



Liturgical Guide for the Feast of the Holy Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ



Christ is Born, Glorify Him!

*Combined Liturgical Guide for the
VIGIL on Eve of Feast - Thursday, December 24, 2015
& FEAST – Friday, December 25, 2015*

ON DECEMBER 24TH, THE DAY OF PREPARATION (EVE) BEFORE THE HOLY NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST IN THE FLESH, WE COMMEMORATE *Eugenia, the Righteous Nun-Martyr of Rome*. Through her holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

ON DECEMBER 25TH, WE COMMEMORATE THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST. We also remember the Adoration of the Magi: Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthasar; and the commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem who were watching their flocks and came to see the Lord. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Welcome, Visitors & 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 HYMN FOR ST. BASIL'S LITURGY
ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2015

Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (Hymnal-pp. 298-301):

Today, instead of "Axion Estin" or "Truly it is proper to call you blessed...", we sing: In you, O woman full of grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the race of mankind. O hallowed temple and spiritual paradise, glory of virginal souls, from you our God was incarnate and became a child, He who is God from all ages. By making your womb His throne He made you more spacious than all the heavens. In you, O woman full of grace all creation rejoices. Glory to you.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FOR VESPERAL DIVINE
LITURGY ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2015

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

Epistle Reading (Hebrews 1:1-12)

*1*Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets,²but in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also created the worlds.³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and He sustains all things by His powerful word. When He had made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You"? Or again, "I will be His Father, and He will be my Son"?⁶And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "Let all God's angels worship Him."⁷Of the angels He says, "He makes His angels winds, and His servants flames of fire."⁸But of the Son He says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of Your kingdom."⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."¹⁰And, "In the beginning, Lord, You founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands;¹¹they will perish, but You remain; they will all wear out like clothing;¹²like a cloak You will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will never end."

Gospel Reading (Luke 2:1-20)

*2*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.³All went to their own towns to be registered.⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in

Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in bands of cloth, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is the Messiah, the Lord.¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL
ENTRANCE ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2015**

1./3./5./10. Special Hymn for the Feast of the Blessed Birth of our Lord (sung after the Great Doxology, before and after the Small Entrance, and instead of *Ithomen to fos*, “We have seen the true light” after the distribution of Holy Communion) – (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. Hymn for Second Antiphon – (Hymnal-p.-28):

On the occasion of today’s feast, we sing the following hymn instead of the regular Soson imas, “Save us, O Son of God”: “Save us, O Son of God, Who was born of the Virgin, Who sing to You, Alleluia.

4. Small Entrance Exclamation of the Priest:

On the occasion of today’s feast, the Priest intones the following at the Small Entrance: “Before the morning star, from the womb, I have begotten you. The Lord has sworn and will not repent. You are a Priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. Save us, O Son of God, Who was born of the Virgin, as we sing to You, Alleluia.”

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

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.

7. Trisagion Hymn – (Hymnal-pp.292-293):

On the occasion of today’s feast, we sing the following hymn instead of the Trisagion hymn: “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves in Christ. Alleluia. (3)”

8. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (Hymnal-pp.312-315):

Today, the following hymn is sung instead of "Axion Estin" or "Truly it is proper to call you blessed...": "Magnify, O my soul, the woman more honorable and

more glorious than the powers of heaven. I see a mystery, strange and most wondrous: the cave has become heaven, the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim. The manger holds Him who cannot be held or contained, Christ our God, Whom we praise and magnify.”

9. Communion Hymn – (Hymnal-p.326):

On the occasion of today’s feast, the following hymn is sung instead of “Aineite” or “Praise the Lord”: “The Lord has sent redemption to His people. (3) Alleluia.”

**SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM ORTHROS & DIVINE
LITURGY ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2015**

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 – ORTHROS SERVICE (Matthew 1:18-25)

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 knew her not until she had borne a son; and He named Him Jesus.

Epistle Reading (Galatians 4:4-7)

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Gospel Reading (Matthew 2:1-12)

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children." (Gal. 4:4-5)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

The door opened and closed with a bang thousands of times. One angry son left the house and crashed the door shut and the hinge came loose. When he tried to re-enter the door wouldn't open.

"What's the matter with this door?" he shouted. "Someone let me in."

"Now, you've done it," said the mother.

"The door isn't broken," said the boy, "it is just the hinge."

"Well, I can't get it open," said the mother. "You'll have to wait until father gets home."

"You push and I'll pull," said the boy, "and we will get the door open."

They succeeded with a struggle and closed the door with a struggle. "You wouldn't think one little hinge would make such a difference," said the boy.

It is true that the doorways of life *hinge* on important matters, which we often take for granted. Christmas hinges on the birth

of Christ and the Church teaches of His Spirit; but much of society takes Jesus and the Church for granted.

Democracy hinges on the respect for the rights of every individual, while many take these rights for granted, while denying the privileges to others. Christmas, democracy, the Church, the school, the home, and all good things are short changed by millions who ignore the hinges which swing the doors through which they come and go. In observing Christmas we pause to consider the many to whom we are indebted... those who keep the streets usable, those who keep the electric lines supplied, and those who bring us the mail. Christmas is a time of appreciation because God's love makes us aware of the many blessings He provides through others. The greatest gift is the gift of love for it makes us aware of all that is good in His creation.

The boy learned the value of the hinge in his own defeat. Some are wise enough to appreciate the things on which life hinges without frustration.

*“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)*

Commemoration of Feast of the Nativity of our Lord on Friday, December 25, 2015

After the dismissal of the Liturgy, Fr. George, joined by our Chantors and Choir Members go to the middle of the Solea [in front and on the sides of the Festal Icon of the Holy Nativity of our Lord], and lead our congregation in singing the following two Hymns in Greek and English:

1. The Troparion of the Feast (first in Greek, and then in English). This can be found on page 198 of the Divine Liturgy Hymnal.

Ἡ γέννησίς σου, Χριστέ ὁ
Θεός ἡμῶν,
Ἀνέτειλε τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ φῶς
τὸ τῆς γνωσεως,
Ἐν αὐτῇ γάρ, οἱ τοῖς ἀστροῖς
ατρεύοντες
Ἕν ὑπὸ ἀστέρος ἐδιδάσκοντο
Σέ προσκυνεῖν τὸν ἡλιον τῆς
δικαιωσύνης
Καί σέ γινώσκειν ἐς ὕψους

ἀνάτολὴν. Κύριε, δόξα σοι.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
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, to worship You, the Sun of justice, and to know You, the Dawn from on high. O Lord, glory to You.

2. The Kontakion of the Feast (first in Greek, and then in English). This can be found on page 244 of the Divine Liturgy Hymnal.

*Both now and forever, and unto the ages of ages.
Amen.*



Η Παρθένος σήμερον τόν
υπερούσιον τίκτει
Καί ή γη τό σπήλαιον τω
άπροσίτω προσάγει
Αγγελιοι μετά ποιμένων
δοξολογουσι
Μάγοι δέ μετά άστέρος
όδοιπορούσι
Δι ήμας γάρ έγεννήθη
παιδίον νέον Ό πρόαιώνων
Θεός

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.

Christ Is Born! Glorify Him!

On this our thirteenth Feast of the Holy Nativity of our Lord at our St. Christopher 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!

COMMUNITY SCHEDULE

Thursday, December 24th, Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m.: Great Hours of the Nativity of our Lord

5:15 p.m.: Vespers of the Holy Nativity

6:00 p.m.: Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great for the Holy Nativity
of our Lord

Friday, December 25th, Christmas Morning:

8:00 a.m.: Orthros of the Holy Nativity

9:00 a.m.: Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom for the Holy Nativity
of our Lord

11:30 am Feed the Homeless at St. John the Wonderworker 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 Nativity of our Lord/St. Stephen the First Martyr):

7:45 am Orthros Service

9:00 am Divine Liturgy/Coffee Fellowship

11:00 am Let's EAT™ Join us at Broadway Diner, 535 S. Glynn St.,
Suite 1009, Fayetteville, GA 30214

"For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore, I command you to do this word which says, 'You shall surely open your hands to your brother, to your poor and needy in your land.'"
(Deuteronomy 15: 11)

Feed the Homeless on Christmas...

December 25, 2015, 11:30 a.m.

Christmas at St. John the
Wonderworker Church

We will be helping St. John the Wonderworker's Loaves and Fishes Program distribute food, hats, scarves, and gloves for adults on Christmas Day, beginning at 11:30 a.m. Please join us!

For location information, go to: www.saintjohnwonderworker.org.

Stewardship 2016

We thank everyone who has offered your family's 2016 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!*

 **"Follow" & "Like" our Facebook page.** *Be sure to check our status for updates and photos.*