

# 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



## ST. IOASAPH BRINGS PILGRIMS TO MUDDY, IL FOR PRAYER

Back during the middle of Great Lent, two friends, Matt and David, from Madison, Alabama, fueled by their veneration for Holy Hierarch Ioasaph of Belgorod made a pilgrimage to Muddy, Illinois, to the site where St. Ioasaph Church once stood.

To our newer parishioners Muddy, IL, means very little. But to our "old-timers" St. Ioasaph Church in Muddy has a strong connection with our St. Basil's in St. Louis, and our parish website is a useful resource: <https://stbasilthegreat.org/who-we-are/resourcesthe-history-of-the-church-of-st-iosaph-in-muddy-illinois/>

The search for the origin of the Orthodox community in Muddy, IL, will take us back to 1880, when Eastern European immigrants settled in the village called Robinson's Ford, in southern Illinois, to



# AUGUST 2022

## Schedule of Services

- **Venerable Seraphim of Sarov**
  - Venerable Macrina
  - Mon., Aug. 1 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **Holy Prophet Elias**
  - Mon., Aug. 1 Vigil 6 P.M.
  - Tue., Aug. 2 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **8th Sunday after Pentecost**
  - Dormition of Righteous Anna
  - Sat., Aug. 6 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., Aug. 7 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon**
  - Mon., Aug. 8 Vigil 6 P.M.
  - Tue., Aug. 9 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **9th Sunday after Pentecost**
  - Procession of the Precious Cross
  - Sat., Aug. 13 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., Aug. 14 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
  - Followed by the Lesser Blessing of the Waters
  - Beginning of the Dormition Fast
- **Transfiguration of the Lord**
  - Thur., Aug. 18 Vigil 6 P.M.
  - Fri., Aug. 19 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
  - Followed by blessing of the grapes and other fruit
- **10th Sunday after Pentecost**
  - Sat., Aug. 20 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., Aug. 21 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **11th Sunday after Pentecost**
  - Dormition of the Theotokos
  - Sat., Aug. 27 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., Aug. 28 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.



work in the coal mines. In the early 1900's the village was renamed Muddy, with its mines belonging to Harrisburg Big Muddy Coal Company. At the time, the Orthodox Poles, Slovaks, Rusyns or the emigres from the Russian Empire all considered themselves Russian Orthodox, with Church-Slavonic being their language of prayer. The miners built a church for themselves in 1913 and dedicated it to Holy Hierarch Ioasaph of Belgorod, a recently glorified saint. The church served sixty families at that time. However, it never had a permanent priest. As the coal mining industry died out, people began to move out of Muddy, and soon the parish was without a single

parishioner – a common fate of mining towns.

Our parishioner Madeline Pisani was born in Muddy and attended St. Ioasaph's as a child. She and her brother maintained the church in recent decades. Each year Archpriest Martin Swanson and parishioners of St. Basil's in St. Louis tried to make a pilgrimage to the church to serve a Thanksgiving Moleben. A panihida was also usually served at the old Russian cemetery, which was not far from the church.

In December of 2019, due to the inability to continue to care for the vacant temple, with its structure getting less secure with every passing year (thus making it impossible to keep insurance on the dilapidated building), the temple was demolished and properly disposed of.

After this extremely long preamble, which we believe was necessary, we go back to Matt and David from Alabama. Here is what Matt shared with us:

*Thank you again so very much for all your help with this pilgrimage and for your interest and encouragement. Madeline Pisani was also very supportive and friendly, and I'm very grateful to her. I also appreciate the further bit of history and background about the St. Ioasaph Church. I think it is amazing and wonderful that a church to this great saint was built here in America a mere two years after his glorification.*

*[We were in Muddy] in the morning and read the Akathist [to St. Ioasaph]. It was cloudy and cool but overall a very nice morning for the prayers. No one was [at the Pisani] home at that hour. We found a good spot to prop up our icons there on the property and said the Akathist roughly near where the church once stood. As you requested, I have attached some pictures. I'm the one with the large beard and blue jacket. My friend David (Gabriel in baptism) is the one in jeans, holding the two icons of St. Ioasaph. We ended up being the only two from our church able to make the trip up.*

*This trip was a real blessing. I have a tremendous love for St. Ioasaph. He is a great inspiration to me and his intercessions have been of immense help to me many times. I would dearly love for more Orthodox Christians in America, especially converts like me, to know about him. I even wrote a little booklet about his life and privately printed a few copies for distribution to friends.*

*Yes, I would be delighted for you to post some pictures and a few words about our pilgrimage to the church's Facebook page and in your parish newsletter. It would be a joy to be able to share the experience in that way.*



# TENDING THE CANDLES



When we come to church for the Divine Services, we light candles before icons. This is an ancient pious tradition which expresses our love for Christ and His saints.

If the candle is allowed to burn down all the way into the candle stand socket, one needs a screw driver to retrieve the candle stub. To prevent this, usually those who stand near the candle stands keep an eye on the candles and blow them out when they extend about an inch over the candle socket. It is also permissible for children to help blow out the candles. However, this should be done under adult supervision and by children who are at least 7-8 years old.

## A VISIT TO HOLY TRINITY MONASTERY BY PARISHIONER JOSEPH STEINEGER

*Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. - Proverbs 22:28*

In 1930, the Hieromonk and future Archimandrite Panteleimon (Nizhnik) and his spiritual son, the Reader Ivan Kolos, with the blessing of Archbishop Apollinarius of North America (+1933), established Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY. Since that time, the monastery has been the center of Russian Orthodoxy in America, producing many pious bishops, archimandrites, priests, and monks. In 1948, the monastery founded Holy Trinity Seminary on its property, which Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko) of blessed memory (+1960) claimed was “to prepare workers for the harvest of the Orthodox Church” (Pravoslavnaya Rus , No 22). Bishop Luke is the current archimandrite of monastery and rector of the seminary.



I made a pilgrimage to Holy Trinity for the Feast of Ascension, arriving in time for the feast's vigil on the evening of June 1 and leaving after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning June 5. Upon entering the gates of the monastery to attend the vigil I was greeted by the calm consolation of the Holy Spirit, “Here you may lay aside all of your earthly cares.” The sound of the choir intensified as I entered the temple – not in mere volume, but in a manner that increased the sobriety of my spirit, bestowing on me a grace of clarity and attention to the one thing needful. Here the faded icons etched upon every surface, which have seen many sunrises and sunsets, heard the prayers of our forefathers in the faith, witnessed the tears of repentance of countless

faithful, greeted me with merciful glances.

The services were the highlight of my pilgrimage, all of them being marked by beauty and concentration. Each of Bishop Luke's actions – anointing our heads during vigil, blessing the food during the meals, distributing the Holy Eucharist – expressed a special grace and mannerism that I have come to associate with the Russian Church Abroad specifically. His concern for preserving Holy Orthodoxy is manifest in all that he does, and this attentiveness spills over into the monastics, seminarians, and pilgrims. The humility of this spiritual submission is nevertheless not weak or fragile. It is matched by a profound expression of majesty and boldness, particularly in the services. The Kingdom of God is indeed a kingdom, and this regality is exceptionally tangible in the symbols of the monastery's liturgical movements and clothing. One can see with great transparency that here the Faith is kept intact. Here Christ is present and proclaimed to all.



I stayed at the guesthouse roughly one mile south of the monastery. The accommodations are humble, but more than sufficient for a pilgrim. Between services, I spent much of my time praying in the crypts located at the outer altar-end perimeter of the temple. There are at least four such crypts wherein our previous metropolitans and archimandrites rest. I spent many hours praying in the crypt of Archbishop Averky of blessed memory (+1976) from which I could see the resting place of the newly reposed Metropolitan Hilarion. I also spent time in a couple of the cemeteries a mile or so north of the monastery where hundreds of faithful are buried. The largest of these cemeteries includes a small chapel which was unfortunately locked when I was



present. I could nevertheless see the beautiful interior iconography through its windows. All of these places – my room, the crypts, the cemeteries, the surrounding countryside – were remarkably conducive to prayer, saturated in the stillness (hesychia) that is Holy Orthodoxy.

Anyone who can make a pilgrimage to Holy Trinity monastery should do so. The intimacy you will experience with the Holy Trinity will be inseparable from the closeness that you'll experience with our Lord's cloud of witnesses. You will experience Holy Orthodoxy in its life-giving mercy and rigor, preserving the ancient landmarks that our Holy Fathers have set.

The Holy Trinity website includes many well-written articles about its history and current projects, as well as fantastic photographs of the monastery and its environs. I especially recommend the virtual tour section of the website which provides 360 degree visuals for the main parts of the monastery grounds and temple. [www.jordanville.org](http://www.jordanville.org)



## NEW CATECHUMEN AT ST. BASIL'S

St. Basil's is happy to have received a new catechumen in July. Alexander Kantz was made a catechumen before Divine Liturgy on Sunday, July 17th. Please continue to pray for Alexander as he continues his spiritual journey to the Orthodox Church.

## FOCUS PARTICIPATION

St. Basil's was tasked with preparing hygiene kits for the FOCUS pantry and the parishioners answered the Lord's call by gathering hundreds of personal hygiene items to be distributed to our neighbors who need them most. The idea was to create individual packages that contain necessary items, such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, a toothbrush, etc. for the recipients to be able to maintain some level of cleanliness during their difficult time. Thank you to all that generously purchased and provided these items for this cause! The kits and additional hygiene items will be delivered to the pantry and made available to all who need one.

A quick reminder that the next FOCUS dinner will be hosted by St. Basil's on **August 21st**. If you are interested in helping, either by providing food for or helping cook it with the Sisterhood, or by distributing the meal and pantry items at Archangel Michael parish in the city, please notify Fr. Sergii, Joseph Steineger, or Constantine Stade.



## BAPTISMS AT ST. BASIL'S

Below we interview the newly baptized parishioner, Ahsan, and learn more about his experiences and ultimately what led him to the Orthodox Church. Ahsan was baptized on Lazarus Saturday after completing his catechumen studies with Father Thomas where he learned about who God is and how to achieve union with Him.

### Where did you grow up?

I grew up right here in St. Louis, although when I was very young, I did live for a few years in Chicago.



## How did you hear about the Orthodox Church and what made you want to convert?

I can't recall specifically the first time I heard about Orthodoxy but it was probably from Jay Dyer, an Orthodox YouTuber and general online personality. He and Jonathan Pageau are probably the first two Orthodox that I followed online and whose content was the most influential in my Orthodox journey. As for what made me want to convert, I can't really say I had anything to do with it. I remember being torn between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, while only having a general grasp on either of them and being consumed with a compulsion to definitively pick one to commit to. Eventually I gave up thinking about it and prayed for God to point me in the right direction and He pointed East. Afterward, the more I learned about Orthodoxy, the more it became clear to me that it was the truth.

## What was something memorable about your first time attending an Orthodox service?

The first Orthodox parish I went to was Sts. Constantine & Elena in Indianapolis, which according to their card is a Romanian parish but under the OCA. I had seen a lot of YouTube videos of the Liturgy and the inside of churches before I eventually visited, so nothing was really new or surprising. Thinking back, I remember the choir being very good

and being surprised at how the parish seemed to entirely consist of converts and young families. I suppose the most memorable thing was the Liturgy itself, being in the midst of it versus just watching a video is incomparable.

## Who is your patron saint and why did you choose him?

My patron is St. Kallistos (Xanthopoulos). Why I chose him is a combination of Fr. Thomas telling me the translation of my name into Greek is Kallistos, and when I eventually settled on the name it happened to be his commemoration day. More than that, I find myself praying the Jesus prayer quite often, especially during times of personal distress, and so feel a connection with him through it. He was a hesychast and saw the Uncreated Light and wrote a book about hesychasm, so I feel he can be someone I can follow to guide me in my continued practice of the Jesus prayer.

## What do you like best about being Orthodox?

Other than being in communion with God, probably what I like best is the unchanging and consistent teaching of the Church. It's a big relief to shift gears from trying to figure out what is the truth to figuring out how to apply/live the truth.

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## Parish Prayer List



Archpriest Martin Swanson — Health  
Katherine Swanson — Recovery from surgery  
Archimandrite Seraphim — Health  
Jackie (Xenia) Peck — Health

Photini Mills — Health  
Tatiana Zyryanova — Health  
Gloria Pappas — Health

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.