



**Liturgical Guide for Sunday, January 7, 2024**



## GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

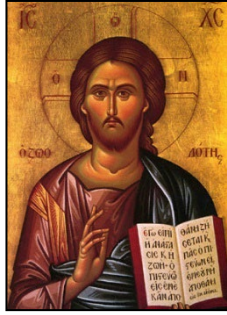
*Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople:* [www.patriarchate.org](http://www.patriarchate.org)

*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, January 7, 2024**

**ON THIS DAY, THE SUNDAY FOLLOWING THE FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, WE REMEMBER THE SYNAXIS (COLLECTIVE CELEBRATION) OF JOHN, THE HOLY GLORIOUS PROPHET, BAPTIST, AND FORERUNNER. We also remember Cedd, Bishop of Scotland and Fursey, Abbot of Lagny. *Through the intercessions of Your Forerunner, O Christ our God, have mercy 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. Hymn for Second Antiphon – (Hymnal-p.28):**

*On the occasion of Theophany feast, we sing the following hymn instead of the regular Soson imas, "Save us, O Son of God": "Save us, O Son of God, Who was baptized in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist, as we sing to You, Alleluia."*

### **2./4./11. Hymn of the Theophany of our Lord – (Hymnal-pp.208-211):**

*This hymn is sung before and after the Small Entrance, and instead of Ithomen to fos, "We have seen the true light" after the distribution of Holy Communion): "At Your baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest, for the Father's voice bore You witness, by calling You His beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of a dove, confirmed the truth of the Father's Word. O Christ our God, You have appeared to us and enlightened the world. Glory to You."*

### **3. Resurrectional Hymn (Plagal of the Second Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.118-121):**

*It is sung before and after the Small Entrance: The angelic powers appeared at Your tomb, the soldiers guarding it became as dead men, and Mary stood at Your grave seeking Your most pure body. But You made hell a captive; You were untouched by its might. You came to the Virgin and granted life. O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You.*

### **5. Hymn for St. John the Baptist – (not in Hymnal):**

*It is sung at the end of Orthros and after the Small Entrance. Remembrance by the just is praiseworthy, but being witness of the Lord suffices you, O Forerunner. A Prophet in truth and most revered, you have been revealed and approved worthy to baptize Him Whom you did proclaim. Therefore, as you are champion of the*

Truth, rejoicing that even to Hades is proclaimed, that God is manifested in the flesh, the sacrifice, for the sins of the world, and granting to us, the great mercy.

**6. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):**

*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.

**7. Kontakion of the Holy Theophany of our Lord – (Hymnal-p.-248-249):**

This hymn is sung *after* the Small Entrance: “You have revealed Yourself to the world today, and Your light shines forth on us, who sing Your praise with full knowledge: You have come to us, O Lord; You are made manifest, O inaccessible Light.

**8. Trisagion Hymn – (Hymnal-p. 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)”

**9. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (not in Hymnal):**

*On the occasion of today’s feast, the following hymn is sung instead of “Axion Estin” or “Truly it is proper to call you blessed...”* O my soul, magnify the ever-virgin Maid who from the curse has redeemed us. O all spotless Bride, surpassing comprehension are the wonders of your childbirth, blessed Mother! Through you obtaining comprehensive salvation, we bring you a gift in striking up this worthy hymn of gratitude to you our Benefactress.

**10. 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 (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 (Acts 19:1-8)**

*19While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. <sup>2</sup>He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” <sup>3</sup>Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” <sup>4</sup>Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the One Who was to come after Him, that*



is, in Jesus.” <sup>5</sup>On hearing this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup>When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied— <sup>7</sup>altogether there were about twelve of them. <sup>8</sup>He entered the synagogue and for three months spoke out boldly, and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God.

### **Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (John 1:29-34)**

<sup>29</sup>The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, “Here is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup>This is He of Whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man Who ranks ahead of me because He was before me.’ <sup>31</sup>I myself did not know Him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that He might be revealed to Israel.” <sup>32</sup>And John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him. <sup>33</sup>I myself did not know Him, but the One Who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on Whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the One Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>34</sup>And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.

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

**Is It Six or Is It One-Half Dozen? Hmmm....**

I pray God grants you and everyone in our parish family along with our friends and neighbors a blessed 2024! ***Yesterday, we had a special church service that some refer to as “Epiphany” and others call “Theophany”. Is there a difference, or do the two words mean the same?***

Sometimes people refer to January 6<sup>th</sup> as “Epiphany” and other times they say “Theophany.” *Is there a difference?* The word “Epiphany” refers to a sudden revelation or insight, a manifestation of a divine or supernatural being, and to the Western Christian world, the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12).



The word “Theophany” refers to a visible manifestation of God to humankind! In fact, the icon of Theophany depicts that for the first time in human history the divine revelation of all the Three Persons of God *together*... God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. That’s why I prefer using the term “Theophany”, since the Feast itself reveals the Holy Trinity as it was first revealed to humankind. The word “Theophany” perfectly describes the occasion when our Lord, Jesus Christ, was baptized at the age of 30, just before

beginning His three-year witness of proclaiming the “Good News” of His Heavenly Father, which continues to be instilled and work in each of us through God’s Holy Spirit.

As an Orthodox Christian and especially as a Priest, the Feast of Theophany reminds me of the presence of God in the world at large, in my personal life, and throughout His Holy Body... the Church, which I serve together with you. To be able to drink and be sprinkled with the blessed waters from the *Agiasmos* Service gives rise to thoughts of how I, like our Lord, Jesus Christ, was baptized and received God’s Holy Spirit. I sense a connection with every Christian who has lived, is living, and will live. Through God’s Holy Eucharist, I commune with God and His Holy Body; at the Feast of Theophany, it is a time for me to recall I was reborn with water and fire... God’s Spirit. I feel

refreshed, renewed. At this beginning of the new year, I am reminded of the potential we all have to begin afresh with God's will in mind.

Today, as I contemplate St. John the Baptist's role in assisting the Theophany of God to the world, I rejoice that as a Priest, I have been called and am blessed with the privilege of bringing others into the Body of Christ, just like St. John did 2,000 years ago as he preached a baptism of repentance and exhorted his brethren to repent, to prepare and make way for the Lord.

At our Atlanta Winter Youth Rally a few years ago, I was blessed to see a senior college student who graduated from The Citadel in Charleston serve as an adult advisor to his parish's WYR participants. His life was influencing so many other lives... his kind words, his gentle attitude, his courage to proclaim his faith in Christ Jesus, and his witness of God's love, mercy, and forgiveness. While his parents, Godparents, family, friends, teachers, and fellow students have helped shape him, I rejoiced to God that He gave me a small part in His plan to offer eternal life to Frank... I had the privilege of baptizing him as an infant. He was the first boy I ever baptized at the beginning of my priestly ministry. Now that he is an adult, I see the fruits of our collective labors and I give glory to God for blessing me with a spirit of joy for him, his family and friends. Like St. John the Baptist, I am reminded of the power of God's Spirit living and guiding us in our present world.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, I give glory to God for the privilege of serving God as one of His Priests. I thank you as well; St. Peter shared that the laity, all of you, are part of God's royal priesthood. As we remember the Theophany of our Lord and how it was carried out with the assistance of St. John the Baptist yesterday and today, I hope you will take a moment to



rejoice and thank God for the precious gifts He has given to us. These gifts, like the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, exist in a spirit of love and forgiveness... they are offered by God to each of us to use and share. They reflect our fellowship, service, witness, and worship of the Triune God.


I prayed our parishes are filled with God's people this weekend. I pray His Spirit continues to stir us after the services. I trust God can stir our hearts and souls to go into the streets and various paths our 2024 will take us, so that we can find and invite those who have never been part of God's Body to know Him and become part of His Body. And for those who have been baptized yet feel apart from His Body, may He use us to offer them a life-saving sip from the Blessed Waters of 2024... physically and spiritually, so that they can know and live life together with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... now, and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen!

## Today is “Parish Thanksgiving Sunday”

*We thank **Dedee & Kirk Panayis & Maria Panayi,** together with **Susan & Pete Kleto** for offering the five Artos (loaves of bread) in thanksgiving to God for the health and welfare of them and their family and God's many blessings in our lives.*



*Likewise, today we thank God and celebrate Name Days, Birthdays, Wedding Anniversaries, and other special occasions that occurred recently or during the month of January. Congratulations to everyone celebrating their special events today.*

 ["Follow" & "Like"](#) our Facebook page. *Be sure to check our status for updates and photos.*

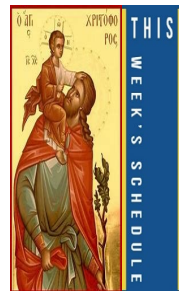
On this the 986<sup>th</sup> Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women, and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience 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! ***Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!***

## **January 7, Feast of the Synaxis of John the Holy Glorious Prophet, Baptist, & Forerunner**

**7:45 Orthros**

**9:00 Divine Liturgy, Blessing of the 5 Loaves,  
January Commemorations**

**11:00 Religious Education Classes *(for all ages)***



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



Annual Vasilopita Dinner and Auction on  
Saturday January 13<sup>th</sup> 2024 at 5p.m. at  
All Saints Anglican Church, Fayetteville, GA  
and

Donations through the Month of January  
to Benefit the Children of Saint Basil Academy



Please place donations in the Hands of Love Red Box in the  
entryway of the church.

or donate online by clicking on the Hands of Love tab at  
<https://StChristopherPhiloctochos.square.site>

The following reflection entitled “The Voice of the Lord Upon the Waters’: Creation and Recreation” is reprinted from <https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com>. +Fr. George Tsahakis



In the Cathedral of the Assumption in Monreale, Sicily, there are the so-called Genesis Mosaics from around the 12th century. The first mosaic bears an inscription from Genesis 1:1, “In principio creavit deus celum et terram,” (“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”) but the image also covers verse 2, “And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” The mosaicist takes the “face of the waters” literally and shows the “Spirit of God” in the form of a dove with a halo being sent by Jesus above.

The “darkness on the waters” is visualized as a dark band transpierced by the dove's path.

In Psalm 28(29):3 we read: “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory has thundered; the Lord is upon many waters.”

During the Service of the Great Blessing of the Waters on Theophany, we chant: “The voice of the Lord upon the waters cries out, saying, Come all of you, receive the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God, of Christ who has appeared.”

Through Holy Baptism, the darkness and void within us was brought to order through the Spirit of God, Christ having sanctified the waters by entering the waters and receiving Baptism Himself that we may be recreated.