

January 31, 2021

HOLY AND WONDERWORKING UNMERCENARIES CYRUS AND JOHN

Live Streaming of Divine Services

St. George is open for all parishioners or 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.

Welcome to St. George! Thank you for attending today's Divine Services. 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 is invited to receive the final blessing of the priest and Holy Bread at the end of Liturgy.

In the **Divine Liturgy** of **St. John Chrysostom** *{the Golden-Mouth}*,
The **Special Hymns** we sing are on the Bilingual sheets from the links in Fr. Joe's email.

Holy Bread Offerings

- **Hiam** Bathish for her health and the health of her **children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren** and in loving memory of **James Gorr** (40 day) and husband **Emil**.
- Anwar and Janet Abueita for the health of their family and in loving memory of **Nasim Salomon** (4 year, Janet's brother).

Baptism/Chrismation Days

The Church School offers the Holy Bread for their teachers and/or students who are celebrating their *New Birth* {Baptism and/or Chrismation} into the Church this week:

- **Julianna** and **Eli** Helal – January 31st

May our children be children of the Light and heirs of eternal good things. {Baptismal Service}

- We also pray for the servants of God who have fallen asleep in the Lord: **Hannan** Awad (+December 24th, sister of Wafa Alsaouri), **Donald** Hawkins (+January 7th, husband of JoAnn), and **Issa** Odeh (+January 27th, uncle of Elham Ishak).

- 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, **Sahar** Abdallah, **Asma** Abuaita (sister of Janett), **Reader Fouad** Abuaita, **Shafiq**a Abuaitah, **Anwar** Abueita, **Wadia** Albaba, **Khalid** Al-Khouri, **Nabil** Andoni (brother of Vera Daoud), **Levi** Cooper, **Vera** Daoud, **Jimmy** David, **Evelyn** Delbridge, **Vera** Farah, **Averie** Fisher (niece of Sandy Thomas), **Mariam** Ghanim (mother of Manal Abuaita), **Phyllis** Good, **Carol** Haddad, **Shawna** Hale, **Gracyn** Haskins (granddaughter of Mike and Nancy Silpoch), **JoAnn** Hawkins, **Nassem** Helal (father of Amani Helal), **Daisy** Isaac, **Nawal** and **Nimer** Iseid, **David** Jordan (cousin of Dn. Mike), **Sally** Joseph, **Michael** Khal, **Nakhleh** Khoury, **Nicola** Khoury, **George** and **Jeanette** Nassif, **Aida** Raffoul, **Deborah** Salim, **Ellis** Salim, **Nicholas** Saseen, **Michael** Silpoch, and **William** Sophiea Jr.
- We also pray for those who are with child: **Nawal** (John) Abud [son of Fr. Joe and Kh. Leslee], Dr. **Lindsey** [Farah] (Dr. Ryan) Brunner, **Jenny** [Abueita] (Tony) Salsa, and **Sarah** (Matthew) Thomas [son of Doug and Sandy].

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH SCHOOL HAS BEGUN! We want ALL of our St. George children in our education program. To make this happen, we need email addresses for our children and their parents! Please send them to Director Janet Abueita (cooeita@aol.com) as soon as you can so none of our children are left out and they can enjoy and learn about our life in Christ. Every month, our registered students will receive a packet of fun things in the mail (an email is sent to everyone on Fr. Joe's parishioner email list). Then on the last Sunday of each month (**THIS SUNDAY, January 31st**) our teachers have our CS Zoom Sunday at 12 Noon! Be a part of the FUN and send your email addresses to Janet TODAY! If you haven't done it before, contact Janet ASAP so your children can be part of the fun!

2020 GENERAL ASSEMBLY As you know, we postponed our scheduled November 8, 2020 Parish General Assembly with the hope the pandemic would subside; unfortunately, that has not taken place, yet. Consequently, our 180 Voting Members of St. George were mailed a ballot to vote on 2 important items: the *Proposed Budget* (Motion A) and *Using our SBA Loan* (Motion B). In the mailing, besides the ballots, are: 1) Cover Letter from Chairman Fadi Rishmawi and Fr. Joe, 2) Proposed Budget (which is essentially the same as last year), and 3) Proposal to use the SBA Loan for a Pavilion and Banquet Center renovations. **Your ballots need to be brought to the church or sent in the mail by February 7, 2021.** We need at least 60 ballots returned for a quorum and valid vote. We had three nominees for the three spots on the Parish Council so no vote is needed. Thank you to *Aida Nassar* for her many years of love and service on the Parish Council; we will miss her! Congratulations to *Areen Bathish*, *Tony Daoud*, and *Sub-Deacon Salim Hanna*!

OUR STEWARDSHIP, OFFERINGS, & DONATIONS Though everyone cannot attend church due to limited capacity or other reasons, our stewardship, offerings, and donations are still very badly needed. PLEASE help your parish by continuing to offer! If you cannot come to church, you can simply go to our parish website (<https://saintgeorgeflint.org/>) and donate on-line 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!

PLEASE FOLLOW OUR PROCEDURES Because of serious health concerns, **we all must wear masks at all times over our mouths and nose.** If this is difficult for you at this time, please watch our live-stream from home instead. Remember we are venerating icons by bowing (*not kissing or touching*) and the same for the priest's hand and the chalice at Holy Communion. Further, **our clergy and chanters are the only ones who should be singing at this time.** If you feel the need to sing, please do it **softly and with your mask on.**

COMING EVENTS

This Week	The traditional fasting discipline (<i>no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine, olive oil, and their by-products</i>) is also observed on Wednesday and Friday.
Monday	Combined Pan-Orthodox <i>Vesperal Divine Liturgy</i> for the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple at Assumption 2245 E Baldwin Road, Grand Blanc 6pm
Wednesday	Arabic-English Bible Study <i>Gospel of John the Evangelist</i> 12-2pm
Saturday	Great Vespers and Confessions 5pm

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Holy Water~*Drinking Holy Water is the best and most effective medicine*

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

The Orthodox Church frequently uses holy water in rites of blessing and exorcism, and the Church also sanctifies the water used for baptism with a special blessing. Orthodox do not normally bless themselves with holy water upon entering a church like Catholics do, but a quantity of holy water is typically kept in a font placed in the narthex (entrance) of the church, where it is available for anyone who would like to take some of it home with them. Unlike our Catholic friends, it is customary for Orthodox to drink holy water, to use it in their cooking and to sprinkle their houses with it.

Often, when objects are blessed in the church (such as the palms on Palm Sunday, Icons or sacred vessels) the blessing is completed by a triple sprinkling with holy water using the words, *“This (name of item) is blessed by the sprinkling of this holy water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”*

Holy water is sprinkled on items or people when they are blessed outside the church building as part of the prayers of blessing. It is common for Orthodox Christians to bring newly bought cars to the church for blessing. Holy water is sprinkled inside and out, as well as under the hood. Similarly, in Alaska, the fishing boats are sprinkled with holy water at the start of the fishing season as the priest prays for the crews' safety and success.

Orthodox Christians most often bless themselves with holy water by drinking it, and many Orthodox Christians will drink a small amount daily with their morning prayers. It may also be used for informal blessings when no clergy are present, as parents might bless their children with holy water before they leave the house for school or play. It is also not unusual for pious Orthodox Christians to put a little holy water in their food as they cook their meals, and is also often taken with prayer in times of distress or temptation.

There are two rites for blessing holy water: the Great Blessing of Waters which is held on the Feast of Theophany, and the Lesser Blessing of Waters which is conducted according to need during the rest of the year. Both forms are based upon the Rite of Baptism. Certain feast days call for the blessing of Holy Water as part of their liturgical observance.

The use of holy water is based on the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, and the Orthodox interpretation of this event. In the view of the Church, John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, and the people came to have their sins washed away by the water. Since Jesus had no sin, but was God incarnate, his baptism had the effect not of washing away Jesus' sins, but of blessing the water, making it holy—and with it all of creation, so that it may be used fully for its original created purpose to be an instrument of life.

Jesus' baptism is commemorated in the Eastern Orthodox churches at the Feast of Theophany (literally "*manifestation of God*") on January 6 (for those Orthodox Christians who use the Julian Calendar, January 6 falls on the Gregorian Calendar date of January 19). At the Vespers of this feast, a font of holy water is typically blessed in the church, to provide holy water for the parish's use in the coming year. The next morning, after the Divine Liturgy a procession goes from the church to a nearby river, lake or other body of water, to bless that water as well. This represents the redemption of all creation as part of humanity's salvation.

In the following weeks, the priest typically visits the homes of the members of the parish and leads prayers of blessing for their families, homes (and even pets), sprinkling them with holy water. Again, this practice is meant to visibly represent God's sanctifying work in all parts of the people's lives.

Water is consecrated by a heartfelt invocation of the Holy Spirit, with this prayer, "*That there may descend upon these waters the cleansing operation of the super-substantial Trinity, let us pray to the Lord*". We ask the Holy Trinity to cleanse the water because only God who created water can make it holy.

The Bible says nothing about consecration of water, just as it doesn't address many other issues confronting Christians. This is because the Bible is the word of God, and not a sort of instructional book that records the tiniest details of what happens in the Church. Just because something is not explicitly written in the Bible does not mean that it has nothing to do with church life and must be avoided.

The Holy Apostle Paul said, "*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). The apostle urged Christians from the city of Thessalonica to stand fast in the faith, and hold fast the traditions that he taught them, whether by word (orally) or our epistle (i.e., letters of St. Paul, which made it into the biblical canon).

The Great Consecration of Waters is an element of the universal ritual of Baptism held by early Christians on the day of Theophany. Water is consecrated by praying to the Holy Spirit to descend onto the water and to sanctify it, as well as through the Life-Giving Cross of our Lord, which is dipped into the font by a priest three times. This ritual reminds us of the ancient Old Testament narrative when the bitter waters of Marah turned sweet and drinkable when Moses immersed a certain kind of wood into them, following a revelation from the Lord. A priest dips his cross into a font or a water reservoir to turn water into a source of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Water is so important to the Christian life that Saint Luke the Surgeon, Archbishop of Simfe, recommended that we should "*Drink Holy Water, the more often, the better. It is the best and most effective medicine. I'm not saying this as a priest, I'm saying it as a doctor, from my medical experience.*"