



JANUARY 5, 2024

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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– Fr. Theodore Pantels, Proistamenos (Pastor) – Deacon Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.

Holy Communion Order

- 1. Please remain standing while following the directions of our ushers. 2. Ladies, kindly remove lipstick before receiving. 3. When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name), and naturally receive as if being fed. 4. Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service. 5. All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see the priest if you have any questions.

THE LADDER

SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY)



PRAYER FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES

“Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all these things that are pleasing to You. For You are the Light of our souls and bodies and to You we give glory together with Your Father Who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.”

EPISTLE- 2 Timothy 4:5 – 8

Timothy, my son, always be watchful, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

GOSPEL- St. Mark 1:1 – 8

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets,

‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight —’ John was baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

CELEBRATING THE EVENT OF OUR SAVIOR’S BAPTISM IN THE RIVER JORDAN

Today is the Sunday Before the celebration of our Lord’s Baptism in the River Jordan. Tomorrow is the Celebration Itself. The Gospel readings of all the services tell of the Lord's baptism by John in the Jordan River. The Epistle reading of the Divine Liturgy tells of the consequences of the Lord's appearing which is the divine Epiphany. The main feature of the celebration is the blessing of water. This Church service follows both the Divine Liturgy of the Eve of the Feast day (today) and the Divine Liturgy of the Feast day itself...The blessing verifies that mankind, and all of creation, were created to be filled with the sanctifying presence of God. In connection with the feast, it is traditional for the priest to visit all the homes of the faithful for their annual house blessing using the water that has been blessed at the Theophany services.

– Taken in part from: https://orthodoxwiki.org/Theophany

### Liturgical Notes for Today

At the Entrance of the Gospel: 1) **Entrance hymn:** 1) *"Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord, by His Mighty Arm, has created a Dominion. He has conquered death by death, and become the firstborn of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of Hades, and has granted the world great mercy."*/Ευφρανέσθω τα ουράνια...

2) *"The River Jordan once reversed its course before the mantle of Elisha when Elijah ascended, and the waters parted for side to side. The waterway became dry land for him as a true image of Baptism through which we cross the changing passage of life. Christ has appeared in the Jordan, sanctifying the waters."*/ Απεστρέφετο ποτε, ο Ιορδάνης ποταμός...[Hymn for the Forefeast of Epiphany]

3) *"Since you are a deliverer of captives and a defender of the poor; a physician for the sick and a noble attendant to kings, O Great among the Martyrs and Glorious George, intercede to Christ our God that He may save our souls."* [Hymn of St. George]/Ως των αιχμαλώτων ελευθερωτής... [Hymn for St. George]

4) **Kontakion:** *"Appearing in the streams of the Jordan today, the Lord cries out to John, 'Do not be afraid to Baptize Me for I have come to save Adam, the first to be created.'"*/Εν τοις ρείσθοις σήμερον του Ιορδάνου...

### WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Sunday, January 5th .....FOREFEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY) [Strict Fasting Day]  
Orthros-8:15 a.m./Divine Liturgy -9:15 a.m./Great Blessing for the Waters to follow.

Monday, January 6th.....EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY) - THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST  
Orthros-8:15 a.m./Hierarchical Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m./Great Blessing for the Waters to follow.

Tuesday, January 7th.....ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.  
Bible Study-11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, January 8th..... Orthodox Christian Catechism-6:30 p.m. (online). Contact Fr. Ted by email at [tpantels@stgeorgepd.org](mailto:tpantels@stgeorgepd.org) to receive a link to join on Zoom.)

Sunday, January 12th.....Vasilopita Celebration (sponsored by our St. George Philoptochos)

Monday, January 13th.....Festival Preparations Begin-9:00 a.m. at our parish hall.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SUNDAY SCHOOL** – Following the “Christmas break,” classes will resume next Sunday, January 12, 2025.

**PHILOPTOCHOS** – Vasliopita Sunday is next Sunday, January 12th and we will have a limited amount of vasilopita for purchase on that day.

**ST. GEORGE BOOKSTORE** – Our St. George Bookstore has received many new items. We have set up a "Holiday Shop" in the Church Hall. New items are on order, so if you don't see anything check back in a few days or any of the following Sundays. We take credit card, cash, or checks payable to St. George Church-memo-bookstore.

**PARISH COUNCIL** – We welcome Jim Christopoulos and Francine Vasilomanolakis as the newly elected members of our 2025 Parish Council. The 2025 Parish Council “Affirmation of Office” will be scheduled in the very near future, following the ratification of our Parish Elections by our Holy Metropolis.