

## Hymns and Holy Scripture Readings

### Resurrectional Apolytikion in the Third Mode

Let the heavens sing for joy, and let everything on earth be glad. For with His Arm the Lord has worked power. He trampled death under foot by means of death; and He became the firstborn from the dead. From the maw of Hades He delivered us; and He granted the world His great mercy.

### Apolytikion for Forefeast of the Nativity in the Fourth Mode

O Bethlehem, prepare, Eden is opened unto all. \* And be ready, Ephrata, for the Tree of life \* has in the grotto blossomed forth from the Virgin. \* Indeed her womb is shown to be spiritually \* a Paradise, in which is found the God-planted Tree. \* And if we eat from it we shall live, and shall not die, as did Adam of old. \* Christ is born, so that He might raise up \* the formerly fallen image.

### Apolytikion for Sun. before Nativity in the Second Mode

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.

### Memorial Hymn

Remember, O Lord, as You are good, Your servants, and forgive every sin they have committed in this life. For no one is sinless except You, Who have power to grant rest to those who have fallen asleep.

### Apolytikion of the Church in the Fourth Mode

Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit; and they were assured by the blessing that Thou are the Son of God and Redeemer of the world.

Ἀνελήφθης ἐν δόξῃ, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, χαροποιήσας τοὺς Μαθητάς, τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος· βεβαιωθέντων αὐτῶν διὰ τῆς εὐλογίας, ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ λυτρωτὴς τοῦ κόσμου.

### Apolytikion of St. Katherine (Protectress of our Chapel)

Let us praise and extol the all-lauded Bride of Christ,\* the Protectress of Sinai, divine Saint Katherine,\* as the one who gives aid and her assistance to us;\* for she brilliantly suppressed the impious orators,\*with the sword of the Spirit.\* And being crowned as a martyr,\* she asks that all receive the great mercy

### Seasonal Kontakion in the Third Mode

On this day the Virgin Maid \* goes to the grotto to give birth \* to the pre-eternal Word \* in an ineffable manner. \* Dance for joy, all the inhabited earth, on hearing. \* Glorify along with Angels and with the shepherds \* Him who willed that He appear as \* a newborn Child, \* the pre-eternal God.

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

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.

### The Gospel of Matthew 1:1-25

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 Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz 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 Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar 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 fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel!" (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



**ON BEHALF OF THE ASCENSION PARISH FAMILY, we wish you a blessed time with your families throughout this joyous Nativity season. Please refer to our schedule of Divine services for Christmas and Epiphany that was just sent to your homes and may also be found on our website.**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND MANY BLESSINGS IN THE NEW YEAR!**

## Ascension of Our Lord Greek Orthodox Church



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## WEEKLY PARISH BULLETIN December 20, 2020 – January 3, 2021

### Spiritual Reflection

*“I too will proclaim the greatness of this day: the Immaterial become incarnate, the Word is made flesh, the invisible makes itself seen, the intangible can be touched, the timeless has a beginning, the Son of God becomes the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, always the same, yesterday, today and forever. . . This is the solemnity we are celebrating today: the arrival of God among us, so that we might go to God, or more precisely, return to Him. . . Revere the nativity which releases you from the chains of evil. Honor this tiny Bethlehem which restores Paradise to you. Venerate this crib; because of it you who were deprived of meaning (logos) are fed by the divine Meaning, the divine Logos Himself.”*

**St. Gregory the Theologian**

## Weekly Calendar

<b>Sunday</b> 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	<b>December 20</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy Memorial for Ioanna Akrivou (40 Days); Bill Anest (1 yr.)	<b>Sunday before Nativity</b> <u>St. Ignatius the God-Bearer</u>
<b>Monday</b> 9 a.m.	<b>December 21</b> Divine Liturgy	
<b>Tuesday</b> 8 a.m. 9 a.m.	<b>December 22</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy	<b>St. Anastasia the Great Martyr</b>
<b>Wednesday</b> 9 a.m.	<b>December 23</b> Divine Liturgy	
<b>Thursday</b> 7:30 a.m. 5 p.m.	<b>December 24</b> Great Hours followed by Vespers-Liturgy Christmas Vespers	<b>Eve of the Nativity</b>
<b>Friday</b> 8:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	<b>December 25</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy	<b>Holy Nativity</b>
<b>Saturday</b> 8 a.m. 9 a.m. 5 p.m.	<b>December 26</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy Vespers	<b>Synaxis of the Theotokos</b>
<b>Sunday</b> 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	<b>December 27</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy	<b>Sunday after Nativity</b> <u>St. Stephanos</u>
<b>Friday</b> 8:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	<b>January 1, 2021</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy followed by Doxology for the New Year	<b>St. Basil the Great &amp; Circumcision of Our Lord</b>
<b>Saturday</b> 5 p.m.	<b>January 2</b> Vespers	
<b>Sunday</b> 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	<b>January 3</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy	<b>Sunday before Epiphany</b>

## Our Sunday Volunteers

**Prospora Baker:** Christine Stathakopoulos

**Ushers:** Nick Marino UIC, Doug Hugdahl, Bill Athenson, Steve Sintetas, Anastasia Svigos, Carol Stamas

## Prayer Requests for Health

**PLEASE INCLUDE IN YOUR PERSONAL PRAYERS** the servants of God: Eleni, George, Anastasia, Stella, Mitchell, Joanne, Panagiotis, Christina, Dee, Helen, Sophia, Connie, Fred, Katerini, James, Theresa, Peter, Anna, Alexander, Anthony, Matina, Panagiotis, Paraschos, Chris, Bill, Don, Hariklia, Justin, Ignacio, Kevin, Andreas, Theodore, Thanasi, Mary

## Announcements

+ **WE THANK OUR LOYAL & GIVING PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE PROVIDED ASSISTANCE FOR -- AND DURING -- THE DIVINE LITURGY THIS PAST YEAR** including Ushers, Prospora Bakers, Greeters, Epistle Readers, our Koliva team, Coffee Fellowship hosts, and since March, our COVID Parish Safety Team. Your dedication, love and good works on behalf of our Ascension parish is truly recognized and appreciated. May God bless you always.

+ **THE PARISH COUNCIL WISHES TO THANK EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED AND DONATED TO ASCENSION THIS YEAR WHEN THE CHALLENGES FROM THE PANDEMIC MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO DO SO.** As 2020 draws to a close, we ask that any families who have not yet fulfilled their 2020 Stewardship Pledge please do so before the end of this year. Also, for overall year-end tax-deductible charitable contributions to be accounted for in 2020, they must be received or postmarked no later than December 31, 2020. Credit card transactions must process before the church office closes at 3 p.m. on Thursday, December 31st. Remember, any charitable contributions made for the rest of this year are eligible for a 100% tax deduction under the CARES Act legislation. Please call the office or with any questions!

+ **PHILOTOCHOS THANKS YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR PHILANTHROPIC AND FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS** these last few months. Because of your generosity, Ascension was able to fulfill the Christmas wishes of eleven residents at the GARCC, provide hundreds of articles of warm clothing to our veterans and their families, give Christmas gifts to 30 children from the DCFS and make monetary donations to several worthwhile charities to include the *Northern Illinois Food Bank*, *Fill a Heart 4 Kids*, *SEDOL's Adopt-a-Family* program and *Lake County Haven*. On behalf of the Philoptochos, we wish you all a blessed Christmas and a new year filled with much happiness and good health. May God continue to bless our Ascension family throughout this joyous Nativity season. *Καλά Χριστούγεννα* to you and yours!

+ **PROJECT HOPE (formerly The Orthodox Store) is a parish-wide effort to support the growing needs of our local community.** Many thanks to all who have supported this ongoing ministry! Please continue to support Project Hope during this Nativity season by contributing dinner bags, non-perishable food items and COVID-19 kits. You may drop off your donations in the bins provided at the east door. Please contact the office to make arrangements.

+ **SAVE THE DATE: ASCENSION OF OUR LORD 2021 ALASKA MISSION TRIP:** In partnership with the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, Ascension is planning a mission trip to Newhalen Alaska, August 6th – 17th, 2021, Space is limited for this life-changing opportunity. If you are interested, please contact David Rutkowski: [David.rutkowski55@yahoo.com](mailto:David.rutkowski55@yahoo.com), (847)650-0559, who will give you much greater detail about this mission. Visit the OCMC website for more information: [www.ocmc.org/](http://www.ocmc.org/)

+ **SUPPORT OUR PARISH RESTAURANTEURS:** With the new dining restrictions that recently went into place again in Illinois, let us do our part to support our fellow parishioners who own or manage restaurants in our community. Visit the bottom of our website homepage to find a listing of restaurants and bakeries. Please call the office to add a dining establishment to the list.

+ **SUPPORT ASCENSION WHILE SHOPPING ON AMAZON!** When you make a purchase on [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and designate Ascension as your charity of choice, 0.5% of eligible purchases will be donated to our church! Just start each shopping session at the URL [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). On your first visit to AmazonSmile, select Ascension of Our Lord Greek Orthodox Church before you begin shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) will result in a donation. Thank you for participating in this simple way to raise funds for our parish.

### PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR ALL NATIVITY and EPIPHANY SERVICES

**With much love in Christ, we kindly ask for your cooperation as we continue to follow the Civil and Metropolis guidelines in regards to attending services during this festive season. It will be difficult for us to accommodate walk-ins; therefore, pre-registration is imperative so we can adhere to our church capacity limits.**

**Please know that services are offered every day at Ascension during this blessed Christmas season. If a service has reached capacity and registration has closed, please call the office to be placed on a waiting list. You may also consider attending a different service. For those who wish to worship from home, we will continue to live-stream on our website and Facebook/You Tube platforms.**

**We thank our Parish Safety Team and our ushers for all of their time and effort this year to making sure our parish has operated with the utmost safety. We also thank all of our dedicated parishioners for their love, patience, support and understanding during this unprecedented and challenging year.**

+ **SARANTALITURGO – The Nativity Fast culminates this Thursday, December 24.** December 25 through January 4 is fast-free. During the Fast, we have been celebrating 40 Liturgies for the faithful—Sarantaliturgo—to pray for the well being of our parish families, as well as for the souls of the deceased.

+ **STEWARDS: THE 2021 ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDARS AND SCRIPTURE CARDS** are available for you to pick up at church.

+ **HOUSE BLESSINGS WILL BE PAUSED DURING THIS UPCOMING EPIPHANY SEASON** in an abundance of caution per direction from our Metropolitan. Fr. Sotiri looks forward to blessing our homes as soon as it is possible.