



## COVENANT CARE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE PRAYER GATHERING

SAINT BARBARA GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - ORANGE, CONNECTICUT

### A PRAYER SERVICE & LEAF OF REMEMBRANCE

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Priest: Blessed is our God always now and forever and unto the ages of ages.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth: You are everywhere present filling all things; Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life: come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One!

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us. (3x)

*Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your Name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

*Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Priest: For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen. (Psalm 112\*) Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches will be in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness; He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A

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\* Of the psalms describing the righteous man, this is the most popular song in the Orthodox Church for use on days of commemoration of the saints. The verse, "The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance..." makes up the communion hymn for most saint's days, for these righteous ones who have departed are present with us at the heavenly Eucharist (Hebrews 13:22-24), and are thus in everlasting remembrance in the sight of God and in our hearts and minds. Memory eternal!

good man deals graciously and lends; he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he will never be shaken; the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. He will not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established; he will not be afraid, until he sees his desire upon his enemies. He has dispersed abroad, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn will he exulted with honor. The wicked will see it and be grieved; he will gnash his teeth and melt away; the desire of the wicked will perish.

(Psalm 113) Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its going down the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth? He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, that He may seat him with princes; with the princes of His people. He grants the barren woman a home, like a joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord!

(Psalm 117) Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!

(Psalm 121) I will lift up my eyes to the hills; from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth and even forevermore.

Priest: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the peace of God and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this holy house and for those who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For those who live faithfully, seeking God's will, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the suffering and the homeless, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For those who are destitute or in despair, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For those who have suffered loss or great sorrow, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For our strengthening in joy and hope, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For all of us who call on You from our hearts, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For to You belong all glory, honor, and worship to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen. (Psalm 23) The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want; he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

*The following petitions are for those who have fallen asleep in the Lord:*

Priest: Chosen Intercessor and High Priest, Who has laid down Your soul for the salvation of the sinful world and has given us authority to be children of God, and to dwell in the never-ending day of Your Kingdom, grant forgiveness and eternal joy to Your servants who have fallen asleep, for whom we cry to You in supplication: Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

People: Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

Priest: O holy Guardian Angel given by the Lord: Come pray for your servant, whom you did accompany, preserve, and direct on all the paths of life, and cry with us to the All-compassionate Savior:

Jesus, tear up the handwriting of the sins of Your servants.

Jesus, heal the wounds of their soul.

Jesus, grant that there not be bitter memories of them on earth.

Jesus, for the sake of this have mercy on those who were grieved and offended by them.

Jesus, cover their imperfections with the radiant garment of Your redemption.

Jesus, gladden them by Your loving-kindness.

Jesus, Ineffable, Great and Wondrous - reveal Yourself to them.

Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

People: Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

Priest: Like an inconsolable dove, the soul is borne aloft over the earthly vale, contemplating from the heights of divine reason the sins and temptations of its past life, and bitterly sorrowing over every irretrievable day, which passed without benefit; but do You, O Master, have mercy on Your servants that they may enter into Your rest, crying out: Alleluia!

People: Alleluia!

Priest: Since You did suffer for all world, since You did pour forth tears and the sweat of blood for the living and the dead - who, then, could restrain us from prayer for the departed ones? Imitating You, who did descend even unto hades, we pray for the salvation of Your servants:

Jesus, Giver of Life, illumine them with Your light.

Jesus, may they be only with You and the Father.

Jesus, who calls all to Your vineyard, forget not to illumine them by Your light.

Jesus, generous Bestower of eternal rewards, show them to be a child of Your bridal chamber.

Jesus, return to their soul the grace-filled powers of the first-created purity.

Jesus, may good deeds be multiplied in their name.

Jesus, warm those left behind with Your mystical consolation.

Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

People: Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

Priest: For Yours is the dominion, the kingdom, the power, and the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.

People: Amen. (Psalm 102) Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from corruption, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger for ever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor requite us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments. The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word! Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will! Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!

*The following petitions are for those who have fallen asleep in the Lord:*

Priest: We believe that our parting will be brief. We bury you, as grain in a field, and you will spring forth in another land. Let the weeds of your sins die in the grave, but may good deeds shine forth there, where good seed brings forth incorrupt fruit, and where holy souls sing: Alleluia!

People: Alleluia!

Priest: When the fate of the departed fades into oblivion, when their image dims in the heart, and time obliterates, along with their tomb, the fervency of prayer for them, then do You not abandon them but give delight to their lonely souls:

Jesus, the warmth of Your love never ceases.

Jesus, Your goodwill is inexhaustible.

Jesus, in the never-silent supplications of the Church may their sins be washed away by the offering of the Bloodless Sacrifice.

Jesus, through the intercession of all Your Saints, grant them the grace of prayer for the living.

Jesus, in the days of our own trials, accept their intercession for us.

Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

People: Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

Priest: Let us pray with tears while the memory of the ones who have fallen asleep are painfully fresh. Let us remember their names day and night, giving alms, feeding the hungry, and crying from the depths of our souls: Alleluia!

People: Alleluia!

Priest: The Seer of Mysteries, John the Theologian, in contemplation beheld at the Throne of the Lamb of God a great multitude of people, clothed in white garments. These are they who came out of great sorrow. They joyfully serve God day and night, and God dwells with them, and torment will not touch them:

Jesus, number among them also Your departed servants.

Jesus, they suffered much and languished.

Jesus, all their bitter hours and painful moments are known to You.

Jesus, on earth they had sorrow and tribulation - grant them joy in heaven.

Jesus, refresh them from the fountains of living water.

Jesus, take away every tear from their eyes.

Jesus, grant them an abode where the sun of Your righteousness scorches not but rather gives life.

Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

People: Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

Priest: O Christ our God, you have dominion over the living and the dead. Through the intercessions of your All-Holy Mother, and of all the saints, establish the souls of your servants, departed from our midst, in the company of the blessed, and have mercy upon us who grieve and are filled with sorrow.

We bear your Holy Image in the depths of our soul, and though marred by faults, it is still radiant with your own ineffable glory. We cry out to you from the depths, cast down into despondency. Of old you made us from the dust of the earth, and often to the dust we fall. But restore us, to that radiance of your image, and lift us again to our ancient beauty. Show your compassion to your creature, Lord, and raise us up once more to be able to sing to you in praise with a glad and lightened heart, with renewed vigor and hope. For you are a God of mercy and compassion, and to you we offer glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.

People: Amen. (Psalm 133) Behold, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who by night stand in the house of the Lord! Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. The Lord who made heaven and earth bless you from Zion!

Priest: If the reflection and trace of You make the faces of mortals shine, then what can we say about You Yourself? If the fruits of Your hands are so wonderful, and if the earth, which reflects only a shadow of You, is full of unutterable majesty, then what can be said of Your unseen countenance? Reveal Your glory to Your servants who have fallen asleep:

Jesus, enhance their hearing unto the perception of Your divinity.

Jesus, enhance their hearing for heavenly wisdom.

Jesus, may their joy be full.

Jesus, strengthen them with the hope of meeting in the dwelling places of the blessed.

Jesus, grant that we may feel the grace-filled power of the prayer of the reposed.

Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

People: Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

Priest: O All-good Master, may the radiant gates of Paradise be open to them who have fallen asleep; and may they be met with exultation by the assemblies of righteous and holy ones, and the multitudes of their close ones. May Your light-bearing Angels rejoice over them and may they see Your Ever-blessed Mother there, where victoriously there resounds: Alleluia!

People: Alleluia!

Priest: At Your breath flowers come to life, the river Nile is resurrected and a multitude of tiny creatures awakens. Your glance is brighter than the spring sky; and Your love, O Jesus, is warmer than the rays of the sun. You did raise our mortal human flesh from the dust of the earth unto the blossoming of the eternal spring of incorruptible life. Do You then illumine also Your servants with the light of Your mercy:

Jesus, at Your right hand are goodwill and life.

Jesus, in Your gaze are light and love.

Jesus, deliver those who have fallen asleep from eternal spiritual death.

Jesus, they fell asleep in hope as did Nature before the cold winter.

Jesus, rouse them when the thorns of the earth are clothed in the light of eternity.

Jesus, may nothing earthly cloud their final rest.

Jesus, You unchanging Gladness and goal of our existence.

Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

People: Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

Priest: O Christ! You are the Kingdom of Heaven; You are the land of the meek; You are the dwelling place of many. You are the drink which is completely new; You are the vesture and crown of the venerable ones. You are the couch of repose of the Saints. You are our Sweetest Jesus and to You is due praise: Alleluia!

People: Alleluia!

Priest: Using the image of peaceful gardens of unearthly beauty and mansions bright as the sun, in the splendor of heavenly singing You have revealed to us the blessedness of those who love You:

Jesus, may Your servants enter into Your joy.

Jesus, clothe them with the radiance of the glory of the Father.

Jesus, sanctify them with the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, may they hear the ineffable song of the Cherubim.

Jesus, may they ascend from glory to glory.

Jesus, may they see You face to face.

Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

People: Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servants the sweetness of Paradise.

Priest: O Immortal Bridegroom, coming from Heaven with the Angels at the midnight of sin and unbelief to judge the whole world, open the doors of Your glorious bridal chamber to Your servants, that among the countless hosts of saints they may forever sing: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

People: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Priest: For You are holy, our God, and to You we give glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Together: All those who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ forever. Alleluia.

Ὅσοι εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε. Ἀλληλούϊα.

All those who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ forever. Alleluia.

*Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*

Have put on Christ forever. Alleluia.

All those who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ forever. Alleluia.

Priest: That we may be found worthy to hear the Holy Gospel, let us entreat the Lord our God.

People: Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Wisdom! Arise! Let us hear the Holy Gospel. Peace be with you all.

People: And with your spirit

Priest: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew. Let us be attentive.

People: Glory to You O Lord, Glory to You.

Priest: When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. Then He began to speak, and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are

those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

People: Glory to You O Lord, glory to You.

Priest: For You are a good and loving God, and to You we give glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.

People: Amen. (Psalm 150) Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord!

(Psalm 136) Priest: O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: O give thanks unto the God of gods, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: O give thanks unto the Lord of lords, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: To him who alone does great wonders, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: To him who by understanding made the heavens, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: To him who spread out the earth upon the waters, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: To him who made the great lights, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: The sun to rule over the day, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: The moon and stars to rule over the night, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: It is he who remembered us in our low estate, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: He who gives food to all flesh, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: O give thanks to the God of heaven, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good, Alleluia.

People: For His mercy, endures forever. Alleluia.

Priest: O Lord, compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and plentiful in mercy, attend to the voice of our prayer. Work upon us a sign for the good. Lead us in your way, that we may walk in the truth. Gladden our hearts that we may honor your Holy Name.

For you are great and work wonders. Lord, who is mighty in mercy, gracious in strength, always ready to aid and to comfort and save those who put their trust in your holy name. And to you are due all glory, honor, and worship now and forever and unto the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: Let us complete our prayer to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this holy house and for those who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and distress, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy upon us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For a perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless evening, let us ask the Lord.

People: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: For an angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask the Lord.

People: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: For forgiveness and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask the Lord.

People: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: For all that is good and beneficial to our souls, and for peace in the world, let us ask the Lord.

People: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: For the completion of our lives in peace and repentance, let us ask the Lord.

People: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: For a Christian end to our lives, peaceful, without shame and suffering, and for a good account before the awesome judgment seat of Christ, let us ask the Lord.

People: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: For to You belong all glory, honor, and worship to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

(Hymn of Saint Barbara the Great Martyr)

Βαρβάραν τὴν Ἁγίαν τιμήσωμεν· ἐχθροῦ γὰρ τὰς παγίδας συνέτριψε, καὶ ὡς στρουθίον ἐρρύσθη ἐξ αὐτῶν, βοήθεια καὶ ὄπλῳ τοῦ Σταυροῦ ἢ Πάνσεμνος.

Let us praise the most honorable Barbara. She thwarted the enemy's power, and through the might and strength of the Cross, she was made free in her flight to God.

Priest: For You are a good and loving God, and to You we give glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.

People: Amen. Vouchsafe, Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed are You, Lord, God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name forever. Amen. Lord, let Your mercy come upon us, for we have trusted in You. Blessed are You, Lord; teach me Your commandments. Blessed are You, Master; make me understand Your commandments. Blessed are You, Holy One; enlighten me with Your commandments. Lord, Your love endures forever; do not turn away from the work of Your hands. To You belong praise, song, and glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*At this point in the service, the names of the beloved departed souls will be said aloud as each Leaf of Remembrance is gently placed on the Covenant Care Community Christmas Tree. The faithful will have the opportunity to say the name of their loved one themselves, or the name will be said aloud by Father Peter or another designated individual from the Church community.*

*Members of the Saint Barbara GOYA, will assist Fr. Peter and other parishioners, by helping transfer the Remembrance Leaves to the Tree.*

*After all the Leaves of Remembrance have been prayerfully presented, the service concludes with the following prayer of Saint Ioannikios the Great:*

People: My hope is the Father. My refuge is the Son. My shelter is the Holy Spirit. O Holy Trinity, Glory to You.



#### PRAYER FOR YOUR LOVED ONE

*Jesus, All-merciful Judge, vouchsafe Your servant (name of one fallen asleep in the Lord) the sweetness of Paradise. Amen.*

*The word "Vouchsafe" signifies: to allow, grant or permit, as by favor, or graciousness, by God's Grace.*

Portions of this service have been taken from the "Akathist to Jesus Christ: For a Loved One who has Fallen Asleep" published by Saint Paisius Serbian Orthodox Monastery; Prayer Book of the Early Christians published by Paraclete Press; The Orthodox Study Bible New Testament and Psalms (numbering of the Psalms according to this text). These books are all available for purchase in the Saint Barbara Book and Icon Store.