



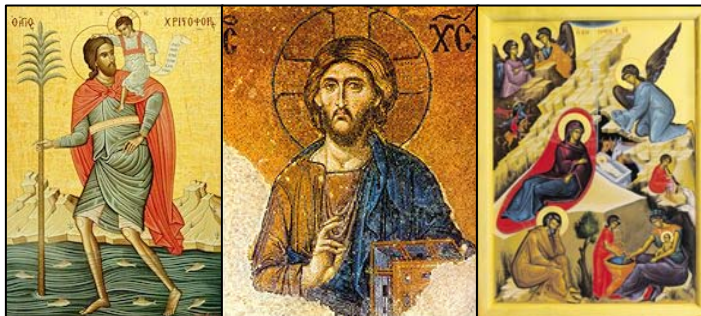
GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

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



313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210
Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

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

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, December 27, 2009

ON THIS DAY, THE SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST, WE COMMEMORATE THE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS FOREFATHERS OF GOD, JOSEPH, THE BETROTHED OF THE VIRGIN MARY; JAMES, THE BROTHER OF OUR LORD (IAKOVOS); AND DAVID, THE PROPHET AND KING. On this day, we also commemorate St. Stephen, Archdeacon & First Martyr (+34); Righteous Father Theodore the Confessor, brother of St. Theophanes the Hymnographer (+845); Righteous Father Theodore, Patriarch of Constantinople; Holy Priest-Martyr Maurice, and the other 70 martyred with him; and Righteous Father Luke of Triglia in Bithynia. *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./3. Special Hymn for the Feast of the Blessed Birth of our Lord (sung before and after the Small Entrance) – (Hymnal-pp.198-201):

“Your birth, O Christ our God, shines forth on all the world with the light of knowledge. For at Your Birth, those who had adored the stars were taught by a star to worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to know You, the Dawn from on high. O Lord, glory to You.”

2. Resurrectional Hymn (Fourth Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.110-113):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance: The joyful news of Your resurrection was proclaimed by the angel to the women disciples. Having thrown off the curse that fell on Adam, they ran elatedly to tell the apostles: Death has been vanquished; Christ our God is risen from the dead, blessing all the world with His great mercy.

4. Hymn for Saints Joseph, David, and Iakovos – (Hymnal-pp.202-203):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance: Go, holy Joseph, tell David what the angel said. With the shepherds and the wise men from afar, praise the Son of the Virgin, begging Him to save our souls.

5. Hymn for St. Stephen, Archdeacon & 1st Martyr – (not in Hymnal):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance: St. Stephen, First Martyr of Christ God, the diadem of a King was given you for a crown for all you

endured for Christ. Truly You put to shame Jews who were your persecutors. You have seen the Savior at the Right Hand of the Father; to Him cease not to pray for our souls.

6. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

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.

7. Kontakion of the Blessed Birth of our Lord – (Hymnal-pp.244-247):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth presents a cave to the Unapproachable One. Angels with shepherds give Him glory; wise men follow a star as they journey to Him who is God from all ages, yet for our sake is born 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 (John 20:1-10)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent

down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that He must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60)

⁸Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. ¹⁰But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. ¹¹Then they secretly instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." ¹²They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. ¹³They set up false witnesses who said, "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us." ¹⁵And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. ⁷Then the high priest asked him, "Are these things so?" ²And Stephen replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³and said to him, 'Leave your country and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.' ⁴Then he left the country of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After his father died, God had him move from there to this country in which you are now living. ⁵He did not give him any of it as a heritage, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as his possession and to his descendants after him, even though he had no child. ⁴⁷But it was Solomon who built a house for him. ⁴⁸Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human

hands; as the prophet says, ⁴⁹‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?’ ⁵⁰‘Did not my hand make all these things?’ ⁵¹”You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. ⁵²Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. ⁵³You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.” ⁵⁴When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” ⁵⁷But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Matt. 2:13-23)

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him." Then Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called My Son." When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children;

she refused to be consoled, because they are no more." When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the Child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE *(TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):*

"For a Child has been born for us, a Son given to us; authority rests upon His shoulders; and He is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

(Isaiah 9:6)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

[At the beginning of a New Year, we frequently commit to resolutions. The following guidelines challenge us to consider how we interact in our day-to-day life's encounters. May our Lord help us to honor and respect Him, our neighbors, and ourselves always.]

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

of

HOW TO GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE

1. Keep skid chains on your tongue. Always say less than you think. Cultivate a low, persuasive voice. How you say it often counts more than what you say.
2. Make promises sparingly and keep them faithfully, no matter what the cost.
3. Never let an opportunity pass to say a kind and encouraging word to or about somebody. Praise good work, regardless of who did it. If criticism is needed, offer it gently, never harshly.
4. Be interested in others---their pursuits, their work, their homes and families. Make merry with those who rejoice, and weep with those who mourn. Let everyone you meet, however humble, feel that you regard him or her as a person of importance.
5. Don't burden or depress those around you by dwelling on your minor aches and pains and small disappointments. Remember, everyone is carrying some kind of burden, often heavier than your own.
6. Keep an open mind. Discuss, but don't argue. It is the mark of a superior mind to be able to disagree without being disagreeable.
7. Let your virtues, if you have any, speak for themselves. Refuse to talk of other's vices. Discourage gossip. It is a waste of valuable time, and can be extremely destructive.
8. Be careful of another's feelings. Wit and humor at another person's expense may do more damage than you will ever know.
9. Pay no attention to disparaging remarks. Remember, the person who carried the message may not be the most accurate reporter

in the world, and things become twisted in the retelling. Live so that nobody will believe them.

10. Don't be too eager to get the credit due you. Do your best, and be patient. Forget about yourself, and let others "remember". Success is much sweeter that way.

(Credited to Ann Landers)

THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

MONDAY EVENING, JANUARY 4, 2010

EVE OF PREPARATION FOR HOLY THEOPHANY

(EVERYONE OF ALL AGES IS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND)



5:00 PM, SERVICE OF GREAT HOURS

A beautiful and meaningful prayer service consisting of the reading of prayers for the First, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours consecutively. Old Testament psalms and prophecies are read, as well as selected New Testament Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, and Gospels related to the Holy Theophany of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. Readers of all ages are encouraged to attend and assist with the readings.

6:15 PM, VESPERS & DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

Vespers & Divine Liturgy of St. Basil commemorating the Holy Theophany of our Lord will be celebrated. It includes many beautiful Scriptural readings.

7:15 PM, THE FIRST BLESSING OF THE WATERS

This service is the first blessing of the waters. Please note that there is no difference between this blessing service and that of the second blessing of the waters tomorrow evening. The water that is blessed is considered holy and can be used throughout the year for the prayerful needs of parishioners.

(7:30 pm - Fasting dinner to follow - please bring food to share.)

TUESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 5, 2010

EVE OF THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD
- STRICT FAST DAY

(EVERYONE OF ALL AGES IS ENCOURAGED
TO ATTEND)

6:00 PM, ORTHROS

This service is in preparation for the Divine Liturgy to follow. It contains beautiful hymns and canons of our Church related to the Holy Theophany of our Lord.



7:00 PM, DIVINE LITURGY

The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated in commemoration of the Holy Theophany of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

8:00 PM, THE SECOND BLESSING OF THE WATERS

This service is the second blessing of the waters. Please note that there is no difference between this blessing service and that of the first blessing of the

waters yesterday evening. The water that is blessed is considered holy and can be used throughout the year for the prayerful needs of parishioners.

(8:15 pm - Non-fasting dinner to follow - please bring food to share.)

WEDNESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 6, 2010

EVE OF THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE PROPHET, FORERUNNER, AND
BAPTIST

(EVERYONE OF ALL AGES IS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND)

6:00 PM, ORTHROS

7:00 PM, DIVINE LITURGY



The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom will be celebrated in commemoration of the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John. On this day, St. John the Baptist is honored for the part he has played in the events celebrated on the day before. This Synaxis, or *Gathering*, is an occasion for the people of God to come together and hear the voice of the Forerunner preaching penance for the remission of sins.

(8:00 pm - Non-Fasting dinner to follow - please bring food to share.)

SACRAMENT OF CHRISMATION OFFERED TODAY

The mystery of Chrismation (Confirmation) is anchored in the events of Jesus' baptism and the outpouring of the Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost, yet, in the Lord's declaration "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

There is both an intrinsic unity and a distinction between the mysteries of baptism and chrismation. They are intimately related theologically and liturgically. Chrismation is not so much the second mystery, as it is the very fulfillment of baptism. While baptism incorporates us into Christ's new risen existence, chrismation makes us partakers of His Spirit, the very source of this new life and of total illumination.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit. *Chrismation causes a mysterious new and hidden life to flow in us. It imparts to persons the energies and the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Is. 11:2-3 and Gal. 5:22). "To some the Holy Spirit is given that they may be able to benefit others and edify the Church by speaking of the future of by teaching mysteries or by freeing men from disease with a single word. To others, however, He is given in order that they themselves may become more virtuous and shine with godliness or with an abundance of sobriety, love or humility" (St. Nicholas Cabasilas).*

Chrismation is called the seal (sphragis). The neophyte receives the Holy Spirit as the source, the pledge and the seal of unending life. Anointed with the oils of Chrism, we are marked forever as the sheep and soldiers of Christ. We belong to Him and to His Holy Church. Thus chrismation, once canonically performed, cannot be repeated. Chrismation is also a sacrament of reconciliation. People who come to Orthodoxy out of certain heretical confessions and schismatic churches are received through the mystery of chrismation. The ritual anointing "validates" through "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit" a Christian baptism performed in irregular circumstances—i.e., outside the canonical boundaries of the Church (John Meyendorff).

The Holy Chrism. *The chrism that is used for the ritual anointing is a mixture of olive oil, balsam, wine, and some forty aromatic substances, symbolizing the fullness of sacramental grace, the sweetness of the Christian life and manifold and diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit. The chrism is also called the holy Myron. Chrism, prepared and consecrated periodically on Holy Thursday, is the antitype, the visible tabernacle of the Holy Spirit.*

By ancient custom the right to prepare and consecrate the chrism belongs to the Bishop and its administration to the presbyters. Each autocephalous Orthodox Church has the right to prepare and consecrate chrism. The Patriarchate of Constantinople, as the senior jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church, prepares and distributes the holy myron to other Orthodox jurisdictions.

Excerpt from "The Sacramental Life of the Orthodox Church," by the Rev. Alciviadis C. Calivas, Th.D. Essay reprinted from A Companion to the Greek Orthodox Church, Department of Communication, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, New York, 1984.

Today, we welcome Steven Joseph Wilson into the Holy Orthodox Church. We congratulate Steven, his Godparents, Stephen & Becky Butler, his fiancée, Katie Tsahakis, and his family and friends who shared this special occasion with us today. May God bless him with many years of happy, healthy, and spirit-filled life. Fr. George & Presbyteria Marinda invite everyone to our brunch after services.

2010 Calendars Available

The small tri-fold Orthodox wallet calendars for 2010 and the larger wall calendars for 2010 are available. You are welcome to receive one – they are next to the Sunday Liturgical Guides. *Please share with your family also.*

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

(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

10:30 a.m. Brunch offered by Fr. George, Presbytera Marinda, and their family in honor of Steven Wilson's joining the Orthodox Church – everyone is invited to join us. *May God grant Steven many years of happy, healthy, and spirit-filled life.*

(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!*