

St. Mark Orthodox Church

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese,

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of
all North America

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

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.

Church School after Holy Communion



December 24, 2017

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

HYMNS AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Troparion of 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 Sunday Before the Nativity 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 prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Troparion of the Paramon (Eve) of the Nativity in the Fourth Tone: As the fruit of David's seed, Mary was registered of old with the Elder Joseph in the little town of Bethlehem, when she conceived with a seedless and pure conception. Behold, the time was come that she should bear her Child, but no place was found within the inn for them; yet the cave proved a delightful palace for the pure Lady and Queen of all. For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforeside.

All: Troparion of 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 Karim and Hani Youssef and their families for the soul of their mother Mary, departed this life one year. Memory Eternal!

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Please remember in your prayers: Michael Debbas, Reham Turk, Darlyne Dibs, Nuha Qushair, Eleanor Wackeen, Georgette Salameh, June Anter, Kh. Katherine Tsichlis, Khouria Joanne Townsend, Tarek Fakhouri, Caren Deeb, and the suffering people of Mexico, Puerto Rico, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Palestine, Venezuela, Ukraine, and all people afflicted with disease and violence.

Ushers serving this week: Special team for Christmas Eve morning.

Quote from the Saints

The Lord, before His Incarnation, let mankind experience all the bitterness of sin, all their powerlessness to eradicate it; and when all longed for a Deliverer, then He appeared, the most wise, all-powerful Physician and Helper. When men hungered and thirsted after righteousness, as it grew weaker, then the everlasting righteousness came.

St. John of Kronstadt

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/christened 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

Great Vespers of the Feast 6:30 p.m.

Thank you to Nelson and Jerri Mamey for donating the Poinsettias to decorate our church for Christmas!

CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND DECORATIONS: Be sure to stop by the table in the narthex and in the bookstore for some really fine ideas for Christmas presents and some fine decorations. There is a larger assortment of both than usual. A free gift bag is included with the new special ornaments.

We have received some pictures from **Life touch** here at the church. Please check the envelope on the table by the book store to find your picture. Please initial if you got yours. Thank you.

Please make sure to pick up your 2018 calendar from the table by the bookstore. Please one calendar per family.

Give the Gift of Life to St. Mark Church!! St. Mark 2018 Stewardship Pledge Drive!

Your gift of a financial pledge and commitment, that's starts in January, is to gift to St. Mark's church. This gift is important and supports the work of the church, the parish itself and those who work for St. Mark and St. Mark cannot survive without it. This month we've had 42 families turn in their 2018 Pledge cards and have raised \$78,152 which is 38% of our goal of pledging \$205,000. Please take the time to fill yours out today! Remember that you don't need to make your first payment until January 2018. We appreciate your prayers and support. Additional pledge cards are available in the back of the church and can be dropped off in the white box between the church and the hall. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask a parish council member.

In Christ, St. Mark Stewardship Committee

Please remember to take your Sunday Bulletin home, it will help you to remember the services and the events going on in your church. Please put the Liturgy book service back in the pocket when you are done using it. Thank you!

This Week

**Monday December 25, Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:
Liturgy 10:00 a.m. (Orthros 8:45 a.m.) Church Office will be closed!**

Next week

December 31, Annual St. Mark New Year's Eve Dinner Dance (see flyer for more information)

**Monday January 1 Feasts of our Lord's Circumcision and St. Basil the Great:
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. (Orthros 8:45 a.m.) Church Office will be closed!**

Upcoming Services & Events

Saturday January 6, Feast of Holy Theophany. Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of Waters, 10:00 a.m. (Orthros 9:00 a.m.)

St. Mark Church Blood Drive, January 21, 2018. Please save the date, invite family and friends. Thanks for saving lives. Please see flyers included for more information.

2018 Sweetheart Ball: Prospective Debutantes and Parents

The Ladies' Society of St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Cathedral is now preparing to host the 56th Sweetheart Ball to be held on Saturday, April 14, 2018, at the Universal Hilton Hotel.

Your experience as a debutante will be most memorable, filled with a variety of activities! Nothing would give us greater pleasure than to share this amazing experience with you this coming year. Debutantes must be at least 15 years old by October 1, 2017.

If you are interested in becoming a debutante in the Sweetheart Ball please email or call me as soon as possible. The deadline to sign up is October 15th, 2017.

Much Love,

Caren Deeb Kouri auntylulu@aol.com (818-399-8899)

Orange County Forum

A place for Orthodox Christian young adults in the OC area, married and single, to have fellowship, fun and engage in social and service activities. This group serves to foster the unity of faith, love and friendship between the Orthodox young adults in the community with discussion, speakers and fun social events. Join our Face book group at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/OrangeCountyForum> for a list of scheduled events and more information.

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.