

December & January Announcements

Nativity Fast Continues

November 15 marked the beginning of the Nativity Fast, our 40-day period of preparation for Christ's Nativity. All faithful are commended to prepare for the upcoming feast by using this time for prayer, fasting, and confession.

Supplication Service to St. Raphael of Brooklyn in December and January

We will offer our Supplication Services to St. Raphael of Brooklyn in December and January on the following dates and times:

- 5 p.m. Saturday, December 3
- 5 p.m. on Saturday January 7

This service will be in place of our usual Saturday Vespers service. As the "patron saint of missions" in our Archdiocese, we offer this service as an intercession for our community as it embarks upon a building program.

Choir/Chanter Appreciation Sunday

On Sunday, December 11, it is Chanter/Choir Appreciation Sunday throughout the Archdiocese. Thank you to all of those who offer their musical talents to the worship of our parish!

Installation of the 2017 Parish Council

St. Luke's Parish Council for 2017 will be installed at the end of Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 11.

Town Hall Meetings in December and January

Our next two parish town hall meeting will take place **after coffee hour** on **Sunday, December 11** and **Sunday, January 22**.

Vespertal Liturgy for St. Herman of Alaska

The faithful of St. Herman Orthodox Mission in Hudson invites our parish to join them for the upcoming Feast of their Patron Saint Herman of Alaska.

They will be celebrating Vespertal Liturgy 6:00 p.m. on the evening of Monday, December 12, at the church, 86 Owen Brown Street, Hudson. After Liturgy, they will enjoy a lenten meal together at Aladdin's in the First and Main District in Hudson that we are invited to participate in as well.

December and January Building Committee Meetings

Remaining Building Committee meetings in December and January will meet at 6:30 p.m. on the following dates:

- Thursday, December 15
- Thursday, December 22
- Thursday, January 12

December & January Parish Council Meetings

The December Parish Council meeting is scheduled for **4:30 p.m.** on **Sunday, December 18**. The January Parish Council meeting is scheduled for **4:30 p.m.** on **Sunday, January 15**. Immediately before the December meeting, the Council will elect officers for 2017.

St. Ignatius Sunday

On Sunday, December 18, we will remember the work of the Order of St. Ignatius, which is the philanthropic organization of our Archdiocese. For more information, see: <http://antiochian.org/order>

Nativity 2016

Our services for the Nativity of Christ (Christmas) will be on Saturday, December 24, starting with 5 p.m. Festal Orthros, followed at 6 p.m. by Festal Divine Liturgy, and concluding afterwards with the singing of traditional Christmas carols. Following the service, there will be an informal potluck coffee hour —bring something to share!

Note: If you plan on receiving communion at the Christmas Liturgy, the practice of our Archdiocese is to abstain from food and water from after the midday meal.

Note: There are **no** services scheduled for Sunday, December 25.

Reminder: No Fasting December 25-January 4. The period from December 25 to January 4 is fast-free in celebration of Christ's Nativity.

Theophany 2017 & House Blessings

One of Fr. Matthew's responsibilities as the parish priest is to visit and bless every family's home during the Theophany season. As stated in the Archdiocese *Clergy Guide* under "Duties Specific to Pastors":

The pastor must see that the home of each parishioner is visited and blessed each year during the days following Epiphany [Theophany]..."

As a reminder, the feast of Theophany (Our Lord's baptism) and Theophany house blessing season 2017 falls as follows:

- 6 p.m. Thursday, January 5, 2017 - Evening Divine Liturgy for Theophany and Great Blessing of Water at Church
- Friday, January 6, 2017 - Fr. Matthew begins blessing homes.
- 12:30 p.m. Sunday, January 8 - Outdoor Blessing of Waters in Riverside Park, downtown Chagrin Falls
- February 26: Forgiveness Sunday. Last opportunity for a house blessing during the Theophany 2017 season.

The time to start scheduling house blessings now. Please check your calendars and contact Fr. Matthew as soon as possible (440-591-1030 or frmatthew.thurman@gmail.com) so that we can schedule your house blessing.

Church School Resumes in the New Year

Church School will resume after the holidays. Our first session in the New Year will be on Sunday, January 15 at **9 a.m.**

Shoebboxes for Our Kids

We are participating again in the "Shoebboxes for our Kids" ministry. This year, we are asked to contribute 110 deodorant sticks for needy school kids. In the next few weeks, please bring any brand of deodorant to Church.

Who's Got a Question?

Question: I've seen Fr. Matthew outside of church and on days other Sunday wearing a black shirt and white collar. Why does he dress that way when he's not at church?

Answer: The parish priest is an icon of the ministry of Christ, including in his form of dress. The black shirt and white collar ("clericals") are part of the "dress code" of the Church for priests. With the exceptions of being on vacation, doing physical labor, etc., the parish priest is expected by the bishops to dress in clericals at all times.

From the Synaxarion: Major Feasts in December & January

December 13: St. Herman of Alaska

On this day we commemorate our righteous Father Herman of Alaska, Enlightener of the Aleuts, who reposed in peace in the year 1837. Herman was born in the town of Serpukhov in the Moscow Diocese around 1756. At age 16, he entered the Russian Orthodox monastic life at the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Hermitage near St. Petersburg. Later, he moved to the Valaam Monastery. During this time, the head of the Golikov-Shelikov Company; Gregory Shelikov, visited Valaam and made a request for several monks to begin a mission into the Alaskan territory. Father Herman was selected, along with seven other monks. They arrived on Kodiak Island on September 24, 1794. The monks educated and converted the Aleuts or native Alaskans and, as time progressed, they found themselves protecting the natives from exploitation and abuse. Because of this moral stance the monks themselves were abused, arrested and physically threatened. In time, enduring hardship, inclement weather, illness and more, Herman stood as the only remainder from the original band of missionaries. Father Herman felt it his duty to protect the native Alaskans (Aleuts) from exploitation. He defended them against the often cruel treatment of those who controlled the colony, which he documented and presented before the governors of the colony. The natives regarded him as their intercessor before God. When there was a tidal wave on the Island, Herman took an icon of the Theotokos, placed it on the beach and assured the people that the water would not rise beyond the place where the icon was, and it did not. When there was a great fire on the island, it is said that he dug a trench and stayed the flames. Prior to his death he foretold that there would be no priest to bury him and that he would be forgotten for 30 years. He died on December 13, 1837, and was forgotten until the first investigation of his life in 1867 by Bishop Peter of Alaska.

December 20: St. Ignatius of Antioch (Commemorated on St. Ignatius Sunday on 12/22)

Today in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate the holy Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, Bishop of Antioch. This holy man is called "the God-bearer" because he constantly bore the name of the Living God in his heart and on his lips. According to tradition, he was thus named because he was held in the arms of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ. On a day when the Lord was teaching His disciples humility, He took a child and placed him among them, saying: Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 18:4). This child was Ignatius. As the third Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius governed the Church of God as a good shepherd and was the first to introduce antiphonal chanting in the Church, in which two choirs alternate the singing. This manner of chanting was revealed to Ignatius by the angels in heaven. When Emperor

Trajan was passing through Antioch on his way to do battle with the Persians, he heard of Ignatius, summoned him and counseled him to offer sacrifice to the idols. If Ignatius would do so, Trajan would bestow upon him the rank of senator. Ignatius refused, and was shackled in irons and sent to Rome with ten merciless soldiers, to be thrown to the wild beasts. Ignatius rejoiced in suffering for his Lord, only praying to God that the wild beasts would become the tomb for his body and that no one would prevent him from this death. After a long and difficult journey from Asia through Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus, Ignatius arrived in Rome, where he was thrown to the lions in the circus in the year 106.

December 25: The Nativity of Our Lord (Celebrated with Divine Liturgy the evening of 12/24)

On December 25 in the Holy Orthodox Church we celebrate the Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. Thus entered into the world He Whose coming was foretold by the prophets, and Who was born in the same manner in which it had been prophesied: of a Most-holy Virgin, in the town of Bethlehem, of the lineage of David according to the flesh, at the time when there was no king in Jerusalem of the lineage of Judah, but rather when a foreigner named Herod, who sought to kill the infant Messiah, was reigning. After many types and prefigurings, messengers and heralds, prophets and righteous men, wise men and kings, finally He appeared, the Lord of the world and King of kings, to perform the work of the salvation of mankind.

January 1: The Circumcision of Our Lord & St. Basil the Great (Celebrated with Divine Liturgy on 01/01)

On January 1 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we celebrate the Circumcision in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ; it being the eighth day after His birth, we commemorate also the giving of the Name of Jesus. The Divine Child was presented in the Temple and circumcised according to the Law existing in Israel since the time of Abraham. The Old Testament circumcision was the proto-type of the New Testament baptism. The circumcision of our Lord shows that He received upon Himself the true body of man and not just seemingly, as was later taught of Him by heretics. Our Lord was also circumcised because He wanted to fulfill the entire Law which He Himself gave through the prophets and forefathers. Thus, the Apostle Paul declares: "For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation" (Gal. 6:15).

On this day we also commemorate our Father among the Saints Basil the Great, archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. While still unbaptized, Basil spent fifteen years in Athens where he studied philosophy, rhetoric, astronomy and all other secular sciences. His colleagues at that time were Gregory the Theologian and Julian, later the apostate emperor. In his mature years he was baptized in the river Jordan. He was Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia for almost ten years. He was a great defender of Orthodoxy, a great light of moral purity, a great theological mind, a great builder and pillar of the Church of God. Basil fully deserved the title "Great." In liturgical services, he is referred to as the "bee of the Church of Christ which brings honey to the faithful and with its stinger pricks the heretics." Numerous works of this Father of the Church are preserved; they include theological, ascetical and canonical writings as well as the Holy and Divine Liturgy named after him, which we will celebrate today. Basil reposed peacefully in 379 A.D.

January 6: The Theophany of Our Lord (Celebrated with Evening Divine Liturgy 01/05)

On January 6 in the Holy Orthodox Church we celebrate the Holy Theophany, or Epiphany, of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. When our Lord reached thirty years from His physical birth, He began His teaching and saving work. He Himself signified this "beginning of the beginning" by His baptism in the River Jordan. St. Cyril of Jerusalem says, "The beginning of the world: water; the

beginning of the Good News: Jordan." At the time of the baptism of the Lord in water, the Father was revealed to the sense of hearing; the Spirit was revealed to the sense of sight, and in addition to these, the Son was revealed to the sense of touch. The Father uttered His witness about the Son, the Son was baptized in the water, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove hovered above the water. John the Baptist witnessed and said about Christ, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world." When John immersed and baptized the Lord in the Jordan, the mission of Christ in the world and the path of our salvation were shown. That is to say: The Lord took upon Himself the sins of mankind and died under them (immersion) and became alive again (the coming out of the water); and we must die as the old sinful man and become alive again as cleansed, renewed and regenerated. This is the Savior and this is the path of salvation. The Feast of the Epiphany (Theophany in Greek) is also called the Feast of Illumination. For us, the event in the River Jordan illuminates, by manifesting to us God as Trinity, consubstantial and undivided. Also, every one of us through baptism in water is illumined by this, that we become adopted by the Father of Lights through the merits of the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit.

January 30: Three Hierarchs & Ecumenical Teachers: St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, and St. John Chrysostom

On January 30 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate our Fathers among the Saints and Ecumenical Teachers Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom. This common feast of these three teachers was instituted a little before the year 1100, during the reign of the Emperor Alexis I Comnenus. The common feast ended a dispute and strife that arose among the notable and virtuous men of that time. Some of them preferred Basil (calling themselves Basilians), while others preferred Gregory (Gregorians), and yet others preferred John Chrysostom (Johannites), quarreling among themselves over which of the three was the greatest. To end the contention, the three Saints appeared together to the saintly John Mavropous, a monk who had been ordained Bishop of Euchaita in Asia Minor. They revealed to him that the glory they have at the throne of God is equal, and told him to compose a common service for the three of them, which he did with great skill and beauty. Saint John of Euchaita (Oct. 5) is also the composer of the Canon to the Guardian Angel, the Protector of a Man's Life. By the intercession of the Three Hierarchs, O Christ God, and of all the Saints, cast down the uprisings of the heresies and preserve us in oneness of mind and a peaceful condition, and deem us worthy of Thy heavenly Kingdom; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Schedule of Services & Events

December

1	Thu	6:30 p.m.	Building Committee Meeting
3	Sat	9:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m.	Stewardship Workshop @ St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church, N. Royalton Vespers
4	Sun	8:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	Orthros Great Martyr Barbara <i>(No Church School)</i> Divine Liturgy St. Nicholas Celebration at Coffee Hour
8	Thu	6:30 p.m.	Building Finance Committee Meeting
10	Sat	5:00 p.m.	Vespers
11	Sun	8:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	Orthros Sunday of the Forefathers (Ancestors) <i>(No Church School)</i> Divine Liturgy w/ Installation of new Parish Council Town Hall Meeting after Coffee Hour
12	Mon.	6:00 p.m.	Vesperal Liturgy @ St. Herman Orthodox Church, Hudson
15	Thu	6:30 p.m.	Building Committee Meeting
17	Sat	5:00 p.m.	Vespers
18	Sun	8:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m.	Orthros Sunday before Nativity (Genealogy) <i>(No Church School)</i> Divine Liturgy Election of New Parish Council Officers followed by December Parish Council Meeting
22	Thu	6:30 p.m.	Building Committee Meeting
24	Sat	5:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	Festal Orthros Nativity of Christ Festal Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of Christ
25	Sun		(No a.m. services at St. Luke)
31	Sat	5:00 p.m.	Vespers

January

1	Sun	8:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	Orthros Divine Liturgy	St. Basil the Great/Circumcision of Our Lord
5	Thu	6:00 p.m.	Evening Divine Liturgy	Theophany of Our Lord/Blessing of Water
7	Sat	5:00 p.m.	Supplication Service to St. Raphael of Brooklyn	
8	Sun	8:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. Noon	Orthros Divine Liturgy Outdoor Blessing of Water—Riverside Park, Downtown Chagrin Falls	Sunday after Theophany
12	Thu	6:30 p.m.	Building Committee	
14	Sat	5:00 p.m.	Vespers	
15	Sun	8:30 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 4:30 p.m.	Orthros Church School Divine Liturgy January Parish Council Meeting	29th Sunday after Pentecost
16	Mon		<i>Martin Luther King Holiday</i>	
21	Sat	5:00 p.m.	Vespers	
22	Sun	8:30 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	Orthros Church School Divine Liturgy Town Hall Meeting after Coffee Hour	32nd Sunday after Pentecost
28	Sat	5:00 p.m.	Vespers	
29	Sun	8:30 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	Orthros Church School Divine Liturgy	17th Sunday after Pentecost