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St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: [www.saintchristopherhoc.org](http://www.saintchristopherhoc.org)

## 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 - Saturday, December 24, 2016  
& FEAST – Sunday, December 25, 2016*

**ON DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>, 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 25<sup>TH</sup>, 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. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S LITURGY ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2016**

**1./3./5. Special Hymn for the Preparation of the Blessed Birth of our Lord (sung after the Great Doxology and before and after the Small Entrance:** "As she carried in her womb what she conceived without seed, Mary went to Bethlehem with elder Joseph to enroll, for they were of the house and lineage of David. The time arrived for her to give birth to her Child; but then there was no place in the inn for them. Therefore the grotto served as a luxurious royal palace for the Queen. And Christ the Lord is born, to raise the image which was formerly fallen."

**2. Hymn for Second Antiphon – (Hymnal-p.-28):**

*We sing the following hymn instead of the regular Soson imas, "Save us, O Son of God": "Save us, O Son of God, among the saints glorified, Who sing to You, Alleluia."*

**4. Small Entrance Exclamation of the Priest:**

*The Priest intones the following at the Small Entrance: "Save us, O Son of God, among the saints glorified, Who sing to You, Alleluia."*

**6. 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.

**7. 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.

**8. Communion Hymn – (not in Hymnal):**

*On the occasion of today's preparation for the Holy Nativity, the following hymn is sung instead of "Aineite" or "Praise the Lord": "Blessed are those whom You have chosen and received, O Lord. Their memorial abides from generation to generation. (3) Alleluia."*

**SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FOR DIVINE LITURGY ON  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2016**

*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 During Divine Liturgy (Gal. 3:8-12)**

*<sup>8</sup>And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you." <sup>9</sup>For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed. <sup>10</sup>For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed*

*is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law.”* <sup>11</sup>*Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for “The one who is righteous will live by faith.”* <sup>12</sup>*But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, “Whoever does the works of the law will live by them.”*

**Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Luke 13:19-29)**

<sup>19</sup>*It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.”* <sup>20</sup>*And again He said, “To what should I compare the kingdom of God?”* <sup>21</sup>*It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”* <sup>22</sup>*Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching as He made His way to Jerusalem.* <sup>23</sup>*Someone asked Him, “Lord, will only a few be saved?”* He said to them, <sup>24</sup>*“Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able.”* <sup>25</sup>*When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then in reply he will say to you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’* <sup>26</sup>*Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’* <sup>27</sup>*But he will say, ‘I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!’* <sup>28</sup>*There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out.* <sup>29</sup>*Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God.*

<p><b><u>SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016</u></b></p>
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**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 SUNDAY, 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.*

## PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:



Like many of you, this past Sunday I witnessed the youth and adults of our parish offer their inspiring Christmas Pageant. For me personally, it *brought to life the Incarnation of our Lord in the very people that we see and worship with each week.* They represent the best of all of us... they freely chose to be part of this effort, and I commend them and all who assisted “behind the scenes.” I also commend those in our parish who “bring to life” the blessed and good news of our Lord’s Incarnation.

**That is the message in everything we do...** whether we realize it or not, we are each called to serve God... not just in the annual Christmas Pageant, but in our worship, service, fellowship, and witness. God grants us the freedom to choose to respond to His call through me, our ministry leaders, our co-workers, and even the visitors and strangers in our midst.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, although we each get to choose *how* and *where* we travel, I pray this coming weekend's commemoration of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ inspires us on our mutual and life-changing journey together. With the Holy Spirit leading us and by us choosing to work together in a spirit of mutual love and mercy, we all have the potential to enter God's eternal Kingdom.

*In closing, I want to affirm that your presence, prayers, and participation are essential and greatly appreciated. Your time, your talents, and your gifts are priceless! **Glory to God!***

## **Christ Is Born! Glorify Him!**

***“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)***

On this our fourteenth Feast of the Holy Nativity of our Lord and on this 637<sup>th</sup> 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!

## **COMMUNITY SCHEDULE**

### **Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve**

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

**5:00 p.m. Orthros in Preparation of the Holy Nativity**

**6:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in preparation for the Holy Nativity of our Lord**

### **Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Morning:**

**7:45 a.m. Orthros of the Holy Nativity**

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

**11:30 a.m. 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.)*

### **Monday, December 26 (Eve of the Feast of St. Stephen the First Martyr):**

**5:00 p.m. Great Vespers Service**

**5:45 p.m. Divine Liturgy (Evening), followed by Community Dinner (please bring non-fasting food)**

### **Sunday, January 1<sup>st</sup> (Sunday after the Nativity of our Lord/Circumcision of our Lord/St. Basil the Great):**

**8:45 a.m. Orthros Service (note later starting time)**

**10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil/Blessing of the Vasilopita (note later starting time)**

***Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!***

*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 τῆς γνώσεως,  
Ἐν αὐτῇ γάρ, οἱ τοῖς ἀστροῖς αὐτρεύοντες  
Ἕν ὑπὸ ἀστέρος ἐδιδάσκοντο  
Σέ προσκυνεῖν τὸν ἥλιον τῆς δικαιοσύνης  
Καί σε γινώσκειν ἐς ὑψους ἀνάτολήν. 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.*

Ἡ Παρθένος σήμερον τὸν ὑπερούσιον τίκτει  
Καί ἡ γῆ τὸ σπήλαιον τῷ ἀπρόσιτῳ προσάγει  
Ἄγγελοι μετὰ ποιμένων δοξολογοῦσι  
Μάγοι δέ μετὰ ἀστέρος ὁδοιποροῦσι  
Δι ἡμᾶς γάρ ἐγεννήθη παιδίον νέον Ὁ 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.

# Feed the Homeless on Christmas...

December 25, 2016, 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](http://www.saintjohnwonderworker.org).

## Stewardship 2017

We thank everyone who has offered your family's 2017 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!*

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