



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, February 7, 2016

ON THIS DAY, THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF SAINT MATTHEW, WE REMEMBER Righteous Father Parthenios, Bishop of Lampsakos (4th cent.); Righteous Father Luke the New of Greece (+846); Holy Martyr Theopemptos and his Four Companions; and Holy New Martyr George of Crete. *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. 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 held in the arms of the righteous Symeon, as we sing to You, Alleluia."

2./4. Hymn for the Feast of the Presentation – (Hymnal-pp.212-215):

It is sung before and after the Small Entrance: Rejoice, O woman full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos, for there rose from you the Sun of Justice, Christ our God, who enlightens those in darkness. You too exult and be glad, just and aged Simeon, for you carried in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, who bestows on us the grace of resurrection.

3. Resurrectional Hymn (Third Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.106-109):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord has shown the mighty power of His arm. He has trampled down death by death, becoming the firstborn of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell and has granted to all the world His great mercy.

5. 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.

6. Kontakion of the Presentation of the Lord – (Hymnal-pp.250-253):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: For our salvation You took flesh and You sanctified the Virgin's womb; You blessed the aged Simeon as You lay resting in his arms; and having come to save us all, O Christ our God, to these troubled times, bring Your lasting peace. Give strong and undaunted faith to all Your people, O only lover of mankind.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

<p>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</p>
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Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Mark 16:9-20)

Now after He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. She went out and told those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. But when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. After this He appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them. Later He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and He upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw Him after He had risen. And He said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using My name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." So then the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it. Amen.

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (2 Cor. 6:1-10)

As we work together with Him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.² For He says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!³ We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry,⁴ but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger;⁶ by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love,⁷ truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness

for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Matthew 25:14-30)

¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter?’ ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

MEMORY VERSE *(TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):*

“Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His Name; bring an offering, and come before Him. Worship the LORD in holy splendor;” *(1 Chronicles 16.29)*

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

(Today, I would like to give extra emphasis to our church music. Each week, our chantors and church choir lead us in expressing the beautiful hymns of our faith. After Religious Education today, our Choir Director, Jeanie Ellinas, has asked our Choir Members to attend an important meeting to help move us to the "next level" for offering our best in worshipping God through hymns. The following article, reprinted from the [Archdiocese's Center for Family Care](#) gives us a beautiful testament as to why all of us should consider music not only as a blessing of God, but as His Ministry! Read on! Faithfully yours, +Fr. George)

Music as a Ministry

by Gigi Baba Shadid

“When you make the sign of the cross, you remember that God is the boss.”[\[1\]](#)

This is a simple rhyme and at the same time, a profound truth. It is a reminder that we are not in control, God is. What is it about music and rhyme that attracts us so?

Music is a universal language central to every culture of the world. It has been used to entertain, communicate, educate and inspire. Rhyme, rhythm, song and movement have historically been used as powerful teaching tools that have infused the values, morals and customs of cultures and societies.

Speaking from experience, the best way to get a sleepy or disengaged student to wake up and get excited about learning is to have them move their bodies and sing along in song. Research has proven that music reduces mental fatigue, calms tensions, focuses thinking and greatly impacts creativity.

Here are some more convincing reasons why we should use music to teach our children both at home, at church and at school:

1. The human body is more than 70% water, and water is a perfect conductor of vibration. This is precisely why music has an energizing effect on the body.

2. Learning through music is extremely effective because it is completely brain compatible. Music is auditory, kinesthetic/tactile (movement), and elicits emotion. When song lyrics are made available in the printed form, music also taps the visual modality.
3. Music gets stored in our long-term memory (ALPHA and THETA brain wave states which are more conducive to memory and creativity) – which is why we remember songs.
4. Music simply makes learning easy and more fun!

There is so much deep theology and catechism in our Church hymnology; simply study the hymns of St. Ephrem the Syrian^[2] as an example and be inspired to pray as well as learn about our faith: "The boldness of our love is pleasing to you, O Lord, just as it pleased you that we should steal from your bounty." — *Hymns on Faith* 16:5.

In this regard, we as Orthodox are richly blessed. As for original Orthodox Christian music that children can listen to and sing in a “fun” way through Vacation Bible School(VBS) church school or at home, we are lacking. Our Protestant friends have a wealth of music for children – much of it is good and Bible-based as I discovered from teaching an “Orthodoxized” version of a Christian VBS for many years. However, there were some years I recall teaching the music when the songs were, let’s just say – *lacking substance*. Why aren’t there non-liturgical songs to teach our Orthodox children about the feasts of the Church, about the saints, about icons and making the sign of the cross? My passion is teaching with music, and I felt that God was calling me to do something about it. Hence, “God is the Boss” was written, along with now over 50 songs for Orthodox children of all ages.

The truth is, parents *want* their children to learn about God and about their faith, but many have a lack of knowledge themselves. That is why music is so effective. Kids and parents can listen and together learn and grow in their knowledge and faith in Christ and their love for His holy Church. Liturgical music and original Orthodox music are two kinds of music that speak to the soul.

On our way to evening liturgy for the feast of the Holy Cross, I asked my three children if they knew what the feast of the Holy Cross was about. They were silent. I figured, they needed to know why we were going to church that night and why this feast is important – so I proceeded to ask a few questions. “Do you know the story about who found the cross of Jesus? What are their names? How did they find it?” They remained silent. I then told them to *pay close attention* to the song that they were about to hear and after it is finished I would ask those same questions again. They sat up straight and were really paying attention as the song “Finding the Cross” (from the “*Celebrate the Feasts*” CD) was being played. Afterwards, I could not get them to stop talking and shouting, “Constantine! Helen! There was a dead man and he rose when Jesus’ cross was laid on him!” They asked to play the song again and again until we got to church. They answered more questions and were so excited to learn about the feast. Two days later, my oldest son came to me after church school, beaming with pride. He said he knew all the answers about the feast of the Cross when his teacher asked the class in Sunday school.

How else can we use music in the home with our families?

- As alluded to in the example above, one of the easiest things to do is listen to Orthodox children's music and liturgical music in the car with your kids instead of turning on the radio. Other recommended music can be Bible songs, chanting, and VBS music.
- Chant "Lord Have Mercy" in different languages after each petition during morning and evening prayers.
- Chant also the Trisagion, "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal Have Mercy on us" and the Magnificat "You are honored more than the Cherubim..."

FEAST DAYS:

- Before decorating your Christmas tree, gather your children around the tree and pray The Lord's Prayer. While decorating the tree, play Christmas music or church troparia related to Christmas (YouTube has a wealth of music and videos from which to choose). It is a good thing to have icons and cross ornaments with which to adorn your tree as well.
- At Epiphany, make the traditional fried dough balls^[3] and dip them into a homemade simple syrup while singing the Troparion of Theophany: "When Thou O Lord was baptized in the River Jordan..." Explain that dipping the dough into the syrup reminds us of Jesus being baptized in the Jordan river.
- As a family, dye Easter eggs on the eve of Pascha while singing "Christ is Risen" and other related hymns. You will find it to be a meaningful and joyous to hear your children singing like the angels.

I have personally done these things with my own children and have enjoyed seeing them participate in the feasts of the church through these hands-on activities and through incorporating music. It makes the feasts more meaningful to them as well as memorable. "Train up a child the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). If we engage our children in the life of the Church, there is a high likelihood that these traditions will get passed onto our grandchildren as well; they will not depart from it. Sadly, the opposite is true as well. Liturgical music is a part of our Orthodox Christian culture that we should be passing along to our children and grandchildren.

Fr. Anthony Coniaris writes in his book, Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home, that the home is the first church in which a child learns about Christ, faith and liturgical life. He says, "We need to remember that each home is a *religious* institution; parenting is a *holy calling*, a priesthood" (20). If our home is to be a 'little church' and we the 'priests,' should we not adorn it with icons and fill it with hymns, chants, and songs of praise as we see and hear in church? The hymnology of the Church has always been filled with rich theology and has been teaching her faithful for generations. We now have other types of music as well to supplement that which the

Church gives us. May our homes and lives be filled with the Word of God, both spoken and sung so that one day we can join the holy angels in giving constant praise to God through song.

It's as easy as pressing "play."

Gigi is the wife of Fr. James Shadid and mother to Dimitri (7), Noel (6) and Emil (3). She has a degree in Education from the University of Houston and has worked as a Youth Director of the Antiochian Archdiocese as well as a teacher of both public and parochial schools since 1998. She has produced five educational music CD's since 2004, four of which are Orthodox music for children and adults.

[1] From "God is the Boss" song, "Fruits of the Spirit" CD by G. Shadid.

[2] Ephrem the Syrian Hymns, The Classics of Western Spirituality, Paulist Press

[3] This traditional dough is called "zalabyah" or "awaymat."



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Be sure to check our status for updates and photos.

And on this 594th 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

Sunday, February 7 (16th Sunday of St. Matthew/Souper Bowl of Caring):

- 7:45 am Orthros Service**
- 9:00 am Divine Liturgy & Coffee Fellowship**
- 10:45 am Religious Education Classes (for all ages)**
- 11:30 am Choir Meeting for ALL Choir Members**

Thursday, February 11:

- 6:00 pm Outreach Committee Meeting (Broadway Diner)**
- 6:30 pm Choir Practice – please join us!**
- 7:00 pm Parish Council Fellowship Dinner (Broadway Diner)**

Sunday, February 14 (Sunday of the Canaanite Woman):

- 7:45 am Orthros Service**
- 9:00 am Divine Liturgy & Coffee Fellowship**
- 10:45 am Religious Education Classes (for all ages)**
- 11:45 am Parish Council Meeting**

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!