

Sunday, March 3, 2024



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

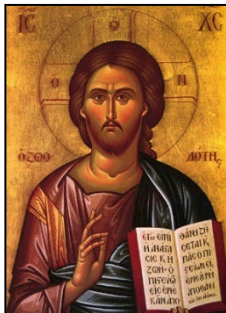
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlmetropolis.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, March 3, 2024

ON THIS DAY, THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE TRIODION PERIOD, THE 17TH SUNDAY OF ST. LUKE, WE REMEMBER OUR LORD'S PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON, TAKEN FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE. ON THIS DAY, WE ALSO COMMEMORATE the Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus; Theodoretos the Holy Martyr of Antioch; and Nonnita, mother of Saint David. *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 (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.

3. 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.

4. Kontakion for Sunday of the Prodigal Son– (Hymnal-pp.256-259):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: From my Father's glory, I have foolishly turned away. By my sins, I squandered all the riches He gave me. Therefore, like the prodigal, I cry out to Him: I have sinned before You, compassionate Father. Accept my repentance, and take me back again as one of Your hired servants.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS/DIVINE LITURGY

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| 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 24:36-53)

While they were talking about this, Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at My hands and My feet; see that it is I Myself. Touch Me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He took it and ate in their presence. Then He said to them, "These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about Me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Then He led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up His hands, He blessed them. While He was blessing them, He withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (1 Cor. 6:12-20)

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the

members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him. Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Luke 15:11-32)

Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again;

he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

MEMORY VERSE *(TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):*

“Sing to the LORD, all the earth. Tell of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples.” *(1 Chronicles 16.23-24)*

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

The boy watched his father cutting an expensive furnace tile. “Let me try that,” he said.

“No,” said the father, “a wrong cut will ruin the expensive tile.”

“Then I’ll watch.” He saw his father draw the line in black chalk, place the chisel carefully on the line and repeatedly tap his blows. First lightly, as he circled the tile slowly, and then heavier blows were made.

“It looks to me,” said the boy, “like you are getting nowhere. You haven’t begun to cut through.”

“Watch,” said the father. After several blows carefully repeated, the father gave one hard blow and the tile separated with a perfect cut.

“Why didn’t you hit it that hard in the first place?” asked the boy.

“It would have ruined the tile and made it worthless,” said the father. “All those earlier blows set the pattern for the final one.”

There are many things in life that seem repetitious and sometimes worthless, but they set the stage for the truly important decisions in life. Every year, we approach Great Lent by remembering in advance the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

Likewise, the Prodigal Son’s return to his father inspires us to seek to reconcile with God and one another. Its everlasting reminder summons us to seek the forgiveness of God and those we have betrayed. If we respond, we grow closer to God and cling to Him as the source of authentic and lasting healing and restoration.



Our Heavenly Father sees our sorrow and failings. He offers in exchange for our faith and repentance His peace, strength, and eternal joy. God rejoices in the growth of each human soul.

No matter where we have strayed in the past, this year’s lenten journey will bring us back home... *if we dare to come forward and live with the Source and Sustainer of our lives.*

Yes, we have done this before, but in our earthly life, God never tires of loving us; He patiently waits for us to live forever with Him. Let us restore our relationships by seeking His forgiveness and reconcile with Him and one another. In so doing, St. Paul assures us of the prize that awaits...

“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (1 Cor. 15:58)



Thanks to those who attended St. George Church in Port Arthur, TX, for donating our beautiful new Royal Gate depicting Christ the Good Shepherd. We appreciate Kirk Panayis for undertaking its installation.



Philoptochos Membership Drive



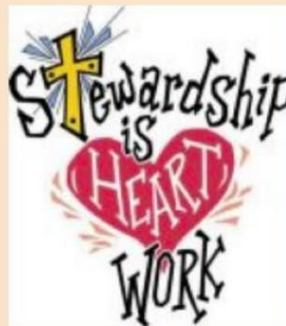
Join the energetic, creative, and compassionate women, assisted by our dedicated men, of St. Christopher Ladies Philoptochos, by registering on **March 3,10 or 17**

How do I become a member?

Simply visit the Membership table to fill out a stewardship form. Prayerfully consider your time, talents and treasure. Or click [here](#)

Benefits of Membership:

- Being part of a philanthropic movement
- Changing someone's life
- Developing friendships
- Expressing yourself
- Getting involved in your community
- Helping those in need
- Learning from others
- Making an impact
- Using your skills to help others



"All things are possible to the one who believes in Christ." Mark 9:23



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

On this the 994th 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!***



[**Click QR code
to view**](#)



**Support Our Efforts to
Build Our Church Complex**



March 3, Sunday of the Prodigal Son

7:30 Orthros

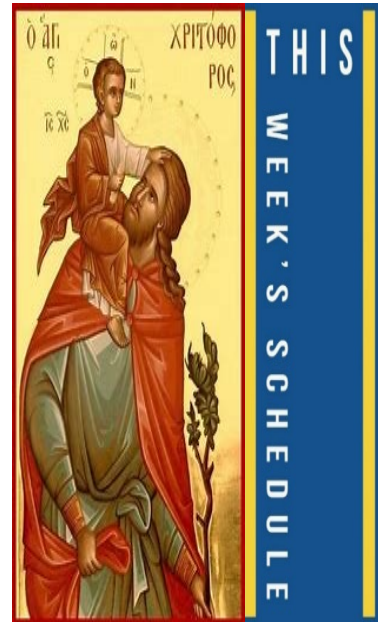
8:45 40-Day Churching of Mother & Baby

9:00 Divine Liturgy, Blessing of Five Loaves,

March Commemorations, & Philoptochos

Membership Drive

11:00 Religious Education Classes



March 10, Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)

7:45 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy

10:15 GreekFest Informational Meeting & Simple GreekFest-Style Foods

10:30 Philoptochos Membership Drive

11:00 Religious Education Classes (for youth only today)

11:45 Parish Council Meeting

Today is “Parish Thanksgiving Sunday”

We thank *Dedee & Kirk Panayis & Maria Panayi* 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 March. Congratulations to everyone celebrating their special events today.

Sunday, March 3, 2024 – Sunday of the Prodigal Son

The Sunday after the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee is the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. This parable of God's forgiveness calls us to "come to ourselves" as did the prodigal son, to see ourselves as being "in a far country" far from the Father's house, and to make the journey of return to God. We are given every assurance by the Master that our heavenly Father will receive us with joy and gladness. We must only "arise and go," confessing our self-inflicted and sinful separation from that "home" where we truly belong (Luke 15:11-24).
(from oca.org)



In today's Orthros, we hear the following Lenten hymns on these Sundays leading us to Great Lent. They reinforce the theme of exile in today's Gospel:

Open to me the gates of repentance, O Giver of Life, for early in the morning my spirit hastens to Your holy temple, bringing the temple of my body all defiled. But as One compassionate, cleanse me, I pray, by Your loving-kindness and mercy.

Guide me in the paths of salvation, O Theotokos, for I have befouled my soul with shameful sins and I heedlessly squandered all of my life's resources. By your intercession deliver me from every uncleanness.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy; and according to the abundance of Your compassion, blot out my transgression. When I ponder in my wretchedness on the many terrible things that I have done, I tremble for that fearful day, the Day of Judgment. But trusting in the mercy of Your compassion, like David I cry to You, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy."