

From the Fathers (and others):

Praise the Lord and exalt Him throughout all the ages. Bless the Lord you heavens, sun and moon, fire and heat, ice and cold, lightning and clouds, seas and rivers, all birds of the air, all beasts and cattle, you sons of men, you who are holy and humble of heart.

- *Song of the Three Holy Youths*

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*

'Unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Mt. 5:20). What does 'exceed' refer to? In the first place, we must believe not only in the Father, but also in His Son now revealed; for He it is Who leads man into fellowship and unity with God. In the next place, we must not only say, but we must do; for they said and did not. And we must not only abstain from evil deeds, but even from the desires after them. Now He did not teach us these things as being opposed to the Law, but as fulfilling the law, and implanting in us the varied righteousness of the Law.

- *St. Irenaeus*

Our Lord heals one that is deaf, who has an impediment of speech (cf. Mk. 7:31-37), He spat, and touched the man's tongue, showing that every part of His holy flesh was divine and holy, so that even His spittle loosed the bonds of the tongue. Although spittle seems worthless, with the Lord all things are marvelous and divine.

- *Blessed Theophylact*

Everything is possible for the believer. I have watched impure souls mad for physical love but turning what they know of such love into a reason for penance and transferring that same capacity for love to the Lord. I have watched them master fear so as to drive themselves unsparingly toward the love of God. That is why, when talking of that chaste harlot, the Lord does not say, 'because she feared,' but rather, 'because she loved much' she was able to drive out love with love (Lk. 7:47).

- *St. John Climacus*

There would be no need for sermons, if our lives were shining; there would be no need for words, if we bore witness with our deeds. There would be no more pagans, if we were true Christians.

- *St. John Chrysostom*

St. John Orthodox Church

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America



~ December 17th, 2023 ~

Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

Commemoration of Prophet Daniel & the Three Holy Youths Ananias, Azarias & Mishael

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 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

11th Sunday of Luke

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Gospel: Luke 14:16-24

The Holy Bread for Eucharist is offered by Anna Pashchinskaya.

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.

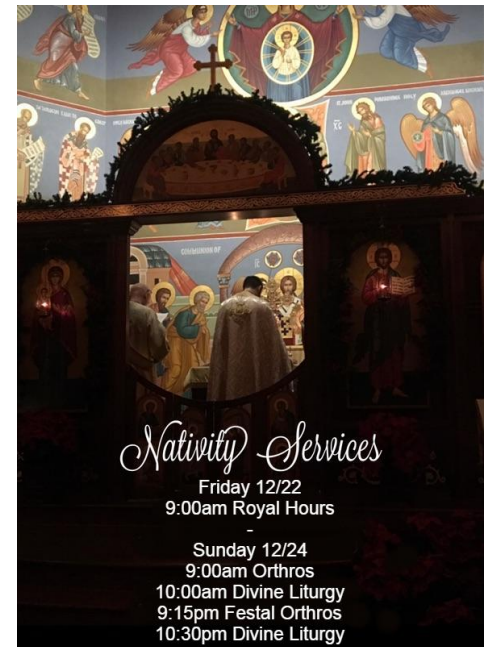
ST. JOHN CALENDAR

December 17 – 24

(Nativity Fast)

- Sunday** - Orthros, 9:00 am
 - Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am
 - *Nativity Play (after Liturgy)*
 - Parish Christmas Caroling, 3:00 pm
- Monday** - First Hour, 6:45 am
 - Klimkowski Visitation, 6:00-8:00 pm
 - Trisagion Prayers, 7:00 pm
- Tuesday** - Third Hour, 9:00 am
 - Klimkowski Funeral Service, 10:00 am
 followed by burial at Elmwood Cemetery
 - Fasting Mercy Meal, following burial
 - Orthodoxy 101, 7:00 pm
- Wednesday** - Third Hour, 9:00 am
 - Women's Teaching, 10:00 am
 - Advent Paraklesis, 6:00 pm
 *No Bible Study
- Thursday** - Third Hour, 9:00 am
- Friday** - Royal Hours of Nativity, 9:00 am
- Saturday** - Ninth Hour & Vespers, 5:50 pm
- Sunday** - Orthros, 9:00 am
 - Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am
 - Festal Orthros for Nativity, 9:15 pm
 - Divine Liturgy for Nativity, 10:30 pm
 - *Nativity Feast (following Liturgy)*

Upcoming Churching – Dec. 31:
 Ashley and Gabriel Powell



Birthdays, Anniversaries, Nameday

Sunday, 12/17

Birthday: Drew Garrison, Bru Wallace
Righteous Sarah: Sarah Finley
Righteous Aaron: Aaron White
Righteous Deborah: Sh. Deb Mashburn
Prophet Daniel: Daniel Damon,
 Daniel Sanderlin

Monday, 12/18

St. Zoe of Rome: Zoe van Drimmelen

Tuesday, 12/19

Birthday: Callum Knight, Theo McGee
Anniversary: JonMark & Heather Hetrick

Wednesday, 12/20

None

Thursday, 12/21

None

Friday, 12/22

Birthday: Amal Rustom, Weston Sanderlin
St. Anastasia: Milana Kumar
Anniversary: Mark & Sarah Ortwein

Saturday, 12/23

Birthday: Odette McKelroy

Commemorations

December 17: Prophet Daniel; The Three Holy Youths: Ananias, Azarias and Misael; Dionysios of Zakynthos, the wonder-worker; Avvakum the deacon.

December 18: Martyrs Sebastian and Zoe of Rome, and those with them.

December 19: Martyrs Boniface and Areos of Cilicia; Martyrs Eutychios of Thessalonika; Venerable Aglaida the Roman; Boniface of Ferentino.

December 20: Hieromartyr Ignatios the God-bearer, bishop of Antioch; New-martyr John of Thasos; Daniel II of Serbia.

December 21: Virgin-martyr Juliana of Nicomedia; Martyr Themistokles of Myra in Lycia; Peter, metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia.

December 22: Great-martyr Anastasia and her teacher the Martyr Chrysogonos.

December 23: Ten martyrs of Crete; New-martyr Nicholas; Venerable Nahum of Ochrid, enlightener of the Bulgarians.

December 24: Sunday before the Nativity of Christ (The Holy Fathers); Venerable-martyr Eugenia of Rome and those with her; Martyrs Achaikos and Basillia; New-martyr Ahmed of Constantinople.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sunday	Colossians	3:4-11	Luke	14:16-24
Monday	Hebrews	3:5-11, 17-19	Mark	9:42-50; 10:1
Tuesday	Hebrews	4:1-13	Mark	10:2-12
Wednesday	Hebrews	10:32-38	Mark	9:33-41
Thursday	Hebrews	7:1-6	Mark	10:17-27
Friday	Hebrews	7:18-25	Mark	10:24-32
Saturday	Galatians	3:8-12	Luke	13:19-29
Sunday	Hebrews	11:9-10, 32-40	Matthew	1:1-25

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

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); Kimberly Castrillon (Dianna Hildebrand's niece); 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



Church School Holiday Schedule – Reminder: Church school will not meet today due to the Nativity Play, or on December 24th or 31st. We will resume on January 7th!

Orthodoxy 101 will next meet on Tuesday, December 19th, at 7pm. The topic will be *The Work of Christ – Part 2*. All are welcome to attend either in person or via Zoom.

Nativity Play – Advent means “Preparing for Jesus’ birth.” The children of St. John (Level 1 atrium - 5th grade) will glorify Him with their traditional Nativity play today after the liturgy.

Parish Christmas Caroling Today at 3pm – All parishioners are invited to go Christmas caroling today from 3-4pm at The King's Daughters & Sons Home in Bartlett (3568 Appling Rd). Festal apparel is encouraged! Please plan to arrive a few minutes early. We hope to see you there to celebrate the season & spread some festive cheer!

Nativity Decorations – Maggie Harms has volunteered to coordinate our Nativity decorations this year. If you enjoy decorating, please reach out to her to volunteer with help.

Nativity Feast this Sunday – The Nativity Feast returns to St. John this coming Sunday! The church will provide deli sandwich trays from Bogie's, and parishioners are welcome to bring easy sides & desserts to share (preferably in disposable serving dishes). We will also need volunteers to set up and clean up for the feast (please see the sign-up list in the weekly emails if you would like to serve in this way)!

Parish Council Update – The year is winding down! Thank you for your support over the course of this year!! As the year winds down, now is the time to make those end of the year donations. The Council met on Tuesday, December 12 and worked to finalize the budget for 2024. May God bless us as we continue to be good stewards of our Parish Resources!!

Volunteers Needed for Room in the Inn for December – St. John's is signed up to host Room in the Inn this month tomorrow (December 18) and next Monday (December 25), to help families with children who continue to find themselves homeless in Memphis each week. Please check out the sign-up link on the weekly parish emails to see if there is a task you can help with. In addition, feel free to contact Thea at thea.wallace@yahoo.com or 404-408-3292 if you have any questions.

Mercy Meals for the Dey Family!

Many years to the Dey family! Austin and Madison Dey welcomed new baby Wade Hampton Dey on December 13th. He was 8 lbs 3 oz and 20 inches long. Thanks be to God, mom and baby are well. If you would like to provide a meal for the family, please sign up on the link on the parish emails.

Save the Date!

Save the date for the Feast of Theophany and the Blessing of the MS River on Saturday, January 6.

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

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.

Nativity Fast – The Nativity Fast grows in strictness as the Nativity approaches. From November 15th through December 12th the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine and oil) is observed with katalysis (relaxation of the fast) for fish, wine and oil on every day except for Wednesdays and Fridays. From December 13th to 19th, the katalysis is only for wine and oil on Tuesday and Thursday and fish, wine and oil on Saturday and Sunday. From December 20th through 24th the traditional discipline is observed with katalysis for wine and oil only on Saturday and Sunday.

St. John Youth

Today:

Sunday, 12/17 -

Parish Christmas Caroling, 3pm
Families are welcome & encouraged! Festal attire also encouraged!
Transportation will need to be worked out by families. Please arrive a few minutes early.

Looking Ahead:

Sunday, 12/24 -

No Youth Group

Sunday, 12/31 -

No Youth Group

Saturday, 1/6 -

Feast of Theophany & Blessing of the MS River

Sunday, 1/7 -

Christmas Party, 5-8pm (Location TBD)
Christmas Potluck for all of our youth group families, with a White Elephant gift exchange game for youth group members. (Bring a wrapped gift around \$10 in value.)

Women of St. John Calendar

12/20 (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

Today we honor perhaps the richest group on the Church’s list of commemorated saints. It’s the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (12/17), the ancestors in the flesh of Christ, and it is a powerful reminder to us that He is fully man and fully God. This is a moveable feast which falls on the Sunday that is between December 11-17.

In keeping with this theme of the Holy Forefathers, today we also commemorate the Prophet Daniel (12/17) and the Three Holy Youths. They are familiar to many of us because they are frequent subjects of children’s Bible stories. Remember Daniel in the lion’s den and the fiery furnace? It is amazing that all of these stories and events that we remember from childhood are “ever-occurring” and woven into the Liturgy, music and life of the Church. The three holy youths are mentioned repeatedly during services throughout the year including Lent and even in the marriage service. Read about these events in *Children’s Bible Reader* (KID BIB GBS) and *Daniel and the Lion* (KID STS DAN). And, look for their icons in our nave.

John of Kronstadt (10/19 & 12/20) is a 20th century saint who was glorified by the church just over forty years ago! Check out our library’s books by and about him: *My Life in Christ* (PAT JOH), *On Prayer* (PAT JOH), *Spiritual Counsels* (PAT JOH), *The Life of Righteous Father John the Wonderworker of Kronstadt* (KID STS JOH), *Season of Repentance* (PAT JOH), and *A Spiritual Portrait: St. John of Kronstadt*, (HAG JOH CON).

Wednesday we commemorate St. Ignatius the God-Bearer (12/20), a disciple of our own patron, St. John the Evangelist. Tradition tells us that Christ held the young saint in His arms when He said, "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." It is also said that he began the practice of antiphonal singing in church after seeing a vision of angels alternately giving their praises to God. Perhaps he is best known for actively desiring to die for Christ. On the road to martyrdom in Rome, he continually repeated the name of Jesus. When asked about this he said that the Name was written on his heart. St. Ignatius was devoured by lions who left only his heart and some bones. The pagans cut open his heart and saw "Jesus Christ" in gold letters. Learn more about him in *Fathers of the Church* (HAG - - - WUE), *Pillars of the Church* (HAG - - - GRE), and in *For Christ and the Church: St. Ignatius of Antioch* (PAT COM IGN).

St. Juliana (12/21) was one of many women saints who refused a pagan suitor and dedicated her life to Christ. Her father handed her over to torture in the presence of a large crowd, many of whom professed Christ and joined her in receiving martyrs' crowns. According to the OCA website, she was the subject of an Anglo-Saxon poem which was penned by Cynewulf in the 8th century.

Friday we honor St. Anastasia (12/22). Anastasia was forced into marriage with a pagan. He locked her in their home after learning that she donned a disguise and visited Christians who had been imprisoned because of their faith. After her husband's death, she gave away her money and visited and nursed the Christians who were in prison in several cities. She received the name, Deliverer from Potions because she healed many from the effects of poisons. She was arrested, starved, and martyred by being burned alive. Read more about her in *The Encyclopedia of the Major Saints and Fathers* (HAG - - - ELE) and in *Married Saints of the Church* (HAG - - - MOS).