

December 17, 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*)

- Habeeb and Denise Ghattas for the health of their family and in loving memory of Denise's parents **Khouriyah Loretta** (40 day) and **Father Basil Karpelenia** (17 year).
- Elias and Asmahan Helal for the health of their family especially son **Rodny** and his family.
- Suhair & Sary Awwad for the health of their family especially daughter **Maya** on the occasion of her 16th birthday ~ *may God grant her many years!*
- St. George Parish for the health **clergy and faithful** of the **Holy Forefathers of Christ Orthodox Church** in Beit Sahour, Palestine on their patronal feast day ~ *May God grant them many years!*
- We also pray for the servants of God who have fallen asleep in the Lord: **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**, **Fr. Joe** Abud, **Sahar** Abdallah, **Reader Fouad** and **Soad** Abuaita, **Philip** and **Janett** Abuaita, **Rasha** Abuaita, **Shafiqa** Abuaitah, **Laila** Abud, **George** Abueita, **Georgette** Abueita, **Jane** Abueita, **Mary** Abueita, **Youssif** Abousamra, **William** Alsaouri, **Naila** Banna, **Vera** Daoud, **Said** Farah, **Elias** Gantos, **Subdeacon George** and **Suad** Gantous, **Phyllis** Good, **Ronald** Haddad, **Daisy** Isaac, **John** Joseph, **Karen** Mortensen, **Karam** Nassar, **Laura** Nassar, **Jeanette** Nassif, **Adam** Odeh, **Rahmeh** Rashmawi, **Elaine** Shaheen, **Michael** Silpoch, and **Sandy** Thomas.
- 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** Mikroudīs, **Vera** and **Luay** Sababa, & **Jacqueline** (daughter of Anwar & Janet Abueita) and **John** Timm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP is hosted by *Suhair & Sary Awwad*.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTS Available dates: December 31st, January 14th, 21st, and 28th ~ sign-up poster and hosting information are 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**, please contact Manal Abuaita.

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 THIS 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).

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!*

“If a king wanted to take possession of his enemy's city, he would begin by cutting off the water and the food and so his enemies, dying of hunger, would submit to him. It is the same with the passions of the flesh; if a man goes about fasting and hungry the enemies of his soul grow weak.”

Abba John the Dwarf, from *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

Divine Services for the Nativity Fast and Christmas Eve

- ❖ 2nd Sunday before the Nativity, December 17th ~ **Holy Forefathers of Christ**
Matins – 8:50am **Divine Liturgy** – 10am
- ❖ Wednesday, December 20th **Nativity Fast Prayer Service** at 6pm
- ❖ Friday, December 22nd – **Royal Hours of the Nativity** – 6pm
- ❖ Sunday before the Nativity, December 24th ~ **Holy Fathers of Christ**
Matins – 8:50am **Divine Liturgy** – 10am
- ❖ **Nativity Services, Sunday night, December 24th:**
Nativity Festal Matins – 4:50pm **Nativity Divine Liturgy** – 6pm
- ❖ Nativity Day, December 25th ~ no Divine Services
This also begins the **Twelve Days of Christmas** until January 5th!

CHRISTMAS SERVICES Since there are a huge diversity of family commitments, customs, and social obligations, if you cannot attend our celebration of the Nativity of our Lord on Christmas Eve, Assumption, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. Nicholas will be celebrating the Nativity Divine Liturgy on Monday, December 25th all beginning at 10am and you are welcome to attend:

Assumption 2245 East Baldwin Road, Grand Blanc, MI 48439

St. Mary Magdalene 2439 South Long Lake Road, Fenton, MI 48430

St. Nicholas 2143 Center Rd, Burton, MI 48519

PAN-ORTHODOX BOOK CLUB The Pan Orthodox Book Club will meet (in person and on Zoom) this Tuesday, December 19th at 6pm at St. George. We are reading **On the Incarnation** by St. Athanasius the Great which is a perfect read as we near our celebration of our Lord's Nativity (Incarnation)! Fr. Michael will send out thoughts each week to help focus our reading). The online link for the book is at <https://www.onthewing.org/user/Athanasius%20-%20On%20the%20Incarnation.pdf>. It can also be purchased in many places or may be in your parish bookstore. This book is fairly short. Please read and come prepared to discuss. When we meet, we will also read out loud the short *Protoevangelium of James*, a legendary writing from the 2nd century which gives details of the conception, birth, and early life of the Mother of God as well as the Nativity of Christ. Anyone is welcome to attend! A Zoom link will be sent before the meeting. Please contact Fr. Michael Bassett (frdmike@gmail.com or 989-627-9580) for more information or to be added to their distribution list!

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. The 2nd period is from December 20th through 24th, when the traditional fasting discipline (*no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine, oil and their by-products*) is observed except on Saturday and Sunday when *wine and oil* are permitted.

Wednesday *Nativity Fast Prayer Service* 6pm
Friday *Royal Hours for the Nativity of our Lord* 6pm
Saturday *Great Vespers and Confessions* 4pm

The Sins of Others ~

If We Are To Win The Battle We Must Focus Only On Our Own Sins

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

When we take our eyes off our own failings, shortcomings, and sins, we notice the failings of others. As the sins of others get our attention, our focus turns away from our own struggles with the passions, and we begin to fall further into sin, our eyes having turned away from the Lord. When our focus is no longer turned towards the conquering of our own passions, our hearts become vulnerable, and we begin to expend our energy on picking apart our neighbor. Their sins become the hot topic with our gossiping friends, and we fall further into the rottenness of our own sins. At this stage, Abba Sisoës asks, *“How can we guard the heart if the tongue leaves the door of the fortress open?”*

If we are to take ourselves out of the mire of sin, and with Christ’s help, be transformed and made whole, our eyes must never look to the sins of others, *“For a person cannot be disquieted or concerned about other people’s affairs if he is satisfied with concentrating on the work of his own hands.”* (St. John Cassian)

As we continue the Nativity Fast, let us refocus ourselves, and prepare for the struggle ahead. Let us make this Fast the most profitable of all, with the goal of acquiring a humble and contrite heart. If we focus on our own failings, only, we will find this Lenten season will be the most profitable of all, and we will be lifted up by God, and our celebration of the Nativity of Christ will be the most glorious of them all.

Remember, the Nativity Fast was created for us as a time for repentance, renewal, and the restoration of heart, mind, and body. Let us keep our spiritual eyes on Christ, and be open to the healing of our soul that comes for us through this very Christ Jesus, Whom we worship and adore.



The Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch

December 17, 2023

Christ is in our Midst!

During this Advent period of our Orthodox Faith, we are called to focus on our words, deeds, and thoughts. We prepare, in joyful anticipation and gratitude, for the Greatest Gift of all - the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. On behalf of The Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, we are thankful for your selfless support of The Order's ministry. Your unconditional gift affects the lives of countless people within our Orthodox Faith, our Antiochian Orthodox community and beyond. Your gift creates a life-changing ripple effect that is immeasurable in its impact on individuals and families we will never come to know personally. Thank you.

For almost 50 years, you and those before you made a conscious decision to put the needs of others ahead of your own. Your gift is not simply a donation deposited and forgotten for the next 12 months. It is so much more than a check written or a charge on your credit card. It is an act of Faith in support of a life-changing ministry that:

- Provides reassurance to our clergy during their golden years from funding of the **Retired Clergy Fund**. Even more, it expresses gratitude toward our beloved clergy for their years of being our guide and comforter during our times of sorrow and uncertainty, as well as a welcomed friend in our times of joy.
- Helps plant seeds of Orthodoxy, the true faith, throughout North America with the Order's support of the **Department of Missions and Evangelism**.
- Supports youth programs that strengthen the faith and prepare the future leaders of our parishes and Archdiocese through **Youth Ministry, Summer Camp Scholarships, SOYO Leadership & Youth Worker Training, Christian Education and College Conference**.
- Provides summer camp scholarships for children that would not otherwise be able to attend camp due to financial reasons. But even more, provides knowledge, relationships, and memories that were created in God-filled environments and are the essential tools to help our children remain steadfast in their Orthodox faith as they face the challenges that will test their Orthodox Christian beliefs.

Through the generosity of our many Governing Council volunteers who give of their time, talents, and treasure, we are thankful to share that only 7.7% and 7.2% of total revenue went to administrative expense in FY 2022 and the last 5 fiscal years, respectively. Together, we were able to support the many ministries of the Archdiocese over the past 7 ½ years in a meaningful way.

Clergy	\$2,266,260
Retired Clergy Allowance	\$2,070,000
Married Seminarian Assistance	\$95,795
Clergy Symposium & Convention Assistance*	\$100,465
Archdiocese Youth	\$2,604,446
Summer Camp Scholarships	\$1,153,184
Youth Ministry	\$910,000
SOYO Special Olympics	\$26,000
SOYO Leadership & Youth Worker Training	\$123,334
Christian Education	\$303,303
College Conference	\$88,625

Archdiocese Development & Growth	\$2,085,265
Missions & Evangelism	\$985,803
Parish Development / Mission Grants	\$189,553
Internet Ministry	\$758,303
Antiochian House of Studies	\$151,606
Other Grants	\$437,440
Project Mexico	\$60,000
IOCC	\$90,000
Syrian Relief	\$140,000
Other Archdiocese Projects & Needs	\$147,440

Time Period: Jan 1, 2016 - August 31, 2023

So, as you contemplate your support of the Order over the years or consider becoming a part of The Order's ministry for the first time, we leave you with what we believe should be in your heart. These words are what guide our work as a Governing Council and come from the teachings of St. Ignatius himself:

"Let no man's place, or dignity, or riches, puff him up; and let no man's low condition or poverty abase him. For the chief points are faith towards God, hope towards Christ, the enjoyment of those good things for which we look, and love towards God and our neighbor."

In His service,

Roger J. David
North American Chairperson, The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch