



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

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## St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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

### Liturgical Guide for Sunday, December 20, 2015

**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); Holy Father John of Kronstadt; 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 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 (Fourth Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.110-113):**

It is sung *before* and *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.

### **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 (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 (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!



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Please Join Us to Celebrate the  
Feast of the Holy Nativity!

The Eve of the Feast (Christmas Eve)

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

5:15 p.m. Vespers for the Nativity of our Lord

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

Feast of the Holy Nativity (Christmas Day)

8:00 a.m. Orthros for the Nativity of our Lord

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

11:30 a.m. Feed the Homeless, St. John the Wonderworker Church

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**Stewardship 2016**

We thank all families who have offered their 2016 Stewardship Commitment Card. If you have not done so already, please place your envelope in the basket in the Narthex/entrance area. Extra cards/envelopes are available. *Every parish family is asked to support our Stewardship Program!*

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

And on this 587<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!

## **SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

*Nativity Fast continues through December 24.*

### Sunday, December 20 (Sunday before the Holy Nativity of our Lord):

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy/Memorial Service – Penelope & George Spetsios, 3-months and 39 years, respectively/Coffee Fellowship
- 10:45 a.m. Religious Education Classes (*for all ages*)
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch, Cookie Donation to Cancer Treatment Center of America in Newnan, Caroling at Ashley Park – *see Anna Pelky for details*

### Thursday, December 24 (Christmas Eve Vigil – please join us):

- 4:00 p.m. Great Hours of the Nativity of our Lord
- 5:15 p.m. Vespers of the Nativity of our Lord
- 6:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil for the Nativity Vigil

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

- 8:00 a.m. Orthros
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom for the Nativity of our Lord
- 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.)*

### Saturday, December 26 (Christmas Eve Vigil – please join us):

- 5:30 p.m. Parish Outing to Atlanta Botanical Gardens (a wonderful Evening of fun, lights and fellowship) – *RSVP – Anna Vlachakis by 12/22*

### Sunday, December 27 (Sunday after the Holy Nativity of our Lord/Feast of St. Stephen the 1<sup>st</sup> Martyr/GOYA Winter Youth Rally - Cathedral):

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- 11:00 a.m. Let's EAT! Join us at Broadway Diner, 535 S. Glynn St., Suite 1009, Fayetteville, GA 30214. It's easy – no reservations, Dutch Treat, and open to all...!