



# St. MARY MAGDALENE ORTHODOX CHURCH



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## MONTHLY BULLETIN DECEMBER 2019

### Important Dates to Remember:

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- ✝ 12/3 Inter-Christian Basketball
- ✝ 12/5 Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas at 6pm
- ✝ 12/6 St. Nicholas Day
- ✝ 12/7 Vigil and Confession
- ✝ 12/8 St. Nicholas Visit and Luncheon
- ✝ 12/10 Parish Council
- ✝ 12/12 Choir Rehearsal
- ✝ 12/13 Divine Liturgy 10am
- ✝ 12/15 ANNUAL MEETING
- ✝ 12/19 Choir Rehearsal
- ✝ 12/19 OCF Outing
- ✝ 12/21 Bake & Craft Sale
- ✝ 12/24 Royal Hours 9 am & Christmas Vigil 7pm
- ✝ 12/25 Divine Liturgy 10am
- ✝ 12/26 Divine Liturgy 10am

## Living "Radically" in the Faith

A message from Fr. Gabriel

Out of all of the Saints throughout the history of Christendom, it would be hard to find one who is more honored, and more well known than St. Nicholas. In the Orthodox Church, although we all share and recognize the same list of Saints in our Churches, there are some that are more popular than others, based on what region of the world they belonged to. But St. Nicholas is a major exception to that rule. He is a Saint who transcends local veneration, and is honored throughout the entire world, by both Christians and Non-Christians alike!

What is it that seems to separate St. Nicholas from all of the rest of the Saints who we honor this month? When we read about his life, we notice that Nicholas isn't remembered for any of his written works, like so many of our other great Fathers of the Church. He didn't leave behind songs, or poems, or books on how to live. We don't have any homilies that he had given while he was Bishop. He was present at one of the most important theological gatherings in Church History, the first ecumenical council, where we get to hear from the likes of St. Athanasius and others who **defended** teachings about Christ, but we don't hear of any speeches or dialogue that was offered by St. Nicholas himself.

The world doesn't remember St. Nicholas because he spoke about an eloquently virtuous life. It remembers him because he LIVED an eloquently virtuous life...

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(Continued from page 1)

and he lived it in a **very unique** and radical way. When St. Nicholas was young, he came from a very wealthy family. He never had to worry about money, or food, or clothing, and he had the ability to live comfortably for his entire life without lifting a finger. Yet when he began his ministry in the Church, we read that he gave it all to the poor. And just so there is no confusion, the synaxarion doubles down on the next sentence and says: *“he kept NOTHING for himself.”* He didn’t give away 10%...or half...he gave it ALL away, so that there were no distractions in his life to seek after God.

### Radical Virtue.

St. Nicholas lived in a tumultuous time. He was around during the last of the Christian Persecutions under Emperor Diocletian in the 4th century. But despite all of the threats and pressures from the state, he still went out of his way to preach the love of God, and to proclaim truth to the world. He went into pagan temples and smashed idols. He was thrown into prison and threatened with his life on numerous occasions. Throughout it all, he persevered, and refused to deny Truth, regardless of how it made him look.

### Radical Virtue.

Years later, during that first ecumenical council, many of us know the famous role that St. Nicholas played. He wasn’t known for a homily that helped to change the hearts of those who were blaspheming God. Rather, he was known for going up and smacking the heretic Arius in the jaw for speaking ill about God. St. Nicholas no doubt knew that this would be frowned upon. He must have known that he would be defrocked and thrown into prison... yet he chose to defend Christ with righteous anger towards those who would blaspheme Him.



### Radical Virtue

One morning after Divine Liturgy, there were several women who ran to the feet of St. Nicholas, and through their tears, they told Bishop about an evil plot that was carried out against their husbands, who were now being executed for a crime that they didn’t commit. St. Nicholas ran to the prison, only to find out that the men were already on their way to the fields for the wrongful sentence to be carried out. So he ran like a small child to the field, grabbed the sword out of the executioner’s hands, and threw it into a nearby ravine. If that wasn’t enough, Nicholas then went and censured the ruler of the city, who eventually came to his senses, was humbled, and then repented.

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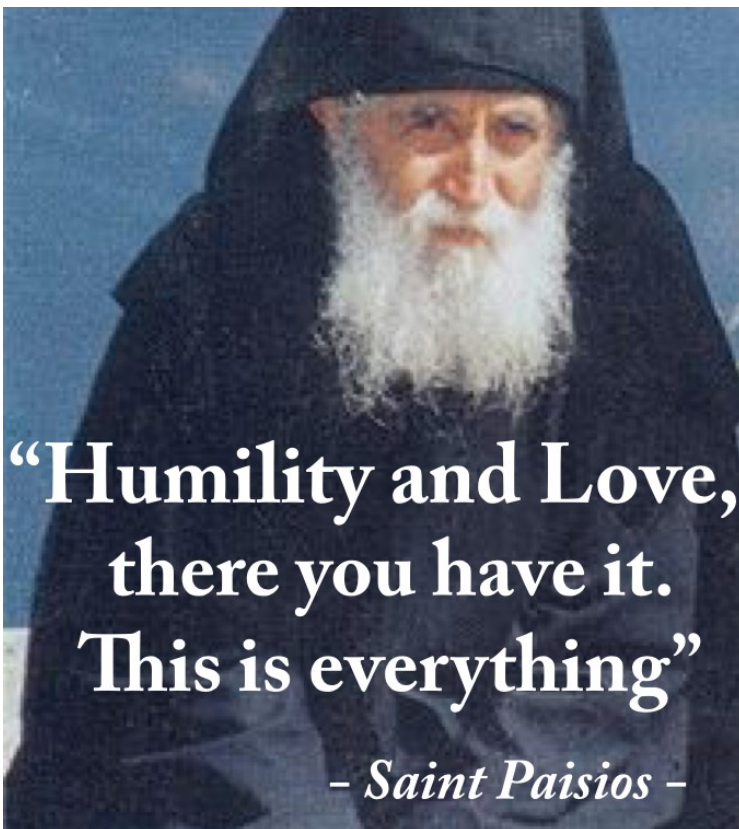
## Radical Virtue

How does a simple Christian from 1700 years ago get so much notoriety in the world? By living a life of Radical Virtue.

So what does this mean for us? Are we called to go and slug the next Jehovah's witness that comes knocking at our door? No...but there are small ways in which we as Orthodox Christians who are living in an increasingly secular society, can live a life, that can be seen as "radical" virtue. When we are in public, we should never hide our faith in Christ, or our lives as Orthodox Christians, for fear of what others might think of us. Make the sign of the cross and bless the food that you have been given in a crowded restaurant. Say a silent prayer before meetings at work. Make the sign of the cross over your steering wheel when you get into your carpool to drive you and others home. Spreading your faith, and showing your love for Christ, especially in today's judgmental society, requires a small measure **radical** courage.

This is the time of year when the stress of the holidays gets ahold of people, as they plan for family gathers, mailing out Christmas cards, cooking, purchasing gifts...etc. In a time that is supposed to be peaceful, our tempers sometimes get the best of us, and we see so many take out their frustrations on others. Another way to live a life of **radical** virtue, is to take personal attacks on the cheek, without a retort. If you are yelled at, screamed at, slandered, or stepped on, it takes a tremendous measure of **radical** humility (even if you are in the right )to say "*forgive me*", keep silent, and move on.

Here is one we might not think about, and I know that there are many that completely disagree with this one, but I'm going to tell you the standard that we are all held to in the Gospels. It takes **radical faith...radical courage... and radical love**, to put God and the Church **ABOVE** our family and friends. How often do we hear in secular society that Christmas is a time to be with your family? To this statement, we completely and 100% agree...but not at the expense of heavenly worship. There are no doubt going to be times in the coming weeks, where we all have that small negotiation in our heads, when the family wants to get together at 6:30 PM on Christmas Eve, but we know that Vigil for Nativity begins at 7:00 PM. "*Eh, I'll make sure I go to Liturgy the next day...*" Or God forbid, "*I will go the Sunday before...that's good enough*".



Living a life of radical virtue, means putting the love of God above EVERYTHING else. All of the Saints, whether they were monks, or laity just like you and I, had that holy level of discernment, to not even allow **thoughts** of skipping the winter Pascha come into their minds. This is important and very delicate thing for all of us to navigate as we draw near to the feast of the Nativity. In our daily prayers, we should be always asking for that same holy level of discernment that fills the Holy men and women of our Church's present and past, to help guide us through some of those difficult decisions in our life, especially when it comes to deciding between family and our love of God.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, why is all of this necessary? Why is it important to live a life of radical love for God? Because despite our many faults...no matter the times we have doubted Him...slandered Him...and turned our backs on Him...we still have a God who undeniably, unequivocally, and radically...**loves us**. Through the Prayers of St. Nicholas, may we learn to not only increase in our love of God, but in our love for each other!

# THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO SERVE!

## Parish Greeters

December 1st:  
George & Julie Jonascu  
December 8th:  
Steve & Sue Walton  
December 15th:  
Scott & Tina Shephard  
December 22nd:  
Elaine Boucher  
December 29th:  
David & Cindy Welch

## Coffee Hour Volunteers

December 1st: (fasting)  
Joyce Ballnik  
December 8th: (fasting)  
Jeremy & Ranae Becklehamer  
December 15th: (fasting)  
Elaine Boucher  
December 22nd: (fasting)  
Chris & Rachel Burtka  
December 29th:  
Brion & Theresa Cooley

## Epistle Readers

December 1st:  
Rdr. David Schutt  
December 8th:  
Dr. Janet Wiese  
December 15th:  
Rdr. John Auxier  
December 22nd:  
Sbdn. Andrew Durand  
December 29th:  
Rdr. Nathan Auxier

## Alternate Readers

December 1st:  
Rdr. Brian Walton  
December 8th:  
Rdr. Chris Ballnik  
December 15th:  
Rdr. David Schutt  
December 22nd:  
Dr. Janet Wiese  
December 29th:  
Rdr. John Auxier

Incase you missed this months homilies visit...

<http://www.st-marymagdalene.org/parish-blog>

## WISHING YOU MANY BLESSED YEARS!

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- ✠ 3– Sbdn. Andrew Durand & Nicholas Oslin
- ✠ 4– Emma Lanterman
- ✠ 5- Richard Ziats & Winifred Daugherty
- ✠ 6– Romanos Royer-Durand
- ✠ 7– Douglas Wilkinson
- ✠ 8– Christopher Cooley
- ✠ 11– Lucille Bilas
- ✠ 12– Richard Schlaack
- ✠ 13– Anne Khoury & Robert Oginsky Sr.
- ✠ 14– Matushka Laura Bilas
- ✠ 17– David Schutt & Katherine Schutt
- ✠ 18– Elizabeth Kekel & Joshua Forwerck
- ✠ 19– Maura Burtka
- ✠ 21– David Welch
- ✠ 23– Robert Oginsky Jr.
- ✠ 24– George Branoff
- ✠ 30- Dr. Kristen Wolf
- ✠ 31– Christine Suriano & Isaiah Durand

### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

- ✠ 27– Stephen & Inna Bondira
- ✠ 28– John & Denise Oslin
- ✠ 30– Rdr. Robert & Adelaide Lanterman

**HAVE YOU “liked” and “shared” our parish Facebook page? For announcements, upcoming events, pictures and more visit us at**

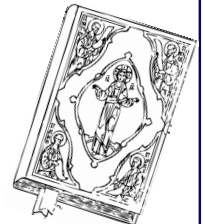
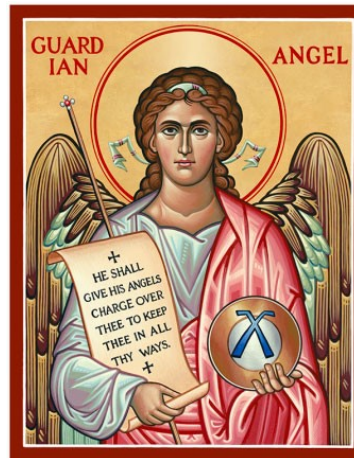
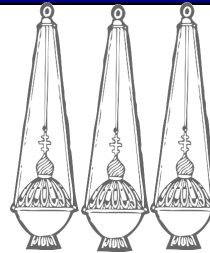
**[https://www.facebook.com/  
StMaryMagdaleneOrthodoxChurch/](https://www.facebook.com/StMaryMagdaleneOrthodoxChurch/)**

**This is a great way for you, your family and your friends to stay connected with your parish family and Orthodox Christian Community!**

# Prayer Life

*Pray for our sick and suffering brothers and sisters*

Metropolitan Theodosius	Michael
Metropolitan Herman	Pulette
Reader Gregory	Katherine
Vinne	James
Anastasia	Ron
Alex	Pat
Elaine	Michael
Perpetua	Chloe
Carol	Jenna
Katelyn	Carol
Frankie	Melissa
Thom	Susan
Damian	
Stacie	
Caolyn	
Megan	
Lon	
Ella	
Noah	
Elnora	
Peter	
Calvin	
David	



## *This Month's Scripture Readings*

### **November 3rd:**

Gal 1:11-19

Luke 8: 41-56

### **November 10th:**

Gal 2:16-20

Luke 10:25-37

### **November 17th:**

Gal 6:11-18

Luke 12: 16-21

### **November 24th:**

Eph 2:4-10

Luke 13:10-17

## **Armed Forces**

Matthew Beck; Air Force  
 Michael Oginsky; U.S. Marines  
 Patrick Tejkl; U.S. Marines  
 Lindsey Cazatt; U.S. Navy  
 Stephany Bishop; U.S. Navy  
 Jason Wilburn; Army Rangers  
 Alex Suriano; Air National  
 Guard  
 Dallas Watson; Air Force  
 Seaphim Lazar-Watson; Air  
 Force

## **Recently Departed**

## **Catechumens**

John  
 Karem  
 Asher  
 Miriam  
 Elliott  
 Alyssa  
 William

## **Mother's With Child**

Christine

# MONTHLY FORECAST

## The Feast Day of St. Nicholas

We will be gathering together with our sister parish of St. Nicholas in Burton, to celebrate their patronal feast day on Thursday, December 5th, beginning at 6:00 PM.

### St. Nicholas Visitation and Brunch

On Sunday, December 8th, we will be celebrating the feast of St. Nicholas at our own parish with a visitation for St. Nicholas himself after the Divine Liturgy! This will also be the day for our annual St. Nicholas Day Luncheon, so please bring a dish to share as we remember and celebrate this great Saint!

### Seminarian Angel Tree

As some of you know, it takes a tremendous financial sacrifice for a family to follow a calling to go to seminary. Years ago, the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America began to collect gifts for those seminarian families who were unable to afford gifts for their children at Christmas. We continue that wonderful tradition here at St. Mary Magdalene, and ask that each family pick out a tag off of the Seminarian Angel Tree, and return a gift card with the dollar amount listed on the tag, to be given to a seminarian family. Please return the gift cards to Fr. Gabriel, no later than the Sunday, December 8th, so that he can get those to the families in need!

### Divine Liturgy for St. Herman of Alaska

On Friday, December 13th, we will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy for St. Herman of Alaska, beginning at 10:00 AM

### Advent Confession Schedule

Throughout the month of December, Fr. Gabriel will be available for the sacrament of confession on Wednesday evenings after compline (6:00 PM) and on Saturday evenings after Vigil (4:00 PM). It is an important part of our preparation for the Nativity to participate in the sacrament of confession during the Fast. If you are unable to come during these times, please reach out to Fr. Gabriel so that he can schedule another time for you and your family to come!

### Choir Rehearsals for the Nativity

We will be having several choir rehearsals this month to help us prepare for the Nativity Services! On Thursday, December 12th and Thursday, December 19th at 6:00 PM, Greg will be going over the Christmas Vigil, as well as learning the new Christmas Canon. Before Vigil on Christmas Eve, starting at 6:15 PM, Greg is also asking that the choir be present for one last run through before the services begin!

## Annual Meeting

After Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 15th, we will be having our annual parish meeting. Everyone should have received an Annual Parish Meeting Primer, which has all of the financial data, as well as the proposed 2020 budget. If you did not receive this primer, please reach out to a member of your parish council. If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions, please bring them with you to the next parish council meeting prior to the annual meeting (Tuesday, December 10th, 7:00 PM).

### Christmas Bake Sale and Craft Show

The Parish Christmas Bake Sale and Craft Show will take place on Saturday, December 21st, from 10:00-4:00. Our bakers will be presenting their favorite cookies, cakes, pies, nut rolls, baklava, and candy, as well as American and Ethnic Holiday treats. Bread and rolls as well as savory items will be available. A tray of fresh baked treats are perfect for a dinner invitation or Christmas party! Come early for the best choices!

The Craft Show will feature knitted items for children and adults. Note cards in unique designs and painted religious and ethnic items make a great last minute gift! Look for the sign up sheet in the vestibule if you would like to lend a hand!

### Christmas Eve Services

On Tuesday, December 24th, we will begin our services for the Feast of the Nativity with Royal Hours beginning at 9:00 AM. Christmas Vigil will begin that evening at 7:00 PM. It is important to make as many of these services as possible, but most especially the evening Vigil and the Divine Liturgy the next morning!

### Christmas Divine Liturgy and Christmas Caroling

On Sunday, December 25th, we will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM, followed by a round of Christmas Caroling at a local nursing home. Details and Directions will be available shortly, be on the look out for a sign –up sheet

### Divine Liturgy for the Theotokos

Divine Liturgy for the Theotokos will be held on Thursday, December 26th, beginning at 10:00 AM!

# The Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

oca.org

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, was born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in the city of Bethlehem during the reign of the emperor Augustus (Octavian). Caesar Augustus decreed that a universal census be made throughout his Empire, which then also included Palestinian Israel. The Jews were accustomed to be counted in the city from where their family came. The Most Holy Virgin and the Righteous Joseph, since they were descended from the house and lineage of King David, had to go to Bethlehem to be counted and taxed.

In Bethlehem they found no room at any of the city's inns. Thus, the God-Man, the Savior of the world, was born in a cave that was used as a stable.

"I behold a strange and most glorious mystery," the Church sings with awe, "Heaven, a Cave; the Virgin the Throne of the Cherubim; the Manger a room, in which Christ, the God Whom nothing can contain is laid." (Irmos of the 9th Ode of the Nativity Canon).

Having given birth to the divine Infant without travail, the Most Holy Virgin "wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger" (Luke 2:7). In the stillness of midnight (Wisdom of Solomon 18:14-15), the proclamation of the birth of the Savior of the world was heard by three shepherds watching their flocks by night.

An angel of the Lord (Saint Cyprian says this was Gabriel) came before them and said: "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). The humble shepherds were the first to offer worship to Him Who condescended to assume the form of a humble servant for the salvation of mankind. Besides the glad tidings to the Bethlehem shepherds, the Nativity of Christ was revealed to the Magi by a wondrous star. Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Theophylactus, commenting on Saint Matthew's Gospel, say that this was no ordinary star. Rather, it was "a divine and angelic power that appeared in the form of a star." Saint Demetrius of Rostov says it was

a "manifestation of divine energy" (Narrative of the Adoration of the Magi). Entering the house where the Infant lay, the Magi "fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Mt. 2:11).

The present Feast, commemorating the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, was established by the Church. Its origin goes back to the time of the Apostles. In the Apostolic Constitutions

(Section 3, 13) it says, "Brethren, observe the feastdays; and first of all the Birth of Christ, which you are to celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month." In another place it also says, "Celebrate the day of the Nativity of Christ, on which unseen grace is given man by the birth of the Word of God from the Virgin Mary for the salvation of the world."

In the second century Saint Clement of Alexandria also indicates that the day of the Nativity of Christ is December 25. In the third century Saint Hippolytus of Rome mentions the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, and appoints the Gospel readings for this day from the opening chapters of Saint Matthew.

In 302, during the persecution of Christians by Maximian, 20,000 Christians of Nicomedia (December 28) were burned in church on the very Feast of the Nativity of Christ. In that same century, after the persecution when the Church had received freedom of religion and had become the official

religion in the Roman Empire, we find the Feast of the Nativity of Christ observed throughout the entire Church. There is evidence of this in the works of Saint Ephraim the Syrian, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Ambrose of Milan, Saint John Chrysostom and other Fathers of the Church of the fourth century.

Saint John Chrysostom, in a sermon which he gave in the year 385, points out that the Feast of the Nativity of Christ is ancient,

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and indeed very ancient. In this same century, at the Cave of Bethlehem, made famous by the Birth of Jesus Christ, the empress Saint Helen built a church, which her mighty son Constantine adorned after her death. In the Codex of the emperor Theodosius from 438, and of the emperor Justinian in 535, the universal celebration of the day of the Nativity of Christ was decreed by law. Thus, Nicephorus Callistus, a writer of the fourteenth century, says in his History that in the sixth century, the emperor Justinian established the celebration of the Nativity of Christ throughout all the world.

Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople in the fifth century, Sophronius and Andrew of Jerusalem in the seventh, Saints John of Damascus, Cosmas of Maium and Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople in the eighth, the Nun Cassiane in the ninth, and others whose names are unknown, wrote many sacred hymns for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, which are still sung by the Church on this radiant festival.

During the first three centuries, in the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Cyprus, the Nativity of Christ was combined together with the Feast of His Baptism on January 6, and called "Theophany" ("Manifestation of God"). This was because of a belief that Christ was baptized on anniversary of His birth, which may be inferred from Saint John Chrysostom's sermon on the Nativity of Christ: "it is not the day on which Christ was born which is called Theophany, but rather that day on which He was baptized."

In support of such a view, it is possible to cite the words of the Evangelist Luke who says that "Jesus began to be about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23) when He was baptized. The joint celebration of the Nativity of Christ and His Theophany continued to the end of the fourth century in certain Eastern Churches, and until the fifth or sixth century in others.

The present order of services preserves the memory of the ancient joint celebration of the Feasts of the Nativity of Christ and Theophany. On the eve of both Feasts, there is a similar tradition that one should fast until the stars appear. The order of divine services on the eve of both feastdays and the feastdays themselves is the same.

The Nativity of Christ has long been counted as one of the Twelve Great Feasts. It is one of the greatest, most joyful and wondrous events in the history of the world. The angel said to the shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, glorifying God and saying: Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Those who heard these things were astonished at what the shepherds told them concerning the Child. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen" (Luke 2:10-20).

Thus the Nativity of Christ, a most profound and extraordinary event, was accompanied by the wondrous tidings proclaimed to the shepherds and to the Magi. This is a cause of universal rejoicing for all mankind, "for the Savior is Born!"

Concurring with the witness of the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church, in their God-inspired writings, describe the Feast of the Nativity of Christ as most profound, and joyous, serving as the basis and foundation for all the other Feasts.



*Christ is Born!*  
*Glorify Him!*



# OUR PARISH YOUTH

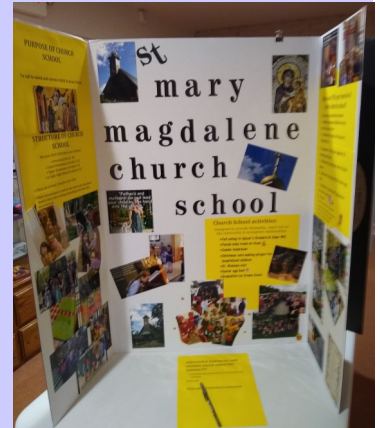
## Upcoming events:

### St. Nicholas will be visiting on December 8th!

December is a short month for the church school! We look forward to a visit from St. Nicholas after Liturgy December 8th as well as our children's choir singing just prior to communion. Be sure to be practicing this next week at home!

While the annual meeting is scheduled for December 15th, this is also our last scheduled class for the year. We have decided to still go out for a short lesson, returning to the church in time for the meeting.

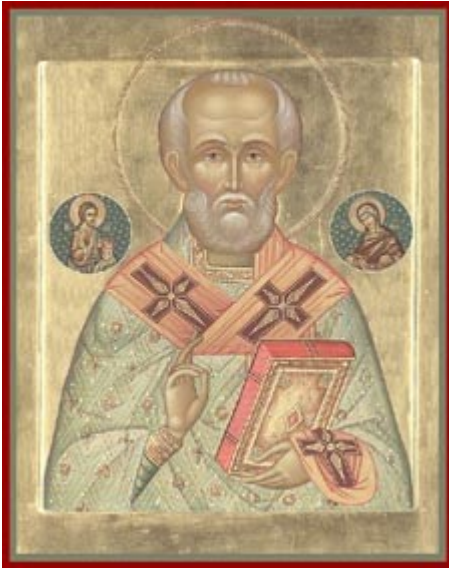
The 15th will be the end our semester and we look forward to resuming class in the new year! A special thanks to all of our teachers and volunteers for making this first half of the church school year great! Thank you also to our parents for bringing your children and supporting our program!



**“FATHERS AND MOTHERS: GO AND LEAD YOUR CHILD BY THE HAND INTO THE CHURCH.” - ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

# St. Nicholas Day and Shoes?

By: Fr. Dustin Lyon is a priest at St. Elias the Prophet Greek Orthodox Church in Dubuque, Iowa



It's that time of year again.

Christmas lights are up and plastic lawn decorations of that old jolly man in a red suit have appeared. Yet, that jolly old man is more than a cartoon caricature that we hope brings us the new iPhone in our stocking this year. In fact, the real Santa Claus was the Orthodox bishop of Myra in the early 4th century. We know him as St. Nicholas and he reminds us about the importance of giving to others.

Why? —Because when we give, we have the opportunity to significantly change other peoples' lives for the better – and there's no better example than St. Nicholas himself.

In the time of St. Nicholas, there was a man who was once very rich, but times became tough and finances were so hard that this man had to think of creative ways to earn money just to put food on the table. This man was so desperate to feed his family that he decided the only way he could get enough money was to sell one of his three daughters into slavery. Yikes!

This may sound very harsh to us, but in this time and place, this happened often. People who came upon hard times were forced to sell family members into slavery just to make ends meet.

When St. Nicholas heard of this man's plan to sell one of his daughters, he decided to help. Late that night after the family went to sleep, St. Nicholas stopped by and threw a bag of coins into the man's home. The money landed in one of the girl's shoes, which was set by the fire place. The next morning, the man found the gold coins which allowed him to buy food and host a wedding for the daughter he had planned to sell into slavery. As the story goes, St. Nicholas helped this man with all three of his daughters, providing money to cover wedding expenses that allowed all the daughters to marry good husbands instead of being sold into slavery. St. Nicholas' generous gifts helped change this man's world (and his daughters' world) for the better.

In this story, St. Nicholas' gifts all landed in the shoes of the daughters, so it has become an Orthodox tradition to lay out our shoes on the eve of St. Nicholas Day (December 6th) in hopes of finding gold coins in them when we wake.

The story of St. Nicholas reminds us that we should do more than look for gold coins in our shoes. We should look to walk in his shoes by giving to others to make a difference. Our gift may not be saving someone from slavery, but a gift as simple as a smile to a stranger or buying a coffee for someone can still make a big difference in their life.

When we follow in St. Nicholas' shoes – loving others by sharing our gifts and talents with them, we become people who make a difference and spread Christ's love. This is when we truly embrace the meaning of St. Nicholas' name, "victory of the people."



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

**Flint OCF:**

The Flint OCF had a fun and eventful month of November. From November 1st - 3rd, some of us went to the Fall Retreat in Kansasville Wisconsin. The topic of the retreat was "Lights for Today: the Lives of Modern Saints." It was complete with several church services, educational talks and fellowship activities. Then on November 5th, we went to Lansing with the MSU OCF chapter to listen to an excellent lecture from Bishop Anthony titled: "The Church as a Hospital." On November 9th, we volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, in conjunction with the Fellowship of St. Photini, to work on a build in Flint. On November 23rd, a large group of us carpoled to Farmington Hills where we played archery tag. Next month we look forward to a talk from Fr. Joe on December 6th, where we will discuss St. Nicholas. Also we have our Star Wars showing, on December 19th, where we will be joined by some teens from the church as well as several others from the parish.



**Prayers for our college students:**

Greg Auxier  
Katherine Arnes  
David Schutt  
Katherine Schutt  
Oliver Lazar Senter  
Elena Bucciarelli  
Zachary Wilkinson  
Douglas Wilkinson

Laura Khoury  
Rachael Hildreth  
Sydney Wilkinson  
Katerina Jonescu  
Katheryn Auxier  
Alexandra Kekel



## A Month in Review:

We had a tremendous month of November, which was highlighted by a visit from His Eminence Archbishop Alexander, who gave us a talk on "The Last Judgement", and also participated in our parish's mortgage burning ceremony! We would also like to thank Dr. Kristin and Brion for helping several of our faithful learn life-saving techniques in our first ever CPR and AED training course!

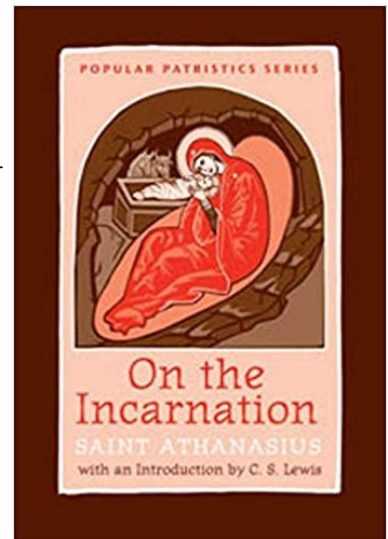


On November 3rd we welcomed Sophia, Seraphima, James and Maximus into the Holy Orthodox Faith. We also welcomed Elliot, John, Asher, Karen and Miriam into the Catechumenate. May God continue to guide and bless their journey!

## Recommended Reading from Fr. Gabriel

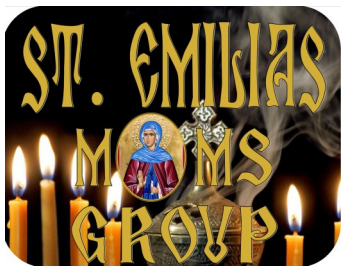
### "On the Incarnation" By St. Athanasius the Great

By any standard, this is a classic of Christian theology. Composed by St Athanasius in the fourth century, it expounds with simplicity the theological vision defended at the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople: that the Son of God himself became "fully human, so that we might become god." Its influence on all Christian theology thereafter, East and West, ensures its place as one of the few "must read" books for all who want to know more about the Christian faith.



For neither did he make creation itself be silent, but what is most wonderful, even at his death, or rather at the very trophy over death, I mean the cross, all creation confessed that he who was made known and suffered in the body was not simply a human being but Son of God and Savior of all. For the sun turned back and the earth shook and the mountains were rent, and all were awed. These things showed the Christ on the cross to be God and the whole of creation to be his servant, witnessing in fear the advent [*parousia*] of the Master. In this way, then, the God Word showed himself to human beings by his works.

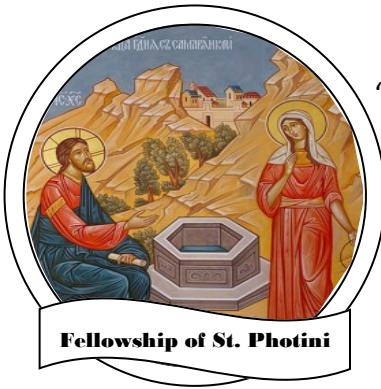
**ATHANASIUS, BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA (d. 373)**  
**On The Incarnation 19**



## St. Emilia's Moms Group

**CALLING ALL MOTHERS:** For more information please reach out to Renea Becklehamer or Addie Lanterman.

# FELLOWSHIP OF ST. PHOTINI



"An inclusive opportunity for community outreach led by the faithful of St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church"

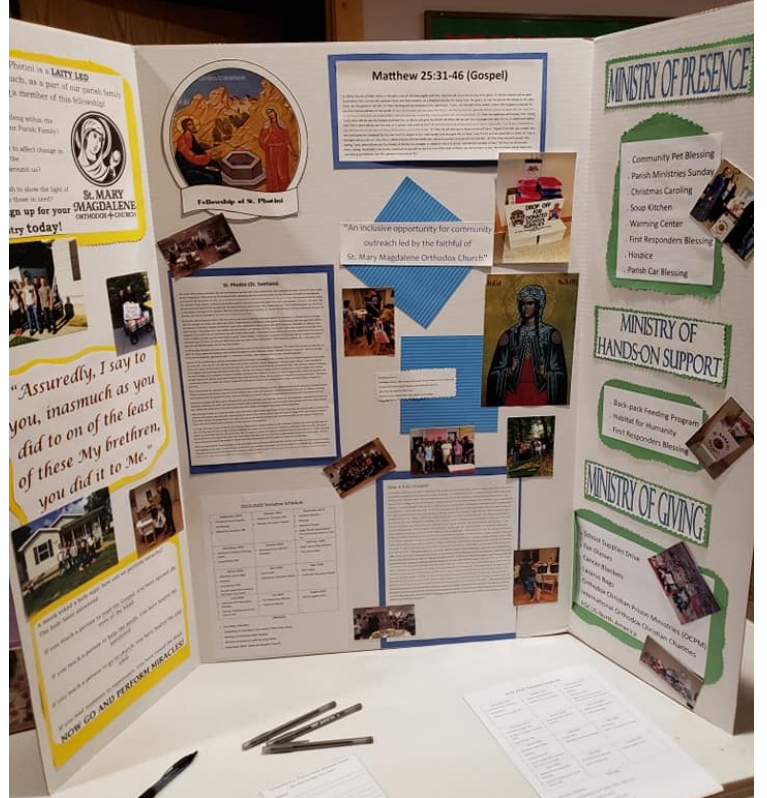
Thank you to all who attended our first ever Parish Ministries Sunday. Almost everyone signed up for a ministry at some sort at this event, which shows Christ's love and giving spirit we have in our parish. If you were unable to attend please see any member of the leadership team to sign up for your Ministry at any time.

This month we will continue to collect donation for the Seminarian Angel Tree. If you are able please take a tag and bring back the corresponding gift card. We will need to send these out before the Seminarians leave on Christmas Break.

After the first of the year we will begin to take up a collection for the Lazarus Bags for the Homeless in our community as well. See Marisa Bailey with any questions.

Soon we will set up dates to visit the St. Michael's Warming Center in Flint. This is a great ministry of presence to those in need. Please see Deacon Mike for more information.

Please contact Theophan Forsyth, Terri Oginski or Rebekah Humphreys if you would like any information about upcoming projects or would like to donate to the works of the Fellowship of St. Photini.



Every year many families spend time away from their loved ones while they attend Seminary to further their call to God



# Seminarian Angel Tree

As some of you know, it takes a tremendous financial sacrifice for a family to follow a calling to go to seminary to study the faith. Many of these future Priests give up their financial stability, and put their trust in God that He will support their families. Years ago, the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America began to collect gifts for those seminarian families who were unable to afford gifts for their children at Christmas. Starting on November 15th (the beginning of Advent), there will be a Seminarian Gift Card Tree located in the front of the Church. We are asking that everyone purchase one of the gift cards (\$25 or \$50) on the tree to be given to a seminarian family...giving them the opportunity to have some extra blessings during the Advent Season!



# **Cookie Walk & Craft Sale**

**Saturday, December 21st**

**10am—3pm**

**Bake goods and Crafts**

**St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church  
2439 S. Long Lake Rd  
Fenton, MI 48430**

Any questions? See Pat Smith, Rebecca Lazar or Liz Ziats

**YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN**

Mother Abbess Gabriella & The Community of  
The Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery on  
Thursday, January 23, 2020, at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church for our

**~ 8<sup>th</sup> Annual 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 & Bookstore Open*
- ✓ 6:45 - *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

**☞ MAKE ALL CHECKS OUT TO: Assumption Church ☜**

- ✓ Assumption Church ..... Lori Photiou
- ✓ St. George Church..... Dn. Michael Bassett
- ✓ St. Mary Magdalene Church..... Dn. Michael Schlaack
- ✓ St. Nicholas Church..... Lena Bakousidis

**~ 100% of your donation goes to Dormition Monastery ~**

**ALL ACTIVITIES TO BE HELD AT ASSUMPTION CHURCH**

**2245 E Baldwin Rd., Grand Blanc Township**



# NATIVITY SCHEDULE

## 2019

Tuesday, December 24th: Royal Hours 9:00am

Christmas Vigil 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 25th: NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, December 26th: Divine Liturgy for the Theotokos 10:00 a.m.



Advent Confessions: Please make sure that you make time this advent season for the Holy Sacrament of Confession. Fr. Gabriel is available after compline on Wednesday evenings (see schedule) or on Saturday's after vigil. If these do not work for your schedule, email him to make other arrangements.

# NATIVITY & THEOPHANY SERVICE SCHEDULE



Tuesday , December 24th:	9:00am Royal Hours
	7:00pm Nativity Vigil
Wednesday, December 25th:	<b>Feast of the Nativity</b>
	10:00am Divine Liturgy
	Christmas Caroling at the Nursing Home immediately following Liturgy
Thursday, December 26th:	10:00am Divine Liturgy for the Theotokos
Sunday, January 5th:	Divine Liturgy and Blessing of the Waters
Monday, January 6th:	<b>Feast of Theophany</b>
	10:00am Divine Liturgy
Sunday, January 12th:	9:50am Divine Liturgy & Blessing of the River
	Lamb Dinner & Agape Meal