

## Hymns and Holy Scripture Readings

### Resurrectional Apolytikion in the First Mode

The stone having been sealed by the Pharisees and chief priests, \* and Your all-immaculate body being guarded by soldiers, \* You rose on the third day, O Lord and Savior, granting life unto the world. \* Then the powers of the heavens cried out to You, O Giver of Life, and shouted, \* "Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ! \* Glory to Your eternal rule! \* Glory to Your plan for saving us, only benevolent God!"

### 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

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, after You filled the Disciples with joy, by promising to send them the Holy Spirit, and You blessed them and established their faith, that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

Ἀνελήφθης ἐν δόξῃ, Χριστέ 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 preeternal 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 foundation, 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 recently 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 22 - 29, 2024

**WELCOME TO THE ASCENSION PARISH!** Your presence has brought us much joy! We hope your visit is memorable and meaningful in every way. Our doors and hearts are always open to you. Please join us for fellowship following the Divine Liturgy and visit with Fr. Sotiri and with members of the Parish Council. They will answer questions and provide you with information regarding Ascension's ministries and vibrant parish life.

**COMMUNION GUIDELINES:** To partake of Holy Communion, one must be a Baptized/Chrismated Orthodox Christian and be in good standing with the church. Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and regular participation in Holy Confession are welcome to receive communion. One should also be present at the Liturgy before the Scripture readings. Please follow the directions of the ushers during Holy Communion, and, also please allow the Sunday Church School staff and students to commune first so they can make their way to class and promptly begin their lessons. Thank you.

## Spiritual Reflection

*"There are many purposes for presenting the genealogy of Jesus in the Gospels, chief among them which is the affirmation that Jesus, being in truth the Son of God, as all Gospels testify, has come "in the flesh" as a real human being. ...One other important point is made in listing the human generations which led to the birth of Jesus. This is the fact that God is faithful to His promises even though His chosen people are often not faithful. Among the people from whom Jesus came are both sinners and heathens. In a word, Jesus comes not only from the righteous and holy, but from the wicked and sinful. And He comes not only from Jews, but from Gentiles."*

**Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko: The Winter Pascha**

## Weekly Calendar

<b>Sunday</b> 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	<b>December 22</b> Orthros Hierarchical Divine Liturgy <u>Memorials</u> George Mouzakiotis (40 Days) Aphrodite Frangoulis (1 yr) Eleni Vardalos (1 yr) Vasilis (3 yrs) and Thanasi (3yrs) Davos. Andreas Zoulas (3 yrs). Evangelos Simos (6 yrs) Coffee Fellowship Hosted by Sophia & Arthur Metropulos & The Zoulas Family	<b>Sunday before Nativity</b>
<b>Monday</b> 9 a.m.	<b>December 23</b> Divine Liturgy	
<b>Tuesday</b> 8:30 a.m. 5 p.m.	<b>December 24</b> Royal Hours Vespers Liturgy for the Nativity (Holy Communion is served)	<b>Eve of the Nativity</b> <i>Church Office Closed</i>
<b>Wednesday</b> 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	<b>December 25</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy	<b>Holy Nativity</b> <i>Church Office Closed</i>
<i>Note: December 25 – January 4 is FAST-FREE</i>		
<b>Thursday</b> 8 a.m. 9 a.m.	<b>December 26</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy	<b>Synaxis of the Theotokos</b>
<b>Friday</b> 8 a.m. 9 a.m. 12:00 p.m. 6 p.m.	<b>December 27</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy Senior Synaxis Christmas Party, Dover Straits, Mundelein Parish Family Ice Skating, Centennial Ice Arena, Highland Park	<b>St. Stephen the First-Martyr</b>
<b>Saturday</b> 5 p.m.	<b>December 28</b> Vespers	
<b>Sunday</b> 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 12:00 p.m.	<b>December 29</b> Orthros Divine Liturgy YAL & OCF Brunch, Eggspresso, Bannockburn	<b>Sunday after Nativity</b>

+ **PASTORAL NEEDS, HOSPITAL CALLS, NURSING/REHAB AND HOME-BOUND PARISHIONERS:** If you have a pastoral need or emergency and would like to speak to Fr. Sotiri, or know of someone who would like to schedule a pastoral visit, please contact Father via the office.

+ **STEWARDS: THE 2025 ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDARS AND SCRIPTURE CARDS** are available for you to pick up in the Narthex

+ **LOST & FOUND LAST CALL:** Visit our lost-and-found area in the long hallway across from the restrooms. We have some clothing hanging and items in baskets on the shelf. Whatever is not claimed will be donated at the end of Dec.

## STEWARDSHIP & GRATITUDE

### THE PARISH COUNCIL WISHES TO THANK EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED AND DONATED TO ASCENSION THIS YEAR! As 2024 draws to a close, we have two important requests of all Ascension Families:

- 1) **Stewardship 2024:** We thank the 397 families that have pledged \$537,426 to date, as well as their time and talents. If you made a pledge for 2024 but have yet to fulfill it, please do so before the end of the year. For overall year-end tax-deductible charitable contributions to be accounted for in 2024, they must be received or postmarked no later than December 31, 2024. Credit card transactions must process before 3 p.m. on Tuesday, December 31st.
- 2) **Stewardship 2025:** To date, we thank the 91 families that have pledged \$221,748 as well as generously offer their time and talents to this Parish! Stewardship is the lifeblood of our Parish. As of this week, we are at 34% of our 2025 stewardship target of \$650,000. Let's keep the momentum going! *(Please be aware that Stewardship doesn't automatically renew annually. We ask that you recommit your annual stewardship of time, talent and treasures by completing the online 2025 Stewardship Pledge form.)* If you have any questions, please contact the office. Let us draw together as a parish family to demonstrate our gratitude and lovingly serve God by supporting Ascension.

## Sunday Volunteers

**Prosporo Bakers:** Mary Paganis & Sofie Caronis  
**Epistle Reader:** Bill Athenson  
**Greeters:** Maureen Patouhas & Despina Taranko  
**Ushers: UIC: Alex Gianaras, Demetri Katsulis, Bruce Carlson, Vicki Betsios, Bill Athenson, Alex Marx**

## Prayer Requests

**PLEASE INCLUDE IN YOUR PERSONAL PRAYERS the servants of God:** Eleni, George, Anastasia, Stella, Mitchell, Joanne, Panagiotis, Christina, Dee, Helen, Sophia, Connie, Katerini, James, Theresa, Peter, Anna, Alexander, Anthony, Magdalena, Maggie, Panagiotis, Paraschos, Chris, Don, Justin, Ignacio, Finn, Kevin, Theodore, Mary, Madison, Trinity, Evangelos, John, Rick, Robert, Tom, Georgia, Kristi, Rob, Maureen, Antonia, Christina, Constantine, Irene, Iliana, John, Carolyn, Mary, Maria, Patrick, John, Panagiota, Luci, Stephanos, Leonidas, Vasiliki, Nikki, Anastasios, Stacey, Adriane, Eleni, Helen, George, Gregory, Irene

**PARKING IN OUR FIRE LANE AND IN THE CIRCULAR DRIVEWAY IS ILLEGAL & UNSAFE**  
The entrance to the parking lot, as well as the circular driveway/drop-off area at the front of the main doors to church, is a NO PARKING ZONE as mandated by Police/Fire Department Ordinance. Emergency vehicles must be able to enter these areas quickly and without obstructions from parked vehicles. The Police Department will ticket cars illegally parked in the entrance area and circular fire lane. Thank you for your cooperation this upcoming week with this important safety matter.

## Vigil Lights

Vigil Lights offered by Jim and Della Facklis with prayers for the well-being of the Jim and Suzanne Saric family.

## Announcements

+ **WE ARE BLESSED TO HAVE HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN NATHANAEL WITH US ON THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY** Our Parish Family extends our heartfelt wishes to His Eminence for a joyous Nativity and a new year filled with good health and many blessings. May the newborn Christ grant you strength in your service and leadership of the Church as you shepherd this Metropolis into a new year.

+ **WE THANK OUR LOYAL & DEVOTED PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE SERVED FOR AND DURING OUR DIVINE SERVICES THIS PAST YEAR,** including Acolytes, Chanters, Ushers, Prosporo Bakers, Greeters, Epistle Readers, our Koliva team, Coffee Fellowship hosts, and Icon-Decorating Team. Your dedication, love and good works on behalf of our Ascension parish is truly recognized and appreciated. May God bless you always.

+ **LAST DAY FOR COOKBOOK ORDER PICK-UP** before the Christmas holiday is **TODAY, in the lobby of the east entrance of our fellowship building!** After today, uncollected cookbook orders will then need to be picked-up on Sunday, January 5 in Anagnos Fellowship Hall following Divine Liturgy. If you need additional information, please email Mary Ellen Esser at [esserfamily@msn.com](mailto:esserfamily@msn.com).

+ **THIS FRIDAY, GET ON THE ICE! OUR ANNUAL PARISH ICE-SKATING PARTY** takes place this Friday, December 27th from 6-8 p.m. at Centennial Ice Arena at Highland Park. Please see the insert for more details and be sure to RSVP online by December 23. See you there!

+ **SENIOR SYNAXIS IS HOLDING ITS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY** on Friday, December 27th at Dover Straits in Mundelein at noon. Family and friends are always welcomed. Cost is \$40 payable to Ascension and mailed to Elaine Stevens, 3133 Epstein Circle, Mundelein, IL 60060. Please RSVP by contacting Kay James at (847) 533-1225 by 12/23. Join us for our joyous and festive annual gathering.

+ **FANARI REUNION DANCE HOSTED RIGHT HERE AT ASCENSION!** Fanari campers and friends! Ring in the New Year with your Fanari Family at the **Fanari Reunion Dance!** Join us for an evening of music, dancing, dinner, and amazing parea. Ascension is honored to host youth from across the Metropolis this year on Monday, December 30th from 7-10 p.m. Please help spread the word about this fun event to all current and rising Fanari campers (6th - 12th grade). Tickets are just \$10 and can be purchased at [fanari.camp/reuniondance](http://fanari.camp/reuniondance)

+ **WE THANK OUR YOUTH AND ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN OFFERING LAST SUNDAY'S BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT** which gave our parish family an opportunity to witness the Nativity story through the voices of our children. Visit our Sunday Church School webpage to view photos and a video of this special performance.

+ **THIS YEAR'S YAL CHICAGO CHRISTMAS PARTY** will take place at Roanoke (135 West Madison, Chicago) on December 26 from 8-11 a.m. Visit the YAL webpage on Ascension's website for a link to RSVP and more information.

+ **ATTENTION COLLEGE STUDENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS:** You are invited to join Fr. Sotiri, Presvytera Stefanie and Pastoral Assistant John Anton along with all of your friends for a "Winter Break Brunch" following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 29, 2024 at Eggspresso in Bannockburn at noon. Please RSVP to Alex Karkazis at [alexanderckarkazis@gmail.com](mailto:alexanderckarkazis@gmail.com) by Dec. 27th. We look forward to catching up with all of you!

+ **FANARI WINTER CAMP Registration is open** for this year's camp, which will take place at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center for 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders January 17-20 (MLK weekend). Visit [www.fanari.camp/wintercamp](http://www.fanari.camp/wintercamp)

+ **PHILOTOCHOS KOLIVA PREPARATION:** We have had several people ask us about classes for making koliva. Although we don't have any formal classes planned at this time, we often prepare koliva trays on Saturday mornings. If you are interested in learning, you are always warmly welcomed to join us and assist. Please contact Jeannie Thomas (847.323.6916 or [jgt1009@gmail.com](mailto:jgt1009@gmail.com)) for upcoming schedules and details.

+ **EPIPHANY HOME BLESSINGS** – According to the Greek Orthodox tradition, the month of January is the time for home blessings. If you wish for Fr. Sotiri to bless your home, please complete the insert and return it to the Church Office by 1/8/25.

+ **SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 6th ANNUAL DIVE FOR THE CROSS EVENT** We will celebrate this historic tradition on Sunday, January 26 from 3-5 p.m. at the Highland Park Rec Center Pool. Diving is reserved for K-12th graders.

+ **WE ARE IN NEED OF COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTS A COUPLE WEEKS IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY:** Please volunteer to host with your family, or together with another family, so that we may continue our fellowship after Liturgy. You may sign up via our website, or by calling the church office.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Perhaps you've heard of the Christmas carol "Good King Wenceslaus," but behind the song is an Orthodox Saint! Saint Wenceslaus, the Holy Prince of the Czechs, was a wise and just ruler who succeeded his father at the age of eighteen. Raised by his grandmother, Saint Ludmilla, he was deeply pious, well-educated, and committed to the Christian enlightenment of his people, building churches and respecting the clergy. His peace-loving nature and efforts to strengthen Christianity in his realm made him a target for envious nobles, including his own brother, Boleslav. On September 28, 935, Boleslav, aided by his servants, treacherously murdered Wenceslaus at the church doors. His body was initially discarded unceremoniously, but after his repentance, Boleslav transferred the saint's relics to Prague, where they were placed in the church of Saint Vitus. The Russian Orthodox Church has long honored Saint Wenceslaus' memory on that date.