



HOLY CROSS

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

859 First Street | Macon, Georgia 31201 | 478.621.0744 (office)
www.holycrossga.org | Facebook: HolyCrossMaconGA

Sunday, December 22, 2024

Sunday before the Nativity

St. Anastasia the Pharmacolytria

Eothinon/Orthros Gospel: Fourth (Luke 24:1-12)

Mode of the Week: First / Πρώτος

QR Codes (scan with smart phone for service texts)

Orthros, part 1



Orthros, part 2



Divine Liturgy



Upcoming Schedule

Today, December 22

9:15am Orthros
 10:30am Divine Liturgy on the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ
 Pageant Preparation for the Youth after Holy Communion
 Artoklasia honoring the Feast Day of St. Anastasia the Great Martyr
 Youth Nativity Pageant after the Divine Liturgy
 Coffee Fellowship in the Parish House after the Pageant
 12:45pm Adult Greek School

Monday, December 23

5:30pm Vespers for the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ

Tuesday, December 24

9:00am Royal Hours and Great Vespers for the Nativity of Christ
 5:30pm Orthros
 6:30pm Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of Christ (Christmas)

Wednesday, December 25

Christmas Day—Office Closed

Sunday, December 29

9:15am Orthros
 10:30am Divine Liturgy on the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ
 Sunday School for the Youth after Holy Communion
 Coffee Fellowship in the Parish House after the Liturgy
 12:45pm Bible Study/Youth Greek School

Wednesday, January 1

New Years Day—Office Closed

6:00pm Orthros
 7:00pm Divine Liturgy on the Feast Day of St. Basil the Great

Friday, January 3

9:30am Royal Hours of Theophany

Saturday, January 4

5:00pm Great Vespers

Sunday, January 5

9:15am Orthros
 10:30am Divine Liturgy on the Eve of Theophany
 40-Day Memorial for Presvytera Kalliopi Vastakis at the end of the Liturgy
 Blessing of the Waters at the end of the Liturgy
 Blessing and Cutting of the Vasilopita
 Coffee Fellowship in the Parish House after the Liturgy
 1:15pm Adult Greek School
 2:00pm Great Vespers for Theophany (Epiphany)

Monday, January 6

9:30am Orthros
 10:30am Divine Liturgy on the Feast Day of Theophany (Epiphany)
 Great Blessing of the Waters at the end of the Liturgy

Tuesday, January 7

9:30am Divine Liturgy on the Synaxis of St. John the Baptist

Upcoming Epistle Readers: (12/29) Helen Troupous, Carter Zoumberis; (1/5) Chad Ridley, Beth Zoumberis
Upcoming PC Member On-Duty: (12/24p) Maria Spicer, Gray Yates; (12/29) Maria Spicer; (1/5) Sarah Drakopoulos
Upcoming Ushers: (12/23) James S.; (12/24a) Sarah D.; (12/24p) Cheryl+ Erick S.; (12/29) Charles G., Joanna P.
Upcoming Video Operators: (12/24pm) David Z.; (12/29) Gray Y./David N.; (1/5) Natalia S.; (1/6) Cristina L.
Fellowship Hosts: (12/29) Nichole Lawrence; (1/5) Vasilopita; (1/12) Georgia Saratsiotis; (1/19) Toulia Tsamolias

Our Parish Hymn of the Holy Cross of Christ:

Save, O Lord, save your people and bless Your inheritance. Give victory to those who battle evil and protect us all by Your Holy Cross.

Σώσον Κύριε τὸν λαόν σου καὶ εὐλόγησον τὴν κληρονομίαν σου, νίκας τοῖς Βασιλεῦσι κατὰ βαρβάρων δωρούμενος καὶ τὸ σὸν φυλάττων διὰ τοῦ Σταυροῦ σου πολίτευμα.

To our Visitors and Guests: We extend a **warm welcome** to all worshipping with us today! While Holy Communion, following ancient practice, is offered only to Orthodox Christians, non-Orthodox may receive the blessed bread (antidoron) offered at the conclusion of the service.
Please join us in the Parish House after the Divine Liturgy for Coffee Fellowship!

Epistle Reading

*Εὐλογητὸς εἶ Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πατέρων
ἡμῶν.*

*Στίχ. Ὅτι δίκαιος εἶ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν, οἷς ἐποίησας
ἡμῖν.*

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*Πρὸς Ἑβραίους Ἐπιστολῆς Παύλου τὸ
ἀνάγνωσμα.*

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Ἀδελφοί, πίστει παρώκησεν Ἀβραάμ εἰς τὴν γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ὡς ἀλλοτρίαν, ἐν σκηναῖς κατοικήσας μετὰ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ τῶν συγκληρονόμων τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῆς αὐτῆς· ἐξεδέχετο γὰρ τὴν τοὺς θεμελίους ἔχουσαν πόλιν, ἧς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ Θεός. Καὶ τί ἔτι λέγω; ἐπιλείπει γὰρ με διηγούμενον ὁ χρόνος περὶ Γεδεών, Βαράκ τε καὶ Σαμψὼν καὶ Ἰεφθάε, Δαυῖδ τε καὶ Σαμουὴλ καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, οἱ διὰ πίστεως κατηγωνίσαντο βασιλείας, εἰργάσαντο δικαιοσύνην, ἐπέτυχον ἐπαγγελιῶν, ἔφραξαν στόματα λεόντων, ἔσβεσαν δύναμιν πυρός, ἔφνυγον στόματα μαχαίρας, ἐνεδυναμώθησαν ἀπὸ ἀσθενείας, ἐγενήθησαν ἰσχυροὶ ἐν πολέμῳ, παρεμβολὰς ἐκλιναν ἀλλοτρίων· ἔλαβον γυναῖκες ἐξ ἀναστάσεως τοὺς νεκροὺς αὐτῶν· ἄλλοι δὲ ἐτυμπανίσθησαν, οὐ προσδεξάμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, ἵνα κρείττονος ἀναστάσεως τύχωσιν· ἕτεροι δὲ ἐμπαυγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πείραν ἔλαβον, ἔτι δὲ δεσμῶν καὶ φυλακῆς ἐλιθάσθησαν, ἐπίσθησαν, ἐπειράσθησαν, ἐν φόνῳ μαχαίρας ἀπέθανον, περιήλθον ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγείοις δέρμασιν, ὑστερούμενοι, θλιβόμενοι, κακουχούμενοι, ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος ὁ κόσμος, ἐν ἐρημίαις πλανώμενοι καὶ ὄρεσι καὶ σπηλαίοις καὶ ταῖς ὄπαῖς τῆς γῆς. Καὶ οὗτοι πάντες μαρτυρηθέντες διὰ τῆς πίστεως οὐκ ἐκομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν, τοῦ Θεοῦ περὶ ἡμῶν κρεῖττόν τι προβλεψαμένου, ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελειωθῶσι.

*Blessed are You, O Lord God of our
fathers.*

*Verse: For You are righteous in all You
did for us. (Prayer of Azariah)*

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*The reading is from Paul's Letter to the
Hebrews. (11:9-10, 32-40)*

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Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall 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, enforced justice, received promises, stopped 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. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated — of whom the world was not worthy — wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

The Holy Gospel Reading according to St. Matthew (1:1-25)

Sunday before the Nativity

Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ. Ἀβραάμ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰσαὰκ, Ἰσαὰκ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ, Ἰούδας δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Φαρὲς καὶ τὸν Ζαρά ἐκ τῆς Θάμαρ, Φαρὲς δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἑσρώμ, Ἑσρώμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀράμ, Ἀράμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀμιναδάβ, Ἀμιναδάβ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ναασσών, Ναασσών δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Σαλμών, Σαλμών δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Βοὸς ἐκ τῆς Ῥαχάβ, Βοὸς δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ὠβὴδ ἐκ τῆς Ῥούθ, Ὠβὴδ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰεσσαί, Ἰεσσαὶ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Δαυῖδ τὸν βασιλέα. Δαυῖδ δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐγέννησε τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου, Σολομῶν δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ροβοάμ, Ροβοάμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀβιά, Ἀβιά δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀσά, Ἀσά δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωσαφάτ, Ἰωσαφάτ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωράμ, Ἰωράμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ὀζιαν, Ὀζίας δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωάθαμ, Ἰωάθαμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἄχαζ, Ἄχαζ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἐζεκιαν, Ἐζεκιὰς δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Μανασσῆ, Μανασσῆς δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀμών, Ἀμών δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωσιαν, Ἰωσίας δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰεχονίαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλώνας. Μετὰ δὲ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλώνας Ἰεχονίας ἐγέννησε τὸν Σαλαθιήλ, Σαλαθιήλ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ζοροβάβελ, Ζοροβάβελ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀβιούδ, Ἀβιούδ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἐλιακεῖμ, Ἐλιακεῖμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀζώρ, Ἀζώρ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Σαδώκ, Σαδώκ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀχειμ, Ἀχειμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἐλιούδ, Ἐλιούδ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἐλεάζαρ, Ἐλεάζαρ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ματθάν, Ματθάν δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός. Πᾶσαι οὖν αἱ γενεαὶ ἀπὸ Ἀβραάμ ἕως Δαυῖδ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ Δαυῖδ ἕως τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλώνας γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλώνας ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες. Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡ γέννησις οὕτως ἦν. μνηστευθεῖσις γὰρ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Μαρίας τῷ Ἰωσήφ, πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εὗρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου. Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἄνθρωπος αὐτῆς, δίκαιος ὢν καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν παραδειγματίσαι, ἐβουλήθη λάθρα ἀπολύσαι αὐτήν. ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος Κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων· Ἰωσήφ υἱὸς Δαυῖδ, μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαριάμ τὴν γυναῖκά σου· τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ Πνεύματος ἁγίου ἐστὶν Ἁγίου. τέξεται δὲ υἱὸν καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν· αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν. Τοῦτο δὲ ὄλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῆι τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσουσι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ, ὃ ἐστὶ μεθερμηνεύμενον μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ Θεός. Διεγερθεῖς δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἐποίησεν ὡς προσέταξεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος Κυρίου καὶ παρέλαβε τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτήν ἕως οὗ ἔτεκε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς τὸν πρωτότοκον, καὶ ἐκάλεσε τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, 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 Ammin'adab, and Ammin'adab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Bo'az by Rahab, and Bo'az the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uri'ah, and Solomon the father of Rehobo'am, and Rehobo'am the father of Abi'jah, and Abi'jah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehosh'aphat, and Jehosh'aphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzzi'ah, and Uzzi'ah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezeki'ah, and Hezeki'ah the father of Manas'seh, and Manas'seh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josi'ah, and Josi'ah the father of Jechoni'ah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoni'ah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerub'babel, and Zerub'babel the father of Abi'ud, and Abi'ud the father of Eli'akim, and Eli'akim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eli'ud, and Eli'ud the father of Elea'zar, and Elea'zar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Joseph, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne her firstborn son; and he called his name Jesus.

HOLY CROSS

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Theodore Ehmer

Προϊστάμενος/Presiding Priest

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Office Days: Tuesday through Friday; call or email Fr. for appointment

Holy Confession: call or email Fr. to schedule

Bulletin for the week of December 22, 2024

Ushers on Duty: Cleo Bennette, Charles Glotzbach

Video: Joanna P.

Altar Servers: All Adult/Youth Servers

Epistle Readers: Pete Tsamolias (Greek); James Scarborough (English)

Fellowship Host (Thank You!): Christine and Ron Sprouse

PC Member On-Duty: Sarah Drakopoulos

Today our Holy Orthodox Church commemorates:

- + Sunday before the Nativity (the recounting of the Genealogy of Christ)

On the Sunday that occurs on or immediately after the eighteenth of this month, we celebrate all those who from ages past have been well-pleasing to God, beginning from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as the Evangelist Luke hath recorded historically (Luke 3:23-38); we also commemorate the Prophets and Prophetesses, and especially the Prophet Daniel and the Holy Three Children.

- + The Holy Great Martyr Anastasia (Αναστασία) Pharmakolytria (+290)

This Saint, who was from Rome, was a most comely, wealthy, and virtuous maiden, the daughter of Praepextatus and Fausta. It was her mother who instructed her in the Faith of Christ. The Saint was joined to a man named Publius Patricius, who was prodigal in life and impious in disposition, but she was widowed after a short time. Henceforth, she went about secretly to the dwellings of the poor and the prisons where the Martyrs of Christ were, and brought them whatever was needed for their daily subsistence. She washed their wounds and loosed them from their fetters, and consoled them in their anguish. Also, because the Saint, through her intercessions, has healed many from the ill effects of spells, potions, poisons, and other harmful substances, she has received the name "Deliverer from Potions." Since the fame of her deeds had spread about, she was arrested by Diocletian's minions, and after enduring many torments she was put to death by fire in the year 290.

- + The Holy Martyr Chrysogonos (Χρυσογόνοσ) (+290)
- + The Holy Martyr Theodota (Θεοδοτή) and her children (+304)
- + The Holy Martyr Zoilos (Ζωίλοσ) (+304)
- + Our Father among the Saints, Hunger of Utrecht (+856)

Through the intercessions of Your Saints, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.



Variable Hymns of the Day in the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (pg. 8 in the Small Book/pg. 37 in the Hymnal):

- Weekly Resurrectional Hymn (Του λίθου σφραγισθέντος, First Mode):

The stone having been sealed by the Pharisees and chief priests, and Your all-immaculate body being guarded by soldiers, You rose on the third day, O Lord and Savior, granting life unto the world. Then the powers of the heavens cried out to You, O Giver of Life, and shouted, "Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your eternal rule! Glory to Your plan for saving us, only benevolent God!" (Sung before and after the Small Entrance, Greek Text found in hymnal on pg. 98)

- Hymn of the Forefeast of the Nativity (Ετοιμάζον Βηθλεέμ, Fourth Mode):

O Bethlehem, prepare, Eden is opened unto all. And be ready, Ephrata, for the Tree of life has in the grotto blossomed forth from the Virgin. Indeed her womb is shown to be spiritually a Paradise, in which is found the God-planted Tree. And if we eat from it we shall live, and shall not die, as did Adam of old. Christ is born, so that He might raise up the formerly fallen image. (Greek text found in hymnal on pg. 190)

- Hymn of the Fathers (Μεγάλα τα της πίστεως, Second Mode):

Magnificent are the accomplishments of faith! The holy Three Servants greatly rejoiced, as they stood in the fountain of fire, as if beside the still waters; and the Prophet Daniel appeared to be a shepherd of lions, as if they were sheep. At their entreaties, O Christ God, save our souls. (Greek text found in hymnal on pg. 194)

- Hymn of the Holy Cross (Σώσον Κύριε, First Mode):

Save, O Lord, save your people and bless Your inheritance. Give victory to those who battle evil and protect us all by Your Holy Cross.

- The Kontakion of the Preparation for the Nativity of Christ, Η Παρθένος σήμερα, Third Mode):

On this day the Virgin Maid goes to the grotto to give birth to the pre-eternal Word in an ineffable manner. Dance for joy, all the inhabited earth, on hearing. Glorify along with Angels and with the shepherds Him who willed that He appear as a newborn Child, the pre-eternal God. (Greek Text found in hymnal on pg. 240)

Guidance, Prayer Requests, and Announcements

This Week's Daily

Scripture Readings and Fasting Guidance:

Sunday, December 22: St. Anastasia—Wine+Oil: Luke 24:1-12; Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40; Matthew 1:1-25

Monday, December 23:—Strict Fast:

I Timothy 5:1-10; Mark 10:46-52

Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve—Strict Fast:

Hebrews 1:1-12; Luke 2:1-20

Wednesday, December 25: Christmas—No Fasting:

Matthew 1:18-25; Galatians 4:4-7; Matthew 2:1-12

Thursday, December 26: Synaxis of the Theotokos—

No Fasting: Hebrews 2:11-18; Matthew 2:13-23

Friday, December 27: St. Stephen the First Martyr—

No Fasting: Acts 6:8-15, 7:1-5, 47-60; Matthew 21:33-42

Saturday, December 28—No Fasting:

I Timothy 6:11-16; Matthew 12:15-21

Prayer Requests:

Metropolitan Alexios, Fr. Symeon (mission priest supported by our parish), Fr. Mike, Panteleimon, Michael, Kassiani, Dimitrios, Georgia, Pavlos, Maria, Betty, Irene, Valerie, Dianna, Jeannie, Dawn, Kenneth, Mary, Kay, Helen, Nikki, Austin, Kiley, Garrett, Carolina, Maria, Laurie, Lindsey, Randy, Marina, Effie, Christina, Ashley, Brian, Bessie, Katerina, Link, Virginia, Karl, Colin, Mitch, Rinne, Michael, Christian, Paul, Lucas, Leo, Barry, Nicholas, Jude, Kevin, Andy, Karen, Vera, Adam

Prayers for those recently reposed:

Cheryl (+November 17). Presvytera Kalliopi (+November 24), Claudie (+December 2)

Prayers for expecting mothers:

Katina B., Julia E., Schyler J.

Prayers for Military Personnel and Their Families:

Aubriana Butchko, Kyle Glotzbach, Robert Ice, Aaron Vrahiotes, Aleksander Zajac

Prayers for our Catechumens and Inquirers into the Orthodox Church:

Alexander, Bobbie, Dakota, Hannah, Jessica, Mary Elizabeth, Mary Emma, Nate, Sophia, Sebastian, Susan, Tammy and pray for those who are seeking Christ and His Church!

Weekly Wisdom of the Fathers:

St. Ambrose of Milan (+397) instructing the faithful about the mystery of the birth of our Lord: "Why is it hard to believe that Mary gave birth in a way contrary to the law of natural birth and remained a virgin, when contrary to the law of nature the sea looked at Him and fled, and the waters of the Jordan returned to their source (Ps. 113:3). Is it past belief that a virgin gave birth when we read that a rock issued water (Ex. 17:6), and the waves of the sea were made solid as a wall (Ex. 14:22)? Is it past belief that a Man came from a virgin when a rock bubbled forth a flowing stream (Ex. 20:11), iron floated on water (4 Kings 6:6), a Man walked upon the waters (Mt. 14:26)? If the waters bore a Man, could not a virgin give birth to a man? What Man? Him of Whom we read: '...the Lord shall be known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day; and they shall offer sacrifices, and shall vow vows to the Lord, and pay them' (Is. 19:20).

In the Old Testament a Hebrew virgin (Miriam) led an army through the sea (Ex. 15:21); in the New Testament a king's daughter (the Virgin Mary) was chosen to be the heavenly entrance to salvation."

Upcoming Celebrations This Week

Name Days—Chronia Polla, Many Years!

Sunday before the Nativity: Rebekah Bradford, Hazel Ruth Dunbar, Holly Economopoulos

December 22: Presvytera Stacey Ehmer

December 24: Eugenia Zoe Jones

December 25: Christina Danforth, Violet Christina Danforth, Gloria Anastasia Dixon, Chrissy Holland, Christina Lekas, Christian Morris, Christine Nicholas, Chrissy Zdrakas

Birthdays—Happy Birthday!

December 26: John Cacavias

December 27: Washington Morris

Anniversaries—Congratulations!

December 27: Kostas and Katerina Iakovidis

(If you have a celebration that did not make it into the bulletin, please e-mail Fr. Theodore!)

Announcements:

* **Adult Greek School** will take place at approximately 12:45pm/after the Pageant in the Chapel this afternoon.

* **Youth:** Thank you to all who participate in the Christmas Caroling this past week. We have the Nativity Pageant after the Liturgy today. May God bless our youth! Thank you to the youth and their parents who are participating and to Presvytera Stacey for organizing the Pageant.

* **On Christmas Eve**, we will have the Orthros (5:30pm) and Divine Liturgy (6:30pm) to celebrate the Nativity of Christ. After the Liturgy, we will have a Pot-Luck in the Parish House to break the fast as a Church Family. Please plan on attending and bringing an hor d'oeuvre to share if you are able!

* **Iconography Project:** We are kindly asking each parishioner to submit a minimum of five names of friends and family along with addresses to help build our database of those who may want to support our project. To submit names, please scan this QR code or speak with Emily Dermatas. Please be sure to pick up a trifold in the bookstore as well!



* **Fr. Theodore will be out of town** visiting family this week from December 25 to January 1. If you have an emergency, let him know by cell phone in order to arrange pastoral care.

* Please keep an eye out for an email that will be sent regarding **House Blessings** after the Feast of Theophany at the beginning of January. Once again, house blessings will be arranged by area and there will be an online sign-up.

* The **Enthronement** of our new Metropolitan of Atlanta, Metropolitan Sevastianos, will be taking place on Saturday, January 25 at 10:00am at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Atlanta. More details to come!

Merry Christmas! Καλά Χριστούγεννα!