying in the manger /  
To ceaselessly cry out to Him in song: ///  
O Lord, glory to Thee!

*Note: If this is either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> of December, the Theotokion, in Tone 3: (from the Resurrection Apostikha)*

**B**y the will of the Father, /  
Thou hast conceived of the Holy Spirit without seed the Son of God, /  
Who, begotten of the Father, /  
Had His being without mother before the world began. /  
He was born for our sakes in the flesh of thee without a father /  
And thou hast fed Him as an infant with thy milk. /  
Do not cease entreating Him ///  
To deliver our souls from danger.

**The Apostikha from the Octoechos.**

*Note: If however, this is the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, the following stikhera for the Forefeast and verses, in Tone 2:*

**O** house of Ephratha, /  
Thou holy city /  
The glory of the holy prophets, ///  
Beautify the house in which God is born.

*Verse:* God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the mountain overshadowed by the forest.

**O** Bethlehem in the land of Judah, /  
Prepare the divine cavern as a dwelling for God /  
To be born in the flesh from a Virgin who knew not man, ///  
To save the human race.

*Verse:* O Lord, I have heard the report of Thee and am afraid; O Lord, I have considered Thy works and am amazed.

**O** come all ye faithful, /  
And let us celebrate /  
The coming feast of the Nativity [of Christ], /  
And being led by the star, together with the Magi and the shepherds let us mystically sing: ///  
Salvation cometh from the Virgin's womb, summoning all the faithful.

**Glory..., in the Same Tone: (by Cyprian)**

**R**ejoice, O honorable prophets /  
Who firmly established the Law of the Lord, /  
Who were revealed as unshakeable and invincible pillars by faith, /  
And as the mediators of the New Covenant of Christ. /  
Having been translated to heaven ///  
Entreat Him to grant peace to the world and to save our souls.

**Now and ever..., for the Forefeast, in the Same Tone: (by Cyprian)**

**N**ow cometh the hour of our salvation! /  
Make ready, O cave, /  
Behold, the Virgin approaches thee to give birth. /  
Rejoice and be glad, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, /  
For the Lord shall arise like the Sun at dawn and shine forth from thee. /  
Hearken, ye mountains and hills, and all ye lands of Judæa, /  
For Christ cometh to save His creation, the human race, ///  
For He is the only Lover of mankind.

**Note: If this is either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> of December, we sing instead the Resurrection Theotokion, also in Tone 2:**

**B**ehold a new wonder greater than all the miracles of old: /  
Who has ever known a mother to bear a child without a man, /  
And hold in her arms Him Who encompasses the whole creation?  
It was the will of God to be born /  
And thou, O all-pure Virgin, hast carried Him, an infant in thine arms. /  
The boldness of a mother is therefore thine. /  
Do thou pray to Him without ceasing for us who honor thee, ///  
Entreat Him to save our souls and to have mercy on us.

**At the blessing of the loaves, the Troparion: Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos..., (Twice) and:**

**The Troparion for the Fathers, in Tone 2:**

**G**reat are the accomplishments of faith, /  
For the three holy youths rejoiced in fountain of flames as though at 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.

*Note: If however, this is the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, after the blessing of the loaves we sing the Troparion for the Fathers, Great are the accomplishments of faith... (Twice), and the Troparion for the Prefeast, Tone 4: (Once)*

**M**ary once, with agèd Joseph /  
Went to be taxed in Bethlehem, /  
For they were of the lineage of David; /  
And she bore in her womb the fruit that had not been sown. /  
The time of her birth was at hand and there was no room at the inn; /  
But the cave provided a fair palace for the Queen. ///  
Christ is born, that He may raise up again the image that before was fallen.

**Morning Service**

**At God is the Lord, the Troparion for the Resurrection (Twice), Glory..., for the Fathers; Now and ever..., Theotokion, Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos..., (or for the Prefeast, Mary once, with agéd Joseph...).** The usual Kathisma (Sedalen) hymns from the Octoechos and their Theotokia. If however, it is **December 24<sup>th</sup>**, we sing the following Kathisma (Sedalen Hymns:

**After the 1<sup>st</sup> Kathisma, the Sedalen, in Tone 4: Special melody, “Joseph was amazed...”**

**T**hou didst mystically pre-announce to the fathers, O God, /  
The manifestation mystically about to happen on earth, /  
Of Thy Pre-eternal Son [coming forth] from the Virgin /  
To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, /  
Judah and the rest; /  
Jesse and David and all the prophets, /  
Foretelling by the Spirit of the appearance of Christ in Bethlehem. ///  
Therefore, the whole world cries out to Thee.

**Glory..., now and ever.... (Repeat, Thou didst mystically pre-announce...).**



**After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kathisma, the Sedalen, in Tone 8: Special melody, “Of the Wisdom...”**

**L**et us celebrate the feast of the holy fathers, O faithful, /  
Joyfully honoring Adam, Abel and Seth, /  
Blessing Enos, Enoch and Noah, /  
And singing the praises of Shem and Japheth. /  
Let us praise Abraham, fervent with faith before the Law, /  
And the divine Isaac, Jacob and Judah; /  
[Together with] Levi and Joseph the chaste, /  
And let us faithfully cry out to them: /  
O God-bearing fathers [of old], /  
Pray to Christ that He remits the sins ///  
Of them that lovingly celebrate your memory.

**Glory..., now and ever... (Repeat, Let us celebrate the feast of the holy fathers...).**

Polyeley and the rest, **as usual**. Ypakoe **for the Resurrection**.

**After the Polyeley, the Sedalen for the Forefathers, in Tone 8: Special melody: “Of the Wisdom...”**

**C**ome and let us sing a song of praise /  
To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, /  
The meek David and Joshua, /  
And to the twelve patriarchs /  
And together with them the three holy youths /  
Who quenched the flames through the power of the Spirit. /  
And let us cry out to them all: /  
Rejoice, all ye who bravely rebuked the wisdom of kings /  
And pray to Christ that He remits the sins ///  
Of them that lovingly celebrate your memory.

**Glory..., now and ever..., in the same Tone: (and melody)**

**T**hou didst descend from the bosom of the Father /  
And in Thine ineffable forbearance /  
Partook, beyond nature, of our poverty, /  
O Lover of mankind, /  
Thou didst condescend to dwell in the cave, O Lord, /  
And as an infant thou wast nourished at Thy Mother's breast, /  
O Creator and Lord. /

Therefore, the Magi, guided by star, /  
Brought Thee gifts as the Sovereign Creator. /  
Shepherds and angels were astonished, crying out: /  
Glory to God in the highest! ///  
Who is coming to be born on earth as a man.

*Note: If this is either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> of December, we sing instead this Theotokion, in the same Tone: (and melody)*

**L**ike the widow I offer my meager offering of thanks to thee /  
As is due, O Lady, /  
For all thy precious gifts; /  
For thou hast ever been my protection and my aide /  
Rescuing me from trials and sorrows. /  
Therefore from the midst of the furnace I earnestly cry to thee: /  
Deliver me from all things that assail me, /  
Help me, O Mother of God, by thy prayers to Christ God /  
That He grant the remission of my sins ///  
For I thy servant have placed my hope in thee.

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Antiphon (Song of Ascents) and the Prokeimenon in the Tone of the Week and the rest, as usual.**

### The Canon

If this is either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> of December, we sing the canon of the Resurrection from the Octoechos, with 4 troparia including the irmos; that of the Cross and Resurrection, with two troparia; that of the Theotokos, with two troparia; and the canon of the Fathers, with 6 troparia. The Katavasia from the canon of the Nativity.

If this Sunday falls between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, we sing the canon of the Resurrection from the Octoechos, with 4 troparia including the irmos; the canon of the Forefeast, with four troparia; and the canon of the Fathers, with 6 troparia (excluding the first two troparia, which are to the Resurrection). The Katavasia from the canon of the Nativity.

If however, this is the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, we sing the special canon to the Resurrection combined with verses to the Fathers, with 8 troparia including the irmosi sung twice; and the canon of the Prefeast, with 6 troparia. The Katavasia from the canon of the Nativity.

*Incomplete as of 11/2013*

**After Ode 3, the Ypakoe, in Tone 8:**

The Angel which bedewed the furnace for the three children, /  
Dried the tears of the women, saying: /  
Why do you bring myrrh? Whom do you seek in the tomb? ///  
Christ God is Risen, for He is truly the Life and the Salvation of the human race.

**After the Ode 6:**

*Note: If this is either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> of December,*

**The Kontakion for the Fathers, in Tone 6:**

O thrice-blessed ones, you did not worship the image made by man /  
But armed with the invisible power 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 defense ///  
For Thou art merciful and able to accomplish all that Thou dost will.

**Ikos:** Stretch out Thine arms, through which in ancient times both the Egyptians and the Hebrews underwent trials, and leave us not, so that neither death, thirsting after us, nor Satan, hating us, may devour us. Rather, draw near to us and pardon our souls, as once Thou didst pardon the children who were in Babylon ceaselessly glorifying Thee, and who, being cast in the furnace for Thy sake, from the furnace cried out to Thee: “Speedily come to our defense, for Thou art merciful and able to accomplish all that Thou dost will.”

*Note: If, however, this Sunday falls between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>rd</sup> of December,*

**The Kontakion, for the Forefeast, in Tone 1: *Special melody, “The choir of angels....”***

Rejoice, O Bethlehem, prepare thyself, 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.

**Ikos:** As they behold the radiance of thy birth giving shining forth, O Virgin, Abraham, the lover of God, and Isaac, the famed, and Jacob and all the choir of saints assembled by God rejoice, and they bring the creation forward to meet thee with joyful words. For she, who effects joy for all, is manifest, having conceived in her womb Him, who once was seen in Babylon, past all understanding preserving unconsumed the youths who were unjustly cast into the furnace. Therefore, they raise the song to Him Who is being held in the arms of the Maiden nursing Him,

**Exapostilarion (Svetilen): to the Resurrection.**

**Glory..., to the Forefathers: *Special melody "To the disciples...."***

Truly, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the chiefs of the patriarchs and the fathers before the Law came, shone like stars with faith, for all the prophets and the righteous ones were illumined by them; and as they were shining beacons, the rays of their honored prophecy illumine all of creation, as they earnestly pray to God for the world.

**Now and ever..., Theotokion:**

This is truly a great wonder, the chaste and blameless Ewe-lamb giveth birth to the Lamb, the Pre-eternal Word, in these latter days! He is the grandchild of Adam and the heir of David. Therefore, the multitude of the fathers celebrates the coming feast of His ineffable Nativity.

*Note: If however, this is the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, the Exapostilarion to the Resurrection is not said. Instead, the following, to the Fathers:*

The Pre-eternal Word is brought forth from the seed of Abraham and the godly David, the ancestor of God. He Who wondrously came down as an angel saving the children equal in number to the Trinity, from the flames, changed the weeping of the women into joy.

**Glory..., to the Forefathers: (*Repeat, Truly, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the chiefs of the patriarchs...*).**

**Now and ever..., Theotokion:**

Rejoice, O Bethlehem, and thou, O Ephratha, make ready, for the Mother of God shall come to the cave and the manger to give birth in an ineffable manner to God. O great mystery! Now Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the patriarchs and the prophets; mankind and all the angels, all joyously celebrate the coming feast of His Nativity.

**At the Praises.**

**From the 18<sup>th</sup> through the 23<sup>th</sup> of December, we use the following order:**

**4 stikhera to the Resurrection from the Octoechos, and four to the Fathers, in Tone 5: *Special melody: "Rejoice ...."***

**R**aise up thy voice, O Zion, /  
Thou divine city of God /  
And proclaim the divine memory of the fathers, /  
Honoring with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob of everlasting mememory. /  
For behold, with Judah and Levi we magnify Moses the great, /

And Aaron, the wonderful; /  
And with David, we celebrate the memory of Joshua and Samuel, /  
Inviting all with divine songs and praise to the preparation of the Nativity of Christ, /  
Praying to receive His goodness; ///  
For He it is Who grants the world great mercy. (*Twice*)

*Verse:* Blessèd art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever!

**C**ome, O Elijah, /  
Who once ascended in the divine fiery chariot, /  
And thou, divinely-wise Elisha, /  
And rejoice together with Ezekiel and Josiah! /  
Exchange glad tidings with them, /  
O venerated rank of the twelve prophets inspired by God, /  
About the Nativity of the Savior. /  
And all you righteous ones, sing hymns; /  
And you all-blessèd youths who quenched the flames in the furnace with the  
dew of the Spirit. ///  
Pray for us, pleading with Christ to grant our souls great mercy.

*Verse:* For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us.

**T**ruly, the Virgin Mother of God, /  
Who was proclaimed from the ages /  
By the words of the prophets here on earth, /  
And whom the wise patriarchs and the ranks of the righteous foretold, /  
With whom, the glory of women: Sarah, Rebecca and Anna, /  
And Miriam, the sister of Moses, shall exchange glad tidings. /  
With them the ends of the earth shall rejoice /  
As well as all creation, ///  
For God comes to be born in the flesh and grant the world great mercy.

**Glory..., in Tone 8:** The divine Nativity of Christ.... (*See below*)

If, however, it is the **24<sup>th</sup> of December**, the Resurrectional stikhera are not sung, but rather, we begin with the stikhera to the Fathers (*above*) and continue with the following

**4 stikhera, in Tone 4:** *Special melody: "Called from above...."*

**N**ow the proclamation of Isaiah is fulfilled, /  
For behold, the Virgin carries in her womb /  
The Indescribable and Ineffable One /  
And most-gloriously she comes to give Him birth. /  
Adorn thyself, O cave, prepare to receive Him; /  
Make ready, O Bethlehem, /  
For the King wishes to make thee His habitation; /  
Receive, O manger, the Christ Child wrapped in swaddling clothes, ///  
As He comes to loose the bonds of transgressions of men, by grace. *(Twice)*

**A**s was written by the servant of the Master, /  
He is about to tear asunder the handwriting of our transgressions, /  
And enroll us in the Book of Life, /  
Who had been deceived by the serpent. /  
And the Virgin carries Thee Who bears us all /  
Wrapped now in the cloth of mortal flesh, /  
Condescending to dwell in a little cave. /  
The ranks of angels in heaven and the shepherds glorify Thee ///  
Marveling at the dominion Thy power.

**T**he bright and sheltering shadow of the Spirit /  
Bearing the dewdrops of heaven /  
Is now about to spill Its grace upon the ground /  
In order to quench the thirst of the earth, /  
And the mystical swallow carrying in her womb the Spring of Grace /  
Is about to give birth [to] the Ineffable Word, /  
Thus bringing the Winter of iniquity to an end. /  
Behold, the pure and chaste palace of the King ///  
Brings Him forth incarnate within the cave.

### **Glory..., in Tone 8:**

**T**he divine Nativity of Christ /  
Was clearly preached in the teachings of the Law /  
And through grace, by those before the Law, /  
Who, transcended the Law through faith. /  
And as the Incarnation is the cause of salvation from corruption /  
Thus they foretold Thy Resurrection /  
To the souls imprisoned in Hades. ///  
O Lord, glory to Thee!

**Now and ever..., as usual:** “Thou art most-blessèd....”

**The Great Doxology, the Troparion for the Resurrection, usual litanies and the Dismissal.**

The Appointed Gospel Stikheron is sung in the narthex, and then the First Hour, followed by the final Dismissal.

### **Liturgy**

**At the Beatitudes, 10 Troparia:** 6 for the Resurrection; 4 for from Ode 3 of the canon to the Fathers.

**The Troparion for the Resurrection and:**

**The Troparion for the Fathers, in Tone 2:**

**G**reat are the accomplishments of faith, /  
For the three holy youths rejoiced in fountain of flames as though at 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..., now and ever..., The Kontakion, for the Fathers (Forefeast), in Tone 1:**  
*Special melody, “The choir of angels....”*

**R**ejoice, O Bethlehem, prepare thyself, 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.

**The Prokeimenon for the Fathers, Tone 4:** Blessèd art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers / and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever! **Verse:** For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us.

**The Epistle for the Fathers (Sunday Before):** (328) Heb. 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40.

**The Alleluia for the Fathers, Tone 4:** We have heard with our ears, O God, for our fathers have told us. **Verse:** For Thou hast saved us from them that oppose us, and hast put to shame them that hate us.

**The Gospel for the Fathers (Sunday Before):** (1) Matthew 1:1-25.

**The Communion Hymn:** Praise the Lord from the heavens.... Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous! Praise befits the just!