

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22  
26<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (14<sup>th</sup> of Luke)  
Forefeast /Sunday before the Nativity of Christ

STONE 1

"Lord I Call..." Stone 1

Lord, I call upon You, hear me!  
Hear me, O Lord!  
Lord, I call upon You, hear me!  
Receive the voice of my prayer,  
when I call upon You!//  
Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer arise  
in Your sight as incense,  
and let the lifting up of my hands  
be an evening sacrifice!//  
Hear me, O Lord!

*v. (10) Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Your Name!*

**Stone 1**      *(for the Resurrection)*

Accept our evening prayers, O holy Lord!  
Grant us remission of sins,//  
for You alone have manifested the Resurrection to the world.

*v. (9) The righteous will surround me, for You will deal bountifully with me.*

Encircle Zion  
and surround her, O people!  
Give glory in her to the One Who rose from the dead!  
For He is our God,//  
Who has delivered us from our transgressions!

*v. (8) Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!*

Come, O people,  
let us hymn and fall down before Christ,  
glorifying His Resurrection from the dead!  
For He is our God,//  
Who has delivered the world from the Enemy's deceit!

*v. (7) Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!*

*(Resurrection stichera by Anatolius)*

Be glad, O heavens!  
Sound trumpets, O foundations of the earth!  
Sing in gladness, O mountains!  
Behold Emmanuel has nailed our sins to the Cross!  
Granting life, He has slain death.//  
He has resurrected Adam as the Lover of man.

*v. (6) If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You.*

**Tone 6**      *(for the Forefeast)    (Having placed all their hope)*

The never-setting Sun presses forward to rise,  
enlightening all things under heaven.  
Let us hasten with clean hands and pure deeds to meet Him;  
let us prepare to be borne on high with Him in spirit!  
Let us beseech Him in His compassion,  
that, as He comes in His good pleasure to His own strange birth,  
He may lead us, who have become strangers  
to the path of life in Eden,//  
into Bethlehem where He comes to be born!

*v. (5) For Your Name's sake I wait for You, O Lord. My soul has waited for Your word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.*

The Word of God, upborne on the shoulders of the cherubim,  
goes to dwell in a womb without blemish.  
Though without passions, He is bound fast to the flesh;  
He comes on earth as a man, born of the tribe of Judah.  
A cave becomes the palace of the King of all;  
the fiery throne is replaced by a manger,  
where the Virgin Mary lays Him as a babe,  
for He comes to restore the first-created man,//  
as He is well-pleased so to do.

*v. (4) From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord!*

O Word of God without beginning,  
the Virgin lays You in a manger of dumb beasts.  
You choose to begin Your life in the flesh  
in a manner beyond understanding.  
You have come to loose me from the fetters of evil  
with which the envious serpent bound me.  
O Lover of man, You are wrapped in swaddling clothes,  
tearing to pieces the bonds of my countless sins.  
Therefore I joyfully praise and worship Your holy birth, //  
for You came to set me free.

*V. (3) For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.*

**Tone 6**      *(for the Holy Fathers)*      *(Having placed all their hope)*

The memory of the Ancestors is revealed to the ends of the world,  
truly filling it with light  
and making known the dawning of grace.  
For Christ shone forth from afar, brighter than the sun,  
the leading rank of stars shining with Him;  
and the divine-human birth was revealed to take place in Bethlehem.  
Therefore with faith let us all gather at this birth, //  
rejoicing in chorus and singing the pre-festal praise!

*V. (2) Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!*

Adorned with the glory of divine communion,  
Adam rejoices today,  
as he is the foundation and support of the wise Ancestors.  
With him Abel leaps with joy, and Enoch makes glad;  
Seth dances, and Noah with him;  
the all-praiseworthy Patriarch Abraham sings;  
Melchizedek beholds from afar the birth that is without a father.  
Therefore, as we celebrate the divine memory of the Forefathers of Christ, //  
we pray for the salvation of our souls.

*V. (1) For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.*

The three Youths, wise in God,  
who shone with joy in the furnace,  
proclaimed the birth of Christ on earth;  
For just as the Lord sent down a precious dew,  
He preserved from the flame her who gave birth,  
keeping her undefiled and enriching her with divine gifts.  
Therefore Daniel, pleasing to God, rejoiced and was glad,  
for having foreseen the Stone from the unquarried mountain,//  
he now prays with boldness in behalf of our souls.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

**Tone 6**      *(for the Holy Fathers)*

Daniel, the man of desires, beheld You, O Lord,  
the Stone cut without human hands from the Mountain.  
Thus, he foretold that You would take flesh without seed,  
O Word of God, born of the Virgin,//  
the changeless God and Savior of our souls!

*now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**Tone 6**      *(for the Forefeast, by Byzantius)*

O cave, make ready, for the Ewe Lamb comes,  
bearing Christ in her womb!  
O manger, receive Him Who by a word has released the dwellers of earth from  
lawlessness!  
You shepherds, abiding in the fields, bear witness to the fearful wonder,  
And you magi from Persia, offer to the King gold, myrrh, and frankincense,  
for the Lord has appeared from a Virgin Mother!  
And she, bending over Him as a handmaiden,  
worshipped Him as He lay in her arms, saying to Him:  
“How were You sown as seed in me?  
How have You grown within me,//  
O my Deliverer and my God?”

**Old Testament Readings** *(Holy Fathers)*

**Genesis 14:14-20**

**Deuteronomy 1:8-11, 15-17**

**Deuteronomy 10:14-21**

## Aposticha

### Tone 1 *(for the Resurrection)*

We have been freed from sufferings  
by Your suffering, O Christ.  
We have been delivered from corruption  
by Your Resurrection.//  
O Lord, glory to You!

*V. The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty!*

Let creation rejoice!  
Let the heavens be glad!  
Let the nations clap their hands with gladness,  
for Christ our Savior has nailed our sins to the Cross.  
Slaying death, He has given life.//  
He has resurrected fallen Adam as the Lover of man.

*V. For He has established the world, so that it shall never be moved.*

As King of heaven and earth,  
You were voluntarily crucified in Your love for man.  
Hell was angered when it met You below.  
Adam rose seeing You, the Creator, under the earth.  
O wonder! How has the Life of all tasted death?  
You enlightened the world which cries://  
O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You!

*V. Holiness befits Your house, O Lord, forevermore!*

The myrrhbearing women came with haste to Your tomb,  
bearing myrrh and lamenting.  
Not finding Your most pure body,  
they learned from the angel of the new and glorious wonder.  
They told the Apostles://  
“The Lord is risen, granting the world great mercy.”

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

**Tone 2**      *(for the Holy Fathers, by Cyprian)*

Rejoice, O honored Prophets,  
who laid well the foundation of the Law of the Lord,  
and were revealed as firm and unshaken pillars of faith!  
You became indeed the mediators of Christ's new covenant.  
Since, therefore, you have been taken up into heaven,//  
intercede with Him to grant peace to the world and salvation to our souls!

*now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**Tone 2**      *(for the Forefeast, by Cyprian)*

The time of our salvation draws near.  
Make ready, O cave!  
The Virgin draws near to bear the Christ.  
Be glad and rejoice, O Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
for our Lord has come from thee!  
Hearken, O mountains and hills, you lands around Judea,//  
for Christ, the Lover of man, is coming to save those whom He created!

*(at Great Vespers)*      **Tone 1**      **Troparion**      *(Resurrection)*

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,  
while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure body,  
You rose 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 Christ!  
Glory to Your Kingdom!//  
Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of mankind!"

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,*

**Tone 2**      **Troparion**      *(Holy 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!

*now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**Tone 4      Troparion    (*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 is born to raise up again what fell in former times, His image.

*(at the Divine Liturgy)*                      **Tone 1      Troparion    (*Resurrection*)**

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while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure body,  
You rose on the third day, O Savior,  
granting life to the world.  
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**Tone 4      Troparion    (*Forefeast*)                      (*See above*)**

**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!

**Tone 4      Prokeimenon      *(Holy Fathers)***

Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers, / and praised and glorified is Your Name forever! *(Song of the Three Holy Children, v. 3)*

*V. For You are just in all that You have done for us! (v. 4)*

**Epistle**

(328) Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40 *(Sunday Before)*

**Tone 4**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*V. We have heard with our ears, O God, for our fathers have told us. (Ps. 43:1a)*

*V. For You have saved us from them that oppose us, and hast put to shame them that hate us. (Ps. 43:8)*

**Gospel**

(1) Matthew 1:1-25 *(Sunday Before)*

**Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just! *(Ps. 32:1)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

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*Prepared by the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations, Orthodox Church in America.*