

# St. George Orthodox Church

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

Web Site: [saintgeorgeflint.org](http://saintgeorgeflint.org)

January 1, 2023

Father Joseph M. Abud, Pastor

Father Michael Bassett, Attached

## Glory to Jesus Christ! *Glory Forever!*

**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*)

- Aida Nassar for the health of her family especially husband **Karam** on the occasion of his birthday ~ *May God grant him many years!*
- We also pray for the servant of God who has fallen asleep in the Lord: **Aida** Raffoul (+November 24<sup>th</sup>).
- 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** 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, **Mariam** Ghanim (mother of Manal Abuaita), **Denise** Ghattas, **Phyllis** Good, **Ronald** Haddad, **Nadia** Ibrahim (mother of Ziyad), **Daisy** Isaac, **Dannie** Jones, **Loretta** Karpelena (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); **Samer** Kardooss who is to be 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-Khoury, **Katrina** and **Gary** Gagne, and **Taylor** and **Jeffrey** Tipton.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**COFFEE FELLOWSHIP** is in our Lounge and is hosted by our *St. George Ladies Auxiliary in loving memory of Aida Raffoul*.

**COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTS** Available dates: January 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> ~ 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](#).

- ⇒ Our **Banquet Center Renovation** has begun! We still want, and need, to have time to be with each other and have fellowship! It will be crowded, but we will be having it in our Lounge.
- ⇒ **COATROOM** Much of our coatroom is being used for storage. Please keep your coat, and your children's coats, with you in church ~ thank you!

**E-MEMO'S** If you would like to be added to our Parishioner Email List and receive our weekly *St. George E-Memo*, please send your e-mail address to [saintgeorgeflint@gmail.com](mailto:saintgeorgeflint@gmail.com).

**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 ❤️!

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

**ST. BASIL'S BREAD (VASILOPITA)** We remember and celebrate St. Basil the Great on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Part of our celebration is the making of St. Basil's Bread with two special coins (one for adults and one for children) and prayers over the bread (normally in our Banquet Center, but this year in our Lounge). See the end of the bulletin for more information.



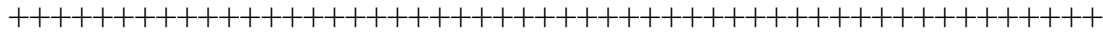
**Our stewardship, offerings, and donations are needed.** PLEASE help your parish by continuing to offer your gifts! If you cannot come to church, you can simply go to our parish website (<https://saintgeorgeflint.org/>) and donate on-line (or *use the QR code to the left*) or you can bring or mail your 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. Unfortunately, we did not receive our full order. A list of those missing is on the table, but will be coming soon. 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** There is no fasting from our Lord's Nativity, December 25<sup>th</sup> until January 4<sup>th</sup>. The traditional fasting discipline (*no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine, olive oil or their by-products*) is observed on Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup> in preparation for *Theophany*. There is no fasting on Friday, the Feast of our *Lord's Theophany*.

- Wednesday **Royal Hours for the Theophany of our Lord** 6pm
- Thursday **Evening Divine Liturgy for Theophany and Blessing of Water** 6pm
- Saturday **Great Vespers and Confessions** 4pm (note time change until further notice!)



# Examination of the Heart ~

## Spiritual progress comes through examination of the heart

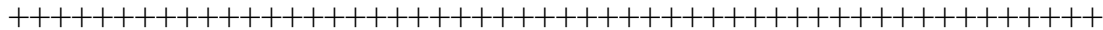
*by Abbot Tryphon, head of All-Merciful Savior Monastery on Vashon Island, Washington*

Not an hour should pass without taking time to examine our heart, for the hour of judgement (falling asleep) can come at any time, and we must be ready to give account to God for our life.

According to Saint Theophan the Recluse, when we examine our lives we find many instances when God shows His unmistakable mercy on us. Those moments we experienced trouble brewing, God delivered us. We must acknowledge these moments, and give thanks to God for His love.

When we practice examination of the heart, we do so with the knowledge that there is no spiritual improvement if we do not seek to please God with holiness of life. If we find good in our deeds, we must attribute it to Christ. If we find we've neglected our spiritual struggle, and acted with foolish abandon, we must turn to God in repentance.

Each moment of each hour must find us resolved to turn ourselves around, knowing that with God's help, we will defeat the enemy of our souls. Holiness comes only to those who struggle, but with God we have the grace needed to battle the enemy.



# THE TRADITION OF THE VASILOPITA

(pronounced "vǎ-sē-LŌ-pē-tǎ ")

The tradition of baking and cutting a special "pita" (which can mean a loaf of bread, a cake, or even a pie!) each year on January 1<sup>st</sup> is observed in honor of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia - hence its name Vasilopita (*Basil's bread*). This tradition is observed in both parish churches and in the homes of the faithful. What is the meaning of this tradition and how did it begin? For centuries upon centuries parents, grandparents, and Godparents have related the following story to Orthodox children about St Basil and the Vasilopita.



*One year, during a time of terrible famine, the emperor levied a sinfully excessive tax upon the people of Caesarea. The tax was such a heavy burden upon the already impoverished people that to avoid debtors' prison each family had to relinquish its few remaining coins as well as pieces of jewelry, including precious family heirlooms. Learning of this injustice against his flock, St Basil the Great, the archbishop of Caesarea, took up his bishop's staff and the book of the holy Gospels and came to his people's defense by fearlessly calling the emperor to repentance. By God's grace, the emperor did repent! He cancelled the tax and instructed his tax collectors to turn over to St. Basil all of the chests containing the coins and jewelry which had been paid as taxes by the people of Caesarea.*

*But now St. Basil was faced with the daunting and impossible task of returning these coins and pieces of jewelry to their rightful owners. After praying for a long time before the icons of our Master Christ and His All-holy Mother, St. Basil had all the treasures baked into one huge "pita." He then called all the townspeople to prayer at the cathedral and, after Divine Liturgy, he blessed and cut the "pita," giving a piece to each person. Wondrously each owner received in his piece of Vasilopita his own valuables. They all joyfully returned home, giving thanks to God who had delivered them from abject poverty and to their good and holy bishop, St. Basil the Great.*

In remembrance of that miracle wrought by God as a result of St Basil's love and defense of his people, Orthodox Christians have observed the tradition of the Vasilopita each year on January 1<sup>st</sup> - the date on which St Basil reposed in the Lord in the year 379. In some places the Vasilopita is prepared as a loaf of rich bread (like that used for Artoklasia), while in other places it takes the form of a spicy sheet cake (without frosting). But no matter what form a Vasilopita may take, they all have one thing in common - each contains a single coin. After placing the bread dough or batter in the proper baking pan, the baker makes with the foil wrapped coin the sign of the Cross over it, closes his/her eyes, and then secretly places it into the unbaked Vasilopita.

After the Vasilopita is baked and cooled, it is blessed and cut following Divine Liturgy

for the feast of St. Basil on January 1<sup>st</sup>. At churches it is blessed and cut in the parish fellowship hall by the bishop or priest, and in homes it is blessed and cut by the head of the household. The blessing of the Vasilopita usually begins with the Apolytikion of St. Basil the Great, chanted in Tone 1:

Thy sound hath gone forth into all the earth that received thy word.  
Thereby thou hast divinely taught the Faith;  
Thou hast made manifest the nature of things that be;  
Thou hast adorned the ways of man.  
O namesake of the royal priesthood,<sup>1</sup> our righteous Father Basil,  
Intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Then the following prayer may be said:

Let us pray unto the Lord. Lord, have mercy. O Creator of all things, Lord and King of the ages, plenteous in mercy and bountiful in goodness, who didst accept the Magi's gifts in Bethlehem, who art the Bread of life that came down from heaven, who by Thine authority didst establish the seasons and the years and dost hold our life in Thy hands. Hear us who pray to Thee on this holy day upon our entrance into the new year of Thy goodness and bless (+) this loaf/cake, which has been offered to Thy glory and in honour of our Father among the Saints Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Do Thou who art Benevolent, look down from Thy holy heaven and send down upon us, upon those who have offered these gifts and upon them that partake thereof, Thine heavenly gifts, for our hope is in Thee, the living God, unto the ages. Bless this parish (home, school, foundation, etc) and our entrances and exits; replenish our life with all good things and direct our footsteps that we may keep Thy divine commandments, for man shall not live by bread alone; Through the intercessions of Thy Most pure Mother, of our Father among the saints Basil the Great and of all Thy saints who from all ages have been well pleasing to Thee. Amen.

The sign of the Cross is then made over the Vasilopita with a knife while saying, "*In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*" All respond "*Amen.*" Then pieces of the Vasilopita are cut in the following order:

- 1<sup>st</sup> piece is set aside for Christ;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> piece for the Theotokos;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> piece for St. Basil, and the;
- 4<sup>th</sup> piece for the poor.

Then pieces are given to all present, beginning with the eldest and ending with youngest. He or she who receives the piece containing the coin is traditionally considered to be especially blessed for the New Year.

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<sup>1</sup> In Greek the name Basil means "royal" or "kingly."

~ Thursday, January 19, 2023, 5 – 9 PM ~  
 ~ At Assumption Greek Orthodox Church ~  
 ~ 2245 Baldwin Rd, Grand Blanc, MI ~

# 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Winter Dinner for the Holy Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery

## Evening Schedule

- ✓ 5:00 Vespers led by the Monastic Community
- ✓ 6:15 Social Time, Appetizers & Monastery Gift Shop
- ✓ 7:00 Dinner and Program
- ✓ 8:30 Closing Prayer & Good Night!



QR Code

### Minimum Suggested Dinner Donation

- \$35 / Adult
- \$25 / Child or Student

**Make Checks Out To:  
DORMITION MONASTERY**

### REGISTER / VOLUNTEER / DONATE by Sunday 1/15

- Online at [stgeorgeflint.org](http://stgeorgeflint.org) or use the above **QR Code**
- By paper: Fill out the form below, detach and give to your parish rep
- By phone: Call St. George Church (810-732-0720)

### PARISH REP's

- ✓ Assumption Greek Orthodox Church..... Joanne Schultz
- ✓ St. George Church ..... Fr. Michael Bassett
- ✓ St. Mary Magdalene Church..... Dn. Michael Schlaack
- ✓ St. Nicholas Church..... Susie Ford

*A Pan-Orthodox Event Sponsored by the Orthodox Churches of Genesee County*

**Detach below this line and give to your parish rep**

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### **PAPER REGISTRATION FORM**

**V = Volunteer / \$\$ = Amount Given / M = Meal / D = Donation Only**

Name (please give cell # if Volunteering)	V	\$\$	M / D