



The Trophy Bearer

January 2020

Volume 1, Issue 5

St. George Orthodox Church

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Buffalo, NY 14216

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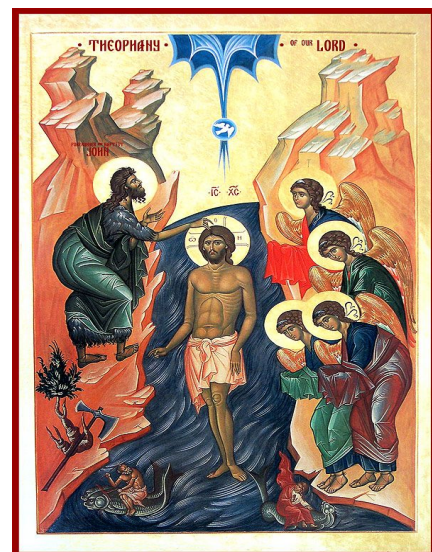
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Mr. Amil Slaiman, Parish Council President

This newsletter is published monthly in the interest of the parishioners and friends of St. George Orthodox Church in Buffalo, a parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey and The Orthodox Church in America.

The Theophany of the Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

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January 6

During the time that John the Forerunner preached on the banks of the Jordan River and baptized people, Jesus Christ reached thirty years of age. He also went from Nazareth to the Jordan River to John to receive baptism from him.

John did not consider himself worthy to baptize Jesus Christ and began to shrink back from Him saying, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?"

Upon completion of the baptism, when Jesus Christ came out of the water, suddenly the heavens were opened over Him; and John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him and heard the voice of God the Father from Heaven saying, "*This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.*"

Then, John was finally convinced that Jesus was the expected Messiah, Son of God, Saviour of the world.

The Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ is celebrated in the Holy Orthodox Church as one of the great feasts on *January 6th*. The celebration of the Baptism of the Lord is also called *Theophany* or the Manifestation of God because at the time of baptism God revealed Himself to people as the Holy Trinity in this way: *God the Father* spoke from Heaven, the incarnate *Son of God* was baptized, and the *Holy Spirit* descended in as a dove. Also, at the time of baptism for the first time, people could see that in the person of Jesus Christ there appeared not only man but also *God*.

The day before the feast is an established fast day. The same strict fast is observed and the same types of services are celebrated as on the Eve of Christ's Nativity (Christmas). Because the Saviour by His own baptism sanctified the water, on this feast there is a blessing of water. On the day before, water is blessed in church and on the feast itself — under the open sky, in rivers, lakes, pools and wells. This Blessing of the Waters is often called "*The Procession to the Jordan.*"

Theophany is the Feast which reveals the Most Holy Trinity to the world through the Baptism of the Lord (Mt.3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). God the Father

But Jesus answering said to Him, "Suffer it to be so now," — that is, do not hold back from me now, "for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," — to fulfill everything in the Law of God and to set an example for people. Then, John obeyed and baptized Jesus Christ

spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptized by the St John the Forerunner, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a dove. From ancient times this Feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since God is Light and has appeared to illumine "those who sat in darkness," and "in the region of the shadow of death" (Mt.4:16), and to save the fallen race of mankind by grace. In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptize catechumens at the Vespers of Theophany, so that Baptism also is revealed as the spiritual illumination of mankind. The origin of the Feast of Theophany goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in The Apostolic Constitutions (Book V:13). From the second century we have the testimony of St Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this Feast. There is a third century dialogue about the services for Theophany between the holy martyr Hippolytus and St Gregory the Wonderworker. In the following centuries, from the fourth to ninth century, all the great Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, John of Damascus, commented on the Feast of Theophany.

The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this Feast, which is sung at Orthodox services even today. St John of Damascus said that the Lord was baptized, not because He Himself had need for cleansing, but "to bury human sin by water," to fulfill the Law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify "the nature of water" and to offer us the form and example of Baptism. On the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, the Holy

Church proclaims our faith in the most sublime mystery, incomprehensible to human intellect, of one God in three Persons. It teaches us to confess and glorify the Holy Trinity, one in Essence and Indivisible. It exposes and overthrows the errors of ancient teachings which attempted to explain the Creator of the world by reason, and in human terms. The Church shows the necessity of Baptism for believers in Christ, and it inspires us with a sense of deep gratitude for the illumination and purification of our sinful nature. The Church teaches that our salvation and cleansing from sin is possible only by the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, therefore it is necessary to preserve worthily these gifts of the grace of holy Baptism, keeping clean this priceless garb, for "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27).

On the day of Theophany, all foods are permitted, even if the Feast falls on a Wednesday or Friday.

A Message From Fr. Jason

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY
FOREVER!

**"THIS IS THE DAY THAT THE LORD
HAS MADE! LET US REJOICE AND BE
GLAD IN IT!"**

I greet all of you with these words of praise as we begin another Civil Year within our lives and the Life of Our Church.

Every year on January 1, people all around the world celebrate this Great Feast to mark the beginning of their journey through the cycle of life. Some make resolutions and others just go on with 'business as usual'. However, for us as Orthodox Christians, this celebration takes on another meaning. It takes on a meaning that the world does not and could not understand unless they themselves open their eyes and hearts to Our Lord Jesus Christ WHO IS the Light of the World through the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord and St. Basil the Great.

As we begin this New Year, many things in our personal lives are happening. The Feast of the Nativity has passed, families and friends have gone back to their homes, children are going back to school, we are busy cleaning the house and putting the decorations away – the list goes on. As we are busy with all of these important aspects of our life, this would be a great time for us, as Christians, to choose a goal that is appropriate for our own spirituality. Perhaps we need to attend the weekly services that are offered on a more regular basis, pray a little more each day, read the Bible all the way through, fast more often or more strictly, extend our time, talents, and efforts a little more. Whatever we need to do to grow spiritually, we need to start today! The commemoration of the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord and St. Basil the Great and the Civil New Year, itself, reminds us of the constant need to re-evaluate and recapture that which is central to our lives as Orthodox Christians, to restore balance in all we do, and in repentance to make an earnest attempt to set aside a portion—the "first portion"—of our time to acquire the peace of the Holy Spirit.

By entering the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord and St. Basil the Great and the Civil New Year we discover -- perhaps for the first time -- the mercy and love of God revealed in the celebrations, which open to us the great acts of salvation. In these celebrations, culminating in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the body of Christians is made into the body of Christ. In these celebrations, the Kingdom of God is being proclaimed and revealed. With the proclamation of the Gospel we are given the opportunity to receive the living Word of God which renews and illumines those seeking "to run the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1). By embracing this Word we are invited to draw near and receive from the table of the Kingdom the bread of life and the fountain of immortality.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, a great and awesome gift has been entrusted to us. By entering the New Year we are given the opportunity to proclaim, in

word and deed, the Gospel of new and eternal life. Let us draw near together, as a parish family, and enter with great joy into the mystery of the liturgical life of our Church. And let us proclaim to the world the saving acts of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by fulfilling and proclaiming His Beloved Gospel.

As we begin this New Civil Year, I challenge and encourage all of us to participate more in the Liturgical and Spiritual Life of our parish. We will be offering more services to allow everyone the opportunity to grow in their spiritual life as well as to become apart of the Liturgical Life of our parish. We will also be offering more Educational Sessions for both the children and the adults of our parish to allow the opportunity for all of us to grow in our faith. We also have many projects and activities and outreach ministry projects planned for this coming year which will require everyone's efforts. Through these activities, we will allow ourselves the opportunity of coming together as a parish family to enjoy fun and fellowship with one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

As we begin this New Civil Year, I encourage all of us to continue our love and support for one another. I encourage all of us to continue praying for one another. For through these efforts on everyone's part, not only will our beloved parish family continue to grow in faith and in love, but more so we will become what God has intended us to be: A Thriving and Living Body of Christ proclaiming and living the Gospel of His Beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ!

As we begin this New Civil Year, I humbly ask for your forgiveness if I have failed you in any way during this past year or if I have sinned against you or caused you to sin. Be assured of my continued love and prayers for you, your families, and our entire parish family.

Through the Prayers of Our Heavenly Patron, Holy Great-Martyr and Wonderworker George the Victorious, may GOD continue to bless us and protect us as we minister and proclaim the Gospel of His

Beloved Son, Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ.

God Bless You!

With Love in Christ,

Fr. Jason

Q&A with Fr. Jay

In this section, we will answer questions that have been given to Fr. Jason on various topics pertaining to our life as Orthodox Christians. If there are any questions that we may have about The Orthodox Faith and Her Teachings, please feel free to leave our question(s) in the box located at the candle desk in church (Questions for Father) or email it to Fr. Jason and he will be able to provide the answers for us. All questions are anonymous and are here for the benefit of everyone to help each of us grow closer in our relationship with Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ in understanding our Holy Orthodox Faith and Her Teachings.

What is the Orthodox Religious Calendar: Its History and Development

Within the Orthodox Church feast days and fast days are reckoned according to two distinct calendars, the Julian Calendar and the Gregorian Calendar. The first is attributed to the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar, whose name it bears. It was later corrected in the sixteenth century by Pope Gregory XIII due to the ever-increasing discrepancy between calendar time and calculated astronomical time. Thus the Gregorian Calendar came into being.

Old and New Calendars

Inasmuch as the Julian Calendar had been in continuous use in the Christian East and West throughout the centuries, the subsequent introduction of the Gregorian Calendar in the West created yet another anomaly in the deteriorating relations between the two Churches. The need for correction of the Julian Calendar was well understood in the East and had even led

some to devise a new calendar themselves. Nevertheless, the Julian Calendar remained in use throughout the Byzantine period and beyond. Despite the efforts of the emissaries of Pope Gregory to convince the Orthodox to accept the New (Gregorian) Calendar, the Orthodox Church rejected it. The main reason for its rejection was that the celebration of Easter would be altered: contrary to the injunctions of canon 7 of the Holy Apostles, the decree of the First Ecumenical Synod, and canon 1 of Ancyra, Easter would sometimes coincide with the Jewish Passover in the Gregorian calendar.

This is where the matter stood until the end of World War I. Until then, all Orthodox Churches had strictly abided by the Old (Julian) Calendar, which at present is 13 days behind the New Calendar long since adopted by the rest of Christendom. In May of 1923, however, an "Inter-Orthodox Congress" was convened at Constantinople by the then Ecumenical Patriarch, Meletios IV. Not all Orthodox Churches were in attendance. The Churches of Serbia, Romania, Greece, and Cyprus were; the Churches of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, although invited, were not; the Church of Bulgaria was not invited. Several issues were under discussion at the congress, one of which was the adoption of the New Calendar. No unanimous agreement was reached on any of the issues discussed. Several of the Orthodox Churches, however, did eventually agree, though not all at the same time, to adopt the New Calendar. These were the Churches of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Poland, and most recently, Bulgaria (1968); on the other hand, the Churches of Jerusalem, Russia and Serbia, along with the monasteries on Mt. Athos, all continue to adhere to the Old Calendar.

Calendar Problems and Implications Among the Orthodox Churches in the Twentieth Century

The Old Calendarists

The result of this situation is unfortunate indeed. The Orthodox Churches

which have adopted the New Calendar observe Christmas with the other Churches of Christendom on December 25; the Orthodox Churches which have not adopted it celebrate Christmas 13 days later, on January 7. The former celebrates Epiphany on January 6 and by the latter on January 19. And so it is with all the great feasts of the Christian Calendar but one. Easter, the feast of feasts, continues to be calculated by all Orthodox Churches to the dates of the Old Calendar. Consequently, all Orthodox Churches observe the event of Christ's Resurrection on the same day, regardless of when the rest of Christendom does. An exception to this general rule is the Orthodox Church of Finland. Owing to the fact that it makes up less than 2% of the population of a predominantly Lutheran country, it observes Easter according to the New Calendar for practical reasons.

It may well be that the date of Orthodox Easter occasionally coincides with that of the other Christian Churches; however, it may also occur as much as 5 weeks later. Thus arose the formula applied by the Orthodox Churches adopting the New Calendar--viz., that immovable feast days are to be observed 13 days earlier than in the Old Calendar, while Easter and all movable feast days dependent on it are still calculated according to the Old Calendar--which was seen as a compromise with those who opposed the change. On the one hand, the necessary revisions were made to correct the Old Calendar; on the other hand, the calculation of Easter was retained as before so as not to violate the holy canons. Nevertheless, this compromise was to prove incapable of preventing the schism of "Old Calendarists" which ensued.

As is always the case with reform movements, there was strong opposition to the adoption of the New Calendar, especially in Greece. What differed in this situation, however, was that reform was initiated by the established Church together with the total backing of the state. Groups of "Old Calendarists" refused to abide by the Church's decision and continued to follow the Old Calendar for both movable and immovable feast days. The basis of their

refusal to abandon the Old Calendar rested on the argument that canons ratified by an Ecumenical Synod knew only of the Julian Calendar. Therefore, nothing less than an Ecumenical Synod had the authority to institute a reform of such proportion. In view of their refusal to submit to the authority of the Church of Greece, the official Church excommunicated them. This was not the case with the monasteries of Mt. Athos. Although all but one (i.e., 19 monasteries) continued to follow the Old Calendar, they are under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople with which they continue to be in communion. Despite attempts by the civil authorities in Greece to suppress them, the "Old Calendarists" continue to exist there and abroad and to maintain a hierarchy of their own together with parishes and monasteries.

Holy Days in the Orthodox Church

The ecclesiastical year, which according to Byzantine practice begins on the first of September, is divided between movable and immovable or fixed holy days. The movable holy days are determined by the date of Easter - the most important of all feast days -, which is in a class by itself. The determination of the date of Easter was definitively regulated by the decision of the First Ecumenical Synod, held in Nicaea (325). Next in importance to Easter are the "twelve great feasts," of which three are movable. Eight of these feasts are devoted to Christ and four to the Virgin Mary. There are also a number of feast days of varying importance, most of which commemorate the more popular saints.

Holy Days Dedicated to Christ and the Virgin Mary

The "twelve great feasts," as they occur in chronological order after September 1, are as follows:

1. The Nativity of The Most-Holy Theotokos (September 8)

2. The Elevation of The Precious and Life-Giving Cross (September 14)
3. The Entrance of The Most-Holy Theotokos into the Temple (November 21)
4. The Nativity of Our Lord (December 25)
5. The Holy Theophany of Our Lord (January 6)
6. The Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple (February 2)
7. The Annunciation of The Most-Holy Theotokos (March 25)
8. The Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem (the Sunday before Easter)
9. The Ascension of Our Lord (40 days after Easter)
10. The Feast of Holy Pentecost (50 days after Easter)
11. The Transfiguration of Our Lord (August 6)
12. The Dormition of The Most-Holy Theotokos (August 15)

Fast Days and Fast Periods

Four main fast periods are included in the ecclesiastical year. They are:

1. The Great Fast (Lent)--beginning on a Monday 7 weeks before Easter.
2. Fast of the Apostles--varying in length from 1 to 6 weeks; it begins on a Monday, 8 days after Pentecost, and ends on June 28--the eve of the feast of Saints Peter and Paul.
3. Fast of the Repose of the Virgin Mary--August 1 to 14.
4. Christmas Fast--lasting 40 days, from November 15 to December 24.

Individual fast days include the feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross (September 14), the Beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29), and the eve of Epiphany (January 5), as well as all Wednesdays and Fridays. There is no fasting, however, between Christmas and Epiphany, during the 10th week before

Easter, the week after Easter and the week after Pentecost.

Although the term denotes total abstinence from food or drink, fasting as practiced in the Orthodox Church means abstinence from meat, fish, dairy products, olive oil, and wine. Total abstinence is reserved for the fast of several hours duration preceding Holy Communion. The rules for fasting prescribed by the holy canons are quite rigid; and, although they are still observed in the monasteries and by the very devout, most Orthodox Christians today find it difficult to uphold the traditional practice for the length of time prescribed. Nevertheless, any deviation from the norm is permitted only following consultation with one's spiritual father or with the prior approval of the local hierarchy.

Orthodox Pascha

The determination of the date of Easter is governed by a computation based on the vernal equinox and the phase of the moon. According to the ruling of the First Ecumenical Synod in 325, Easter Sunday should fall on the Sunday which follows the first full moon after the vernal equinox. If the full moon happens to fall on a Sunday, Easter is observed the following Sunday. The day taken to be the invariable date of the vernal equinox is March 21.

Herein lies the first difference in the determination of Easter between the Orthodox Church and the other Christian Churches. The Orthodox Church continues to base its calculations for the date of Easter on the Julian Calendar, which was in use at the time of the First Ecumenical Synod. As such, it does not take into consideration the number of days which have since then accrued due to the progressive inaccuracy of the Julian Calendar. Practically speaking, this means that Easter may not be celebrated before April 3 (Gregorian), which had been March 21--the date of the vernal equinox--at the time of the First Ecumenical Synod. In other words, a difference of 13 days exists between the accepted date for the vernal equinox then and now. In the

West, this discrepancy was addressed in the 16th century through the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar, which adjusted the Julian Calendar still in use by all Christians at that time. Western Christians, therefore, observe the date of the vernal equinox on March 21 according to the Gregorian Calendar.

The other difference in the determination of Easter between the Orthodox and other Christian Churches concerns the date of Passover. Jews originally celebrated Passover on the first full moon following the vernal equinox. Christians, therefore, celebrated Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the other tragic events, which gave rise to the dispersal of the Jews, Passover sometimes preceded the vernal equinox. This was occasioned by the dependence of the dispersed Jews upon local pagan calendars for the calculation of Passover. As a consequence, most Christians eventually ceased to regulate the observance of Easter by the Jewish Passover. Their purpose, of course, was to preserve the original practice of celebrating Easter following the vernal equinox.

As an alternative to calculating Easter by the Passover, "paschal (Easter) cycles" were devised. The Orthodox Church eventually adopted a 19-year cycle, the Western Church an 84-year cycle. The use of two different "paschal cycles" inevitably gave way to differences between the Eastern and Western Churches regarding the observance of Easter. Varying dates for the vernal equinox increased these differences. Consequently, it is the combination of these variables, which accounts for the different date of Orthodox Easter, whenever it varies from the rest of Christendom.

Parish Activities

PARISH COUNCIL

The next meeting will be held on January 13 at 6:00 PM. During this meeting the

Proposed 2020 Budget will be reviewed and discussed for presentation to the Parish at our Annual Parish Budget Meeting to be held on Sunday January 19. During this meeting, we will review and discuss the Proposed 2020 Budget as well as the Proposed Amendment to the Parish By-Laws (allowable amount permitted for parish council to spend). Also on this Sunday, we will have the Installation of the Newly-Elected Parish Council Trustees and Officers during the Divine Liturgy:

President - Amil Slaiman
Vice-President - Michael Dan
Treasurer - Barbara Kuvshinoff
Secretary - Alice Kfoury
Trustees: Boris Kuvshinoff, Paul Shosho, Linda Mucyn

2020 Auditors are Dean Mellas and Matushka Christine Hoeplinger

The Windows for the Rectory are scheduled to be installed in Mid-January.

CHURCH SCHOOL

Sunday January 5

Youth Sunday
Church School Q&A with Fr. Jay (Epistles)

Sunday January 12

Annual Blessing of Water for Church School Children following Divine Liturgy

Annual Blessing of Water at Hoyt Lake - 1:30 PM

Saturday, January 18

The Church School will be making an outing to one of our local destinations.

ADULT EDUCATION/BIBLE STUDY

We will be having a Bible Study class two Wednesdays each month (The first and third Wednesdays: January 8 and January 22) at 10:00 am There will also be evening classes after Compline (6 pm) and class at 6:30 pm. The topic will be The Holy Gospels. Come engage with the Holy

Fathers and their commentaries as we learn and come to understand The Holy Gospels by reading, discussing, and reviewing The Holy Gospels!

SISTERHOOD OF ST. GEORGE

SEMINARIAN SPONSORSHIP

Sbdn. Maximos, Michelle, and their daughter Madeline are being sponsored by the Parish. He is a 1st Year Seminarian at St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary. The parish has committed to a monthly stipend. We also would like to send gift cards to them periodically. Local stores are Wegmans, Target, Walmart, Kohls.

If anyone would like to contribute to our "Adopt a Seminarian Fund", please see or contact Fr. Jason or Barbara Kuvshinoff.

Thoughts for the New Year - A Time for Renewal

The first day of the New Year is a traditional time we evaluate our past and set new goals for the coming year. Often we couch these as "resolutions." We commit to losing weight, exercising more, improving our business and so forth. We might even commit ourselves to reading the Scriptures every day or making a commitment to daily prayer or regularly attending church and participating in the fasts and sacraments regularly. These efforts to seek to better our life physically and spiritually are important. Yet there are only a few such resolutions that last more than a few weeks. Why is this? Simply because we don't set out to make a habit out of what we commit to, making them part of our normal life routine. We are so influenced by our culture that we expect instant results. We are impatient, too used to comfort, and quickly tire of things that require discipline and hard work. But if we truly seek to be an Orthodox Christian we must do both of these. This is what the Orthodox way of life is all about. Our spiritual growth does not come without effort and discipline. This is how

the apostle Peter puts it: Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love (2 Peter 1:5-7). Being an Orthodox Christian is about a way of life. We must seek to live in a way that we become the "aroma of Christ" to our surroundings (2 Cor 2:15). This means that we must develop a presence that influences others by our way of living and acting.

This is a good time to review the following [ten principles](#) of an Orthodox Way of life and reflect on our own lifestyle. asking what changes do I need to make to improve my "aroma."

1. [Praying Daily](#): Have a regular prayer rule that includes morning and evening prayer.

2. [Worshiping and Participating in Sacraments](#): Attend and participate in the Divine Liturgy receiving Holy Communion regularly as well as regular participation in Confession and attend church a little more.

3. [Honoring the Liturgical Cycle of the Church](#): Follow the seasons of the church and participate in the fasts and feasts of the Church. Develop a better rule of prayer and fasting throughout the year.

4. [Using the Jesus Prayer](#): Repeat the Holy name whenever possible throughout the day or night.

5. [Slowing Down and Ordering Your Life](#): Set priorities and reduce the stress and friction caused by a hurried life.

6. [Being Watchful](#): Give full attention to what you are doing at the moment.

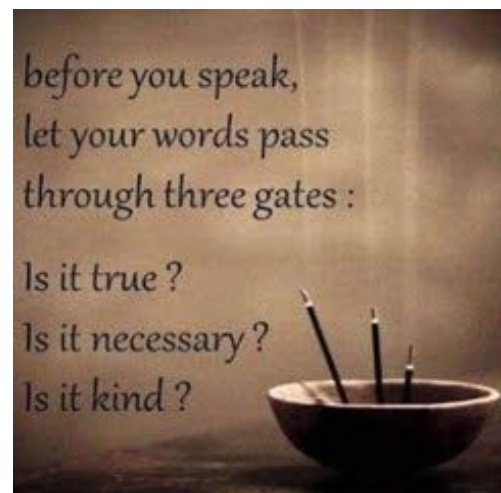
7. [Taming the Passions](#): Overcome your habits, attachment to your likes and dislikes, and learn to practice the virtues.. Putting Others First: Free yourself from your selfishness and find joy in helping others. Strengthening our Time-Talents-Treasures

8. [Spiritual Fellowship](#): Spend time regularly with family and also other Orthodox Christians for support and inspiration. Visit a Monastery. Invite someone to come to church with you.

9. [Reading the Scriptures and Holy Fathers](#): Be inspired by the lessons of the Holy Scriptures, the wisdom of the Holy Fathers and the lives of the Saints of the Church. Read The Daily Scripture Readings.

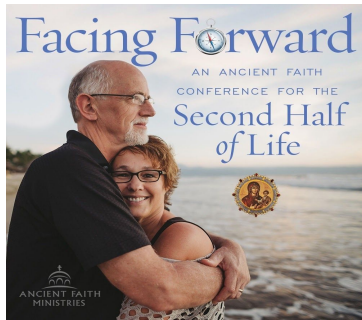
10. [Love one another! Pray for one another! Respect one another! Forgive one another!](#): The Key ingredients to a happy, healthy, blessed life with Our Lord and with one another!

The starting point is always prayer coupled with regular participation in the Divine Liturgy and regular preparation and partaking of Holy Communion. Fasting and the practice of the Jesus prayer can help build the necessary discipline and an attitude of repentance where we are constantly asking for God's mercy and help. If you seek spiritual enrichment in the coming year, then don't let yourself fall into a dull slumber of inattention to what really matters. Engage yourself in your spiritual development and allow the Holy Spirit to transform you from the inside out. Don't seek instant results from God like he was an ATM machine. Seek and thirst after him. Don't fret about how distant He seems. Commit yourself to live the life He has provided for you through His Church. The Church is given to us for our benefit. It outlines for us how we can become self-disciplined and gain His help to transform our lives so that we truly live in Him and He in us as the Scripture says.



Retreats in 2020

Facing Forward: An Ancient Faith Conference for the Second Half of Life



May 28-31, 2020 at Antiochian Village in Bolivar, PA (140 Church Camp Trail, Bolivar, PA. About 4 miles north of Ligonier, PA on Route 711)

The middle season of life marks itself in our experiences as an ending and a beginning. It is a season of change and realization, and can be a time of great joy and great suffering. There are many questions to ask as we seek to reinvent ourselves, to stay connected with grown children, to care for aging parents, and to think practically about the end of natural life. We invite you to a weekend of thought-provoking conversation, worship, and good fellowship as we study the joys and trials that come to us as God grants us many years.

Who's Invited: Fighting the Good Fight is a pan-Orthodox event for adults. If you are not Orthodox, you are still very welcome to attend. This is an openly Orthodox event, but if you're comfortable with us, we're comfortable with you.

Speakers and sessions include:

- Fr. Gregory and Kh. Frederica Mathewes-Green -- *A Conversation for Parents of Adult Children*
- Steve and Peggy Robinson -- *Parenting Your Parents*
- Bill Marianes -- *Why Are You Here? How Do You Discover Your Calling And Live A Life Of Greater Significance?*
- Steve Kellar -- *Managing Risk in Retirement*

To register, go to

<https://store.ancientfaith.com/facing-forward-2020/>

Fighting the Good Fight: A Conference for Orthodox Men

August 20-23, 2020 at Antiochian Village (140 Church Camp Trail, Bolivar, PA. About 4 miles north of Ligonier, PA on Route 711)



Led by Fr. Evan Armatas, Fr. Andrew Damick, Fr. Stephen Freeman, and Fr. Barnabas Powell, this first-ever conference will invite Orthodox men to reflect on the battle to tame the passions and run the race

that is set before us. The conference will include daily worship, sessions, panel discussions, a live-audience radio event, fellowship, and good food.

Who's Invited: Fighting the Good Fight is a pan-Orthodox event for adults. If you are not Orthodox, you are still very welcome to attend. This is an openly Orthodox event, but if you're comfortable with us, we're comfortable with you.

To register, go to

<https://store.ancientfaith.com/good-fight-2020/>

Ancient Faith Women's Retreat 2020

November 12-15, 2020 at Antiochian Village (140 Church Camp Trail, Bolivar, PA. About 4 miles north of Ligonier, PA on Route 711) Speakers to be announced; registration is not yet open. But the 2019 retreat presentations are available at

<https://www.ancientfaith.com/specials/the-ancient-faith-womens-retreat-2019>

Parish Shut-ins

As we say our daily prayers, let us also take time out to remember our loved ones who are homebound, who are in hospitals and who are in nursing homes. Let us remember them that GOD will continue to watch over them and protect them. Also, during the Year, let us take to either send them a card,

give them a call, or visit them to let them know how much we love them, how much we remember them, and how much we pray for them.

If anyone has any questions or would like to add someone to our List of Parish Shut-Ins, please see or contact Fr. Jason.

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Mrs. Mary Massey
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Hamburg, NY 14075
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Mrs. Diane Salvamoser
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ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH BOOKSTORE

When you are in the Parish Fellowship Hall for coffee hour, don't forget to check out our Bookstore. We have some new items that just arrived. These items include icon ornaments, jewelry, icons, prayer books, prayer ropes, and much more. If you need a gift, come check out the bookstore.... you may find something you like!! We are also offering gift certificates for our bookstore. Please speak with Dave or Andrea for more details/information. We thank David and Andrea who are managing our bookstore for us. If you have any questions or if you would like to order something that you do not see, please see or contact Dave or Andrea and they will be able to assist you.

You may also email them at bookstore@stgeorgebuffalo.com. May God continue to bless and guide all of you.

Our Parish Outreach Missions:

Hearts for the Homeless There are over 400 red bins located throughout the area. The organization collects items to sell in the thrift store as well as items that can be recycled. With the money earned, they provide meals for the homeless of Buffalo from their mobile soup kitchen as well as a food pantry open to local families. They also are in need of donations of food for the soup kitchen and food pantry. The website is <http://heartsforthehomeless.org>

Homespace The mission of Homespace is to provide not only transitional housing, but also provide support programs to help families in need break away from dependency and begin a new life of personal growth and economic independence. Homespace provides affordable housing for young (ages 16 - 21), homeless, single parent families.

To see what kind of donations they need, see their website which is <http://www.homespacecorp.org>

Buffalo City Mission: This organization provides meals, shelter, and services to the homeless. They are looking for donations of canned goods and other non-perishable food. The website is www.buffalocitymission.org

Mats for Mission: This organization collects grocery store bags which they cut into strips and after looping the strips together, crochet mats for the homeless. The homeless put the mats on the ground under

Diocesan Ministries

AN INVITATION TO SUPPORT THE STEWARDS OF THE OCA

The Orthodox Church in America (OCA) set the direction for expanding our apostolic work in North America at the 18th All-American Council. The foundation for this work is Jesus Christ, Whom we encounter in our spiritual lives, stewardship, evangelism and outreach, and relations with others as we engage the world. Being a steward of the OCA goes beyond the financial gifts which support the work of our church. Being a steward is about caring for and knowing the history of the mission of the Orthodox Church here in North America and finding your place in that history. Having received this great gift of our Orthodox Faith, we bear the responsibility to continue the legacy of Saint Herman and Saint Tikhon; Saint Innocent and Saint Alexis and all the other saints known and unknown who have worked to build up and expand Christ's

their blankets. The mats provide a dry warm base for sleeping on. There is a bin in the social hall to place your grocery bags in. We meet monthly on the second Tuesday of the month to sort and cut bags. Dinner is provided. Come and join us.

Please bring these items to church and place them in the collection bins located in the Parish Fellowship Hall. Once a month, we will take these items down to the Hearts for Homeless, HomeSpace, and Buffalo City Mission.

Kevin Guest House Once a month we provide dinner, conversation, and prayer for the residents of the Kevin Guest House. The residents are patients and their caregivers who are under treatment at local hospitals. If you would like to get involved, dinner is served the second Tuesday of the month. Bring something to share (see Fr. Jason) or just come to share in the conversation and prayer.

Church here in North America. Please consider being a part of that mission today by giving to the Stewards of the OCA. For more information, please visit The OCA Website: <https://oca.org/become-a-steward>

AN INVITATION TO SUPPORT THE MINISTRY OF THE DDB

In order to fund necessary ministries and fulfill the work of the Church in the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, **Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors** generously contribute financial support. To learn more about the DDB, please go to the following link: <http://vimeo.com/71021182> and watch a 60 second video inviting you to join the ever-growing list of Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors of The Diocese of New York and New Jersey who joyfully support the on-going work of our diocese. Their support allows us to provide assistance to new mission parishes, scholarships to seminarians, support the departments of The Diocese, and much-needed encouragement to older struggling parishes. How about you? Our parish is a member of

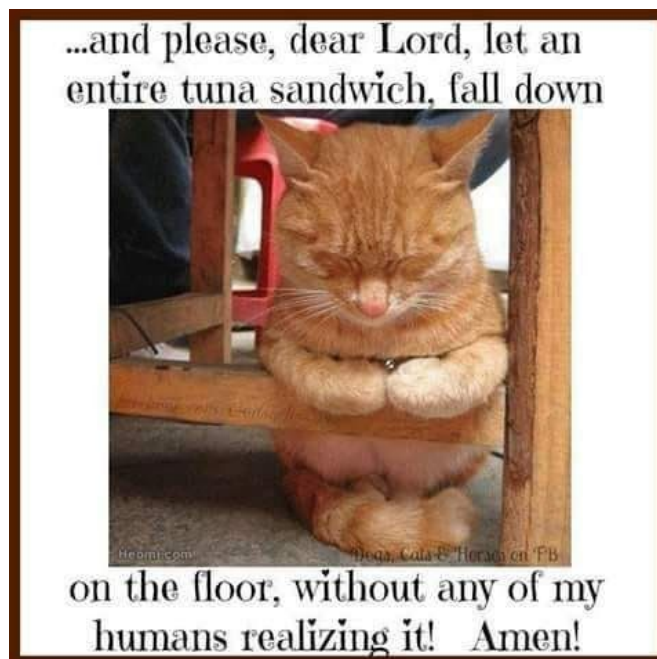
the DDB. If anyone would like to join, please see Fr. Jason as well as take a pamphlet from the table in the back of the church. May God continue to bless and guide you for your continued support.

MONTHLY PUBLICATIONS

The Diocese of New York and New Jersey has two monthly newsletters: **"First Fruits"** and **"Beyond the Plateau."** The goal, as expressed by Archbishop Michael, is to increase communication and grow the communal spirit of diocesan fellowship in the building-up and strengthening of our parish communities. To learn more about these monthly diocesan publications, please refer to the diocesan website: <http://www.nynjoca.org/newsletters.html>.

His Eminence Archbishop Michael presents a series of talks on matters of faith, belief, and the teachings of the Church. These instructional videos are concise and to the point, offering Orthodox Christians much-needed information, helpful advice for their spiritual journey, and assistance in answering questions that may come from non-Orthodox friends or acquaintances. The goal is that we might better know and better live our faith. These instructional videos can be found at the Diocesan Website: <http://www.nynjoca.org>! **There are 14 videos! Be sure to check them out.**

"LESSONS IN OUR FAITH" VIDEO PRESENTED BY HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL



St. George Orthodox Church January Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<p>31</p> <p>Eve of the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord/ St. Basil's Feast Day/ New Year's Eve</p> <p>4pm Great Vespers with Litiya</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord/ St. Basil's Feast Day/ New Year's Day</p> <p>9:30 am Divine Liturgy followed by Moleben for the New Year and Blessing of St. Basil Bread</p> <p>Brunch in Parish Fellowship Hall</p>	2	3	<p>4</p> <p>4pm Great Vespers 4 pm</p>
<p>5</p> <p>9:30 am Divine Liturgy Followed by Great Vespers</p> <p>Q&A with Fr. Jay (Epistles) & Coffee Hour Fellowship</p> <p>4:00pm Great Compline with Litiya</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Feast of Theophany</p> <p>9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil</p> <p>Followed by The Great Blessing of Water</p>	7	<p>8</p> <p>5:30 -7:30 pm Monthly Dinner at Kevin Guest House</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9 am Akathist Service</p>	10	<p>11</p> <p>Chrismation of Anthony and Mary Dipiano 3:30 PM</p> <p>5 pm COCCNF Great Vespers at St. Stephen Orthodox Church</p> <p>Presentation and Reception following Vespers</p>

<p>12</p> <p>9am Matins 10 am Divine Liturgy followed by Church School & Coffee Hour Fellowship</p> <p>Blessing of Water for Church School Children</p> <p>1:30 pm Blessing of Water at Hoyt Lake</p>	<p>13</p> <p>6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9 am Matins</p> <p>6:30 pm Mats for Missions</p>	<p>15</p> <p>10 am Bible Study</p> <p>6 pm Little Compline Service</p> <p>6:30-8pm Bible Study</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9 am Akathist</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Church School outing</p> <p>4 pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>19</p> <p>9:40 Hours 10 am Divine Liturgy Followed by Church School & Coffee Hour Fellowship</p> <p>Installation of Parish Council Trustees/ Officers</p> <p>Annual Parish Budget Meeting</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>9 am Matins</p>	<p>22</p> <p>6:30 pm Monthly Healing Service</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9 am Akathist</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>4 pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>26</p> <p>9:30 am Service of General Confession 10 am Divine Liturgy Followed by Church School & Coffee Hour Fellowship</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9 am Matins</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Eve of the Feast of the Three Hierarchs</p> <p>10 am Bible Study</p> <p>6 pm Great Vespers with Litiya</p> <p>6:30-8pm Bible Study</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Feast of the Three Hierarchs</p> <p>9:30 am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Eve of the Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple</p> <p>6 pm Great Vespers with Litiya</p>	<p>2</p> <p>The Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord in the Temple</p> <p>9:30 am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>4 pm Great Vespers</p>