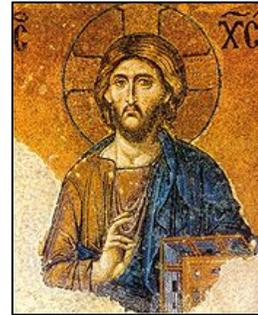




GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

*Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlanta.goarch.org
St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org*

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210
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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, December 8, 2013

ON THIS DAY, THE 10TH SUNDAY OF ST. LUKE, THE CHURCH the Forefeast of the Conception by St. Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos; Patapius the Righteous of Thebes (5th cent.); and Apollo, Tychikos, Sosthenes, Cephas, Epaphroditos, Caesar, & Onesiphoros, Apostles of the 70. *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our 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 (Grave Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.122-125):

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: By Your Cross, O Lord, You destroyed death; to the thief You opened paradise. The myrrhbearers' sorrow You transformed into joy, and You sent Your apostles forth to proclaim that You had risen from the dead, Christ our God, bestowing on all the world Your great mercy.

3. 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.

4. Kontakion – Preparation for the Nativity (11/26-12/24) – (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

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| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>– St. John Chrysostom</p> |
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Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Mark 16:1-8)

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Him.

And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; He is not here. Look, there is the place they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (Eph. 2:14-22)

For He is our peace; in His flesh He has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So He came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through Him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. In Him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in Whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Luke 13:10-17)

Luke 13:10 Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. 12 When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." 13 When He laid His hands on her,

immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. 14 But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day." 15 But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? 16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" 17 When He said this, all His opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that He was doing.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

(TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

"Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."

(James 1:17)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

The Great Steward of the Church

St. John the Almsgiver was a seventh century Patriarch of Alexandria. What does Patriarch John have to do with Stewardship? If we look more carefully at his life, we will see that he was one of the great Stewards of the Church of Christ. His was the true embodiment of giving because of the many philanthropic programs he initiated as Patriarch.

Those who knew him spoke of his great compassion for the needy. He would never think of ignoring a beggar, a prisoner, or any afflicted person that he met in the street. As often as he gave, though, he never seemed to run out of resources for the work of the Church. God abundantly blessed him in every conceivable way because of his charity to others. The following episodes in the life of St. John the Almsgiver allow us the opportunity to learn from this great Steward of the Church who taught us about giving.

An indication of the kind of Patriarch that he was to become is given to us upon the occasion of his enthronement to the Patriarchal See of Alexandria. His first act as Patriarch was to summon the treasurers and financial administrators of the various branches of the Church. He addressed them in the following words: "It is not right, brethren, that we should prefer anyone over Christ."

The whole assembly which had gathered together was deeply touched by his words and in complete agreement with him. Then the holy man continued: "Go, therefore, through the whole city, please, and make a list of all my masters down to the last."

But his listeners could not imagine who his masters could be. In astonishment they asked him to reveal the names of those who were above him in stature. After all, he was the Patriarch. He opened his mouth and again said: "Those whom you call poor and beggars, these I proclaim my masters and helpers. For they, and they only, are really able to help us and bestow upon us the Kingdom of Heaven."

Once his command was carried out with all speed, he instructed his private treasurer to set aside a daily sum sufficient for the needs of these poor; and there were more than seven thousand of them. St. John, we are told, was in the habit of sleeping on the cheapest of beds and using only very poor coverings in his room. One of the city's wealthy landowners once went into the Patriarch's room and saw that he was only covered with a torn and worn quilt, so he sent him a new quilt costing thirty-six nomismata (currency). He urged the Patriarch to cover himself with the quilt, remembering the one who gave it to him in prayer.

John took and used it for one night because of the giver's insistence, but throughout the night he kept saying to himself, "How can I lie under a blanket costing thirty-six nomismata while Christ's brethren are pinched with cold? How many are there this minute grinding their teeth because of the cold? How many have only a rough blanket half below and half above them so that they cannot stretch out their legs but lie shivering, rolled up like a ball of thread? How many have no second garment either in summer or winter and so live in misery? Mad yet, I who hope to obtain everlasting bliss, am being kept warm by a blanket worth thirty-six nomismata.

Indeed, if I live like this and pass my life in such ease I cannot expect to enjoy the good things prepared for us on high; but I will certainly be told, as was the other rich man: "...You in your lifetime received good things, and Lazarus, in like manner, evil things; but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish'" "Blessed be God!" "I shall not be covered with it another night. For it is right and proper that one hundred and forty-four of my brothers and masters should be covered rather than me, one miserable creature." For four simple blankets could be purchased for one nomisma. Early on the following morning, therefore, he sent it to be sold, but the man who gave it to him saw it and bought it for thirty-six nomismata and again brought it to the Patriarch.

When the wealthy landowner saw it put up for sale again the next day, he bought it once more and carried it to the Patriarch and implored him to use it. When he had done this for the third time, the Saint said to him jokingly, "Let us see whether you or I will give up first!" For the man was exceedingly wealthy and the Saint took pleasure in getting money out of him for the sake of the poor. The Patriarch used to say that if, with the object of giving to the poor, anyone were able, without ill-will, to strip right down to their shirts, he would do no wrong, especially if they were heartless skinflints. For in so doing, he would save their souls.

One day the Patriarch heard of a generous giver and so he sent for him privately and said jokingly, "How is it that you became so generous? Was it natural for you, or did you have to force yourself?" The man answered, "I used to be very hardhearted and unsympathetic and one day I lost my money and was reduced to poverty. Then my reason began to say to me, 'Truly, if you had been generous, God would not have forsaken you.' And immediately I decided to give five coppers a day to the poor. But when I started giving them, Satan immediately checked me by saying, 'Those coppers would really have been enough to buy a bath ticket or vegetables for your family.'

When I felt at once that I was taking the money out of my children's mouths and so I gave nothing. But I noticed that I was being mastered by greed, so I said to my servant, "I want you to steal five coppers each day without my noticing it, and give them to charity.'" "My servant, a worthy fellow, began by stealing ten coppers, and occasionally even more. As he noticed that we were being blessed, he began to steal larger sums of money and give them away."

"One day I was expressing my astonishment at God's blessings to us! I said to him, 'Those five coppers, boy, have greatly benefited us. So now I want to give ten.' At that the servant said to me with a smile, 'Yes, be thankful for my thefts, since but for them we should not even have bread to eat today. However, if there can be a just thief, I am he!' And he told me that he had given larger amounts than the five or ten coppers. So it was through my servant's faith that I grew accustomed to giving with all my heart." The holy Patriarch was much edified by this story.

One last story in the life of St. John has to do with his practice of giving money to every poor person that he met. A stranger to the city, one who noticed the remarkable sympathy of the Holy Patriarch, decided to put him to the test. The stranger dressed himself up in old clothes and approached the Patriarch as he made his rounds of the hospitals. He came to John and said, "Have mercy on me for I am a prisoner of war."

John said to his purse-bearer, "Give him six coins." After the man had received his money he left, changed his clothes, met John in the street a second time and falling at his feet said. "Have pity on me for I am in need." Again the Patriarch said to his purse-bearer, "Give him six coins." As the man left, the purse-bearer nudged the Patriarch to let him know that it was the same man. This time the Patriarch responded, "Give him twelve coins, for it might be my Christ come to test me."

Our Church, too, calls upon each of us to become Stewards. Unlike the man in disguise, our Church comes openly seeking support for the worthy work of the Church. If Patriarch John was doubly generous to the disguised man, thinking that he might be Christ, how generous should we be to the Church which is the body of Christ?

[Thanks to the Rev. Fr. John Chakos for this reflection.]

And on this the four hundred and eighty-eighth 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

Friday, November 15 – Wednesday, December 24 – Nativity Fast

Sunday, December 8 (10th Sunday of St. Luke):

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros Service
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy/Memorial – One Year – Panayiotis
Zographos/Coffee Fellowship
- 10:30 a.m. Parish Council Elections/Baby Shower for Claudia
& Jim Sliwinski
- 11:30 p.m. Community Christmas Tree Decoration
- 11:45 a.m. Parish Council Meeting

Thursday, December 12:

- 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice

Friday, December 13:

Note: Fr. George will offer Divine Liturgy at 9:00 a.m., Archangel Michael Chapel, 2480 Clairmont Road, NE, Atlanta

Sunday, December 15 (11th Sunday of St. Luke):

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| <p>"Fill the Pew Sunday" - bring your families, friends, and guests so that our pews are completely filled today!</p> |
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- 7:45 a.m. Orthros Service
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy/Offering of 2014 Stewardship
Pledges/Blessing of Prayer Shawls/Coffee Fellowship
- 11:00 a.m. Christmas Program Rehearsal
- 11:30 p.m. Hellenic Language Class/G.O.Y.A. Meeting
- 11:30 a.m. Deadline to Schedule Sacrament of Confession/
Reconciliation Before Feast of the Nativity of our Lord

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!

Welcome

Today, we welcome to our parish Mrs. Dee Nicolaou, Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos Board President and National Philoptochos leader. At the request of our St. Christopher Philoptochos Board, Dee met with our parish's Philoptochos Board members and Fr. George from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. yesterday to share "best practices" from Philoptochos chapters throughout our Holy Metropolis. She offered opportune and effective approaches to Philoptochos' mission and likewise challenged us for the future.

Fr. George has asked her to address our parish community this morning to share the overall mission of our National and Metropolis Philoptochos Society and answer any questions we might have. Thank you, Dee for your tremendous stewardship of visiting parishes throughout our Metropolis and offering your services, time, and visits at no expense to the Metropolis or our parishes. *We love you and welcome you back soon!*



["Follow" & "Like"](#) our new Facebook page. *Be sure to check our status for updates and photos.*

Hands of Love

November 24-December 8

*Grant Park Christmas Basket Program at
St. John the Wonderworker Orthodox Church*



We will be collecting hats, scarves and gloves
for adults and gifts for teenagers.
Please pick an angel from the wish tree!

Through December 8th, a wish tree for needy families will be located in our Church. Please pick an angel from the tree and bring it back with your gift by December 8. The donations will go to St. John the Wonderworker, and will be distributed in the “Grant Park Christmas Basket Program”.

Grant Park Christmas Basket Program for needy families in the inner city of Atlanta is a Program of St. John the Wonderworker Orthodox Church of Atlanta, in which they collect food boxes and toys for the children. Every year, the families pick up the gifts on the Saturday before Christmas. The program begins around the first of November with the collection of food and toys.

Personal note:

Every month when we collect donations through our Hand of Love Program, and especially at Christmas when we collect gifts for teenagers and hats and gloves for the adults, I get totally overwhelmed by the great kindness, generosity and thoughtfulness of our parishioners who give with such loving and tender hearts. I feel extremely humbled and lucky to be part of a small church in which the great love manifested by its members makes it seem like there are hundreds or even thousands of people that offer the presents, even though everything comes from a few dozen kindhearted and exceptionally generous people. I personally thank you for all your past donations and I am convinced I will continue to be impressed each time I will look under the wish tree.

May you all have a blessed and peaceful Christmas!

Claudia Sliwinski
Hands of Love Coordinator



IS YOUR FRIDGE BARE???
ARE YOU OUT OF LENTEN MEALS???

Are you out of Lenten Recipes???

TIRED OF THE HASSLE OF THE GROCERY STORE???

Tired of having to fight crowds, wait in line, pay HUGE prices and then having to go home to cook AND do dishes???



SHOP AT THE LENTEN MARKET!!!!

- **When?** Ends Today, December 8, 2013
- **Where?** Conveniently located in the church bookstore
- **Why? WHY YOU ASK???**



- **HOMEMADE** meals, prepared by someone **OTHER** than you!
- **NO** real prep work
- **EASY** clean up
- *ALL* money goes to support the Victims of the Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in response to Archbishop Demetrios' Encyclical requesting our prayers and offerings of support! ([Click to read Encyclical](#))

Philoptochos is selling homemade meals, pre-packaged, ready to HEAT AND EAT! It is that simple! Come buy 1, 2, 3 or more meals for the week...the more you buy the less work you have to do each night!!!

Soldiers' Angels for Christmas



If you are looking for a way to support our military this Christmas, Philoptochos has joined forces with Soldiers Angels and has made plans to do just that!

Soldiers' Angels is a volunteer nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide aid and comfort to the men and women of all branches of our military, as well as their families on the home front. Some of you may remember the beautiful quilts made by our Philoptochos a few years ago. Those quilts were sent to the largest hospital in Afghanistan and used for our badly wounded who needed extra comfort on the way home. Our Philoptochos wanted to support our military again, and have adopted an Army family of 6 through *Soldiers' Angels for Christmas*. Because Military families usually live on a very tight budget, putting together Christmas can be a real challenge for some of them.

Here is an excerpt from the email we just received from our family: "I don't know how to say thanks to you and your church. It is an incredible thing you are doing here helping out a family for Christmas, and we are blessed that you received ours. We just got to Fort Stewart here in Georgia a few months ago from Fort Campbell in Kentucky. It has been challenging at times but we wouldn't trade this life now because it's all we really know anymore. Thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts, you all really are angels!"

The family includes (Dad, Mom and 4 children - Boy 15, Girl 13, Boy 12 and Boy 8). We have a list from the mother of everything the children would like. We are going to send them a nice card from Walmart for food for Christmas dinner and then purchase a gift or two for each child. *If you are interested in participating in this outreach, please contact Faye Georgeo (770-861-4954), fayeg924@yahoo.com.*

NOTE: This effort is not replacing our angel tree for St. John the Wonderworker Christmas program; that will still be going on as well.