
In this Issue:

- Monthly Forecast
- Nativity/Theophany Schedule
- Community Outreach
- Youth, College and Adult Education
- Orthodox Library

Major Dates to Remember:

- 1/5-1/7 Theophany Services
- 1/18 Dormition Monastery Charity Dinner
- 1/20 Parish Movie & Board Game Night
- 1/21 Sanctity of Life Sunday

"LET MY PRAYER ARISE"

January 2018

***"God is With Us! Understand All Ye Nations and Submit Yourselves!
For God is With Us!"***

.FROM THE DESK OF FR. GABRIEL

We all heard and sang these prophetic words just a few short days ago, when we gathered in our Churches to celebrate the birth of Christ. We celebrated the truth, that our Lord had finally come to enlighten a universe that had been thrust into the darkness of sin! Christ came into this world and walked among us...experiencing the same pains and emotions that we experience, eating the same food that we eat, and interacting with us just as we interact with each other. And yet, our feeble minds are still littered with this question...this mystery that countless fallen men have tried to answer throughout history:

"Who is Jesus Christ? And what does He have to do with my life?"

If you were present at the Christmas Vigil, you might remember a point where the Deacon stood in front of the icon of Christ and proclaimed: "God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!" If "God is with us" is the theme for the Nativity, then it can be said that "God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us" is the theme for the feast of Theophany, because it is at this feast that we are given the answer to all of our questions! There is no mystery anymore! God has revealed Himself to the human race!

The feast of Theophany is also called The Feast of the Illumination, because it was at this feast that we were all illuminated. It is the feast that answers that mystery of Who God is and What He wants us to.

To give you a picture of what your lives are without Christ, I want you shut your eyes and imagine yourself being on a ship that is sailing on a stormy sea in the middle of the night. All around your boat, the sea is violent. Temptations and passions slam against you, and in the darkness of the world, you tend to just go where the winds and the waves take you.



Sailing in this darkness, there is no goal and there is no destination. Where you end up is wherever the waves of sin take you. If you are tempted from the passion of gluttony that wave will eventually lead you to gorging yourself and becoming un-healthy. If you are tempted by the passion of lust, that wave will eventually lead to a life of adultery and other dark temptations. With no goal... and no place to go, your ship is destined to remain adrift for all eternity.

When Christ came into this world, He offered us something that had been foretold for centuries. The prophet Isaiah wrote those prophetic words which we recited in the "God is With Us" verses: "The People who sat in darkness, have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region of the shadow of death, a light as risen."

Brothers and Sisters, Christ is our light and our salvation. He acts as our lighthouse, our bright star to follow in the night sky, so that we are able to navigate through those stormy waters. All of the sacraments given by the Holy Spirit, are there to help us on our journey.

At Holy Baptism, we are given our ship...strong and sturdy...one that will be able to repel the waves that seek to destroy us. At Holy Chrismation, we are given the sails which the Holy Spirit uses to give us the power to move towards the light...which is Christ. The Eucharist...the Body and Blood of God Himself...is there to keep us nourished and strong as we continue our journey. Holy Unction is given to us for those times where we are in need of healing. Holy Confession acts as our lifeboat, so that when we are thrown from our own boats and into the dark sea, we do not drown, and instead are offered the chance to make our way back to the boat...back the purity we received at Holy Baptism...back to the life that we were called to live.

Who is Jesus Christ? What does he do for me? These are the questions that are answered for us at the feast of Theophany. The mission for all of us here at St. Mary Magdalene is as clear as the crisp Michigan air after a fresh winter snowfall. We are called to live a life like Christ, and in that, to live to our true potential as adopted sons and daughters of God Himself. This Church exists for no other purpose, than to provide clarity and strength for our journey towards the Light of Christ Himself.

So as we prepare to celebrate the Holy Feast of Theophany, let us echo the words of St. Nikolai of Zica who said:

"Out of burning love, Thou didst come down from heaven; From Eternal beauty, Thou didst descend into a monstrous plain; From Eternal light, Thou didst descend into the thick darkness of evil. Thou didst extend Thy holy hand to those choked in sin. Heaven was amazed, the earth quaked...welcome O Christ, The Master and Light of Salvation!"

This Month's Scripture Readings

Sunday, January 7th:

John 20: 19-31

Ephesians 4:7-13

Matthew 4:12-17

Acts 19: 1-9

John 1:29-34

Sunday, January 14th:

John 21: 1-14

1 Timothy 1:15-17

Luke 18: 35-43

Sunday, January 21st:

John 21: 15-25

1 Timothy 4: 9-15

Luke 19: 1-10

Sunday, January 28th:

Matthew 28: 16-20

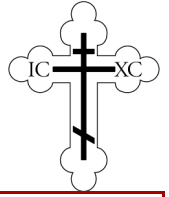
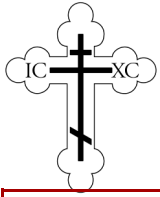
2 Timothy 3:10-15

Luke 18: 10-14



St. Mary Magdalene

Monthly Forecast



6th Annual Dormition Monastery Charity Dinner Thursday, January 18th:

This year, St. Mary Magdalene's responsibility will be beverages. Drinks will include wine, (red & white) and soft drinks. If you would like to make a donation toward the purchase of these beverages please see Dn. Michael or Steven and Sue Walton.

The Evening Schedule is as follows:
5:30 Vespers sung by the Mothers of Dormition Monastery
6:15 Social Time
7:00 Dinner & Speakers

The donation request for the dinner is \$35/adult and \$25/student. However, cost should not be a factor in your ability to attend. See Dn. Michael if you have concerns about the cost.

See the attached flyer for more information.



House Blessings:

Fr. Gabriel will begin blessing homes after Theophany! Please fill out the sign up sheet that is attached, and return it to Fr. Gabriel Before January 21st! The sheets will also be available at the front of the Church!

Agape Meal:

This month's Agape Meal will follow the blessing of the River for Theophany on **Sunday, January 7th** We will have our annual lamb roast, please bring a side dish or dessert to pass.

Metanoia Class:

Orthodoxy 101 Class will begin again on Wednesday January 10th. Classes will be on the 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st following Small Compline at 6:00pm

Parish Movie and Game Night:

On Saturday, January 20th we will have a parish movie & game night following Great Vespers. The movie will be Pixar's 'Inside Out' and the adults are welcome to join in, play board games, and enjoy fellowship

Sanctity of Life Sunday:

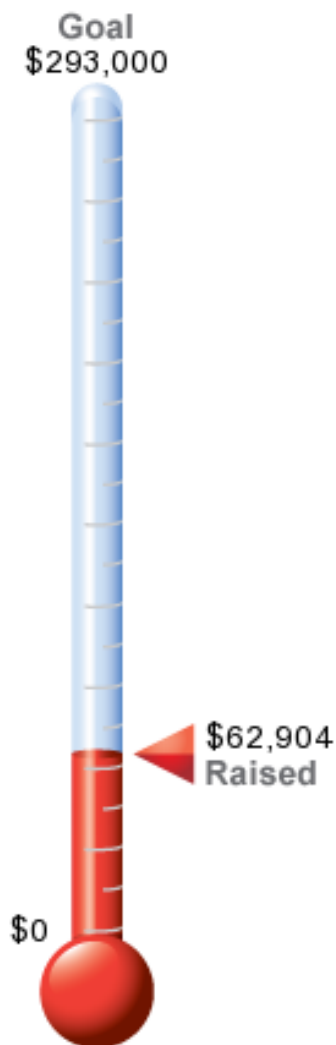
On Sunday, January 21st, following Liturgy, we will have a memorial for all Unborn Children. Please share the flyer attached with any and all who have lost a child.

***Be sure to give Fr. Gabriel the names of those children who have fallen asleep prior to the service**

Help Us Reach our Goal!

An update on our Mortgage Initiative:

By the Grace of God we are continuing to pay down our Church Mortgage. Our balance is now down to \$230,096. We pray for continued success in lowering our mortgage amount.



Mortgage Initiative

BAKE SALE:

This year's bake sale raised \$1,550.60! We would like to thank everyone who supported the bake sale by organizing, baking, working or even buying goods. We were blessed to have a very successful fundraiser.

SELLING A HOME?

Know anyone who is looking to buy or sell a home in the state of Michigan? Conne Terova of Real Estate One is offering an incentive program to benefit the St. Mary Magdalene Mortgage Initiative by offering a \$500.00 donation toward the mortgage balance for every referral that results in a closed transaction! The referral program runs from now until December 31st.

See the attached flyer for contact information.

THEOPHANY SERVICE SCHEDULE

Friday, January 5th:

Great Vespers of Theophany 6:30pm

Saturday, January 6th:

Theophany Divine Liturgy & Blessing of the Waters 10:00am

Great Vespers 12:30 pm

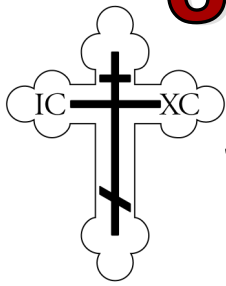
Sunday, January 7th:

Divine Liturgy & Blessing of the River 10:00am

Agape Meal and Lamb Roast following Divine Liturgy



Community Outreach Opportunities



MATTHEW 25

"For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you took me in,
I was in prison and you came to me,
I was sick and you visited me, I
was naked and you clothed me."

"...I was thirsty and you gave me drink..."

This month we will be taking up a collection for the Fenton Area Resources and Referral Network (FARR Network). This is a local community organization that serves the Fenton, Lake Fenton & Linden area and one that our parish works with to assure those who reach out to us in need are able to get the support they are looking for. The FARR Network helps with housing & utility assistance, medical & counseling referral, emergency needs and many other referrals.

Compassion in Action—CiA

Since 2012 the St. Mary Magdalene CiA ministry has been proving a "compassionate presence" to those in our community in need of someone to listen to them. During the 2017 ministry the team has been involved in several group and personal encounters including:

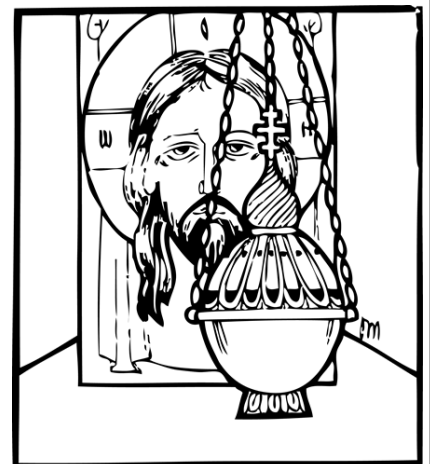
St. Michael's Warming Center

CiA Training

Ministries in member's hometowns

What we need for the 2018 Year is four fold.

1. New lay Chairperson: Is it vital that we find a lay person to coordinate this ministry. Dn. Michael will continue on as the clergy advisor, but due to other commitments on Sunday mornings, a strong chairperson is needed to facilitate the monthly meetings and coordinate the outreach.
2. Renewed focus on personal ministries: As stated above, local ministries in each member's communities are vital to provide members with a consistent and convenient ministry opportunity.
3. Increased community outreach: the new chairperson will be able to seek out new opportunities for compassionate presence within our communities. We should plan for quarterly team visits and have them scheduled well in advance.
4. Continue recruiting: The CiA team welcomes new members who would like to be part of this unique ministry



OUR PARISH YOUTH



Important Dates to Remember:

January 20th: Movie Night following Vespers

February 11th: Bake Sale

February 18th: NO CLASSES—
Forgiveness Sunday

April 8th: PASCHA

April 15th: Shortened Lesson & Easter egg hunt

May 6th: End of Year Celebration & Graduation

We are excited to get back into our lessons on the Old Testament! We will resume our regular class schedule

Sunday, January 14th!

We are still looking for some additional helpers, if you are interested in teaching or being an assistant teacher please contact Fr. Gabriel or Matushka Laura!

The church school will be sponsoring a movie night on January 20th. The movie will be Pixar's 'Inside Out', please sign up!

We will be holding a fundraising bake sale February 11th, watch for more details to come soon!

Sunday School

This month's topics:

January 7th: NO Class

January 14th: Samuel & Hannah

January 21st: Saul

January 28th: David & Goliath

2017-18 Church School Volunteer Assignments

Coordinator: Jennie Otis

Ages 3-5: Mat. Laura, Tammy Arnes

Ages 6-9: David Welch, Chris Ballnik, Cindy Welch (Back up) Renea Becklehamer (Fill-in)

Ages 10-12: Renee Auxier, Christine Auxier

Teen Group: Sbdn. Andrew Durand, Meghan Durand, Sharon Watson

Upper High School & OCF: Fr. Gabriel & Dn. Michael

Child Care: Tammy Arnes, Joyce Ballnik, Renea Becklehamer, Elaine Boucher, Terri Oginsky, Joe Suriano

COLLEGE CORNER

Flint OCF:

This December was a good month for the Flint OCF. We met at St. George with Fr. Matthew Butrie for a wonderful group discussion. We volunteered at the Center for Hope Soup Kitchen and had our 2nd annual Christmas party. Some of us even went to St. Iakovos Retreat Center in Wisconsin for OCF's College Conference Midwest.

Prayers for our college students:

Greg Auxier,
Nathaniel Auxier,
Katherine Arnes
Elisabeth Dalbo
Gabrielle Royer
David Schutt
Katherine Schutt
Oliver Lazar Senter
Elena Bucciarelli
Emmanuel Watson
Zachary Wilkinson
Douglas Wilkinson
Laura Khoury
Rachael Hildreth



Prayer of a Student

Christ my Lord, the Giver of light and wisdom, who opened the eyes of the blind man and transformed the fishermen into wise heralds and teachers of the gospel through the coming of the Holy Spirit, shine also in my mind the light of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Grant me discernment, understanding and wisdom in learning. Enable me to complete my assignments and to abound in every good work, for to You I give honor and glory. Amen.

Prayers Before Study

Most blessed Lord, send the grace of Your Holy Spirit on me to strengthen me that I may learn well the subject I am about to study and by it become a better person for Your glory, the comfort of my family and the benefit of Your Church and our Nation. Amen

Christ, the true light, who enlightens and sanctifies every person coming into the world, let the light of Your countenance shine upon me (us) that I (we) may see Your unapproachable light; and guide my (our) steps in the way of Your commandments, through the intercessions of Your all-holy Mother and of all the Saints. Amen.

Prayer After Study

I thank You, Lord our God, that again on this occasion You have opened my eyes to the light of Your wisdom. You have gladdened my heart with the knowledge of truth. I entreat You, Lord, help me always to do Your will. Bless my soul and body, my words and deeds. Enable me to grow in grace, virtue and good habits, that Your name may be glorified, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (OCF) is the official campus ministry organization of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America.

ADULT



Adult Education Classes will continue during Great Lent following the Friday Presanctified Liturgies.

“Metanoia” Learning To Change One’s Heart For God

Learning the Ways of the Early Christians, St. Vladimir the Great, a prince of Kievan Rus in the 10th century, sent envoys to all of the civilized world, looking at the various religions that were being practiced at the time. The response that impressed him the most, was the group that returned from an Orthodox Christian service in Constantinople, where his servants marveled at this ancient Christian service saying: “We knew not whether we were in heaven, or still on earth.”

In a Christian World now littered with various denominations, each teaching a different version of the same Gospel, have you ever wondered or thought about what the earliest Christians taught, how they worshiped, and what they believed? Now is your opportunity to come and experience what those emissaries saw over 1000 years ago!

Fr. Gabriel will be offering a 14 week introductory course on the Eastern Orthodox Faith, whose worship and teachings have not changed since the time of Christ and the Apostles.

2017-2018

Orthodoxy 101 Courses

January:

10th

17th

24th

31st

from 6:00-7:30 PM

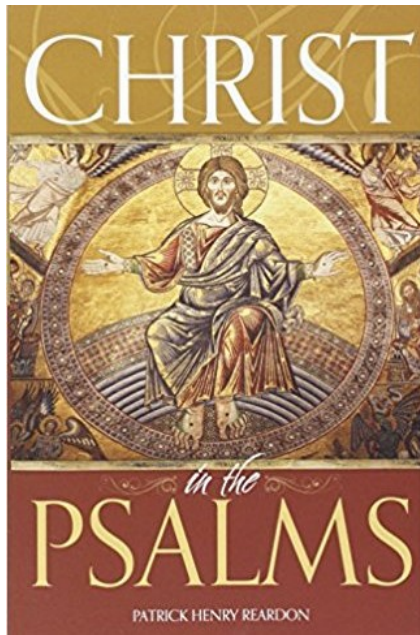
ADULT

Recommended reading this month.



“Christ in the Psalms”

By: Patrick Henry Reardon



Christ in the Psalms takes the reader on a thought-provoking and enlightening pilgrimage through this beloved prayer book of the Church. Lively and highly devotional, this book holds a wealth of insight into the beloved Scriptures, the world of the Early Church, and the Apostles themselves, who constantly used and referred to the Psalms in their own writings.

Our Parish Library is growing!!

We still are looking for donations from our parishioners to donate their used Orthodox Books to our new parish library. If you have already read your books, do not leave them to collect dust lend them to the parish. You will still be able to come and take them out of the Church library whenever you want!

All book donations should be given to

either Fr. Gabriel or

Rdr. Brian Phillip Walton!

We appreciate your help!



St. Mary Magdalene Prayer Life

Pray for our sick and suffering brothers and sisters.

His Beatitude Metropolitan
Theodosius
His Beatitude Metropolitan
Herman
Archpriest
Dimitri Vincent
Susan Walton
Vinnie Wall
Pat Wall
Autumn Smith
Katherine Fortier
John Matts
Anne Stevelinch
Katherine Schutt
Anastasia Branoff
Alex Branoff
Elaine Gejoff
Solome Daugherty



*We have recently recycled our prayer list. If you have any names of anyone you wish to be added, please give them to Fr. Gabriel.



Prayers for our armed forces:

Matthew Beck—First Lieutenant—Air Force
Michael Oginsky—Major—U.S. Marines
Patrick Tejkl—U.S. Marines
Lindsey Cazatt—U.S. Navy

Stephanie Bishop—U.S. Navy
Jason Wilburn—Corporal— Army Rangers
Alex Suriano—Ohio Air National Guard
Dallas Watson—U.S. Air Force

Prayers for those recently departed this life:

Marcella Grace
 Rosealie

Pray for our Catechumens:

Roland Drummond
Lori Drummond

Pray for our Mothers with child:

Sara Shephard
Ann Owens
Kristen Jakubus

Thank you to our angels who serve our community!

Coffee Hour Volunteers

Parish Greeters

Epistle Readers

January 7th: (Lamb Roast)

John & Tatiana Tyrell

January 14th:

Dn. Michael & Susan Schlaack

January 21st:

Katherine Senter

January 28th:

Scott & Tina Shepherd

January 7th:

Pat Smith

January 14th:

Steven & Sue Walton

January 21st:

Scott & Tina Shephard

January 28th:

Elaine Boucher

January 7th:

Sbdn. Andrew Durand & Jennifer Otis

January 14th:

Rdr. Chris Ballnik & Sue Walton

January 21st:

Janet Wiese & Sbdn. Andrew Durand

January 28th:

Rdr. John Auxier & Rdr. Chris Ballnik

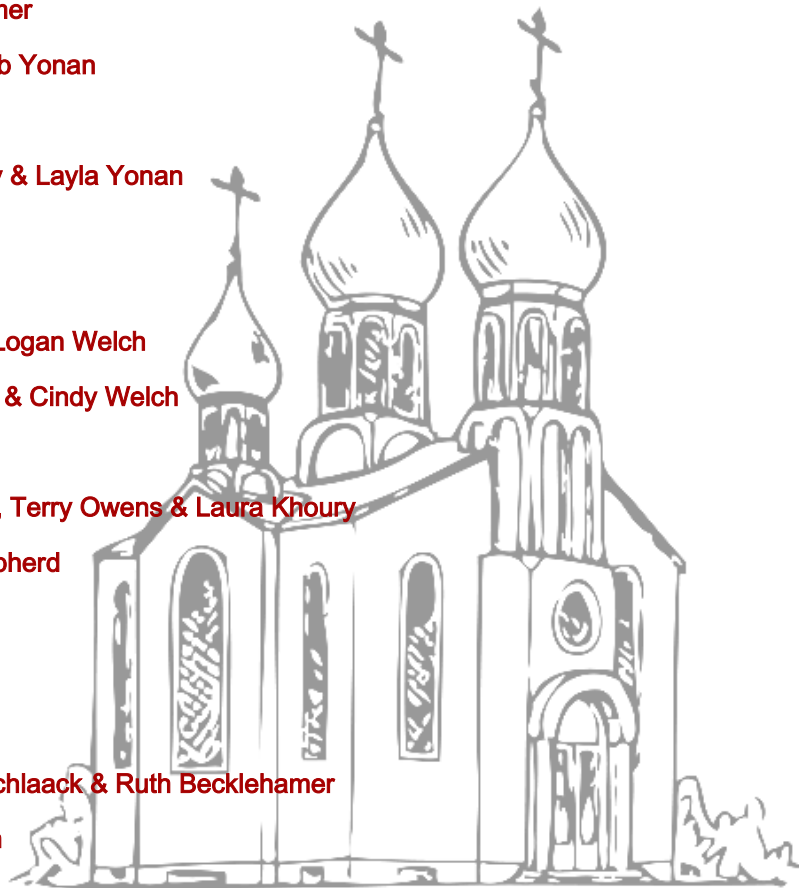
Wishing you many blessed years!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 1 - Robyn Dollins
- 3 - Jeremy Becklehamer
- 4 - John Oslin & Jacob Yonan
- 7 - Anastasia Branoff
- 10 - Jaclyn Daugherty & Layla Yonan
- 11 - Theodora Tyrell
- 15 - Mark Yonan
- 16 - Minka Owens & Logan Welch
- 18 - Katherine Senter & Cindy Welch
- 19- Katherine Arnes
- 20- Jeanette Hildreth, Terry Owens & Laura Khoury
- 21- Sbdn Logan Shepherd
- 22- Denise Oslin
- 24- Katheryn Auxier
- 25- Michael Khoury
- 29- Fr. Dn Michael Schlaack & Ruth Becklehamer
- 30- Renee Wilkenson
- 31- Stephen Schlaack

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

- 12- Michael & Terri Popilchak





ST. MARY MAGDALENE HOUSE BLESSING FORM 2018

Family Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Best Number to Reach You:

Circle What Days and Times Work Best For Your Family:

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Mornings

Afternoons

Evenings

In preparation for your House Blessing, please have a candle, an icon, a small dish to hold the Holy Water, and a list of names for your family's living and departed.

Please join the Orthodox Churches of Genesee County &
 The Mothers of The Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery
 On January 18, at Assumption Orthodox Church, for our
6th Annual Pan-Orthodox Winter Dinner To Support

The Dormition of the Mother of God Orthodox Monastery

Donation Requested
 \$35 Adult / \$25 Student

*The Mothers will be
 bringing the Monastery
 Gift Shop to Flint!*

Evening Schedule

- 5:30 - Vespers sung by the Mothers of Dormition Monastery
- 6:15 - Social Time
- 7:00 - Dinner & Speakers
- 8:30 - Benediction

Names	Donation

**See your Parish Rep to make a reservation, volunteer your time or be a sponsor
 OR: Contact Assumption Church at (810) 771-4611**

- Assumption.....Camelia Greenberg
- St. George.....Dn. Michael Bassett
- St. Mary Magdalene....Dn. Michael Schlaack
- St. Nicholas.....Deborah Adams

~ 100% of your donation goes to the Monastery ~

**ALL ACTIVITIES TO BE HELD ON 1/18 AT ASSUMPTION ORTHODOX CHURCH
 2245 East Baldwin Rd., Grand Blanc, MI**

JAN
20



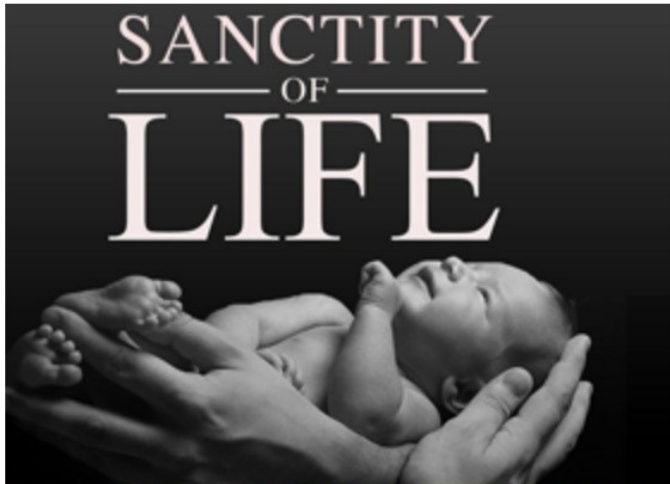
ST. MARY MAGDALENE MOVIE AND GAME NIGHT!

Saturday, January 20th, after Vigil!

Come join us for a Parish Movie and Game Night, sponsored by the Church School! Be sure to sign up so we can make appropriate arrangements on a location (either at our education center or at Fr. Gabriel and Matushka Laura's home)

Please sign up for the event via the sign up sheet at the Church, by Sunday, January 14th!

See Matushka Laura for more details!



MEMORIAL PRAYER SERVICE FOR ALL OF OUR DEPARTED INFANTS OF GOD

On **Sanctity of Life Sunday**, The St. Mary Magdalene Parish Family wishes to invite the entire community to our Church for a special prayer service in memory of all unborn infants. If you know of anyone who has ever suffered the loss of a child in the womb, please ask them to join us after the Divine Liturgy to offer prayers and consolation for their departed children, and for each other.

When: Sunday, January 21st, After the Divine Liturgy (Approx. 11:45 AM)

Where: St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church
2439 S. Long Lake Rd.
Fenton, Michigan, 48451

Contact: For more information, please do not hesitate to call our priest, Fr. Gabriel Bilas, at (810) 750-1401 or by email at frgabrielsmm@gmail.com

Referral Program To Benefit The St. Mary Magdalene Mortgage Initiative



Conne Terova
Real Estate One
Cell: (248) 318-7342
Email:
cterova@gmail.com
teamterova.com

Know anyone who is looking to buy or sell a home in the state of Michigan? Conne Terova of Real Estate One is offering an incentive program to benefit the St. Mary Magdalene Mortgage Initiative, by offering a \$500.00 donation to the Church's Mortgage Balance for every referral that results in a closed transaction! The referral program runs from now until December 31, 2018!