



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlmetropolis.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, December 20, 2009

ON THIS DAY, THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST WHICH WE REFER TO AS THE SUNDAY OF THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST, WE COMMEMORATE all of our Holy and God-bearing Fathers and Mothers who have been well-pleasing to God, beginning from Adam to Joseph, the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos Mary, according to genealogy, as the Evangelist Luke has recorded historically (Luke 3:23-38), as well as, the Holy and Righteous Prophets and Prophetesses of God, and especially the Prophet Daniel and the Holy Three Youths. Today, we remember the following people who lived during Old Testament times: *The first created human beings, Adam and Eve; Abel, son of Adam and Eve; Seth, son of Adam and Eve; Enos, son of Seth; Cainan, Son of Enos; Mahalalel, son of Aainan; Jared, son of Mahalalel; Enoch, son of Jared; Mathusaleh, son of Enoch, Lamech, son of Mathusaleh; Noah, son of Lamech; Shem, son of Noah; Japheth, son of Noah; Arphaxad, son of Shem; Cainan, son of Arphaxad; Salah, son of Cainan; Eber, son of Salah; Peleg, son of Eber; Reu,*

*son of Peleg; Serug, son of Reu; Nahor, son of Serug; Terah, son of Nahor; The Holy Patriarchs Abraham, son of Terah; Isaac, son of Abraham; Jacob, son of Isaac; Holy Twelve Patriarchs and sons of Jacob and Rachel: Rubin, Symeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulon, Isaacher, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin; Saints Perez and Zerah—twins, sons of Judah; The Saints Hezron, son of Perez; Ram, son of Hezron; Amminadab, son of Ram; Salmon; Obed, son of Boaz by Ruth; Jesse, son of Obed; The Holy Kings David, son of Jesse; Solomon, son of David; Rehoboam, son of Solomon; Abijah, son of Rehoboam, Asa, son of Abijah; Jehoshaphat, son of Hezekiah; Amon, son of Manasseh; Josiah, son of Amon; Jeconiah, son of Josiah; The Saints Shaltiel, son of Jeconiah; Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel; Abiud, son of Zerubbable; Eliakim, son of Abiud; Azor, son of Eliakim; Zadok, son of Azor; Achim, son of Zadok; Eliud, son of the Betrothed, son of Jacob; The Righteous Melchizedek and Job; Holy Prophet Moses; Saint Hur, and Holy Nathan; Holy Prophet Daniel; Three Holy Children: Ananias, Azarias and Mishael; Patriarch Isaak; The Righteous Leah, first wife of Patriarch Jacob; Rachel, second wife of Patriarch Jacob; Asenath, spouse of Patriarch Joseph; Miriam, sister of the Holy Prophet Moses; Prophetess and Judge Deborah; the Righteous Ruth; Righteous widow of Zarephath to whom the Holy Prophet Elias was sent; Righteous Shumanite woman who showed hospitality to the Holy Prophet Elisha; Righteous Judith; Righteous Esther; Righteous Hannah, mother of the Holy Prophet Samuel; and Righteous Susanna. **ON THIS DAY, WE ALSO COMMEMORATE** Holy Martyr Ignatios the God-Bearer, Bishop of Antioch (+106); John the New Martyr of Thassos (+1652); and our Righteous Father Philogonios, Bishop of Antioch (+323). *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.**

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Mission Parish!

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. *You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!*

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./2. Resurrectional Hymn (Third Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.106-109):

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord has shown the mighty power of His arm. He has trampled down death by death, becoming the firstborn of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell and has granted to all the world His great mercy.

3. Hymn for Preparation of the Holy Nativity – (Hymnal-pp.190-193):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance: Make ready, Bethlehem; O Eden, open to all. O Ephratha, prepare, for soon the Tree of Life will be brought forth from the Virgin in a cave. Like paradise itself, she will bear the fruit divine, and if we eat of it, we shall never die like Adam. For Christ is born, and by His birth, He will raise that image that fell so long ago.

4. Hymn for Sunday of the Genealogy of Christ – (Hymnal-pp.194-195):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance: How great is the power of faith. By faith three young men rejoice in flames as if in refreshing water, and Daniel in the lions' den is like a shepherd with his sheep. Through their prayers, Christ our God, save our souls.

5. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see handout):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance. Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

6. Kontakion – Preparation for the Nativity – (Hymnal-pp.240-243):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance: Today the Virgin goes forth, making her way to a cave where from her, ineffably, God the eternal Word will be born. Let the world be filled with joy, hearing these tidings. Joining the angels and shepherds, let us give glory to Him who is God from all ages, yet wills to be seen as a little child.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts.

– St. John Chrysostom

Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Luke 24:36-53)

While they were talking about this, Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at My hands and My feet; see that it is I Myself. Touch Me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He took it and ate in their presence. Then He said to them, "These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about Me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Then He led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up His hands, He blessed them. While He was blessing them, He withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God. Amen.

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (Hebr. 11:9-10, 32-40)

By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets — who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented — of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Matt. 1:1-25)

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah

the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

THIS WEEK’S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

“...the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the Good News.” *(Mark 1:15)*

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! As we will soon celebrate the blessed Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I wanted to thank all of you for your faithful service and witness during the year. I am truly grateful for the unselfish gift of your time, talent, energy and resources to serve our Lord and His Church, our parish, and our Holy Metropolis of Atlanta.

As we prepare ourselves for the Divine Gift of God's Son, what a beautiful gift we receive, the gift of love from God Himself. This great and joyous feast of the Nativity is a wonderful opportunity to reconsider our lives and the way we deal with each other. While we search the stores for the “perfect gift” for our loved ones, perhaps we should also consider giving the most costly gift of all this Christmas in honor of our Savior's birth. This gift is not expensive in terms of money, but does require a great deal of effort on our part to “love one another, as He has first loved us.” Letting go of old wrongs and hurts, forgiving mistakes and shortcomings, even as He forgives us, and humbling ourselves is not easy. What better time to forgive each other’s failings and start over again, as joy and peace fill our hearts, and God comes to us as a little baby?

And for all the faithful of our parish and those living in the Metropolis of Atlanta, I pray for safe travel to visit loved ones and all the joy and blessings of this Holy Season. I pray that the loyalty of the shepherds, the perseverance of the Wise Men, the joy of the angels, and the peace of the Christ Child will be God's gift to you this Christmas time and always. Amen.

God bless you and keep you in His tender care as we celebrate the birth of our Savior on Christmas and throughout the New Year!

Everyone is invited to join us for our

**Annual Community Christmas Program,
"The Christmas Box"
[a short play depicting the story of Christmas]
& Lenten Luncheon**

today following church services. Thanks to everyone who participated, and thanks to all who brought food.

EVERYONE is welcome to stay for lunch!

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
*Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Appear on
60 Minutes Segment on Orthodox Christianity*

NEW YORK – His All Holiness Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians who constitute the second largest Christian denomination in the world, will be featured on the CBS News program **60 Minutes** reported by Bob Simon, scheduled to air on Sunday, December 20, 2009 at 7 p.m. EST. The segment will focus on the Orthodox Church, the most ancient Christian church, and its development from its earliest years to modern times in what is now the Republic of Turkey.

His All Holiness was named 11th among the world's 100 most influential people by *Time* magazine and was awarded the US Congressional Gold Medal for his efforts to promote human rights and religious tolerance. He has also been recognized by the United Nations as a Laureate *Champion of the Earth* for his pioneering work to protect the environment.

Affectionately known as “the Green Patriarch,” Patriarch Bartholomew has called upon leaders of all denominations to join him in this effort, noting simply that “If life is sacred, so is the entire web that sustains it.”

His All Holiness recently concluded an extended visit to the U.S., where he participated in an environmental symposium in Mississippi, ministered to the five million Orthodox faithful in America, and met with Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and President Barack Obama, among many others. He is the author of *Encountering the Mystery* (Doubleday) and *In the World, Yet Not of the World* (Fordham).

Commenting on the upcoming broadcast, Archbishop Demetrios of America said:

“The appearance of the Ecumenical Patriarch on a program such as 60 Minutes is an extraordinary opportunity for the American public to become aware of our Orthodox Christian Faith. Millions of people who would otherwise have limited knowledge of the Orthodox Church will have the chance to see and hear the highest ecclesiastical personage of our Church in their living rooms. It is also a tremendous opportunity for our own Orthodox Faithful in the United States to see His All Holiness in a way that will surely touch their hearts and minds with love and deep respect.”

60 Minutes is the pre-eminent investigative television news show in the United States and has run on CBS since 1968. It has been among the top-rated TV programs for much of its life and has garnered numerous awards over the years. The show will also be broadcast over the Internet on the **60**

Minutes website: www.60minutes.com

<<http://www.60minutes.com>>

More information about His All Holiness's work for religious freedom, human rights, environmental conservation, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as texts of his addresses may be found at: www.patriarchate.org

<<http://www.patriarchate.org/>>

Information on religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate may be found on: www.archons.org

<<http://www.archons.org>>

Prayer Shawl Ministry Update

With Christmas coming this week, Susan Kleto, our Philoptochos Society Prayer Shawl Chairman thanks our parish's Prayer Shawl makers and their friends who participated in today's Christmas distribution of shawls. Following church services, Fr. George will bless the prayer shawls and offer thanksgiving to our Lord for those who shared their time and talents in making these shawls that will be directed to women's shelters in Coweta and Fayette counties.

Fr. George thanks those already involved with this ministry and encourages those who may be interested to email Susan Kleto at sbkleto@aol.com to learn of future opportunities to make our prayer shawls. We are blessed to receive the fruits of the labors of both our parishioners and our friends outside the parish who have made the prayer shawls we will offer today. We ask our Lord to bless those who will receive them and direct them in His path leading to eternal salvation.

Today, the two organizations that will be receiving the shawls are the Community Welcome House of Newnan and Promise Place of

Fayetteville. The two representatives from the Community Welcome House who will be present today include Linda Kirkpatrick, Director, and Morgan Reese, House Manager. We thank both of these charitable organizations for their philanthropic efforts and pray that our Lord bless their labors always.

And on this the two hundred and ninety-ninth Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Nativity Fast continues through December 24.

Sunday, December 20 (Sunday before the Holy Nativity):

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- 10:15 a.m. Blessing of Wedding Anniversary & Blessing of Prayer Shawls/Presentation
- 10:30 a.m. Parish Christmas Program, followed by Lenten Luncheon
- 11:30 a.m. GOYA Meeting

Thursday, December 24 (Christmas Eve Vigil):

- 8:00 a.m. Great Hours of the Nativity of our Lord
- 9:00 a.m. Vespers of the Nativity of our Lord
- 6:00 p.m. Orthros of the Nativity of our Lord (Encourage your families to join us)
- 7:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (Everyone is welcome)

Friday, December 25 (Christmas – Nativity of our Lord, God, & Savior Jesus Christ):

11:30 a.m. “Feed the Homeless” at St. John the Wonderworker Church in Atlanta

(In celebration of the Feast of the Nativity, the period from 12/25-1/4 is fast free.)

Sunday, December 27 (Sunday after the Holy Nativity/Feast of St. Stephen the 1st Martyr):

7:45 a.m. Orthros

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy & Sacrament of Chrismation – Steven Wilson

(No Religious Education Classes today)

Sunday, December 27 – Wednesday, December 30

Metropolis of Atlanta – GOYA Winter Youth Rally (Annunciation Cathedral)

Thursday, December 31 (Eve of Feast of Circumcision of our Lord/St. Basil the Great):

5:00 p.m. Orthros

6:00 p.m. Liturgy of St. Basil/Doxology on the 1st of the Year & Blessing of the Vasilopita

8:00 p.m. - ?New Year’s Eve Parish Fellowship Celebration - All parishioners and their families of St. Christopher Church are invited to our Outreach Committee's Parish Fellowship Event being hosted by Tammy and Costas Soulakos. *Happy New Year 2010!*

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!

Stewardship 2010

We thank everyone who has offered your family's 2010 Stewardship Commitment Card. If you have not done so already, please place your envelope in today's offering tray. Extra cards/envelopes are on the entrance table. *Every parishioner is asked to support our Stewardship Program!*