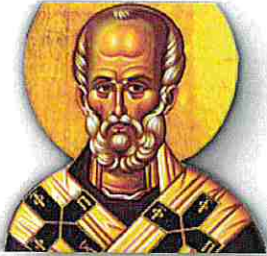


SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023 – Sunday before the Nativity of Christ

Saints of the Day: All those pleasing to God throughout the ages according to our Lord's Genealogy from Adam to Joseph the Betrothed; All the Prophets and Prophetesses (especially the Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths); Eugenia the Righteous Nun-martyr of Rome and those with her

Fourth Mode • Seventh Eothinon



WELCOME TO ST. NICHOLAS CATHEDRAL!

VISIT www.stnickspgh.org TODAY for news and updates about our parish!

CLERGY: Rev. Fr. Eleftherios Constantine and Rev. Dn. Robert Lykos

Father's Email: fr.ec@stnickspgh.org

PROTOPSALTRIA: Amy Hogg

CHOIR DIRECTOR: Steve Andrews

ORGANIST: Larsen Vincent

Questions about our Parish? E-mail church@stnickspgh.org or call 412-682-3866

Our Sunday worship schedule: September – May: Orthros 8:45 a.m. & Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

WELCOME, VISITORS! You are honored guests here at St. Nicholas Cathedral and welcome at all our services. We invite you to receive the Holy Eucharist (Communion) if you are an Orthodox Christian who is prepared through fasting, prayer, and confession. If you are not Orthodox, or are Orthodox but have not prepared, we respectfully invite you instead to come forward at the end of the service for a blessing by the priest and a piece of blessed bread (antidoron).

Our Mission & Vision Statements

The **MISSION** of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral is to Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a Spirit of Unity and Love for All through Worship, Service, Education, Fellowship and Outreach.

Our **VISION** is to be a Welcoming and Growing Parish, Striving to Live the New Life in Christ according to the Teachings and Traditions of the Greek Orthodox Faith.

Watch Sunday services, which are streaming live from St Nicholas Cathedral at www.stnickspgh.org/ and click on "Live Streaming Click Here."

On-Line Giving donations are up and running on our web page www.stnickspgh.org by clicking the please donate button – or you may access the donation page by visiting <https://abundant.co/stnickspgh/give>

TODAY:

- ❖ Christmas Eve Vespers 4:30 p.m.
- ❖ No Church School.
- ❖ Coffee hour is hosted today by the GOYA in the Small Hall.

THIS WEEK AT ST. NICHOLAS:

- Monday, December 25, 2023: Merry Christmas (Church Office Closed)
CHRISTMAS DAY The NATIVITY of OUR LORD Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
- Saturday, December 30, 2023: NO Greek School
- Sunday, December 31, 2023: No Church School
Trisagion/Memorial Service for Krystal Hedderman (40 days)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023 – Sunday before the Nativity of Christ

Saints of the Day: All those pleasing to God throughout the ages according to our Lord's Genealogy from Adam to Joseph the Betrothed; All the Prophets and Prophetesses (especially the Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths); Eugenia the Righteous Nun-martyr of Rome and those with her

Fourth Mode · Seventh Eothinon

TODAY'S HYMNS AND READINGS

The Resurrection Hymn of the week in fourth mode is chanted at the Small Entrance:

Τὸ παιδρὸν τῆς ἀναστάσεως κήρυγμα, ἐκ τοῦ Ἀγγέλου μαθοῦσαι αἱ τοῦ Κυρίου Μαθήτριάι, καὶ τὴν προγονικὴν ἀπόφασιν ἀπορρίψασαι, τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις καυχώμεναι ἔλεγον· Ἐσκύλευται ὁ θάνατος, ἡγέρθη Χριστὸς ὁ Θεός, δωρούμενος τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

When the women disciples of the Lord heard the Angel joyously proclaim the resurrection, they cast aside the ancestral verdict, and boasting in glory they said to the Apostles, "Death has been despoiled! Christ God has risen, granting the great mercy to the world!"

At the Small Entrance, the usual Entrance Hymn is chanted:

Following the Small Entrance, the Resurrection Hymn of the week in fourth mode is repeated (see above).

After this, we chant the hymn of the day (for the Forefeast of the Nativity) in fourth mode.

Απεγράφετο ποτέ, σὺν τῷ πρεσβύτῃ Ἰωσήφ, ὡς ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυΐδ, ἐν Βηθλεὲμ ἡ Μαριάμ, κυοφοροῦσα τὴν ἄσπορον κυοφορίαν. Ἐπέστη δὲ καιρὸς ὁ τῆς Γεννήσεως, καὶ τόπος ἦν οὐδεὶς τῷ καταλύματι· ἀλλ' ὡς τερπνὸν παλάτιον τὸ Σπήλαιον, τῇ Βασιλίδι ἐδείκνυτο. Χριστὸς γεννᾶται τὴν πρὶν πεσοῦσαν, ἀναστήσων εἰκόνα.

As she carried in her womb what she conceived without seed, Mary went to Bethlehem with elder Joseph to enroll, for they were of the house and the lineage of David. The time arrived for her to give birth to her Child; but then there was no place * in the inn for them. Therefore, the grotto served as a luxurious royal palace for the Queen. And Christ the Lord is born, to raise the image which was formerly fallen.

Then we chant the hymn for the Fathers in second mode.

Μεγάλα τὰ τῆς πίστεως κατορθώματα! Ἐν τῇ πηγῇ τῆς φλογός, ὡς ἐπὶ ὕδατος ἀναπαύσεως, οἱ ἅγιοι Τρεῖς Παῖδες ἠγάλλοντο, καὶ ὁ προφήτης Δανιήλ, λεόντων ποιμὴν, ὡς προβάτων ἐδείκνυτο. Ταῖς αὐτῶν ἱκεσίαις Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, σῶσον τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.

Magnificent are the accomplishments of faith! The holy Three Servants greatly rejoiced, as they stood in the fountain of fire, as if beside the still waters; and the Prophet Daniel appeared to be a shepherd of lions, as if they were sheep. At their entreaties, O Christ God, save our souls.

We then chant the Apolytikion hymn for our patron, St. Nicholas, in fourth mode:

Κανόνα πίστεως καὶ εἰκόνα πραότητος, ἐγκρατείας διδάσκαλον, ἀνέδειξέ σε τῇ ποιμνῇ σου, ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλήθεια· διὰ τοῦτο ἐκτίσω τῇ ταπεινώσει τὰ ὑψηλά, τῇ πτωχείᾳ τὰ πλούσια, Πάτερ ἱεράρχα Νικόλαε· πρέσβευε Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ, σωθῆναι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.

The truth of things have revealed you to your flock as a rule of faith, an icon of meekness, and a teacher of temperance; for this cause you have achieved the heights by humility, riches by poverty. O Father and Hierarch Nicholas, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Finally, we chant the Festal Kontakion (for the Forefeast of the Nativity), in third mode:

Η Παρθένος σήμερον, τὸν προαιώνιον Λόγον, ἐν Σπηλαίῳ ἔρχεται, ἀποτεκεῖν ἀπορρήτως. Χόρευε ἡ οἰκουμένη ἀκουτισθεῖσα, δόξασον μετὰ Ἀγγέλων καὶ τῶν Ποιμένων, βουληθέντα ἐποφθῆναι, Παιδίον νέον, τὸν πρὸ αἰώνων Θεόν.

On this day the Virgin comes to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child Who before the ages is God.

Today's Epistle Reading (Sunday before the Nativity of Christ):

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews (11:9-10, 32-40)

Αδελφοί, πίστει παρώκησεν Ἀβραάμ εἰς γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ὡς ἀλλοτρίαν, ἐν σκηναῖς κατοικήσας μετὰ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ τῶν συγκληρονόμων τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῆς αὐτῆς · ἐξεδέχετο γὰρ τὴν τοὺς θεμελίους ἔχουσαν πόλιν, ἧς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ θεός. Καὶ τί ἔτι λέγω; ἐπιλείπει με γὰρ διηγούμενον ὁ χρόνος περὶ Γεδεών, Βαράκ, Σαμψών, Ἰεφθάε, Δαυὶδ τε καὶ Σαμουὴλ καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, οἱ διὰ πίστεως κατηγωνίσαντο βασιλείας, εἰργάσαντο δικαιοσύνην, ἐπέτυχον ἐπαγγελιῶν, ἔφραξαν στόματα λεόντων, ἔσβεσαν δύναμιν πυρός, ἔφυγον στόματα μαχαίρης, ἐδυναμώθησαν ἀπὸ ἀσθενείας, ἐγενήθησαν ἰσχυροὶ ἐν πολέμῳ, παρεμβολὰς ἔκλιναν ἀλλοτρίων · ἔλαβον γυναικες ἐξ ἀναστάσεως τοὺς νεκροὺς αὐτῶν · ἄλλοι δὲ ἐτυμπανίσθησαν, οὐ προσδεξάμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, ἵνα κρείττονος ἀναστάσεως τύχωσιν · ἕτεροι δὲ ἐμπαιγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πείραν ἔλαβον, ἔτι δὲ δεσμῶν καὶ φυλακῆς · ἐλιθάσθησαν, ἐπρίσθησαν, ἐν φόνῳ μαχαίρης ἀπέθανον, περιήλθον ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγείοις δέρμασιν, ὑστερούμενοι, θλιβόμενοι, κακουχούμενοι, ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος ὁ κόσμος, ἐπὶ ἐρημίαις πλανώμενοι καὶ ὄρεσιν καὶ σπηλαίοις καὶ ταῖς ὀπαῖς τῆς γῆς. Καὶ οὗτοι πάντες μαρτυρηθέντες διὰ τῆς πίστεως οὐκ ἐκομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν, τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ ἡμῶν κρεῖττόν τι προβλεψάμενου, ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελειωθῶσιν.

Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. [RSV]

Today's Gospel Reading (Sunday before the Nativity of Christ):

The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (1:1-25)

Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ. Ἀβραάμ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰσαὰκ, Ἰσαὰκ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς αὐτοῦ, Ἰούδας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Φάρες καὶ τὸν Ζάρα ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ, Φάρες δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἑσρώμ, Ἑσρώμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀράμ, Ἀράμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμιναδάβ, Ἀμιναδάβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ναασσών, Ναασσών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλμών, Σαλμών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Βοὺζ ἐκ τῆς Ῥαχάβ, Βοὺζ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωβὴδ ἐκ τῆς Ῥούθ, Ἰωβὴδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεσσαί, Ἰεσσαί δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Δαυὶδ τὸν βασιλέα. Δαυὶδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίας, Σολομῶν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥοβοάμ, Ῥοβοάμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀβιά, Ἀβιά δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀσάφ, Ἀσάφ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσαφάτ, Ἰωσαφάτ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωράμ, Ἰωράμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ὀζίαν, Ὀζίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωθαάμ, Ἰωθαάμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀχάζ, Ἀχάζ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἑζεκίαν, Ἑζεκίας δὲ

ἐγέννησεν τὸν Μανασσῆ, Μανασσῆς δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμώσ, Ἀμώσ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσίαν, Ἰωσίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεχονίαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος. Μετὰ δὲ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλῶνος Ἰεχονίας ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλαθιήλ, Σαλαθιήλ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ζοροβαβέλ, Ζοροβαβέλ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀβιούδ, Ἀβιούδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐλιακίμ, Ἐλιακίμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀζώρ, Ἀζώρ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαδώκ, Σαδώκ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀχίμ, Ἀχίμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐλιούδ, Ἐλιούδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐλεάζαρ, Ἐλεάζαρ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ματθάν, Ματθάν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός. Πᾶσαι οὖν αἱ γενεαὶ ἀπὸ Ἀβραάμ ἕως Δαυὶδ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ Δαυὶδ ἕως τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες.

Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡ γένεσις οὕτως ἦν. Μνηστευθείσης τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Μαρίας τῷ Ἰωσήφ, πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εὐρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου. Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς, δίκαιος ὢν καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν δειγματίσαι, ἐβουλήθη λάθρᾳ ἀπολῦσαι αὐτήν. Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων· Ἰωσήφ υἱὸς Δαυὶδ, μὴ φοβηθῇς παραλαβεῖν Μαριάμ τὴν γυναῖκά σου, τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου· τέξεται δὲ υἱὸν καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν, αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν. Τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος, Ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον Μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ Θεός. Διεγερθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἐποίησεν ὡς προσέταξεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου καὶ παρέλαβε τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ· καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτὴν ἕως οὗ ἔτεκεν υἱόν· καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Ammin'adab, and Ammin'adab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Bo'az by Rahab, and Bo'az the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uri'ah, and Solomon the father of Rehobo'am, and Rehobo'am the father of Abi'jah, and Abi'jah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehosh'aphat, and Jehosh'aphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzzi'ah, and Uzzi'ah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezeki'ah, and Hezeki'ah the father of Manas'seh, and Manas'seh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josi'ah, and Josi'ah the father of Jechoni'ah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoni'ah was the father of Sheal'tiel, and Sheal'tiel the father of Zerub'babel, and Zerub'babel the father of Abi'ud, and Abi'ud the father of Eli'akim, and Eli'akim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eli'ud, and Eli'ud the father of Elea'zar, and Elea'zar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emman'uel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus. [RSV]



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 350/2023

Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of Christmas

December 25, 2023

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

Thus says the Lord: a rod shall come forth out of the root of Jesse,
and a blossom shall rise from that root.
(Prophecy of Isaiah 11:1)

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

Although He comes to us in humility, in swaddling clothes and in poverty, He is the powerful Rod of the Root of Jesse. In assuming our human nature from his Most Holy Mother the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, He bears all the suffering and sin of humanity across all the ages. What strength in this Rod! What glory in His powerful love for every creature!

He also comes as a blossom of inner and truthful beauty, to restore our human nature to its original shining loveliness. The Prophet Isaiah says elsewhere, "He had no beauty nor glory..." (53:2), but such was the humility that bowed down the Son of God to become the Son of Man. The flower of His virtues, His sinless life, His sacrificial love, is a bloom that will never fade. The root of His human nature is his Holy Mother, who



bore him in a cave in Bethlehem of Judea. But from this root out of dry and virginal ground, there arose the first fruits of them that slept (I Corinthians 15:20)! For the Lord was born in cave in order to arise from another cave. He was wrapped as an infant in swaddling clothes in order to proclaim His own Resurrection by leaving behind the grave-linens set aside in the tomb (John 20:5). And He was laid in a manger — used to feed the mute beasts of burden — so that we might be fed with His Holy Body and Precious Blood and proclaim Him risen from the dead.

Therefore, my beloved Christians, let us receive this Rod of glory and Blossom of beauty with gratitude and honor. Through his Holy Mother, His human nature is our human nature, and there is nothing that He cannot make whole and pure. Let us worship Him with all our hearts, and minds, and souls.

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

† Ελπίδοφορος

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America

Prot. No. 828

Patriarchal Encyclical for Christmas

+ B A R T H O L O M E W

By God's Mercy, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch to All the Plenitude of the Church
Grace, Mercy, and Peace from the Saviour Christ Born in Bethlehem

Most honorable brother hierarchs,

Beloved children in the Lord,

With the grace of God, we are once again this year celebrating in chant, hymn, and spiritual song the Nativity according to the flesh of the pre-eternal Son and Word of God, namely the manifestation of the mystery of God and humankind. According to St. Nicholas Cabasilas, what occurs in the Divine Liturgy is "the mystagogy of the Lord's incarnation," while its introductory acclamation "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" is evidence "that it is through the Lord's incarnation that people first learned that God is three persons."¹ The same saintly Father proclaims that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was the first and only to demonstrate the authentic and perfect human being, concerning His ethos, life, and everything else."²

The assumption of human nature in the person of the Son and Word of God, along with the opening of the way of human deification through grace, add unsurpassable value to humankind. Forgetting this truth leads to the diminishment of respect for the human person. The denial of the supreme destiny of human beings does not only liberate them, but also leads to diverse reductions and divisions. Without being conscious of their divine origin and their hope for eternity, humans struggle to remain human and are unable to handle the contradictions of the "human condition."

¹ *On the Divine Liturgy* XII, PG 150.392D.

² *On the Life of Christ* VI, PG 150.680C.

The Christian perception of human existence provides a solution to problems created by violence, war, and injustice in our world. Respect for the human person, peace, and justice are gifts from God; however, establishing the peace that comes from Christ demands the participation and cooperation of human beings. The Christian view on the struggle for peace lies in the words of Christ our Savior, who proclaims peace, addressing His disciples with the greeting "Peace be with you" and encouraging us to love our enemies.³ The revelation in Christ is called the "gospel of peace."⁴

This means that, for us Christians, the way to peace is through peace and that non-violence, dialogue, love, forgiveness, and reconciliation have priority before other forms of resolving differences. The theology of peace is clearly described in the Ecumenical Patriarchate's document *For the Life of the World: Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church* (2020):

"Nothing is more contrary to God's will for His creatures fashioned in His image and likeness than violence one against another . . . We may justly say that violence is *sin par excellence*. It is the perfect contradiction of our created nature and our supernatural vocation to seek union in love with God and our neighbour. . . Peace is a real revelation of the still deeper reality of creation as God intends it and as God fashioned it in his eternal counsels."⁵

Peace cannot be taken for granted; it is not self-evident. It is an obligation, an achievement, and an incessant struggle to preserve it. There are no automatic solutions or permanent recipes. In the face of ongoing threats to peace, we need to have vigilance and willingness to resolve problems through dialogue. The great heroes of politics are the champions of peace. As for us, we continue to underline the peacemaking role of religion. This is during a time when religions are criticized for nurturing fanaticism and violence "in the name of God" instead of being forces of peace, solidarity, and reconciliation. However, this indicates an alienation of religious faith and not an integral part of it. Genuine faith in God is the harshest critic of religious fanaticism. Religions are the natural allies of all human beings who strive for peace, justice, and the preservation of creation from human destruction.

³ Cf. Mt. 5:44

⁴ Eph. 6:44

⁵ § 42, 43 and 44.

This year, the world honours the 75th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (December 10, 1948), constituting a summary of fundamental humanitarian ideals and values, "the shared standard, to which all peoples and all nations should aim." Human rights, whose central point of focus includes the protection of human dignity with its individual, social, cultural, economic, and ecological conditions, are only understood in their original dynamics if they are acknowledged as the basis and criterion of global peace, associating it with freedom and justice. In this sense, the future of human rights and peace is also linked to the contribution of religions in the matter of respecting them and making them a reality.

With these thoughts and festive sentiments, in full conviction that the life of the Church in itself comprises resistance against inhumanity, wherever such inhumanity arises, we invite all of you to the good fight of constructing a culture of peace and solidarity, where people will see in the face of their fellow human beings a brother or sister and a friend, rather than a threat and enemy. Moreover, we remind you all, dear brother Hierarchs and children, that Christmas is a time of self-consciousness and thanksgiving, of the revelation of the difference between the God-man and "man-god," of the realization of the "great miracle" of freedom in Christ and of the healing of the "great wound" of alienation from God. Finally, we kneel respectfully before Mary, the Mother of God, who bears in her arms the incarnate Word, and we convey to you the blessing of the Mother Holy Great Church of Christ, wishing you an auspicious, healthy, fruitful, peaceful, and joyous new year of the Lord's favour.

Christmas 2023

+ Bartholomew of Constantinople

Your fervent suppliant of all before God

To be read in churches after the Gospel Reading during the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Christmas.

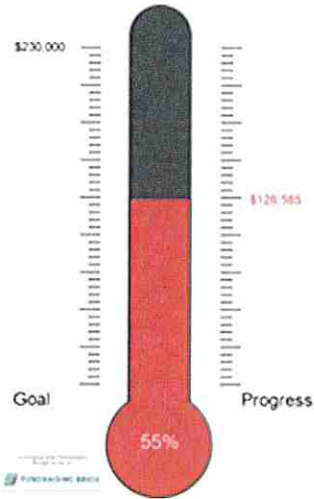
PRIVACY NOTICE: Your information will be kept confidential and used only for scheduling purposes.

2023 Stewardship Pledge Cards are in the Narthex

(Just ask a member of Parish Council)

If you have already submitted your 2023 Stewardship Commitment, THANK YOU!
If not, please take the time to make financial Stewardship Commitment today and complete the talent portion of the card to enable OUR Community to grow and carry on the mission of our faith.

HELP US REACH/ EXCEED OUR GOAL!!



*Giving Thanks,
Eucharistic
Stewardship*

<u>2023</u>	<u>STEWARDSHIP</u>
Total Stewards	279 (GOAL 300)
Total Pledged	\$126,585.00 GOAL (\$230,000.00)
Avg. Pledge	\$715.17

YOUTH SAFETY WORKERS

Who is considered a Youth Safety Worker?

All Clergymen (Bishops/Priests/Deacons, both Active & Retired)

Pastoral Assistants & Youth Directors

People assisting, in any ministry, where the participants are under 18 years of age or in high school, whichever is later.

Including Parish Youth Safety Administrators, Church School Teachers, Dance Directors, Greek School Teachers, Youth Advisors (including Chaperones & Drivers) and Parish Council.

Even... Parents who occasionally help-out but are alone with other people's children.

Each Youth Safety Worker is required to register yearly with the church.

Registration is available through the church office. In addition, all Youth Safety Workers are required to take two courses (on-line training platform) annually and to complete a background check every other year.

Here is the website: Please register at <https://ncsrisk.org/goarch/>. The first course, Youth Safety, has two parts. The second course, Youth Worker Regulations, has one part. Prompt completion is necessary as one cannot participate in any youth programs without being registered, having a background check, having PA state clearances, and completing the two courses.

Those interested in becoming a Youth Safety Worker and have not started the process or need to determine what documentation you need to complete, please contact Taki Darakos, edarakos@aol.com, 412-944-4961.

GOYA NEWS

Pastitsio Sale - GOYA is selling delicious pans of pastitsio, just in time for your holiday meal or to give as a gift to friends and family. Pick up today a frozen 9 by 13 pan of Pastitsio for \$35.00 by stopping by the GOYA table. For more information please contact Alea Melachrinou Mavrogeorgis via text 412-726-5940. Please identify who you are in a detailed message. Checks can be made to St. Nicholas GOYA or cash is also acceptable. Thank you for supporting our fundraiser.



From the Church School Desk!

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral Church School is preparing for their Holiday Outreach Project:

We are looking for hats, mittens, scarves, gloves, etc. for **Neighborhood Resilience Project's "Project Bundle-up"** to decorate our tree. Many thanks in advance for your warm winter accessories and teaching the children the gift of giving.

I appreciate the support from all of you and thanks for sharing your children with us every Sunday!

Yours in Christ
Miss Michelle

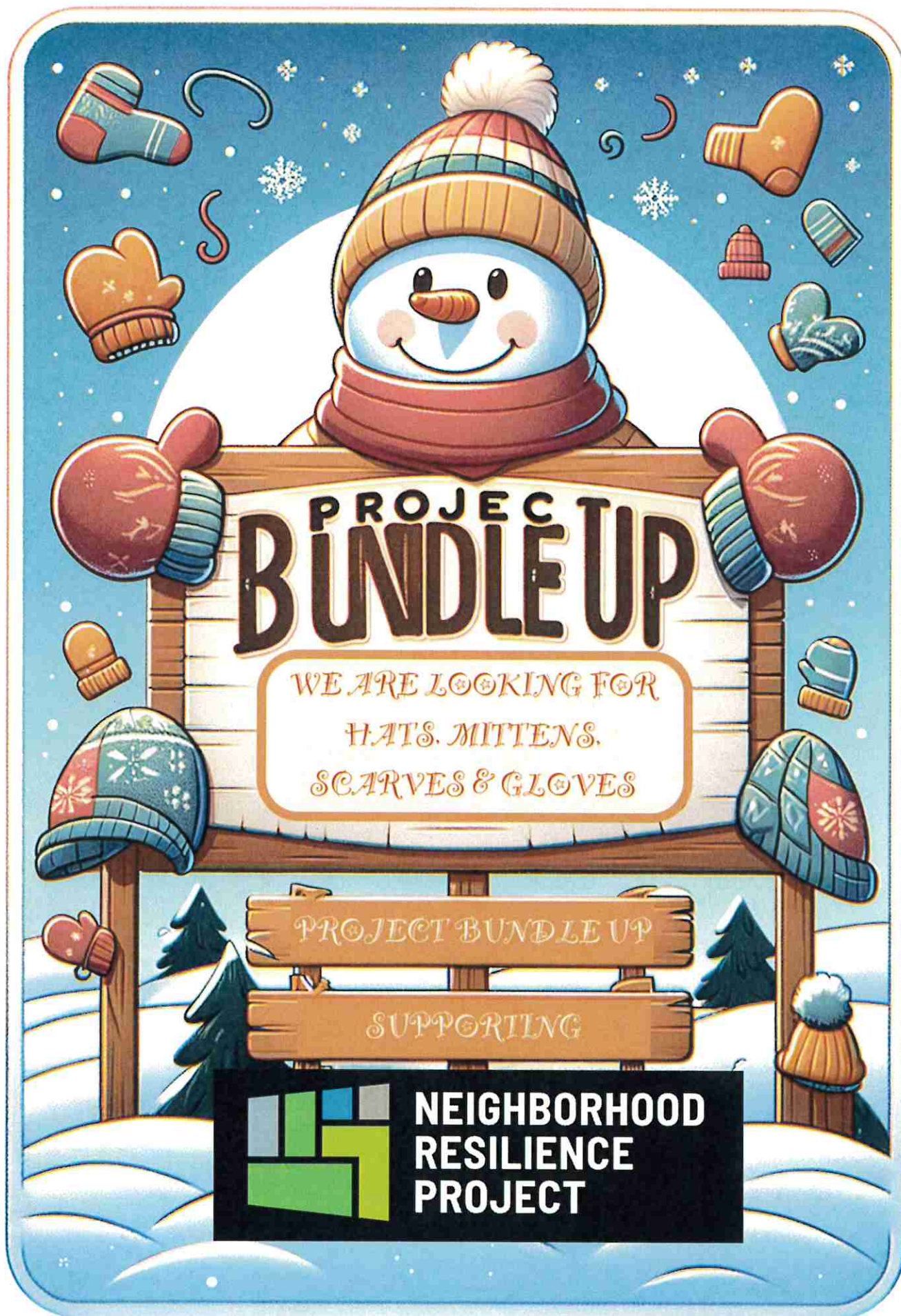
ST. NICHOLAS CATHEDRAL SIXTY CLUB

To All Brothers and Sisters in Christ of All Ages,

May the Love, Hope and Joy of the Christmas Season

last throughout the New Year.

May it bring us Peace and Good Health.

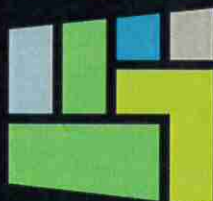


PROJECT BUNDLE UP

WE ARE LOOKING FOR
HATS, MITTENS,
SCARVES & GLOVES

PROJECT BUNDLE UP

SUPPORTING



**NEIGHBORHOOD
RESILIENCE
PROJECT**

2024 Festival Cooking Schedule

January 2024

January

Spanakopita	Thursday, January 4 (Prep) Sunday, January 7 after Church till 4:00 pm Monday, Jan. 8 , 9:00 am continuously till 8:00pm, Evening Cooking , Jan. 9, and 10, 9:00 – 4:00 Possibly Thursday, Jan. 11, 9:00 am
Souzoukakia	Friday and Saturday, January 20, 21, 9:00 to 4:00 Sunday, Jan. 22, After Church till 4:00
Koulourakia	Saturday, January 27, 9:00 to 4:00

February

Pasta Flora	February 3
Baklava	February 10, 11, 12
Pastitsio	February 23, 24, 25

March

Karidopita	March 5
Finikia	March 16
Galatoboureko	March 22, 23, 24

April

Kourambiethes	April 6
Tiropita	April 13, 14
Diples	April 22 or 23, TBD

DECEMBER 2023 / JANUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
24 Sunday before Nativity Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. <i>(No Church School)</i> Christmas Eve Vespers 4:30 p.m.	25 CHRISTMAS DAY The NATIVITY of OUR LORD Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. <i>Church Office Closed</i>	26	27	28	29 Wedding	30 <i>No Greek School</i>
31 Sunday after Nativity Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. <i>(No Church School)</i>	1 JANUARY <i>Church Office Closed</i> NEW YEAR'S DAY, CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD, FEAST OF BASIL THE GREAT: Orthros 9:00 a.m., Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 a.m.	2 GOYA Girls Basketball 6:00 p.m.	3	4	5 Royal Hours of Theophany 10:00 a.m. Vespersal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, followed by the Great Agiasmos 6:30 p.m.	6 THEOPHANY Festal Orthros 9:00 a.m., Divine Liturgy followed by the Great Agiasmos 10:00 a.m. <i>No Greek School</i>
7 Synaxis of John the Holy Glorious Prophet, Baptist, & Forerunner Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Cutting of Vasilopita Parish Council Affirmation of Office GOYA basketball Practice GOYA Xmas Party	8 YAL Basketball 7:00 p.m.	9 Adult Greek Classes 6:30 p.m. GOYA Girls Basketball 6:00 p.m.	10	11	12	13
					GOYA BBall Tourney in Columbus, OH	
14 Leavetaking of the Theophany Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	15 Parish Council Meeting 6:30 p.m. YAL Basketball 7:00 p.m.	16 St. Anthony the Great Orthros 6:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m. Adult Greek Classes 6:30 p.m. GOYA Girls Basketball 6:00 p.m.	17	18 Sts. Athanasios and Cyril, Patriarchs of Alexandria Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	19	20 Greek School 10:00 a.m. Metropolis Parish Leadership Conference
21 12th Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Philoptochos Membership Drive Oratorical Education Sunday	22 YAL Basketball 7:00 p.m.	23 Adult Greek Classes 6:30 p.m. GOYA Girls Basketball 6:00 p.m.	24	25 Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople Orthros 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.	26	27
GOYA BBall Tourney in Akron, OH						Greek School 10:00 a.m.