



St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
 Weekly Newsletter
 Sunday, November 22, 2020

9th Sunday of Luke

Ephesians 2:14-22

Luke 12:16-21

Parish Directory Update

We are currently updating our parish directory, and we want to be sure we have the most up to date contact information for each household. Letters will be sent via email for those whom we have emails on file and via mail for the rest. When you receive the letter, please review the information we have on file, make corrections as needed, and provide any missing information. If you do not receive a letter, it means we have no mail/email contact information on file for you – please contact the office to provide your information. You may either mail the completed form back to the church or [email it to the office](#).

Upcoming Meetings

- Choir Practice - Tuesday 11/17 at 7pm
 Contact [Matt Gordon](#) for link

Philly OCF

- Bible study - Tuesday 11/24, 11am
[Zoom link](#)
 Mtg ID #880 5713 0161
 Password: Scripture
- Regular Meeting - Monday 11/30, 8pm
[Zoom link](#)
 Mtg ID #835 2215 9264
 Password: Fellowship

- The following services will be held in the church and streamed on the [website](#):
 - **Wednesday 11/18** – Vespers, 6pm
 - **Thursday 11/19** – 3rd Hour, 9:30am
 - **Friday 11/20** – Vespers, 6pm
 - **Saturday 11/21** – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
 - **Saturday 11/21** – Vespers, 5pm
 - **Sunday 11/22** – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
- To attend one of the services listed above at the church, please sign up via Sign Up Genius ([November services](#)). When doing so, please keep in mind the following:
 - reserve the number of slots for family members attending (For example, if there are 3 household members attending, reserve 3 slots.)
 - those who are elderly, have pre-existing conditions, or currently are not feeling well are asked to remain home.
 - children who are too young to keep a mask on are asked to remain home.
- To set up a time to receive communion, please sign up via the [Sign Up Genius](#). Please reserve only one slot per household unit. Prior to arriving at the church for communion, please say the [Morning Prayers](#) and the [Prayers of Preparation before Communion](#).
- Confession is also being scheduled by appointment. To set up an appointment, please email the church office and provide a few dates/times you are available. The office will email you to confirm your appointment time.

Troparion of St. George

O liberator and deliverer of captives, helper of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender for kings, O great among Martyrs, the victory-clad George; intercede with Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

If you attend a service, you must wear a mask/face covering out of care for ourselves, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and our neighbors.

Adopt-a-College Student

We are currently gauging interest from both our college students and parishioners in the Adopt-a-College Student program. If you would like to pray for a student or support them in some other way or if you are a student who would like to be paired with a family, please contact the church office at office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org to be put on the list.

2020 Holiday Drive

St. George's will once again be supporting People's Emergency Center (PEC) in Philadelphia through our holiday gift drive. Due to COVID-19, PEC is requesting that all donations be mailed to the center, so we will not be collecting items at the church. To donate, [you may visit PEC's website to view the wishlists](#). Alternatively, you may also make a donation to St. George's online or via cash/check (with the note "PEC holiday drive") no later than December 6th and we will direct it to the holiday drive.

2020 Thanksgiving Boxes

St. George's is now collecting donations for Thanksgiving boxes to be donated to PEC. To donate, please make a donation on the church's website or via cash check (with the note "Thanksgiving boxes") no later November 19 so we can deliver the boxes on November 24.

12 Baskets

If you would like to participate in the 12 Baskets ministry, please contact the [church office](#) to sign up.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The 2020-21 Sunday School year curriculum will focus on the 12 Great Feasts of the church. Classes will rotate through an activity each week, and everything will be done remotely. The schedule for November is listed below. Parents will be receiving additional information from the church office later this week.

To register your child(ren) and to ensure we have updated contact information for parents, please fill out this brief form:
<https://forms.gle/HmNKu2Fa2TpPm6Jz6>

Feast: Entrance of the Theotokos (11/21)

November 22

- Elementary school: Ask Abouna
- Middle school: Class (via Zoom)
- High school: At home resources

November 29

No Sunday School

Wisdom of the Holy Fathers

How is justice greater than all the other virtues? The other virtues gratify the one who possesses them; justice does not give pleasure to the one possessing it, but instead pleases others.

+ St. Jerome

Guidelines for the Nativity Fast

November 15 - December 24

The Nativity Fast is one of the four Canonical Fasting Seasons in the Church year. This is a *joyous* fast in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ. That is the reason it is less strict than other fasting periods. The fast is divided into two periods. The 1st period is November 15th through December 19th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Similarly, fish, wine, and oil are permitted on Saturdays and Sundays. The 2nd period is December 20th through 24th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil only on Saturday and Sunday during this period. Here are the guidelines:

Meat	Dairy	Fish	Wine	Oil
beef, chicken, pork, turkey, elk, veal, lamb, deer, rabbit, buffalo, and so forth	milk, eggs, cheese, butter, yogurt, cream, and so forth	fish with a backbone (not including shrimp, octopus, shellfish, squid, or other seafood.	(some include all types of alcohol in this category)	(some include all types of oil in this category)
Abstain.	Abstain.	Permitted only on Saturdays and Sundays before December 20. (some permit fish Tuesdays and Thursdays also)	Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, & Sundays before December 20.	Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, & Sundays before December 20.

Abstinence includes refraining from the food and drink mentioned above, as well as from smoking. The Eucharistic Fast means abstaining from at least the previous midnight for communing at a morning Liturgy.

The Purpose of Fasting

The purpose of fasting is to focus on the things that are above, the Kingdom of God. It is a means of putting on virtue in reality, here and now. Through it we are freed from dependence on worldly things. We fast faithfully and in secret, not judging others, and not holding ourselves up as an example.

- Fasting in itself is not a means of pleasing God. Fasting is not a punishment for our sins. Nor is fasting a means of suffering and pain to be undertaken as some kind of atonement. Christ already redeemed us on His Cross. Salvation is a gift from God that is not bought by our hunger or thirst.
- We fast to be delivered from carnal passions so that God's gift of Salvation may bear fruit in us.
- We fast and turn our eyes toward God in His Holy Church. Fasting and prayer go together.

- Fasting is not irrelevant. Fasting is not obsolete, and it is not something for someone else. Fasting is from God, for us, right here and right now.
- Most of all, we should not devour each other. We ask God to "set a watch and keep the door of our lips."

Do Not Fast

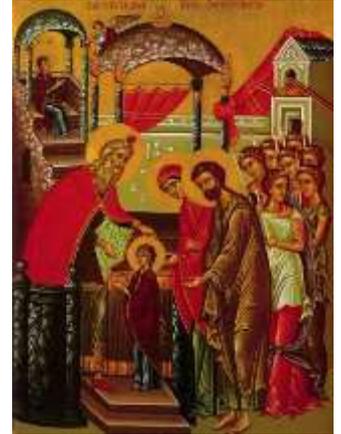
- between December 25 and January 5 (even on Wednesdays and Fridays);
- if you are pregnant or nursing a newborn;
- during serious illness;
- without prayer;
- without alms-giving;
- according to your own will without guidance from your spiritual father.



The Entrance of the Theotokos

According to Holy Tradition, the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple took place in the following manner. The parents of the Virgin Mary, Saints Joachim and Anna, praying for an end to their childlessness, vowed that if a child were born to them, they would dedicate it to the service of God.

When the Most Holy Virgin reached the age of three, the holy parents decided to fulfill their vow. They gathered together their relatives and acquaintances, and dressed the All-Pure Virgin in Her finest clothes. Singing sacred songs and with lighted candles in their hands, virgins escorted Her to the Temple (Ps. 44/45:14-15). There the High Priest and several priests met the handmaiden of God. In the Temple, fifteen high steps led to the sanctuary, which only the priests and High Priest could enter. (Because they recited a Psalm on each step, Psalms 119/120-133/134 are called “Psalms of Ascent.”) The child Mary, so it seemed, could not make it up this stairway. But just as they placed Her on the first step, strengthened by the power of God, She quickly went up the remaining steps and ascended to the highest one. Then the High Priest, through inspiration from above, led the Most Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest entered once a year to offer a purifying sacrifice of blood. Therefore, all those present in the Temple were astonished at this most unusual occurrence.



After entrusting their child to the Heavenly Father, Joachim and Anna returned home. The All-Holy Virgin remained in the quarters for virgins near the Temple. According to the testimony of Holy Scripture (Exodus 38; 1 Kings 1: 28; Luke 2: 37), and also the historian Josephus Flavius, there were many living quarters around the Temple, in which those who were dedicated to the service of God dwelt.

The earthly life of the Most Holy Theotokos from Her infancy until She was taken up to Heaven is shrouded in deep mystery. Her life at the Jerusalem Temple was also a secret. “If anyone were to ask me,” said Saint Jerome, “how the Most Holy Virgin spent the time of Her youth, I would answer that that is known to God Himself and the Archangel Gabriel, Her constant guardian.”

But there are accounts in Church Tradition, that during the All-Pure Virgin’s stay at the Temple, She grew up in a community of pious virgins, diligently read the Holy Scripture, occupied Herself with handicrafts, prayed constantly, and grew in love for God. From ancient times, the Church has celebrated the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple. Indications that the Feast was observed in the first centuries of Christianity are found in the traditions of Palestinian Christians, which say that the holy Empress Helen (May 21) built a church in honor of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple.

The Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple foretells God’s blessing for the human race, the preaching of salvation, the promise of the coming of Christ.