

St. George Orthodox Church

5191 Lennon Road • Flint, MI 48507 • (810) 732-0720

Web Site: saintgeorgeflint.org

December 11, 2022

Father Joseph M. Abud, Pastor

Father Michael Bassett, Attached

Christ is in our Midst!

He is and ever shall be!

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*)

- St. George Parish for the health of our families especially the members of our **Choir** and **Chanters** ~ *May God grant them many years!* and in loving memory of their departed members especially: **Yacoub** Abueita, **Betty** Brackett, **Kamelia** Brackett, **Bishara** David, **Laura** Gantos, **Norma** Isaac Rynek, **Reader George** Jamra, **Alex** Khouri, **Jean** Khouri, **John** Khouri, **Dolores** Khouri, **Marty** Newman, **Thelma** Nickola, **Betty** Salim, **Norma** Salim Lazar, **Sylvia** Sophiea, and **Gloria** Ward.
- We also pray for the servants of God who have fallen asleep in the Lord: **Victor** David (+November 4th) and **Aida** Raffoul (+November 24th).

- 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, **Sally** Abuaita, **Suheil** and **Abeer** Abuaita, **Khader** AbuAita, **Shafiq** 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), **Emil** Bathish, **Levi** Cooper, **Vera** Daoud, **Jimmy** David, **Valland** Frangi (sister of Ron Haddad), **Elias** Gantos, **Mariam** Ghanim (mother of Manal Abuaita), **Denise** Ghattas, **Phyllis** Good, **Ronald** Haddad, **Nadia** Ibrahim (mother of Ziyad), **Daisy** Isaac, **Dannie** Jones, **Loretta** Karpelenia (mother of Denise Ghattas), **Judy** Mikhail, **Antonia** Molina (friend of Areen Bathish), **Laura** Nassar, **Issa** Odeh, **Deborah** Salim, **Elaine** Shaheen, **Michael** Silpoch, **Christa** Whitehead, and **Samantha** Zerka (cousin of Lauren Zerka and Goddaughter and niece of Victoria Zerka); **Mike**, **Waad**, and newborn **Jouri** Abdallah (November 8th).
- We also pray for our expectant parents: **Jasanta** and **Ghassan** Al-Khoury, **Katrina** and **Gary** Gagne, and **Taylor** and **Jeffrey** Tipton.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LADIES AUXILIARY HOLIDAY BAKE SALE Our ladies are having a Bake Sale TODAY for Coffee Fellowship ~ Please be generous and support our ladies and their good works!

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTS Available dates: January 15th, 22nd, and 29th ~ 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 coordinator Manal Abuaita.

⇒ As soon as we begin renovating our Banquet Center (if it hasn't happened yet!), we still want and need to have time to be with each other and have fellowship! It will be crowded, but we will try and have it in our Lounge.

ST. GEORGE WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY All Women of St. George are invited to attend this Christmas Dinner Party at the Redwood Steakhouse (5304 Gateway Center, Flint, MI 48507 off Hill Road and US 23) on Monday, December 26th at 5:30pm. The cost is \$27 per person and must be paid in advance to reserve your spot. The deadline for reservations is Saturday, December 17th. To reserve your spot or for more information, please contact our coordinators Areen Bathish (810-691-0722) or Janet Abueita (810-691-0956). There will be no gift exchange, but please donate to our Church with an extra Christmas Gift!



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!

HOLY SACRAMENT OF REPENTANCE (CONFESSION) If you are 7 years or older, have been away from the Church, or have not had Confession in the last 2 months and desire to come back and receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion, please remember you must offer a confession of your sins first. During this time of preparation for the **Christmas ~ the Nativity of our Lord Fast** is a

perfect opportunity. Because it is so important and for your convenience, Fr. Joe and Fr. Michael will hear confessions after Coffee Fellowship NEXT Sunday, December 18th. Fr. Joe is not the only Orthodox priest in the area, or at St. George, and if you would prefer to go to Fr. Michael or one of the other local priests, feel free to do so (*please just let Fr. Joe know*): Fr. Gabriel Bilas from St. Mary Magdalene (810-750-1401) or Fr. Matthew Butrie from St. Nicholas Church (810-744-0070).

Let everyone in our St. George Family prepare and partake of our Lord in Holy Communion. The important thing is not who hears your confession, but that you participate in this Holy Sacrament on a regular basis. **Blessed are those who wash their (baptismal) robes, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life (which is Christ).** Revelation 22:14

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. 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* ~ thanks!

COMING EVENTS

Fasting Discipline On Tuesday, November 15th, we began the traditional forty-day **Nativity Fast** (also called the Christmas or Advent Fast) in preparation for the feast of the **Nativity of Christ** on December 25th. The Fast is divided into two periods. The first period is until December 19th when the traditional fasting discipline (*no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine, oil and their by-products*) is observed on all days except Tuesdays and Thursdays when *wine and oil* are allowed and Saturdays and Sundays when *fish, wine, and oil* are allowed.

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| Monday | Bible Study: <i>1st book of the Bible, Genesis</i> 1:30-3:30pm |
| | SOYO Monday 6-8pm |
| | Pan-Orthodox Book Club 6-8pm |
| Tuesday | Men's Fellowship 6pm |
| Wednesday | Arabic-English Bible Study: <i>1st book of the Bible, Genesis</i> 12-2pm |
| | Nativity Fast Prayer Service 6pm |
| Thursday | Nativity Play Practice 5:30-7pm |
| | Parish Council Dinner Meeting 6:15pm |
| Saturday | Great Vespers and Confessions 4pm (note time change!) |
| | Parish Nativity Program <i>follows</i> |

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The Holy Forefathers of Christ

from the *Synaxarion* (lives of the saints) in today's Matins Service

On this day we celebrate the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (Ancestors) of our Lord Jesus.

Verses

Receive joy, O Forefathers which lived aforetime,
As now ye behold at hand Christ the Messiah.
Be glad, O Abraham, for thou art shown to be the forefather of Christ.

continued ⇨

We remember all the holy Patriarchs of the Old Testament who prefigured or foretold Christ: Adam the first Father, Enoch, Melchizedek, Abraham, the friend of God, Isaac, the fruit of the Promise, Jacob and the twelve patriarchs. We then commemorate those who lived under the Law: Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, and the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; the twelve minor prophets; Elijah, Elisha, Zachariah, and John the Baptist; and finally the Virgin Mary, the intermediary between mankind and her divine Son. Indeed, the Lord Jesus did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to redeem humanity which bemoaned the weight of evil since Adam; to realize the promise made to Abraham; to change the Law of Fear into the Law of Love; and to give Resurrection and Life to mankind. This feast prepares us for the Nativity of Jesus Christ, placing before us the anticipation and hope for His coming among us.

By the intercessions of Thy Saints, O God, have mercy upon us. Amen.





**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Prot. no.: PV013/2022

December 11, 2022

Beloved Brother Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy, and Christ-Loving Faithful,

On this holy Sunday of the Forefathers of Christ, I send warm greetings to you from His Beatitude Patriarch John X, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, father of fathers and shepherd of shepherds, in the name of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Today we gratefully recognize all our dedicated and faithful church musicians and take a moment to reflect on their essential contribution to our church life. The beauty and sweetness of their music carry our hearts beyond mundane preoccupations to the contemplation of heavenly and eternal truths. The spirit and strength of their singing fill us with zeal for God and boldness in seeking His Kingdom.

It is written in the Psalms, “Blessed is the people who know the festal shout. O Lord, they will walk in the light of Thy countenance and will exult in Thy name all day long and will be lifted up by Thy righteousness” (88:16–17). The hymns sung by our choirs and chanters are not merely pleasant tunes but festal shouts of courage and victory. As these hymns fill our hearts and our lives, they inspire us to live boldly for God in each moment, proclaiming our loyalty to Him without embarrassment and being led by Him into a life of holiness.

On this Musician Appreciation Sunday, we extend heartfelt thanks to Ms. Mareena Boosamra-Ball and all the members of our archdiocesan Department of Sacred Music for their tireless efforts in support of this holy ministry. And we gratefully honor the dedication of all the choir directors, chanters, and choir members in parishes throughout the archdiocese, who faithfully present their time and talents, week after week, as priceless gifts to Christ and His Church.

Wishing you and your families—in the name of His Beatitude Patriarch John X and on my behalf—a blessed remainder of the fast and a joyous Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

✠Metropolitan ANTONIOS

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Antonios". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Metropolitan of Zahle, Baalbek, and Dependencies
Patriarchal Vicar of New York and All North America

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

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WHO ARE THE HOLY FOREFATHERS, AND WHY DO WE COMMEMORATE THEM BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST?

Priest Andrei Chizhenko, Translation by Nun Cornelia (Rees), 12/24/2017

The last two Sundays before the Nativity of Christ are called the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (today) and the Sunday of the Holy Fathers (next Sunday). The Holy Forefathers and Fathers are the Old Testament relatives according to the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, beginning with the holy ancestors Adam and Eve, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, and his sons, the holy patriarch Abraham, and so on up to the glorious Nativity of Christ.

We honor all the righteous of the Old Testament, including those who became the Savior's ancestors according to the flesh, because these people burned like candles of God in the darkness of paganism, and lived in the hope of the coming of the Messiah and mankind's deliverance from slavery to the devil, sin, and death. They lived by this hope, led by it as by a certain inner ray of the heart, which cut through the darkness of pagan religion and gave them the anticipation, the intuition of Christ, the joy of communion with God, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the foretaste of paradise. Where human feet had not stepped for many thousands of years, but where (O, they believed in this!) the gates would unfailingly open; because into the world would come the One Whom these forefathers and fathers loved above all else, loved more than life itself, and for Whose sake were ready for anything ~ even death. Into the world would come our Lord Jesus Christ, Who would save them. And he will save all of us!

It is precisely for this reason that on the final Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, on the Sunday of the Holy Fathers, we read at the Divine Liturgy the first synoptic (similar) Gospel, the first in order according to the Gospel of Matthew, where the genealogy (family tree) of the Lord God, our Savior Jesus Christ is recounted. On the one hand, this was established by the Church in order that we would know and be interested in the lives of these Old Testament righteous ones, finding much that is fascinating and, especially, instructive in them. On the other hand, this established order is testimony to the fact that Christ is a real, historical person. And not just a historical person, but God incarnate in human nature, became a real Man, Who took on our sins, healed us with His redeeming death and resurrection, and Who ascended with human nature to the right hand of God the Father. Every man has ancestors, a family tree, and the Savior also had them, which is what the Gospel retells with utmost clarity.

Furthermore, brothers and sisters, we would like to direct your attention to the feat of the holy forefathers and fathers from the historical point of view. We live in a society that is penetrated and drenched with Christian morality, as the earth is penetrated with air and drenched with water. However, at that time, among the ancient Greeks flourished homosexuality, the Canaanite peoples made sacrifices of their own breastfeeding children to Moloch, the Scythians drank the blood of their enemies, and among many nations drunkenness and fornication were glorified by their pagan religions and exalted to the level of religious ritual.

Cruelty and slavery were the norm then. Human life was cheap. Anyone could break into another man's house during war and take him into slavery, to make of him a "talking thing" with absolutely no rights.

And it seems to me that in those times it must have been very easy to lose the guiding star of the true faith. However, the holy forefathers and fathers did not lose it; to the contrary they preserved it as a flaming, untouchable tradition, like a burning candle. This is what we also must pass on (still burning!) to our own descendants. The world is still standing because of this.

There is a reason why this year at the Liturgy on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers the Gospel parable of the wedding feast of the king's son is read (Lk. 14:16-24). The powerful of that world rejected Christ, but the lame on the wayside accepted Him and were triumphantly led to the wedding feast. Who are "the maimed, the deaf, and the blind" in the Gospel, who were called to the feast of faith? Of course, they are, first of all, the holy forefathers and fathers, and after them all Christians who sincerely consider themselves spiritually sick—sick with sin, and therefore do they weep and lament over their sins and seek their most important Physician, God. They seek and find Him.

The central liturgical theme on the Sundays of the Holy Forefathers and Fathers is the theme of the three holy friends in the book of the Prophet Daniel: Saints Ananias, Azarius, and Misael, whom the king had thrown into the Babylonian furnace because they did not bow down to the pagan idol. The three holy youths did not burn, as an angel protected them. Their being "*in a fiery furnace*" became a prefiguring of the Nativity of Christ: just as the three youths were not harmed by the flames of the furnace, so also Christ's Nativity did not scorch (did not harm) the "Virgin Womb".

At the threshold of the Nativity of Christ, we would like to wish that all of us, dear brothers and sisters, would have within ourselves, like a heavenly fire, that feeling of the living God, Who appears One and the Same for them, the holy forefathers and fathers, and for the holy apostles, and for us!

In fact, just as the Most High conversed with the holy foreparents Adam and Eve in paradise and abode with them, so does He converse with our souls; although because of our sinfulness we cannot perceive this in full measure as did the first people in paradise. However, this happens, nevertheless.

And perhaps one of the most important feelings or thoughts that unites the holy forefathers, the fathers, the apostles, and all the saints of all generations is the understanding that the Lord, just as two thousand years ago, so also now, is among us, and walks beside us through life. This reality of the living God is what makes us Orthodox Christians.

**Holy Forefathers and Fathers,
pray to God for us!**