

# St. Christopher

## Hellenic Orthodox Church

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## Wednesdays During Great Lent

### *Quick Overview from Fr. George*

### **9th Hour/Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, 6:00 - 7:15 p.m.**

Because the Divine Liturgy is the festive “Banquet of Christ”, a celebration, the ancient practice of the Church came to regard it as out of harmony with the penitential climate of Great Lent. To provide the faithful with the “Food of Immortality”, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts was established. During this service, there is no consecration of the Holy Gifts. This is because they were “pre-consecrated” or “pre-sanctified” during the past Sunday Divine Liturgy, along with the Holy Gifts for Sunday, and then kept covered on the Holy Altar until their distribution during the Presanctified Liturgy.

The Presanctified Liturgy is an ancient liturgy and was attested as an approved custom by the Quinisext Council (692). It is attributed to St. Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome. According to ancient custom, like all of the divine services, the Presanctified Liturgy makes generous use of the Psalms. These are hymns expressing thanksgiving, repentance, petitions, hope, anticipation, wisdom, and prophecies pointing to God coming as Messiah. When Christ came, those Israelites and Gentiles who embraced Him as their Savior became the members of His Body, the Church, the “Israel of God” as St. Paul states (Gal. 6:16).

It was only natural for the Church to continue to include the Psalms in her Christian worship, understanding references to Israel in prophetic fulfillment as referring to the Church, and to Zion and Jerusalem as referring to the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God where God reigns in the midst of His people. In order to prepare for the Presanctified Liturgy, a small service called the Ninth Hour is read before we begin. During this service, the faithful sit (or kneel) quietly and pray. When the Priest comes out and does the dismissal for the Ninth Hour, the Faithful stand and prepare to begin the Presanctified Liturgy. *Those planning to partake of Holy Eucharist in the evening should fast after a light lunch.*

### **Community Family Dinner & Lenten Study Program, 7:15 - 8:30 p.m.**

After church services and our lenten family dinner, please join us in learning from our textbook, ***Thirty Steps to Heaven***. Its spiritual disciplines will enhance your spiritual life, to help you grow and mature in your faith and life, and bring you closer to Christ. ***Please join us!***