St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church

Lowell, Massachusetts

Sunday of the Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ

December 11, 2022

ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Rt. Rev. Bishop JOHN, Diocese of Worcester and New England
Rt. Rev. Archimandrite Leonard Faris ~ Pastor of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
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FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/saintgeorgelowell
INSTAGRAM: stgeorgelowell

WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) Service 9:00 a.m. Sunday School: Every other Sunday, 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. **Church Office Hours:** Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Divine Liturgy begins at 10:00 a.m. and we should not arrive late. When we do arrive late and the Epistle or Gospel is being read or the priest is preaching the sermon or the Great Entrance is taking place, please **REMAIN** in the Vestibule until it is finished before entering the Church. At the end of the Divine Liturgy please keep your conversation until you have left the Church.

We should leave the Church in silence.

Important Notice: The reception of Holy Communion is limited to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting and recent Confession. Confessions are heard on Sunday mornings during the Matins Service or by special appointment. The Eucharistic Fast begins at midnight on Saturday and ends up with the receiving of Holy Communion. If you are on medication or a young child, you can have a light breakfast before coming to church. If you have any questions, please call Fr. Leonard.

Thank you,
Father Leonard

Prayer Requests and Bulletin News: All prayer requests and articles for the weekly bulletin must be submitted each week by **Noon, Tuesday**: emailed to Fr. Leonard at fatherfaris@comcast.net or call 978-452-4816, otherwise, the requests and articles will be published the following week.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

If anyone is in the hospital it is the duty of the family to inform the priest so that he can visit the patient. Also, if anyone is homebound and would like to receive Holy Communion, he/she or a family member should contact Fr. Leonard to make arrangements to bring the Sacrament to the shut-in. Fr. Leonard is always happy to bring the Sacraments to those in Hospitals, Nursing Homes or at home. Thank you and God bless!

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 1

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure Body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Saviour, granting life to the world; for which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of Life: Glory to thy Resurrection, O Christ; glory to Thy Kingdom; glory to Thy Providence, O Thou Who alone art the Lover of mankind!

Entrance Hymn

Ha~lum~mu li~nas~judu, wal~nar~ka' lil~ma~sih, malikana wa eelaheena, khal~lis ~na ya bna l~lah, ya man qa~ma min by~nil~am~wat, li~nu~rat~til la~ka, Hal~li~lu ~ia

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 1 (repeated)

Troparion of the Forefathers, Tone 2

Thou hast justified by faith the ancient Forefathers, and through them Thou hast gone before and betrothed unto Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, take pride in glory; for from their seed sprouted forth a noble fruit, and it was she who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

Troparion of St. George, Tone 4

As deliver of captives and defender of the poor, healer of the infirmed, champion of kings, victorious great martyr George, intercede with Christ our God, for our souls' salvation.

Kontakion of the Preparation of Christ's Nativity, Tone 3

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; * with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child Who before the ages is God.

THE EPISTLE

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers.
For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians. (3:4-11)

Brethren, when Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (14:16-24)

The Lord spoke this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

Prayers are being offered for the Health and Safety of:

Nora Abdelahad
ANSARA: Lorice, Yvette
Nel Arsenault
BETOR: Ed, Paul & Kerrie
BORAGINE: David & Cindy, Ida
Sharon DeForest
Daniella Forsley De LaFuente
Charbel El-Hashem
George Ellis
Athanasia Grivas
Duayne Habib
Victoria Ishac
Fr. Stephen and Family
MANSOUR: Joseph, Ray
Lynn, Thomas Marcotte & Family
Clemence Maria
Karine Nabbout & Family
Gwen Noonan
Helen Poulos
Michael Saati
Bassam Taleb
Amad Tayebi
Jack Trottier
Robert, Denise & Megan Wagstaff
Dr. Vartan & Lisa Yeghiazarians & Family
Genia Yeghiazarians
Khouryee Jane Zbeeb

Prayers are being offered in Memory of:

Charles Abdelahad
ABODEELY: Connie, George, Miriam
Hayel Altali
ANSARA: Andrew, Elias John, Maurice, Michael
Phyllis Arsenault
ASSALY: Gladys, Linda
Yaacoub Awad
BAHOU: Juliette, Laurice, Siham
Widad Batten
James "Jimmy" Beaudry
Lillian Betor
BORAGINE: Dorothy, Sal
Cleopatra Bouras
ELIAS: Ella Jean
ELLIS: Frances, Frank
FARIS: George & Elsie, Mary T., Mary V.
Pamela Jo Forsley
Elizabeth & Joseph Ghareeb
Elias Grivas
George P. Habib
Emile & Teffaha Haddad
Philip & Rosalind Hajjar
Elias Hanna
HUSSON: Dorothea, Eleanor, Joanne, Robert
N. Mary Husson
Joe & Terry Husson Kadir
Salim Khabazeh
LAKKIS: Gerges, Michel
LOUH: Amanda, Nuha Shahin
LOWE: George & Rose
Efthymios & Paraskevi Manolis
Robert Maria
Jenny Mansur
George Matook
Maurice Matte
Denise McCrady
Nafie Moses
Elias Nabbout
Fred Noonan
Frederick & Matilda Noonan
Paul Panagopoulos, Sr.
SAAD: Anisse, Hanna
Mary Saati
George W. & Mary Saba
Badawi Sabbouh
Eleanor Shalhoup
Fred Simon
SKAFF: Chakeep Mildred & Arthur, Minnie Nellie, Ricky, Stephen, T. Michael Skaff
J. B. Taleb
Lydia Tateosian
Elaine Vieira
Leon Yeghiazarians
Mary Ann & Charles Zaharias
ZANANIRI: Hilda, Nahil
Fr. Andrew Zbeeb

ALTAR BREAD

Today's Altar Bread is being offered for the Servant of God, Sharkey Skaff requested by his wife Laurence and his Family. May Sharkey's memory be eternal.

Today's Altar Bread is being offered for the Servant of God, George Lowe, requested by his Family. May George's memory be eternal!

Today's Altar Bread is being offered for the Servants of God, Affah and Bahije Haddad, requested by their daughter and son-in-law Hana and Nabil Bahou and Family. May Affah and Bahije's memories be eternal.

MEMORIAL ~ December 11th

A 4 Year Memorial Service is being offered for the repose of the soul of the Servant of God, Sharkey Skaff, requested by his wife Laurence and his Family. May Sharkey's memory be eternal.

A Memorial Service is being offered for the repose of the soul of the Servant of God, George Lowe, requested by his Family. May George's memory be eternal!

A 2 Year Memorial Service is being offered for the repose of the soul of the Handmaid of God, Affah Haddad and a 10 Year Memorial Service is being offered for the Servant of God, Bahije Haddad, requested by their daughter and son-in-law Hana and Nabil Bahou and Family. May Affaf and Bahije's memories be eternal.

NATIVITY FAST

This fast is divided into two periods: The first period is November 15th through December 19th, when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine and oil) is observed on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, but with allowance for fish, wine, and oil on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. The second period is December 20th to 24th, when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine and oil) is observed Monday through Friday, but with allowance for wine and oil on Saturday and Sunday.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WHAT IS GIVEN HERE IS THE TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINE OF THE FAST. YOU MAY HAVE TO ADOPT THESE RULES TO YOUR PARTICU LAR SITUATION.

HOWEVER, EVERYONE SHOULD ADOPT SOME REGIMEN OF FASTING IN PREPARATION FOR THE GREAT FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

Today, December 11th, following Liturgy, join us for our Sunday School's Christmas Party.

THIS WEEK

Sun	12/11	12:00	LAST DAY TO PURCHASE LUNCHEON TICKETS
Mon	12/12	7:00 pm	Divine Liturgy for the Feast of St. Spyridon
Tue	12/13	6:30 pm	Parish Council Meeting via Zoom

Come to the evening Divine Liturgies to prepare, spiritually, for the coming of Our Savior Jesus Christ on Christmas Eve. Confessions will be heard before and after these Services.

2022 Christmas Flower Fund

You are invited to make a donation to help decorate
the Church for Christmas.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

For the Health & Safety of:	In Loving Memory of:

You name: _____

Donation: _____

All donations should be received no later than
December 18, 2022
DONATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE

Please make checks payable to "St George Antiochian Church"

The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers is the Sunday that falls between December 11-17, the second Sunday before the Nativity. Two Sundays before the Manifestation of God in the flesh which is known as Nativity, the Orthodox Church connects us to the crowd of Forefathers and Prophets, from the time of Adam to Christ. They are all related to Christ, either because they awaited him, or because they were from his lineage, or also because they were seeking Him without knowing him.

Saint Justin the Philosopher wrote in the 2nd century:

"We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that He is the Word in whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them". The saint talks in his Apologetics about Christ as "spermatikos Logos", a seed in all nations which know the truth in part. The Logos is the Word of God, found in the minds of good people. These have grown the seeds and discovered the realities of God in part. In fact, faith completes the mind, and is not against logic.

Two Sundays Before Nativity:

The Sunday of the Forefathers of Christ.

The church focuses on the universal and widespread character of Nativity. Christ is not the deity of a particular people nor is He a particular choice to anyone, but rather he is the Creator of the entire universe and, consequently, he is the God of the whole world.

After the fall of humankind and God's promise of salvation, God revealed to the Fathers and Prophets in the Old Testament the fulfillment of the promise and His economy (dispensation) of the Incarnation and Redemption. There are more than three hundred prophecies in the Old Testament about the coming of the Savior; all peoples have waited for the true God.

This is confirmed by visit of the Magi from Persia. The same goes for philosophers thirsting for wisdom, happiness and joy. They spoke about Him and desired Him without naming Him.

We see how Paul the Apostle does not hesitate in Arius Pagus, while talking to its poets and philosophers, to quote poet Epimenides who advised the erection of a statue of an unknown god, and to apply the quote on Christ: "for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring'."

For example, in Athenodoros, a philosopher in the first century BC we find beautiful phrases as he said:

"A Holy Spirit rises deep within us. He is an observer and guardian of our good and evil thoughts."

Elsewhere, he says: "I know that if you do not dare to ask anything from God in the presence of all people, then you are not free from your passions yet. Live with people as if God sees you and speak to God as if people hear you."

This is our God, the God of the living and the dead and the God of all peoples and generations and the Savior of our souls, so let us go to meet Him.

Hence, the goal of the 40 days fast that began on the 15th of November is to make us meet this incarnate God face to face, and to make our hearts a manger that receives the One Who came down from heavens and accepted to be born as a Child, to raise us to His kingdom.

But this requires humility, emptying of oneself (kenosis), obedience to God's will, and, of course, sincere repentance for us to be born again.

Abraham was a pagan in the eye of religious sciences, but he became a great teacher of obedience and faith.

All beliefs and religions, from the Far East to the Far West, called for a God who saves and redeems.

They looked for peace, security, happiness and quietude, when "the wolf finds pasture with lambs." People craved this joy beyond terrestrial identity that unite us by giving a heavenly identity. Hence the Apostle Paul's words: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise".

The blessing of Melchizedek, "King of Shalim" - meaning the King of Peace - to Abraham upon his return from the Battle of Chedorlaomer and the fact that he gave him bread and wine is an affirmation of the existence of divine seed in the whole world.

Melchizedek is the king of Jerusalem, Shalim, or Jerusalem, mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. This is a Canaanite name meaning "King of Peace".

His character remains mysterious, "without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually." He was not a Jew, but he was mentioned as the priest of the Most-High God.

COME AND CELEBRATE THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

Beloved in Christ,

On Thursday, December 24, 2022, we will celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. "The Word was made Flesh and Dwelt among us!

You are all invited to come and attend Christmas Eve Services and receive Holy Communion on this Great Feast!

Festal Orthros (Matins)	5:00 pm
Procession to the Creche and Blessing	5:45 pm
Solemn Candlelight Divine Liturgy of St. Basil	6:00 pm

Begin your Christmas celebration by coming to church first and wishing Our Lord "Happy Birthday"! May the Prince of Peace, Whose Birth we are celebrating, fill your hearts with joy and gladness during this Holy Season and may the New Year bring us all peace, good health and spiritual happiness!

With Love,
+Fr. Leonard

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