



## St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

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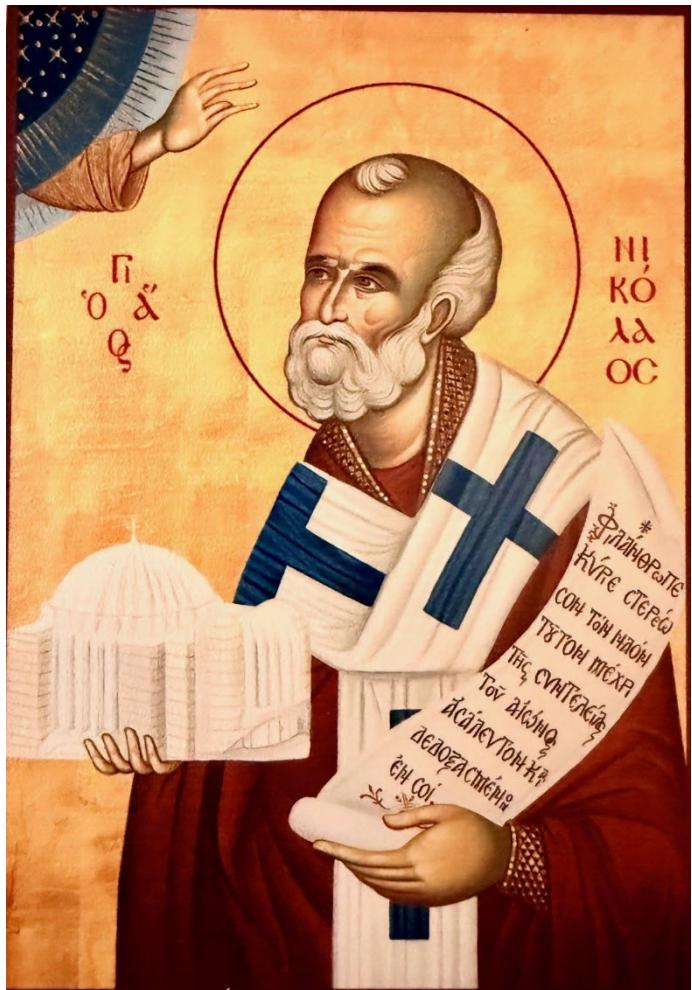
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Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, Pastor  
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### Pastoral Message from Fr. George, December 10, 2025



In his sermon on Saturday morning, December 6<sup>th</sup>, Fr. George highlighted the life and ministry of St. Nicholas. He had a heart full of Christ's love and a life dedicated to helping those in need, becoming the *"precursor to Santa Claus,"* and serving as a true example of living the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker's life teaches us that:

- **Generosity isn't about wealth—it's about love.** You may not have bags of gold, but you can give kindness, time, and encouragement.

- **Do good in secret.** Try helping someone without telling anyone. That's real humility.

- **Stand firm in your faith.** Nicholas didn't compromise.

Neither should we.

We thank Presbytera Marinda for providing a lenten breakfast following the Divine Liturgy.



Afterwards, parishioners joined together to decorate the new community Christmas tree donated by Kirk & Dedee Panayis and Steve & Pam Theodorakis. Our new tree is very attractive and we thank them.

Amidst his busy schedule this month, Santa Claus surprised us with a visit. Through short and simple questions about the life of St.

Nicholas, Santa

reinforced the message of Fr. George's sermon about St. Nicholas. Santa gifted bags of "gold coin chocolates" to all.



We wish "Chronia Polla" and "Happy Name Day" to all  
celebrating on the Feast of St. Nicholas.



## Santa's Questions & Answers During His Surprise Visit



1. Do you know why Santa is visiting you today?

Answer: Because we're celebrating St. Nicholas, the real-life saint who inspired Santa Claus!

2. Who was St. Nicholas in real life?

Answer: He was a bishop who loved Jesus and helped people in need.

3. Where did St. Nicholas live?

Answer: In a place called Myra, in what is now Turkey.

4. What made St. Nicholas famous?

Answer: His kindness and secret gifts to help poor families.

5. What did St. Nicholas give instead of toys?

Answer: Bags of gold coins to help people in need.

6. Why did St. Nicholas give gifts in secret?

Answer: Because he wanted to honor God, not get attention.

7. What does the word 'wonderworker' mean?

Answer: Someone who does amazing things through faith in God.

8. How is St. Nicholas different from Santa Claus?

Answer: Santa comes once a year; St. Nicholas helped people every day.

9. What holiday do we celebrate St. Nicholas on?

Answer: December 6th.

10. What was St. Nicholas' job in the Church?

Answer: He was a bishop.

11. What did St. Nicholas do at the Council of Nicaea?

Answer: He defended the truth about Jesus Christ.

12. Why do we decorate a Christmas tree?

Answer: To celebrate the joy and light of Christ coming into the world.

13. What's one way you can be generous like St. Nicholas?

Answer: Share toys, help a friend, or say something kind.

14. If you had a bag of gold, what would you do with it?

Answer: Help people who need food or clothes.

15. What's more important than gifts?

Answer: Love and kindness.

16. Why do we give gifts at Christmas?

Answer: To remember God's greatest gift—Jesus Christ.

17. What's one secret act of kindness you can do this week?

Answer: Leave a nice note for someone or help without telling anyone.

18. What color are bishops' robes usually?

Answer: Gold or white for special feasts.

19. What does Santa's red suit remind us of?

Answer: The bishop's robes of St. Nicholas.

20. What does St. Nicholas teach us about faith?

Answer: To trust God and help others even when it's hard.

21. What's one thing about St. Nicholas that surprised you today?

Answer: He didn't have reindeer—he had prayer and a big heart!

22. Why do we call him a saint?

Answer: Because he lived a holy life and followed Jesus.

23. What's one thing you can do to make someone smile today?

Answer: Say "thank you" or give a hug.

24. What's the best gift you can give someone?

Answer: Your love and kindness.

25. Who is the greatest gift of all?

Answer: Jesus Christ!

*Before leaving, Santa shared:*

"You've all done great! Remember, St. Nicholas teaches us to give, love, and help others—especially in secret. So, this week, try one secret act of kindness. And keep Christ at the center of Christmas. Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas!"

## **“Remaining Faithful in a World of Trials: The Witness of Saints Menas, Hermogenes, and Eraphos”**

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Beloved in Christ,

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Holy Church celebrates three courageous martyrs—**Saint Menas the Kallikelados, Saint Hermogenes, and Saint Eraphos**—who suffered for their faith in Christ under Emperor Maximian in the early fourth century. Their story is not only a chapter of Church history; it is a living testimony that speaks directly to us as we struggle to remain faithful to God in our own journey of faith.

These saints lived in a time when confessing Christ meant risking everything—status, security, and life itself. Yet, they chose Christ over compromise, truth over fear, and eternal glory over temporary power. Their witness challenges us: How do we remain steadfast when our faith is tested? How do we confess Christ in a world that often pressures us to be silent?

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### **1. Saint Menas: Courage to Confess Christ**

Saint Menas was an Athenian nobleman, gifted in eloquence and entrusted with authority. Sent by the emperor to Alexandria to suppress riots between Christians and pagans, Menas faced a choice: obey imperial orders or obey Christ. He chose Christ. Instead of silencing Christians, he openly preached the Gospel,

converting many pagans to the faith. His eloquence earned him the name *Kallikelados*, “beautiful-sounding,” but his true beauty was his unwavering courage.

*Lesson for us:*

We live in a culture that often values comfort over conviction. Like Menas, we are called to speak the truth of Christ—not only with words but with our lives. Where do we hesitate to confess our faith? At work? Among friends? In moments of moral compromise? The witness of Menas reminds us that faith is not private; it is a light meant to shine.

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## **2. Saint Hermogenes: Transformation Through Witness**

Hermogenes, a pagan and a man of law, was sent to judge Menas and purge Alexandria of Christians. Yet, when he saw Menas endure torture with peace and even experience miraculous healing, his heart was pierced. Hermogenes embraced Christ and joined Menas in suffering for the faith.

*Lesson for us:*

Our steadfastness in trials can inspire others. When we remain faithful under pressure—whether in illness, injustice, or hardship—our witness speaks louder than words. Who might be watching our faith today? A child? A co-worker? A neighbor? Hermogenes reminds us that our endurance can lead others to Christ.

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### 3. Saint Eraphos: Loyalty to Christ Above All

Eraphos, the secretary of Menas, declared himself a Christian after witnessing the courage of his master and Hermogenes. The emperor, enraged, stabbed Eraphos himself before ordering the beheading of Menas and Hermogenes. Eraphos teaches us that faith is contagious—and costly.

*Lesson for us:*

Faith is not inherited by convenience; it is embraced by conviction. In a world that tempts us to compromise for acceptance or success, Eraphos calls us to loyalty above all—to Christ, who is our life and salvation.

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### Reflection on Modern Trials

Beloved, we may not face swords or prisons, *but we face trials of another kind:*

- The pressure to conform to secular values that dismiss faith.
- The temptation to prioritize comfort over commitment to Christ.
- The struggle to keep prayer and worship central in a world of distractions.

- The fear of ridicule when we speak about our faith openly.

These are real battles. They test our courage, our priorities, and our love for God. The martyrs remind us that faith is not easy—but it is worth everything. They echo the words of the Psalmist:

*“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”* (Ps. 23:4)

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### **Living as Modern Witnesses**

Beloved in Christ,

The courage of Saints Menas, Hermogenes, and Euphrates is not confined to the pages of history. Their witness speaks to us today, because we too face trials—different in form, but real in their challenge to our faith.

- In the workplace, when honesty costs us advancement, we are called to stand firm like Menas, choosing truth over compromise.
- In times of suffering, when despair tempts us, we can endure with hope like Hermogenes, trusting that God's grace will sustain us and inspire others.
- In our daily choices, when loyalty to Christ means swimming against the current of culture, we can imitate

Eugraphos, who declared his faith boldly even when it cost his life.

*Modern witnesses are all around us:*

- A young person who refuses to hide their Orthodox faith in a secular school.
- Parents who prioritize worship and prayer over worldly distractions.
- Christians who advocate for justice and mercy, even when unpopular.
- Believers who remain faithful in illness, radiating peace and hope.

These examples remind us that martyrdom is not only about dying for Christ—it is about living for Him every day. In a world that often prizes comfort and compromise, we are called to be living icons of courage, truth, and love.

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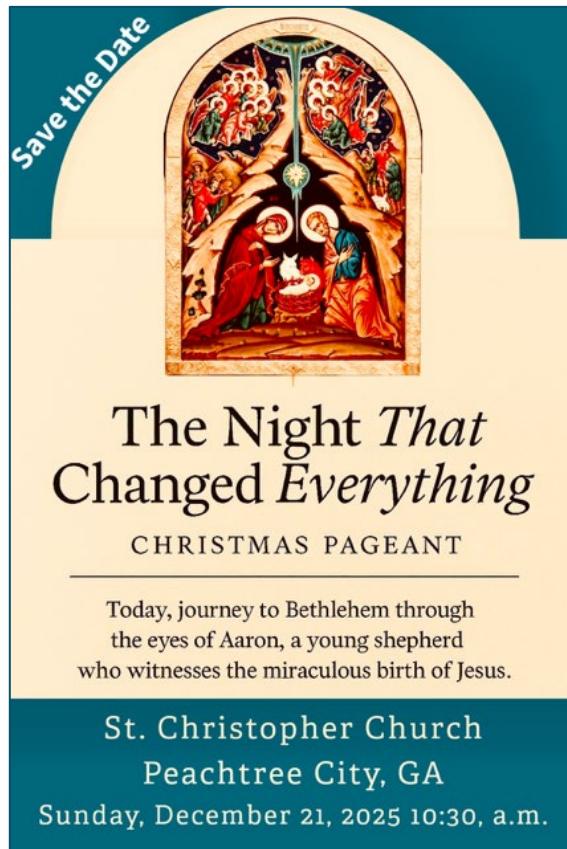
## **Conclusion**

Beloved, as we honor Saints Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugraphos, let us ask for their intercessions to strengthen us in our own trials. May we echo their faith, confess Christ boldly, and live as modern witnesses of His love. For as the Festal Hymn of the feast proclaims:

*"The staunch Martyrs of Christ God laid hold on the graces to drive off the pains and illnesses of the sick and work wonders both while living and after death. Glory be to our only God."*

Through their prayers, may we remain steadfast and inherit the crown of life. Amen.

+Fr. George Tsahakis, 12.10.25



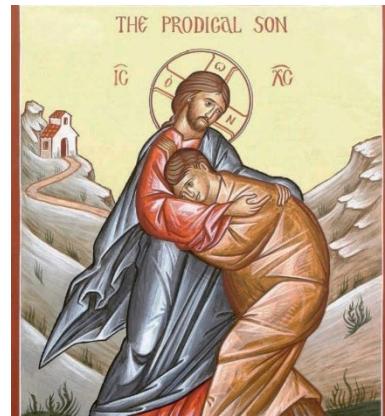
*Youth and Adults – join us for Religious Education combined session THIS SUNDAY for us to rehearse our lines and dress rehearsal.*

*Parents, please join us also to know how to rehearse with your children at home and learn their lines.*

## Preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

This Saturday after the Divine Liturgy, Fr. George will offer the Sacrament of Holy Reconciliation (Confession)—a sacred opportunity to renew our hearts and draw closer to God. Before we approach this holy mystery, the Church invites us to prepare spiritually, so that our confession may be sincere and fruitful.

Orthodoxy gives us beautiful tools for this preparation:



### 1. Prayerful Reflection

Spend time in quiet prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of your life where you need healing and forgiveness. Begin with the prayer of the Psalmist:

*"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me"* (Psalm 50/51).

### 2. Examination of Conscience

Review your thoughts, words, and actions in light of Christ's commandments. Consider the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments. Ask:

- Have I loved God with all my heart?
- Have I loved my neighbor as myself?
- Where have pride, anger, or neglect taken root?

### 3. Scripture Reading

Read passages that call us to repentance, such as Luke 15 (the Prodigal Son) or Psalm 50. Let God's Word soften your heart and inspire humility.

### 4. Fasting and Humility

If possible, fast lightly before confession. Fasting reminds us of our dependence on God and helps us approach the sacrament with reverence.

### 5. Prayer Before Confession

Use the traditional prayer:

*"O Lord my God, I confess that I have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. Forgive me and grant me the grace to repent sincerely."*

Remember, confession is not about shame—it is about healing. Christ waits to embrace us with His mercy. Let us come with open hearts, ready to be renewed.

*With love in Christ, Fr. George Tsahakis*

## Parish Storage Puzzle Solved with Teamwork

Our Storage Facilities Chair, Kirk Panayis, has been busy organizing parishioner volunteers to streamline and improve our offsite parish storage needs. For the past few weeks, Kirk oversaw the relocation of St. George Church items, along with older storage contents, to our new storage facility. We now have ample space to accommodate many more items as needed.

The existing church kitchen storage room has been de-cluttered, creating additional room for the Golf Committee's items and even chairs and furniture in a climate-controlled environment.

**I ask you to join me in thanking Kirk and everyone who assisted in this effort.** Your generous help made this possible.

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### Our Storage Journey

The items from St. George Church in Port Arthur, Texas were originally stored in a facility generously donated by the Peter Poolos family. On October 26th, we were informed that we needed to vacate that space, which began our search for a new storage solution. At the same time, the church was using three additional storage locations. These included many pews donated by the Marietta Church, all our Greek Festival items, and other materials accumulated over the past 20+ years—all of which needed to be relocated.

Kirk accepted the responsibility of leading the Storage Committee and finding a new facility. By God's grace, he located a suitable space in Fayetteville. His family has donated the cost of renting these new facilities for the next two years as a gift to our church. We thank Kirk and Dedee for this generous gift, along with covering the cost of the paid workers who assisted our dedicated group of volunteers who worked tirelessly to sort, clean, and move these items. For the heavier St. George items, he hired Better Way Ministries to assist with the move. **Together, they did it!** With their hands, vehicles, and trailers, they completed this enormous task.

Our parish now has **three new storage units** that house all donated items, our Greek Festival supplies, and still provide plenty of room for future needs.

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### Special Thanks

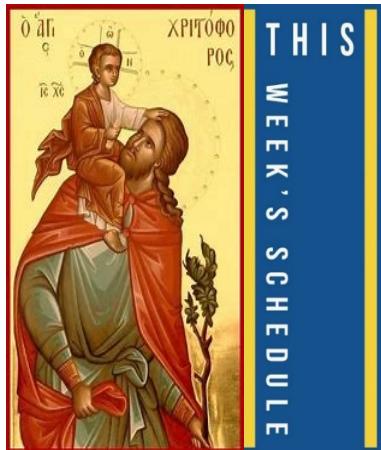
- **Dedee Panayis and Julie Skouteris** for cleaning and organizing 15 years' worth of Greek Festival storage.
- **Steve Sarantis, Nick Cochran, Jim Sliwinski, Perry Panos, and Jeff Longino** for their help and use of their trucks and trailers.

Kirk shared that *"When we come together as a community—putting our minds and hearts into a common goal—there is nothing we cannot accomplish. Truly, God is with us. Finally, I want to thank Fr. George for his blessings, prayers, encouragement, and guidance throughout this project."*

**The storage project is complete. Glory be to God!**  
**Thanks, Kirk Panayis & parishioner volunteers!**



## Join Us Often with Your Family



### **Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> (note new date)**

8:00 Orthros & 9:00 Divine Liturgy at Archangel Michael Chapel at Metropolis Office

### **Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> – St. Lucia the Virgin Martyr**

9:00 Divine Liturgy, followed by Sacrament of Holy Reconciliation (Confession) -no appointment needed. Come and pray as you wait.

### **Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of St. Luke**

7:45 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Prayer Shawls

10:45 – 12:45 Parish Council Elections

11:00 Religious Education (all ages) – youth and adults will rehearse Christmas Pageant

11:45 Philoptochos General Meeting

12:00 Parish Council Meeting

### **Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**

8:00 Orthros & 9:00 Divine Liturgy at Archangel Michael Chapel at Metropolis Office

### **Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup> – St. Lucia the Virgin Martyr**

3:00 Young Adult League Kickoff

### **Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup> – Sunday Before Holy Nativity**

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy, Annual Christmas Pageant, & Community Luncheon

5:00 Candlelight Service & Christmas Concert (Pan-Orthodox) at Annunciation Cathedral in Atlanta