

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 20, 2015

THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE FEAST OF OUR LORD'S NATIVITY

HYMNS AFTER THE ENTRANCE

Troparion for the Resurrection, in the Fourth Tone: Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

Troparion of the Forefeast in the Fourth Tone: Make ready, O Bethlehem; for Eden hath been opened for all. Prepare, O Ephratha; for the Tree of life hath blossomed forth in the cave from the Virgin; for her womb did appear as a supersensual paradise in which is planted that holy Vine. If we should eat thereof we shall live and not die as Adam of old. Christ shall be born, raising the image that fell at the beginning.

Troparion of the Sunday before Christmas in the Second Tone: Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, have mercy upon us.

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 Tone 4 (Daniel 3.26, 27) 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 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 foundations, 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 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.

Alleluia Verses Tone 4 (Psalms 43.1; 33.17) O God, we have heard with our ears. The righteous cried and the Lord heard them.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. 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 Shealtiel, and Shealtiel 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.

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Holy Oblations are offered today by Ibrahim, Lydia, Michael & Christopher Wakileh for Charlie on the occasion of his birthday; by Jacob Bahbah and family for Vera on the occasion of her birthday; by Michael, Charlotte, Melissa, Grace & Amanda Khoury for Melody and George on the occasion of their birthdays; by Georgette Salameh & family for the health and salvation of His Eminence, Metropolitan Joseph and for the occasion of husband & father Manuel Salameh's 80th birthday, & granddaughter Nour Salameh's 21st birthday, wishing them God's Blessing; and by the Tierney & Nassir families for their father and grandfather Nicholas Nassir on the occasion of his birthday.

A Special Luncheon is served today by the Antiochian Women of St. Mark in honoring our Metropolitan Joseph's visit to our church. Charges \$5 adults and \$3 children under 12 years old.

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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.

<p>Ushers serving Today: Members of the Order of St. Ignatius</p> <p>Ushers serving Next week: Nader Qoborsi & Maurice Karkar</p> <p>Altar boys serving Today: Special Altar boys team only</p> <p>Altar boys serving next week: Noah Fortuna, Daniel Atallah, Connor Wilde, George Aldada.</p>

Quote from the Saints

Those would see the Lord should purify their hearts with the continual remembrance of God. They will reach the contemplation of God in every moment, and within Him all will be light. *St. Isaac the Syrian*

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

We welcome our father in Christ, Metropolitan Joseph for the Consecration of our new Holy Table and Iconostasis. The Iconostasis is donated by Richard and

Mary Lou Gallade and Family, and the Holy Table is donated by The Mansour Family in memory of Mary Mansour. As a memento of the consecration, pieces of the *savano*, the special robe worn by the metropolitan during the consecration, will be distributed to all.

Is the Sixth Sunday of the Christmas Fast (Advent). 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. During these last days of the fast (December 20 to 24) we observe strict fasting (abstention from all meat, poultry, dairy & egg products, alcohol and olive oil). 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.

Thank you to the Antiochian Women of St. Mark for the Annual Christmas Bake Sale last Sunday. Especial thanks goes to the chairs Julie Bahbah and Barbara Khamis and to Gisele Awayjan and Elsa Frech and to all the ladies who baked and donated the goodies.

Especial thanks to all the ladies who came on Friday December 11 and helped in baking the Spinach & Zaater pies, Julie Bahbah, Keity Turk, Nadia and George Sindaha, Amanda Mansour, Elsa Frech, Lori Nour, Donna Laffoon, Emilie Laffoon, Marty Morrison.

BOOKSTORE: Still Christmas shopping? Come by the bookstore and check out the variety of gift items that are still available. A new item from St. Barbara Monastery, added to their several lavender products, is a new, all natural Lip Balm. We also have a beautifully done new book, just in from the publisher, Heaven Meets Earth, on Pascha and the Twelve Feasts, a fine gift idea. There are quite a few other possibilities for gifts. Come by and take a look.

This Week

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.

Next week

Sunday December 27, Church School Music program after Liturgy

Monday December 28, Teen SOYO Christmas Party at the church hall. please see flyer included for more information.

Tuesday December 29th, 7:00 p.m. Men's Club Annual Christmas Dinner at Citrus Cafe'. Please see flyer included in this bulletin for more information.

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

Upcoming Services & Events

Sunday January 3, Antiochian Women of St. Mark Annual Christmas Luncheon at Citrus Cafe'. Please see flyer included for reservation and more information.

Sunday January 10, Antiochian Women of St. Mark will serve Zalabieh, (Awameh) for the celebration of the Feast of Theophany (January 6).

Dear friends,

Our annual Anaheim Ducks Hockey game followed by Broomball with St. Luke's and St. Mark's will be held on Sunday, February 21 at 4 pm. The discounted price of \$25 per ticket will be booked when a check is received, made payable to "Anaheim Ducks" (box office price is \$30). There is a limited block of 200 seats and once they are gone, we can't get more at this price. Contact for St. Mark is Barbara Scholl. Contact for St. Luke Church is Frank Kouri. Your contact has gift certificates in case you'd like to give these as holiday gifts. Broomball will be after the game on the ice at Honda Center at no extra charge and only available to our group. Questions? Call Barbara Scholl at 949-533-4634. If you see any conflicts, let me know. It will be a fun connection for all!

In Christ, Barbara Scholl

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](tel:858-761-1720). For an updated list of events, please visit www.Facebook.com/OCOrthodoxChristianYoungProfessionals

"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

We have begun our 2016 Pledge Drive. In your bulletin you should find a Pledge Card for the New Year. Please fill in and place these cards **in the White Box** on the table by the bulletin board, so that we can fulfill the 2016 Budget as passed by the parish at our annual meeting.

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 18, we have 31 pledges for a total of \$64,970 pledged.

The 2016 Calendars are here. Please pick up one Calendar per family from the table at the hall by the bulletin board.

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

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.

Sunday of the Genealogy (Sunday before the Nativity)

On the Sunday that occurs on or immediately after the eighteenth of this month, we celebrate all those who from ages past have been well-pleasing to God, beginning from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as the Evangelist Luke hath recorded historically (Luke 3:23-38); we also commemorate the Prophets and Prophetesses, and especially the Prophet Daniel and the Holy Three Children.



**ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF ST MARK ANNUAL CHRISTMAS
LUNCHEON**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 2016

**1:00 - 3:30PM
AT**



1481 Edinger Ave. Tustin CA, 92780

Menu

- 1- Stuffed Chicken Breast: Stuffed with Spinach, dill & Feta Cheese,
Seasonal Vegetable and Jasmine rice in beurre blanc sauce**
 - 2- Pot Roast: Purred Potatoes & seasonal vegetable served in a merlot
demi-glaze sauce**
 - 3- Fish: Grilled Tilapia, served with Seasonal Vegetable and Jasmine
rice in beurre blanc sauce**
 - 4- Vegetarian Pasta: Choose one as an additional {item}**
- 1- Ricotta Cheese Ravioli 2- Mediterranean vegetable Penne**
All items comes with Green Salad

and

SOFT BEVERAGE, ICED TEA, COFFEE OR TEA

\$27.72 PER PERSON INCLUDING TAX AND GRATUITY

**PLEASE BRING A GIFT \$20 VALUE TO PLAY THE GIFT EXCHANGE
GAME**

**RSVP BY THURSDAY DECEMBER 31ST WITH DENISE NASSIF AT (949)
500-8318 OR LYDIA WAKILEH (949) 851-8933**



ST. MARK MEN'S CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY

In celebration of the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Mark Men's Club invites you to its Annual Christmas Party.

- WHEN:** *Tuesday, DECEMBER 29TH, 2015 @ 7.00 P.M.*
- WHERE:** Citrus Café Banquet
1481 Edinger Avenue
Tustin, CA
At the corner of Edinger and Redhill
- PRESENTS:** Each guest is asked to bring two wrapped presents; one serious present with a value of at least \$15.00 and one funny present with a value of at least \$10.00.
- PROCEDURE:** All presents will be auctioned. The fun part is that no one knows the content of the presents until bought.
- R.S.V.P.** PLEASE call Ghassan Awayjan: 951/454-5429 or email: gadesigns@sbcglobal.net by the 27th of December with your selection of the main dish. See attached flyer.