

# 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  
Protopriest Radomir Chkautovich  
Priest Thomas Nichols  
Deacon Ephraim Galloway



## FOCUS ON FOCUS

On Sunday August 21 our parish served the FOCUS Sunday dinner, feeding 59 people (the highest number of attendees since the COVID pandemic) and distributed \$1,008.70 of goods from the food pantry and clothing center. Thank you very much to everyone who contributed to this blessed service, and we look forward to your virtue and faithfulness in the future. Remember, everyone and anyone is welcome to come and help!

Along with providing the meal, St. Basil's was also tasked with gathering canned goods to be added to the pantry. Hundreds of canned goods and crackers were donated by our parishioners which will go a long way in stocking the FOCUS pantry.

For the month of September, we have been asked to supply cereal, oatmeal, and shelf-stable milk for the FOCUS pantry. Fr. Sergii has sent out an email to the parish with detailed instructions for these items, and a flier will be posted in the hall with tear-away tabs for reminders. Please donate these goods in the large plastic container in our parish coat closet before September 18.

Again, thank you for your faithfulness. FOCUS has been incredibly grateful for the immense support that our parish has shown the ministry.

# SEPTEMBER 2022

## Schedule of Services

- **12th Sunday after Pentecost**
  - Afterfeast of Dormition
  - Sat., Sept. 3 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., Sept. 4 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **13th Sunday after Pentecost**
  - Beheading of St. John the Baptist
  - Sat., Sept. 10 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., Sept. 11 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Holy Right-Believing Prince Alexander Nevsky**
  - Brotherhood Patronal Feast
  - Mon., Sept. 12 Moleben 5:30 P.M.
- **Church New Year**
  - Tue., Sept. 13 Vigil 6 P.M.
  - Wed., Sept. 14 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **14th Sunday after Pentecost**
  - Right-Believing Peter and Fevronia of Murom
  - Sat., Sept. 17 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., Sept. 18 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Nativity of the Mother of God**
  - Tue., Sept. 20 Vigil 6 P.M.
  - Wed., Sept. 21 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **15th Sunday after Pentecost**
  - Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross
  - Leavetaking of the Nativity of the Theotokos
  - Sat., Sept. 24 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., Sept. 25 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Exaltation of the Cross**
  - Mon., Sept. 26 Vigil 6 P.M.
  - Tue., Sept. 27 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Martyrs Faith, Hope, Love and Sophia**
  - Fri., Sept. 30 Moleben 9 A.M.

## WORKDAY AT ST. BASIL'S



Early on Saturday August 13th, members of the Brotherhood arrived at church for an outdoor clean up and weed pulling party.

Workers included Ivan, Mark, Michael, David, Andrew, and Michael Orlando, the senior advisor. Weeds were cut around the sand box, swing set, and outside dining tables. Weeds were pulled in the west MSD pond, as well. It was a great start on much needed clean up which has been delayed due to the intense heat of the past month. The Brotherhood is planning to purchase a push mower to help keep the church grounds in shape. Thanks to all members of the Brotherhood for this important activity.

## DEACONESSES: THEIR ROLE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The Greek word *diakonos* (διάκονος) means 'servant' or 'helper.' The first deacons were ordained by the holy apostles for the purpose of "serving the tables": overseeing the orderly distribution of food in the first Christian community (Acts 6:1-6). Being set aside for serving the Church, the deacons also helped during the Divine Services. This task they perform to this day: helping at the Divine Services and making the worship more beautiful: just as Cherubim and Seraphim fly around the Throne of the Most High, so deacons "fly" around the Holy Altar Table assisting during the Bloodless Sacrifice of the Eucharist.

In the first centuries of Christianity, there were women "helpers," too. Those who were chosen for the ministry of deaconesses were either virgins or widows. They were ordained for their ministrations and were involved in the church ministries where men's participation was either potentially scandalous or even forbidden. The deaconesses helped during women's catechism and baptisms (at the time when people were baptized naked), visiting inhabitants of women's quarters of houses where men were not allowed (especially in pagan and Muslim households) for the purpose of catechism or encouragement, and also visiting ailing women. Since they viewed their entire life as service to the Church, they performed many other tasks, such as caring for the needy and ailing, showing hospitality to the pilgrims, providing for the needs of the clergy, overseeing order at holy places, etc. So it is evident from what is outlined above that their ministry was essentially non-liturgical.

If some deaconesses could enter the altar (with the exception of when they had their monthly period), they never participated in the Divine Services in any way or form. Therefore, their role was never equal to that of deacons in the Church.

In our day and age, Baptism does not involve complete undressing. Today, all other ministries, with which the deaconesses were concerned in the Early Church, are performed by parish sisterhoods and parish female social workers.

Consequently, any attempt to have women do more than what they have been doing beginning from the first centuries of Christianity and to this day is an invention nurtured by secularization and is a dangerous temptation for those weak in the faith.



*St. Olympiada of Constantinople, the Deaconess*

# LITURGICS CLASS AT ST. BASIL'S

A Liturgics class, under the direction of Fr. Thomas, began this past August. The goal of the class is to familiarize future readers, or anyone else interested, both men and women, with how the divine services are constructed. Typically, out of kindness and a desire to mitigate the labor of constructing the services, our choir director will print out every aspect of the services that a reader will need. It is a common practice throughout the Orthodox world that the services are entirely sung or read from books, without the aid of a printout. It is with an eye toward this traditional method that the class is being taught. Those attending the class are learning which books are required, where they are kept, and how and where to look for the material that must be read from them. A particular emphasis is being placed on how to piece together the Vigil services because they, and the rules that govern what is read in them, can be quite complex.

If anyone is interested in joining this class, please contact Father Thomas for more details.

## NOVICE FROM ST. BASIL'S

Former parishioner, Basil Kopel, has been made a novice at the All-Merciful Saviour monastery on Vashon Island in Washington. Many may recall that Basil was baptized into the Orthodox faith here at St. Basil's in December of 2021. Even at that time, Basil had felt a calling to monasticism and was led to the brotherhood at the All-Merciful Saviour monastery. Basil arrived to the monastery in May of 2022 and has been settling into monastic life. He shares the following words after being made a novice: "Please pray for me to love God and my neighbor with ever greater depth and devotion." Let us honor his request and keep him in our prayers as he continues on this calling to serve God and to follow His will.

Pictured from left to right is the entire brotherhood: Monk Nicodemus, Hieromonk Paul, Abbot Tryphon, Monk Martin, Monk Paisios, and our own Novice Basil.



## ST. BASIL'S YARD SALE

Good weather allowed for a successful church yard sale during the last weekend of July. Many parishioners donated countless items to be sold on behalf of the church, and others came to assist on the days of the general sale. The customers of the sale were eager to see our temple, and many asked

about services or had general questions about the Orthodox faith. In general, the sale was an excellent opportunity for the parish

to give their gently used items a second life and to interact with our community, all for the benefit of our church.

Thank you to all that participated and helped in any way!



# BAPTISMS AT ST. BASIL'S

Madeleine Crabtree was baptized on July 31st at St. Basil's. Parents, Isaac and Arlie Crabtree welcomed their fifth child into the Orthodox Church with Nicole Steineger as the infant's Godmother. Madeleine was gently cradled in her family's loving arms and received the cleansing Grace of the Holy Spirit on this joyous day. Please join us in congratulating the Crabtree family and may God grant Madeleine many years!



## ASK YOUR PRIEST

**Q: When I have attended Vigil services, I have noticed that it seems like very few people are there when compared to the Sunday Liturgy. Are Vigils important and/or are they as important as Divine Liturgy?**

**A:** Divine Liturgy is the most important Divine Service. But our attendance of the Divine Liturgy is only then fully beneficial when we participate in the Divine Services which prepare us for the Liturgy. In many parishes, attendance of the Vigil is required for those who prepare to receive Holy Communion the following day. Although we do not have such a stipulation in our parish, it must be understood by all that those who have fasted, confessed, prayerfully prepared for Holy Communion and prayed at the Vigil – only they are properly prepared to partake of the Dreadful Mysteries of Christ. If we fail to attend the Vigil, we skip an important part of the preparation.

If we attend only the Divine Liturgy, we rob ourselves from experiencing the fullness of what the Holy Spirit has established in the Church. Some do not attend the Vigil because, before they had become Orthodox, their worship was anchored only in Sunday mornings. But this understanding is rather new, since the Early Christians celebrated the memory of the martyrs on the exact days the saints suffered for Christ, which meant the Divine Services – the Divine Liturgy was a part of the Vigil – could be served on any day (or rather night, hence our word "All Night Vigil") of the week. Therefore, we should slowly re-think how we spend Saturday nights or the nights before Holy Days.

*-Archpriest Sergii Alekseev*

## Parish Prayer List

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

 **Add to your prayer list**

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.