

## From the Fathers (and others):

...it is up to us to add labors to labors in order to "go from strength to strength" (Ps. 83:7), and to come "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

- *St. Seraphim of Sarov*

...we know that God arranges the opportunities for salvation in different ways. Our situation is that we respond eagerly or in a laggardly manner to these opportunities made available by God to us. God made the call "come out of your homeland"; Abraham by coming out was exercising obedience. There was the instruction "come into the land"; it was done, and that was the work of obedience. But the addition "which I shall show you" has to do with the grace of God, who gave a command - and a promise.

- *St. John Cassian*

To stand guard over the heart, to stand with the mind in the heart, to descend from the head into the heart - all these are one and the same thing. The core of the work lies in the concentration of attention and the standing before the invisible Lord, not in the head but within the chest, close to the heart and in the heart. When the divine warmth comes, all this will be clear.

- *St. Theophan the Recluse*

...those who sit in the darkness of passions and whose minds are blinded by ignorance, or, rather, those who have not acquired the 'mind of Christ' (I Cor. 2:16), think that he who has the mind of Christ is foolish, and that he who has it not is sensible. Of these the prophet David rightly states, 'The ignorant and foolish perish together' (Ps. 49:11). Therefore, such men twist the whole of Scripture according to their own desires (cf. II Pet. 3:3, 16) and corrupt themselves in their own passions. But it is not divine Scripture that suffers from this, but those who disfigure it!

- *St. Symeon the New Theologian*

Can anyone be a father without beginning to be one? Yes, one who did not begin his existence. What begins to exist begins to be a father - God the Father did not begin at all. He is Father in the true sense, because He is not a son as well. Just as the Son is son in the true sense, because He is not a father as well. In our case, the word 'father' cannot be truly appropriate, because we must be fathers and sons...

- *St. Gregory of Nazianzus*

Humility is a Divine property and the perfection of the Christian life. It is attained through obedience. He who is not obedient cannot gain humility. There are very few in the world today who have obedience. Our humility is in proportion to our obedience.

- *Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica*

# St. John Orthodox Church

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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~ January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024 ~

## ***Leave-Taking of Theophany***

*Commemoration of the Holy Fathers Slain at Sinai and Raithu  
and the Virgin-Martyr Agnes*

**ST. JOHN ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
1663 TUTWILER AVENUE  
MEMPHIS, TN 38107  
(901) 274-4119  
www.stjohnmemphis.org

**His Eminence Metropolitan SABA**  
Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America  
Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America

**His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS**  
Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast

V. Rev. Fr. Philip Rogers, Pastor

V. Rev. Fr. Basil Cushman, Associate Pastor

V. Rev. Fr. John Troy Mashburn, Jr., Pastor Emeritus

V. Rev. Fr. Donald John Berge, Attached

**GREAT VESPERS**  
Saturday, 6:00 p.m.

**ORTHROS**  
Sunday, 9:00 a.m.

**DIVINE LITURGY**  
Sunday, 10:00 a.m.

*Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America*  
“...the Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch!”  
Acts 11:26

## Leave-Taking of Theophany

**Epistle:** Ephesians 4:7-13

**Gospel:** Matthew 4:12-17

The Holy Bread for Eucharist is offered by Dn. Charles McKelroy.

Welcome to all those visiting St. John Orthodox Church. We are honored by your presence.

It is our sincere desire that your participation today in the Divine Liturgy will draw you closer to Christ and His Church.

If you are from a non-Orthodox background, you may see new things such as icons, incense, the sign of the cross, the veneration of saints, and a great deal of standing. These can be perplexing to the uninitiated eye. Rest assured that everything we do has a solid biblical foundation and a long history among Christian people. Please feel free to participate where you feel comfortable and feel equally as free only to observe when you prefer.

The Orthodox Church understands the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, to be – among other things – the paramount expression of Christian unity. While it is our deepest hope that Christendom will one day fulfill Christ's desire for true unity among all those who claim His name (John 17:21), the unfortunate reality of our day is that the various segments of Christendom are not unified with the historic Orthodox faith. *Since participation in the Eucharist expresses a unity with all the dogma and practice of the Orthodox Church, non-Orthodox guests do not receive Holy Communion.* The Holy Eucharist is reserved for those members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting, and recent confession. All visitors and unprepared Orthodox are invited to partake of the blessed bread as they come forward to venerate the cross at the end of the Liturgy. Thank you for your understanding.

## ST. JOHN CALENDAR

January 14 - 21

- Sunday** - Orthros, 9:00 am  
- Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am
- Monday** - First Hour, 6:45 am
- Tuesday** - Third Hour, 9:00 am  
- Men's Lunch, 12:00 pm  
- Orthodoxy 101, 7:00 pm
- Wednesday** - Third Hour, 9:00 am  
- Women's Teaching, 10:00 am  
- Vespers, 6:00 pm  
- Bible Study, 7:00 pm
- Thursday** - Third Hour, 9:00 am
- Friday** - First Hour, 6:45 am  
- Third Hour, 9:00 am  
- Sixth Hour, 12:00 pm
- Saturday** - Byzantine Chant Class, 4:30pm  
- Ninth Hour & Vespers, 5:50 pm
- Sunday** - Orthros, 9:00 am  
- Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am  
- North American Antiochian Orthodox Medical Professionals Meeting (after Liturgy)

### Today's Memorials:

Luke Heisig – 1 year  
Sue Ingram – 8 years

### Upcoming Churching – Jan. 21:

Madison & Wade Dey

### Upcoming Chrismation – Jan. 21:

Eric Iverson

### Upcoming Memorials – Jan. 28:

Aleksander Klimkowski – 40 days  
Clinton & Rose Nash

## Birthdays, Anniversaries, Nameday

### **Sunday, 1/14**

*Birthday:* Isabelle Mansour, Manar Shleweet

*Anniversary:* John & Lisa Curry

### **Monday, 1/15**

None

### **Tuesday, 1/16**

None

### **Wednesday, 1/17**

*Birthday:* Dashiell Ortwein

*St. Anthony the Great:* Nawar Mansour, Michael Redmond

### **Thursday, 1/18**

*Birthday:* Clare Freeman, Zach White

*St. Athanasius:* Austin Brown

*Anniversary:* Jose & Emanuela Laraya

### **Friday, 1/19**

*St. Macarius:* Mickey Hodges

### **Saturday, 1/20**

*Birthday:* Ella Sue White

*Anniversary:* Carlos & Jodi Yzaguirre

## Commemorations

**January 14:** The holy fathers slain at Sinai and Raithu; Virgin-martyr Agnes; Venerable Theodoulos and Neilos of Sinai; Nina, equal-to-the-Apostles and enlightener of Georgia.

**January 15:** Venerable Paul of Thebes and John the hut-dweller; Venerable-martyr Pansophios of Alexandria; Venerable Gabriel of Lesnovo.

**January 16:** The veneration of the precious chains of the Apostle Peter; Peusippos and Neonilla, and the martyrs of Cappadocia; Hieromartyr Damaskinos of Hilandar monastery on Athos; Honoratos, archbishop of Arles and founder of Lerins Monastery; Romil of Ravanica.

**January 17:** Venerable Anthony the Great; Anthony the New, ascetic of Berrea in Macedonia; New-martyr George of Ioannina.

**January 18:** Athanasios and Cyril, patriarchs of Alexandria; Martyr Theodoulis; Maximos, Serbian despot.

**January 19:** Venerable Makarios the Great; Arsenios, bishop of Kerkyra; Venerable Mark Eugenikos, metropolitan of Ephesos, pillar of Orthodoxy.

**January 20:** Venerable Eutymios the Great; New-martyr Zachariah of Moreah.

**January 21:** Venerable Maximos the Confessor, Zosimos and Neophytos; Virgin-martyr Agnes of Rome; Venerable Maxim the Greek.

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### DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sunday	Ephesians	4:7-13	Matthew	4:12-17
Monday	Galatians	5:22-26; 6:1-2	Luke	12:32-40
Tuesday	Acts	12:1-11	John	21:14-25
Wednesday	Hebrews	13:17-21	Luke	6:17-23
Thursday	Hebrews	13:7-16	Matthew	5:14-19
Friday	Galatians	5:22-26; 6:1-2	Matthew	19:16-26
Saturday	2 Corinthians	4:6-15	Luke	6:17-23
Sunday	Colossians	3:4-11	Luke	17:12-19

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### Remember in Your Prayers

**Our catechumens:** Jeff Bennett; Ben Haag; Thomas & Christy Potts; Eric Iverson; Andrew Potts; Brian, Danielle, Luree, John, & River Pfeister; Billy & Stacey Murray; Leighann Pompa; John & Lisa Weaver; Hannah Gibson; Richard & Lucas Luper; Michael Pritchett; Taylor Tawbush; Kyle, Jane, Isla & Lachlan Esposito

**Prayer Requests:** Mother Raphaela; Cathy & Adam van Drimmelen & family (Cathy's mother, Wilma West, fell asleep in the Lord on Nov. 13); Ken Alvis (Dianna Hildebrand's brother); Mary Elliott & family; Mike & Joyce Grossman; Chris Hodges; Mickey Hodges; St. Nicholas Orthodox Church; St. Paul Orthodox Mission; Samuel Brownlow; Elizabeth Turner (Jack's mother); Aleksandra Klimkowski & family; Emma & Katelyn Coe; Janan Heisig & family; Shawn McClenny (Miriam Redmond's brother-in-law); Charles Pugh (Madeleine Boiles's brother); the Bowick family; those suffering in the Middle East, most especially the Christians.

**Expecting:** Katherine Verbist, Marija Pavlovic, Ioana Rustom, Heather Hetrick

**Diocesan Seminarian:** Caleb McGee



## ST. JOHN COMMUNITY



**Theophany House Blessings** – It is time to schedule your House Blessing! Please sign up on the printed sheets in the parish hall for the times and days which are most convenient for your family to have your home blessed by one of our priests. Fr. Philip will follow up with you with a specific date and time.

**Orthodoxy 101** will next meet on Tuesday, January 16th, at 7pm. The topic will be *The Saints*. All are welcome to attend either in person or via Zoom.

**Parish Council Update** – The Parish Council met on Tuesday, January 9. They reviewed the final numbers for 2023 and updated the budget for 2024 in anticipation of the annual meeting on February 18. There was discussion about updating the Church website and the security at the Church during services. No decisions were made to change our current security practice but more advice will be sought to make an appropriate decision. May God continue to bless our community!

### Byzantine Chant Class – This Saturday

Byzantine Chant Class is resuming for the new year and will meet this Saturday, January 20th, at 4:30pm. All are welcome as we continue practicing Tone 5! Please reach out to Ted (ted@stjohnmemphis.org) if you have any questions! We hope you can join us!

### Seeking Volunteers for Room in the Inn for January

St. John's is signed up to host Room in the Inn this month on Monday nights, to help families with children who continue to find themselves homeless in Memphis each week. Please use the sign-up link on the weekly parish emails to see if there is a task you can help with. Feel free to contact Thea at thea.wallace@yahoo.com or 404-408-3292 if you have any questions.

**Medical Professionals Meeting Next Sunday** – By the blessing and direction of Metropolitan SABA, a new fellowship is forming: The North American Antiochian Orthodox Medical Professionals. The first meeting of the local chapter will be on Sunday, January 21 following the Divine Liturgy in the library in order to discuss the goals and interests of the group. There will be a national Zoom meeting in March with Dr. Daniel Hinshaw as the keynote speaker. Box lunches will be served at our local meeting. To ensure there is enough, please RSVP on the sign-up link in the parish emails. For more information, you can contact Dr. Nawar Mansour.

**Save the Date for our Pre-Lenten Retreat!** Fr. Jeremy Davis, author of *Welcoming Gifts: Sacrifice in the Bible and Christian Life*, will be with us Feb. 9-11, offering a retreat on “Saved by Sacrifice: What is the Cross All About?” The Cross of Christ is the perfect sacrifice, fulfilling the missed potential of the offerings in the Old Law. Today many people focus on the violence and suffering endured by Jesus, but for ancient Christians these were merely the backdrop for His self-offering to the Father. The joyful and positive idea of sacrifice in the Bible and throughout the ancient world will give us a renewed appreciation for our salvation in Christ. All are welcome to attend the retreat and be encouraged as we prepare for Great Lent!

**The Sons of Thunder Men's Book Club** will meet at the church at 6pm on Sunday, February 18, to discuss *The Power and the Glory* by Graham Greene. Please bring food and drink to share.

**Photos on Bulletin Board** – Is your family pictured on the bulletin board leading into St. Raphael Hall? If not, please see Mr. Trent Terry! He will take your picture and add you to our photos. There are so many new people and it is great to have a tool to put a name to a face.

**2024 Calendars** have arrived and can be found in the bookstore and hall.  
**Daily Lives, Miracles, and Wisdom of the Saints & Fasting Calendar** (spiral bound) is \$20.  
**Icon Wall Calendars** are free, but please limit to one copy per family.

## **St. John Youth**

**Today:**  
Sunday, 1/14 - No Youth Group

**Next Week:**  
Sunday, 1/21 - Service Project (Lunch Provided), 12:45-2:45pm

**Looking Ahead:**  
Sunday, 1/28 - Discussion & Donuts (Lunch Provided), 12:30-2:30pm  
Sunday, 2/4 - Lunch or Dinner at Someone's Home (TBD)

## **Women of St. John Calendar**

**1/17 (Wed.) AWSJ Teaching, 10am** – Women's Teaching will meet via Zoom this week to discuss *A Voice for Our Time* by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann.

**Third Hour Prayer & Fellowship (Fridays), 9am** – Each Friday a group of moms and kids are gathering at the church to attend Third Hour prayers followed by a time of fellowship. Any and all are welcome to join us! Please reach out to Heather Hetrick with any questions.

## **LIBRARY LINES**

St. Nina (1/14) is known as Equal-to-the-Apostles and the Enlightener of Georgia. She was born in the third century and was raised in the Faith. Her guardian told her that Christ's robe, woven by the Theotokos, was kept in Georgia, then a country of pagans. In a dream, the Mother of God appeared to her with a grapevine in her hands and promised to take her there. She awoke to find a cross made of a grapevine in her own hands. She traveled throughout the whole country gaining the love of the people and making converts. Check out *The Life of St. Nina, Equal to the Apostles* (KID STS NIN) and *St. Nina, Equal to the Apostles, Enlightener of Georgia* (HAG NIN HOL).

St. John the Hut-Dweller (1/15), a fifth century saint, was the son of wealthy parents. Although highly educated, he desired the monastic life and secretly left his parents' home. He began a life of strict asceticism having only one possession, a gold Gospel book which was given to him by his father and mother. After six years, he was greatly tempted by the Devil to return to his former life of wealth and ease. He received a blessing to return home, but disguised himself as a beggar and lived in poverty in a hut near his family's home. Near death three years later, he revealed his identity to his parents by showing them his Gospel book. He asked them to bury him dressed in his rags underneath his hut. Read more about him in *Stories from the Prologue* (KID STS MAN) on p. 61.

This week we commemorate a group of "the Great Saints." Wednesday is the feast day of St. Anthony the Great (1/17), the father of monasticism. His pious parents brought him up to be serious about church services and the Holy Scriptures. From his youth, he engaged in strict asceticism and was attacked by demons, sometimes in the form of wild beasts. At age thirty-five, he began his monastic life as a hermit, which was unheard of at the time. He lived in the desert for eighty five years and died peacefully in 356 A.D. at age 105. According to the OCA website, *The Life of Anthony* (PAT ANT ATH) by St. Athanasius of Alexandria is the first biography of a saint who was not martyred. St. John Chrysostom urged every Christian to read the book. Also, take a look at *The Letters of Saint Anthony the Great* (PAT ANT), *Athanasius...The Life of Anthony and the Letter to Marcellius* (HAG ATH ANT), *Talks on St. Anthony*, CDs, (HAG ANT HOP) and *Saint Anthony the Great: Angel of the Desert* (KID STS ANT).

Athanasius the Great and St. Cyril were both bishops of Alexandria. They share a feast day (1/18) because their writings upheld the truth of Scripture and rejected heresy. St. Athanasius was born in 298 to pagan parents. He declared himself Christian after seeing a group of students at school acting out the services of the Church. Before reaching the age of 20, he wrote the treatise *On the Incarnation* (PAT ATH), affirming and explaining that Jesus Christ was both God and man thus beginning Christianity's fight against the heresy of Arianism. Athanasius participated in the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 325 which was the first of two councils that produced the symbol of faith commonly called the Nicene Creed. It was finalized in 381 at the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople. At Nicea, Athanasius surpassed everyone there in his zeal to uphold the teaching that Christ is consubstantial with the Father. Athanasius was also the first person to identify the same 27 books of the New Testament that are in use today. Various ones were in use at the time but eventually it was Athanasius's list that was ratified and universally recognized as the New Testament canon. He also wrote a biography of Anthony the Great that later served as an inspiration to monastics in the East and the West. Saint Athanasius reposed in 373.

St. Marcarius the Great (1/19) loved the life of silence and, like St. Anthony the Great, fought the attacks of demons. He became a disciple of the elder St. Anthony who received him in love and respect for his struggles. The Church's practice of praying for the departed is supported by this story from his life. St. Macarius was walking along a road and saw a skull on the ground. He asked "Who are you?" The skull replied that he was a pagan and said that when we pray for souls in hell, they receive some benefit. Read more on him in *St. Macarius the Spiritbearer* (HAG MAC PAL) and *Fifty Spiritual Homilies* (PAT MAC).