

**December Notes:** on Monday the 4<sup>th</sup>, we have two birthdays - *John Frederics and Lily Backus* - and two name days - *Lily Backus and Nevine Sharobim* (Great Martyr Barbara)! ... on the 6<sup>th</sup> is *St Nicholas of Myra the Wonderworker* - the patron of *Nikolas Bell* ... Tuesday the 7<sup>th</sup> is *Genevieve Bell's* birthday ... on Sunday the 10<sup>th</sup>, we have two name days: *Jonathan Douglas* (Righteous Jonathan), and *Sarah Harrison* (Righteous Sarah) ... the 12<sup>th</sup> is *Noah Bell's* name day (St Spyridon, Bishop of Tremithus) ... *Nina Sandbothe's* birthday is on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and *Mary Teter and Rebecca Kemper* share theirs on the 15<sup>th</sup> ... the **Eve of the Nativity of Christ** is Sunday, December 24: start your day with the 9:30 AM **Divine Liturgy**, followed by **Great Vespers**, and end it with the **Vigil** at 5:00 PM ... and before opening presents on Monday the 25<sup>th</sup>, give thanks at the festal **Divine Liturgy for the Nativity** at 9:30 AM ... and we end the year with two anniversaries: *Jonathan Douglas & Joanne Zhang, and Luke & Jennifer Harrison!*

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*O Christ our God, Who didst choose the most pure Virgin from among all generations and wast born of her in the flesh, we, Thy servants, ask Thee: accept this, our meager supplication, thanksgiving and glorification, as Thou didst accept the gifts and worship of the Magi; and preserve us, Thy servants, from all perils. Grant us the forgiveness of sins, and from everlasting torment deliver those who with faith glorify Thy nativity from the pure Virgin. As Thou art possessed of ineffable lovingkindness, O Master, from all manner of misfortunes free us who cry: O Jesus, Son of God, Who becamest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!*



# DECEMBER 2017

## "Thee, O God, We Praise"

Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, was born in 340 AD into the family of the Roman prefect of Gaul (now France). Even in the saint's childhood there appeared indications of his great future. Once, bees covered the face of the sleeping infant, flying in and out of his mouth, leaving honey on his tongue. Ambrose's father said that the child would become something great when he reached manhood.

After the death of his father, Ambrose journeyed to Rome, where the future saint and his brother Satyrius received an excellent education. About the year 370, upon completion of his course of study, Ambrose was appointed to the position of governor of the districts of Liguria and Aemilia, though he continued to live at Mediolanum (now Milan). In 374, the Arian Bishop of Mediolanum died. This led to complications between the Orthodox and the Arians, since each side wanted to have its own bishop. Ambrose, as the chief city official, went to the church to resolve the dispute.

While he was speaking to the crowd, suddenly a child cried out, "Ambrose for bishop!" The people took up this chant. Ambrose, who at this time was still a catechumen, considered himself unworthy, and tried to refuse. He disparaged himself, and even tried to flee from Mediolanum. The matter went ultimately before the Emperor Valentinian the Elder, whose orders Ambrose dared not disobey. He accepted Holy Baptism from an Orthodox priest and, passing through all the ranks of the Church clergy in just seven days, on December 7, 374 he was consecrated Bishop of Mediolanum. He dispersed all his possessions, money and property for the adornment of churches, the upkeep of orphans and the poor, and he devoted himself to a strict ascetic life.

Ambrose combined strict temperance, intense vigilance and work within the fulfilling of his duties as archpastor. Saint Ambrose, defending the unity of the Church, energetically opposed the spread of heresy. Thus, in 379 AD he traveled to establish an Orthodox bishop at Sirmium, and in 385-386 he refused to hand over the basilica of Mediolanum to the Arians.

His preaching in defense of Orthodoxy was deeply influential. Another noted Father of the Western Church, St Augustine, bore witness to this, having accepted baptism in 387 by the grace of the preaching of the bishop of Mediolanum.

Saint Ambrose also actively participated in civil matters. Thus, the emperor Gracian removed, by decree of the saint, the altar of Victory from the halls of the Senate at Rome, on which oaths were taken. Displaying a pastoral boldness, Saint Ambrose placed a severe penance on the emperor Theodosius I for the massacre of innocent inhabitants of Thessalonica. Though he released Theodosius from the penance, the saint would not permit the emperor to commune at the altar, but compelled him to do public penance. The saint combined strictness with an uncommon kindness. Granted a gift of wonderworking, he healed many from sickness. One time at Florence, while staying at the house of Decentus, he resurrected a dead boy.

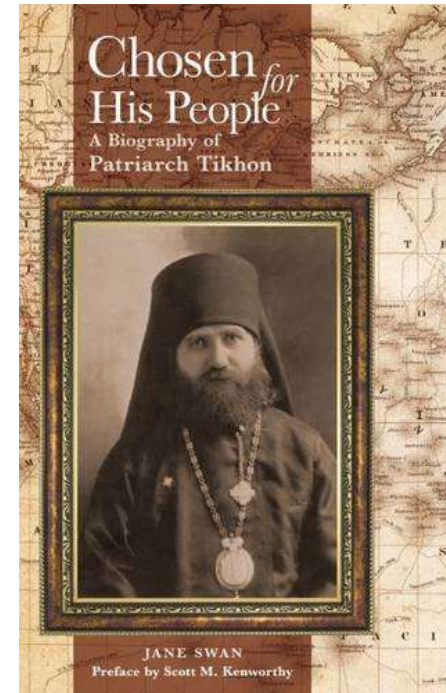
Saint Ambrose was also a reformer of Church singing. He introduced antiphonal singing (along the Eastern or Syrian form) into the western Church, which became known as “Ambrosian Chant.” He also composed twelve hymns which were used during his lifetime. The hymn, “Thee, O God, we praise” (*Te Deum*), attributed to Saint Ambrose, entered into the divine services of the Orthodox Church (the Molieben).

The repose of St Ambrose, who departed to the Lord on the night of Holy Pascha, was accompanied by many miracles. He even appeared in a vision to the children being baptized that night. The saint was buried in the Ambrosian basilica in Mediolanum, beneath the altar, between the Martyrs Protasius and Gervasius.



*Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, October 15, 2017*

## *New in the Bookstore!*



Saint Tikhon is one of the most important figures of both Russian and Orthodox Church history in the twentieth century. Yet ninety years after his death this remains the only complete biography ever published in the English language. It has now been updated and revised with a new preface and bibliography, together with revised and additional endnotes. It reveals a man whom no one expected to be chosen as Patriarch. Nevertheless, he humbly accepted the call of God and the people to guide the Church during the most turbulent of times as it faced both internal upheavals and external persecution. As he said in his speech immediately following his election as Patriarch in 1917, “... I am entrusted with the care for all the Russian churches, and what awaits me is the gradual dying for them all my days.” Now available for only **\$12**.

## FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

*(unaudited)*

	Oct. Actual	Oct. Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
<b>Income</b>	4,075.19	3,947.50	40,085.32	40,725.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	3,712.13	4,911.64	37,930.99	40,636.40
<b>Cash Flow</b>	363.06	(964.14)	2,154.33	88.60
<b>Building Fund</b> (Net of Rent Reserves)			16,833.51	