

St. George Orthodox Church

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V. Rev. Father Joseph M. Abud, Pastor

Dn. Michael Bassett

الظهور الإلهي

THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY OR BAPTISM) OF OUR LORD

January 6, 2013

Altar Servers: **Captains and Assistants**

Next Week – **St. John** team

Confessions
8:30-9:30am

Matins p.44
8:50am

Divine Liturgy p.91
10:00am

Memorial Service
Trisagion p.183

Welcome to St. George! Every Sunday we remember the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The word "*Liturgy*" means *work of the people* which means everyone participates through singing, praying, hearing the teaching, and opening our hearts to allow God's grace to enter. For those who have committed themselves to the Orthodox Faith (through Baptism and/or Chrismation) it also means, if prepared, the reception of Holy Communion. Preparation includes the Sacrament of Confession (7 years and older) within the last 2 months, prayer, being on time for church, being at peace with others, attending the Divine Liturgy regularly, and fasting (no food or drink from midnight the night before). If you are new, just visiting, or have any questions, please introduce yourself to Father Joe. Please know that everyone is invited to venerate the Holy Cross and receive Holy Bread at the end of Liturgy. All are welcome to our Coffee Fellowship in the hall after Liturgy.

In the **Divine Liturgy** of **St. Basil the Great** (his prayers begin on p.132 in the Red Service Book and the bilingual sheets in the Narthex), we sing these special hymns:

First Antiphon - Psalm 113

Verse 1. When Israel went forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob, from a people of strange language.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Verse 2. Judah became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion. *Refrain*

Verse 3. The sea looked and fled, Jordan turned back. *Refrain*

Verse 4. What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan that you turn back? *Refrain*

Glory to the Father ..., now and ever ... Amen. *Refrain*

Second Antiphon - Psalm 114

Verse 1. I love the Lord because He has heard, the voice of my supplication.

Refrain: O Son of God baptized in the Jordan, save us who sing to Thee, Alleluia.

Verse 2. Because He inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call on Him as long as I live. *Refrain*

Verse 3. The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of hell laid hold on me. I suffered distress and anguish then I called upon the Name of the Lord. *Refrain*

Verse 4. Gracious and righteous is the Lord, and our God is merciful. *Refrain*

Glory to the Father ..., now and ever ... Amen. *Only begotten Son...*

Third Antiphon - Psalm 117

Verse 1. O give thanks to the Lord for He is good; for His mercy endures forever.

Verse 2. Let the house of Israel confess that He is good; for His mercy endures forever.

Verse 3. Let the house of Aaron now confess that He is good; for His mercy endures forever.

Verse 4. Let them now who fear the Lord confess that He is good; for His mercy endures forever.

Refrain {Troparion of the Baptism of Christ}: When Thou O Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest! For the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son! And the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, who has revealed Thyself and has enlightened the world, glory to Thee!
باعتمادك يا رب في نهر الأردن، ظهرت السجدة للثالوث، لأن صوت الأب تقدم لك بالشهادة، مسمى إياك ابناً وأنرت العالم أيها المسيح الإله المجد لك. محبوباً، والروح بهيئة حمامة يؤيد حقيقة الكلمة، فيا من ظهرت

Entrance Hymn

Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. The Lord is God and hath appeared unto us. O Son of God who was baptized by John in the Jordan, save us who sing unto thee. Alleluia (3x).

Hymns after the Entrance with the Gospel

Troparion of the Baptism of Christ—Tone 1 (*as above*)

Kontakion for the Baptism of Christ—Tone 4

Today Thou hast appeared to the universe and Thy light, O Lord, has shone on us, who, with understanding, praise Thee: Thou has come and revealed Thyself, O Light unapproachable.

Instead of Holy God..., we sing:

As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia.

أنتم الذين بالمسيح اعتمدتم. المسيح قد لبستم هلولياً.

Epistle Reading: *Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7* {Theophany}

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 3:13-17* {Theophany}

Holy Bread Offerings

- St. George Parish Council for the health of their families and the community of St. George -- *May God grant them many years!*

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 coming week:

♦ **Adam Salomon** – January 10th

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

- This morning we pray for the servants of God who have fallen asleep in the Lord: **Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch** (+December 5th), **Muna Ibrahim** (+December 10th, Alkazaha and Ibrahim Families' relative), **Shoukre Abdo** (+December 13th, Syracuse, NY, brother-in-law of Elias Gantos), **Anthony Michaels** (+December 17th, father of Bishop Anthony), **Khouriya Joanne Bitar** (+December 30th, cousin of Jeanette Nassif), and **Suhail Alsaoury** (+January 1st, brother-in-law of Salwa Abu-Aitah).
- Prayers are offered for our parishioners who are ill, recovering, or in need, especially His servants: **Androlla Abu Aita**, **Reader Fouad Abuaita**, **Clemence** (Dn. Mike's mother) and **Jonathan Bassett**, **George Damouni** (brother of Lina Burbar and May Gantos), **Vera Farah**, **Samira Gantous**, **Camille Ghantous**, **Nadera Ghantous**, **Phyllis Good**, **Carol Haddad**, **Roland**

Haddad, Gabby Joubran (Najwa Joubran's brother-in-law), **Betty Khouri, Jean Khouri, John Khouri, Mariam Khoury, Norma Lazar, Lourice Matta, Megan Meade** (relative of Bob Teunion), **Danny Mortensen, George Nassif, Laura Nichols** (church secretary), **Elaine Salim, Elaine Shaheen, Michael Silpoch, Marie Skafi, William Sophiea Jr., and Kinan Turjman** (Sahar Abdallah's nephew).

- We also pray for those who are with child: **Katrin Mitri** and **Marlen Odeh**.

Megalynarion (*Instead of "It is truly meet..."*) for St. Basil's Liturgy (Tone 2)

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace: the assembly of angels and the race of men. O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins, from whom God was incarnate and became a Child: our God before the ages. He made your body into a throne, and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace, glory to you!

التعظيم لوالدة الإله (بالحن الثاني)

إن البرايا بأسرها تفرحُ بك يا ممتلئة نعمة، محافلَ الملائكة وأجناسَ البشر، أيتها الهيكلُ المتقدسُ والفرديوسُ الناطقُ، فخرَ البتوليةِ مريم التي منها تجسّدَ الإلهُ وصارَ طفلاً وهو الإلهُ الذي قبلَ الدهور، لأنه صنعَ مُستودعَكَ عرشاً وجعلَ بطنَكَ أرحبَ من السَّمواتِ، لذلك يا ممتلئة نعمة تفرحُ بك كلُّ البرايا وتُمجّدُكَ.

Communion Hymn (*for our Lord's Baptism*)

(*Refrain*) The saving Grace of God has appeared unto all.

(*Verse*) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

(*Verse*) He who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity.

(*Verse*) To purify for himself a people of His own, who are zealous for good deeds.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Reception of Holy Communion

- Please remember **ONLY ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS** who have **PREPARED THEMSELVES** may partake of Holy Communion.

Instead of *We have seen the True Light* ..., we sing the Troparion of Theophany (*see above*)

During the Great Blessings of Water, please follow *Bilingual Service* on the Narthex Table.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today's special **ZALABEE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP** is hosted by *our Altar Society*.

Why Zalabee for Theophany? There are two reasons: #1 relates to the manner in which it was originally leavened. In olden days the dough was prepared without yeast. Instead the dough was wrapped in cloth which was then tied into a bag, dipped three times in water ("baptized") and then suspended from the limb of a tree until it doubled in size (the water acted with enzymes to create a natural leavening); and #2 relates to the manner in which it is cooked. Rather than being baked, it is deep fried by being submerged ("baptized") in hot oil.

Thank You and God Bless ...

... **Deacon Michael and Pam Bassett** for making St. Basil's Bread (*Vasilopita*) in honor of St. Basil the Great who we remembered on (January 1st).

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTS Available dates: January 13th and 20th -- sign-up poster is in the Hall. Hosting information is in the Hall and 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.

HOLY WATER BOTTLES As part of today's celebration, Fr. Joe will bless water for all parishioners to take home. We are in need of a donor or two to provide the Holy Water icon bottles. The cost is \$200. If you are interested, please let Fr. Joe know.

PAN-ORTHODOX WINTER DINNER The Orthodox Churches of Genesee County are having a dinner in support of the Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery in Rives Junction, MI on Thursday, January 17th (*St. Anthony the Great, the founder of the monastic life*). We at St. George are honored to be hosting this 1st, and God willing, annual dinner! Please see the flier in the Lounge. Paid reservations (deadline is next Sunday, January 13th) will be taken during Coffee Fellowship.

January 6th — **HOLY THEOPHANY (DIVINE MANIFESTATION) OF CHRIST**

About the beginning of our Lord's thirtieth year, John the Forerunner, who was some six months older than our Savior according to the flesh, and had lived in the wilderness since his childhood, received a command from God and came into the parts of the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Then our Savior also came from Galilee to the Jordan, and sought and received baptism though He was the Master and John was but a servant. Whereupon, there came to pass those marvelous deeds, great and beyond nature: the Heavens were opened, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Him that was being baptized, the voice was heard from the Heavens bearing witness that this was the beloved Son of God, now baptized as a man (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:1-22).

From these events the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great mystery of the Trinity were demonstrated. It is also from this that the present feast is called *Theophany*, that is, the divine manifestation, God's appearance among men. On this venerable day the sacred mystery of Christian baptism was inaugurated; henceforth also began the saving preaching of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

COMING EVENTS

This Week	The traditional fasting discipline (<i>no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine, olive oil or their by-products</i>) is observed on Wednesday and Friday.
Monday	Bible Study: Gospel of St. Mark 3-5pm YAF Party at Christine & Joselyn Elias' home 6:30pm
Wednesday	Arabic/English Study of the Lives of Saints/Divine Liturgy 12:30pm-2:30pm SOYO Wednesday 7-9pm
Saturday	Great Vespers and Confessions 5pm

2013 OFFERING ENVELOPES AND CHURCH CALENDARS Please pick yours up (and other family members and friends) so we do not have to mail them! If your name isn't listed, call the church office. Our children will receive their envelopes in Church School. **Parents**, please make sure your child gets their *Offering Envelopes*.

MOST. REV. METROPOLITAN PHILIP

RT. REV. BISHOP ANTHONY



ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK AND
METROPOLITAN OF ALL NORTH AMERICA

DIOCESE OF TOLEDO AND THE MIDWEST

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The Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest

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On The Death of My Father

December 31st, 2012

His Eminence Metropolitan Philip, Members of the Local Synod, Reverend Clergy, family and friends, brother and sisters in Christ,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Thank you for the e-mails, cards, letters, memorial gifts, sympathies and condolences by phone and through the social media available to me and my immediate family.

Thank you for my father who is grateful for the love and support you have shown him by taking care of his son, my brother and sister. He loves us more than himself. When you do it to the least of these you do it to me, applies to my dad as well. And I thought that is what Jesus meant: He loved us so that His life had personal extension into the world He created through our lives.

My father shared all of his joy with us all the time, and none of his disappointments. Whatever they were they did not prevent his preparation for keeping his appointment with God. He was serenely ready to meet the Lord. His resume was completely filled with a chronology of love, replete with dates and times and references spread over a life time of being and doing good.

As I had the honor and opportunity to read the prayers of the departure of the soul from the body at my father's falling asleep in the Lord, somehow the radiance and spontaneity of youth returned to him and he, during the Christmas season, was alert, like a child, to open the rewards and presents Christ had for him in Paradise. Instantly, psalm verses flooded my mind: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bring forth fruit in old age, to show that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is not unrighteousness in him (Ps. 92.12-15)." "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his

benefits, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's (Ps. 103.2-5)."

He fell asleep as peacefully as anyone could, taking thin, rhythmic, baby's breaths. When he closed his eyes before he took his last clean breath, it had the comfort and mildness that comes when a mother kisses her child before she turns the light off in the room and as she says good night. And, perhaps, 'the gentle stillness of this room was that silent night of Christ's birth when the angels, the shepherds, the wise men and the animals were circled around Him and His Mother, and when the star was high enough to give soothing light but not overwhelming light. Dad was also surrounded in his bed.

Our tears were for us. We will miss his physical presence, his strong and enveloping voice which was a prelude to his sure and tight embrace that had the strength of the "outstretched arm" of the Lord who parted the waters and led His children through the torrent as on dry land. Dad parted the waters of the uncertain rapids and undertows of growing up and set us on dry ground so we could go forward in life.

There is a beautiful series of waterfalls at Black River Harbor on the southern coast of Lake Superior, if you can call anything about Lake Superior southern, not far from where I lived as a boy. We could ride our bikes there and hike all day and live fantastic forest adventures. When the sunlight dives into the crashing sheets of water, crystal sprays of drops seem like tears. There is the sunshine of joy and the rain of sorrow all at once, like we have now. Edgar Lee Masters in one of his poems wrote: "Here, world, I pass you like an orange to a child, I have had enough of you." Run home, now, Dad, and enjoy your eternity with those who love you there and with those who love you here.

Memory Eternal!

+ Bishop Anthony

+Bishop ANTHONY

**Auxiliary Bishop of Toledo and the Midwest
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America**

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 1st 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 1st - 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 1st. 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,¹ 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:

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

¹ In Greek the name Basil means "royal" or "kingly."