

St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church

Self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, Diocese of the West

17840 Sky Park Circle, Irvine CA 92614 (949) 851-8933

Church Office Hours: M-F – 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

Website: www.st-mark-church.org

Archpriest Michael Laffoon, Priest Patrick Irish

Protodeacon George Moubayed, Sub Deacon Athanasius Fakhouri

Choir Director Barbara Scholl

Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Theresa Joubran, Mark Ellis,

Karim Youssef & Jake Bahbah

Church Office Administrator: Lydia Wakileh

Teen Advisors: Paula Rodriguez and Dana Chade

Sunday Schedule: Orthros (Matins) & Confessions 8:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.



DECEMBER 13, 2015

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS OF CHRIST

VENERABLE FATHER HERMAN OF ALASKA

HYMNS AFTER THE ENTRANCE

Troparion of the Resurrection in the Third Tone: Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

Troparion of the Forefathers in the Second Tone: 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 she it was who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

All: Troparion to St. Mark in the Fourth Tone: From thy childhood the light of truth enlightened thee, O Mark, and thou didst love the labor of Christ the Savior. Wherefore thou didst follow Peter with zeal and didst serve Paul as a fellow laborer and didst enlighten the world with thy holy Gospel.

Kontakion of Preparation for the Nativity of Christ in the Third Tone: The Virgin cometh today to the cave to give birth ineffably to bring forth the Word eternal. Therefore, rejoice, O earth at the message with the angels and shepherds give glory to him who shall appear by his own will as a young child, he who is from eternity God.

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Prokeimenon (Daniel 3:26,27) Tone 8: Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our Fathers. For you are just in all you have done.

The reading from Saint Paul's Epistle 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.

Alleluia Verses (Psalm 98.6, 33:17) Tone 4: Moses and Aaron are among his priests. The righteous cried and the Lord heard them.

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."

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Holy Oblations are offered today by Melad & Wafa Hanna for the souls of her mother Jamileh and her father Ibrahim and for the health and success of their children Michael, Amanda & Sameer; by Eileen & Mark Ellis for the health and salvation of their family and in memory of Eileen's grandparents, Archpriest Elias (60 years), and Kh. Halimeh (36 Years); by Constantine Geronikolaou for the soul of his mother Eleni departed this life 40 days, by Michel and Charlotte Khoury for the souls of Michel's parents Amine & Sumaya and in memory of his aunt Nadia, and for the health and salvation of Melody, George, Melissa, Grace and Amanda, and by Lori Nour for the soul of her uncle Norman Nader departed this life December 9th.

Instead of Coffee Hour our Antiochian Women are holding their Annual Pre-Christmas Bake Sale.

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Please remember in your prayers: Odette Chade, Maha Kureh, Darlyne Dibs, Eleanor Wackeen, Georgette Salameh, Lourice Kishek, Paul and June Anter and the suffering people of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Palestine, Yemen, Ukraine, West Africa, Nepal and all people afflicted with disease and violence.

Ushers serving Today: Randy Dabbah & Dimitri Kort
Ushers serving Next week: Members of the Order of St. Ignatius
Altar boys serving Today: James Dabbah, Paul Youssef, Nour Youssef, Matthew Dabbah

Altar boys serving next week: Sammy Khamis, Andrew Azzam, George Bahbah, Richard Tierney.

Quote from the Saints

Would you not say, Is not that which is best, above all, and surpassing all, and that which by preference is most worthy of love, the Very Lord, our Jesus Christ, who created us, adorned us with such ideals, gave life to all, sustains everything, nurtures and loves all, who is Himself Love and most beautiful of all men?

Should we not then love God above every thing, desire Him more than anything, and search Him out?'

St. Herman of Alaska

Canned Food Drive

Low employment and homelessness continue to be significant problems, even in affluent Orange County. In light of this, the ongoing canned food collection of our parish is a small but important way to help. Please try to bring something to go in the collection barrel every week.

Good Samaritan Fund

Several years ago, St. Mark Church established a fund for assisting those in need, both within our parish and in the general community. From time to time we ask for contributions to the Good Samaritan Fund, and this is one of those times. If you are in need of assistance or you are aware of someone in our parish that needs financial assistance, please speak with Fr. Michael.

Church Etiquette

- Please be on time for services; those arriving late should not approach the Chalice for Communion.
- To receive Communion, one must be a baptized/chrisdated Orthodox Christian who has prepared by prayer, fasting, alms giving, and regular confession.
- Confessions are heard on Wednesday and Saturday evenings after Great Vespers and during the week by appointment.
- Men, women, and children: please dress modestly for services.
- Please remove lip balm or lipstick before receiving Communion or kissing the holy icons, Chalice, or Gospel.
- If you wish to stand for the entire service, please do so in the back or the aisle so as not to block the view of others who may need to sit. When seated, we should refrain from a posture of relaxation (e.g., crossing legs or arms).

- Pledges, Tithes, Donations: Giving 10% of one's income is God-pleasing, as are all gifts offered by a pious and cheerful giver with a humble heart. Membership forms, renewed annually, are located in the Hall.
- Children are welcome! Yet, if they interfere with the prayers of the faithful, we all may need a break. Food and drink (and toys) are not allowed in the Temple.

Today

Is the Fifth Sunday of the Christmas Fast (Advent). This fast, which lasts exactly 40 days, prepares us to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity (Birth) of Jesus Christ, commonly known as Christmas. During this season we are reminded that the Christian life style must include alms giving (acts of charity), prayer and fasting. Therefore, we are asked to intensify these efforts. During Advent we should be praying more, giving more time and resources to those in need, eat less and more simply, and above all, seek to fast from sin. As usual, Wednesdays and Fridays are strict fasting days (abstention from all meat, poultry, dairy & egg products, alcohol and olive oil). Until December 20, the other days of the week we are to fast from all meat and meat products, with wine and olive oil allowed. As part of our Advent effort Orthodox Christians should also participate in the Sacrament of Confession. The only way to combat the commercialization and vaguely sentimental observance of the Birth of the Savior is to prepare for a Holy Feast Day by participating in some meaningful way in the Fast.

FOCUS St. Nicholas Day Dinner & Gifts

To all of our Parish who prayed for us, donated gifts, and helped with the preparation of the Dinner - Thank You !!

To all of our volunteers who were able to attend the FOCUS Dinner at the Valencia Inn - Thank you !!

The children and parents were so very grateful - God Bless You All

Eileen Waian-Ellis, the Church School Students and Teachers

This Week

Monday December 14, 6:30 p.m. Parish Council Meeting at the home of Randy Dabbah. {**NO Advent Paraklesis**}

Tuesday December 15, 6:30 p.m. Becoming Truly Human

Wednesday December 16, 6:30 p.m. Vespers

Friday December 18, 6:30 p.m. Advent Paraklesis

Next week

Sunday December 20, His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph will be at St. Mark for the consecration of our new holy table and iconostasis. This service will take place just before the Divine Liturgy. If you are not here at 10:00 a.m., you may miss it. The Antiochian Women will serve a luncheon in honor of his visit.

Upcoming Services & Events

Christmas week Services

Sunday December 20, 6:30 p.m. Pre- Feast Vespers

Monday December 21, 6:30 p.m. Pre- Feast Vespers

Tuesday December 22, 6:30 p.m. Pre- Feast Vespers

Wednesday December 23, 6:30 p.m. Pre- Feast Vespers

Thursday December 24, 1- Royal hours 9:30 a.m.

2- Divine Liturgy of the Paramon of the Feast 6:30 p.m.

Friday December 25th, Feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ; Orthros 9:00 a.m. and Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday December 27, Church School Music program after Liturgy

Thursday December 31, Please mark your Calendar for St. Mark Men's Club Annual New Year's Eve Party! See flyer included for more information.

Meet and hangout with Orthodox Christian Young Adults from all over North America in Big Bear Lake, CA at the 2016 Young Adult Winter Retreat - Hosted by the Young Adult Ministry within the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West. We've planned a weekend full of activities; including snow tubing, snowboarding, skiing and spiritual discussions lead by the V. Rev. Father Gregory Horton and the V. Rev. Father David Sommer. Our topic will be focused on "A Christian Ending to our Life - An Orthodox Christian perspective on death

Date: Jan 8-10, 2016 Price: Early Bird Rate (includes room/food): \$75/\$100 w/Lift Ticket

More info and to register, please visit www.dlawyoungadults.com/events

ORANGE COUNTY ORTHODOX YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Check out a list of upcoming meetings and activities. For more information and to get involved, please contact Kyra Pelachik at hi_imkyra@yahoo.com or Charlie Kassaseya at Charlesgk@gmail.com or call 858-761-1720. For an updated list of events, please visit www.Facebook.com/OCOrthodoxChristianYoungProfessionals

St Mark's has once again adopted three families for the Christmas Season. Gift cards and wrapped gifts are accepted this year for donations, name tags are put on the Christmas tree for gifts. Please bring your gift cards or wrapped gift by **December 20th**. See Gisele Awayjan after Liturgy if you have any questions. Please help make this Christmas a little brighter for those less fortunate than ourselves. Any donation for food is gladly accepted

"IS EVERY THOUGHT YOURS?"

It is an ongoing challenge being an Orthodox Christian living in the 21st Century.
We're here to help!

Our Young Adult forum is a group open to all college, graduate, and young professionals between the ages of 18-30 in the Southern California area. The Forum offers young adults a context in which they come together to strengthen their relationships with one another and thereby strengthen their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Join us in forming a strong community bond where fruitful conversations happen over dinner. Food and drinks are provided both for the soul and for the body. Our evenings go from 7pm-9pm.

For more information contact our young adult director at christian@stpaulsirvine.org or visit our website at www.stpaulsirvine.org/youth and www.facebook.com/groups/stpaulsirvine

December: 22nd
January: 26th ; February: 9th & 23rd
March 8th & 22nd ; April: 12th & 26th
May: 10th & 24th

The 55th St. Nicholas Ladies Society Sweetheart Ball

Saturday, February 20, 2016, 6pm

Pull out your Ball gown and dust off your Tuxedo!

Plan on spending a delightful evening with your family and friends at the prestigious Century Plaza Hotel.

Join us in supporting our Cathedral as we celebrate our beautiful St. Nicholas Debutantes.

Tania Matar will be taking reservations starting on Sunday, November 22, 2015.

taniamatta@sbcglobal.net or 818-903-0953

Yours in Christ,

Caren Deeb Kouri ;Sweetheart Ball Chairman; 818-399-8899

St. Mark 2016 Stewardship Pledge Drive Progress Report

Thank you to all of you who have made their 2016 Pledge Commitment to St. Mark. As of December 11, we have 26 pledges for a total of \$58,520 pledged.

BUY SCRIP

Our Ladies Guild buys scrip from many and various stores and Restaurants (see list included in this Bulletin) at a 3 to 10% discount. When you buy the scrip, which is accepted just like cash at the issuing store, the Parish benefits. You pay no more for these goods and services and are making a donation to our parish. You can purchase this scrip from Saeda Turk at the coffee hour.

Saint of the Day

St Herman of Alaska (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. Afterwards 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 neighbour. 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, his teaching, and his kindness and sanctity, and was granted the grace of working miracles and of 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 labours, 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.