



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

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## St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

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

### Liturgical Guide for Sunday, August 2, 2015

ON THIS DAY, THE NINTH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW, THE CHURCH COMMEMORATES the Recovery of the Relics of the First Martyr & Archdeacon St. Stephen (+415); Holy Glorious New Martyr Theodore of Dardanelles (+1690); and Phocas the Martyr. *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 (Plagal of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tone) – (Hymnal-pp. 126-7):**

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: From on high You descended, O merciful Lord. You accepted the cross and three days in the tomb to free us from the bondage of sin, O our life and resurrection. Glory to You, O Lord.

### **3. Hymn for St. Stephen– (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.

### **4. 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.

### **5. Kontakion for Feast of Transfiguration – (Hymnal-pp.284-287):**

*It is sung after the Small Entrance.* You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, showing Your disciples as much of Your glory as they could bear, so that when they see You crucified they will know that You suffer freely, and they will tell all the world that You are truly the radiance of the Father.

## **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 20:19-31)**

*“When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After He said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you.’ When He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in His hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in His side, I will not believe.’ A week later His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it in My side. Do not doubt but believe.’ Thomas answered Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in His name.”*

### **Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (1 Cor. 3:9-17)**

<sup>9</sup>*For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.*  
<sup>10</sup>*According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it.* <sup>11</sup>*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.* <sup>12</sup>*Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—* <sup>13</sup>*the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done.* <sup>14</sup>*If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward.* <sup>15</sup>*If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.* <sup>16</sup>*Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?* <sup>17</sup>*If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.*

**Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Matthew 14:22-34)**

*Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds. And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning He came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out His hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.*

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

**"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple."**

*(1 Cor. 3:16-17)*

**You're Invited to Join Us for our  
August Paraklesis Services**

The word "paraklesis" has two meanings: the first is "*consolation*," from which the Holy Spirit is called the "Paraclete," or "Consoler"; the second is "*supplication*" or "*petition*". The Service of the Paraklesis to the Theotokos consists of hymns of *supplication* to obtain *consolation* and courage.

In our Orthodox tradition, it is offered in times of temptation, discouragement or sickness. It also is used every year from August 1- 14, as we prepare for the Feast of the Dormition (Falling Asleep) of the Theotokos.

The theme of the Paraklesis Service is the offering of the petition, “Most Holy Mother of God, intercede for us.” If you have a problem or if something is burdening your soul, if you feel spiritually uneasy and if you are not at peace with yourself and with those around you, then, you should come to our beloved Church during the first fifteen days of August and ask for the intercessions of the Mother of God. Even if you are fortunate enough to be one of those very few who are at peace with themselves and with God, then you who are so blessed should come to these services and thank God and His Blessed Mother for the blessings that they have bestowed upon you and your family.

Since these Paraklesis Services to the Theotokos are primarily petitions for the welfare of the living, in effect, the whole Church is praying for us during the first fifteen days of August, and especially on the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

Avoid letting laziness and apathy cause you to miss this great blessing and inspiration that the Church can bestow upon you. Let the peace and holiness that only the Mother of God can give you enter into your life. “Let us lay aside all earthly cares,” and let us truly, during these fifteen days, participate in the fasting and prayer life of the Church so that we can “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34:8) and so that we may fully experience the spiritual blessings that the Church offers to each of us.

The following dates are when the Paraklesis Service will be offered at St. Christopher Church at 6:00 p.m.: Monday, August 3, Friday, August 7, Monday, August 10, & Wednesday, August 12.

[On Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, Fr. George will offer Great Vespers at 5:00 p.m. and Divine Liturgy/Blessing of the Grapes at 5:45 p.m. for the Feast of the Transfiguration. On Friday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m., he will offer Great Vespers/Service of Blessing of the Five Loaves for the Feast of the Dormition, and on Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, Fr. George will offer Orthros at 7:45 a.m. and Divine Liturgy at 9:00 a.m. for the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos.]

Names for the Health and Well Being of Loved Ones are submitted before the beginning of Paraklesis Services: As noted above, the Paraklesis service is a supplication specifically for the well-being of the living. During the services, Fr. George will pray for the names of the living faithful for whom prayers have been asked. Accordingly, if you have family members, Godparents, Godchildren, and friends who you would like to have remembered at these services, please make a list of their first names and provide it to Fr. George on the following form. He kindly requests you print legibly in either Greek, English, or French.

**The Reason We Fast for the Feast of the Dormition:**

*Parishioners often ask why do we fast before the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos?* In a close-knit family, when we hear word that the matriarch is on her deathbed, we stop what we are doing and adjust our lives. Otherwise important things (like parties, television, luxuries, personal desires) become unimportant; life comes to revolve around the dying matriarch. It is the same with the Orthodox family; word that our matriarch is on her deathbed, could not (or at least should not) have any different effect than the one just mentioned. The Church, through the Paraklesis Service, gives us the opportunity to come to that deathbed and eulogize and entreat the woman who bore God, the vessel of our salvation and our chief advocate at His divine throne. And as, in the earthly family, daily routines and the indulgence in personal wants should come to a halt, fasting, in its full sense (abstaining from food and desires) accomplishes this. Less time in leisure or other pursuits leaves more time for prayer and reflection on she who gave us Christ, and became the first and foremost among our Saints.

In reflecting on the Theotokos and her incomparable life, we see a model Christian life, embodying Christ's retort to the woman who stated that Mary was blessed because she bore Him: "Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it." (Luke 11:28) Mary did this better than anyone. As Fr. Thomas Hopko has stated, she heard the Word of God and kept it so well, that she of all women in history was chosen not only to hear His Word but give birth to it (Him). So while we fast in contemplation of her life, we are simultaneously

preparing ourselves to live a life in imitation of her. That is the purpose of the Dormition Fast. Fr. George hopes you will participate and join us as you're able.

## **PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:**

*As we observe the two-week fast in preparation for the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, let us consider the following attributes of a follower of our Lord. Certainly, our beloved Panagia encompassed all these attributes and we likewise are called to join her.*

A strong person works out every day to keep his body in shape, but a follower of our Lord with strength kneels in prayer to keep his soul in shape.

A strong person isn't afraid of anything, but a follower of our Lord with strength shows her courage in the midst of fear.

A strong person won't let anyone get the best of him, but a follower of our Lord with strength gives the best of himself to everyone.

A strong person walks sure-footedly, but a follower of our Lord with strength knows God will catch her when she falls.

A strong person wears the look of confidence on his face, but a follower of our Lord with strength wears grace.

A strong person has faith that she is strong enough for the journey, but a follower of our Lord with strength has faith that in the journey she will become strong.

*Are we merely strong . . . or do we rely on our faith to provide the strength to overcome life's difficulties and gain victory with our Lord?  
Let us be inspired by Our Lady, the Theotokos, today and always.  
Amen!*

And on this 568<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**

***Fast of the Dormition of the Theotokos begins August 1<sup>st</sup> and continues through August 14<sup>th</sup>***

**Sunday, August 2 (9<sup>th</sup> Sunday of St. Matthew):**

**7:30 am Orthros Service**

**9:00 am Divine Liturgy/Coffee Fellowship**

**Monday, August 3:**

**6:00 pm Paraklesis Service (Evening) (We will pray for the health & welfare of all)**

**Wednesday, August 5 (Eve of Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord):**

**5:00 pm Great Vespers Service**

**5:45 pm Divine Liturgy (Evening)/Blessing of the Grapes/Community Dinner  
(fasting; fish permitted)/Book Study (bring copies of *Being Bread*)**

**Thursday, August 6:**

**6:30 p.m. Choir Practice**

**Friday, August 7:**

**6:00 pm Paraklesis Service (Evening) (We will pray for the health & welfare of all)**

**Sunday, August 9 (10<sup>th</sup> Sunday of St. Matthew):**

**7:45 am Orthros Service**

**9:00 am Divine Liturgy/40 Day Memorial – Helen Hayes**

**11:00 am Parish Council Meeting**

**5:00 pm Parish Outing to Atlanta Braves Game led by GOYA**

**Monday, August 10:**

**6:00 pm Paraklesis Service (Evening) (We will pray for the health & welfare of all)**

**Wednesday, August 12:**

**6:00 pm Paraklesis Service (Evening) (We will pray for the health & welfare of all)**

**Thursday, August 13:**

**6:30 p.m. Choir Practice**

**Friday, August 14 (Eve of Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos):**

**6:00 p.m. Great Vespers Service/Blessing of the Five Loaves**

**Saturday, August 15 (Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos):**

**7:45 am Orthros Service**

**9:00 am Divine Liturgy**

**11:00 am DISC Training for Parish Leadership**

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