

ST BASIL THE GREAT ORTHODOX CHURCH

205 Highland Avenue
Des Peres, MO 63122

A parish of the
Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

CLERGY

Archpriest Sergii Alekseev, Parish Rector
Archpriest Martin Swanson, Dean
Protopriest Radomir Chkautovich
Priest Thomas Nichols
Deacon Ephraim Galloway



JANUARY 2022

Schedule of Services

- **Sunday before Nativity**
 - Sat. Jan. 1 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun. Jan. 2 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Nativity of the Lord**
 - Thur. Jan. 6 Royal Hours 9 A.M.
 - Thur. Jan. 6 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Fri. Jan. 7 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **Sunday after Nativity**
 - Sat. Jan. 8 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun. Jan. 9 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Holy Hierarch Basil the Great**
 - Thur. Jan. 13 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Fri. Jan. 14 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **Sunday before Theophany**
 - Sat. Jan. 15 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun. Jan. 16 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Theophany**
 - Tue. Jan. 18 Royal Hours 9 A.M.
 - Tue. Jan. 18 Vigil followed by Greater Blessing of Waters 6 P.M.
 - Wed. Jan. 19 Divine Liturgy followed by Greater Blessing of Waters 9 A.M.
- **Sunday after Theophany**
 - **St. Theophan the Recluse**
 - Sat. Jan. 22 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun. Jan. 23 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
 - **Holy Martyr Tatiana**
 - Tue. Jan. 25 Moleben 9 A.M.
 - **32nd Sunday After Pentecost**
 - **Venerable Anthony the Great**
 - Sat. Jan. 29 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun. Jan. 30 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.

NEWLY ORDAINED PRIEST AT ST. BASIL'S

Father Thomas Nichols was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Peter at Holy Protection Cathedral in Chicago on the feast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple. Having reached the canonical age for priesthood (thirty years old) and completed seminary studies at the Pastoral School of Chicago and Mid-America, Father Thomas was found worthy (*axios*) to be elevated to the priestly rank. Although we have interviewed Father Thomas in the past concerning his previous role as a Deacon, this time we decided to further explore Father Thomas's journey to the priesthood.



Continued on Page 2



How did you know you wanted to be a priest?

Even before I became Orthodox, I had a strong desire to devote myself totally to God and the people of God. To that end, as I grew to understand what the ideals of the Priesthood were, it became clear that this was the correct and only path for me.

Can you tell us a little bit about your spiritual journey?

I was raised in a Protestant home. As I entered college, I became increasingly disillusioned with what I thought Christianity was, as seen through the distorted lens of Protestantism. In 2011, when I discovered the Orthodox Church, and, in doing so, authentic, Apostolic Christianity, the veil that Protestantism had placed over my eyes was gradually torn, and I began to take spiritual matters seriously again.

What was the most impactful part of the ordination rite?

The part that made the biggest impression on me was when Archbishop Peter gave me a portion of the Body of Christ and told me that I would be accountable for Christ's Body at the Dread Judgment. Each newly-ordained priest is reminded of the necessity of caring for and revering the Heavenly Bread, Christ our true God.



How did you prepare to become a priest?

I attended seminary, and Fr.

Sergii, Fr. Martin, and my spiritual father have continued to guide along this path. Properly speaking, one cannot adequately prepare for the priesthood, because one always feels, and indeed one always is, insufficient. But, where God willeth, the order of nature is overruled. What business does a sinner have walking in the Holy of Holies and concelebrating with Angels? God makes the unworthy worthy, and it is up to the priest to continually strive to make himself worthy of worthiness.

What do you most look forward to as a priest?

Serving God and others, and hopefully seeing the rational flock and myself grow in holiness.

What is your history with St. Basil's?

I have been at St. Basil's since August of 2014. Matushka and I moved to St. Louis from Texas so that I could pursue graduate work at Wash. U. After graduating in 2016, I entered the Pastoral School. I was tonsured a Reader in



2017, made a Subdeacon in 2018, and ordained to the Diaconate in 2020.

What will your primary responsibilities be as second priest?

As of now, I have been serving at weekday Liturgies and at Vigils. There are also plans for me to travel to Benld, IL once every month or so to service the parish there. Ultimately, I will try to do whatever Fr. Sergii asks me to do.

BAPTISMS AT ST. BASIL'S

The Orthodox Church received two new members on December 11th. Bryan (Basil) Kopel and Noah Baerman were baptized by Father Thomas and received Illumination through God's Grace. Also, one of the newest handmaidens of God, infant Cecilia Eaves, was also baptized in December on the 5th. Below are pictures from both Baptisms.



This month, we have interviewed the Kirn Family (Micah, Rachel, and Noelle) pictured above and include their unique experiences below. Stay tuned to the coming newsletters to hear from newly-illuminated Basil and Noah.

Where are you from?

Micah: I was brought up in Hawaii, but lived here in St. Louis for 14 years.

Rachel: I was born and raised here in St. Louis.

What brought you to Orthodoxy?

Micah: About 2 years ago, my wife and I began to really examine what Scripture teaches about Communion—how it has the power to give life—and Confession—how the Church was given authority to remit or retain sin, and that we must confess our sins to receive healing. In looking into different views, we discovered the Orthodox Church, which we had never heard of before. Ever since learning about the Orthodox Church, everything she teaches about everything that formerly confused me

about the Bible and what we see of divided Christianity today made sense. My wife during catechesis, knowing that not every branch of Christianity could be right, saw that the history of Christianity points to the Orthodox Church as the Keeper of the teaching of the Apostles and the right worship of God in the Liturgy and prayer without major change.

Who are your patron saints and why did you choose them?

St. Micah of Radonezh and St.

Rachel the Matriarch. While Rachel was named already after St. Rachel the Matriarch, I was not named after anyone specifically. I chose St. Micah of Radonezh because he is an example of humility, because the Mother of God appeared to him and his spiritual father, St. Sergius, and because they both saw the uncreated Light of God.

Do you have a favorite feast or liturgical service so far?

Our first experience of the all night Pascha service and feast was otherworldly. Looking forward to our 2nd in 2022!

What has been the most interesting thing you have learned during your catechumenate about the

Church?

We learned about the Seven Eccumenical Councils, which showed the solidarity between the Orthodox Church and the apostolic teaching and the victory of the Church over heresy.

Can you tell us a little bit about your immediate family?

Rachel and I have known each other a little over 3 years, been married a year and a half, and our daughter, Noelle, is 7 months old.

What are you most excited about in your new Orthodox life?

To be more healed from sin and grow closer to God

through the Sacraments.

Do you have plans to serve the Church in any way?

We are on a Trapeza team and it is a fun rotation to be in! We are happy to help in any way needed.

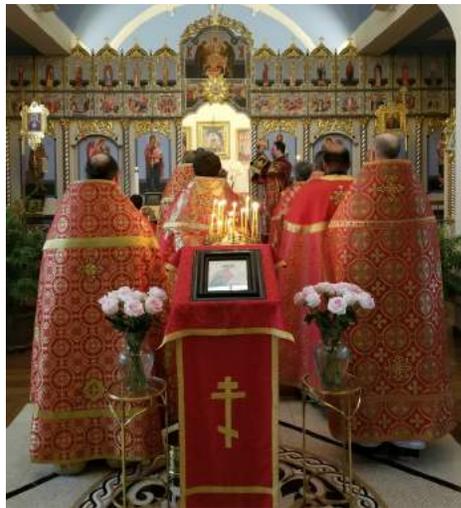
Is there anything else you would like for the parish to know about you?

We have been so warmly accepted by so many of you. We thank God for your kindness, and look forward to knowing more of you personally. Our parish seems small and big at the same time—seems there are still new people to get to know every week.

YOUTH CONFERENCE CELEBRATES AT ST. BASIL'S

The St. Herman's Youth Conference took place in St. Louis the week of December 27th, and St. Basil's was fortunate enough to host the conference participants at the Divine Services for Holy Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths. The youth of the conference participated as the choir and the multiple priests leading and speaking at the conference also concelebrated with our own Archpriest Martin, Archpriest Sergii, Priest Thomas, cathedral protodeacon Alexander Kichakov, and Deacon Ephraim. Thank you to all who helped prepare to receive the group!





LITURGICAL LANGUAGES AND LIVING TRADITION PART III

Conclusion of the discussion which appeared in Road to Emmaus (RTE) magazine eleven years ago which we offer in an abridged form.

RTE: When Cyril and Methodius introduced new Christian terms into the Slavonic language, they put together existing Slavonic roots to mirror Greek terms. The most obvious of these root combinations (called “calques”) is the Greek word *Orthodox*, which in Greek means correct + glorification. In Slavonic, of course, this is *Pravoslavie*, composed of the same pair

pravo (correct) and *slavie* (glorification).

There are calque equivalents for many Greek theological, aesthetic, and philosophical terms, such as speaking of Christ’s dual nature as ‘divine humanity’ (in Russian, *Bogochelovechestvo*), or the single Russian word *Chelovekolyubets*, which is the calque for the Greek word meaning “lover of mankind”. In this way, by using a language’s existing roots you can introduce terms for ideas or concepts that are previously completely unknown. For

example, in English we simply don't have the spiritual concept of "joy-making sorrow", but this exists in both Greek and Slavonic.

SISTER S.: This results in Church Slavonic having an immediacy (and obviously it had even more in the past) for Slavic peoples because it is built using familiar root words. But it also conveys Greek meaning precisely and concisely, whereas English often needs a whole phrase or sentence, or has terms like "Orthodoxy", whose meaning is not so immediate.

RTE: Interestingly, Chinese translators who are now working on translations of Orthodox books and services into Chinese are attempting to do the same as Sts. Cyril and Methodius. They are creating new words and characters to carry the full theological meanings of the Greek and Slavonic originals. Can you comment now on the current state of English translations?

SISTER S.: Most of the service books have been translated into English, which is a great blessing, but the quality of the translations is very uneven. Some are quite as good as we can get in modern English, while others are very inferior. Those who translate service books should have training in theology, including ascetic theology, a thorough knowledge of the Greek of the Church Fathers, and a good ear for English. There is also disagreement about which style of English is more appropriate for church use. Personally, I prefer the older Elizabethan style for its beauty and dignity, but only if it is well done—otherwise it sounds stilted and clumsy.

Elder Ephraim of St. Anthony's Monastery

in Arizona insists that all of his monasteries do all of the services in Greek. I don't quite agree with this and I think it will eventually have to change—but I can understand that he wants the American novices who come to him to learn Greek so that they can read the Fathers, understand the services, and enter the mind of the Church through the language. Also, Greek monasticism is a whole culture in itself. The way people relate to each other in the monastery, the traditional Greek phrases they use, creates an atmosphere and relationship within the monastery that you simply don't have with American converts using English. This all helps to bring people into the mind of the Church.

RTE: A few years ago I mentioned this language controversy to two British academics, both Orthodox converts, and they answered, "Well, there is only one real answer—everyone needs to learn Greek." Although not of Greek heritage themselves, this is what they had come to, they felt it was of such importance. Obviously, this is not going to happen for most of us, who will continue to rely on our English translators. Yet, many of us are concerned that some of our English-speaking churches are moving towards adopting not the best of our translations, but colorless versions with distorted meanings. To be fair, this is often in an attempt to fit the English words to traditional music, but even so, we are in danger of losing whatever real beauty and meaning can be preserved in English.

SISTER S.: Yes, these original languages were formed by the mind of the Church, by saints, by great theologians who were saints, and by the practice of the people

over two millennia. Even though the West has been Christian, it hasn't always been Orthodox, so even words that might have originally corresponded to the Orthodox terms have acquired a different meaning or flavor and have to be reinterpreted and re-explained in light of the language of the Church Fathers and the New Testament. Many of these concepts have been lost and are now no longer intelligible to us. Still, the Holy Spirit also helps, of course. You can be illiterate and become a saint, but these questions of language are certainly worth contemplating. I believe that we converts need to have a degree of humility towards the cultures that brought us Orthodoxy—to be grateful and humble that we are the recipients of these peoples' centuries of piety and learning. And not to be like Jacob—a weaned child on his mother's lap who grows fat, and kicks away. (cf. Deut. 32:15) Sometimes we read a few books and a smattering of Church history and think, "there we are". Humility and gratitude towards these cultures are important in developing a truly Orthodox world-view.

Ask Your Priest

Q: What is an answer I can give to family and friends that are unfamiliar with why we celebrate Christmas on January 7th?

A: The reason why the Russian Orthodox Church and the majority of Orthodox Christians world-wide celebrate the Birth of Christ on January 7th instead of December 25th is because January 7th, on our modern, civil calendar, corresponds to December 25th on the Church's liturgical calendar. There is, for the time being, a 13 day difference between the two. The Church's liturgical calendar is based on the Julian Calendar, which the entire world used as its civil calendar until 1582. In that year, Pope Gregory XIII introduced a new calendar which now bears his name and which the West now uses as its civil calendar. The Russian Church, along with four other conservatively-minded, autocephalous Orthodox churches (Jerusalem, Georgia, Serbia, Poland), remains faithful to the Julian Calendar because it is the same calendar that the Apostles and the entire Church used from the very beginning.

- *Father Thomas*

Parish Prayer List

Nadia Danett — Health

Jackie (Xenia) Peck — Health

Nora (Zoe) Resz — Health



Add to your prayer list

Keep our parishioners, and those who ask us to pray for them in your prayers this month. Contact Fr. Sergii to have yourself or your loved ones added to the parish prayer list. Let one of the Fathers know if you, a member of your family, or a friend is ill or hospitalized so that appropriate prayers and visits can be arranged. Please note: Hospitals do not notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.