

Sunday, December 27, 2020
Sunday after the Nativity of Christ
St. Stephen, Archdeacon & First Martyr

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)

- # 80 – Η Γεννσις σου Χριστε ο Θεος/Your Nativity O Christ our God
- # 4 – Το φαιδρον της Αναστασεως/Having heard the joyous Resurrection message
- # 80 – Η Γεννσις σου Χριστε ο Θεος/Your Nativity O Christ our God
- # 84 – Ευαγγελιζου Ιωσηφ/Bring, O Joseph, the good news
- # 82 – Βασυλειον διαδημα, εσετερη ση κορυφη/With a royal diadem, you were crowned
- # 134 – Του Σταυρου σου τον τυπον/The sign of the Cross in the sky
- # 223 – Η Παρθενος σημερον/The Virgin bears today, the one above essence

READINGS: Orthros Gospel: John 20:1-10.

Epistle: Acts 6:8-7:5, 47-60.

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23.

(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: Justin Tillich & ALL Parish Council members and volunteers.

MEMORIALS

- | | | | |
|---------|---------------------------|---------|----------------------------|
| 9 days | Zoe Batalis | 40 days | Anastasia (Annie) Dubowski |
| 40 days | Kostantinos (Gus) Stassis | 1 year | Efthalia Maginas |
| 40 days | Andrew John Spores | | |

MAY THEIR MEMORY BE ETERNAL!

SERVICE SCHEDULE: Friday, January 1st – *Circumcision of Our Lord and Feast of St. Basil the Great* – Orthros: 8:00 a.m. and Divine Liturgy: 9:00 a.m. in the Cathedral.

Tuesday, January 5th – *Eve of Epiphany* – Vesperal Liturgy: 6:30 p.m. followed by Agiasmo Service in the Cathedral.

Wednesday, January 6th – *Theophany of Our Lord* – Orthros: 8:00 a.m. and Divine Liturgy: 9:00 a.m. followed by Agiasmo Service in the Cathedral.

ΘΗΣΚΕΥΤΙΚΟΝ ΗΜΕΡΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ: Παρασκευη, 1 Ιανουαριου – *Η Περιτομη του Κυριου και Γιορτη του Αγιου Βασιλειου* – Ορθρος: 8:00 π.μ. και Θεια Λειτουργια: 9:00 π.μ. στο Καθεδρικο.

Τριτη, 5 Ιανουαριου – *Παραμονη των Φωτων* – Εσπερινος και Θεια Λειτουργια και Αγιασμος: 6:30 μ.μ. στο Καθεδρικο.

Τεταρτη, 6 Ιανουαριου – *Τα Αγια Θεοφανια Του Κυριου Ημων Ιησου Χριστου* – Ορθρος: 8:00 π.μ. και Θεια Λειτουργια και Αγιασμος: 9:00 π.μ. στο Καθεδρικο.

NEW YEAR: On January 1st, we celebrate a number of events. We usher in the New Year with secular celebration and also welcome the New Year with liturgical celebration. The feast day of St. Basil the Great is celebrated on the first day of January. On this day the Church remembers his many contributions to the writings of the Church, as well as his development of the monastic life, orphanages and other institutions. On the same day we also remember the Feast of the Circumcision of Jesus, Who became incarnate just days before. In the Church's wisdom, we begin the New Year - a new start, by remembering a very special saint and role model, St. Basil. We also call to mind the circumcision of baby Jesus and ponder the new beginning He brought humanity through His blessed Incarnation. So as we celebrate the New Year with our family and friends, let us remember and participate in these liturgical commemorations on the first day of the New Year. Worship services for January 1st begin with Orthros at 8:00 a.m. and followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:00am.

A BLESSED NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE! **EYTYXISMENOS O NEOS XPONOS!**

NEW YEAR'S WISHES: Our Cathedral Clergy, Fr. Ted, Fr. Dimitri, and Fr. Bill, along with the president of the parish council and our entire parish council, offer their prayers and best wishes to everyone in our community of SS. Constantine & Helen and hope that all will have a very peaceful, blessed, healthy, and joyful New Year.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: I will, like Paul, forget those things which are behind and press forward; like David, lift up mine eyes unto the hills from which comes my help; like Abraham, trust implicitly in my God; like Jehoshaphat, prepare my heart to seek God; like Moses, choose rather to suffer than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; like Daniel, commune with my God at all times; like Job, be patient under all circumstances; like Caleb and Joshua, refuse to be discouraged because of superior numbers; like Joseph, turn my back to all seductive advances; like Gideon, advance even though my friends be few; like Aaron and Hur, uphold the hands of my spiritual leaders; like Isaiah, consecrate myself to God's work; like Andrew strive to lead my brother closer to Christ; like John, lean upon the bosom of the Master and imbibe His Spirit; like Timothy, study the word of God; like the heavenly host, proclaim the message of peace on earth and good will toward all men; and like my Lord Himself, overcome all earthly allurements by refusing to succumb to their enticements.

Realizing that I cannot hope to achieve these objectives by my own strength, I will rely upon Christ, for "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

CHUCKLE: Are you sick of making the same resolutions year after year and yet you never keep them? Here are some resolutions that you can actually accomplish! Enjoy! (10) Read less. (9) I want to gain weight. Put on at least 30 pounds. (8) Stop exercising. Waste of time. (7) Watch more TV. I've been missing some good stuff. (6) Procrastinate more. (5) Drink. Then drink some more. (4) Start being superstitious. (3) Spend more time at work. (2) Stop bringing lunch from home: I should eat out more and last but not least... (1) Take up a new habit: maybe smoking or going to church every week!

NEW YEAR'S THOUGHT: God will forgive those who start late in life to serve Him, but He will not forgive those who quit early.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING: Christmas is synonymous with Salvation. The hope and promise of Salvation is a gift from God. This is the greatest gift one can receive. Won't you open your hearts this Christmas and share a gift with God and His Church? Thus assuring that the strong message of God's great gift will be brought to all this Christmas. Offerings may be made in the Christmas envelopes that have been mailed to your homes.

**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: One day a driver was looking for a place to park. He saw a car leaving a parking space in the area in which he wanted to park. He pulled into the space and checked the parking meter. There was close to an hour of time left. It was more time than he needed so he parked on the other person's dime. This little story acts as a reminder that there are people, even in church, who park on the other people's dimes.

As today is the last Sunday of the year, we ask all our parishioners who have an outstanding balance on their 2020 Pledges to please meet their commitment. There is still over \$30,000 in unpaid pledges for the year. If you cannot meet your pledge, please contact Fr. Ted at the church office and the matter will be taken care of.

2021 Pledge Forms have been mailed to all members. Close to 25 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>

MESSAGE DEADLINE: Announcements for the February Message must be submitted to the church office by Monday, January 4, 2021.

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE: At the last Parish Council meeting on December 17th, Daniel Barajas and John Paviadakis had their names submitted for the two open positions on the Council. They were accepted and voted in to complete the current term which finishes on December 31, 2021. Thank you to Daniel and John for stepping forward and offering their time, talent and treasure to serve our Cathedral of Ss. Constantine and Helen as members of the Parish Council.

SEXTON POSITION FILLED: We would like to announce that the new sexton for our Cathedral is Nick Fitousis. He will begin shortly learning the duties and responsibilities of the position. Welcome Nick, and may the good Lord watch over you as you offer your time and talent to His Church.

THE CHURCH OFFICE will be closed January 1, 2021 for New Year's Day. Memorial names, reservations for worship and any announcements for the Sunday, January 3, 2021 bulletin must be received by Tuesday, December 29th, 3:00pm.

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.

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 Tuesday, December 29th, from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. instead of our regular Friday date. 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.

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!

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!

THE CUTTING OF THE VASILOPITA will take place in our parish on Sunday, January 17th immediately following worship.

We invite all those who represent leadership of our societies and organizations, as well as the various ministries and programs of our Cathedral, along with the members of our parish to be available to receive the special slice of Vasilopita and make a donation.

Please note that due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Annual Vasilopita Luncheon will not take place. Also, everyone attending worship this day must register with the church office prior to Friday, January 15th, 12:00noon.

THE APPROACHABLE GOD: Whenever God appeared to man in the Old Testament, it was a frightening experience. He approached Abraham through heavenly messengers, and he spoke to Moses out of the burning brush. In both cases, man was afraid in the presence of God. But centuries later, the angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds on Judean hills and announced, "**For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord**" (Luke 2:11). While startled at first, those shepherds hastened to Bethlehem. Though they stood in the presence of God, they were not afraid, for God had come to them as a tiny infant. Who could ever be afraid of a baby?

God drew near to a man as a little babe, so that man might not be afraid any more to draw near God!

The good news of Christmas is that God in Christ is approachable:

*He was approachable to the Samaritan woman at the well.

*He was approachable to the man with the withered hand, to the deaf, to the lame.

*He was approachable to the blind beggar who called out to him from the gutter of a street; to the leper who was afraid to come near Him; to the penitent thief who died next to Him on the cross. Utterly approachable!

He is approachable today:

*Approachable in our sorrow to dry our tears;

*Approachable in death to sustain us with the hope of everlasting life;

*Approachable in our weakness to strengthen us with His divine grace;

*Approachable in our confusion to guide us to the way, the truth and the life;

*Approachable in our sins to grant us a forgiveness that will put a song in our hearts.

SAINT OF THE DAY: SAINT STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR: The Book of Acts of



the Apostles tells the story of how Stephen was tried by the *Sanhedrin* (high priests) for blasphemy against Moses and God and speaking against the Temple and the Law. He was stoned to death by an infuriated mob encouraged by Saul of Tarsus, the future Saint Paul: "And Saul entirely approved of putting him to death." Stephen's final speech was presented as accusing the Jews of persecuting prophets who spoke out against their sins:

"Which one of the Prophets did your fathers not persecute, and they killed the ones who prophesied the coming of the Just One, of whom now, too, you have become betrayers and murderers." (7:52)

Saint Stephen's name is simply derived from the Greek "*Stephanos*," meaning "crown", which translated into Aramaic as *Kelil*. Traditionally, Saint Stephen is invested with a *crown of martyrdom* for Christianity; he is often depicted in art with three stones and martyrs' palm. In iconography, he is shown as a young beardless man with a tonsure, wearing a deacon's vestments, and often holding a miniature church building or a censer.

FROM THE FATHERS: At His birth He is laid in a manger, and abides in an inn, and takes a mother of low estate; teaching us to think no such thing a disgrace, and from the first outset trampling underfoot the arrogance of man, and bidding us give ourselves up to virtue only. For why do you pride yourself on your country, when I am commanding thee to be a stranger to the whole world? – *St. John Chrysostom*

MORE FROM THE FATHERS: This is our festival, this we celebrate God coming to man that man might go back to God our father. Off with the old man, on with the new! Once dead in Adam, now alive in Christ, born with Christ, crucified with Christ, buried with Christ, risen with Christ. – *St. Gregory of Nazianzus*

POST CHRISTMAS THOUGHT: When we start to take down our Christmas decorations to store them in the attic or basement, let us be careful not to take down Christ from our lives. He was not meant to be stored away but to live in our hearts and souls all year round. After all, His presence with us is what Christmas is all about.