Sunday, December 20th  Sunday before Christmas

8:15 AM  Orthros
9:30 AM  Divine Liturgy
11:15 AM  Preschool Christmas Program

Wednesday, December 23rd

6:00 PM  Live-Stream Bible Study with Fr. Hector
7:00 PM  Paraklesis to St. Nikiforos

Thursday, December 24th  Nativity Eve

9:30 AM  Food Box Distribution & Delivery
   Sponsored by George and Tina Georges
   For the Glory of God
9:00 AM  Christmas Royal Hours
6:30 PM  Christmas Eve Vesperal Liturgy
Office Closed

Friday, December 25th  Christmas Day

8:00 AM  Orthros
9:30 AM  Liturgy
Office Closed

Saturday, December 26th

7:00 PM  Vespers

BEREAVEMENT

Joanne Gammache (87), mother of parishioner David Gammache, reposed in the Lord, December 14th
For the family of Harry D. Stratigos (91), December 15th

Bazaar Food Items Available for Sale
4 Cases Chicken Souvlaki
1 Case Pork Souvlaki
(each case is $50 and contains 50 skewers)
6 Gallons Syrup—$5 each
5 (11 lb each) Tzatziki Tubs—$20 each
Please call the office if you are interested in purchasing any of the above items 717-394-1735

A reminder that masks must be worn in the church before, during, and after the services; and please don’t congregate in the Narthex.

Service & Outreach

We are collecting slightly used/new coats & blankets for the families in need. Please drop off your donation in the blue bin located in the breezeway.

Bazaar Tickets

Please remember to return all your unsold Bazaar tickets & money for sold tickets to Steve Marinios.

Upcoming Liturgies/Services

† Christmas Royal Hours—Dec. 24 (9:00AM)
† Christmas Eve Vesperal Liturgy — Dec. 24
† Christmas Day — Dec. 25
† St. Stephen — Dec. 27 (Sunday)
† St. Basil— Dec. 31-Jan. 1 Vigil
† Theophany Royal Hours—Jan. 4. (9:00AM)
† Eve of Theophany—Jan. 5
† Feast of Holy Theophany—Jan. 6
† St. John the Baptist—Jan. 7
† St. Anthony the Great—Jan. 17

Donors needed for:
Altar Flowers, Altar Candles, & Candelabra Candles
January 31, February 7, 14 & 28
Please call the Church Office 717-394-1735 to make your donation.

Centennial Spiritwear

There are Centennial Aprons available for sale.
$20 each
Please contact Tina Georges if you are interested in purchasing one at 717-314-4678 or email at tineli79@gmail.com

ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, LANCASTER, PA
SUNDAY, December 20th, 2020 — Sunday before Nativity

Foreast of the Nativity
Ignatius the God-Bearer


The Christmas Tree and Orthodox Tradition
By Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos of Nafpaktos

I suspect that the custom of decorating a tree at Christmas time is not simply a custom which came to us from the West and which we should replace with other more Orthodox customs. To be sure, I have not gone into the history of the Christmas tree and where it originated, but I think that it is connected with the Christmas feast and its true meaning.

First, it is not unrelated to the prophecy of the Prophet Isaiah: “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots” (Is. 11:1). St. Cosmas the Poet had this prophecy in mind when he wrote of Christ as the blossom which rose up out of the Virgin stem from the stump of Jesse. The root is Jesse, David’s father, the rod is King David, the flower which came from the root and the rod is the Theotokos. And the fruit which came forth from the flower of the Panagia is Christ. Holy Scripture presents this wonderfully. Thus the Christmas tree can remind us of the genealogical tree of Christ as Man, the love of God, but also the successive purifications of the Forefathers of Christ. At the top is the star which is the God-Man (Theanthropos) Christ.

Then, the Christmas tree reminds us of the tree of knowledge as well as the tree of life, but especially the latter. It underlines clearly the truth that Christ is the tree of life and that we cannot live or fulfill the purpose of our existence unless we taste of this tree, “the producer of life”. Christmas cannot be conceived without Holy Communion. And of course as for Holy Communion it is not possible to partake of deification in Christ without having conquered the devil when we found ourselves faced with temptation relative to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, where our freedom is tried. We rejoice and celebrate, because “the Tree of Life blossomed from the Virgin in the cave”.

Excerpt from the book titled The Feasts of the Lord: An Introduction to the 12 Feasts and Orthodox Christology, 1993.

WELCOME TO ALL VISITORS
We welcome our non-Orthodox friends and neighbors at all the liturgical services with a reminder that Holy Communion may be received only by prepared Orthodox Christians. Please sign the Visitor’s Registry in the Narthex if you wish to be contacted by the priest.

Father Hector Firoglanis, Pastor
Father Theodosios Palis, Assistant Pastor; Father Alexander Veronis, Pastor Emeritus
www.annunciationorthodox.org
The Epistle Heb. 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, heir of the promise, 32 while he was still in the land of Canaan, he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. He took his son, his only son, Isaac, and he offered him upon the altar. As it turned out, it was nothing but a mere shadow, a mere representation of something better to come; now that the reality is here, let us not plague ourselves with doubts as to whether it is indeed here or not.

1. RESURRECTIONAL APOLOYTIKION

Let the heaven rejoice, and let things on earth be glad. For the Lord has worked with power under arms; he has trapped manifold death by death; he has become the first born of the dead. From the bowels of Hades he has delivered us, and has granted great mercy to the world.

2. FOR THE FOREFEAST

And be ready, Ephrata, for the Tree of life has in the groton blossomed forth from the Virgin. Indeed her womb is shown to be spiritually a Paradise, in which is found the God-planted Tree. And if we eat from it we shall live, and shall not die, as did Adam of old, Christ is born, so that he might raise up once the fallen fallen fallen.

3. FOR THE FATHERS (Second Mode)

Magnificent are the accomplishments of faith! The three Holy Servants greatly rejoiced, as they stood in the fountain of fire, as if beside the still waters; and the Prophet Daniel appeared to be a shepherd of lions, as if they were sheep. At their entreaties, O Christ God, save our souls.

4. HYMN OF THE CHURCH (Fourth Mode)

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the revelation of the mystery of ages. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin and Gabriel proclaims this gift from God. Together with him we cry out to You, O Theotokos: “Hail thou full of grace, the Lord is with you.”

5. PRE-NAIVITY KONTAKH (Third Mode)

Today the Virgin goes forth, making her way to a cave, where from her, ineffably, she gives birth to God. God the eternal Word will be born. Let the world be filled with joy, hearing these tidings. Joining the angels and shepherds, let us give glory to Him who is from ages past, yet to be seen as a little child.

THE GOSPEL LUKE 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 Ram, and Ram 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 Jesse’s wife Uriah’s wife, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijam, and Abijam the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Ahijah, and Ahijah the father of Jehu, and Jehu 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, Jehoahaz was the father of Sheelaiah, and Sheelaiah 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 the father of Mattathias, and Mattathias the father of Zechariah, and Zechariah the father of Josechiah, and Josechiah was the son of [41x66]Joseph, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Laban, the son of Rebekah, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, and Nahor the son ofpadan

1. APOLOYTIKION ANASTAIMOS 'HOSUC

Ευφραίνεσθι τούτον τ’ αὐγά, ἀγαλλιάζω τὰ ἐπίγεια, ὅπως ἔποιησε κράτος, ἐν βραχίονι αὐτοῦ ὁ Κύριος. Ἐπάτησε τῷ Βασάνῳ τὸν Βασάνον, πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν ἐγένετο, ἐκ κοίλως ἄδεια ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς καὶ παρέρισε τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ μέγας ἔλεος.

2. ΤΟΝ ΠΡΟΕΟΡΤΙΟΝ 'ΗΣΟΥΣ

Ἐμοιασόμεθα Βιβλίῳ, ἐπιθυμοῦσι πᾶσιν καὶ ἔδειμι. Ἐν οἷς ὁ Κύριος ἡμᾶς ἔδωκε τὸ ὅραμα, ὃ ἐν τῷ Στίλπνῳ ἐξήγησεν ἐκ τῆς Παρθένου, Παρθένος καὶ γάρ, ἡ ἐκείνη γαστήρ, ἐδήμη νοστή, ὡς ἐν τῷ θεσμῷ φύτευσεν ἐκ τῆς ἡμῶν. Χριστὸς γεννάται, τὴν πρώτην, ἀνάστασιν εἰκόνα.

3. ΤΟΝ ΠΑΤΕΡΟΝ ἩΣΟΥΣ

Μεγάλα τὰ τῆς πιστεύσεως καταράμωσα. Ἐν τῇ πηγῇ τῆς φλογῆς, ὡς ἐπὶ ὑδάτως ὑποτελοῦσιν, καὶ ὡς ἀναστήσων εἰκόνα.

4. ΕΙΣΟδιΚΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ (Ηχ. ΄Δ)

ἈΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙ

Ἐν τῇ πηγῇ τῆς φλογῆς, ὡς ἐπὶ ὑδάτως ὑποτελοῦσιν, καὶ ὡς ἀναστήσων εἰκόνα.

5. ΠΡΟΕΟΡΤΙΟΝ ΚΑΝΤΑΚΧΟ (Ηχ. ν.

Η Παρθένος σήμερον τον προεορτικόν λάγην. Εν σπηλαίᾳ ἐρήμωσε απαθετικά ἀπορρύθμως. Χάρις οἰκομένη κακογίνεται. Δώσατον με τοις αγγέλων και τοις προεορτικοῖς βουλεύσεις, καὶ τὰ προεορτικὰ παρέδοναν τῶν προεορτικῶν ἥμεροι καὶ ἡμέρᾳς συν αὐτὸ τῇ Θεοτόκῳ βουθήσεως. Χάρις Κεχαριμένη, ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σοῦ.