

# St. George Orthodox Church

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

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

V. Rev. Father Joseph M. Abud, Pastor

Protodeacon Michael Bassett

May 10, 2020

**المسيح قام! حقا قام! Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!**

**4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF PASCHA: RAISING OF THE PARALYTIC**

Confessions  
8:30-9:30am

Matins p.44  
8:50am

Divine Liturgy p.91  
10:00am

Memorial Service  
Trisagion p.183

## Live Streaming of Divine Services

ALL services are served only with clergy, an altar server, and a few chanters. They are not open to the public. Please view our livestream at:

YouTube ~ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpLWfxMIJK4uQOV41ekE6Wg> or

Facebook ~ <https://www.facebook.com/St-George-Flint-254638524560302/>

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.

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

## Holy Bread Offerings

- Daisy Isaac and the Issac, Jehnsen, and Harris Families for the health of their families and in loving memory of mother, grandmother, and great grandmother **Helen** (22 years).

## Baptism/Chrismation Days

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

- **Liam** Cooper and **Kirolous** Meshraky – May 15<sup>th</sup>

*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: **Kimberly** Fanous (40 day), **Souad** Khoury (40 day), **Hiam** Awad (40 day), **Natashia** Sous (40 day), **David** Daoud (40 day), **Lucille** Shadeed (+April 11<sup>th</sup>, sister of JoAnn Hawkins), **Evelyn** Deligorges (+April 12<sup>th</sup>, sister of Alex Deligorges), and **Helga** Lamb (+April 30<sup>th</sup>, mother of Rick, owner of Swartz Funeral Home).
- 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), **Anwar** Abueita, **Eman** Abufarha, **Wadia** Albaba, Dr. **Usama** Albedd (brother of Sally Abuaita), **Naila** Banna, **Levi** Cooper, **Vera** Daoud, **Alex** Deligorges, **Micheline** El-Chaer, **Vera** Farah, **Averie** Fisher (niece of Sandy Thomas), **Mariam** Ghanim (Manal's mother), **Elias** Gantos, **Phyllis** Good, **Shawna** Hale, **Donald** Hawkins, **Walid** and **Amal** Hayek, **Daisy** Isaac, **Imad** Isaac (friend of St. George), **Nawal** and **Nimer** Iseid, **Mary** Khal (sister of Aida Nassar), **Nakhleh** Khoury, **Nicola** Khoury, **George** Nassif, **Aida** Raffoul, **Deborah** Salim, **Eva** Saseen (daughter of

Nicholas), **Nicholas** Saseen, **Elaine** Shaheen, **Michael** Silpoch, **Habib** Skafi, **William** Sophiea Jr, **Lois** Teunion, **Vicki** Toma (Fr. Joe's sister), and **Yacoub** Zureikat (father of Sahar Abdallah and Dr. George).

- We also pray for those who are with child: **Renea** (Rakan) Bayouk, **Andrea** Jones [daughter of Nasri and Carol Haddad], **Jennifer** (Martin) Khoshaba [daughter of Najwa Joubran], and **Katie** (Philip) Quackenboss [daughter of Bill and Sue Shaheen].

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTS** Available dates: May 31<sup>st</sup> ~ sign-up poster and hosting information is in the Lounge and includes bringing whatever you wish to serve and cleaning up afterwards. St. George provides coffee, cups, cream, and sugar at a charge to the host of \$25. For more information, contact Manal Abuaita (810-577-0028).

**OUR STEWARDSHIP, OFFERINGS, AND DONATIONS** This is a very difficult time for us and everyone around the world as we deal with COVID-19. Though parishioners are not able to attend church, PLEASE help our parish by continuing to send your offerings to St. George. This can simply be done by going to our website (<https://saintgeorgeflint.org/>) or by sending your offerings to St. George in the mail.

**PARKING LOT PLEDGES** Our goal is \$80,000 (we have raised over \$40,000 so far including half of the Valentine Gala profits) and we are so thankful for those who have donated and pledged. If you have not already, please pick up a form, fill it out, and send it to the church. Remember our donations to the Parking Lot are separate (above and beyond) our weekly offerings. Again, thank you to our donors!

Fr. Joe and Leslee Abud  
Dn. Mike and Pam Bassett  
St. George Preschool  
Khader and Lucy Abuaita  
Anwar and Janet Abueita  
Laila Abud

Anonymous  
Ladies Auxiliary  
Tony Daoud  
Ayman and Wafaa Elias  
John and Theresa Farah  
Betty Froberg

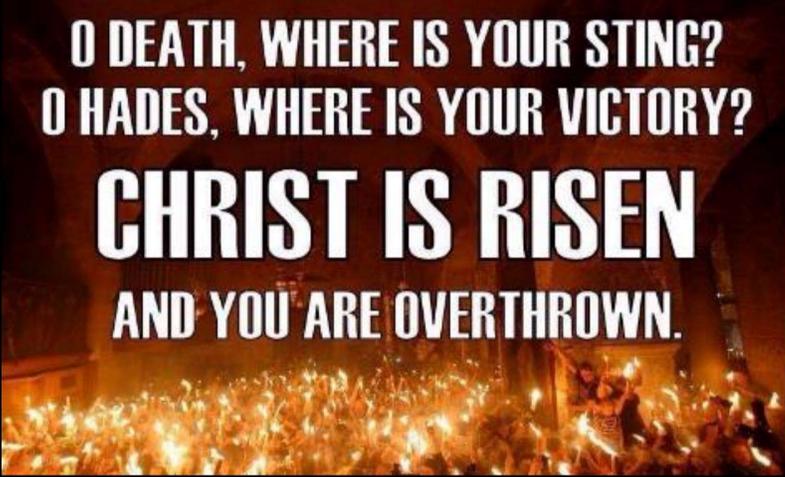
Dr. David and May Gantos  
Bill and Sue Shaheen  
Richard Shaheen  
Bob and Lois Teunion

## COMING EVENTS

This Week	There is no fasting until our celebration of the Great Feast of our Lord's Ascension into Heaven on the 40 <sup>th</sup> day after His Resurrection (May 28 <sup>th</sup> ).
Thursday	<b>Parish Council Meeting</b> 6:15pm
Saturday	<b>Great Vespers</b> 5pm

While praying, a person should not have any thoughts, but rather become selfless. Even the Holy Fathers say this: *"While at prayer, behave as though there were no one else in the world, just you and God."* When praying, we shouldn't be preoccupied with ourselves, because in that case, we are so absorbed in our own needs, that we ourselves are detrimental to our prayer. We interfere with our own prayer, and become an obstacle. We often think that evil is out there somewhere, but if it were not for the evil that exists in us, the evil "out there" would not be able to touch us.

Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica



O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?  
O HADES, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY?  
**CHRIST IS RISEN**  
AND YOU ARE OVERTHROWN.

## **The Spiritual Benefits of the Pandemic ~**

**Let us allow this pandemic to be the force that transforms the world**

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

Entertainment has come to take on a central role in many people's lives, becoming so important as to have replaced personal interaction with neighbors and friends. I'm old enough to remember the day when neighborhoods were filled with homes sporting large front porches. On hot summer nights families would be sitting on their porches, sipping lemonade and waving at passing neighbors who were actually out for a stroll. Now we all have air conditioners, and front porches have been replaced with private back patios, where no one can see us. Gone are the days of neighborliness.

Even in our spiritual lives we have tended to live in isolation. Many Christians have chosen to reserve their prayers to issues revolving around finances, or regarding health matters, or that of a family member. Yet we rarely think of the importance of corporate prayer with family and friends, apart from the Sunday Liturgy. Prayer has become a private matter, rarely shared with others.

So, now that we've collectively created an age of self-exile, we enter into a pandemic, where we are forced into an extreme exile, living alone in our homes and apartments, forced to distance ourselves even from our closest friends and relatives. Perhaps this forced exile should be seen as a wakeup call, even allowed by God for our ultimate spiritual benefit, for it has gifted us with the challenge of reaching out to those very people we've been too busy to acknowledge.

Now we have the God-given opportunity to reach out to the elderly neighbor, who because of the danger of the Covid-19 virus, dare not shop at the grocery store, and who is deprived of spending a Sunday with their friends in the parish, or an afternoon with their grandchildren.

The little neighborhood children who have been deprived by the pandemic from playing with other neighborhood children, stuck in apartments with parents who are often on edge with worry about the future, and, sometimes, given over to domestic violence.

So, what can we do? We can offer to shop for the elderly couple, for whom an outing to the grocery store could put them in danger of getting the coronavirus. We can organize a distancing block party for the children of the neighborhood, leading them with songs and laughter, all from a safe distance. We can encourage our church community, with an online fundraiser to sustain the parish during a time of greatly reduced financial support, given the fact that people are not purchasing candles, or dropping money in the collection plate.

We can make a special effort, each and every day, to call someone we know is likely all alone, and suffering from depression because of forced isolation. We can even put aside our own sadness, and send a friend a YouTube comedy that would lift their spirits, or a video of a favorite musical group that would bring a smile to their face. We can FaceTime a friend or neighbor, giving them the opportunity to visually see someone who loves them.

Perhaps best of all, we can seriously start praying for an end to the suffering of so many people around the world, and ask God to use this pandemic as the vehicle by which we see real change in our own heart, so that we come out of this isolation with a renewed commitment to making a difference in our world, spreading the joy of Christ to our family, our neighbors, our community, and even into all the world.

Now is possibly the best opportunity most of us will ever have to become true, Christ-centered, individuals, who really care for others, and truly love God. By looking beyond our own fear, our own loneliness, and our own despair, we can become agents for ushering in the Kingdom of God. Like Saint Seraphim of Sarov, by acquiring inner peace, a thousand around us will be saved.

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## **Pandemic ~ Why is God allowing this pandemic?**

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

Saint Paisios of the Mount Athos said, *“So in every test, let us say, ‘Thank you, my God, because this was needed for my salvation.’”* This is because a person has salvation not only by his good deeds, but also by his patient suffering of various griefs, illnesses, misfortunes, and failures (Luke 16:19-31, Mark 8:31-38, Romans 6:3-11, Hebrews 12:1-3, and Galatians 6:14).

Jesus Christ gives us the power which is needed for transformation, and prepares us to live with a strength under the most difficult conditions, preparing us for the peace

that is eternal. History is filled with periods of trial and tribulation, but we've always come out stronger in the end, and we will come out of this pandemic as well.

Without suffering, we cannot join ourselves to the cross, and when we do take up our cross in suffering, it is with our Co-Suffering Savior. Sickness and suffering are not given to us by a wrathful and punitive God because we have sinned, but rather allowed by this loving God who co-suffers with us. It is Western juridical misconceptions concerning sin which has tended to distort a proper recognition of suffering and its connection to sin.

Our world has been in a bad place for a very long time, with priorities for most people, and their nations, centered on the acquisition of wealth and comfort. Western Europe has long abandoned her Christian roots, as has America. In these latter times, is it any wonder a pandemic that has closed down the world's economy, and forced millions to be sequestered in their homes, is being allowed by God as a wakeup call to all of us?

As hard as it is, we must use this difficult time to look inward, and take a very serious look at ourselves, and the direction we have been taking. Now is the time we need to refocus on that which is of eternal value. Our children need their parents to refocus the family on Christ, putting aside everything else. Even as individuals, we need to enter into that silent place, perhaps with the aid of the Jesus Prayer, and find the true peace "that passes understanding".

The Church's history is filled with times like these, where, even during terrible persecutions, Christians found solace in their walk with Jesus Christ. Our Co-Suffering Savior is not abandoning us, but rather, joining Himself with our suffering. We will all get through this period of pandemic, together with the extreme economic hardship that has befallen the world, and return, collectively, to being of Christ. In eternity, it is not about being an American, a Russian, or a Brit, it is about being citizens of the Kingdom of God.

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His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE**  
OF NORTH AMERICA

May 6, 2020

Beloved Clergy,

Greetings to you and your families as we continue our celebration of Holy Pascha! Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!

I offer my whole-hearted gratitude to each of you for your holy labors over these many difficult weeks. Our flocks have suffered through a time of great anxiety, fear, confusion, and unknown, and you have had the added challenge of ministering to them struggling with our natural and holy impulse to gather in the churches. You have had to feed them without being able to nourish them with the Holy sacraments. As pastors, this situation has been immensely painful and frustrating for us all, but you have bravely endured and strengthened your people with the help of our Lord, and I thank you.

By the Grace of God, we are entering a time of a phased reopening in many places, and we have been at work over the last several weeks studying how we can safely return our people to the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. We must be prudent and proceed in a measured way over these vitally important weeks. I ask your patience, and I ask your prayers as we begin this process.

Effective on May 6, 2020, my brother bishops and I have decided to begin with an initial phase of welcoming our people back into the liturgical and sacramental life of our parishes. We will continue to study the situation in consultation with our Orthodox Christian health professionals over the next few weeks to decide on whether to open more widely. Again, this directive is meant to be a temporary, intermediate step that we expect will be followed shortly by a more robust opening. Please pray that we can continue the process of reopening without any reversal of the positive trends we have been seeing the last few weeks.

*"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)*

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These are the directives that must be followed in areas that have either lifted their stay-at-home orders or have given churches an exemption:

- ❖ Services are to be conducted by one celebrant (without a second priest or deacon), one altar server, and two chanters – one standing on each side of the solea. Due to the recent research about the spread of the virus through singing, we will not proceed with choirs yet.
- ❖ An additional ten members of the laity may attend in rotation with physical distancing throughout the nave.
- ❖ There is no longer a limit to the number of services per week. (The website is being updated to include weekday liturgies for St. John the Theologian, Mid-Pentecost, Sts. Constantine & Helen, Leavetaking of Pascha, and Ascension as minimum of weekday liturgies to be offered.)
- ❖ Parishioners may ask to receive Holy Communion and Confession by appointment throughout the week at the discretion of the pastor.
- ❖ Churches may be open for individual prayer – no more than ten people at a time – by appointment or posted times.
- ❖ Sacraments and funerals may be served with no more than ten persons in addition to the clergy at a time. Funerals are highly recommended to be done in funeral homes or at the gravesite due to the difficulty of regulating crowd sizes.
- ❖ Non-liturgical gatherings are not to resume at this point. I encourage all of you to continue organizational meetings, Bible studies, Ask Abouna sessions, etc. online.

Please note the following regarding safety precautions until further notice:

- ❖ The church must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected – especially pews and other highly-touched surfaces and items – after each service.
- ❖ Doors and windows should be opened during and after services, if possible, to allow fresh air into the building.
- ❖ Hand sanitizer must be available at the entrances for the faithful to use upon entering and leaving the church. If hand sanitizer is difficult to attain in large sizes in your area, you should encourage the faithful to bring their own.
- ❖ The faithful should be highly encouraged to wear face-coverings. The celebrant should not wear a face covering while serving but should consider doing so at all other times. Any further questions arising from local directives regarding the wearing of face coverings may be asked of your local bishop.
- ❖ There should be empty rows of pews between the faithful to allow appropriate social distancing between persons not living in the same household.

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

- ❖ Announcements should be made and signage posted in the narthex asking those who feel sick or have a fever to stay home and asking everyone to observe proper hygiene practices – no hugging, handshakes, or kissing, proper handwashing, cough/sneeze into shoulder, etc.
- ❖ In the first two phases of the CDC reopening strategies, those who are elderly or at-risk should be encouraged to remain home for services. To receive Communion and Confession, they may come to the church by appointment.
- ❖ Announce to the faithful that we will continue to offer Communion according to our Tradition, but all should allow the priest to pour the Body and Blood by opening their mouths wide and not closing their lips on the spoon. If the spoon does touch the mouth of the communicant, it should be wiped on the kalima.
- ❖ An usher should be assigned to direct people in line for Communion or Antidoron spaced appropriately. Tape could be placed on the floor to further help with spacing.
- ❖ The priest should cleanse his hands periodically through services – especially right before “Holy Things are for the Holy” and once again before giving Communion to the faithful.
- ❖ Antidoron should be given by the priest or a server – either of which must wear a plastic glove. The priest may wear a face covering to hand out antidoron and greet the faithful after the service.
- ❖ There should be no passing of collection trays. The trays may be stationed in the narthex.
- ❖ Given the inability to confess during Lent and the long absence from Communion, please encourage the faithful to avail themselves of the sacrament of confession. The spiritual conversation aspect of confession may be done either over the phone with the absolution prayer being given in person with physical distancing being observed or all in-person with physical distancing being observed. You have our blessing to say the absolution prayer from a distance without placing the stole on the penitent’s head during this time.
- ❖ For those asking for Communion by appointment, ask that they read the Prayers of Preparation for Holy Communion and/or the service of Typika before receiving.

If a parish is in a locality that has moved into phase 1 of their reopening, the priest and parish council may ask their local bishop to increase the number of faithful at the services consistent with local ordinances. The parish and local hierarch should review the relevant directives and revise the above measures, as necessary. The parish and hierarch should also consider whether reported cases and flu like illnesses have been

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

decreasing for a period of no less than fourteen days according to the CDC. If the conditions appear favorable and the local ordinances allow for it, the local hierarchy may give a blessing to increase to a *maximum* of 25% of the seating capacity of the church's nave to ensure adequate distancing.

In areas where the local authorities continue to enforce stay-at-home orders that limit services only to those persons necessary to livestream services (currently New York, New Jersey, California, Kentucky, New Mexico, and Washington), the Archdiocese will partner with other Orthodox jurisdictions and Christian communities to petition for an immediate reconsideration of these policies and a certification of our clergy as essential workers and communal worship as an essential act – as we have begun to do in California. In the meantime, parishes must abide by their local and state authorities regarding gatherings. Unless prohibited by the authorities, parishes in these areas are not limited as to the number of services that may be served and may rotate the limited number of faithful to participate.

This initial phase of reopening must be strictly abided by over the next few weeks. We will continue to prepare for the next phase of this process as we monitor the situation around the country as areas reopen – sometimes in ways contrary to CDC recommendations. Our goal is to present a more robust plan of opening our churches in anticipation of the Leave-taking of Pascha later this month. We ask you to exercise your pastoral discretion in planning to rotate the faithful in as fair a way as possible. We ask that you remind our faithful that we are doing these things out of love and care for our flock, not out of fear.

Again, I thank you for your patience and perseverance during these challenging weeks. Please continue to pray for continued progress in the battle against this deadly pandemic and for the forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing pouring forth from the Empty Tomb to be granted abundantly to our suffering world.

With prayers for you and your families as well as your flocks to be kept safe and in good health for completion of every good work, I remain,

Your Father in the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Metropolitan Joseph". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**+JOSEPH**

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

cc. Our Hierarchs

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