

**The Weekly Messenger – December 21, 2025**  
**St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church**  
**237 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103**

**Father Kakhaber Kurtanidze (Father Kai) 484-843-4209 [fr.kai@stjcaoc.org](mailto:fr.kai@stjcaoc.org)**

Website: <https://stjcaoc.org/> Email address: [info@stjcaoc.org](mailto:info@stjcaoc.org)

**This Week Epistle:** Sunday before the Nativity Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40 **Gospel:** Matthew 1:1-25

**Next Week Epistle:** Sunday after the Nativity Galatians 1:11-19 **Gospel:** Matthew 2:13-23

**Upcoming Events:**

**Dec 21<sup>st</sup>** Sunday School Christmas Pageant following the Divine Liturgy  
and a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus during coffee hour.

**Wednesday, Dec 24<sup>th</sup>** Christmas Eve Vespertal Liturgy @ 4:00 pm

**Thursday, Dec 25<sup>th</sup>** Christmas Liturgy 10:00am

**Jan 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026** Blessing of the water and Part 1 of the Icon Auction during coffee hour

**Monday, Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 2026** Vespertal Liturgy 6 pm Theophany/Epiphany

**Jan 11<sup>th</sup>** Part 2 of the Icon Auction during coffee hour

**Monday Jan 12<sup>th</sup>** Parish Council meeting via ZOOM 7:30 pm

**Feb 8<sup>th</sup>** Soup-er Bowl Sunday

**Commemorations for the Departed:** Archbishop Nikon, Protopresbyter Arthur Liolin Chancellor Emeritus of the Albanian Archdiocese, the victims of the war in Gaza and the rest of the Middle East, the victims in Ukraine, Soteria Douris, Elias (Lou) Verdy, Fatime Hyseneshi, Helen Theokary (5 yrs.), Dolly Seiler (5 yrs.), Paul Spiro (8 yrs.), Greg Vrato, Sr. (9yrs.), George Douris (12 yrs.), Peter Kosta (13 yrs.), Deacon Stephen Stefani & those servicemen who have fallen asleep in the Lord in the service of their country.

**Commemorations for the Living:** His Grace, Bishop Nikodhim Archpriest Matthew Tate, the people affected by the war in the Gaza and the rest of the Middle East, the people in Ukraine, Newly Illuminated Arron James Spiro, Newly Illuminated Nicholas Andrew Spiro, Michele Coraluzzi, Adam Coraluzzin, Christopher & Kimlita Spiro, Joanne Risley, Billy Cotto, Christina Schaeffer, Linda Kosta, Marjana Kokalari, Betty Subashi, Gerald Mondlak, Nancy, Stephanos Sarris, Dhimitri Ndrecka, and the men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

***If you have a name to add to the Commemorations for the departed or the living, please email [info@stjcaoc.org](mailto:info@stjcaoc.org)***

**Coffee Hour:** The 2026 Coffee Hour Sign-up sheet is posted in the side vestibule. Please pick a date! Thank you Paula Bendo for making the sign-up sheet!

**Dec 21<sup>st</sup>** Lakuriqi and Gremi Families in honor of Nicholas Gremi's Nameday

**Dec 28<sup>th</sup>** **NO SPONSOR** **Jan 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026 NO SPONSOR**

**Jan 11<sup>th</sup>** **NO SPONSOR** **Jan 18<sup>th</sup>** **NO SPONSOR**

**Christmas Sock, Underwear & Blanket Drive:** We are collecting socks, underwear and blankets for the homeless. A box is located in the vestibule near the candle stand. Please drop off a package of socks, underwear and a blanket.

*If you have something for the Weekly Messenger, please email [mailto:info@stjcaoc.org](mailto:mailto:info@stjcaoc.org)*

**Monthly Giving for December: Napkins**



**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.

**The Feast of the Nativity of Jesus** is one of the most joyful days of the Orthodox Church. It ranks next to the greatest holiday, the Resurrection of Jesus. The Feast of the Birth of Jesus is also known as the "Incarnation of Christ." This means that Jesus became a man and came into the world to save us. We also refer to this joyous feast as Christmas. Biblical Story The story of the Nativity of Christ is beautifully told in the Holy Scriptures. The story is found in Matthew 1:18-25 and in Luke 2:1-20. No matter how often the Birth of Jesus is told, we realize that it is an important event.



**Christmas Card Alert:** We are asking our parishioners to send Christmas cards to those who are not able to come to church and those who are ill. If you have someone who could use some holiday cheer, please send us their name & address. A list will be available at the candle stand or you can request the list of names by emailing: [info@stjcaoc.org](mailto:info@stjcaoc.org)

**Sunday school:** December 21<sup>st</sup> following the Divine Liturgy, the Sunday school will present their annual Christmas Pageant. The most precious kids in the Philadelphia area attend St. Johns and this is a must-see event. Bring your kids, your grandkids, nieces, nephews and your camera. You don't want to miss the pageant. Santa and Mrs. Claus will visit in the church hall during coffee hour.

**Annual Icon Auction:** January 4<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> 2026. We ask that you return the Icon so that we can prepare for the 2026 Auction. A list of Icons available for bids will be on our website. Even if you are not able to attend the Icon Auction you can still submit a bid or make a donation in honor of your patron saint. If you bid on an Icon in 2025 and have not made your donation there is still time. Please send a check or go online [DONATE](#) Thank you!

**2026 Calendars** are available at the Candle Stand. If you want the calendar mailed to you, please contact [info@stjcaoc.org](mailto:info@stjcaoc.org) or call 609-685-1651. Thank you to Vraim Funeral Home for sponsoring the printing of the 2026 Calendars

**If you mailed a Christmas donation to the church, please to check your bank statements** to be sure any checks you sent to the church have been cashed. We still struggle with the mail delivery at the church.

**Welcome to our visitors.** Father Kai, the members of our Parish Council and our church community thank you for celebrating the Divine Liturgy with us. We invite you to join us for coffee hour and fellowship in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy.

**Christ is Born! Glorify Him!** Many thanks to our parishioners and friends who make Christmas at St. John Chrysostom so very special.  
Wishing everyone a blessed and joyous Nativity!

