

STS. CONSTANTINE & HELEN CHURCH

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GOSPEL AND EPISTLE READINGS

Epistle Reading

St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 1:8-18

TIMOTHY, my son, do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelos and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphoros, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me - may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesos.

Gospel Reading

Luke 14:16-24

11th Sunday of Luke

The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

SAINTS AND FEASTS COMMEMORATED

The Holy Hieromartyr Eleutherius, Bishop of Illyricum - December 15

This Saint had Rome as his homeland. Having been orphaned of his father from childhood, he was taken by his mother Anthia to Anicetus, the Bishop of Rome (some call him Anencletus, or Anacletus), by whom he was instructed in the sacred letters (that is, the divine Scriptures). Though still very young in years, he was made Bishop of Illyricum by reason of his surpassing virtue, and by his teachings he converted many unbelievers to Christ. However, during a most harsh persecution that was raised against the Christians under Hadrian (reigned 117-138), the Saint was arrested by the tyrants. Enduring many torments for Christ, he was finally put to death by two soldiers about the year 126. As for his Christ-loving mother Anthia, while embracing the remains of her son and kissing them with maternal affection, she was also beheaded.

The Martyr Susannah the Deaconess - December 15

APOLYTIKION AND KONTAKION HYMNS

Resurrectional Apolytikion Plagal of the Fourth Tone

Εξ ὕψους κατήλθες ο εὐσπλαγχνος, ταφήν καταδέξω τριήμερον, ἵνα ἡμᾶς ἐλευθερώσης τῶν παθῶν, Ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ἡ Ἀνάστασις ἡμῶν, Κύριε δόξα σοι.

You came down from Heaven, O Loving Lord, accepting for three days to be entombed, to liberate us from the passions of the flesh, You who are our Resurrection and our Life, glory to You, O Lord.

Of the Forefathers, Mode 2

By faith You justified the Forefathers, having through them betrothed to yourself the Church that came out of the nations. The saints are boasting in glory; for the glorious fruit, the Virgin who without seed gave birth to You, is from their progeny. At their entreaties, O Christ our God, save our souls.

Apolytikion for The Holy Hieromartyr Eleutherius, Mode Pl 1st

You were fully adorned with the sacred priestly robes. * You were dripping with streams of your own martyric blood. * In this state, you ran to Christ your Master, O blessed Saint * Eleftherius, destroyer of Satan; you are wise. * Therefore cease not interceding * for us who loyally honor * your blessed contest of martyrdom.

Apolytikion of the Church

Του Σταύρου σου τον τύπον εν ουρανῶ θεασάμενος, και ως ὁ Παῦλος την κλήσιν ουκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δεξάμενος, ὁ εν βασιλεύσιν, Ἀπόστολός σου Κύριε, βασιλεύουσιν πόλιν τη χειρί σου παρέθετο. Ἦν περίσῳζε διὰ παντός εν ειρήνῃ, πρεσβείαις της Θεοτόκου, μόνε Φιλάνθρωπε.

Having seen in the heavens the sign of Your precious Cross O Lord, and as it happened with St. Paul, having received not his call from man, he who has become Your Apostle from among the kings, has entrusted the Ruling City into Your hands.

By the intercessions of the Theotokos preserve it forever in peace and safety, O You who love mankind.

Παιδίον νέον, τον προ αίωνων Θεόν.

Kontakion of Pre-Nativity

Ἡ Παρθένος σήμερον, τὸν προαιώνιον
Λόγον, ἐν σπηλαίᾳ ἔρχεται, ἀποτεκεῖν
ἀπορρήτως. Χόρευε, ἡ οἰκουμένη
ἀκουτισθεῖσα, δόξασον, μετὰ Ἀγγέλων καὶ
τῶν Ποιμένων, Βουλευθέντα ἐποφθύναι,

The young virgin on this day is on her way
to a cavern, to give birth ineffably to God
the Word from all ages. Dance with joy
the whole creation at the announcement,
Glorify with all the angels and with the
shepherds Him who wanted to be shown
forth as a young Child while being
eternally God.

WISDOM FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

This parable ... proclaims beforehand both the casting out of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles; and it indicates together with this also the strictness of the life required, and how great the punishment appointed for the careless

And when were they bidden? By all the prophets; by John again; for unto Christ he would pass all on, saying, "He must increase, I must decrease;" by the Son Himself again, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you;" and again, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

But not by words only, but also by actions did He bid them, after His ascension by Peter, and those with him. "For He that wrought effectually in Peter," it is said, "to the apostleship of the circumcision, was mighty also in me towards the Gentiles." ...

St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 69 on Matthew 22*, 4th Century

Come, O faithful,
Let us enjoy the Master's hospitality,
The banquet of immortality.
In the upper chamber with uplifted minds
Let us receive the exalted words of the Word
Whom we magnify.

Last Ode of the Compline Canon,

PARISH NEWS AND EVENTS

Welcome to Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church!

Today, in honor of their Patron, St. Spyridon of Trimythous, our Philoptochos is sponsoring

an Artoclasia--Blessing of the Loaves.

Today our Church School will celebrate its Christmas Program of Song and Cheer after Divine Services.

The Parish Council will meet today after coffee hour.

Members of our Mission Team St. Louis have hand-crafted beautiful Christmas tree ornaments as a fund-raiser for OCMC missionaries Chris and Jennifer Moore to Mongolia. Pick one up today at our bookstore for a suggested donation of \$5.

Last opportunity to sign up for our Annual Community Christmas Card at our Bookstore is today. Suggested donation \$15--all proceeds benefit the youth ministries.

Tues, Dec. 17th: St. Dionysios of Zakynthos

9 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy

6:30pm--The Faith study

Sat, 5 pm Great Vespers, Holy Confession

Sunday, 8:45 Orthros, 10am Divine Liturgy

Coming Up:

Divine Services for Holy Nativity.

Dec. 24th

10 am Royal Hours

5 pm Vespersal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Dec. 25th

9 am Matins and Divine Liturgy

New Year's Vigil in Honor of St. Basil the Great, **New Year's Eve, 6pm, Dec.31st:**
Great Vespers, Matins, Divine Liturgy and Vasilopita Blessing!

All are welcome to remain and pray the the Thanksgiving Prayer after receiving antidoron.

Please join us for a Church School-sponsored lenten Potluck in the Hall.

Glory to God for all things!