

# **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](http://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

Church Office Administrator: Lydia Wakileh

Teen Advisors: Paula Rodriguez and Dana Chade

*Church School After Holy Communion*



**DECEMBER 25, 2016**

**THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR  
JESUS CHRIST**

## SPECIAL REFRAIN OF THE SECOND ANTIPHON

Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, who wast born of a Virgin, who sing to Thee, Alleluia.

## ENTRANCE HYMN (instead of "Come let worship....")

Priest: Out of the womb, before the morning star have I begotten Thee: the Lord hath sworn and will not repent: thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedech.

People: Save us, O Son of God, who wast born of a Virgin, who sing to Thee, Alleluia.

## HYMNS AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

All: **Troparion of the Feast Tone in the Fourth Tone:** Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom. For by it those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to adore thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to thee.

**Kontakion for Christmas in the Third Tone:** On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in Essence; to the Unapproachable, the earth doth offer a small cave; Angels join in choir with shepherds in giving glory; with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; for our sakes is born a young Child, He that existed before the ages as God.

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*Instead of "Holy God..." we sing "As many as have been baptized...."*

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**Prokeimenon** (Psalm 65:4, 1): Let all the earth worship you and sing to you. Shout with joy to God, all the earth.

## **The reading from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (4:4-7)**

Brethren, when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son, into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So through God you are no longer a slave but a son. And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

**Alleluia Verses** (Psalms 18:1, 2) The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night proclaims knowledge.

## **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (2:1-12)**

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been

born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: `And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

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Instead of "It is truly meet..." the following hymn will be sung in both Arabic and English. *"Magnify, O my soul, her who is more honorable and more exalted in glory than the heavenly hosts. I behold a mystery strange and most wonderful: heaven is the cave, the cherubic throne the Virgin, the manger the place where Christ lay, the uncontainable God, whom we magnify in song."*

Communion Verse: *"The Lord hath sent deliverance unto His People: Alleluia."*

Instead of "We have seen the true light" sing the Troparion of the Nativity. (See above)

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**Holy Oblations are offered today for all St. Mark members and their families.**

And given by Mark, Eileen, Gregory, Matthew, Rebecca, and Andrew Ellis for our Parents, Grandparents and loved ones, by Marie Mardinie for the souls of Hebbo, Yacoub, Malak, Michelle, Abdallah & Yusuf, and by Slieman & Siham Aldada for the health and salvation of George, Watfa, Maya, Joanna, Christina, Diana and George.

**Coffee Hour is giving today by the Coffee Hour Committee.**

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*Please remember in your prayers: Michael Debbas, Reham Turk, Maha Kureh, Michael Asaly, Darlyne Dibs, Eleanor Wackeen, Georgette Salameh, June Anter and the suffering people of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Palestine, Venezuela, Ukraine, and all people afflicted with disease and violence.*

**Ushers this week: Special team for Christmas Day**

**Ushers next week: Sam Munayyer & Wael Kashou**

**Altar boys serving this week: James Bahbah, Peter Williams, Nicholas Bahou, Youssef**

**Altar boys serving next week: James Dabbah, Paul Youssef, Nour Youssef, Matthew Dabbah.**

### **Quote from the Saints**

He who denies that Mary gave birth to God will not see the glory of His Divinity, and he who denies that He was clothed in sinless flesh will receive neither salvation nor the life which was granted through his body. His very deeds give witness and His divine strength teaches the contemptuous that He is true God. And his sufferings give proof that he is true man.

*St. Isaac the Syrian*

**December 25 through January 4 is a fast-free period.**

### **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/chrismated 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.

## TO THE PARENTS OF OUR YOUNG CHILDREN

- Relax! God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to suppress it in God's home. All are welcome!
- Sit toward the front where it is easier for your little ones to see and hear what's going on at the altar. They tire of seeing the back of others' heads.
- Quietly explain the actions of the Liturgy (what the priests, deacon, altar boys are doing)
- Sing the hymns and responses. Children learn how to worship in church by copying you.
- Incidental noise and movement are not reasons to take your child out of church. If a child's crying or movements become a distraction to others, then it is time to leave until they are calm.
- If you have to leave the church with your child, do so but please come back. Our Lord said, "Let the children come to me and forbid them not, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven."
- Remember that the way we welcome children in church directly affects the way they respond to the Church, to God, and one another. Let them know that they are at home in our house of worship.

## TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR PARISH

The presence of children is a gift to the Church and they are a reminder that our parish is growing!

Please welcome our children and give a little encouragement to their parents.

### Today

Is The Feast of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Merry Christmas to all.

### **St. Mark 2017 Stewardship Pledge Drive!**

**Our parish Stewardship Drive** continues and we're asking you to please consider making a pledge commitment to St. Mark for 2017. If you have not done so, you can turn in your pledge commitment to the white box in the back of the church now, but you don't need to make the first payment until January 2017.

Thank you to those who have made their 2017 pledge commitment, especially those who turned in it last week. As of December 19, 2016, we have a total of \$94,200 pledged which is 46% of our total goal of \$205,000. We have also successfully collected 40 pledge commitments.

We hope to reach our goal by the end of February. Your financial pledge and commitment is important and supports the work of the church, the parish itself and those who work for St. Mark. Your support is appreciated!

In Christ,

St. Mark Stewardship Committee

Please remember to **take your Sunday Bulletin** with you home, it will help you to remember the services and the events going on in your church. Much time and effort goes into the publishing of our bulletin so, please use it as a resource! Please put the Liturgy book service back in the pocket when you are done using it. Thank you!

**The 2017 Calendars are here. Please pick up one Calendar per family from the table at the hall by the bulletin board.**

**This Week**

**Wednesday December 28, Vespers 6:30 p.m.**

**Saturday December 31<sup>st</sup>, Vespers 4:00 p.m.**

8:00 p.m. Men's Club Annual **New Year's Eve** at our Church Hall, please see flyer included for more information.

**Next Week**

**Monday January 2, Church office is closed.**

**Thursday January 5, 6:30 p.m. Epiphany Liturgy (Orthros 5:30 p.m.)**

**Saturday January 7, Antiochian Women Annual Christmas lunch and gift exchange from 12 noon to 4:00 p.m.**

**Saturday January 7, 7:00 p.m. Men's Club Christmas Dinner**

**Upcoming events and services**

**Sunday January 8, Ladies serving Zalabieh Dessert**

**Orthodox Christian Mission Center opportunities for mission work.** Empower youth and teens in countries where youth ministry is emerging and opportunities for youth leadership exist. Orthodox Mission Teams to Alaska, Kenya, and Albania will offer programs for students and adult leaders, giving them the opportunity to develop vision for their youth groups, as well teach the Biblical basics of youth ministry and what it means to be a leader. These teams will model servant leadership by assisting in small groups, recreation, and worship. OCMC invites you to join these opportunities in youth ministry. For more information, please visit [www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org), e-mail [teams@ocmc.org](mailto:teams@ocmc.org), or call 1-877 GO FORTH (ext 141).

**Orange County Orthodox Christian Young Professionals**

Young adults are welcome to join us for a social and spiritual/discussion each month. Contact Kyra Pelachik at [ococyp@gmail.com](mailto:ococyp@gmail.com) or Charlie Kassaseya at 858-761-1720. You can find our events on [www.tinyurl.com/ococyp](http://www.tinyurl.com/ococyp) or Facebook (search: OC Orthodox Christian Young Professionals)

## **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.

### **The Nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ**

The incomprehensible and inexplicable Nativity of Christ came to pass when Herod the Great was reigning in Judea; the latter was an Ascalonite on his father's side and an Idumean on his mother's. He was in every way foreign to the royal line of David; rather, he had received his authority from the Roman emperors, and had ruled tyrannically over the Jewish people for some thirty-three years. The tribe of Judah, which had reigned of old, was deprived of its rights and stripped of all rule and authority. Such was the condition of the Jews when the awaited Messiah was born, and truly thus was fulfilled the prophecy which the Patriarch Jacob had spoken 1,807 years before: "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; and he is the expectation of the nations" (Gen.49:10).

Thus, our Saviour was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea, whither Joseph had come from Nazareth of Galilee, taking Mary his betrothed, who was great with child, that, according to the decree issued in those days by the Emperor Augustus, they might be registered in the census of those subject to Rome. Therefore, when the time came for the Virgin to give birth, and since because of the great multitude there was no place in the inn, the Virgin's circumstance constrained them to enter a cave which was near Bethlehem. Having as shelter a stable of irrational beasts, she gave birth there, and swaddled the Infant and laid Him in the manger (Luke 2:1-7). From this, the tradition has come down to us that when Christ was born He lay between two animals, an ox and an ass, that the words of the Prophets might be fulfilled: "Between two living creatures shalt Thou be known" (Abbacum 3:2), and "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib" (Esaias 1: 3).

But while the earth gave the new-born Saviour such a humble reception, Heaven on high celebrated majestically His world-saving coming. A wondrous star, shining with uncommon brightness and following a strange course, led Magi from the East to Bethlehem to worship the new-born King. Certain shepherds who were in the area of Bethlehem, who kept watch while tending their sheep, were suddenly surrounded by an extraordinary light, and they saw before them an Angel who

proclaimed to them the good tidings of the Lord's joyous Nativity. And straightway, together with this Angel, they beheld and heard a whole host of the Heavenly Powers praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men" (Luke 2:8-14).

**The Orthodox Greeting of the Feast**

**Christ is Born!      Glorify Him!**

**Al-Masseeh Welida!      Fa maj-iduh! (Arabic)**

**Christos Gennate!      Dhoxasate! (Greek)**

**Hristos se Nashte!      Maritzi-L! (Romanian)**

**Christos Rozhda yet'sya!      Sla' vite Yego! (Slavonic)**