

THE TROPHYBEARER

Pastoral Thoughts

Granted, the stores have been stocking Christmas things for weeks. And granted, the media are full of commercials, most silly or egregious, even though Christmas is near the end of the month. And, again, granted, less of the society seems to be celebrating the Christian feast of Christmas every year.

That is society's loss, not ours. Already we are celebrating the birth of Christ, the coming of the Savior into the world. Already we are celebrating, not just commemorating, the Nativity and all that goes with it, in our hymns.

The Christmas narrative is not history, not exclusively so, certainly not if you listen to the hymns. It is joy, elation, right now, right here. We should never forget that the events happened at a specific time and place, under Caesar Augustus and so forth. But that is not the most important point.

Listen to the hymns of the season and of the feast. The Katavasiae of Christmas start, with joy and power, 'Christ is born, glorify Him!' Not was born, is born. It is a cosmic eternal event, no less worthy of our rapt attention and joy than to the handful there in Bethlehem.

The hymns continue, so that we will not forget. 'Today, willingly born of a Virgin' they proclaim. Now, for us, we who are alive right now, to see and celebrate. This immediacy is striking. One can be casual, indifferent, remote, from acts 2,000 years ago. But this is metaphysical reality now.

Take in, for example, the kontakion we will be singing this month in the Divine Liturgy. 'On this day the Virgin maid comes to the grotto to give birth'. Not when Quirinius was governing Syria, Pilate the Roman governor, or Herod the Tetrarch, but now, for us, those people who walked in darkness and are blessed to see a great light.

Enter the immediacy of the event. In the eternal now, we are presented with our Savior now. There is no better time to seek Him, indeed no other time. We only have the present; the past is a cloudy scene we cannot alter, and the future does not exist, not for us. We have now, this very hour, this very day, this very season.

Glorify Christ, now. Worship Him, now. Sing with joy and astonishment at the arrival of Almighty God in the form of a helpless infant to draw us back home, where we long to be, where we need to be. There is no better time than the present to come and worship the new-born King.

Let us all come together as brothers and sisters in Christ to welcome Him.



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PARISH NEWS

Epistle Readers

Anyone wishing to become an Epistle Reader, Please Contact Father Michael

Sunday, December 1, 2024:

14th Sunday of Luke: Scott Florence

Sunday, December 8, 2024:

10th Sunday of Luke: Harry Coin

Sunday, December 15, 2024:

Sunday of the Forefathers:

Kim Eastland

Sunday, December 22, 2024:

Sunday before the Nativity:

Georgjean Pitsoulakis

Sunday, December 29, 2024:

Sunday after the Nativity:

Loukia Constantinides

Evening Meal Volunteers

December 19, 2024 (Thursday): Deaconess Romilie and Deacon Paul Speed.

January 22, 2025: Nicholas Elias and Dr. Vickie Pyevich

February 26, 2024: Susan Coin and Cathy Farrell

Anyone interested in taking part in this worthwhile ministry should contact Mary Winters at 563-726- 2880

Parish Council Sunday Duty Schedule

Sunday, December 1, 2024: Tom Bakeris, Nick Coin, Mariellen

Crosson, and

Vickie Pyevich

Sunday, December 8, 2024: Mary Kay Eckert, Gus Pappas, Ted

Pitsoulakis, and Diana Spurgetis

Sunday, December 15, 2024: Kathy Begyn, Joe Burmeister,

Dennis Spurgetis and Mary Rankin

Sunday, December 22, 2024: Tom Bakeris, Nick Coin, Mariellen

Crosson, and Vickie Pyevich

Sunday, December 29, 2024: Mary Kay Eckert, Gus Pappas, Ted

Pitsoulakis, and Diana Spurgetis

PROSPHORA MAKERS

Sunday, December 1, 2024:

Open

Sunday, December 8, 2024:

Open

Sunday, December 15, 2024:

Open

Sunday, December 22, 2024:

Open

Sunday December 29, 2024:

Open

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Sunday, December 1, 2024:

Open

Sunday, December 8, 2024:

Mary Rankin

Sunday, December 15, 2024:

Open

Sunday, December 22, 2024:

Pyevich Family

Sunday December 29, 2024:

Open

EVENING MEAL NEWS

The St. Joseph Evening Meal program is working on filling its calendar for next year (2025). This program provides a dinner to those less fortunate than us. St. George is assigned one meal a month. So far this year (2024), thanks to the generosity of those who served, St. George provided dinner to 479 men, women & children.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Saint John of Damascus (December 4)

Saint John was born in Damascus about the year 675, the son of wealthy and pious parents, of the family of Mansur. He was reared together with Saint Cosmas (see Oct. 14), who had been adopted by John's father Sergius, a man of high rank in the service of the Caliph of Damascus. Both of these young men were instructed by a certain monk, also named Cosmas, who had been taken captive in Italy by the Arabs and later ransomed by John's Father. Saint John became a great philosopher and enlightener of the age in which he lived, and was honoured by the Caliph with the dignity of counsellor.

When Emperor Leo the Isaurian (reigned 717-741) began his war on the holy icons, John wrote epistles defending their veneration. Since the Saint, being under the Caliph of Damascus, was beyond Leo's power, the Iconoclast Emperor had a letter forged in John's handwriting which invited Leo to attack Damascus, saying the city guard was then weak; Leo then sent this letter to the Caliph, who in his fury punished John's supposed treason with the severing of his right hand. The Saint obtained the Caliph's Permission to have his severed hand again, and that night prayed fervently to the most holy Theotokos before her icon. She appeared to him in a dream and healed his hand, which, when he awoke, he found to be healed in truth. This Miracle convinced the Caliph of his innocence, and he restored John to his office as counsellor.

The Saint, however, with many pleadings obtained his permission to withdraw from the world to become a monk. He assumed the monastic habit in the Monastery of Saint Sabbas. Then he had as elder a very simple and austere monk who commanded him neither to write to anyone, nor to speak of the worldly knowledge he had acquired, and John faithfully obeyed. A monk grieving over his brother's death, however, after insisting vehemently, prevailed upon John to write a funeral hymn to console him for his brother's death. When John's elder learned of his transgression of the rule he had given him, he cast him out of his cell, and would only accept him back after John had humbly, with much self-condemnation and without murmuring consented to clean all the latrines in the lavra. After his elder had received him back, our Lady appeared to the elder and sternly charged him not to hinder John any longer from his writings and composition of hymns.

In his writings he fought courageously against the Iconoclasts Leo the Isaurian and his son Constantine Copronymus. He was also the first to write a refutation of Islam. The time he had spent as a counsellor in the courts of the Moslems of Damascus had given him opportunity to learn their teachings at first hand, and he wrote against their errors with a sound understanding of their essence. Saint John was surnamed Chrysorroas ("Golden-stream") because of the eloquence of his rhetorical style and the great abundance of his writings; this name Chrysorroas was also the name of the river that flows by Damascus. In his writings he set forth the Orthodox Faith with exactness and order. In his old age, after his foster-brother Cosmas had been made Bishop of Maiuma, John also was ordained presbyter by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Having lived eighty-four years, he reposed in peace in 760. In addition to his theological writings, he adorned the Church of Christ with metrical and prose hymns and composed many of the prosomia used as the models for the melodies of the Church's liturgical chant; he also composed many of the sacred hymns for the feasts of the Lord Saviour and the Theotokos. The life of Saint John of Damascus was written by John, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

HERMAN THE WONDERWORKER OF ALASKA
& FIRST SAINT OF AMERICA (DECEMBER 13)

Saint Herman (his name is a variant of Germanus) was born near Moscow in 1756. In his youth, he became a monk, first at the Saint Sergius Hermitage near Saint Petersburg on the Gulf of Finland; while he dwelt there, the most holy Mother of God appeared to him, healing him of a grave malady. Afterward, he entered Valaam Monastery on Valiant Island in Lake Ladoga; he often withdrew into the wilderness to pray for days at a time. In 1794, answering a call for missionaries to preach the Gospel to the Aleuts, he came to the New World with the first Orthodox mission to Alaska. He settled on Spruce Island, which he called New Valaam, and here he persevered, even in the face of many grievous afflictions, mostly at the hands of his own countrymen, in the loving service of God and of his neighbor. Besides his many toils for the sake of the Aleuts, he subdued his flesh with great asceticism, wearing chains, sleeping little, fasting, and praying much. He brought many people to Christ by the example of his life, teaching, kindness, and sanctity and was granted the grace of working miracles and prophetic insight. Since he was not a priest, Angels descended at Theophany to bless the waters in the bay; Saint Herman used this holy water to heal the sick. Because of his unwearying missionary labors, which were crowned by God with the salvation of countless souls, he is called the Enlightener of the Aleuts and has likewise been renowned as a wonderworker since his repose in 1837.

14,000 INFANTS (HOLY INNOCENTS) SLAIN BY HEROD IN
BETHLEHEM (DECEMBER 29)

The infant-slaying Herod mentioned here is the same one that ruled at the time of Christ's Nativity. In those days, certain Magi, who were wise and noble men, perhaps even kings, set forth from the East and came to Jerusalem, seeking the King of the Jews, Who had been born; and they said that in the East, where their homeland was, an unusual and strange star had appeared two years before, which, according to an ancient oracle (Num 24:17), was to signify the birth of some great king of the Jews. "For we have seen His star in the east," they said, "and have come to worship Him" (Matt. 2:2). Hearing these things, Herod was troubled, and the whole city together with him. Then, having inquired and been informed by the high priests and scribes of the people that, according to the prophecies, Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, he sent the Magi thither and ordered them that when they would find the Child to inform him so that he also - as he affirmed - might go and worship Him. But the Magi, after they had worshipped, departed by a divine command by another way to their own country. Then Herod was wroth and sent men to slay all the infants of Bethlehem and the parts round about, from two years old and under, thinking that with them he would also certainly slay the King Who had been born. But this vain man who fought against God was mocked since Jesus the Child, with Mary, His Mother, under the protection of Joseph the Betrothed, fled into Egypt at the command of an Angel. As for those innocent infants, they became the first Martyrs slain on behalf of Christ. But their blood-thirsty executioner, the persecutor of Christ, came down with dropsy after a short time, with his members rotting and being eaten by worms, and he ended his life in a most wretched manner.



Community Christmas Celebration

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024
4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

The Carlisle
435 E. Butterfield Road.
Lombard, IL 60148

APPETIZERS & REFRESHMENTS WILL BE
SERVED

HELP US PROVIDE WARMTH TO THOSE IN NEED BY DONATING
NEW HATS, SCARVES, GLOVES, OR GIFT CARDS TO PROVIDE
BEDDING FOR THE PHILOXENIA HOUSE LOCATED IN
ROCHESTER MINNESOTA

WWW.PHILOXENIACHARITIES.ORG/ABOUT.HTML

"Love each other with a warm love that comes from the heart."

1 Peter 1:22

Holiday Drive-Thru Bake Sale

Advance Prepaid Order Pickup

Friday, December 13 3:00-6:00pm
 Saturday, December 14 9am - NOON

Name: _____ Order Date: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Pick Up (check one) Friday Saturday

We are taking ADVANCE ORDERS ONLY!!! No Open Sales.

To place an order, call Celia @ 563-293-3396 or order online at
assumptionphiloptochos.square.site.

Orders must be placed and paid in full by credit card no later than Sunday, December 8, 2020.
 If you prefer to mail in this order form with your payment, please advise Celia in advance.

| Item | Quantity | Price | Total |
|--|----------|---------------------------------|-------|
| Baklava | | \$20 per Tray (3 strips) | |
| Kourambiethes <i>Powdered Sugar Cookies</i> | | \$18 per Dozen | |
| Koulourakia <i>Butter Twist Cookies</i> | | \$12 per Dozen | |
| Paximathia <i>Greek Biscotti</i> | | \$12 per Dozen | |
| Gift Box Assortment <i>4 Koulourakia, 2 Baklava, 3 Melomacaroni, 3 Kourambiethes</i> | | \$18 per Box | |

Total Due: _____

Assumption Greek Orthodox Church • 4900 Kennedy Drive • East Moline, IL 61244



**ST. GEORGE
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**
Rock Island, Illinois



PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
2930 – 31st Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Monday, November 4th, 2024

Dear Parishioners and Friends:

The St. George Philoptochos Society is sponsoring the 2024 Parish Christmas Card. As in previous years, each of us can send our Christmas greetings to all our Church members and friends for a great cause. A beautiful card with all the participants' names is sent to everyone on our mailing list. We hope that everyone will be included in the 2024 Christmas Card. Please send the portion below with your name, clearly printed, as you wish it to appear on the card, along with your generous donation to the Church office; return it to the Philoptochos mailbox on Sundays, or mail it to Alexa Florence (address below). Completed forms and donations must be received by Sunday, December 1st. A portion of the proceeds are used for benevolent projects of the Philoptochos Society. More specifically, the proceeds of this year's Christmas card will be donated to two local organizations - one on the Iowa side and one on the Illinois side. In this season of giving, please find it in your heart to give to those less fortunate.

Sincerely,

Georgjean Pitsoulakis, Chairman Philoptochos Christmas Card Committee

- Please email me a change of address and other contact info if you have moved in the past year to georgjean@gmail.com. Thanks!
- Send checks in the mail to St. George or directly to:
Alexa Florence - 1023 Kimberly Ridge Rd, Bettendorf, IA 52722

St. George Philoptochos Society 2024 Parish Christmas Card
NAME(S) (Please print clearly as you would like it to appear on the card)

DONATION: \$ _____ (Checks payable to St. George Philoptochos Society)



We are collecting
hats/gloves/mittens/coats
for the less fortunate...
If you would like to donate,
please place them on the
Christmas tree in the
Narthex until January 5,
2025

2024 DECEMBER

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>14th Sunday of Luke Fish, Oil and Wine Allowed</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes following the Divine Liturgy</p> | <p>2</p> <p>Fish, Oil and Wine Allowed</p> | <p>3</p> <p>Fish, Oil and Wine Allowed</p> | <p>4</p> <p>Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA)</p> <p>11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum</p> | <p>5</p> <p>Fish, Oil and Wine Allowed</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Book Study "Marriage and Family" by Saint John Chrysostom, both "in person" and Zoom</p> | <p>6</p> <p>The Feast Day of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker Oil and Wine allowed.</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Assumption</p> | <p>7</p> <p>Fish, Oil and Wine Allowed</p> |
| <p>8</p> <p>10th Sunday of Luke Fish, Oil and Wine Allowed</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes follow Holy Communion Parish Council Elections 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Metropolis Community Christmas Celebration @ the Carlisle</p> | <p>9</p> <p>Fish, Oil and Wine Allowed</p> | <p>10</p> <p>Fish, Oil and Wine Allowed</p> | <p>11</p> <p>Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA)</p> <p>11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum</p> | <p>12</p> <p>Feast day of Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker Fish, Oil and Wine Allowed</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Book Study "Marriage and Family" by Saint John Chrysostom, both "in person" and Zoom</p> | <p>13</p> <p>Fast Day</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Women's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA)</p> | <p>14</p> <p>Oil and Wine Allowed</p> |
| <p>15</p> <p>Sunday of the Forefathers Oil and Wine Allowed</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes follow Holy Communion Philoptochos Meeting following the Divine Liturgy</p> | <p>16</p> <p>Oil and Wine Allowed</p> | <p>17</p> <p>Oil and Wine Allowed</p> <p>6:30 p.m. Parish Council Meeting</p> | <p>18</p> <p>Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA)</p> <p>11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum</p> | <p>19</p> <p>Oil and Wine Allowed</p> <p>7:00 p.m. Book Study "Marriage and Family" by Saint John Chrysostom, both "in person" and Zoom</p> | <p>20</p> <p>Fast Day</p> | <p>21</p> <p>Oil and Wine Allowed</p> |
| <p>22</p> <p>The Sunday before the Nativity Oil and Wine allowed</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes follow Holy Communion</p> | <p>23</p> <p>Oil and Wine allowed</p> | <p>24</p> <p>Strict Fast 8:30 a.m. Royal Hours for the Nativity @ Assumption Church</p> <p>5:00 p.m. Vesperal Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great</p> | <p>25</p> <p>Fast Free The Nativity according to the Flesh of our Lord</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy</p> | <p>26</p> <p>Fast Free</p> | <p>27</p> <p>Fast Free</p> | <p>28</p> <p>Fast Free</p> |
| <p>29</p> <p>Sunday After the Nativity Fast Free</p> <p>8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy</p> | <p>30</p> <p>Fast Free</p> | <p>31</p> <p>Fast Free</p> | | | | |