

# S P I R I T

## THE SEASON OF HOPE - AND PROMISE

T. S. Eliot called April the cruelest month in his great poem, *The Waste Land*. I call November the bleakest of months. It is the month in which winter begins to announce its coming to Maine; and we know it will be for a long haul. And it is the month of growing darkness. Just think, Saturday, November 3rd, the sun will set at 5:29 pm. The next day, Sunday, November 4th, the sun will set at 4:27 pm. That one hour jump, thanks to the end of Daylight Savings Time, is always a shock, and always the promise of even longer nights to come, together with cold and snow and all the other unpleasantnesses of a Maine winter.

Yes, I know, winter is not wholly unpleasant. There are many wonderful things about winter, and even the increasing darkness of our skies has its spiritual value. But what makes November most precious is that it's also the month of promise and hope. It is the month of Thanksgiving. But more, importantly it is the month which reminds us that Christmas is coming. Right there, in the darkest days of the year, the lights of Christmas will shine a light into our souls and remind us of how God fulfilled his promises to mankind 2,000 years ago.

But is that it? Promise fulfilled, 2,000 years ago? Is there nothing left except to shop, shop, and shop some more? Is that what's left for us? For this season of Advent?

It has always been one of my deepest regrets about the Orthodox tradition that we don't have a proper Advent season. We have a Christmas fast that begins on November 15th, but we don't have a season of rich hymnology and liturgical tradition for this season - unlike our wealth of Lenten liturgies and traditions;

and unlike western churches (Roman Catholic, Anglican, and other liturgical Protestant churches) which did develop a rich Advent season.

What I find most interesting about



# Advent

Advent in the western churches is this: It is not only a preparation for Christmas, but also for the second advent of Jesus, what we call the second coming. The Orthodox Church integrated the message of the second coming/advent of Christ into the Bridegroom Matins services in the first three nights of Holy Week itself. But the theme is missing in our preparation for Christmas, which was, of course, the first advent/coming of Christ.

Is the second coming just an item in

our Creed? Does it mean anything to us today? Yes, Yes! It is the promise, the hope - not just of a future life in glory, but a life lived today in the light of that future glory! It makes November and December the season of hope - and promise.

Too bad if we don't observe Advent with special hymns and special traditions. (Okay, there is one hymn we sing every Sunday on the weeks before Christmas - one hymn!) But just as Thanksgiving is not about shopping; and just as Christmas is not about gifts and trees; so also Advent is not just about hymns and liturgies, or fasting in our case. Advent is about cultivating a spirit of hope and promise in our personal and family lives and in the life of our church community and the society around us.

Don't let the pressures of conformity to instant gratification keep you from enjoying a spirit of hope and promise in this season of waiting, the season of Advent. May you receive Christ with open hearts instead of empty wallets and exhausted minds. May his peace be your peace. Let's gather for a 3-day celebration of Christ's first coming on December 23-25!

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# OUR LORD'S DAY SCHEDULE

SHORT MATINS  
DIVINE LITURGY  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
COFFEE HOUR & FELLOWSHIP

9:30 (or 9:15) AM  
10:00 AM  
10:00 AM  
11:30 AM

Details of our Christmas celebration will be provided in a separate flyer to be mailed in December.  
To help you plan, we will have Christmas Eve Liturgy on Monday, December 24th, at 6:00 PM.  
Matins & Liturgy on Christmas Morning, Tuesday, December 25th, at 9:00 AM.

## **November 4th - Fifth Sunday of Luke (23rd Sunday)**

READINGS: Ephesians 2:4-10; Luke 16:19-31  
READERS: Demo Varipatis, Diana Dowd  
PROSFORO: David Smith  
PARISH COUNCIL: Team II - Dean Krestos\*, Agathi Haxhi, Regat Mebrahtu  
FELLOWSHIP: Philoptochos Fall Dinner.

## **November 11th - Eighth Sunday of Luke (St. Menas)**

READINGS: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15; Luke 10:25-37  
READERS: Stacy Gikas, Jacob Bahbah  
PROSFORO: Elaine Vorias  
PARISH COUNCIL: Team III - Theo Hassapelis\*, Kim Kapothanasis, Mark Butler  
FELLOWSHIP: AHEPA, in honor of **Veterans**.

## **November 18th - Ninth Sunday of Luke (25th Sunday)**

READINGS: Ephesians 4:1-7; Luke 12:16-21  
READERS: Panos Pantelas, Angel Spiller  
PROSFORO: Regat Mebrahtu  
PARISH COUNCIL: Team I - Helen Blewett\*, John Cox, Nona Tsotseria

### **40-Day Memorial for Amelia Giattas**

FELLOWSHIP: To sponsor this Sunday, call 774-0281.

## **November 25th - 13th Sunday of Luke (Holy Great Martyr Katherine)**

READINGS: Galatians 3:23-4:5; Luke 18:18-27  
READERS: Angela Varipatis, Andrew Jasonides  
PROSFORO: David Smith  
PARISH COUNCIL: Team II - Agathi\*, Regat, Dean  
**One-Year Memorial for Maria Fengar**  
FELLOWSHIP: Angela & Demo Varipatis, in memory of Maria Fengar, Teddy's godmother.

## **December 2nd - 14th Sunday of Luke (27th Sunday) - General Assembly**

READINGS: Ephesians 6:10-17; Luke 18:35-43

READERS: Panos Pantelas, Merilla Michael  
PROSFORO: Bettie Moustrouphis  
PARISH COUNCIL: Team III - Kim\*, Mark, Theo  
FELLOWSHIP: Parish Council, at General Assembly.

## **December 9th - Tenth Sunday of Luke (Saint Anna)**

READINGS: Galatians 4:22-27; Luke 13:10-17  
READERS: Demo Varipatis, Tom Peterson  
PROSFORO: Elaine Vorias  
PARISH COUNCIL: Team I - John\*, Nona, Helen  
FELLOWSHIP: To sponsor this Sunday, call 774-0281.

## **December 16th - 11th Sunday of Luke (Sunday of the Forebears of Christ)**

READINGS: Colossians 3:4-11; Luke 14:16-24  
READERS: Stacy Gikas, Joe Pollak  
PROSFORO: David Smith  
PARISH COUNCIL: Team II - Regat\*, Dean, Agathi  
FELLOWSHIP: To sponsor this Sunday, call 774-0281.

## **December 23rd - Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ**

READINGS: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40; Matthew 1:1-25  
READERS: Angela Varipatis, Tom Peterson  
PROSFORO: Regat Mebrahtu  
PARISH COUNCIL: Team III - Mark\*, Theo, Kim  
**The children of Sunday School will present their  
Christmas Program.**

FELLOWSHIP: To sponsor this Sunday, call 774-0281.

## **December 30th - Sunday After the Nativity of Christ**

READINGS: Galatians 1:11-19; Matthew 2:13-23  
READERS: Panos Pantelas, Diana Dowd  
PROSFORO: Bettie Moustrouphis  
PARISH COUNCIL: Team I - Nona\*, Helen, John  
**3-Year Memorial for Vincent LaRosa**  
FELLOWSHIP: LaRosa/Pantelas families, in memory of Vincent LaRosa.

## HOLIDAY CHORAL CONCERT

**Saturday, Dec. 8th @ 5:00 PM**

*by the USM Chamber Singers, under the direction of  
Conductor Nicolas Alberto Dosman*

**Community Business Directory.** Business owners of our community recently received an invitation to promote their business in a directory which we will compile for the reference of all our members. In taking this initiative we hope that our members will support their fellow church members. If we receive a sufficient number of responses we will provide a directory of businesses and practitioners in our community. Please consider listing your business or practice by returning the form provided in the letter you received.

**Ministers of Compassion.** There are many in our community who are engaged in wonderful works of compassion in the broader society outside our church community. For example, we have church members who are involved in animal rescue, who work with opiate survivors, others who volunteer at hospice, others who use their art or comfort animals to bring comfort and enlightenment to people who have neither, and still others involved in other forms of social justice and compassion, as well as activism for the environment and other pressing matters. These ministers of compassion will have their place in our new website currently under development.

**New Website.** Work is progressing slowly, but it is progressing. At the same time we are maintaining the old website which has served us so well for 19 years. Do you realize that we were one of the first Orthodox churches in the country, and probably the world, to have our own website? All thanks to Chris Dilios, who set it up and managed our current website for all these 19 years. Thank you, Chris.

**New robes for the Sanctuary Assistants (previously known as Altar Boys).** Sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the new robes will arrive from Greece. A big thank you to Mrs. Vorias for making this donation.

**The Festival Committee is looking for new members!** The work of the Festival Committee is essential to the success of our Festival and to the wellbeing of our parish. If you are interested in joining, contact Greg Tselikis or Father Constantine.

### **ALTAR OIL OFFERINGS**

- ◇ November 4, Koukos/Butler families, in loving memory of Athena Nanos & Christine Nicholas.
- ◇ November 11, Olga Hasiotis, in memory of her husband, Photios, 34 years since his death.
- ◇ November 18, Ruth Kazanzides, for the health of her family.
- ◇ November 25, Luci Nanos, in memory of her parents, Chris & Kay.
- ◇ December 2, Stacy Gikas, in memory of Argyro Pappas.
- ◇ December 9, Terry Sawyer, in memory of her parents, John & Mary Sotiriou.
- ◇ December 16, Alexandra Vorias, in memory of her mother-in-law, Anastasia.
- ◇ December 23, Cala Family, in memory of loved ones.
- ◇ December 30, Alexandra Vorias, for the health of her family.

**Donations are \$10 per week.**