

St. George Orthodox Church

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Web Site: saintgeorgeflint.org

Father Joseph M. Abud, Pastor

Father Michael Bassett, Assistant

January 8, 2023

Blessings on our Lord's Theophany

(manifestation or revelation at His Baptism)!

Welcome to St. George! Thank you for attending today's Divine Services. If you are a first-time visitor, please register your visit by completing the guest book located in the narthex. We would appreciate getting to meet you after liturgy, so feel free to join us during Coffee Fellowship in our Banquet Center! Every Sunday we remember the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The word "*Liturgy*" means *work of the people* that means everyone participates through singing, praying, hearing the teaching, and opening our hearts to allow God's grace to enter. We believe Holy Communion to be a sign that in Christ we have all things in common, share an identical faith, and are united fully to the Orthodox Church. Anyone interested in learning more about our faith are encouraged to speak with one of our clergy. Holy Communion can be given to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting (no food or drink from midnight the night before), the Sacrament of Confession (7 years and older) within the last 2 months, and being at peace with others. Everyone else, including visitors, are invited to receive the final blessing of the priest and Holy Bread at the end of Liturgy. Again, welcome!

Live Streaming of Divine Services

St. George is open for all parishioners and visitors. If you cannot attend, please pray with us through our livestream which can be seen on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SaintGeorgeOrthodoxChurchFlintMI>

If you have a smart TV, you actually have a web browser and YouTube app built in. All you have to do is start the browser app for YouTube and put the link in the address bar.

Holy Bread Offerings (*Oblations*)

- Elias and Asmahan Helal for the health of their family and in loving memory of **Samir** Helal (3 day, cousin of Asmahan).
- Jamal, Khaled, and Sally Abuaita for the health of their family and in loving memory **Mariam** Ghanim (3 day, mother of Manal Abuaita).
- The Khal, Russell, and Ghantous Families for the health of their families and in loving memory of mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and aunt **Aida** Raffoul (40 day).

- Naila Banna for the health of her family and in loving memory of dear friend **Aida** Raffoul (40 day) and husband **Cesar** (4 year).
- George and Jeanette Nassif for the health of their family especially daughter **Nicole** and in loving memory of **Adel** (25 year), **Joseph, Amenee, Ferris, Nick, Paul, Joe, Rose, Mona, Khouriya Joanne, Sylvia, Ace, Jack, George, and Minera.**
- We also pray for the servant of God who has fallen asleep in the Lord: **Dannie Jones** (+January 3rd).
- Prayers are offered for our parishioners who are ill, recovering, or in need, especially His servants: **Metropolitan Paul** and **Archbishop John** who are in captivity, our local hierach **Bishop Anthony, Sahar** Abdallah, **Reader Fouad** Abuaita, **Shafiq**a Abuaitah, **Laila** Abud, **Jane** Abueita, **Chelsy** Abufarha, **Youssif** Abousamra, **Danial** Alghanim (father of Dania Hanna), **William** Alsahouri, **Sanaa** Alqassis (daughter of Zahra Abuaita), **Walid** Andoni (brother of Vera Daoud), **Sharon** Ballreich (sister of Nancy Silpoch and Deborah Salim), **Levi** Cooper, **Vera** Daoud, **Valland** Frangi (sister of Ron Haddad), **Elias** Gantos, **Denise** Ghattas, **Phyllis** Good, **Ronald** Haddad, **Nadia** Ibrahim (mother of Ziyad), **Daisy** Isaac, **Loretta** Karpelenia (mother of Denise Ghattas), **Judy** Mikhail, **Antonia** Molina (friend of Areen Bathish), **Karam** Nassar, **Laura** Nassar, **Deborah** Salim, **Elaine** Shaheen, **Michael** Silpoch, **Christa** Whitehead, and **Samantha** Zerka (cousin of Lauren Zerka and Goddaughter and niece of Victoria Zerka); **Sam George** Kardouss who was brought into the Orthodox Faith through the Holy Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, and First Communion.
- We also pray for our expectant parents: **Jasanta** and **Ghassan** Al-Khouri, **Katrina** and **Gary** Gagne, and **Taylor** and **Jeffrey** Tipton.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP is in our Lounge and is hosted by *the Family of Aida Raffoul*.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTS Available dates: January 15th, and 22nd ~ sign-up poster and hosting information is in the Lounge. Hosting includes bringing whatever you wish to serve, setting up, and cleaning up afterwards. St. George provides coffee, cups, cream, and sugar at a charge to the host of \$30. **For more information**, contact our Tony Daoud as our coordinator Manal Abuaita is overseas.

⇒ Our **Banquet Center Renovation** has begun! We still want, and need, to have time to be with each other and have fellowship! Coffee Fellowship will take place in the Lounge.

MY CHURCH BAGS These were put together for Preschool-aged children! **PARENTS**, please see that your child takes care of these, replaces all of the items, and returns the bag to the rack by the Narthex Table at the end of Divine Liturgy ~ thank you ❤️!

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS ...

- ❖ **Elie Ghattas** for donating the *Holy Water Icon Bottles* for the health of his family and in loving memory of wife *Diane*. They are filled with Holy Water and in the Narthex for you to take.
- ❖ **Father Michael Bassett** for making St. Basil's Bread (*Vasilopita*) in honor of St. Basil the Great whom we remembered on January 1st. Congratulations and many blessings this year to **Philip Abuaita** and **Emma Koshaba**, granddaughter of Najwa Joubran who was visiting from Chicago, IL, who found the special St. Basil coins.

11TH ANNUAL PAN-ORTHODOX DORMITION MONASTERY FUNDRAISER DINNER Thursday, January 19th at *Assumption Church in Grand Blanc* beginning at 5pm with **Vespers** sung by the Nuns; **Social Hour** with *Gift Shop from the Monastery*; **Dinner and Presentations** with the **Benediction** at 8:30pm. The suggested offering/donation is \$35 for Adults and \$25 for Students. All offerings support the Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction, MI. See the flier on narthex table for more information and how to make reservations and/or donations. Any questions, please contact Fr. Michael.



Our stewardship, offerings, and donations are needed. PLEASE help your parish by continuing to offer your gifts! If you cannot come to church, you can simply go to our parish website (<https://saintgeorgeflint.org/>) and donate on-line (or *use the QR code to the left*) or you can bring or mail your offerings to St. George, 5191 Lennon Road, Flint, MI 48507. As always, THANK YOU for your generosity and love of our St. George!

2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES AND CHURCH CALENDARS Please pick up yours (and other family members and friends) so we do not have to mail them! If your name is not listed, let Fr. Joe know. All envelopes are now here. The calendars (*please take 1 per family*) are a gift from our Ladies Auxiliary ~ thank you, Ladies! Our children will receive their envelopes in Church School. **Parents**, please make sure your children get their *Offering Envelopes*!

COMING EVENTS

Fasting Discipline The traditional fasting discipline (*no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine, olive oil, and their by-products*) is observed on Wednesday and Friday.

Monday	Bible Study: <i>1st book of the Bible, Genesis</i> 1:30-3:30pm
	SOYO Monday 6-8pm
Tuesday	Men's Fellowship 6pm
Wednesday	Arabic-English Bible Study: <i>1st book of the Bible, Genesis</i> 12-2pm
Thurs-Sat.	Special Archdiocesan Convention in Dallas, TX (Fr. Joe is representing our parish)
Saturday	Great Vespers and Confessions 4pm (note time change until further notice!)

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Exercising Virtue ~ Vigilantly Exercise Virtue in the Coming Year

by Abbot Tryphon, head of All-Merciful Savior Monastery on Vashon Island, Washington

It is a tradition among Americans to make a New Year's Resolution, pledging ourselves to positive change in the coming months. We decide we're going to lose weight, and set the loss of a certain amount as our goal for the coming year. We promise ourselves that we'll be more frugal in our spending, setting aside more of our income for savings. Our children will be more central in our weekly allotment of time, with family time coming before personal recreation. The yard work will not be put off in the coming months, and that major kitchen remodel will actually be put on the front burner.

A better plan would be to pledge ourselves to exercising virtue (*virtue is behavior showing high moral standards*) during the coming year. Pledging ourselves to the

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practice of virtue is to habitually and firmly dispose of ourselves to do good. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers, and pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions. Therefore, we should pledge ourselves not only to perform good acts, but to give of the best of ourselves to others.

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Get out your bibles, find the New Testament, and then flip to St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians (between the 2nd Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians and his letter to the Ephesians). Find chapter 5, and start reading at verse 16 and continue until the end of the chapter. Here, St. Paul encourages us to *"walk by the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh"*. St. Paul continues by listing all of the desires of the flesh in verses 19-21. One of the most familiar short virtue lists is what St. Paul himself calls the "fruits of the Spirit," which include *"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control"* (Galatians 5:22-23).

Though we might all have different gifts, talents, and skills, we ALL can, with God's help by the Holy Spirit, live our lives with the fruits of the Spirit!

Need help or you don't understand? Talk with Fr. Joe or Fr. Michael! Love, FJ



Theophany *by Sarah McKee*

January 6th is the feast day of Theophany. It was one of the first feast days of the early church.

Originally, the feast of Theophany included the Nativity (Birth) of Christ, the adoration of the Magi, and his presentation into the temple. Separate feast days were not adopted until the fourth century.

Now the feast day celebrates the baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. It is especially significant because it is commemorating the first appearance of the Holy Trinity in the New Testament. The Holy Trinity appeared to Abraham and Sarah in the Old Testament, and announced the birth of Isaac, the long awaited son who was the start of the nation of Israel.

The Greek meaning of the word **Theophany** is *"the appearance of God."* **Epiphany** in Greek means *"to show forth"* or *"to manifest."* That is why these two words are used interchangeably for this feast of the Orthodox Church. The feast day is tied to the baptism which is our initiation to the Christian family. (Do you know anyone named Tiffany? It is the anglicized version of Theophany!)

Now the main feature of this feast is the Great Blessing of Water. In the ancient Church, there were two blessings: one for the blessing of water intended for baptism and the other of outside bodies of water. This was the Christian imitating the custom of the Christians in Jerusalem who went to the Jordan River to celebrate the feast.

"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened up to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo, a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3:16-17)

In St. John Chrysostom's Homilies, he stated, *"The heavens were opened to show us that our baptism will open the heavens for us. God is made accessible to us. We can know the Unknowable. We can be changed. A good work is done in us, and we have the means to have the promise fulfilled in us."*