

Sunday, December 20, 2020
Sunday before the Nativity of Christ
Genealogy of Christ

WORSHIP SCHEDULE TODAY: Orthros: 8:00 a.m. & Divine Liturgy: 9:00 a.m.

The church will be opened to the first 200 parishioners who have phoned into the church this past week and registered to attend worship (please review church protocols). This service will be live streamed and found on our Ss. Constantine and Helen Facebook Page and You Tube Channel.

HYMNS FOR THE DAY: (Found in red hymnal book)

- # 3 – Ευφραίνεσθω τα ουρανια/Rejoice all the heavenly
- # 75 – Ετοιμαζου Βηθλεεμ/Make ready O Bethlehem
- # 74 – Μεγαλα τα της πιστεως κατορθωματα/Great are the faith's accomplishments
- # 134 – Του Σταυρου σου τον τυπον/The sign of the Cross in the sky
- # 221 – Η Παρθενος σημερον/The Virgin comes today

READINGS: Orthros Gospel: Luke 24:36-53.

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40.

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25.

(For further information go to Archdiocese website at: goarch.org or
The Metropolis of Chicago website at: chicago.goarch.org.)

THE NICENE CREED & LORD'S PRAYER are found on pages 52-54 and 71 of your blue service book. Everyone is encouraged to recite them out loud in both Greek & English.

PRE & POST-COMMUNION PRAYERS: The Pre-Communion prayers are found on pages 76-80 in your blue service book. The first four will be read in Greek and the next four in English. **Please recite them out loud as a congregation.** The Post-Communion prayers are found on pages 98-100 in Greek and pages 101-102 in English. These should be read by those who have received Holy Communion when they return to their seats.

COUNCIL DUTY: Chris Paramantgis & ALL Parish Council members and volunteers.

MEMORIALS

- | | | | |
|----------|----------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 6 months | Konstantinos Halkias | 7 years | Ioannis Linaris |
| 9 months | Kostantinos Vossos | 30 years | Eleni Vossos-Panayi |
| 2 years | Nick Kalogeras | 43 years | Marilyn Droza |
| 6 years | Lemonia Linaris | | |

MAY THEIR MEMORY BE ETERNAL!

SERVICE SCHEDULE: Thursday, December 24th – *Christmas Eve* – Royal Hours: 9:00 a.m. and Vespers Liturgy: 6:30 p.m.

Friday, December 25th – Christmas Day – Orthros: 8:00 a.m. and Divine Liturgy: 9:00 a.m.

ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΤΙΚΟΝ ΗΜΕΡΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ: Πέμπτη, 24 Δεκεμβρίου – Παραμονή

Χριστουγεννίων – Αι Μεγαλαι Ωραι: 9:00 π.μ. και Εσπερινη Λειτουργια: 6:30μ.μ.

Παρασκευη, 25 Δεκεμβριου – *Χριστουγεννα* – Ορθρος: 8:00 π.μ. και Θεια Λειτουργια: 9:00 π.μ.

AT THIS TIME OF YEAR when our minds are especially occupied with the thoughts of gifts, may we take time to realize that we have the Greatest Gift of all to share with the world: the Message of Life, Peace and Joy available through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CHURCH OFFICE will close at 12noon on December 24th & all day on Christmas, December 25th and January 1, 2021 for New Year's Day. Memorial names, reservations for worship and any announcements for the Sunday, December 27th bulletin must be submitted by Tuesday, December 22nd by 3:00pm and for the Sunday, January 3, 2021 bulletin by Tuesday, December 29th, 3:00pm.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING: The Greatest Gift ever presented to humanity was our Lord's Incarnation. Likewise our greatest gift to our Lord in return can be **OUR** commitment, **OUR** service and **OUR** support. This year as we exchange gifts with our loved ones, our friends and our business associates, let us not forget our Lord and His Church.

Over 800 Christmas Offering Envelopes have been mailed out to our parishioners. Please give generously so that we may help reduce the deficit caused by the COVID-19 pandemic! If you haven't already made your Christmas offering to the church, please do so by mail or at the Christmas Eve services or Christmas Liturgy in person. A blessed and joyful Christmas to all!

PARISH COUNCIL OPENINGS: There are two open seats available for the Parish Council for the rest of 2020-2021 term. Any parishioner 18 years or older in good standing with the church (canonically & financially) is welcomed to submit their name, co-sponsored by two parishioners, to Fr. Ted at the church office. We have been asking for months for our parishioners to help, and yet no one has responded! Please, for the love of our Lord and His Holy Church, won't someone give of their time and talent?

SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE: Registration for the November/December Faith Box is ongoing. Sign up at tinyurl.com/novfaithbox.

Each month, families will have the opportunity to register to receive a box packed with activities, readings, discussion questions and games for the whole family! Families can pick up their box after church on Sunday or during the week and complete the different elements at their own pace. That way, everybody can have a few no-stress, faith-centered family nights each month focused on a particular Christian virtue. Just open the box, and the work is done! Contact Fr. Dimitri if you have any questions or suggestions.

THANK YOU TO ALL who supported our St. Helen's Philoptochos Society Holiday Bake Sale. Through your generosity, you not only treated yourselves to some delicious treats, but allowed Philoptochos to continue in their philanthropic endeavors. God bless you all! Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year!!!

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE: The only true way to value Christmas for Orthodox faithful is through prayer and receiving the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist (Holy Communion), and this celebration should be observed by the entire family. Following worship is when we may all come together and focus on the holiday celebration.

This year, worship services for the Feast Day of the Nativity of our Lord will be as follows:

The Royal Hours for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord will be chanted on Christmas Eve morning, Thursday, December 24th, 9:00 a.m. in the chapel (no Holy Communion offered).

The Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil will be celebrated on Christmas Eve evening, Thursday, December 24th at 6:30 p.m. in the Cathedral.

On Christmas Day, Friday, December 25th, Orthros will be chanted at 8:00a.m. followed immediately by the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom at 9:00 a.m. also in the Cathedral.

Holy Communion will be offered at the Vespers Liturgy and the Liturgy on Christmas Day. To prepare for Holy Communion on Christmas Eve: partake of a light lunch around noon and begin a total fast (no food, drink or smoking) afterwards. Read the prayers of Holy Communion and ask for forgiveness from God and each other.

Please come and join us (remember to register to attend the Christmas worship services to the church office before Wednesday, December 23rd, 2:00 p.m.) on both December 24th and 25th and share God's message of hope, peace, and love as we celebrate the Birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

REMEMBER – The Church offers you something you can't get anywhere else.

**ATTENTION FAITHFUL MEMBERS OF SAINTS
CONSTANTINE AND HELEN CATHEDRAL**

**OUTLINE OF SAFETY PROTOCOLS
BEFORE ATTENDING CHURCH**

- The church (or areas used for worship) will be sanitized before each service.
- The church will only be allowed to hold as many people (200) as can maintain social distancing (6 feet distance).
- Due to the limited seating available, every person who is planning on attending worship services will need to register through the church office (219-769-2481) between 11am–1pm, Monday through Friday. Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis. This will allow us to ensure that we can accommodate everyone. Those who come to church without registering will not be allowed to enter.
- According to the directives of the Metropolis of Chicago, the high-risk population and those caring for them should not attend services. Our parish will be using a system of self-reporting. We will not be verifying your age or medical history at the door.
- Those who have tested positive for COVID-19, or who are in the same household as someone positive for COVID-19, or who are feeling sick should not attend services.
- Worship Services will continue to be lived streamed on our Cathedral's Facebook Page and You Tube Channel for those who cannot or may not feel safe to attend.

COMING TO CHURCH

- Every person attending worship will need to check in upon arrival at the designated area in the Exo-Narthex. There will be a brief screening process (verbal questions and a temperature check) at the sign-in table.
- Every attendee will need to wear masks (you must provide your own mask) at all times while they are in the physical area of worship, except when receiving Holy Communion. The only exception will children under the age of 2.
- Use non-contact greetings (waving, a bowing of the head) with fellow parishioners instead of the traditional hugging, kissing or shaking of hands. Social distancing must be maintained. No walking about the church proper to greet, talk or visit with one another.

IN THE CHURCH

- There will be hand sanitizer stations at the entry of the church, at the candle stands, at the entry into the Nave, and at the Solea.
- There will be no veneration (kissing) of icons, sacred objects, or the priest's hand.
- Parish Council members will distribute candles for the faithful to light, as well as place the 3-hour votives and 5-day red votives in there designated areas of the church. After lighting candles you will be asked to sanitize your hands before entering the Nave of the church.
- No paper bulletins, monthly newsletters or other items will be distributed to those attending worship.
- Due to the need to socially distance, a Parish Council member or a designated usher will escort you to your seat. Please do not insist on sitting in "your spot," as the Parish Council's only concern will be in maintaining social distancing to maximize safety.
- Every other pew will be available for seating with six feet in between each worshiper. People living in the same household can sit together.
- There will be no liturgical books in the pews.
- Holy Communion will be distributed at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. The Parish Council will direct people to approach the Chalice and observe social distancing. Sanitize your hands before approaching the Chalice (sanitizer stations will be available on the Solea).

- After receiving Holy Communion, families will depart directly from the side doors and go to their cars to return home. Please do not congregate in the parking lot.
- The church and other worship areas will be sanitized again after services conclude.

Please remember: It is YOUR CHOICE whether to ATTEND CHURCH or not.

It is YOUR CHOICE whether to RECEIVE Holy Communion or not.

DO NOT BE JUDGMENTAL of those who do or don't.

STEWARDSHIP NOTE: As we approach the end of the year, we would like to remind everyone of his or her Stewardship commitment to the Church. In little over one week, we will be closing the year. Praise the Lord that around 80 percent of the Stewardship Pledges for 2020 have been fulfilled. However, 130 pledges, for a total of \$31,463 have not been completed as of yet. This amount will negate any gain in Stewardship revenues and add to the deficit of the Parish's budget. We know it's been a difficult year for everyone due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Let us not make it more difficult for our parish. Please make sure your 2020 Stewardship Pledge of commitment is fulfilled by December 31st.

2021 Pledge Forms have been mailed to all members. Close to 20 percent of our membership have returned their Stewardship Pledges to the church office. If you haven't submitted your 2021 Pledge Form, please do so today. Only through everyone's commitment can our Parish continue to grow and minister to the needs of all.

Remember, when making your stewardship offering, either use your envelopes or make sure your name and stewardship number is listed on your payment. This will enable the church office to correctly credit your account.

EVERY PARISHIONER of a Greek Orthodox parish, 18 years an older, single or married according to Archdiocese regulations should be a supporting member, a steward, of a parish. Everyone should contribute their fair share to the financial support to their parish. We all need to have the willingness to make a commitment of faith and to "go on record" as being a believer and a supporter of God's work through His Church. Since the Coronavirus Pandemic hit, the income of our parish has been cut by 90% (loss of revenue from worship services, especially Holy Week and Easter, no Annual Summer Greek Fest, no banquet rentals, just to name some). To make giving easier for all our faithful, we have established an online program called [Tithe.ly/give](https://tithe.ly/give). This will allow those who have internet accessibility to continue to make offerings for stewardship payments, candles, Helping Hand, Food Pantry and other donations that help cover the costs of operating our parish with just a click of your computer keys. Look below and check out the link listed. It is a profession of faith when we all work together and help our church to better plan for its various financial needs and expenditures. Thank you!

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=1385847>

TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF SS. CONSTANTINE AND HELEN:

It is our prayer to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Whose Birth we celebrate, that He may grant you all and your loved ones length of days with good health, peace, love, joy, prosperity and growth in faith.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

Fr. Ted & Presvytera Tulla Poteres

Fr. Dimitri & Presvytera Danielle Burikas

Fr. William Conjelko

Presvytera Kathy Pappas

FROM GOD'S WORD: "And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE: Along with our usual needs of canned goods, boxed foods, and cleaning items, we are in need of personal hygiene products. For the holidays, the Food Pantry will open on Tuesdays, December 22nd & 29th, from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. However, instead of our regular parishioner crew working it, volunteers from the Ross Township office will. Anyone 18-40 without any medical conditions who would like to volunteer during these times is asked to contact Karen Petalas at the Township Office or Patty Makarounas through the church office.

BOOKSTORE NEWS: Visit our Cathedral Books Store, Monday-Friday, between 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. for some Christmas shopping. Items available such as Christmas CD's, ornaments, Christmas cards, as well as a new selection of books, icons and other items. Children's books make excellent gifts and stocking stuffers. A wide variety of specially priced books will bring lasting joy to many on your gift list!

WEBSITE UPDATE: If you haven't looked lately at our Cathedral website, www.ssconstantineandhelen.org, you should. It has had a new makeover and allows the viewer to gather information about our parish, as well as Metropolis and Archdiocese ministries and programs at a touch of a finger. We would like to thank Presvytera Kathy Pappas and Fr. Dimitri Burikas for their time and efforts in putting this together for our parish. We still are in need of a webmaster to update and keep our information current. If there is anyone interested in volunteering their time and talent for this ministry, please contact Fr. Dimitri through the church office.

ATTENTION PARISHIONERS: If you are planning to move to a new location, or if you have already moved, please inform the church office so that we may change our records. It costs our parish money for every piece of mail that is returned as "Address Change requested." PLEASE let the church office know of any changes to your address, home or cell phones, email address, etc. Your help in this matter is truly appreciated!

SEXTON NEEDED: The position of church sexton is still open. Anyone wishing to submit their name for this paid position is asked to see Fr. Ted.

ZHTEITAI NEOKOPOΣ: Μηπως υπαρχει ανθρωπος στην Κοινότητα μας που θα ηθελε να εργασθη ως νεωκορος στην Εκκλησια μας; Αν ναι, παρακαλουμεν να τηλεφωνησετε στο γραφειο της Εκκλησιας και να μιλησετε με το Πατερα Θεοδορο.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Bible Study will begin again on Zoom starting Tuesday, January 12th, 7:00 p.m. Fr. Dimitri will lead the discussion on the topic of the Gospel according to St. John. Everyone is welcomed to tune in live and review it afterwards on Facebook or You Tube. For specific details, contact Fr. Dimitri.

THANK YOU: We would like to thank all the people who gave so unselfishly to help those less fortunate and needy families of our area over this holiday season. The support that was given for the Food Pantry, the Harvest for the Hungry, Kidz 4 Kidz Toy Drive, the Love & Care Drive, GOYA Coat Drive, Jr. GOYA Pillow & Blanket Drive and the Helping Hand Fund was tremendous. Your love and Christian support during this holiday season is truly appreciated by all you touched. The Lord's blessings to all!

CHRISTMAS HUMOR: Neighbor: "What did you get your wife for Christmas?"

Husband: "She told me, "Nothing would make me happier than a diamond necklace!"

Neighbor: "So you got her diamonds?"

Husband: "No, I got her nothing."

ANOTHER CHRISTMAS CHUCKLE: There was a little girl who while sitting on Santa's lap gave him a whole list of expensive toys which she wanted for Christmas and then without a word of appreciation, she jumped off Santa's lap and started toward her mother. Her concerned mother spoke quickly, "Honey, haven't you forgotten something?" The little girl thought for a moment, then said, "O, yes." Then turning back toward Santa, she shouted, "Charge it."

MATTHEW'S GENEALOGY OF CHRIST: St. Matthew begins his Gospel recording, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac..." and continues on until "...Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations" (Matthew 1:1-7). This passage emphasizes, right from the beginning, Jesus' title Christ, the Greek rendering of the Hebrew title Messiah, meaning "anointed one," in the sense of an anointed king. Jesus is presented as the long-awaited Messiah, who was expected to be a descendant of King David. Matthew begins by calling Jesus the son of David, indicating his royal origin, and also son of Abraham, indicating that he was a Jew; both are stock phrases, in which "son" means descendant, calling to mind the promises God made to David and to Abraham. Matthew's introductory title (the genealogy of Jesus) has been interpreted in various ways, but most likely is simply a title for the generations that follow, echoing the Septuagint use of the same phrase for genealogies. This Gospel narrative is the story of all humanity and how humanity finds hope, salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

GOD IS HERE NOW: A certain father was an atheist. He was trying to teach his little son that there is no God. He wrote on the blackboard: "God is nowhere." But he left too much space between the "w" and the "h" in nowhere. So when he said, "Son, read what I wrote." The little fellow read, "God is now here." The message of Christmas is exactly that: God is now here.

"They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). God is now here.

In paying tribute to a remarkable Christian mother, someone wrote, "She helped me to realize the greatness of life, the lifetime of death and the nearness of God." It is because of the nearness of God that life is great and death is little.

The God we see through the lens of the manger is a God within reach. He is the available God, not the nowhere God but the God who is now here!

How tragically true it is that Christians often think Jesus in the past tense – the Christ who was, or in the future tense – the Christ who will be, but how seldom we think of him in the present tense – the God who is now here. In days of confusion, darkness and struggle, we need the assurance of a God who is now here; a Guide for our difficult path, a Comforter in distress. In the Gospel of John we are told "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (1:14). Is not this just another way of saying God is now here? Not in some distant heaven, not on some faraway planet but here in our midst we may find God, sharing our highest purposes, bearing our heaviest burdens, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, cleansing us of our sins, showing us the kind of life that has eternal value.

THOUGHT TO PONDER: We expected a judge, and it was a Savior Who was born. We expected an executioner, and it was a Child Who was born. We were preparing for a rendering of accounts, we were going "to put ourselves right with God," and a Baby was stretching out His arms to us, asking for our love, protection, and tenderness. All the confidence we never dared have in God, He had in us!

CHURCH FATHER SPEAKS: Jesus our Savior is a light in the darkness, a lamp on the lampstand which enlightens all the world and purifies the sins of men, the pearl of great price which we have sold all our possessions to buy, the treasure hidden in a field that we have found and acquired in joy, the source of life from which we have slacked our thirst. He is a table heavy laden with abundance and we who are famished have eaten there with delight. He is the wine that cheers the hearts of men, and all who suffer can drink of Him and their pains vanish. He is the festal garment and the cloak that conquerors wear. He is the true vine, His Father the vinedresser and the branches implanted in Him.

-St. John Chrysostom