

From the Fathers (and others):

Avoid small sins, so that you might not fall into greater ones.
Elder Justin Parvu of Romania

"Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us. Let us become gods because of Him, since He for us became man. He took upon Himself a low degree that He might give us a higher one. He became poor, that in His poverty we might become rich."

St. Gregory of Nazianzus

Only the Holy Spirit can purify the intellect, for unless a greater power comes and overthrows the despoiler, what he has taken captive will never be set free (cf. Lk. 11:21-22). In every way, therefore, and especially through peace of soul, we must make ourselves a dwelling-place for the Holy Spirit.

St. Diadochos of Photiki

"Prayer is a branch (of the tree) of meekness, and freedom from anger. Prayer is an expression of joy and thankfulness. Prayer is a remedy against sorrow and depression."

St. Nilus of Sinai

Avoid meeting excessively with others and take care for your own soul, so that you might preserve peace of soul.

Elder Justin Parvu of Romania

"The heart is refined, spiritual and heavenly by nature. Guard it. Do not overburden it; do not make it earthly; be temperate to the utmost in food and drink, and in bodily pleasures in general. The heart is the temple of God. 'If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy' I Cor. 3:17." –

St. John of Kronstadt

"When you see poor homes, or live in such, bring to your memory the cave and the manger in which your Lord was born as man."

St. Theophan the Recluse

St. John Orthodox Church



~ December 25, 2016 ~
***The Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord
and God and Saviour Jesus Christ***

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

www.stjohnmemphis.org

www.orthodoxtupelo.com

V. Rev. Fr. Philip Rogers
Pastor

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

Rev. Fr. Donald Berge
Attached

V. Rev. Fr. Basil Cushman
Associate Pastor

Rev. Fr. Alexander Mackoul
Assistant Pastor

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 25, 2016 Nativity of our Lord

Epistle: Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

The Holy Bread for Eucharist is offered by **Lavinia Dumitrache**.

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

Dec. 25 – Jan. 1 (No Fasting)

Sunday -No Services

Monday -OFFICE CLOSED

Tuesday -OFFICE CLOSED

Wednesday -OFFICE CLOSED
-Vespers, 5:30 p.m.
- Parish Meal following
- NO Wednesday Teaching

Thursday -Third Hour, 9:00 a.m.

Friday -First Hour, 6:45 a.m.
-Third Hour, 9:00 a.m.
-Sixth Hour, 12:00 p.m.

Saturday -Holy Baptism of Ben Arthur, 5:00 p.m.
-Great Vespers for St. Basil, 6:00 p.m.
-Potluck meal to follow

Sunday -**Orthros and Church School, 9:00 a.m.**
-**Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.**

VESPERS FOR ST. BASIL

Saturday, December 31, 6:00 p.m.

PRIEST: Fr. Basil

CLEAN UP CREW: Fr. Basil, Fr. John, Dn. Tim, Trent Terry

DIVINE LITURGY

Sunday, January 1, 10:00 a.m.

PRIEST: Fr. Basil

HOMILY: Fr. Basil

READER: Matt Spinolo

USHER: Dan O'Brien

HOLY BREAD: Mindy Williams

ALTAR SERVERS: Zachary, Elijah, Thomas, Paul, James

COFFEE HOUR: Christine McGee, HELP NEEDED

Upcoming at St. John

December 31 – Baptism – Ben Arthur, 5:00 p.m.

January 7 – Blessing of the MS River, 12:00 p.m.

January 7 - Baptism –Edmund Knight

January 8 - Memorial – Dorothy McWhorter, 40 Days

January 10 – Catechumen/Inquirers Class resumes

January 18 – Wednesday Teaching resumes

COMMEMORATIONS

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.

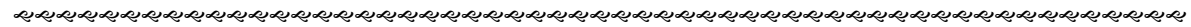
December 28: The twenty thousand martyrs of Nicomedia; Hieromartyr Glykerion; Venerable Simon the myrrh-streaming, founder of Simonopetra monastery on Athos.

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.

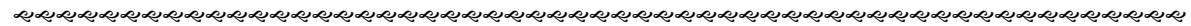
January 1: The Circumcision in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ. Basil the Great, archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia; New-martyr Peter of the Peloponnesos.



DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

December 25 – January 1

Sunday	Galatians	4:4-7	Matthew	2:1-12
Monday	Galatians	1:1-19	Matthew	2:13-23
Tuesday	Acts	6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60	Matthew	21:33-42
Wednesday	2 Timothy	4:9-22	Luke	14:25-35
Thursday	Hebrews	2:11-18	Matthew	2:13-23
Friday	Titus	1:15-2:10	Mark	12:1-12
Saturday	1 Timothy	3:13-4:5	Matthew	3:1-6
Sunday	Colossians	2:8-12	Luke	2:20-21, 40-52



Pray for our catechumens: Memphis - Ben Arthur; Justin Bowles; Wendy, Brody, & Eli Weatherall; Lucas Whatley; Chelsea Yadron & Gabriel de la Torre.

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), Angela Leopold (pregnant), Chelsea Yadron (pregnant), Sarah Finley (pregnant), Caitlin Romero (pregnant), Ernestine Pruitt (Nicholas Hill’s mother), Brenda Thomas, Doris & Jim (Brenda Thomas’ family), Dot Lawson (Lawson Bowick’s grandmother), Lisa Catlett (Fr. Don & Kh. Martha’s daughter), Glenda Brooks, Anna Grace (Joyce Grossman’s granddaughter), Elfreida Drobashevsky, Maria Bellaflores, those suffering in the Middle East, most especially the Christians.



ST. JOHN COMMUNITY

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

Church School – Catechesis of the Good Shepherd will meet on January 1st! We will be having our Nativity celebration with the children on the first since we did not have atria on December 25. Michael Williams and Nawar Mansour’s classes will be meeting as well.

Men of St. John – The following men are listed for Clean Up duty following the St. Basil potluck: Fr. Basil, Fr. John, Dn. Tim, Trent Terry. Please let Trish know if you are unable to help that night. The complete list of assignments for can be found on the website under “Online Sign Ups & Assignments.”

Christmas Carols at St. Paul Skete - Mother Nektaria invites everyone to St. Paul Skete in Grand Junction to celebrate the Second Day of Christmas, the Synaxis of the Theotokos, on Monday, December 26th. Fr. Philip will serve 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.

Year end contributions to the church – Saturday, December 31 is the last day one can make contributions which are tax deductible for the year 2016, please be sure to get your gifts and contributions to the church before the end of that day.

Mississippi River Blessing – Mark your calendars for January 7! This year we are planning on a Blessing of the waters at the Mississippi River along with Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church and St. Seraphim. Fr. Alex will lead our older church school kids in activities Saturday morning here at the church beginning at 10:30; the blessing will be held at 12:00 p.m. with a meal to follow. More details to come!

The **Sons of Thunder** book club will meet at 6:30 on January 22nd at David Twombly's home. They will be discussing the book *Mother Maria Skobtsova: Essential Writings*. All men are welcome.

Coffee Hour – The dates for the first quarter of 2017 can now be found on the St. John website under Parish – Online Sign Ups and Assignments. This is an excellent way to serve our parish and fellow parishioners!

Wednesday Teachings - We will resume teachings on January 18th.

Catechumen/Inquirers Class – Catechumen/Inquirers class will resume on January 10th. Beginning in 2017, class will meet every other week rather than weekly.

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.

Save the date! Dinner & A Show 2017 is scheduled for Friday, February 10th. Please make sure to mark your calendars! We are in need of coordinators for the following: Dessert Auction, Meal Planning, and Decorating. If you are interesting in being a part of the coordinating committee, please contact Meribeth Harvey at meribethsharvey@gmail.com.

Master Plan Updates

Members of the building committee met with the contractors on Thursday to review sub-contractor bids. They were very excited about them. In the coming week a contract will be drawn and we will begin construction in January!

As we prepare for the duplex to be torn down, there are items in the duplex that can be salvaged. If you would like to claim any of them, please see Fr. Philip.

Birthdays, Anniversaries, & Namedays

- Sunday, 12/25:** Kristina Romero
Monday, 12/26: *St. Joseph, the Betrothed: Deon Crum, J. Morgan Harter*
Tuesday, 12/27: *St. Stephen: Stephen Sanderlin*
Wednesday, 12/28: Fr. Philip
Thursday, 12/29: Gary Karnaghon, Claire van Drimmelen
Saturday, 12/31: Mikael Santana
St. Melania: Melanie Stanek

teen group

TODAY: NO TEEN GROUP until January 8

UPCOMING:

Teen Deanery Retreat

When: February 3-5

Where: Camp Hopewell, Oxford, MS

Cost: \$100

Registration Deadline: January 15th

Forms can be found in the Parish Hall. **DO NOT LET COST BE AN ISSUE!** See Fr. Alex for scholarship funds or other questions.

Library Lines

Do you and your children enjoy singing, “Good King Wenceslaus went out on the Feast of Stephen” at Christmastime? The ruler in this well-loved, 19th century Christmas carol was embroiled in Czech political intrigue from birth in 907. Read about his life in *Good King Wenceslaus* (KID STS WEN) and in *Orthodox America*, #45 Nov.-Dec. 1984, p. 8. St. Stephen's feast day is December 27; King Wenceslaus's is September 28.

Tuesday we commemorate St. Stephen (12/27). His 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.

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.

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.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

The St. Brigid Food Pantry is very low on inventory! Please consider donating some of the items listed below. Pop top cans are helpful when available, as are items that are “ready to eat.” Please refrain from donating baby items at this time as we do not have demand for such items.

Vienna sausages
Snack crackers
Saltines
Canned pasta

Peanut butter
Canned meat
Granola bars
Canned vegetables

Soup
Fruit cups
Chili

