

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY FOREVER!

****FLOWERS FOR THIS WEEK****

In front of the Icon of Our Lord, In front of the Icon of The Theotokos, and on the Center Icon Table are donated by St. George Orthodox Church

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Altar Candles are offered by Anthony DelNuovo in Loving Memory of Thy Departed Servants of his family. May their memory be eternal.

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TODAY'S WEEKLY MESSENGER IS SPONSORED BY:

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

WELCOME TO ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

We welcome all of you to the Divine Liturgy this morning, especially those who are visiting with us here at St. George Orthodox Church. Everyone is invited to the Parish Fellowship Hall following the Divine Liturgy for Christian Fellowship. It is our prayer that your experience this morning was spiritually uplifting and you will return very soon to pray with our parish family. In the Orthodox Church, we do not practice open Communion. However we do invite everyone to come and participate in the Divine Liturgy. Hence only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves through prayer and fasting may receive Holy Communion. May the Lord bless you with many years of good health and happiness.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Published weekly in the interest of the parishioners and friends of Saint George Orthodox Church, Buffalo, NY a parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey and The Orthodox Church in America

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28th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 3. Forefeast of the Theophany. Repose of Ven. Seraphim, Wonderworker of Sarov (1833). Sunday before Theophany. St. Sylvester, Pope of Rome (335). Ven. Sylvester of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—12th c.). Righteous Juliana of Lazarévsk (Múrom—1604). Hieromartyr Theogenes, Bishop of Parium on the Hellespont

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GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY FOREVER!

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EPISTLE LESSON GOSPEL LESSON

2 Timothy 4:5-8 (**Sunday Before**) Mark 1:1-8
Galatians 5:22-6:2 (**St. Seraphim**) Luke 6:17-23

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Come and See how we are all called to be Stewards of The Church!

- Stewardship is our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.
- Stewardship is caring for the needs of others.
- Stewardship is offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.
- Stewardship is what a person does after saying "I Believe . . . ", as proof of that belief.
- Stewardship is learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ's Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work, for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.

If you would like to make a donation to our parish, please feel free to use the QR Code below. Thank you for your continued support and generosity for our parish in bringing The Love and Faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ to all! May God continue to bless and guide you and keep all of you in His loving care today and always!



HYMNS FOR THE DIVINE LITURGY

Troparion for the Resurrection (Tone 3)

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.
He has trampled down death by death. He has
become the first born of the dead. He has
delivered us from the depths of hell, and has
granted to the world// great mercy.

Troparion for The Forefeast of Holy Theophany (Tone 4)

Prepare, O Zebulon, and adorn thyself, O
Naphthali! River Jordan, cease flowing, and
receive with joy the Master coming to be
baptized! Adam, rejoice with our first Mother,
and do not hide yourselves as you did of old in
Paradise; for having seen you naked, He has
appeared to clothe you with the first
garment// Christ has appeared to renew all
creation.

Troparion for St. Seraphim (Tone 4)

Thou didst love Christ from thy youth, O
blessed one, and, longing to work for Him alone,
thou didst struggle in the wilderness in
constant prayer and labor. With penitent heart
and great love for Christ thou wast favored by
the Mother of God. Therefore we cry to thee://
"Save us by thy prayers, venerable Seraphim,
our father!"

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,*

Kontakion for The Resurrection (Tone 3)

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O
Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death.
On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with
the Prophets and Patriarchs// they unceasingly
praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE EPISTLE LESSON FOR TODAY

2 Timothy 4:5-8 and Galatians 5:22-6:2

Brethren:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,
kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.
Against such there is no law.

And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its
passions and desires.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not
become conceited, provoking one another, envying one
another.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are
spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness,
considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Brethren:

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the
work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the
time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have
kept the faith.

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,
which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that
Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His
appearing.

Kontakion of the Forefeast of Holy Theophany (Tone 4)

Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John: "Do not be afraid to baptize Me.// For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed man."

PROKEMEINON Tone 6

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine inheritance!

*v. To Thee, O Lord, will I call.
O my God, be not silent to me!*

THE SECOND

PROKEMEINON Tone 7

Precious in the sight of the Lord / is the death of His saints.

ALLELUIA VERSES

O God, be bountiful to us and bless us, show the light of Thy countenance upon us, and have mercy on us.

That we may know Thy way upon the earth, and Thy salvation among all the nations.

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments.

THE HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

It is truly meet to bless You, O Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim. Without defilement, You gave birth to God the Word, true Theotokos, we magnify You!

THE GOSPEL LESSON FOR TODAY

Mark 1:1-8 and Luke 6:17-23

Let us Attend!

And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases,

as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed.

And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all.

Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.

Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

At That Time:

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.'"

John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a

COMMUNION HYMN

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not fear evil tidings. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

LOVE CONQUERS ALL

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE. 1 Cor.16:14

YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. Matt. 22:37

YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. Matt. 22:39

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU. Matt. 5:44

LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND, LOVE DOES NOT ENVY, LOVE DOES NOT BOAST, LOVE IS NOT PROUD, LOVE IS NOT SELFISH, LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED. 1Cor. 13:4

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS, LOVE ALWAYS HAS FAITH, LOVE ALWAYS HAS HOPE, LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS. LOVE NEVER FAILS! 1Cor. 13:7,8

baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose.

I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Lenten and Paschal Cycle



Zacchaeus Sunday

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Feb 14	Feb 6	Jan 29	Feb 18	Feb 2



Publican & Pharisee

Beginning of the Lenten Tridion

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Feb 21	Feb 13	Feb 5	Feb 25	Feb 9



Prodigal Son

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Feb 28	Feb 20	Feb 12	Mar 3	Feb 16



Meatfare

Sunday of the Last Judgment

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mar 7	Feb 27	Feb 19	Mar 10	Feb 23



Cheesefare

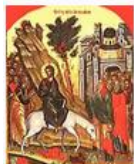
Forgiveness Sunday

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mar 14	Mar 6	Feb 26	Mar 17	Mar 2



Beginning of Great Lent

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Mar 15	Mar 7	Feb 27	Mar 18	Mar 3



Palm Sunday

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Apr 25	Apr 17	Apr 9	Apr 28	Apr 13



PASCHA

Beginning of the Pentecostarion

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
May 2	Apr 24	Apr 16	May 5	Apr 20

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

THE SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY SERVICES and ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY JANUARY 2, 2022 **SUNDAY BEFORE THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD**

The Hours – 9:40 AM
Divine Liturgy - 10:00 AM
followed by and The Blessing of St. Basil Bread

Coffee Hour Fellowship in the Parish Fellowship Hall following Divine Liturgy!

Coffee Hour Host: Paul and Joan

THE GREAT FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD GOD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

TUESDAY JANUARY 4, 2022
9:00 A.M. Royal Hours for The Feast of Holy Theophany

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 5, 2022

{STRICT FAST DAY}
EVE OF THE GREAT FEAST OF THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

9:00 A.M. Vespers with Liturgy of St. Basil followed by Lesser Blessing of Water

6:00 P.M. Great Compline with Litiya

THURSDAY JANUARY 6, 2022

THE GREAT FEAST OF THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

9:30 A.M. Festal Divine Liturgy followed by The Great Blessing of Water and The Blessing of The Church and Parish Fellowship Hall

FRIDAY JANUARY 7, 2022

6:30-9:00 P.M. Parish Family Paint Night

SATURDAY JANUARY 8, 2022

4:00 P.M. Great Vespers

SUNDAY JANUARY 9, 2022

9:40 A.M. The Hours
10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy

Following Divine Liturgy, Coffee Hour Fellowship in Parish Fellowship Hall
Church School Class
(in-person and Google Classroom)

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

PARISH THEME FOR 2021:

**THE SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR
THE GREAT FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD**

THE GREAT FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD GOD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

TUESDAY JANUARY 4, 2022 9:00 A.M. Royal Hours for The Feast of Holy Theophany

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 5, 2022 {STRICT FAST DAY}

EVE OF THE GREAT FEAST OF THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

9:00 A.M. Vespers with Liturgy of St. Basil the Great followed by Lesser Blessing of Water

6:00 P.M. Great Compline with Litiya

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9:30 A.M. Festal Divine Liturgy followed by The Great Blessing of Water and
The Blessing of The Church and Parish Fellowship Hall

FRIDAY JANUARY 7 6:30-9:00 P.M. Parish Family Paint Night

Saturday January 8 4:00 P.M. Great Vespers

Sunday January 9
9:40 A.M. The Hours
10:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy
Following Divine Liturgy, Coffee Hour Fellowship in Parish Fellowship Hall
Church School Class (in-person and Google Classroom)
Annual Blessing of Water at Hoyt Lake - 1:30 PM

SAFETY GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS FOR OUR PARISH

We will continue to celebrate The Divine Services with FULL CAPACITY in The Church. ALL Pews will be open and available for everyone to stand together. So that we can, to the Glory of God, pray together, sing together and stand together as parish family, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Until further notice, we continue to follow the following guidelines based upon The Newly Updated Pastoral Guidelines for our Parish and the new directives from Erie County:

- To ensure that everyone feels comfortable and safe while attending Divine Services and Fellowship Activities at our parish, all who wish to attend the Divine Service and Fellowship Activities here at our Parish of St George Orthodox Church will be required to wear a mask while indoors (inside of The Church and The Parish Fellowship Hall) This is to ensure that we, as a parish family and as brothers and sisters in Christ, minister in every way possible through love to those who come to St. George Orthodox Church to grow in their faith and love of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. Out of love, care, concern, and the well-being of EVERYONE, The Clergy, when distributing Holy Communion and Holding The Cross at the Veneration of the Cross/Dismissal and whenever there is interaction between The Clergy and parishioners, The Clergy will be wearing a mask to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of everyone. As a parish family, let us continue to love one another, respect one another, and pray for and with one another! As I have mentioned previously, the topic of vaccinated vs unvaccinated has no place in our parish. That is a private and individual matter and choice and above that is a HIPAA Privacy Law!
- We will also continue to have hand sanitizer and masks available for everyone both in the Church and in The Parish Fellowship Hall to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of everyone who comes to St. George Orthodox Church for Divine Services and Fellowship Activities. These precautions are for the health, safety, and well-being of everyone who comes and enters our Church to pray and worship God.

* The choir will continue to sing up front

* The space in the back of the church (choir area and children's area) will remain open for the 17 chairs socially distant for those who wish to stand there.

* We will continue to use the Common Communion Cloth. However, if anyone wishes to use the individual napkin to wipe their lips after receiving Holy Communion, they may do so.

* We will be passing the Stewardship Collection Plate during The Litany before The Lord's Prayer

* The Church will continue to be cleaned and sanitized every week and after every service

* The Parish Fellowship Hall will continue to be cleaned and sanitized throughout the week as well as a thorough cleaning/sanitizing every week by hiring our Professional Cleaner (Rocco) who will come in every week on Saturday Night to clean and sanitize the Parish Fellowship Hall and Restrooms. When Hosting Coffee Hour, we will need to be wearing masks as well as use gloves and proper utensils. Following Coffee Hour, the table and chairs will need to be properly sanitized as well as put away properly along with the kitchen and countertops need to be cleaned and properly sanitized,

* With this in mind, we will still need to sign up when we come to Church for THE DIVINE LITURGY on Sundays! This is to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of everyone attending our Parish for the Divine Liturgy. We do NOT need to sign-up beforehand but rather we will need to sign in at The Candle Desk when we come to church. This sign-up is important for us and our parish not only to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to come to Church to pray, participate in The Divine Liturgy and to receive Holy Communion but also to ensure that I have a record of everyone who attends the Divine Liturgy in case, God-forbid, someone becomes ill I would need to contact everyone who was in attendance.

We are taking every measure that we can to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of our parishioners and of everyone that comes to our parish to pray. Together, with the Parish Council, we express our most sincere and heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your help, assistance, patience, and understanding and for your continued working together and praying together as a Parish Family for The Glory of God, To the Glory of God, and With the Glory of God!

**If anyone has any questions or concerns,
please do not hesitate to see or contact Fr. Jason,
Paul or any member of the Parish Council!**

May God continue to bless and guide all of you!**

FIND YOUR SPIRITUAL HOME In The Orthodox Christian Church

Saturday Great Vespers 4:00 PM

SUNDAY Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

~ All are Welcome ~

Do we have questions about our life, its meaning, purpose, destiny?

Are we desiring to know Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God?

Are we seeking forgiveness, healing, and wholeness?

Do we wonder where to go to find answers?

We can find the answers to these questions and so many other questions
in The Holy Orthodox Church through Her Sacred Tradition,
Holy Scriptures, Her Teachings and Dogmas.

The Orthodox Church is the original Christian Church, the Church founded by the Lord Jesus Christ and described in the pages of the New Testament. Her history can be traced in unbroken continuity all the way back to Christ and His Twelve Apostles, empowered and sent forth on the day of Holy Pentecost. Incredible as it seems, for over twenty centuries she has continued in her undiminished and unaltered faith and practice. Today her apostolic doctrine, worship, and structure remain intact. The Orthodox Church maintains that the Church is the living Body of Jesus Christ. Many of us are surprised to learn that for the first 1000 years of Christian history there was just one Church.

Where is "**The Church**" to be found and experienced today? Come Taste and See How Good The Lord is every Sunday by joining us for The Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM.

What is Orthodox Christianity all about? How does it differ from other Christian confessions? This section will attempt to answer these questions and many more.

For a visual introduction to the Orthodox Church, please view the video link below:

http://www.youtube.com/v/Gj4pUphDitA&color1=0xb1b1b1&color2=0xcfcfcf&feature=player_embedded&fs=1

For a brief introduction and in depth study to The Orthodox Faith and to find answers to: 'What we Believe?', 'Who we Are?', and 'How we Live?', please view the PDF link below:

<http://orthodoxdelmarva.org/files/studies/InquirersClassV1final.pdf>

or you may visit the OCA website by clicking the link below:

<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith>

or you can begin a Journey Through Orthodoxy by clicking the link below:

<http://journeytoorthodoxy.com>

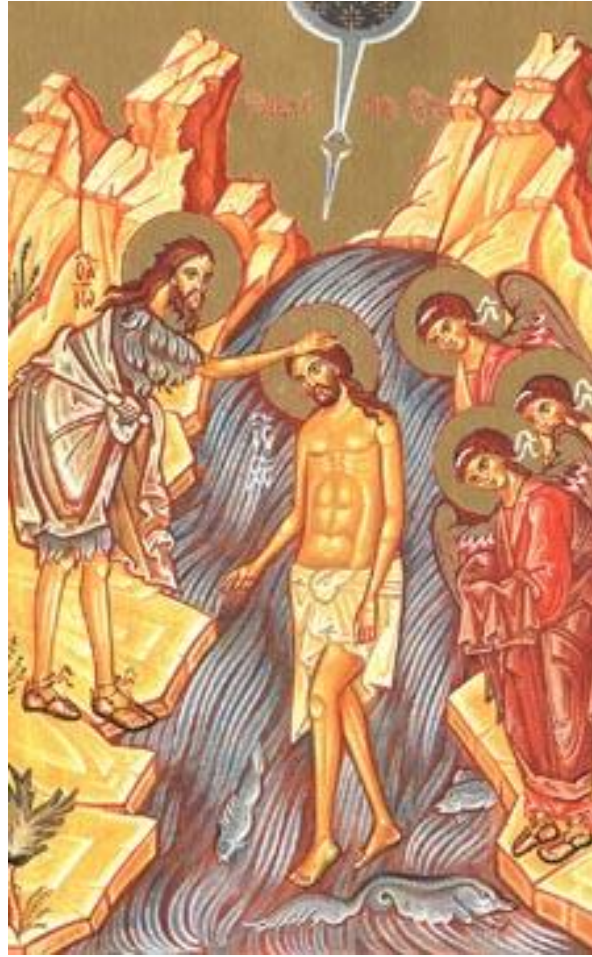
To learn more ways that we can teach our children about the Orthodox Faith, The OCA has provided a wonderful website for us to use that provides great resources such as (handouts, texts, articles, stories, and much more)! To see this great website, please view the PDF link below:

<http://dce.oca.org/page/resources/>

If you have any questions or would like to know more about The Orthodox Faith or needs and help or assistance, please contact our parish priest: V Rev. Jason Vansuch (jvansuch@hotmail.com) or 716.875.4222 and he will be able guide you.

The Forefeast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Sunday January 2, 2022



The first day of the Forefeast of Theophany falls on January 2. Like the hymns for the Nativity, many of the Church’s hymns of this period are slightly modified versions of the hymns of Holy Week.

One of the hymns at Matins today says that the coming Feast of Theophany will be “even more radiant” than the Feast of the Nativity.

The first day of the Forefeast of Theophany falls on January 2. Like the hymns before the Nativity, many of the Church's hymns of this period are slightly modified versions of the hymns of Holy Week.

One of the hymns at Matins today says that the coming Feast of Theophany will be "even more radiant" than the Feast of the Nativity.

From the Church hymns for this day: "With pure lips and souls undefiled", "let us sing hymns of the Forefeast, let us piously proclaim the honorable baptism of our God: for he wills to approach His Forerunner in the flesh. As a man He asks for the baptism of salvation for the regeneration of all", "for the renewal of souls". "Christ is made manifest. God is revealed", "Who knows no sins at all, as one guilty", "for the servant comes asking for baptism": "let the faithful hymn Your extreme humility". "Let us come with Christ to the Jordan", "let us flee from every impure passion", "come thoughtfully with purifying streams of tears to the worthy baptism of the divine image", "that the light being specially revealed, cleansing all with divine rays, O Master, we are revealed everything." "Look upon Christ who voluntarily humbled Himself. He even took the form of a servant. Let us humble ourselves beneath His mighty hand, Who was adopted by the Spirit: that we may honor His baptism with pure deeds".

Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

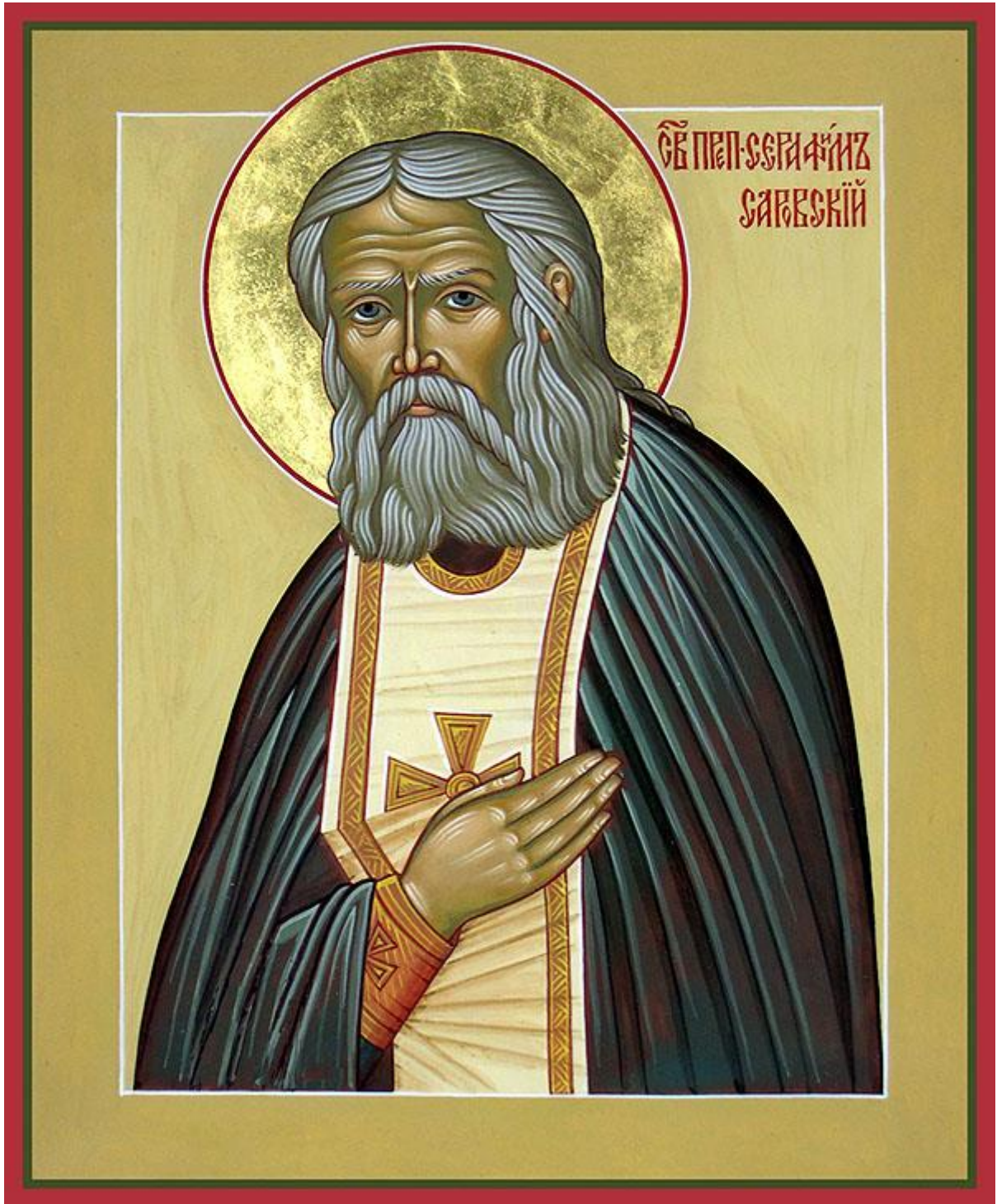
Be thou ready, Zabulon; prepare thyself, O Nephthalim. River Jordan, stay thy course and skip for gladness to receive the Sovereign Master, Who cometh now to be baptized. O Adam, be thou glad with our first mother, Eve; hide not as ye did of old in Paradise. Seeing you naked, He hath appeared now to clothe you in the first robe again. Christ hath appeared, for He truly willeth to renew all creation.

Kontakion in the Fourth Tone

In the running waters of the Jordan River, on this day the Lord of all crieth to John: Be not afraid and hesitate not to baptize Me, for I am come to save Adam, the first-formed man.

St. Seraphim of Sarov

January 2



On January 2, we commemorate the life of St. Seraphim of Sarov. This beloved saint's humility and kindness to both people and animals provide an excellent example for all of us. His name day falls right after the beginning of the new calendar year. We are writing this blog post a whole month before his commemoration, in order to allow time for us to learn about him and teach our children about his life before any of us make our New Year's resolutions. Emulating his life – even just one aspect of his holy way of living – would be an excellent New Year's resolution for any Orthodox Christian.

St. Seraphim, first named Prochor Moshnin, was born in Kursk, Russia, in 1759, to devout parents who took him to church and taught him the things of God. At an early age, miracles began to happen in Prochor's life. For example, when he was only 7 years old, he once fell from the bell tower (which was 3 or 4 stories tall) of the Kursk Cathedral. He should have been seriously injured, but God worked a miracle, and he was unharmed. When he was 10, he became very ill. One night, the Mother of God appeared to him and told him that he would soon be healed. A few days later, a wonder-working icon of the Theotokos was processing through Kursk when rain suddenly began to pour down from the clouds. The procession took a shortcut through Prochor's family's yard. His mother carried her sick boy outside to venerate the icon as it passed, and he recovered from his illness that very day.

Throughout the early years of his life, Prochor studied the scriptures and attended church. At age 19, he went to live in a monastery so that he could become a monk. At the monastery, he worked hard and prayed hard. Years later, at age 27, he was tonsured as the monk "Seraphim," and a few years after that, he was ordained to the priesthood.

After he became a priest, St. Seraphim served God in a variety of ways. He served as the priest for the monastery in Diveyevo; he lived for a while in solitude in the forest; he prayed on a rock for 1,000 days/nights; and much more. Throughout these experiences, he welcomed all visitors, whether they were children, adults, or animals. All the while, he worked at praying the Jesus Prayer. Sometimes when he prayed, he shone with holy light because of how close he was to God. When the Abbot of Sarov asked St. Seraphim to go back to the monastery to help the pilgrims who came there, he obeyed. The pilgrims who came to see St. Seraphim were greeted with, "Christ is risen!" and he called everyone, "My Joy." God often revealed to him what the pilgrims' struggles were, even before they told him about the troubles they were having. Each pilgrim left their meeting with St. Seraphim feeling happy and full of the hope of the resurrection of Christ.

The Theotokos appeared to St. Seraphim 12 times over the course of his lifetime. One of the last times she appeared, he was working at the monastery when he saw her walking around the outskirts of the property. When he saw her, he understood that she was protecting the monastery, and that whoever followed her footsteps in that path would be blessed. He and the nuns spent years digging a canal where she had walked so that pilgrims could also walk there, praying to the Theotokos, and be blessed. To this day, they do. And they are. St. Seraphim reposed in the Lord a few days after the canal was completed. There are many accounts of miracles through his prayers, since his repose in the Lord.

St. Seraphim of Sarov, intercede for us and for our salvation!

St. Basil's Bread

ΒΑΣΙΛΟΠΙΤΑ

Each year, on the feast of St. Basil the Great (January 1), Orthodox faithful around the world make a special bread honoring this great bishop and theologian of the Orthodox Faith.

This bread is called **Vasilopita**, (pronounced Vah-see-LOW-pee-tah) a Greek word meaning "Basil's Bread."

The tradition of the vasilopita comes from an event in the life of St. Basil (<http://bit.ly/st-basil-the-great>), who lived in a desolate region of modern day Turkey call Cappadocia (pronounced Kah-pah-doe-shya).

The emperor had called for a tax on the people of the region, and his demands were outrageous. The people were already poor, and what little money and jewels they had left, was to be given as a tax to the government.

St. Basil, being a kind and loving bishop for the faithful, went to the emperor, calling him to repentance for his injustice and unkind tax.

The emperor, upon hearing St. Basil's words, repealed the tax, instructing his tax collectors to give all of the money to St. Basil, so he could distribute the money back to the people.

There was a lot of money, and a lot of people, and St. Basil needed to find a way ensuring everyone received what they had paid. So he prayed to God, asking for the wisdom to distribute the wealth.

He instructed for a large bread to be made, and he had all of the coins and jewelry baked into the bread. He called all of the people to attend the divine liturgy. Afterwards, he blessed the bread, giving a slice to each person.

A miracle occurred!

Each person received, in their slice of bread, the valuables they had paid towards the tax. The people rejoiced to God, thankful for His mercy and wisdom through the actions of St. Basil their bishop.



Today's Celebration

While St. Basil fell asleep in the Lord in the year 379, we honor him each year with the baking of a vasilopita (here's a recipe: <http://bit.ly/vasilopita-recipe>). It is distributed to the faithful after liturgy on his feast day, January 1. Inside the bread is a coin, as remembrance of the miracle.

The one preparing the bread, wraps a coin in foil, closing their eyes while inserting it into the dough. They knead the dough, placing it into the pan for baking, not knowing who will receive the gift of the coin.

The bread is sometimes decorated with powder sugar or frosting depending on family traditions, and then brought to church for the liturgy on January 1. After the liturgy, the people will sing the troparion/apolytikion to St. Basil in Tone 1:

**Your proclamation has gone out into all the earth
Which was divinely taught by hearing your voice.
You wisely taught the Faith,
expounding the nature of creatures, adorning the ways of man.
O holy father of a royal priesthood, righteous Basil,
Entreat Christ God that our souls may be saved.**

Standing in the middle of the church, holding up the bread, the priest will say, "Let us pray unto the Lord."

The people will reply, "Lord, have mercy."

The priest will read this prayer:

O Creator of all things, Lord and King of the ages, plenteous in mercy and bountiful in goodness, who didst accept the Magi's gifts in Bethlehem, who art the Bread of Life that came down from heaven, who by Your authority didst establish the seasons and the years and dost hold our life in Your hands.

Hear us who pray to You on this holy day upon our entrance into the new year of Your Goodness and bless this bread, which has been offered to Your glory and in honor of our Father among the Saints Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.

In Your benevolence, look down from Your Holy Heaven, sending down upon us, and those who have offered these gifts and upon them that partake thereof, Your heavenly gifts, for our hope is in You, the Living God, unto the ages.

Bless this parish (home, school, city, nation) and our comings and goings in the new year, fill our life with all good things and direct our footsteps that we may keep Your divine commandments, for man shall not live by bread alone.

Through the intercessions of Your Most Pure Mother, of our father among the saints: Basil the Great, and of all Your saints, who from all ages have been well pleasing to You.

The people will respond, singing, "Amen."

The sign of the cross is made over the vasilopita and cut with a knife while the priest says, "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Then pieces of the vasilopita are cut:

First, a piece is cut for Christ, reminding us that our first offering is always made to the Lord.

The second piece is cut for the Virgin Mary, reminding us of her place in our lives, and before the throne of God

The third piece is for St. Basil, thanking him for the example of his charity and love for others.

A fourth piece is cut for the poor, reminding us of those less fortunate.

Then pieces are cut for every individual present

The miracle of the vasilopita bread is there will be enough for everyone to receive their own piece, because God's generosity is for everyone. It is said that the person who receives the piece with the coin will receive blessings from St. Basil in the new year.

Holy Father Basil, pray to God for us!

Sunday	<p>27 <i>Sunday after Christmas</i> St. Joseph, James, and David St. Stephen the Deacon</p> <p>___ Attend Liturgy</p> <p>___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns</p> <p>My favorite part of Christmas Liturgy is:</p>
Monday	<p>28 <i>Postfeast of the Nativity</i> St. Nicomir the Deacon</p> <p>___ Read Acts 6:1-7</p> <p>___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns</p> <p>Today I helped:</p>
Tuesday	<p>29 <i>Postfeast of the Nativity</i> 14,000 Innocents of Bethlehem</p> <p>___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns</p> <p>___ Pray for your choir and chanters</p> <p>___ Get the ingredients for making the vasilopita (see the link on Dec. 31 for details)</p>
Wednesday	<p>30 <i>Postfeast of the Nativity</i> Virginmartyr Anysia of Greece</p> <p>___ Read Psalm 122</p> <p>___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns</p> <p>Today I learned about:</p>
Thursday	<p>31 <i>Leavetaking (Apodosis) of the feast of the Nativity of our Lord</i> St. Kyriacus of Bannio</p> <p>___ Pray the Nativity festal hymns one last time</p> <p>___ Make the vasilopita with your family: http://bit.ly/vasilopita-recipe</p> <p>___ Read Psalm 150 and give thanks to God for the blessings received in the past year, glory to God!</p>
Friday	<p>Jan. 1 <i>Circumcision of our Lord</i> St. Basil the Great New Year's Day</p> <p>___ Attend Liturgy</p> <p>___ Pray for your family, asking God for good health in the new year</p> <p>___ Cut the vasilopita and enjoy the feast of St. Basil!</p>
Saturday	<p>2 <i>Saturday before Theophany</i> St. Seraphim of Sarov</p> <p>___ Attend Liturgy</p> <p>___ Say a prayer to St. Seraphim to experience the joy of Christ in your daily life</p> <p>___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns</p>

THE FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD (January 1)

On the eighth day after His Nativity, our Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised in accordance with the Old Testament Law. All male infants underwent circumcision as a sign of God's Covenant with the holy Forefather Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:10-14, Lev. 12:3).

After this ritual the Divine Infant was given the name Jesus, as the Archangel Gabriel declared on the day of the Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos (Luke 1:31-33, 2:21). The Fathers of the Church explain that the Lord, the Creator of the Law, underwent circumcision in order to give people an example of how faithfully the divine ordinances ought to be fulfilled. The Lord was circumcised so that later no one would doubt that He had truly assumed human flesh, and that His Incarnation was not merely an illusion, as certain heretics (Docetists) taught.

In the New Testament, the ritual of circumcision gave way to the Mystery of Baptism, which it prefigured (Col. 2:11-12). Accounts of the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord continue in the Eastern Church right up through the fourth century. The Canon of the Feast was written by St Stephen of the St Sava Monastery (October 28 and July 13).

In addition to circumcision, which the Lord accepted as a sign of God's Covenant with mankind, He also received the Name Jesus (Savior) on the eighth day after His Nativity as an indication of His service, the work of the salvation of the world (Mt.1:21; Mark 9:38-39, 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6, 16; Phil 2:9-10). These two events, the Lord's Circumcision and Naming, remind Christians that they have entered into a New Covenant with God and "are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11). The very name "Christian" is a sign of mankind's entrance into a New Covenant with God.

ST. BASIL THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP OF CAESAREA (January 1)

Basil was born about 330 at Caesarea in Cappadocia. He came from a wealthy and pious family which gave a number of saints, including his mother Saint [Emily](#) (also styled Emilia or Emmelia), grandmother Saint [Macrina the Elder](#), sister Saint [Macrina the Younger](#) and brothers Saints [Gregory of Nyssa](#) and [Peter of Sebaste](#). It is also a widely held tradition that Saint [Theosebia](#) was his youngest sister, who is also a saint in the Church.

While still a child, the family moved to Pontus; but he soon returned to Cappadocia to live with his mother's relations, and seems to have been brought up by his grandmother Macrina. Eager to learn, he went to Constantinople and spent four or five years there and at Athens, where he had the future emperor [Julian](#) for a fellow student and became friends with [Gregory the Theologian](#). Both Basil and Gregory were deeply influenced by [Origen](#) and

compiled an anthology of uncondemned writings of Origen known as the *Philokalia* (not to be confused with the [later compilation of the same name](#)).

It was at Athens that he seriously began to think of religion, and resolved to seek out the most famous hermit saints in Syria and Arabia, in order to learn from them how to attain enthusiastic piety and how to keep his body under submission by asceticism.

After this we find him at the head of a convent near Arnesi in Pontus, in which his mother Emily, now a widow, his sister Macrina and several other ladies, gave themselves to a pious life of prayer and charitable works. Basil sided with those who overcame the aversion to the [homoousios](#) in common opposition to [Arianism](#), thus drawing nearer to Saint [Athanasius the Great](#).

He was [ordained presbyter](#) of the Church at Caesarea in 365, and his ordination was probably the result of the entreaties of his ecclesiastical superiors, who wished to use his talents against the Arians, who were numerous in that part of the country and were favoured by the Arian emperor, Valens, who then reigned in Constantinople.

In 370 [Eusebius](#), bishop of Caesarea, died, and Basil was chosen to succeed him. It was then that his great powers were called into action. Caesarea was an important [diocese](#), and its [bishop](#) was, *ex officio*, [exarch](#) of the great diocese of Pontus. Hot-blooded and somewhat imperious, Basil was also generous and sympathetic. His zeal for orthodoxy did not blind him to what was good in an opponent; and for the sake of peace and charity he was content to waive the use of orthodox terminology when it could be surrendered without a sacrifice of truth.

With all his might he resisted the emperor Valens, who strove to introduce Arianism into his diocese, and impressed the emperor so strongly that, although inclined to banish the intractable bishop, he left him unmolested. To an imperial prefect, astonished at Saint Basil's temerity, he said, "Perhaps you have never before dealt with a proper bishop."

To save the Church from Arianism, Basil entered into connections with the West, and with the help of Athanasius, he tried to overcome its distrustful attitude toward the Homoousians. The difficulties had been enhanced by bringing in the question as to the essence of the Holy Spirit. Although Basil advocated objectively the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, he belonged to those, who, faithful to Eastern tradition, would not allow the predicate homoousios to the former; for this he was reproached as early as 371 by the Orthodox zealots among the [monks](#), and Athanasius defended him.

His relations also with [Eustathius](#) were maintained in spite of dogmatic differences and caused suspicion. On the other hand, Basil was grievously offended by the extreme adherents of Homoousianism, who seemed to him to be reviving the Sabellian heresy.

He did not live to see the end of the unhappy factional disturbances and the complete success of his continued exertions in behalf of Rome and the East. He suffered from liver illness and his excessive [asceticism](#) seems to have hastened him to an early death. A lasting monument of his episcopal care for the poor was the great institute before the gates of Caesarea, which was used as poorhouse, hospital, and hospice.

The principal theological writings of Basil are his *Treatise on the Holy Spirit* (Lat. *De Spiritu Sancto*), a lucid and edifying appeal to Scripture and early Christian tradition to prove the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and his *Refutation of the Apology of the Impious Eunomius*, written in 363 or 364, three books against Eunomius of Cyzicus, the chief exponent of Anomoian Arianism. The first three books of the *Refutation* are his work; the fourth and fifth books that are usually included do not belong to Basil, or to Apollinaris of Laodicea, but probably to Didymus The Blind.

He was a famous preacher, and many of his homilies, including a series of Lenten lectures on *The Six Days of Creation* (Gr. *Hexaëmeron*), and an exposition of the psalter, have been preserved. Some, like that against usury and that on the famine in 368, are valuable for the history of morals; others illustrate the honor paid to [martyrs](#) and [relics](#); the address to young men on the study of classical literature shows that Basil was lastingly influenced by his own education, which taught him to appreciate the importance of the classics as preparatory instruction.

His ascetic tendencies are exhibited in the *Moralia* and *Regulae*, ethical manuals for use in the world and the cloister respectively. Of the [monastic](#) rules traced to Basil, the shorter is the one most probably his work.

It is in the ethical manuals and moral sermons that the practical aspects of his theoretical theology are illustrated. So, for example, it is in his *Sermon to the Lazicans* that we find Basil explaining how it is our common nature that obliges us to treat our neighbor's natural needs (e.g., hunger, thirst) as our own, even though he is a separate individual. Later [theologians](#) explicitly explain this as an example of how the saints become an image of the one common nature of the persons of the Trinity.

His three hundred letters reveal a rich and observant nature, which, despite the troubles of ill-health and ecclesiastical unrest, remained optimistic, tender and even playful. His principal efforts as a reformer were directed towards the improvement of the liturgy, and the reformation of the monastic orders of the East.

Most of the [liturgies](#) bearing the name of Basil, in their present form, are not primarily his work, but they nevertheless preserve the recollection of Basil's activity in this field in formularizing liturgical prayers and promoting church-song. One liturgy attributed to him is

The Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, a liturgy that is somewhat longer than the more commonly used Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom; it is still used on certain feast days in the Church, such as every Sunday of [Great Lent](#) and [January 1](#), on which his memory is celebrated.

All his works, and a few spuriously attributed to him, are available in the *Patrologia Graeca*, which includes Latin translations of varying quality. No critical edition is yet available.

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LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE. 1 Cor.16:14

YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. Matt. 22:37

YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. Matt. 22:39

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU. Matt. 5:44

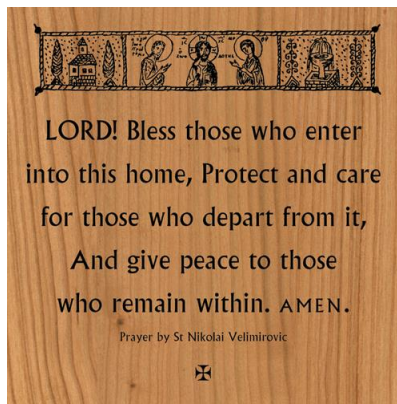
LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND, LOVE DOES NOT ENVY, LOVE DOES NOT BOAST, LOVE IS NOT PROUD, LOVE IS NOT SELFISH, LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED. 1Cor. 13:4

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS, LOVE ALWAYS HAS FAITH, LOVE ALWAYS HAS HOPE, LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS. LOVE NEVER FAILS! 1Cor. 13:7,8



BE SURE TO CONTACT MAT. FRAN REGARDING THE NEW 2022 COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE
AS WELL AS SEE IT LOCATED IN THE SIGN-UP LINK ON THE PARISH WEBSITE!!

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HOME BLESSING

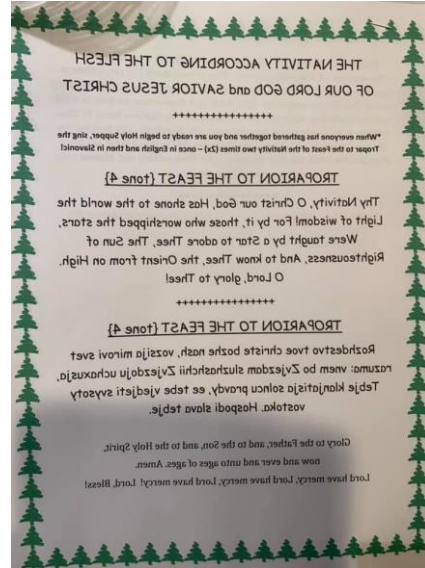
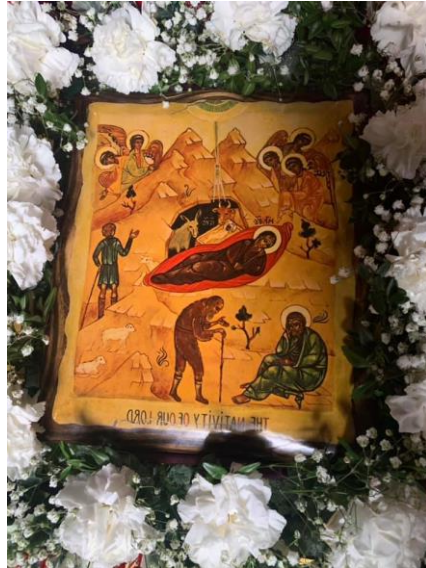
HOME BLESSING

BE SURE TO CONTACT FR. JASON TO SCHEDULE A TIME AND DAY FOR HIM TO COME AND BLESS YOUR HOME DURING THE THEOPHANY SEASON!! HOMES WILL BE BLESSED DURING THE THEOPHANY SEASON ALL THE WAY UP TO THE BEGINNING OF GREAT LENT. AS A REMAINDR, WE CAN HAVE OUR HOMES BLESSED ANYTIME THROUGHOUT THE YEAR 😊

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BE SURE TO SEE THE 2022 READER SCHEDULE (Hours and Epistle) SIGN UP SHEET LOCATED IN THE PARISH FELLOWSHIP HALL AS WELL AS ON THE PARISH WEBSITE!! Please see Fr. Jason or Rdr John interested in Reading during The Divine Service.



ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

2022 HOME BLESSING SCHEDULE

The Blessing of Homes

The custom of blessing homes during the Theophany season is of special beauty and significance. It is not simply a sentimental tradition without meaning, nor is it a custom whose meaning we have forgotten, like an old friend whose face we remember, but whose impact on our life has been forgotten.

When an Orthodox Christian believer moves into a new home, he dedicates his new home as the abode of a follower of Christ. He asks that God, the source of all goodness and the Giver of every perfect gift, to bless his house and all that is within it; he recalls that Jesus Christ, His Son, came to bring Salvation to all, even as He brought Salvation to the house of Zaccheus; he prays that the Holy Spirit may abide in it, guiding those who dwell in it in the Paths of righteousness.

On the Feast of Theophany we rededicate our home for its original purpose, just as we must periodically rededicate our life to Christ. We do it especially on this Feast because this is the day on which we remember in the Church Year the coming of Christ who began His Ministry when He descended into Jordan to be Baptized by St. John the Forerunner and Baptist. He enters again into our lives reminding us that we must "repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand."

An Orthodox Christian must dedicate not only himself and his house to the Lord, but his daily work and all his efforts as well. All things are to be done to the glory of God. That is why in the Orthodox Church, not only religious objects, such as icons, crosses, churches and vestments, are blessed, but also homes, fields, animals and all objects which are used in our daily life for the good of man. In this the Church expresses its faith that the Holy Spirit's sanctifying action extends over the whole Creation.

The Feast Of Theophany

The Feast of Theophany (or Epiphany) commemorates the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. We know from the troparion of the day that "the Trinity was made manifest" to us. But there's more to

it than this. "When Jesus descends into the depths of the river, there occurs a profound upheaval. It is not the one baptized who is purified, for he is spotless; but it is the water that is transfigured and illumined. This water, which was believed to be transparent and purifying, is in fact polluted, inhabited by evil spirits, servants of the old gods. ... By purifying the elements, by sanctifying matter, Jesus frees the cosmos from the powers of evil." (*The Incarnate God, Vol. I*, Catherine Aslanoff, French edition editor, translated by Paul Meyendorff, p.163.)

The Great Blessing of Water and the Home

The Great Blessing of Water takes place at the end of that day's Liturgy. Since our homes cannot be brought to the Church, the Church - through the priest and cantor - go to the homes. There the service of blessing, which began in the church, is finished with the sprinkling of water in the home. Traditionally, in most Orthodox parishes, the priest personally visits all his parishioners each year to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with the newly sanctified water of Theophany (January 6/13). By sanctifying our living quarters, our private place, we extend the grace of God to our individual dwellings. (In very large parishes a yearly visit may not be possible. In areas of the country where the winter is harsh, I know of at least one parish where houses are blessed at the beginning of the ecclesiastical year in September.)

We also bring the blessed water to our homes to use throughout the year to bless our homes and to drink whether we are ill or as part of our daily prayer life. "There are many occasions in family life when a sip of holy water can help to remind us of the blessing that was given 'to bestow sanctification', 'unto healing of soul and body', 'to be a fountain welling forth unto life eternal', as the priest prayed in the litany of Epiphany day." (*Little Falcons: Water*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1998, p.33.)

Weaving Christ into Our Lives

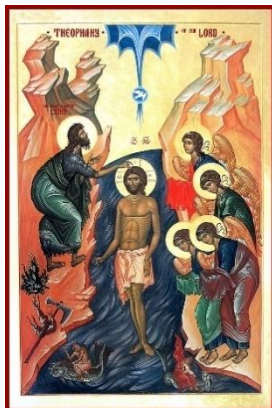
The blessing of homes by these holy waters maintains the spiritual association between the 'family church' and the parish, as well as again providing for the sharing of God's spiritual gifts. ... This annual blessing is not as elaborate as the blessing of the new dwelling, but because of this it should not be overlooked, for it is in this way that the grace of God is extended to individual dwellings." (*Marriage and the Christian Home*, p.25.) If the priest comes to bless the home when the children are present, they have the opportunity to see the parish priest in a different and personal situation. If the priest permits, they can lead the way through the house, or hold a candle. They can show him their rooms or pets or favorite toys. They receive a blessing with water. For children, the house blessing shows the connection of the Church to the home.

In Summary

What does it mean to ask God to bless something? All things in the world have been spoiled right along with us. God must bless His world again in order for it to be the way that He wants it to be. For this reason God sent His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit to the world: to bless everyone and everything that He made, to make all things good again. When the priest comes to bless our homes, he asks God to have mercy on the house, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing. What a wonderful way to begin the New Year!

If anyone would like to have their home blessed this year, please contact Fr. Jason with any specific day and time that would be best for him to come and bless your home. You can contact Fr. Jason at (716) 875-4222 or (609)851-3811 or email him at jvansuch@hotmail.com and he will be in contact with you to make other

arrangements. As Fr. Jason makes his pastoral visitations to the homes of the parishioners, he will use the sign-up sheet as a guideline for him to follow. If anyone has any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to let Fr. Jason know. May God continue to bless and guide all of you and your families. May you have a Holy and Blessed Nativity of Our Lord, a Holy and Blessed Theophany Season and a Blessed, Healthy, and Happy New Year.



THE GREAT BLESSING OF WATERS HOYT LAKE – DELAWARE PARK SUNDAY JANUARY 9, 2022 1:30 PM

Let us come together during this Holy Theophany Season, and join the clergy and the faithful from our sister parishes as we bless the waters of Hoyt Lake in Delaware Park.

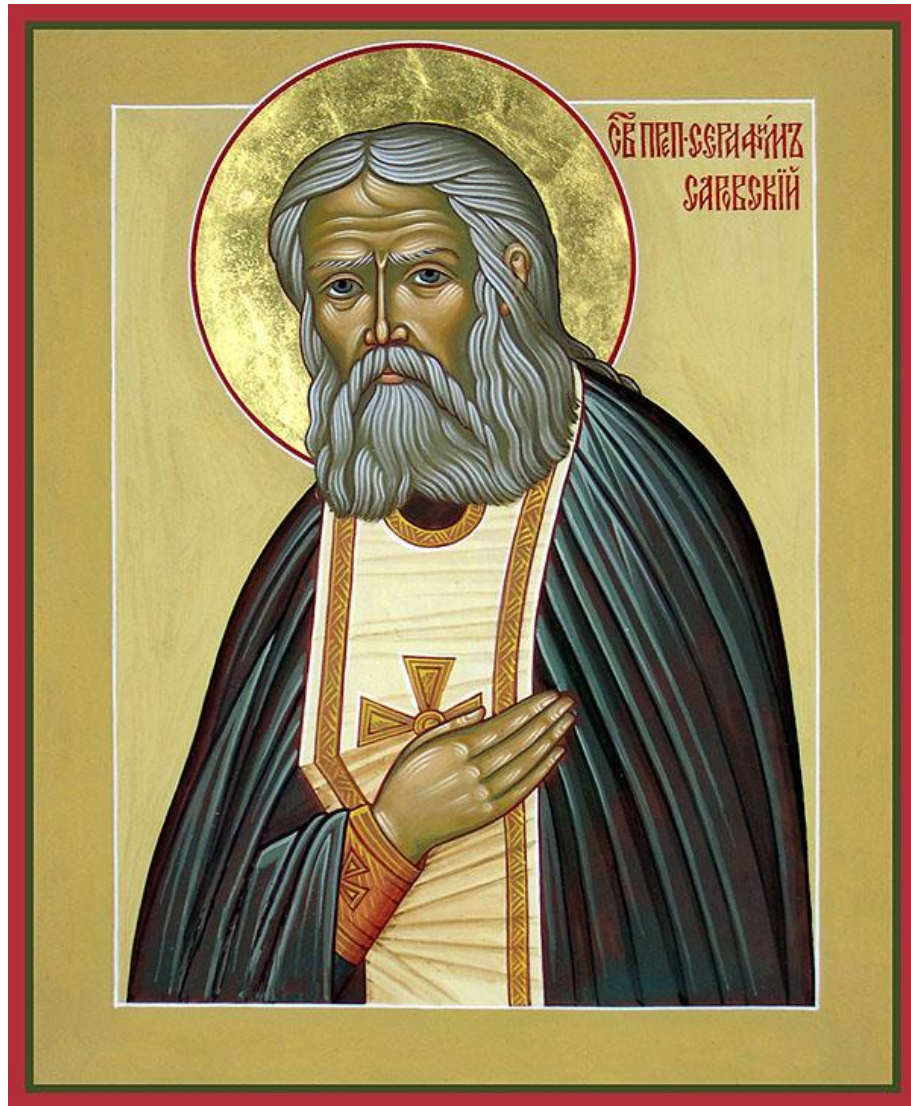
DRIVING DIRECTIONS TO HOYT LAKE

START: 2 Nottingham Terrace, Buffalo, NY 14216
Head south on Nottingham Terrace toward Meadow Rd
Turn left onto Elmwood Ave

Turn left onto Iroquois Dr

Turn right onto Lincoln Pkwy

END: Destination will be on the left: 199 Lincoln Parkway,
Buffalo, NY 14222



THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

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