



**Great & Holy Pascha, April 16, 2023**



## GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

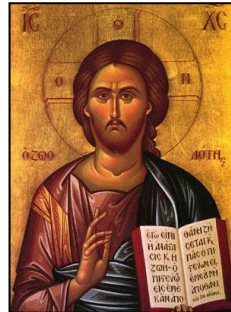
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: [www.patriarchate.org](http://www.patriarchate.org)

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: [www.atlmetropolis.org](http://www.atlmetropolis.org)

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: [www.saintchristopherhoc.org](http://www.saintchristopherhoc.org)

### St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210  
Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

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

### **Liturgical Guide for Sunday, April 16, 2023**

ON THE HOLY AND GREAT SUNDAY OF PASCHA WE CELEBRATE THE VERY LIFE-BEARING RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. WE ALSO COMMEMORATE Agape, Chionia, and Irene, the Holy Martyrs Righteous Amphilochios of Patmos; & Leonidas and Charissa, Nike, Galene, Kallida, Nounenchia, Vasilissa, and Theodora the Martyrs. *To Him be the glory and the dominion to the ages of ages. Amen. Through the holy intercessions of the saints, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

## **Welcome to our Parish**

We welcome our parishioners who are attending services in person today and we also are grateful for those who are viewing our online video streaming at home. Parishioners and visitors who are sick are asked to remain at home to recover and rest. ***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 DURING DIVINE LITURGY**

### **1./2./4./10./11. Special Hymn for the Feast of Pascha** *(our Lord's passover from death to life):*

*Sung three times after the opening of the Divine Liturgy, before and after the Small Entrance, after the distribution of Holy Communion and at the close of the liturgy: Christ is risen from the dead, by death, trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.*

### **3. Small Entrance Exclamation of the Priest:**

*On the occasion of the Feast of Pascha, the Priest intones the following at the Small Entrance: "In your choirs, bless the Lord, you of Israel's wellspring. Save us, O Son of God, who did rise from the dead, we sing to You: Alleluia!"*

### **5. Hymn for Pascha – (not in Hymnal):**

*Sung after the Small Entrance: When the women with Mary had come before dawn, and they found that the stone had been rolled away from the sepulcher, they heard from the Angel, "Why do you seek among the dead, as a mortal man, the One Who exists in everlasting light? See the grave clothes in the sepulcher. Run and proclaim to the world that the Lord has risen and put death to death; for He is the Son of God Who saves the human race.*

### **6. Kontakion for Pascha – (Hymnal-pp.274-277):**

*Sung after the Small Entrance: Into the grave You descended, Immortal One, yet You destroyed the power of Hades, and as victor You arose, O Christ our God; You proclaimed to the myrrh-bearing women a greeting of joy, You*

brought peace to Your holy apostles, and to the fallen You granted resurrection.

### **7. Trisagion Hymn – (Hymnal-pp.292-293):**

*On the occasion of today's feast, we sing the following hymn instead of the Trisagion hymn: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves in Christ. Alleluia. (3)"*

### **8. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (Hymnal-pp.304-307):**

*Today, the following hymn is sung instead of "Axion Estin" or "Truly it is proper to call you blessed...": The Angel cried out to the woman full of grace: Rejoice, O Pure Virgin; again I say, rejoice, for your Son is risen from the tomb on the third day. Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you. Exult and be glad, O Zion. Be radiant, pure Theotokos, in the resurrection of your Son.*

### **9. Communion Hymn – (Hymnal-pp.318-319):**

*On the occasion of today's feast, the following hymn is sung instead of "Aineite" or "Praise the Lord": Receive the Body of Christ; drink from the font of immortality.*

## **SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S 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. Chrysostom	— St. John
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### **Epistle Reading (Acts 1:1-8)**

*In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen. After His suffering He presented Himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, He ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," He said, "is what you have heard from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they asked Him, "Lord, is this the time*

*when You will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

### **Gospel Reading (John 1:1-17)**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him; yet the world did not know Him. He came to what was His own, and His own people did not accept Him. But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to Him and cried out, “This was He of Whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because He was before me.’”) From His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

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

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* (John 1:1)

## **HOLY PASCHA: The Resurrection of Our Lord**

*(cont. from back cover)*

***“Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” (Rev. 5: 12)***

## THE FEAST OF FEASTS

The Christian faith is celebrated in the liturgy of the Church. True celebration is always a living participation. It is not a mere attendance at services. It is communion in the power of the event being celebrated. It is God's free gift of joy given to spiritual men as a reward for their self-denial. It is the fulfillment of spiritual and physical effort and preparation. The resurrection of Christ, being the center of the Christian faith, is the basis of the Church's liturgical life and the true model for all celebration. This is the chosen and holy day, first of Sabbaths, king and lord of days, the feast of feasts, holy day of holy days. On this day we bless Christ forevermore. (Irmos 8, Paschal Canon).

## PREPARATION

Twelve weeks of preparation precede the *"feast of feasts."* A long journey which includes five pre-lenten Sundays, six weeks of Great Lent and finally Holy Week is made. The journey moves from the self-willed exile of the prodigal son to the grace-filled entrance into the new Jerusalem, coming down as a bride beautifully adorned for her husband. (Rev. 21:2) *Repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and study are the means by which this long journey is made.*

Focusing on the veneration of the Cross at its midpoint, the lenten voyage itself reveals that the joy of the resurrection is achieved only through the Cross. "Through the cross joy has come into all the world," we sing in one paschal hymn. And in the paschal troparion, we repeat again and again that Christ has trampled down death—by death! Saint Paul writes that the name of Jesus is exalted above every name because He first emptied Himself, taking on the lowly form of a servant and being obedient even to death on the Cross (Phil. 2:5-11). The road to the celebration of the resurrection is the self-emptying crucifixion of Lent. Pascha is the *passover* from death to life.

*Yesterday I was buried with Thee, O Christ.*

*Today I arise with Thee in Thy resurrection.*

*Yesterday I was crucified with Thee:*

*Glorify me with Thee, O Savior, in Thy kingdom (Ode 3, Paschal Canon).*

## THE PROCESSION

The divine services of the night of Pascha commence near midnight of Holy Saturday. At the Ninth Ode of the Canon of Nocturn, the Priest, already vested in his brightest robes, removes the Holy Shroud from the tomb and carries it to the altar table, where it remains until the leave-taking of Pascha. The faithful stand in darkness. Then, one by one, they

light their candles from the candle held by the Priest and form a great procession out of the church. Choir, servers, Priest, and people, led by the bearers of the cross, banners, icons and Gospel book, circle the church. The bells are rung incessantly, and the angelic hymn of the resurrection is chanted.

The procession comes to a stop before the principal doors of the church. Before the closed doors the Priest and the people sing the troparion of Pascha, *"Christ is risen from the dead..."*, many times. Even before entering the church the Priest and people exchange the paschal greeting: *"Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!"* This segment of the paschal services is extremely important. It preserves in the experience of the Church the primitive accounts of the resurrection of Christ as recorded in the Gospels. The angel rolled away the stone from the tomb not to let a biologically revived but physically entrapped Christ walk out, but to reveal that *"He is not here; for He has risen, as He said"* (Matt. 28:6).

In the Paschal Canon we sing:

*Thou didst arise, O Christ, and yet the tomb remained sealed, as at Thy birth the Virgin's womb remained unharmed; and Thou has opened for us the gates of paradise (Ode 6).*

Finally, the procession of light and song in the darkness of night, and the thunderous proclamation that, indeed, Christ is risen, fulfill the words of the Evangelist John: *"The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it"* (John 1:5).

The doors are opened and the faithful re-enter. The church is bathed in light and adorned with flowers. It is the heavenly bride and the symbol of the empty tomb:

*Bearing life and more fruitful than paradise  
Brighter than any royal chamber,  
Thy tomb, O Christ, is the fountain of our resurrection (Paschal Hours).*

## ORTHROS

Orthros commences immediately. The risen Christ is glorified in the singing of the beautiful canon of Saint John of Damascus. The paschal greeting is repeatedly exchanged. Near the end of Orthros the paschal verses are sung. They relate the entire narrative of the Lord's resurrection. They conclude with the words calling us to actualize among each other the forgiveness freely given to all by God:

*This is the day of resurrection.  
Let us be illumined by the feast.*

*Let us embrace each other.  
Let us call “brothers” even those who hate us,  
And forgive all by the resurrection. . .*

The sermon of Saint John Chrysostom is read by the celebrant. The sermon was originally composed as a baptismal instruction. It is retained by the Church in the Paschal services because everything about the night of Pascha recalls the Sacrament of Baptism: the language and general terminology of the liturgical texts, the specific hymns, the vestment color, the use of candles and the great procession itself. Now the sermon invites us to a great reaffirmation of our baptism: *to union with Christ in the receiving of Holy Communion.*

*If any man is devout and loves God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. . . the table is fully laden; feast you all sumptuously. . . the calf is fatted, let no one go hungry away. . .*

## **THE DIVINE LITURGY**

The sermon announces the imminent beginning of the Divine Liturgy. The altar table is fully laden with the divine food: the Body and Blood of the risen and glorified Christ. No one is to go away hungry. The service books are very specific in saying that only he who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ eats the true Pascha. The Divine Liturgy, therefore, normally follows immediately after Paschal Orthros. Foods from which the faithful have been asked to abstain during the lenten journey are blessed and eaten only after the Divine Liturgy.

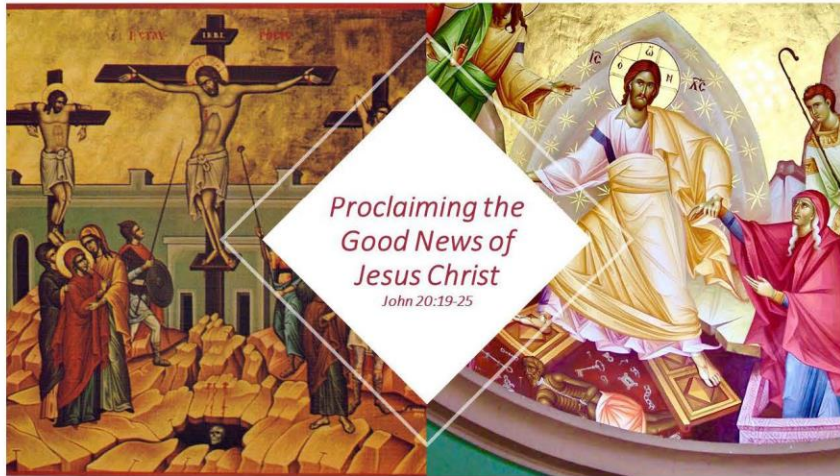
## **THE DAY WITHOUT EVENING**

Pascha is the inauguration of a new age. It reveals the mystery of the eighth day. It is our taste, in this age, of the new and unending day of the Kingdom of God. Something of this new and unending day is conveyed to us in the length of the paschal services, in the repetition of the paschal order for all the services of Bright Week, and in the special paschal features retained in the services for the forty days until Ascension. Forty days are, as it were, treated as one day. Together they comprise the symbol of the new time in which the Church lives and toward which she ever draws the faithful, from one degree of glory to another.

*O Christ, great and most holy Pascha.  
O Wisdom, Word and Power of God,*

*grant that we may more perfectly partake of Thee in the never-ending day of Thy kingdom*  
(Ninth Ode, Paschal Canon).

*The V. Rev. Paul Lazor, New York, 1977*





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On this the 951<sup>st</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** *(CHECK WEB CALENDAR FOR MORE...)*

### **Sunday, April 16 (Great & Holy Pascha):**

Midnight    Proclamation of the Resurrection of Christ  
12:30 a.m.    Resurrection Divine Liturgy  
10:00 a.m.    Great Vespers of Agape (*Resurrection Gospel proclaimed in 18 languages*), followed by Community Easter Egg Hunt at Church

**Bright Week is Fast Free**

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

Thank you for  
your gifts of  
time, talents,  
and treasures...  
today and  
always!

Christ is Risen  
Truly He is Risen!

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη!  
Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη!

Хрістосъ воскресе!  
Воістинѣ  
воскресе!



SAINT



# CHRISTOPHER'S EASTER EGG HUNT

Sunday, April 16<sup>th</sup>

In the playground area following  
the Agape Service

Children under the age of 12 are invited to bring their  
baskets and JOIN THE FUN.

Anyone wishing to donate filled eggs please bring them  
before or to the Agape Service.

Contact Marian (RJ's Mom) at 678-877-4335 or Susan  
at 678-877-9115 with any questions!



## HOLY PASCHA: The Resurrection of Our Lord

"Enjoy ye all the feast of faith; receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness." (*Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom*)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the center of the Christian faith. Saint Paul says that if Christ is not raised from the dead, then our preaching and faith are in vain (I Cor. 15:14). Indeed, without the resurrection there would be no Christian preaching or faith. The disciples of Christ would have remained the broken and hopeless band which the Gospel of John describes as being in hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They went nowhere and preached nothing until they met the risen Christ, the doors being shut (John 20: 19). Then they touched the wounds of the nails and the spear; they ate and drank with Him. The resurrection became the basis of everything they said and did (Acts 2-4): "... for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Luke 24:39).

The resurrection reveals Jesus of Nazareth as not only the expected Messiah of Israel, but as the King and Lord of a new Jerusalem: a new heaven and a new earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . the holy city, new Jerusalem. And I heard a great voice from the throne saying "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. . . He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." (Rev. 21:1-4).

In His death and resurrection, Christ defeats the last enemy, death, and thereby fulfills the mandate of His Father to subject all things under His feet (I Cor. 15:24-26). - Very Rev. Paul Lazor (*Reprinted from oca.org; reflection continued inside bulletin*)

**ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ! ΑΛΗΘΩΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!**  
**CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!**

*+Fr. George Tsahakis*

