

From the Fathers (and others):

God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

C.S. Lewis

“It is not right or proper for the rich to keep excess wealth when there are many poor people in need of the means of existence, of necessary clothing and proper dwellings, for we have nothing of our own; everything belongs to God!”

St. John of Kronstadt

As we rise daily, let us suppose that we shall not survive till evening, and again, as we prepare for sleep, let us consider that we shall not awaken. By its very nature our life is uncertain, and is meted out daily by Providence. If we think this way, and in this way live - daily - we will not sin.

Saint Anthony the Great

St. Antony used to say that it behooved a man to give all his time to his soul rather than his body, yet to grant a short space to the body through its necessities; but all the more earnestly to give up the whole remainder to the soul and seek its profit, that it might not be dragged down by the pleasures of the body, but, on the contrary, the body might be in subjection to the soul. For this is that which was spoken by the Savior: 'Be not anxious for your life what you shall eat, nor for your body what you shall put on. And do you seek not what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, and be not of a doubtful mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after. But your Father knows that you have need of all these things. Howbeit seek you first His Kingdom, and all these things shall be added to you' (Mt. 6:31; Lk. 12:29).

St. Athanasius

The grace of God is the life of our souls. Our soul cannot be alive without the grace of God. For as our body lives by the soul, so our soul lives by the grace of God.

St Tikhon of Zadonsk

You do not know in whom the Lord will come and visit you; be impartial to all, kind to all, sincere and hospitable.

St John of Kronstadt

St. John Orthodox Church



*~ December 24, 2017 ~
Paramon of Nativity*

ST. JOHN ORTHODOX CHURCH
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V. Rev. Fr. Philip Rogers
Pastor

V. Rev. Fr. Basil Cushman
Associate Pastor

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

Rev. Fr. Alexander Mackoul
Assistant Pastor

Rev. Fr. Donald Berge
Attached

GREAT VESPERS
Saturday, 6:00 p.m.

ORTHROS and CHURCH SCHOOL
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

December 24, 2017

Paramon of Nativity

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

The Holy Bread for Eucharist is offered by **Ben Arthur**.

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

December 24 - 31 (No Fasting)

- Sunday** -Orthros Nativity, 9:15 p.m.
-Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of our Lord in the Flesh, 10:30 p.m.
- Monday** -OFFICE CLOSED
- Tuesday** -OFFICE CLOSED
- Wednesday** -OFFICE CLOSED
-NO Wednesday Evening activities
- Thursday** -OFFICE CLOSED
- Friday** -OFFICE CLOSED
- Saturday** -Ninth Hour and Great Vespers, 5:50 p.m.
-Holy Baptism of George Maas and Lucas Whatley following Vespers
- Sunday** -**Orthros and Church School, 9:00 a.m.**
-**Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.**
-Great Vespers for St. Basil, 7:00 p.m.
-Potluck meal to follow

DIVINE LITURGY –Nativity of our Lord in the Flesh Sunday, December 24, 10:30 p.m.

PRIEST: Fr. Philip HOMILY: Fr. Philip
READER: Rod Ratliff
HOLY BREAD: Reem Mansour

DIVINE LITURGY Sunday, December 31, 10:00 a.m.

PRIEST: Fr. Alex HOMILY: Fr. Alex
READER: Jack Turner USHER: Ervin Romero
HOLY BREAD: Ben Arthur
ALTAR SERVERS: James, Mark, Alex, volunteer
COFFEE HOUR: Mitch and Sandy Childress, Sue Brownlow

UPCOMING BAPTISMS – December 30th

George Maas
Lucas Whatley

COMMEMORATIONS

December 24: Venerable-martyr Eugenia of Rome and those with her; Martyrs Achaikos and Basillia; New-martyr Ahmed of Constantinople.

December 25: The Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

December 26: Commemoration of Joseph the Betrothed, David the Prophet and King, and James the Brother of the Lord. The Synaxis of the Theotokos; Euthymios the Confessor, bishop of Sardis; Hieromartyr Constantios the Russian of the Great Lavra on Athos.

December 27: Proto-martyr Stephen the archdeacon; Venerable-confessor Theodore the Branded.

December 28: The twenty thousand martyrs of Nicomedia; Hieromartyr Glykerion; Venerable Simon the myrrh-streaming, founder of Simonopetra monastery on Athos.

December 29: The fourteen thousand infants slain by Herod in Bethlehem; George, bishop of Nicomedia; Venerable Markellos of the monastery of the “Unsleeping Ones”; commemoration of all Orthodox Christians who died from hunger, thirst, the sword and freezing.

December 30: Virgin-martyr Anysia of Thessalonika; Martyr Philetairos of Nicomedia; Venerable Leon; Venerable-martyr Gideon of Karakallou monastery on Athos; Makarios, Metropolitan of Moscow.

December 31: Venerable Melania the younger of Rome; Hieromartyr Zotikos the friend of orphans; Venerable Theophylact of Ochrid.



DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS			December 24 - 31	
Sunday	Hebrews	11:9-10, 32-40	Matt	1:1-25
Monday	Galatians	4:4 – 7	Matt	2:1-12
Tuesday	Hebrews	2:11-18	Matt	2:13-23
Wednesday	Acts	6:8-15, 7:1-5, 47-60	Matt	21:33-42
Thursday	Hebrews	10:35-39, 11:1-7	Luke	14:25-35
Friday	Hebrews	2:11-18	Matt	2:13-23
Saturday	1 Timothy	6:11-16	Matt	12:15-21
Sunday	2 Timothy	4:5-8	Mark	1:1-8



Pray for our catechumens: Memphis –Lucas Whatley, Kendall Ichniowski.
Please remember in your prayers - Mary Clark, Ann Hicks (Dianna Hildebrand’s mother), Charles Ingram, Ted Greathouse (Shelley Snowden’s father), Allen Sudduth (Paul’s father), Janet Berry, Nicholas Hill, Mary Sue Johnson (Jason Guntharpe’s grandmother), Janine Smith (pregnant), Chelsea Yadron (pregnant), Heather Hetrick (pregnant), Julie Hight (pregnant), Ernestine Pruitt (Nicholas Hill’s mother), Brenda Thomas, Doris & Jim (Brenda Thomas’ family), Dot Lawson (Pam Bowick’s mother & Lawson’s grandmother), Lisa Catlett (Fr. Don & Kh. Martha’s daughter), Glenda Brooks, Anna Grace (Joyce Grossman’s granddaughter), Maria Bellaflores, Sharon (Larry Ichniowski’s mother), Chris Hodges, those suffering in the Middle East, most especially the Christians.

 **ST. JOHN COMMUNITY** 

Second Day of Christmas - Everyone is invited to St. Paul Skete in Grand Junction to celebrate the Second Day of Christmas, the Synaxis of the Theotokos, on Tuesday, December 26th with Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m., followed by a potluck meal – bring some Christmas “overabundance” (foods that don’t need heating) – and the singing of Christmas carols.

Feast of St. Basil – As is our tradition, we will have a finger-food potluck following Great Vespers celebrating St. Basil on Sunday, December 31. Please join us!

Parish Council Update

For the minutes of the recent parish council meeting as well as the financial statements, please see the notebook downstairs. In addition to approving the pursuing of the purchase of 1675 Tutwiler, the council discussed forming a 2018 Strategic Planning Committee. More information will be available in the New Year.

Annual Parish Meeting! On Sunday, January 7, we will have our annual parish meeting. Along with all of the annual updates, the parish will be voting on the purchase of the neighboring property. Mark your calendars and plan to be present for this important event!

Year-end contributions to the church – Sunday, December 31 is the last day one can make contributions which are tax deductible for the year 2017, please be sure to get your gifts and contributions to the church before the end of that day.

Theophany House Blessings – Be sure to sign up in the parish hall for the times and days which are most convenient for your family to have your home blessed by one of the priests.

Mississippi River Blessing – Mark your calendars for January 6! Following Divine Liturgy that morning, we will again bless the waters at the Mississippi River along with Annunciation Greek Orthodox. We will come back to the parish to share lunch together.

Birthdays, Anniversaries, & Namedays

- Sunday, 12/26:** *Joseph, the Patriarch: Joe Hodges*
- Monday, 12/25:** Kristina Romero
St. Christina: Christine McGee, Kristina Romero
- Tuesday, 12/26:** *St. Joseph, the Betrothed: Deon Crum, J. Morgan Harter*
- Wednesday, 12/27:** *St. Stephen: Stephen Sanderlin*
- Thursday, 12/28:** Fr. Philip
- Friday, 12/29:** Gary Karnaghon, Claire van Drimmelen
- Saturday, 12/30:** Sean Paden

Master Plan updates

St Raphael Hall – Efforts are being made to continue to work on the sound in the hall. An outside company is stepping in to do tests and make recommendations for how to help. Stay tuned in the new year for a comprehensive plan!

A NEW PROJECT – Many have asked for more details on the purchase of 1675 Tutwiler. The property appraised for \$327,000 and the owner is willing to sell it to the church for \$299,000. According to our conversations with the bank, property management companies and other knowledgeable resources, the projected rental income of the property should cover our annual expenses. May God continue to provide wisdom and discernment as we move forward!

Fund raising – Our final debt amount for the new construction is \$775,000. Thank you for all of your help! Any additional contributions to the mortgage are appreciated!



As is our tradition, we will have a light celebration following Divine Liturgy in the early hours of December 25. The church will provide deli trays for sandwiches as well as drinks. We ask that those who are able bring a simple side dish or dessert to share. Please consider bringing dishes which do not require clean up -disposable pans are great! Also, be sure to take your dish home with you when you leave. We would like to get everyone home at a reasonable time with as easy of a cleanup as possible!

Women of St. John Calendar

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|----------------|---|
| Jan. 8 | AWSJ Book Club – <i>Wicked River: The Mississippi When It Last Ran Wild</i> by Lee Sandlin |
| Jan. 11 | Women's Teaching - 10:00 a.m., location TBD. Please let Trish know if you would like to host! |

REGULAR ALMS GIVING OPPORTUNITIES:

✦ Birthright ✦ St. John Alms Fund ✦ St. Brigid Food Pantry ✦ St. John Camping Fund ✦
Diocese of Miami and the Southeast Mission Fund ✦ Michael & Abigail Bittle Fund ✦

Library Lines

During Advent we commemorated several events in the life of the Theotokos. Her Entrance into the Temple (11/21), her Conception (12/9) and the Nativity of Christ (12/25). These and others are depicted in one of St. John Library's most popular books. *The Story of Mary the Mother of God* (KID STS PAP) by Dorrie Papademetriou is a beautifully illustrated book for young children. The first half of the short book is devoted to Sts. Anna and Joachim, their desire for a child and the early life of the Theotokos. The book continues with the Annunciation, birth, and life of Christ.

The life of the Theotokos is shown to us in much greater detail in another one of our most informative books, *The Life of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos*. This reference book gives us icons, hymns and commentary from the fathers on her life, her significance in the Kingdom of God and her place in the Church. Since she is the Mother of God in the flesh and is pivotal in our salvation, every event, person and aspect of Jesus's life, death, resurrection and events before and after Pentecost are referenced. It's user friendly because it is arranged chronologically and the table of contents is very detailed.

Fittingly after the Nativity we honor two of the first deacons of the Church, Stephen (12/27) and Nicanor (12/28). These men and five others were chosen by the Apostles because they were wise men, filled with the Holy Spirit. They each died at different times and in many places. They are commemorated on the dates of their deaths as well as together on July 28th. St. Stephen's martyrdom mirrors that of the last days of Christ. The Jews accused the saint of blasphemy. Appearing before the Sanhedrin, he accused them of killing the Prophets and the Messiah. He was sentenced to death by stoning in the presence of the Theotokos and the Apostle John. Stephen prayed for his executioners and asked God to not charge them for their sin. His body was secretly buried by the Jewish teacher Gamaliel who later confessed Christ and was baptized. St. Stephen is also commemorated on August 2 and September 15.

On the bulletin board this week you will see icons and the stories of two groups of unnamed martyrs, the Holy Innocents (12/29) slain by Herod and the 20,000 martyrs of Nicomedia (12/28). We also remember all Orthodox Christians who died from hunger, thirst, the sword and freezing. It gives us great hope and comfort to know that our Holy Mother Church remembers those numerous ones who were so insignificant in the world's eyes that their names were never recorded.