

St. George Orthodox Church

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

Web Site: saintgeorgeflint.org

Father Joseph M. Abud, Pastor

Father Michael Bassett, Assistant

December 3, 2023

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! 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. Anyone interested in learning more about our faith are encouraged to speak with one of our clergy.

Guidelines for Receiving Holy Communion for Orthodox Christians: Orthodox Christians fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist by receiving Holy Communion in fulfillment of Christ's command *to eat His Body and drink His Blood*. In order to be properly prepared to receive Holy Communion, the faithful should fast (no food or drink from midnight the night before), the Sacrament of Confession (7 years and older) within the last 2 months, being at peace with others, and striving to always love God and their neighbor. Frequent communion and regular confession are recommended for all faithful Orthodox Christians.

For other Christians: We welcome you to this celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Unfortunately, we cannot extend to you a general invitation to receive Holy Communion. Orthodox Christians believe that the Eucharist is an action of the celebrating community signifying a oneness in faith, life, and worship of our community. Reception of the Eucharist by Christians not fully united with us would imply a oneness which does not yet exist, but for which we must all pray. All, however, are welcome to partake of the blessed bread (*antidoron*) which will be given when coming forward to venerate (kiss) the Holy Cross and receive the final blessing from the priest. 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*)

- David Merrelli and Richard Shaheen for the health of their families and in loving memory of wife and niece **JoAnn** Merrelli (2 year).
- Zahra Abuaita and Family for the health of her family and in loving memory of husband **Hanna** (6 year).
- Khaled and Sally Abuaita for the health of their family especially **Philip** (91 years old, Khaled's father) and **Manal** (sister-in-law) Abuaita on the occasion of their birthdays, and **Janett** Abuaita (Khaled's mother) ~ *May God grant them many years!*
- We also pray for the servants of God who have fallen asleep in the Lord: **Kh. Loretta** Karpelenia (+November 6th, mother of Denise Ghattas), **Sue** Brady-Dingo (+November 21st, aunt of Jason Dine), and **Gena** Basnett, (+November 28th, friend of Fr. Michael) ~ *may their memory be eternal!*
- Prayers are offered for our parishioners who are ill, recovering, or in need, especially His servants: **Archbishop Alexander** (bishop of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Nicholas), our **Bishop Anthony**, **Sahar** Abdallah, **Reader Fouad** and **Soad** Abuaita, **Philip** and **Janett** Abuaita, **Rasha** Abuaita, **Shafiq** Abuaitah, **Laila** Abud, **George** Abueita, **Georgette** Abueita, **Jane** Abueita, **Mary** Abueita, **Youssif** Abousamra, **William** Alsahouri, **Naila** Banna, **Vera** Daoud, **Said** Farah, **Elias** Gantos, **Subdeacon George** and **Suad** Gantous, **Phyllis** Good, **Ronald** Haddad, **Daisy** Isaac, **Samer** Ishaq, **John** Joseph, **Karen** Mortensen, **Karam** Nassar, **Laura** Nassar, **Jeanette** Nassif, **Adam** Odeh, **Rahmeh** Rashmawi, **Elaine** Shaheen, and **Michael** Silpoch; **Subdeacon Salim**, **Dania**, and newborn **Elias** Hanna who will be brought back into the life of our parish through the *Prayers of Churching*; **Jason** Dine and **Evangeline** Kosrow who were brought into the Orthodox Faith through the Holy Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, and First Communion.
- We also pray for our expectant parents: **Ambur** (daughter of Joseph Haddad) and **Matt** Allison, **Gabriella** (daughter of Joseph & Mary Jo Ghattas) and **David** Ayyash, Drs. **Lindsey** and **Ryan** Brunner, **Casandra** and **Danial** Burbar, **Amira** and **Abdulla** Farah, **Andrea** and **Josh** Jones, **Christine** (daughter of Ayman & Wafaa Elias) and Dr. **Matthew** Krinock, **Kari** (daughter of John & Theresa Farah) and **Panagiotis** Mikroudis, **Vera** and **Luay** Sababa, & **Jacqueline** (daughter of Anwar & Janet Abueita) and **John** Timm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP is hosted by *Richard Shaheen*.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTS Available dates: December 17th and 31st ~ 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 Manal Abuaita. *During the Nativity Fast (November 15th - December 24th) no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, or their by-products are to be served.*

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS ~ ST. GEORGE PRE-CHRISTMAS CONCERT will take place on Saturday, December 16th immediately following Great Vespers. Anyone is welcome to sing a solo, sing in a group choir, or play an instrument ~ BOTH adults and children are welcome. Please contact Janet Abueita or Elias Abueita for more information; practice dates will be announced soon! Mark your calendars for a wonderful activity with your St. George Family!

PLEASE HELP ~ KIDNEY NEEDED!

One of our parishioners is in desperate need of a kidney. Everyone has 2 kidneys, but only need 1 to live. Both of this parishioner's kidneys are not working properly. If you are interested and want more information, please speak with Fr. Joe ~ *thanks!*

YOU HAVE BEEN ANGELS!

Thank you for everyone who donated, participated, and were "angels" to 31 children this year. None of this could have happened without our coordinators. Thank you and God bless...

May, Gabriella, and Lauren Gantos

... who did so much to make sure everything went smoothly and was successful! May God continue to bless them and everyone for their love of children not just during the Christmas season, but throughout the year.

THE SACRAMENT OF REPENTANCE (CONFESSION)

If you have not had Confession in the last 2 months and desire to return to the life of the Church and receive the Body and Blood of Christ, please remember you and your children (8 years old and up) must offer a confession of your sins first. During this time of the **Nativity** (Christmas) **Fast** is the perfect opportunity. For your convenience, Fr. Joe and Fr. Michael will be hearing confessions after Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 10th. Fr. Joe and Fr. Michael are not the only Orthodox priests in the area and if you would prefer to go to one of the others, feel free to do so just, please inform Fr. Joe: *Fr. Peter Bistorides* (Assumption Church: 810-771-4611), *Fr. Gabriel Bilas* (St. Mary Magdalene: 810-750-1401), or *Fr. Matthew Butrie* (St. Nicholas Church: 810-744-0070). The important thing isn't who hears your confession, but that you participate in this Holy Sacrament on a regular basis ~ especially during the Nativity Fast!

Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have the right to the Tree of Life (*Christ in Holy Communion!*). (*Revelations 22:14*)

COMING EVENTS

Fasting Discipline On Wednesday, November 15th, we began the traditional forty-day **Nativity Fast** (also called the Christmas or Advent Fast) in preparation for 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.

TODAY	Ladies Auxiliary Meeting <i>after Church School</i>
Monday	Bible Study: <i>St. Paul's Letter to the Romans</i> 1:30-3:30pm
Tuesday	Vesperal Divine Liturgy for St. Nicholas at <i>St. Nicholas</i> (2143 South Center Road, 1/2 mile south of Lippincott in Burton) 6pm
Wednesday	Nativity Fast Prayer Service 6pm
Saturday	Great Vespers and Confessions 4pm

ST. GEORGE WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS DINNER 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 Wednesday, December 27th at 4pm. The cost is \$27 per person and must be paid in advance to reserve your spot. The deadline for reservations is Sunday, 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).

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The Nativity Fast ~ Preparing ourselves for the Birth, in the flesh, of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ

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

The Nativity Fast is already in progress for those on the Gregorian (New) Calendar [us!], and started on Tuesday, November 28th for those who follow the Julian (Old) Calendar [those in the Holy Land]. During this period of prescribed fasting, we are to abstain from all meats, dairy, eggs, cheeses, and all animal products. The Church does allow for fish on the weekends during the Nativity Fast.

Fasting is so important for the Orthodox Christian that many of the Fathers tell us we cannot consider ourselves to be Orthodox unless we keep the fasts. The spiritual discipline of keeping the fast is invaluable to the Christian life, for it helps make us lighter, and more open to spiritual growth. We enter fasting periods because we want to go deeper into our life in Christ, and gain strength in fighting the passions (i.e. our sins).

It is important to remember that fasting is not just about foods that we are to abstain from, but also about the quantity of food we eat. It is hardly a true fast if we eat the same amount of food that we would normally eat during a non-fast period.

If we hunt for foods that are simply vegan replacements for our standard meat and dairy meals, but are just as satisfying as non-fasting foods, we miss the point of the fast. It is hardly in the spirit of fasting if we consume fancy foods that don't seem any different than our regular meals, and in large portions. We undermine the purpose of the fast if we avoid the healthy and simple foods that help us draw closer to the Lord, as we prepare for the Nativity of Jesus Christ.

It is also important that we remember that the fast periods are not just about refraining from certain foods, but also about charity. The money we save during fast periods should be spent on helping the homeless, and those suffering in poverty. The Nativity Fast is the perfect time to give money to your parish, earmarked toward the parish charity funds that help those in need.

[for St. George, please memo your check or envelope: "Needy Parish Families".]

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