



St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
Weekly Newsletter
Sunday, December 6, 2020

10th Sunday of Luke

Hebrews 13:17-21

Luke 13:10-17

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 12/1 at 7pm
Contact [Matt Gordon](#) for link
- Parish Council – Sunday 12/13 at 1pm
The office will send the meeting link

Philly OCF

- Bible study - Tuesday 12/22, 11am
[Zoom link](#)
Mtg ID #880 5713 0161
Password: Scripture
- Regular meetings will resume in January after winter break – check back here for the date

- The following services will be held in the church and streamed on the [website](#):
 - Tuesday 12/1 – Matins, 9:30am
 - Tuesday 12/1 - Akathist, 7pm ([email Dn. Joseph](#))
 - Wednesday 12/2 – Paraklesis, 6pm
 - Thursday 12/3 – 3rd Hour, 9:30am
 - Friday 12/4 – Akathist and Prayer Walk, 6pm
 - Saturday 12/5 – Vespers, 5pm
 - Sunday 12/6 – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
- To attend one of the services listed above at the church, please sign up via Sign Up Genius ([December 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.

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.

Holiday Flowers

If you would like to make a donation for Nativity flowers, please make a donation online or via cash/check to the church. Please send a list of those the flowers are in honor of and in memory of, as well as which of the people are Orthodox and non-Orthodox on the list to the [church office](#). Fr. Joel will remember them in prayers from Nativity through Theophany.

12 Baskets

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

Wisdom of the Holy Fathers

A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love.

+ St. Basil the Great

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (December 6)

Saint Nicholas, the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia is famed as a great saint pleasing unto God. He was born in the city of Patara in the region of Lycia (on the south coast of the Asia Minor peninsula), and was the only son of pious parents Theophanes and Nonna, who had vowed to dedicate him to God.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The 2020-21 Sunday School year curriculum focuses on the 12 Great Feasts of the church. Classes rotate through an activity each week, and everything is done remotely. The schedule for December is listed below. Parents whose children are registered will receive additional information for the upcoming week from the church office by Thursday each 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>

December Feast: Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (12/25)

December 6

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

December 13

- Elementary school: At Home Resources
- Middle school: Class (via Zoom)
- High school: Ask Abouna

December 20

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

December 27

No Sunday School

As the fruit of the prayer of his childless parents, the infant Nicholas from the very day of his birth revealed to people the light of his future glory as a wonderworker. His mother, Nonna, after giving birth was immediately healed from illness. The newborn infant, while still in the baptismal font, stood on his feet three hours, without support from anyone, thereby honoring the Most Holy Trinity. Saint Nicholas from his infancy began a life of fasting, and on Wednesdays and Fridays he would not accept milk from his mother until after his parents had finished their evening prayers.

From his childhood Nicholas thrived on the study of Divine Scripture; by day he would not leave church, and by night he prayed and read books, making himself a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Bishop Nicholas of Patara rejoiced at the spiritual success and deep piety of his nephew. He ordained him a reader, and then elevated Nicholas to the priesthood, making him his assistant and entrusting him to instruct the flock.

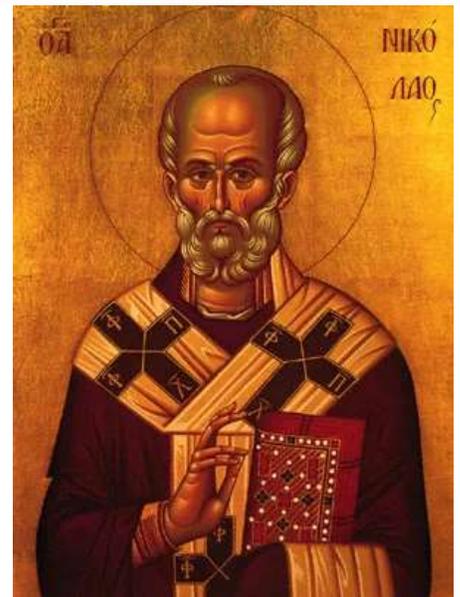
In serving the Lord the youth was fervent of spirit, and in his proficiency with questions of faith he was like an Elder, who aroused the wonder and deep respect of believers. Constantly at work and vivacious, in unceasing prayer, the priest Nicholas displayed great kind-heartedness towards the flock, and towards the afflicted who came to him for help, and he distributed all his inheritance to the poor.

There was a certain formerly rich inhabitant of Patara, whom Saint Nicholas saved from great sin. The man had three grown daughters, and in desperation he planned to sell their bodies so they would have money for food. The saint, learning of the man's poverty and of his wicked intention, secretly visited him one night and threw a sack of gold through the window. With the money the man arranged an honorable marriage for his daughter. Saint Nicholas also provided gold for the other daughters, thereby saving the family from falling into spiritual destruction. In bestowing charity, Saint Nicholas always strove to do this secretly and to conceal his good deeds.

Even during his life the saint worked many miracles. One of the greatest was the deliverance from death of three men unjustly condemned by the Governor, who had been bribed. The saint boldly went up to the executioner and took his sword, already suspended over the heads of the condemned. The Governor, denounced by Saint Nicholas for his wrong doing, repented and begged for forgiveness.

Witnessing this remarkable event were three military officers, who were sent to Phrygia by the emperor Constantine to put down a rebellion. They did not suspect that soon they would also be compelled to seek the intercession of Saint Nicholas. Evil men slandered them before the emperor, and the officers were sentenced to death. Appearing to Saint Constantine in a dream, Saint Nicholas called on him to overturn the unjust sentence of the military officers.

Having reached old age, Saint Nicholas peacefully fell asleep in the Lord. His venerable relics were preserved incorrupt in the local cathedral church and flowed with curative myrrh, from which many received healing.



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.