

**From the Fathers (and others):**

"If I had in myself, only a fist-full of blood; I would shed it for the icon of Christ." –  
St. Stephen the New Martyr

Do you understand how although Christ was seen as a man like us He utters the words of God? For it is something exceptional and beyond the powers of creation that belongs to Him alone who is by nature and in reality God to be able to achieve by the spoken word that which is in accordance with His will, and to make those who have been justified by faith partakers of the Holy Spirit. In this matter one may see that we are referring to Christ. For He said to the leper: 'I will; be clean' (Mt. 8:3).

St. Cyril of Alexandria

O God, be attentive unto helping me. O Lord, make haste to help me. Direct, O Lord God, everything that I do, read and write, everything that I say and try to understand to the glory of Your holy Name. From You have I received a good beginning, and my every deed ends in You. Grant, O God, that I might not anger You, my Creator, in word, deed or thought, but may all my deeds, counsels and thoughts be to the glory of Your most holy Name. Amen.

Elder Anthony of Optina

Just as the farmer wearies himself by merely plowing, digging and sowing the seed on the ground, but it grows and produces fruit early and late (cf. Jms. 5:7) by God's gift, so it is in reality, as you will discover, in spiritual matters. It belongs to us to engage in every activity and with much toil and weariness to sow the seeds of virtue, but by God's gift and mercy alone the rain of His loving-kindness and grace falls and causes the unfruitful soil of our hearts to bear fruit. When the grain of the word falls on our souls it receives the moisture of God's goodness; it germinates, grows, and becomes a great tree (cf. Mt. 13:31-32), that is, it attains to mature manhood, to 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ' (Eph. 4:13).

St. Symeon the New Theologian

We leave our tasks unfinished because of our negligence or debility, for we do not carry out the work of God diligently and do not regard it as our main task; on the contrary, we disdain it as a kind of incidental chore. Because of this we fail to prosper, or indeed often regress, like those others who 'turned back' and no longer followed Jesus (cf. Jn. 6:66). And yet what Jesus said was nothing harsh, as they thought, for he was speaking to them about doctrine. None the less, where a resolute disposition and desire are lacking, even easy things appear difficult, though the reverse is true as well.

St. Peter of Damaskos

# St. John Orthodox Church

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*~ December 3, 2017 ~  
26th Sunday after Pentecost*

**ST. JOHN ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
1663 TUTWILER AVENUE  
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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 3, 2017**

### **26th Sunday after Pentecost**

**Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19**

**Gospel: Luke 18:35-43**

The Holy Bread for Eucharist is offered by **Stephanie Harants**.

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 3 - 10 (Nativity Fast)**

- Sunday** -Nativity Play practice, coffee hour  
-Teen Group, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m., play practice
- Monday** -First Hour, 6:45 a.m.  
-Paraklesis, 6:00 p.m.
- Tuesday** -Third Hour, 9:00 a.m.  
-Men's Lunch, 12:00 p.m., Barksdale's  
-Great Vespers, 6:00 p.m.  
-Catechumen/Inquirers Class, 7:00 p.m., Divine Liturgy, Pt. 1
- Wednesday** -Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas, 9:00 a.m.  
-Dinner, 5:30 p.m.,  
-Teen Group Nativity Play, 6:15 p.m.  
-Small Compline, 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday** -Third Hour, 9:00 a.m.  
-AWSJ Women's Teaching, 10:00 a.m.  
-Chant workshop, 6:00 p.m.
- Friday** -First Hour, 6:45 a.m.  
-Third Hour, 9:00 a.m.  
-Sixth Hour, 12:00 a.m.
- Saturday** -Ninth Hour and Great Vespers, 5:50 p.m.
- Sunday** -**Orthros & Church School, 9:00 a.m.**  
-**Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.**  
-Nativity Play practice – during coffee hour

### **DIVINE LITURGY – St. Nicholas**

**Wednesday, December 6, 9:00 a.m.**

PRIEST:	Fr. Philip	HOMILY:	Fr. Philip
HOLY BREAD:	Trish Ratliff		
COFFEE HOUR:	Caitlin Romero		

### **DIVINE LITURGY**

**Sunday, December 10, 10:00 a.m.**

PRIEST:	Fr. Philip	HOMILY:	Fr. Philip
READER:	John Cameron	USHER:	Thomas Yadron
HOLY BREAD:	Lavinia Dumitrache		
ALTAR SERVERS:	Pavel, Max, Brody, Paul, volunteer		
COFFEE HOUR:	Anna Pashchinskaya, Lavinia Dumitrache		

### **Upcoming Chrismations**

**December 9, following Vespers:**

John Curry, Ian Curry, Allie Helms, JonMark & Heather Hendrick, Justin Bowles, Jamie Escue, and Marissa Kizer

**December 16, following Vespers:**

Tom Ashworth

## COMMEMORATIONS

**December 3:** Prophet Zephaniah (Sophonios); Martyrs Agapios and Seleukos; New-martyr Angelis of Chios; Venerable Theodoulos of Constantinople; Hieromartyr Gabriel, patriarch of Constantinople; Venerable Cosmas of St. Anne skete on Athos; Venerable Sabbas of Zvenigorod, disciple of Sergios of Radonezh.

**December 4:** Great-martyr Barbara of Heliopolis in Syria; Venerable John of Damascus; Martyr Juliana; New-hieromartyr Seraphim, bishop of Phanar in Greece.

**December 5:** Venerable Sabbas the Sanctified; Martyr Diogenes; Venerable Nektarios of Iagri Kelli and Philotheos of Karyes on Athos; Venerable-martyrs from the kellia of Karyes on Athos; Gurius, missionary bishop of Kazan; Venerable Nektarios of Bitolj.

**December 6:** Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia; New-martyr Nicholas of Karamania in Asia Minor.

**December 7:** Ambrose, Bishop of Milan; Martyr Athenodoros of Mesopotamia; Venerable Gregory, founder of Gregoriou monastery on Athos; Venerable Gerasimos; Venerable Anthony of Sia and Neilos of Stolb Island; Venerable Philothea of Thrace.

**December 8:** Patapios the Righteous of Thebes; Sophronios, bishop of Cyprus; Apostles Sosthenes, Apollos, Crispos, Caesar and Epaphroditos of the Seventy; Martyr Parthenios.

**December 9:** The Conception of the Most Holy Theotokos by Righteous Anna.

**December 10:** Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes and Eurgaphos of Alexandria; Venerable Thomas of Bithynia; Joasaph, bishop of Belgorod; Angelina of Albania, mother of Blessed John, king of Serbia.

### DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

### December 3 - 10

Sunday	Ephesians	5:8-19	Luke	18:35-43
Monday	Galatians	3:23-29, 4:1-5	Mark	5:24-34
Tuesday	Galatians	5:22-26, 6:1-2	Matt	11:27-30
Wednesday	Hebrews	13:17-21	Luke	6:17-23
Thursday	2 Thess	2:13-16, 3:1-5	Luke	21:28-33
Friday	2 Thess	2:13-16, 3:1-5	Luke	21:37-38, 22:1-8
Saturday	Galatians	4:22-27	Luke	8:16-21
Sunday	Ephesians	6:10-17	Luke	13:10-17

**Pray for our catechumens: Memphis** –Justin Bowles, Lucas Whatley, Tom Ashworth, Allie Helms, Jon Mark and Heather Hetrick, Ian Curry, John Curry, Jamie Escue, Marissa Kizer and 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), Janna Knight (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



**Caroling at King’s Daughters and Sons Nursing Home** - St. John will again be Caroling at King’s Daughters on Thursday, December 14 at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome to join us for a blessed evening!

**Anniversary T-shirts** – T-shirts are still available to purchase! You may pick one up in the old parish hall and leave a check either in the bookstore cash box or upstairs in the office. They make great Christmas gifts!

**Nativity Play** - Advent means “Preparing for Jesus’ birth.” The children of St. John (Level 1 atrium through 5<sup>th</sup> grade) will glorify Him with their traditional Nativity play on Sunday, December 17 after the liturgy. We will practice in the nave following liturgy on December 3 & 10. All children in Level 1 atrium through 5<sup>th</sup> grade are welcome to participate regardless of whether or not they attend Church School. Contact Claire van Drimmelen with any questions.

**Sons of Thunder** will meet Sunday, December 10, 6:30 p.m. at Keith Parker’s home. They will be discussing *The Singing Heart: A Book of Quiet Reflections* by Ivan Ilyin.

### **Master Plan updates**

**A NEW PROJECT** – The owner of 1675 Tutwiler is selling the building and asked if the church was interested in purchasing the property. The Parish Council is working through all of the numbers and attempting to discern the best course of action. If you have thoughts, please speak with a council member or Fr. Philip.

**Fund raising** – We are almost done with the project and beginning to look at our final price tag for the building. We will be looking at roughly \$800,000 on our mortgage from a project that cost around \$1.5 million. Thank God for His many blessings!! If you would like to help with our monthly commitment to the loan, please let Fr. Philip know.



## **St. Nicholas Play**



We will celebrate **Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas** on the morning of December 6 at 9:00 a.m. That evening, following 5:30 dinner, our teens will again present a short play on the life of the saint in place of our normal Wednesday teaching. As is our tradition, we will collect gifts from the children for the Neighborhood Christian Center Christmas store. **Gifts should be new and not wrapped.** Please bring fasting-friendly desserts to share.

## Birthdays, Anniversaries, & Namedays

- Monday, 12/4:** *St. John of Damascus: Alex Mansour*
- Tuesday, 12/5:** Keith Parker
- Wednesday, 12/6:** *St. Nicholas: Nicholas Hill, Weston Sanderlin, Damon Boiles, Jr.; Nicholas Williams, Larry Ichniowski, William Labonte, Soren Ortwein*
- Thursday, 12/7:** Mindy Williams, Mitch Childress
- Friday, 12/8:** Andrew Mitchell
- Saturday, 12/9:** Charlie Harvey



## BOOKSTORE NEWS

**50% off Sale** still going on! *Does not include calendars, Orthodox Study Bibles or Pocket Prayer Books.*

**New in the Bookstore:** 2018 Wall Calendars, 2018 Icon Calendars, 2018

Daily Lives and Wisdom of the Saints.

### Upcoming at St. John

- Paraklesis** We will pray Paraklesis each Monday evening of Nativity, 6:00 p.m. (December 4, 11, 18)
- December 5** Great Vespers for St. Nicholas, 6:00 p.m.
- December 6** Divine Liturgy for the Feast of St. Nicholas, 9:00 a.m.  
St. Nicholas Play following dinner Wednesday evening
- December 9** Chrismation of Ian Curry, John Curry, Allie Helms, Marissa Kizer, Jon Mark & Heather Hetrick, Jamie Escue, and Justin Bowles following Vespers.
- December 14\*** Caroling at King's Daughters home, 6:30 p.m. (\*note date change)
- December 16** Chrismation of Tom Ashworth

### Women of St. John Calendar

- Dec. TBD** **Prayers for the Departed** - 9:00 a.m with fast-friendly potluck brunch to follow
- Dec. 7** **Women's Teaching** - 10:00 a.m., Judy Terry's home.
- Jan. 8** **AWSJ Book Club** – *Wicked River: The Mississippi When It Last Ran Wild* by Lee Sandlin

## Library Lines

**JUST IN TIME FOR THE FEAST!!!!** *The Saint Nicholas Day Snow* by former parishioner, Charlotte Riggle (KID STS NIC) Two best friends spend the night together on December 5<sup>th</sup> and learn the traditions and a lesson about St. Nicholas.

The Prophet Zephaniah (12/3) is known also by the name Sophronios. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah and helped the boy king Josiah destroy idol worship. He is often shown as resembling St. John the Theologian. He and the Prophet Habakkuk (12/2) were both descended from the tribe of Simeon. Habakkuk prophesied the Babylonian captivity and the return to Jerusalem. During this period, he lived in Arabia. However, while taking food to workers in the fields, he was miraculously transported to the Prophet Daniel in Babylon and fed him there. We also honor him during Holy Week when we sing in the Paschal canon, "Foreseeing your divine humiliation on the cross, Habakkuk cried out trembling: 'Thou shattered the dominion of the mighty by joining those in hell as the almighty Lord.' "Read more about the Minor Prophets in *Christ in His Saints* (HAG - - - REA).

St. Barbara (12/4), a 4th century saint, was a beautiful child and her father, Dioscoros, was extremely devoted to her. He hid her from strangers, in a tower where only her pagan teachers were allowed to see her. From there she could view her surroundings. She contemplated the world around her and the Author of such a beautiful creation. Gradually, she became convinced that the idols were merely the work of human hands. The desire to know the True God so consumed her soul that Barbara decided to devote all her life to this goal in virginity. When Dioscoros permitted her to leave Barbara met a priest from Alexandria. He instructed her in the Faith and baptized her. Barbara told her father of how she had come to know about the saving power of the Son of God and the futility of worshipping idols. Dioscoros became enraged and chased her, beat her, and placed her under guard, attempting to wear her down with hunger. He then handed her over to the prefect of the city who beat her incessantly. By night she prayed fervently to Christ and He came and healed her. Then her torturers began again. Finally, St. Barbara was beheaded with Dioscoros himself delivering the fatal blow to his own daughter. Soon afterwards, he was killed by lightning. We ask her intercession for deliverance from a sudden, unexpected death without the benefit of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. Read more about her in *The Encyclopedia of the Major Saints and Fathers* (HAG - - ELE) and *Forty Saints* (HAG - - SAO).

St. John of Damascus (12/4) is a saint of many talents. He was well educated and held a high position in the government. When he authored three works defending the veneration of icons, he was slandered by his enemies to the caliph. As punishment the ruler cut off the saint's hand. John prayed to the Theotokos for healing so he could continue writing his defenses of the Faith and fell asleep in front of her icon. She restored his hand and told him to work tirelessly for the Church. A thin red line remained at the wrist to remind him of the miracle. Later the saint had a silver hand attached to the icon which is now known as the icon *Of the Three Hands* (6/28). He then entered a monastery and lived in strict asceticism and obedience. There he wrote some of our most beautiful hymns including many of those in the funeral service. We ask his intercessions for help in singing our praises to God. St. John lived to be over 100 years old and died peacefully. For more on him look at *The Encyclopedia of the Major Saints* (HAG - - - ELE), *Poets and Hymnographers of the Church* (HAG - - - TAR), *Stories of Saints from the Prologue*, (KID STS MAN), and *St. John of Damascus: Monk, Theologian and Hymnographer* (HAG COM ISA), a CD.