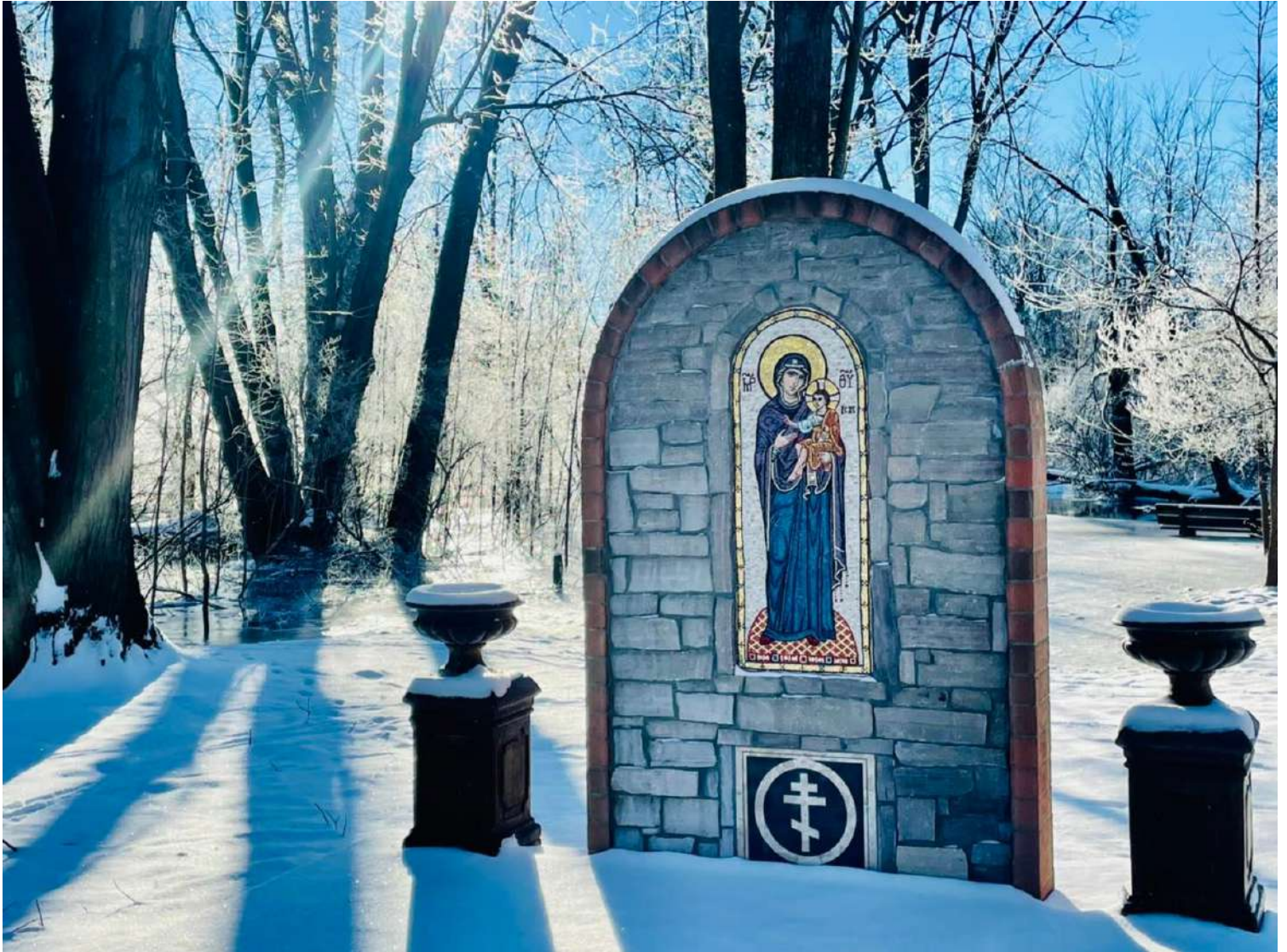


December 2022

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church



Fr. Gabriel Bilas, Rector

Office: 810-750-1401

Church Email: SMMOCAFenton@gmail.com

Father's Email: frgabrielstmm@gmail.com

2439 S. Long Lake Rd, Fenton, MI 48430

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

Office Hours*:

Monday 10:00am-3:00pm

Wednesday 10:00am-3:00pm

Friday 10:00am-3:00pm

***or by appointment**

Monthly e-Newsletter

ST. MARY MAGDALENE ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Lineage of the King of Kings

From the Desk of Fr. Gabriel

Our hearts today are filled with anticipation as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the Joy of the Nativity of our Savior! In December, we stand today at the threshold of the Winter Pascha, together awaiting the moment that changes EVERYTHING.

My dearest parish family, He is coming. The star is shining brightly above Bethlehem, and like the magi, we continue our journey towards the cave to fall down and worship this King of Kings, Who had been foretold to us throughout the centuries in the Old Testament.

Our Lord's family history was filled with many kings and nobleman. When we read through scripture, we cannot help but marvel at the power and wealth of some of these men that are apart of Jesus's Family. Solomon's throne for example, was made of ivory, and overlaid with gold. His cups, dishes, and even his royal bathtub were solid gold! The best made furniture, the strongest horses, the sweetest spices, the most beautiful brides...this is what was expected for the most powerful kings of the world!

But our Lord came, when this King of Kings made His entrance into mankind, He did so in a "not so king like way". Jesus wasn't born in a golden palace, surrounded by the riches of the Jewish Kingdom. His mother did not give birth in a featherbed made from the cedars of Lebanon. The Savior came into this world in the middle of a damp, cool, and rocky cave, being warmed by the breath of the animals that dwelt there. This seems completely backwards doesn't it? Why would the King of Kings, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, God Himself choose to be born in the midst of filth and darkness!?

If WHERE and HOW Christ was born wasn't bad enough, we are given this incredible Gospel text that we read every Sunday before Christmas, which gives us the listing of Jesus's family tree. Although some may regard it as a rather dull reading, the significance behind reading and understanding who these people are, is perhaps one of the most striking images in all of scripture! One would think that the family line of Christ would be full of virtuous leaders and kings (and indeed we do find many names on this list of people who led lives full of the Grace of God). More often than not however, when we look at some of the names on Jesus's family tree, what do we find? More filth than what was on the cave floor where He was born!

We hear stories of idolatry, murder, anger, greed, and rape. Christ didn't come from a perfect lineage. He came from an extremely **imperfect** lineage, full of men and women who missed the mark, just like we do in our own relationship with God!

In the names we read today, there is one that I hoped to bring to the forefront, who wrote a beautiful prayer that we still use in one of our worship services today.

Although it was King David who wrote perhaps Orthodoxy's most popular psalm 50 (51), there was another King later on in the list who also experienced and wrote beautifully about repentance, whose name was King Manasseh.

UPCOMING THIS MONTH

4- Annual Meeting

5-Vesperal Liturgy at St. Nicholas for their Patronal Feast

6-Prayer Service for the Sick and the Suffering

7-Weekday Divine Liturgies resume

10-Baptisms of Sophia & Kathleen Anna

11-40 Day Parastasis for Liz Ziats
11- St. Nicholas Visit, bring a toy to share

13- Divine Liturgy for St. Herman of Alaska

13- Parish Council

15- Akathist to the Saints of North America

17-Baptism of Aron & Juniper

23- Royal Hours

24- Nativity Vigil

25- Nativity Liturgy

25- Caroling at the Nursing Home

26- Liturgy for the Theotokos

"Prayer is the place of refuge for every worry, a foundation for cheerfulness, a source of constant happiness, a protection against sadness."

+St. John Chrysostom

Prayers for our Sick and our Suffering

Vinne	Jeff	Mary Valarie
Elaine	Mike	Lynne
David	Lauren	Jeanne
Pat	Rich	Glenn
Michael	Judy	Gerald
Jim	Anthony	Tony
Elaine	Dorothy	Pamela
Mason	Megan	Elizabeth
Theresa	Shirley	Arminda
Robert	Tinna	Michael
Linda	Susan	Sarah
Hudson	Brian	Nicole
Allison	Sophia	Theresa
Dimitri	Miriam	Debra
Damian	Bryan	Betty
Martin	Chrissy	
Ivanka	Kristen	
Dawn	Cameron	

Mother's With Child

Renee
Rachel
Christine
Taylor
Matushka Sara

Catechumenate

Collin Jacqueline
Jaclyn William
Mark Dimitry
Sarah Nicholas

Seminarian Families

Deacon Alexander,
Matushka Danielle &
Cordelia Earl

Reader Paisios, Anna,
John & Theodore
Hamann

Anniversary of Parish Members Departed

8-Manuela Kemp
24-Marcella Moorman
24- Dorothy Jean Flesher

Recently Departed

Elizabeth Ziats

The Lineage of the King of Kings Cont.

Despite a positive upbringing by his father Hezekiah, Manasseh completely rejected a God Centered Life. When he was made king, he did everything he could to block out the Grace of our Lord. Rather than worshiping the One True God in the temple, he ordered that altars be built to Baal. Instead of asking God through prayer for help and advice on how to rule God's people, Manasseh spent his time consulting wizards and fortune tellers. Scripture even makes it a point to say that he put a lot of trust in the flight patterns and cries of birds to predict certain omens, rather than conversing with God.

Eventually, we know from experience that when we live a life absent of God, it catches up with us. King Manasseh was eventually captured and carried off into Babylon, and it was in the midst of the darkest time of his life, that he was finally humbled. Coupled with that humility came Manasseh's repentance and lament of the life with God that he had rejected.

As is the case with all who turn back to God through humility, our Lord's response to Manasseh was one of complete restoration. He was returned back to his kingdom in Jerusalem and lived out the rest of his days in peace and in communion with our Lord.

I bring up this story of this evil king who turned good, because I think it serves as a small picture of our own relationship with Christ. Although we might not create altars to Baal or consult with wizards and birds, we do not always put our complete trust in God. There are times in our lives where we too create idols out of money, politics, people, and possessions. We become anxious when our lives do not go as planned. We often lose sight of all that God has done for us. Yet despite all of these failings, when we finally wake up and decide to humble ourselves before the feet of our Lord, we become like Manasseh, and are restored to our former glory.

Why did Christ come to us in such a humble way? To teach us all, like He taught King Manasseh, how we need to approach the throne of God: With complete and perfect humility.

St. Ambrose of Milan wrote beautifully in the 4th century: *"He was in a manger, so that we might be able to be at the altar. He was on earth, so that we might be in the stars. He had no place in the inn...so that we might have mansions in paradise."*

What beautiful words from this early saint, that describes for us the life that we are all called to! This is our mark! This our destiny with the Christ Who comes into the world this week! But we learn today that it can only be achieved through extremely humility and sincere repentance.

When Manasseh was captured in Babylon, he wrote a beautiful prayer that we read during the Great Compline Service called *"The Prayer of Manasseh"*. In this prayer, he humbled himself before God, and confessed all of the ways in which he had failed to live up to a Godly way of life. As we approach the Incarnation of Christ, let us echo Manasseh's words by saying:

"Lord, I am not worthy to behold and see the height of heaven, because of the multitude of mine iniquities. I am weighed down with many iron fetters, so that I cannot lift up my head by reason of my many sins...and now I bend the knees of my heart, asking for your Grace. I have sinned O Lord, and I acknowledge my iniquities...but I humble ask of Thee...Forgive me O Lord...forgive me. For You are the God of those who repent, and in me You will manifest your goodness. For unworthy as I am, you will save me in your great mercy, and I will praise you henceforth, all the days of my life...Amen"

Prayers for our Armed Forces

*Michael Oginsky - U.S.
Stephany Bishop - U.S. Navy*

*Jason Wilburn - Army Rangers
Alex Suriano - Air National Guard*

Sarah Tyler- U.S. Air Force

PARISH GREETERS

December 4

Seth & Mia Hillaker

December 11

Freida Owens

December 18

Steve & Sue Walton

December 25

Scott & Tina Shephard

COFFEE HOUR

December 4

Doug & Joyce Ballnik

December 11

Jay & Tonya Rice

December 18

Ruth Karabina

December 25

**NO COFFEE HOUR, CHRIST IS
BORN!**

BELL RINGERS

December 4

Cindy Welch & Ruth Karabina

December 11

Vivian Capatina & Tonya Rice
Children Ringers for St. Nicholas

December 18

Cindy Welch & Ruth Karabina

December 25

Vivian Capatina & Tonya Rice

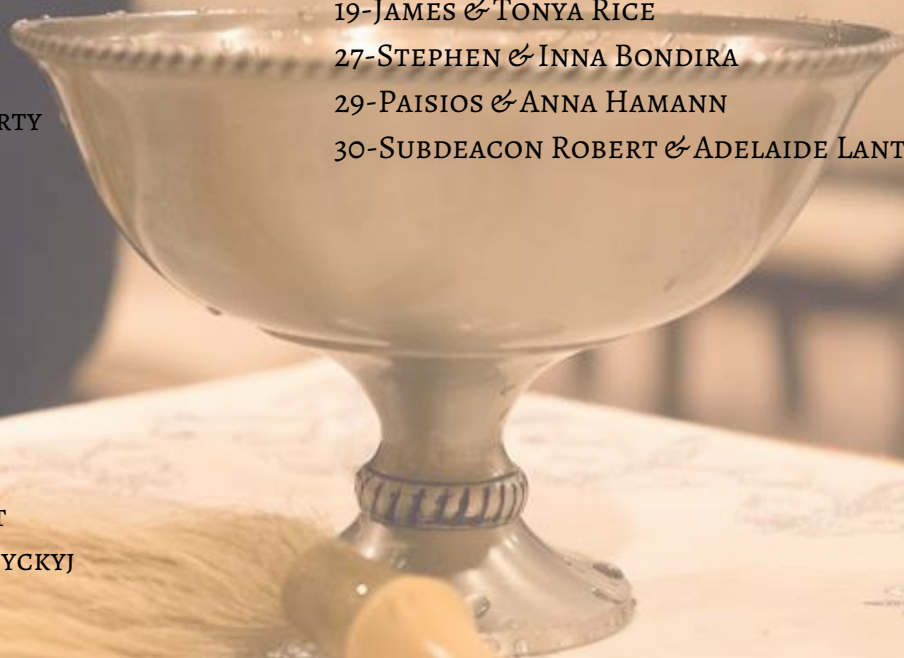
WISHING YOU MANY BLESSED YEARS!

BIRTHDAYS

- 2- JAKE BARNHART
- 3- SUBDEACON ANDREW DURAND
- 4- EMMA LANTERMAN
- 5- RICHARD ZIATS & WINIFRED DAUGHERTY
- 6- ROMONOS ROYER
- 7- DOUGLAS WILKINSON
- 8- CHRISTOPHER COOLEY
- 9- CHARLOTTE SHIPLEY & JACOB BOWERS
- 11- LUCILLE BILAS
- 12- RICK SCHLAACK
- 13- ANNE KHOURY
- 14- MAT. LAURA BILAS & OWEN DOLLINS
- 17- READER DAVID & KATHERINE SCHUTT
- 19- MAURA BURTKA & MYKOLA NEWMERZYCKY
- 21- DAVID WELCH
- 23- ROBERT OGINSKY JR
- 30- KRISTIN WOLF
- 31- ISAIAH DURAND & CHRISTINE SURIANO

ANNIVERSARIES

- 19- JAMES & TONYA RICE
- 27- STEPHEN & INNA BONDIRA
- 29- PAISIOS & ANNA HAMANN
- 30- SUBDEACON ROBERT & ADELAIDE LANTERMAN



EPISTLE READERS

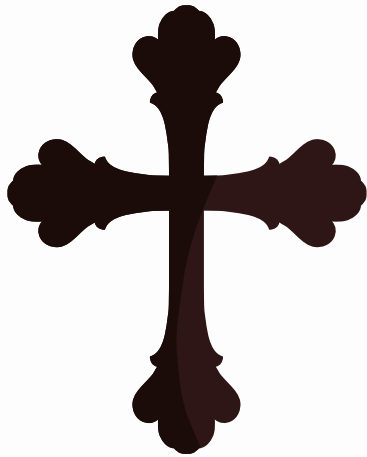


December 4
Jenni Otis
Subdeacon John Auxier

December 11
Sue Walton
Rdr. Nathaniel Auxier

December 18
Rdr. Brian-Philip Walton
Sue Walton

December 25
Subdeacon Andrew Durand
John Wolf



SCRIPTURE READINGS

December 4
Eph. 4:1-6
Luke 17:12-19

December 11
Col. 3:4-11
Luke 14:16-24

December 18
Heb. 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40
Matt. 1:1-25

December 25
Gal 4:4-7
Matt 2:1-12

The Church is opened for
private prayer
Monday, Wednesday, & Friday
10am -3pm
or by appointment



"The Church is a hospital, and not a
courtroom, for souls. She does not
condemn on behalf of sins but grants
remission of sins."
+St. John Chrysostom

RECOMMENDED

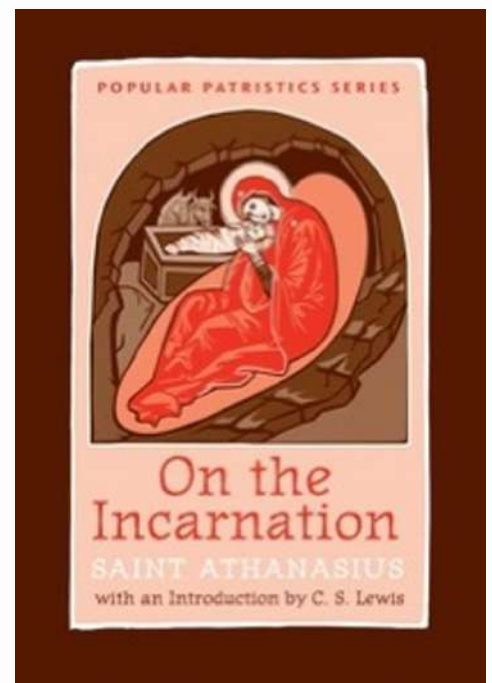
READING

ON THE INCARNATION
BY: SAINT ATHANASIUS

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.

SCHEDULE CHANGE

From November 19th until
after Pascha
regular Saturday services
will be moved to 4:00pm



MONTHLY FORECAST

Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting will take place after Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 4th. All of the financials, reports, and budgets were sent to the members of the parish via email. If you did not receive this, or would like a hard copy, there are some available in the Church.

Pledge Cards

Pledge Cards are due by the week of the annual meeting! We use these cards to determine membership so please make sure that each and every Orthodox Christian who is a member of the parish fills one out!

Seminarian Angel Tree

The last day for Gift Cards to be returned for the Seminarian Angel Tree is on Sunday, December 4th! Please make sure you get these in as soon as possible so that the seminarians can get them before their Nativity Break

St. Nicholas Pan Orthodox Liturgy

Our sister parish of St. Nicholas will be celebrating their patronal feast day of St. Nicholas on Monday, December 5th, with a Vesperal Divine Liturgy at 6:00 PM.

Visitation of St. Nicholas at St. Mary Magdalene

St. Nicholas will be making his annual visit to our parish on Sunday, December 11th. All children should be in attendance for this event and for this special visitation!

Baptism Galore!

On Saturday, December 10th and Saturday, December 17th, we will be welcoming four new warriors for Christ to the Holy Orthodox Faith. The baptisms of Sophia Miller and Kathleen Anna Bieganski will be on Saturday the 10th at 2:00 PM and the baptisms of Aaron Torrey and Juniper Oginsky will be on Saturday the 17th at 2:00 PM

Liturgy with Relics of St. Herman of Alaska and St. Lucy of Syracuse

We are blessed to have the relics of St. Herman of Alaska, as well as St. Lucy of Syracuse for their feast day on Tuesday, December 13th. Divine Liturgy will be celebrated that morning on 10:00 AM, and will take the place of our regular Wednesday Divine Liturgy.

Akathist to Sts. of North America

On Thursday, December 15th, the young adult group will be hosting the Akathist to the Sts of North America, beginning at 6:00 Pm. All are invited to attend and to pray!

Nativity Schedule

While this will be posted in numerous other places, make sure everyone MARKS THEIR CALENDARS for all of the Nativity Services that will be offered here at St. Mary Magdalene! Friday, December 23rd, we will celebrate the Royal Hours of the Nativity beginning at 10:00 AM. Saturday, December 24th, Nativity Vigil will begin at 6:00 PM. Sunday, December 25th, we will have Christmas Day Liturgy at the normal time with hours beginning at 9:40 AM! Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, which gives us the chance to celebrate not only the Nativity but also the Resurrection on the same glorious day!

Nativity Caroling

Join us following the Nativity Liturgy on December 25th for Christmas Caroling at Lockwood of Fenton. This is a wonderful opportunity to put your faith into action and show the gentile presence of Christ by visiting with the shut-ins of the Feast of the Nativity. All too often people are forgotten on the day of the Feast, let this not be the case. Everyone is welcome to and encouraged to join, you do not have to be a choir member. Please bring your children!

Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos

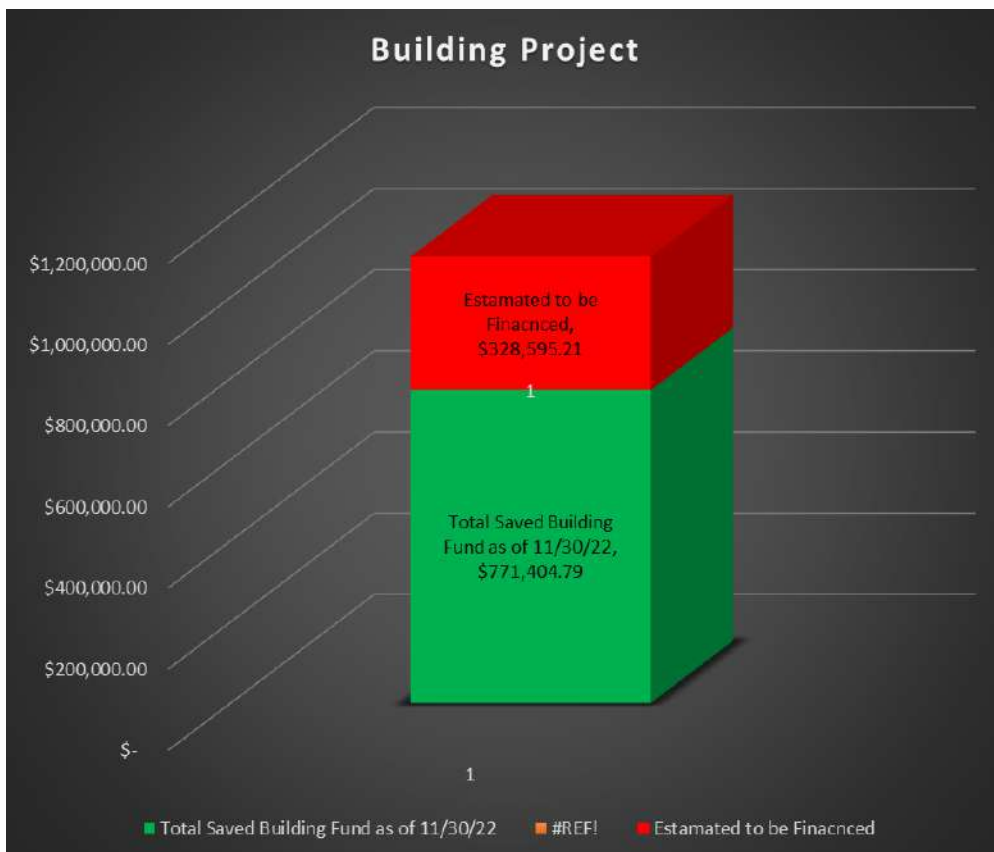
On the day after Christmas, Monday, December 26th, we celebrate the Divine Liturgy in honor of the blessed Theotokos. Liturgy will begin at 10:00 AM

BUILDING THE LITTLE CHURCH IN THE WOODS

A MONTH IN REVIEW

This past month was full of activity for the life of our parish family. We began by going to visit the monastery of Holy Dormition, where we were greeted by Mother Gabriella and Mother Macrina, who impressed upon the pilgrims how we can take aspects of monastic life and implement it in the midst of the world. The parish also celebrated the ordination of Fr. Alexander Earl, which happened on November 6th at St. Vladimir's Seminary! Fr. Alex, Matushka Danielle, and little Cordelia are completing their third year of seminary and awaiting a parish assignment.

This past month has also been full of activity with the building project! The walls have been erected for the new Church addition, and soon the construction crews will be working to connect them into the existing building. It is quite astonishing when one goes and sees just how big this addition is going to be! God has given us this incredible gift, and we all have a mission to take it and make it bear fruit in the lives of others. May it be blessed!



Total Collected 10/27 - 11/30
\$2,737.00

Current Estimate to finance
\$328,595.21

ST. MARY MAGDALENE ORTHODOX CHURCH



Nativity Caroling

2022

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25TH
FOLLOWING THE DIVINE LITURGY**

**LOCKWOOD OF FENTON
16309 SILVER PKWY**

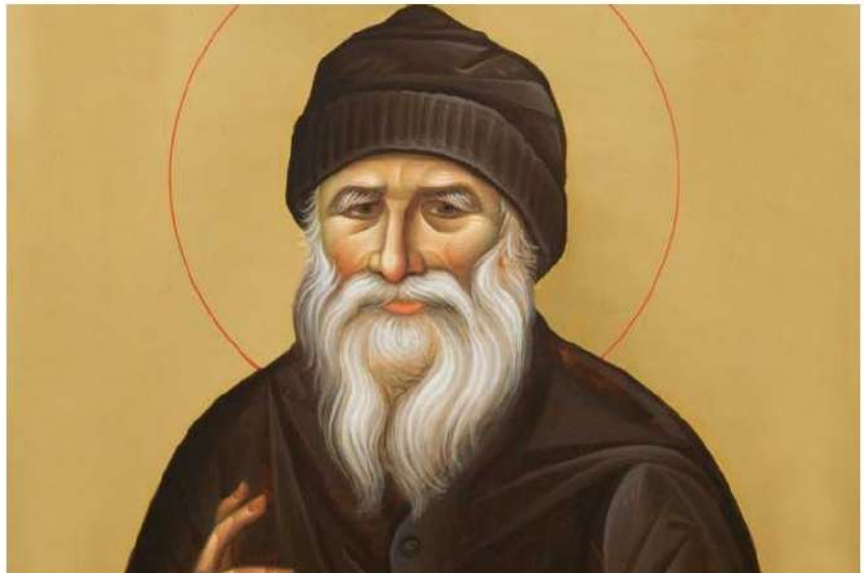
**JOIN US AS WE PUT OUR FAITH INTO ACTION AND VISIT WITH THOSE WHO
ARE ALONE ON THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY.**

Pastoral Report of Fr. Gabriel Bilas

*"With the Worship of God, you live in Paradise. If you know and love Christ, you live in paradise. Christ is Paradise, and Paradise begins here...Our **chief concern**, is to devote ourselves to Christ, and unite ourselves to the Church." -St. Porphyrios*

The building up of paradise on earth has been the mission of the Orthodox Christian Faith since the time of Christ. That same mission has survived tremendous persecutions, wars, famine, and even man-made pandemics. The same mission has survived through the collapse of empires, governments, and it will survive through the madness that has befallen the not only our own nation, but many other seemingly developed western nations.

There is a famous quote by St. Anthony the Great who warned of the days that we are now living in when he said: *"A time is coming when men will go mad, and when they see someone who is not mad, they will attack him saying: "You are mad; you are not like us."*



In a world that seems to be completely upside down, we give thanks to God for our connection to paradise and for our connection to the Church, which acts as a sturdy rock of unchanging faith for us to balance ourselves as we are continually knocked down by the waves of life. **The upkeep and growth of this "mission of paradise" and this love of Christ is and always will be our primary concern.**

In reflecting on the past year, let me begin by remind everyone of the four pillars of the Church that are needed to keep the Mission of Paradise strong.

The Pillar of Worship

How can we begin to show our dedication to the mission of Paradise, without first making the commitment to experience it as often as we can? I am grateful that, despite the construction to our Church this year, we have increased the number of services that were offered from previous years! Here are some of the highlights of this pillar:

- On top of our regular Sunday Divine Liturgies, we maintained our weekday Liturgies with consistent attendance.
- As a “proud papa moment”, the young adult group facilitated the addition of monthly Akathist services to the saints that are open to all.
- Towards the end of the year, we began a monthly ministry of praying an Akathist to the Theotokos for those suffering from cancer and other terminal diseases.
- Saturday Vespers and Confession attendance has (by the Grace of God) increased.
- Most of our parishioners have taken their spiritual life seriously through frequent confessions and participation in the Sacraments.

For these reasons and more, I congratulate our parish community for growing in its life of worship and prayer, despite the difficulties of doing so without the type of Church Temple that we are accustomed to.

Thank you to our Choir, who continue their work and growth in the area of Liturgical Music. Thank you to our altar servers and to their parents for bringing their children here on time. Thank you to our readers. Thank you to those who help decorate and clean for the services. Thank you to all who have come and offered up at least one prayer in this Holy House, taking the steps necessary to *“commend our ourselves, each other, and all of our life unto Christ our God.”*

The Pillar of Community

We first remember those members of our community who have and will continue to support the Church in the “Mansions of the Righteous”: Elizabeth Ziats, Eleftheria Rissin, Taisa Czubenko, Cyrus Lazar, and Phillip Moorman. May their memory forever be eternal!

By the end of this calendar year, we will have welcomed 16 new people to the Holy Orthodox Faith through Baptism and Chrismation. We have 8 catechumens and several inquirers who are also taking classes towards entering into Holy Orthodoxy. As it stands today, we have an unofficial count of over 120 **regularly attending** Orthodox Adult Members, 11 Non-Orthodox Spouses, and just under 60 souls under the age of 18. These numbers do not include the various visitors and inquirers that we are now receiving on a regular basis at the Church.



Despite our space limitations, I remind everyone that a part of our mission is to provide a warm welcome to those who are seeking out Paradise. Thank you to our greeters who continue to be that warm first face that visitors see. Thank you also to those who have continued in their efforts to organize community events, meals, and coffee hours despite the space limitations!

The Pillar of Education

Despite the space limitations, I would like to thank our Church School staff, who has managed to maintain a very solid program for our children to engage in. Seeing the children not only learn about the faith, but also engage in their own little community together, has been a tremendous blessing to witness. The number of children in this parish never ceases to amaze me, and should be a wonderful assurance to us that as long as this pillar of education is strong, the Mission of Paradise will continue far into the future!

Metanoia for adults and new inquirers was revamped this year for those wishing to learn and grow in their faith. We also were blessed during Great Lent to welcome virtually Fr. Josiah Trenham who spoke to us about King Josiah and Repentance during Great Lent.

The Orthodox Book Club continued to meet on Thursdays, covering a variety of books such as “Our Thoughts Determine our Lives”, “Wounded by Love”, and “Everyday Saints”.

God willing, after Church construction is complete, we will be able to return to a more complete and full offering of ways to grow in our knowledge of the faith.



The Pillar of Stewardship

Despite the difficult economy and rising inflation, I want to thank those who continued to honor their pledge and to those who tithed during this past year. To give of ourselves in time, talent, and treasurers shows a love of God, of each other, and of the Church. It also acts as an important spiritual discipline for all of us living in the world, to be able to put the Church and others first in all things.

While more on the financial stewardship of the parish will be offered in the treasurer’s report, I also want to thank the entire St. Photini team who have coordinated our charity and community outreach efforts. Through their efforts, our parish has been able to maintain the “gentle presence of Christ” in the midst of the chaos of the world!

In Conclusion, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your spiritual labors this past year, no matter how big or how small they might have been. Most importantly, I want to thank my wife Matushka Laura and my four children, Lucy, Noah, Ileana, and Elijah, who have had to, and will continue to, sacrifice a lot for this unworthy priest to continue to do the work that he loves to do.

SEMINARIAN UPDATE

ST. VLADIMIR'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!

Many blessed years to the newly ordained Priest Alexander Earl, one of our seminarians who is attending St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. Fr. Alexander was ordained to the Priesthood on Sunday, November 6th at the Seminary in New York.

Please keep the Priest Alexander, Matushka Danielle and their daughter in your daily prayers as the embark on this new journey.



SEMINARIAN UPDATE

ST. TIKHON'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Dear Family and Friends,

We hope you are all doing well! It seems like so much has happened since our last newsletter. It's difficult to believe that we have only been living here a little under four months!

Peter has been enjoying his classes and comes home every day with a sparkle in his eyes – it's clear that he loves what he's doing and that has a positive effect on our entire family. Besides his classes, there are a lot of other church obligations, but as we can join him for many of those, it seems like we get to see him quite often throughout the day. Our day-to-day life here feels very holistic with church at the center and community life, home life, and the occasional extracurricular well-integrated within it. The rural environment suits us perfectly. We don't want to be doing anything else.

I (Anna) have had the opportunity to teach some piano lessons again, which has been a lot of fun! I am hoping that more students will come, but in such a rural area as this, I am not sure how likely that is. We have a large sunroom-type area in the back of our house with a separate entrance that makes a perfect teaching space and music room. Because of the way the house is laid out, we can play music even when our kids are asleep, which feels like a huge blessing coming from the small apartment we had in Michigan. We will soon be acquiring a small electric organ from St. Patrick Western Rite Orthodox Church in VA that we have been storing with family since June. I am very excited to play organ again for the first time in about four years!

John has surprised me with a sudden interest in letters and numbers and “school” of a sort. We've been following a Montessori-type style of learning to read and we are both having so much fun. He is growing into a clever, talkative little guy who keeps us laughing constantly. He is turning three right after Thanksgiving. I can't believe how the time has flown on one hand, but on the other it seems that life has changed tremendously since he was born. We've done a lot of growing up together.

Theodore is suddenly not seeming so much like a baby anymore. He is able to communicate quite well, has a silly sense of humor, and, when he's not being sat upon by his big brother, is really developing physically, too. He mostly just tags along with whatever the rest of us are doing and seems quite content to be a giggly little caboose.

Last week we were blessed to have the entire Holy Synod here at St. Tikhon's! All 12 bishops of the OCA (Orthodox Church in America) were here, including Metropolitan Tikhon. The week's activities included our having dinner with the bishops of our diocese and spending time talking with them about our futures (mostly in general terms). The week culminated in a primatial Liturgy, including music composed and conducted by our own Benedict Sheehan, sung by the professional St. Tikhon Choir. See an example on one of Benedict's pieces here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rv9r7AzRERl> The primatial service was over three hours long (we didn't all make it to the end!) and gloriously beautiful.

It has been already a priceless gift that we have been able to be here for these months. Thank you all for your interest in our newsletter and for your presence in our lives. We love you and keep you in our prayers. Happy Thanksgiving!

Love, The Hamanns



Prayer Service for the Sick and Suffering, Especially those suffering with Cancer.

We welcome anyone who is sick or has a loved one or friend who is sick and suffering with cancer or a chronic illness to join us for this once a month prayer service. We will be offering prayers for the healing of soul and body, for compassion and for comfort to those who are fighting illness.

Please join us in person or submit your names to be read during the healing service

The first Tuesday of the Month
6:30pm

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church
2439 S. Long Lake Rd. Fenton, MI 48506
st-marymagdalene.org



Scan this code to submit
names for prayer or to
find more information.



PARISH LENDING LIBRARY

The parish lending has recently gone through a reorganization and added several new titles. The list of current titles are available digitally on our website. Use the sign-out sheet to check out a book. Make the most of your summer!

You can find reading on the following topics;

St. Mary Magdalene Pictorial History, Young Adult, Journals, Children's Books, Orthodox Theology, Spirituality, Multi Media, Family Life, Orthodox Living, About Prayer & Prayer Books, Sacraments, Advent, Great Lent & Pascha, Intro to Orthodoxy, Scriptural Study, Church History, Liturgical Theology, Service Books, Lives of the Saints. Patristics. Memoirs & Commemorations, and Ethics.

[HTTP://WWW.ST-MARYMAGDALENE.ORG/PARISH-LENDING-LIBRARY](http://www.st-marymagdalene.org/parish-lending-library)



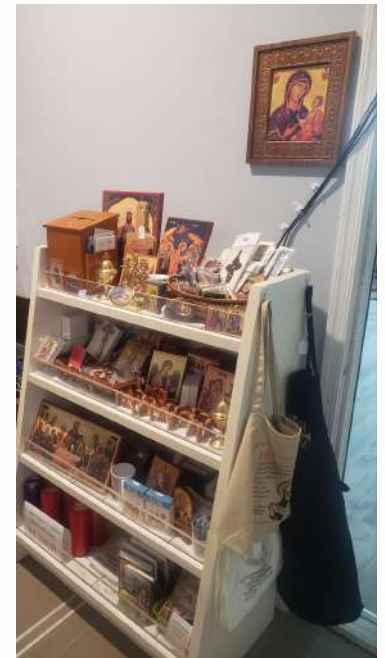
P
A K
R I
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S S
H K

We are still here!!!!

The Parish Kiosk was moved to the hallway in the temporary chapel. We still have a wide array of treasures available from books to home altar supplies to icons. Check it out!

If you are looking for something specific please reach out to the parish office and we can order it from our suppliers. Your order helps support the parish.

We Still have St. Mary Magdalene tumblers available for \$20 each!



NATIVITY STORE IS OPEN AND WAITING FOR YOU!

PARISH CHOIR



UPCOMING REHEARSALS TO PREPARE FOR THE NATIVITY



Saturday, December 3rd, 1:30pm
Saturday, December 10th, 3:00pm
Saturday, December 17th, 3:00pm

Regular Bell Ringing Rehearsals

- 1st Thursday of the Month, 10:30am
- 1st Sunday of the Month following Divine Liturgy

Contact Cindy Welch if you are interested in joining this ministry!



*Parish
Bell Ringers*



Greetings from St. Mary Magdalene Church School. As we approach the Feast of the Nativity, the children and Church School Staff are enjoying a brief "vacation" from class which enables everyone a few extra minutes to prepare for the feast. St. Nicholas will be visiting on Sunday, December 11. Several of the children are learning to ring the bells so they can greet him as he arrives. We are asking children to bring a small toy for distribution (one per family) to the Foster Closet. Children will be able to experience the blessing of a small gift from St. Nicholas as well as the blessing of giving a gift to other children.

We anticipate classes resuming Sunday, January 15. Children will be able to fully participate in the Theophany celebration on Sunday, January 8. It is challenging housing all of our church activities in the Education Center. Thank you to everyone in the parish for their flexibility so far and as we go forward.

Please feel free to reach out to me with questions, concerns and ideas.

Yours in Christ,

Terri Oginsky
Church School Coordinator
989-906-0135
toginsky@gmail.com

RETURN YOUR COLORED ICON TO FR. GABRIEL FOR A PRIZE!

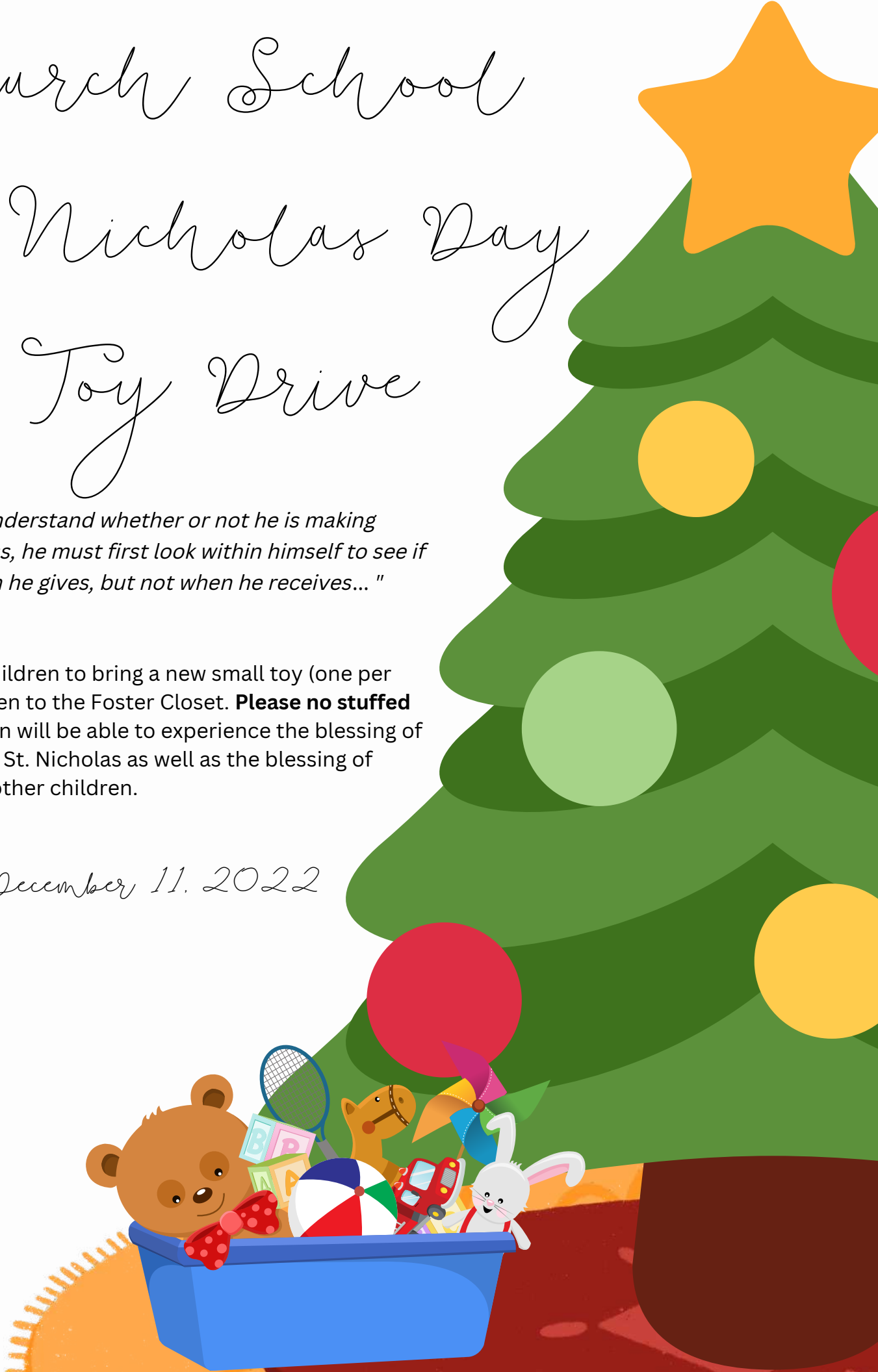


Church School St. Nicholas Day Toy Drive

"If a man is to understand whether or not he is making spiritual progress, he must first look within himself to see if he rejoices when he gives, but not when he receives..."
St. Paisios

We are asking children to bring a new small toy (one per family) to be given to the Foster Closet. **Please no stuffed animals.** Children will be able to experience the blessing of a small gift from St. Nicholas as well as the blessing of giving a gift for other children.

Sunday, December 11, 2022



St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church

St. Nicholas Visit

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2022

O who loves Nicholas the saintly,
O who serves Nicholas the saintly,
Him will Nicholas receive,
And give help in time of need:
Holy Father Nicholas!*

He who dwells in God's holy
mansions,
Is our help on the land and oceans,
He will guard us from all ills,
Keep us pure and free from sins
Holy Father Nicholas!*

Holy Saint, hearken to our prayer,
Let not life drive us to despair,
All our efforts shall not wane,
Singing praises to your name:
Holy Father Nicholas!*

O kto kto Nikolaja l'ubit,
O kto kto Nikolaja sluzit,
Tomu svjatyj Nikolaj,
Na vsjakj cas pomahaj:
Nicolaj, Nicolaj!*

*Repeat the three lines of the refrain.

St. Nicholas will be joining us following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 11th. Traditionally this is the day gifts are exchanged in honor of the life of St. Nicholas and his benevolence. He will be bringing gifts for all our children. Be sure your children, Godchildren and grandchildren are present to hear about the life of St. Nicholas and his giving soul.



SMMOY

ST. MARY MAGDALENE
ORTHODOX YOUTH

SMMOY is back into full swing!
Thank you for your patience as Seth and
Mia transitioned into parenthood.

Follow us on the Band App for the most
up-to-date information!

UPCOMING GATHERINGS & SERVICE

DECEMBER 10TH: COOKIE MAKING FOR 1ST RESPONDERS

JANUARY 14TH: BOARD GAME NIGHT

COLLEGE CORNER

PRAYERS FOR OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Oliver Senter

Katerina Jonescu

Katheryn Brcic

Alexandra Kekel

Abigail Arnes

Tea Jonascu

Ethan Durand

Justin Auxier

Ava Arnes

Francis Lazar Senter



SMMOY SERVICE EVENT

Cookies for First Responders

MAKING AND DECORATING COOKIES FOR OUR LOCAL FIRST RESPONDERS!

- WHEN** December 10th, 2022 from 5-8 pm
- WHERE** 573 Carriage Hill Drive, Fenton, MI
- FOOD** Meal provided
- SUPPLIES** Feel free to bring any cookie decorating supplies you may have. We will sign off on NHS service hours, if requested.

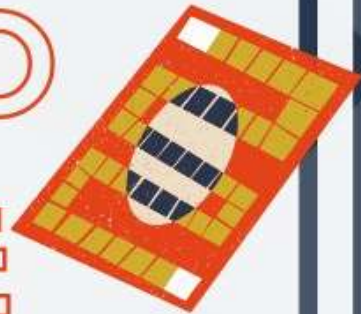
Let's bake!

**10TH
SATURDAY
DEC 2022**



SMMOY FELLOWSHIP EVENT

BOARD
GAME
NIGHT



**JANUARY 14TH, 2022
FROM 5-8 PM**

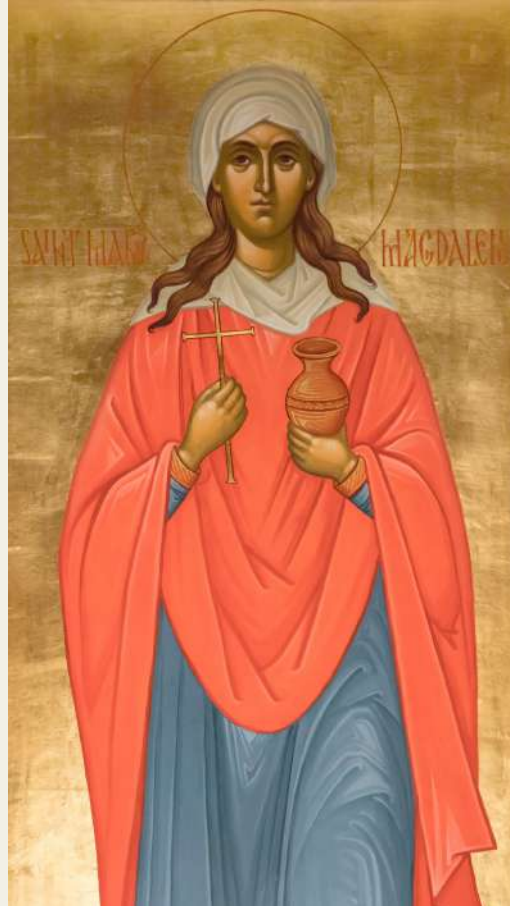
**BRING YOUR
FAVORITE
SNACKS & GAMES!**



SMMOY FELLOWSHIP EVENT

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church

YOUNG ADULT GROUP



THERE WILL BE YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL TIME EVERY SATURDAY FOLLOWING GREAT VESPERS, BEGINNING WITH THE THE PRE-COMMUNION PRAYERS.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE BAND APP FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDED TO THE BAND APP PLEASE REACH OUT TO SUBDEACON JOHN AUXIER.

**NEXT AKATHIST (TO THE SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA)
& FELLOWSHIP WILL BE THURSDAY DECEMBER 15TH**



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

“AN INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR
COMMUNITY OUTREACH LED BY THE
FAITHFUL OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE
ORTHODOX CHURCH”

UPCOMING EVENTS:

SEMINARIAN ANGEL TREE: NOVEMBER 13- DECEMBER 4TH

NEW TOY DRIVE: DECEMBER 11TH

CAROLING AT THE NURSING HOME: DECEMBER 25TH



Dear Friend,
I want to thank you
dearly for the beautiful
hand made Royal Blue
quilt I chose as the royal
blue quilt that you made
and chose the Royal the
quilt which I think is so
lovely. and seems royal blue
I am 103 years old and don't
see so well. I again want to
thank you for such kindness

Words can only
Tell in part
The thanks this brings you
From the heart.
Loveingly
Leona Eichelberg

Truly, I tell you,
whatever you did for one of
the least of these
brothers and sisters of mine,
you did for me.
~MATTHEW 25:40

Please contact Deacon Mike or the Parish office if you would like to join the efforts of the Fellowship of St. Photini

NOVEMBER 13- DECEMBER 4

Seminarian Angel Tree

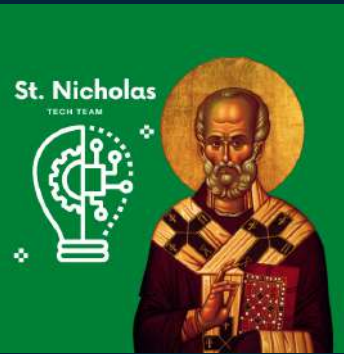


AS SOME OF YOU KNOW, IT TAKES A TREMENDOUS FINANCIAL SACRIFICE FOR A FAMILY TO FOLLOW A CALLING TO GO TO SEMINARY TO STUDY THE FAITH. MANY OF THESE FUTURE PRIESTS GIVE UP THEIR FINANCIAL STABILITY, AND PUT THEIR TRUST IN GOD THAT HE WILL SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES.

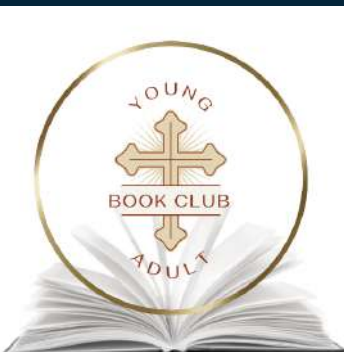
STARTING ON NOVEMBER 13TH (THE BEGINNING OF ADVENT), THERE WILL BE A SEMINARIAN GIFT CARD TREE. WE ARE ASKING THAT EVERYONE PURCHASE ONE OF THE GIFT CARDS (\$25 OR \$50) ON THE TREE TO BE GIVEN TO A SEMINARIAN FAMILY...GIVING THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE SOME EXTRA BLESSINGS DURING THE ADVENT SEASON!



PARISH MINISTRIES & GROUPS



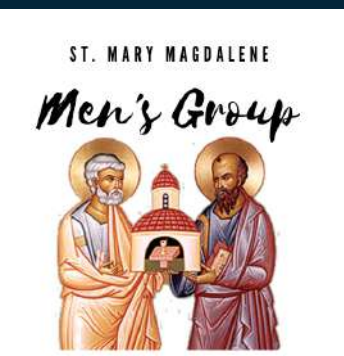
THE ST. NICHOLAS TECH TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROMOTING, UPDATING, AND ENHANCING THE ONLINE PRESENCE OF OUR PARISH. ENCOMPASSING THE WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS, AND LIVE-STREAMING SO THAT WE CAN SPREAD ORTHODOXY THROUGH MODERN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS.



THE YOUNG ADULT BOOK CLUB MEETS EVERY THURSDAY TO DISCUSS VARIOUS BOOKS AND TOPICS RELATING TO THE ORTHODOX SPIRITUAL LIFE. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE GROUP RANGE FROM 18-45 YEARS OLD, BUT ALL ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE!



THE ORTHODOX MOM'S GROUP IS MADE UP OF MOTHERS WHO GET TOGETHER TO DISCUSS HOW BEST TO HELP RAISE THEIR CHILDREN WITHIN THE TRADITIONS OF THE ORTHODOXY FAITH.



THE MEN OF THE PARISH GET TOGETHER A FEW TIMES A YEAR AT VARIOUS PLACES TO ENJOY IN FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER. FOR MORE INFORMATION, DO NOT HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO THE PARISH OFFICE.



St. Mary Magdalene

Parish Council

Upcoming Meetings:

December 4th ANNUAL MEETING
December 13th, 7:00pm

Parish Council Members

Joe Otis, Chair
Reader Chris Ballnik, Secretary
Ann Schutt, Treasurer
David Welch
Tina Shepherd
Subdeacon Andrew Durand
Rachel Burtka
Terri Oginsky

Alternate: Jay Rice



FELLOWSHIP AGAPE MEALS

Agape (Greek *agapē*): in the New Testament, the fatherly love of God for humans, as well as the human reciprocal love for God. In Scripture, the transcendent agape love is the highest form of love and is contrasted with *eros*, or erotic love, and *philia*, or brotherly love.

Sobornost: Divine-Human Oneness

Sobornost means spiritual harmony based on freedom and unity in love. It is a necessary component in our membership with the Body of Christ, for if we are not bound together in love, our freedom becomes our enemy, separating us from others and ultimately from Christ Himself. This concept was so important to early Christians that it was the basis for the agape meal, when Christians shared their food with one another after the celebration of the eucharistic banquet.

That the pre-communion fast would be broken after the Divine Liturgy with a communal meal (the love feast) clearly demonstrates the importance of community within the life of the Church. Sobornost is the divine human oneness we experience as members of the on Body, the Church, and is the moment when we who are many become one. It is the image of the unity of the Holy Trinity, finding its expression among the believers.

Sobornost is not the same as fraternity, a submission to a brotherhood for benefit of the individual. Rather, it is akin to *kenosis* (the relinquishment of divine attributes by Jesus Christ in becoming human) Sobornost is when the individual gives up self-benefit for the community or ecclesia.

We cannot truly be one in Christ if we do not seek out oneness with our fellow Christians. Nor can we be one with Christ if we routinely reject sobornost for heights of spirituality that make us so conscious of self that they separate us from our neighbor.

-"The Morning Offering" Abbot Tryphon November 16th

2022 AGAPE

MEAL SCHEDULE

There are no more agape meals scheduled for this year.

We will set a schedule for next year based on the progress of construction.

save the date

DECEMBER

4TH- ANNUAL MEETING

4TH- ANGEL TREE GIFT CARDS DUE

5TH- PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERAL LITURGY FOR THE FEATS OF ST. NICHOLAS @ ST. NICHOLAS IN BURTON

6TH- AKATHIST FOR THE SICK AND SUFFERING

10TH- BAPTISMS

10TH- SMMOY GATHERING

11TH- ST. NICHOLAS VISIT

11TH- CHURCH SCHOOL STUDENTS BRING A NEW TOY FOR THE FOSTER CLOSET

11TH - 40 DAY PARASTASIS FOR LIZ ZIATS

15TH- AKATHIST & YOUNG ADULT FELLOWSHIP

17TH- BAPTISMS

23RD- ROYAL HOURS

24TH- NATIVITY VIGIL

25TH- CHRISTMAS CAROLING AT THE NURSING HOME FOLLOWING LITURGY

26TH- DIVINE LITURGY FOR THE THEOTOKOS

JANUARY (SCHEDULE YOUR HOUSE BLESSINGS THIS MONTH)

5TH -COMPLINE, LITIJA & BLESSING OF THE WATERS

6TH THEOPHANY LITURGY

8TH- RIVER BLESSING

14TH- SMMOY GATHERING

19TH- DORMITION CHARITY DINNER

22ND- SANCTITY OF LIFE SUNDAY & PRAYER SERVICE

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD & SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

December 23rd Royal Hours | 10:00 AM
December 24th Nativity Vigil | 6:00 PM
December 25th Nativity Liturgy | 9:40 AM
December 26th Divine Liturgy | 10:00 AM

2439 S. Long Lake Rd
Fenton, MI 48430
810-750-1401



Advent confessions are available on Wednesday mornings following Divine Liturgy, Saturday evenings following Vigil or by appointment.

ST. MARY MAGDALENE ORTHODOX CHURCH
ORTHODOX TRADITION OF HOLY SUPPER

CELEBRATED AT HOME BEFORE NATIVITY VIGIL



Following 40 days of the Advent Fast, the birth of Jesus Christ is commemorated with a final Lenten feast December 24th before the Nativity Vigil.

This tradition may look different village to village but the structure and the meanings stay the same. There are several symbolic features to the dinner table, including the placing of hay under the tablecloth in memory of the manger in which the Holy Child was placed by His Mother at His birth. Some grain is also thrown in the straw to represent the abundance of Christ's Coming. The linen tablecloth represents the birth clothes Christ was wrapped.

The Supper usually consists of 12 courses, symbolic of the 12 Apostles. In the Slavic custom the twelve fasting foods usually served are: barley, honey, stewed prunes, pierogi, sauerkraut, potatoes, lima beans, garlic, Lenten bread, mushroom soup and salt. Reminders that life is both bitter and sweet and that the work of each day throughout the current year was required to truly celebrate Christ's Coming. As a multi-cultural parish we will provide 12 different Lenten dishes that represent our diverse parishioners.

THE HOLY SUPPER

The meal begins with the singing of the Christmas troparion and the lighting of a candle placed in the center of the table. The candle symbolizes the star of Bethlehem.

The Holy Supper usually takes place in the home with the father leading the family in the prayer ritual. It begins with the youngest child reading the Nativity account from the Gospel of St. Matthew 2:1-12.

The father then starts with an opening prayer asking God to bless the bread, wine, and food. He then breaks the bread and passes it out to all present. This symbolizes Christ at the Last Supper.

The supper begins with a spoonful of the traditional Kutya, a cooked wheat or barley kasha, sweetened with honey, poppy seeds and chopped nuts – symbolic of joy and happiness.

An extra empty place is always set at the table for Jesus, either in Spirit, or in the form of a traveler or stranger invited into the home, for none are turned away on this day without a warm invitation to partake of this Holy Supper.

Then the prayers are said by the father. If there is a priest present the prayers are lead by him instead of the father.

The Prayers & Ceremony

FATHER: O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who blessed the five loaves in the wilderness and with them You satisfied the five thousand, bless this loaf, wine, and the food we are about to eat and multiply them in this city, and in all the world, and sanctify all the faithful who partake of them. For it is You, O Christ our God, Who bless and sanctify all things, and to You we ascribe glory, together with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, and good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

FAMILY: Amen. *Honey is placed on the forehead with the words:*
"May we love one another as the bee loves honey. The cup of wine is passed around for each to drink."

"Unite us in Faith and Love. Bread is broken and passed to all. It is then dipped into the honey and eaten."

" Let us love one another. Garlic is eaten – not peeled but cracked with the teeth."

" May God Spare us from all Evil."

The twelve Lenten foods are eaten without knives or pepper. Pepper symbolizes arguments and knives the cutting of friendship.

FATHER : May He who was born in a cavern and lay in a manger for our salvation Christ our true God, through the prayers of the Holy Theotokos, of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke and of all the saints have mercy on and save us for He is good and loves mankind.

FAMILY: Amen

After Supper, the candle is blown out gently and if the smoke rises straight up it means a blessing for the year. It is traditional for all to attend a Vigil Service following which the choir may begin visiting homes to sing Christmas Carols.

Traditional Foods Served

The foods range from bitter to sweet to remind us of the bitterness of life before Christ was born and the sweetness of life which comes after His birth.

The number 12 symbolizes the twelve apostles.

Two may be chosen from each category – except soup.

Appetizers: Ikra (caviar), Kutya, Pick-led Mushrooms, Piroshki (with mushroom or sauerkraut filling), Herring (with beet and onion slices), Baklazhan (eggplant caviar).

Soup: Mushroom, Barley, Fish (with dumplings), Borscht, Cabbage, Vegetable.

Fish dishes: Baked Pike, Trout or other, Fried Filet of Sole or Bluefish, Fish in Aspic, Stuffed Carp, Fishcakes, Fried Smelts, Boiled Lobster.

Vegetable dishes: Potato Pancakes, Boiled Potato (with dill), Baked Sauerkraut, Baked Sliced Beets, Potato Salad (with beets), Cauliflower (with bread crumbs and margarine topping), Lenten Cabbage Rolls, Pickled Baked Cabbage, "Malosolniiyeh" Pickles (freshly dilled).

Fruit & cake: Dried-fruit Compote, Cherry or Blueberry Vareniki, Poppy seed Cake or Roll. Nut Pudding, Apple Strudel, Kissel, Fruit Rolls.

Beverages: Wine, Kvass, Tea (served with preserves and lemon slices)

Troparion — Tone 4

Your Nativity, O Christ our God, / has shone to the world
the Light of wisdom! / For by it, those who worshipped
the stars, / were taught by a Star to adore You, / the Sun
of Righteousness, / and to know You, the Orient from on
High. / O Lord, glory to You!

ST. MARY MAGDALENE ORTHODOX CHURCH

THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

Service Schedule

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5TH: COMPLINE, LITIJA & BLESSING OF
THE WATERS
• 6:00PM

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6TH: THEOPHANY DIVINE LITURGY
• 10:00AM

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8TH: GREAT VESPERS
• 4:00PM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9TH: DIVINE LITURGY & BLESSING OF THE
RIVER
• 9:40AM



PAN-ORTHODOX GOINGS ON

The Pan-Orthodox Churches of Genesee County

Holy Assumption Greek
Orthodox Church

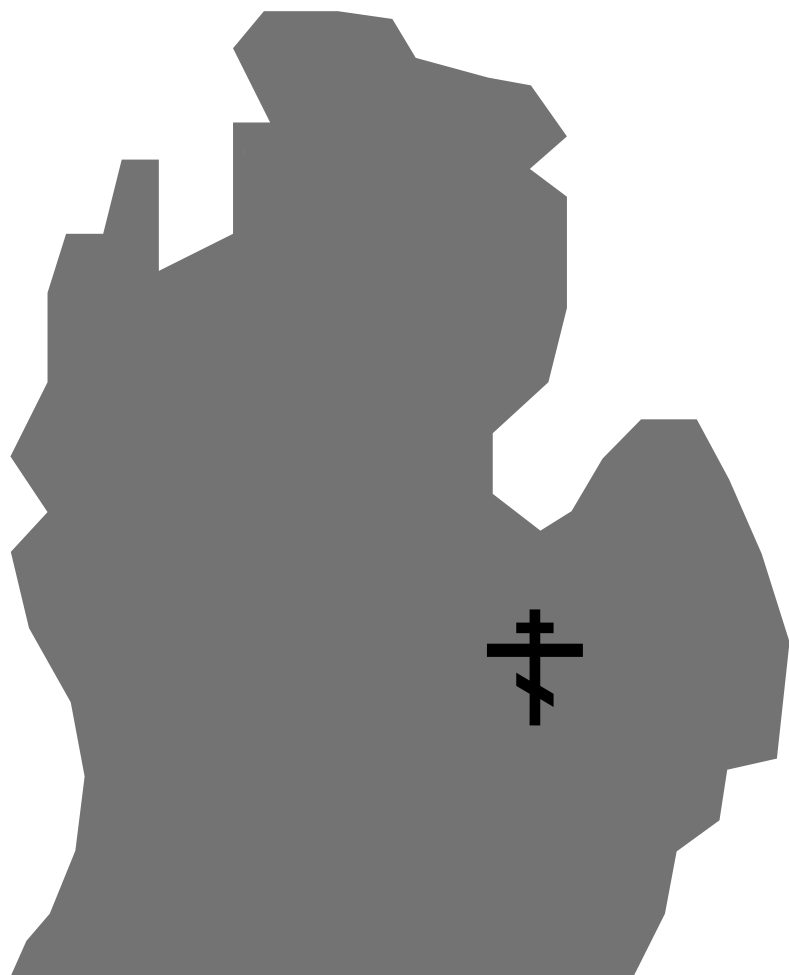
(2245 E. Baldwin Rd Grand Blanc, MI)

St. George Orthodox Church
(5191 Lennon Rd Flint, MI)

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox
Church

(2439 S. Long Lake Rd Fenton, MI)

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
(2143 S Center Rd Burton, MI)



ORTHODOX BOOK CLUB is in the process of ordering their next book Shepherd of Souls: The Life and Teachings of Elder Cleopa, Master of Inner Prayer and Spiritual Father of Romania (1912 - 1998). If you are interested in obtaining a copy (whether you plan on joining the book club meetings or not) please contact Fr. Michael Bassett (frdmike@gmail.com/ 989-627-9580). After books are obtained each person will read the book on their own for about 4 - 6 weeks. During that time the date and time of a “meet in person” discussion and also a Zoom discussion will be coordinated with all readers. We anticipate our next meeting will be at the end of November or beginning of December. A short report on our first book and discussion (the first since well before COVID): 30 copies of the book May It Be Blessed by Archimandrite Symeon Kragiopoulos (70 pages) were distributed. Many of our readers felt it was one of the more significant books they have read. We had 6 participate in our in person discussion and 5 in a zoom discussion. The book was acquired by individuals from all of our parishes except Assumption as well as individuals in parishes in several other states. Additionally I am discussing the book with 5 Protestant Pastors in Owosso on Thursday and on Sunday evening with several close friends from the Catholic Tradition.

-Contact Fr. Michael Basset



CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!



A DETROIT ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS CONCERT

HYMNS AND CAROLS OF GREECE, ROMANIA, EGYPT, UKRAINE,
THE MIDDLE-EAST, AND TRADITIONAL ENGLISH SELECTIONS OFFERED BY
THE ORTHODOX CHOIR OF DETROIT, GUEST ENSEMBLES AND MORE!

SUNDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2022 | 5PM

Saints Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church
36375 Joy Rd. Westland 48185 (between Newburgh & Wayne Rds)
Information & Details: 248 252 8184

FREE ADMISSION - ALL ARE WELCOME

Free-will Donations support the good works of the Council of
Orthodox Christian Churches (COCC) and FOCUS Detroit



ST. MARY MAGDALENE ORTHODOX CHURCH

LET'S GET CONNECTED!

Follow us!



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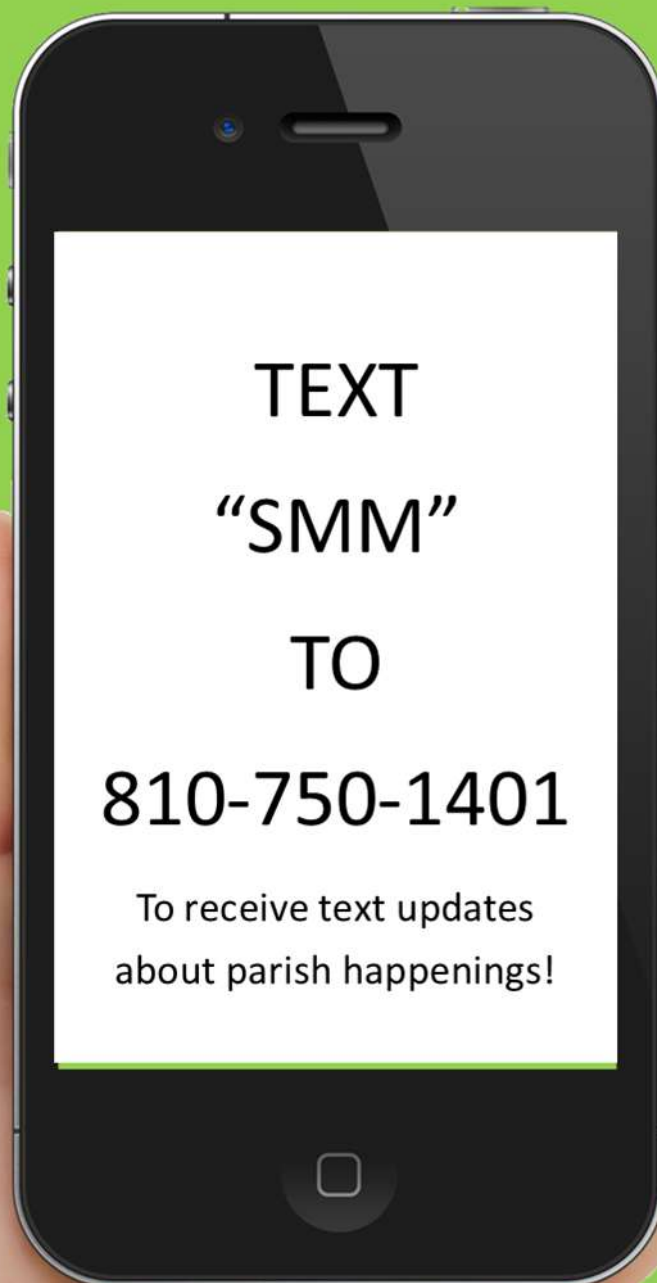
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Stay up-to-date with St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church



St. MARY
MAGDALENE
ORTHODOX ✝ CHURCH



TEXT

"SMM"

TO

810-750-1401

To receive text updates
about parish happenings!



St. MARY
MAGDALENE
ORTHODOX CHURCH

Call: 248-318-7342

Donation of

\$500.00

REFERRAL PROGRAM

To benefit the Building Expansion Project

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 Church Expansion Fund by offering a \$500.00 donation for every referral that results in a sold home!

Conne Terova
Real Estate One

Cell: 248-318-7342
cterova@gmail.com
teamterova.com

