



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org

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St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, June 24, 2018

ON THIS DAY, WE COMMEMORATE the Nativity of the Honorable, Glorious, Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist, John; St. Elizabeth, Mother of the Forerunner; Panagiotis the New-Martyr; and Athanasios Parios. *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 (Third Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.106-109):

It is sung *before* and *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.

3. Hymn Commemorating St. John the Baptist – (see handout):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance. O Prophet and Forerunner of the appearance of Christ, with longing we honor you, although we have not the means of extolling you worthily. Your birth, which was exalted and most glorious, ended the barrenness of your mother and the muteness of your father; and unto the world it announced the Incarnation of God the Word.

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 – (Hymnal-pp.224-227):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: O unfailing protection of Christians, and our faithful advocate before the Creator: though we are sinners, do not ignore our entreaty; but in your goodness, grant your timely help to us who appeal to you in faith. Quickly make intercession; on our behalf make speedy supplication, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

6. Communion Hymn – (Hymnal-pp.328):

On the occasion of today's feast, the following hymn is sung instead of "Aineite" or "Praise the Lord": "The memory of the righteous will endure forever. (Ps. 111[112]). Alleluia."

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 (Luke 24:1-12)

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Then they remembered His words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Epistle Reading (Romans 13:11 – 14:4)

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

14Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Gospel Reading (Luke 1:1-25, 57-68, 76, 80)

1Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, ²just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. ⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. ⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷With the spirit and power of Elijah he

will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”¹⁸ Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.”¹⁹ The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.”²⁰ But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.”²¹ Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary.²² When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak.²³ When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.²⁴ After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said,²⁵ “This is what the Lord has done for me when He looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.”⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown His great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father.⁶⁰ But his mother said, “No; he is to be called John.”⁶¹ They said to her, “None of your relatives has this name.”⁶² Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him.⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And all of them were amazed.⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God.⁶⁵ Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea.⁶⁶ All who heard them pondered them and said, “What then will this child become?” For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.⁶⁷ Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:⁶⁸ “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has looked favorably on His people and redeemed them.⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways,⁸⁰ The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

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

“Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.” (*Matthew 9:13*)

**Nativity of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner
& Baptist John** (*continued from back cover*)



We do not know how the Lord God fed him, how He protected him from the wild animals, neither do we know how the young Forerunner learned to eat locusts and wild honey. But we firmly believe that for God all things are possible. See, therefore, that from the beginning, the life of him who would be called greatest of “those born of women” (Matt. 11:11) was an unprecedented and unheard of life. He remained in the desert totally by himself until thirty years of age. What did he do in the desert? What did he occupy himself with? He did not have any handiwork, and didn't have books, neither did he know letters.



The biographies of the great philosophers, such as Descartes and Kant, relate that these men spent whole days and nights sitting in their armchairs, engrossed in their thoughts. Philosophy is deep, but deeper still is theological contemplation, the greatest form of prayer, which the Holy Fathers call noetic prayer. The depth of communion in Spirit which the saints have with God is inconceivably great. For 91 years the Venerable Paul of Thebes lived in the desert unknown to the world, having communion only with God. For entire nights until the rising of the sun Arsenios the Great stood with hands lifted up to heaven. For a thousand days and a thousand nights the Venerable Seraphim of Sarov prayed to God on a slanted rock. Likely the same was the work of John the Forerunner during his stay in the desert.

In the ceaseless contemplation of God and of the fortunes of the world, in deep communion of prayer with God, his spirit grew and his understanding of the ways of salvation increased, to which he would teach the people who were being lost in their sins. He would have to change their thoughts and the senses of the people, to make them deeper, to urge them to repent and to change their perverted and evil ways.

This was roughly the purpose which He preordained for His great Forerunner: to prepare the path for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is precisely why all his life, from a young age until the moment he began preaching on the banks of the Jordan River, was unprecedented and unheard of. This preaching of repentance drew towards him thousands of people submerged in the futility of worldly life.

Let us glorify and thank our Lord and God, Who sent into our sinful world the greatest of all, the ascetic and preacher of higher truth, the Forerunner John. And on this blessed day which is full of grace, his day of birth, let us bend our knees and our hearts, praising and glorifying Him. Amen.

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

The official start of summer this year was Thursday, June 21st. *I always like to remind myself of five great things we could do during the summer time that I read in the Orthodox Observer (May, 2010). They include: 1) You have time to read books about your faith. Try reading as much as you can of the Bible! 2)*

Church is quieter – take advantage of that – listen to God and prayer – fully follow the Divine Liturgy. 3) Summer Camp! Faith, fun, fellowship.... What more could you ask for!? 4) Vacation time can mean checking out other Orthodox Churches throughout the U.S. 5) You can really focus on your faith without the chaos of school, sports, peer pressure! *May you have a blessed summer with your family and friends.*

On this the 711th 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!



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COMMUNITY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, July 24 (Nativity of the Forerunner John the Baptist):

7:45 a.m. Orthros Service

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy/Trisagion – Bishop Iacovos of Catania

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...!

Tuesday, July 26:

8:00 p.m. Brief Parish Council Zoom Meeting (1 hour)

Thursday, July 28:

5:00 p.m. Great Vespers

5:45 p.m. Divine Liturgy/Community Dinner (oil, wine, fish permitted)

Sunday, July 1 (5th Sunday of St. Matthew):

7:15 a.m. Orthros Service (note earlier start time)*

8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy (note earlier start time)*

9:45 a.m. Coffee Fellowship Reception

**This enables Fr. George to travel to Boston for Clergy Laity Congress.*

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!