

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

April 2023



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
Protopriest Radomir Chkautovich
Priest Thomas Nichols
Deacon Ephraim Galloway

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

- **Saturday of the Akathist**
 - Sat., April 1 Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **Fifth Sunday of Lent**
 - **Venerable Mary of Egypt**
 - Sat., April 1 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., April 2 Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Kursk-Root Icon Visit**
 - Wed., April 5 Akathist in front of the Kursk-Root Icon 6 P.M.
 - Thur., April 6 Moleben in front of the Kursk-Root Icon 9 A.M.
- **Annunciation of the Theotokos**
 - Thur., April 6 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Fri., April 7 Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Lazarus Saturday**
 - Fri., April 7 Matins 6 P.M.
 - Sat., April 8 Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem**
 - **Palm Sunday**
 - Sat., April 8 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., April 9 Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Great Wednesday, April 12**
 - General Unction 6 P.M.
- **Great Thursday, April 13**
 - **Commemoration of the Mystical Supper**
 - Vespers with the Liturgy 8 A.M.
 - Matins with the Reading of 12 Passion Gospels 6 P.M.
- **Great Friday, April 14**
 - Royal Hours and Typika 9 A.M.
 - Vespers 4 P.M.
 - Matins 6 P.M.
- **Great Saturday, April 15**
 - Vespers with the Liturgy 9 A.M.
 - Blessing of the Paschal Baskets at noon, at 9:30 P.M., at 10:30 P.M., and after the Midnight Liturgy
 - Midnight Office 11:30 P.M.
 - Paschal Procession, Matins and Liturgy – Midnight
- **Pascha of the Lord**
 - Blessing of the Paschal Baskets at 1:30 P.M., and 2:45 P.M.
 - Sun., April 16 Paschal Vespers 2 P.M.
 - Sun., April 16 Paschal Banquet 3 P.M.
- **Bright Monday**
 - Mon., April 17 Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Second Sunday of Pascha**
 - **Thomas Sunday**
 - Sat., April 22 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., April 23 Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Radonitsa – Paschal Commemoration of the Departed, Tue., April 25**
 - Panihida 9 A.M.
 - Memorial Litia at St Matthew Cemetery 10 A.M.
 - Memorial Litia at House Springs Cemetery 11 A.M.
- **Virgin Martyrs Agape, Irene and Chiona**
 - Fri., April 28 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
 - Sat., April 29 Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **Third Sunday of Pascha**
 - **Myrrh-bearing Women**
 - Sat., April 29 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., April 30 Liturgy 10 A.M.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wonderworking Icon to Visit St. Basil's

Wonderworking Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God is one of the most ancient icons of the Russian Church. Discovered by a hunter in the roots of a tree not far from Kursk in 1295, God has been pouring forth miracles from this wonderworking icon up until the present day. As a child, Venerable Seraphim of Sarov was healed by this icon. Holy Hierarch John, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco reposed in front of this holy image. Since the Revolution of 1917, the icon, known as the "Protectress of the Russian Diaspora", has traveled all over the world and brought healing and consolation to millions of the faithful. The icon — when not traveling — is kept in the Synodal Cathedral of the Sign in New York City.

This year, during the holy days of Great Lent, the Kursk-Root Icon is visiting our diocese and will be in our deanery from March 30 till April 6, visiting the parishes in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. The icon stopped at St Basil's in the evening of March 30th on her way to Arkansas and will be in our temple on the night of April 5 when we will sing the Akathist to the Mother of God at 6 P.M. and in the morning of April 6, when a short moleben before the icon will be served at 9 A.M. After this moleben the icon will depart for Chicago.

Preparations for the Pascha of the Lord

Everyone is encouraged to help prepare our temple for the celebration of the Pascha of the Lord following the Divine Liturgy on Lazarus Saturday on April 8th. Just as our souls are receiving a spiritual cleansing throughout Great Lent, so too will our temple. All areas of the church will be cleaned therefore everyone is encouraged to participate. In addition to cleaning, palm crosses will be prepared for the Palm Sunday services. All ages are welcome to help in this activity.

Collection for the Holy Land

On Palm Sunday, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, when the faithful come to venerate the Cross, a basket will be held to collect financial support for the monastic communities in the Holy Land. The funds collected through the ROCOR parishes around the world on this Sunday will be sent to the Head of the Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem Archimandrite Roman for further distribution.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES EXPLAINED

Holy Wednesday (April 12)

6:00 P.M. Holy Unction *This is the Mystery of healing of body, heart, mind and soul. Only baptized Orthodox Christians 7 years old and older (unless the child is sick) may partake of the sacrament.*

Holy Thursday (April 13)

8:00 A.M. Vespers Divine Liturgy (*commemorating the Mystical Supper*). All Christians should try to commune at this Liturgy – *the day the Lord communed His disciple with His precious Body and Blood.*

6:00 P.M. Matins with the Reading of the 12 Passion Gospels. *Faithful stand with lit candles during the Gospel Readings*

Holy Friday (April 14)

9:00 A.M. Royal Hours and Typica

4:00 P.M. Great Vespers, at the end of which the Holy Shroud – a cloth icon depicting Christ in the tomb – is brought out of the altar and placed in the

middle of the church.

6:00 P.M. Matins, during which the Lamentations are sung and the Procession with the Shroud around the temple takes place.

Holy Saturday (April 15)

9:00 A.M. Vespers Divine Liturgy for Holy Saturday, during which the church vestments are changed from black to white.

9:30 P.M. Blessing of Paschal Baskets

12:00 P.M. Blessing of Paschal Baskets

10:00 P.M. Reading of the Book of Acts of the Apostles. The faithful read the Book of Acts in different languages (English text will be provided, while the texts in other languages should be brought by the readers).

10:30 P.M. Blessing of Paschal Baskets

11:30 P.M. Service of the Midnight Office, at the end of which the Holy Shroud is brought back into the altar.

Holy Pascha (April 16)

Midnight: Paschal procession around the temple.
Matins and Divine Liturgy of Pascha

2:30 A.M. Blessing of Baskets following the
Midnight Liturgy

1:30 P.M. Blessing of Paschal Baskets

2:00 P.M. Paschal Vespers -*We read the Holy Gospel in many languages, reminding us that the Gospel was spread throughout the whole world.*

2:30 P.M. Blessing of Paschal Baskets

3:00 P.M. Parish Dinner and Egg Hunt for the children

FOCUS ON FOCUS

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve (FOCUS) is a national organization that seeks to provide Orthodox Christians the opportunity to serve our neighbors by distributing food, clothing, and warm meals on Sundays and Wednesdays throughout the month. Our local chapter serves from Holy Archangel Michael OCA parish located at 1901 Ann Ave. in downtown St. Louis under the administration of Fr. Matt McDonald.

We will serve the FOCUS Sunday dinner again on the following three Sundays from roughly 3:45 to 6:00 P.M. – **April 2, June 11, August 13, October 8, and November 19**. 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 or Joseph Steineger.

In addition to offering a Sunday evening meal, we are also asked to help provide goods for the FOCUS pantry. For the month of April, we have been asked to **supply big soup cans (18 oz) with pop top lids and small soup cans (10 oz) with pop top lids. NO TOMATO SOUP, PLEASE.** A flier is posted in the trapeza with tear-away tabs for reminders. Please donate these goods in the large plastic container in our parish coat closet **before April 23**.

Thank you for your service to our Lord and God Jesus Christ through your service to those less fortunate. *“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; ... Naked, and ye clothed me.” Matthew 25.35-36*

BAPTISM AT ST. BASIL'S

Newly illumined Alexander Kantz was baptized into the Orthodox Church on Saturday, March 25th, by Father Thomas. Alexander has been studying about the Orthodox faith and preparing for Holy Illumination since before he was made a catechumen in July 2022. Here Alexander is pictured with Father Thomas and his sponsor, David Peck. May God grant the newly illumined, Alexander, many years!



WHAT IS RADONITSA? EXCERPT FROM THE 'SYNAXARION OF THE LENTEN TRIODION AND PENTECOSTARION'

"On the Tuesday of St. Thomas week, according to the order instituted by our Holy Fathers, we call to remembrance, in Paschal joy, all those who have died from the beginning of the ages in faith and in the hope of resurrection and life eternal.

"Having previously celebrated the radiant feast of Christ's glorious Resurrection, the faithful commemorate the dead today with the pious intent to share the great joy of this Pascha feast with those who have departed this life in the hope of their own resurrection. This is the same blessed joy with which the dead heard our Lord announce His victory over death when He descended into Hades, thus leading forth by the hand the righteous souls of the Old Covenant into Paradise. In short, this feast is a kindred joy, to celebrate the luminous Resurrection with our Orthodox forefathers who have fallen asleep.

"There is evidence of the commemoration of the dead today in the writings of the Church Fathers. St. John Chrysostom mentions the commemoration of the dead performed on Tuesday of St. Thomas week in his "Homily on the Cemetery and the Cross."

"The faithful departed are remembered in Divine Liturgies, 'koliva' is prepared and blessed in the churches in memory of those who have fallen asleep, and the Orthodox graves in cemeteries are blessed by the priests and visited by the faithful. Furthermore, it should be noted that due to the great spiritual joy this jubilant commemoration bears, it is called in the Slavonic tongue, 'Radonitsa,' or 'Day of Rejoicing'."

ICONOGRAPHY COMMENCES AT ST. BASIL'S



With the blessing of Archbishop Peter, St. Basil's is honored to host iconographers Ivan Storck (pictured on the right) and Roman Martynenko (pictured on the left) who have started frescoing the walls of our temple. St Basil's community had extremely humble beginnings in a garage almost forty years ago. In 2015 we moved into our current beautiful temple, which would be impossible without God's provision and generosity of benefactors (although mortgage payment will continue to be a significant burden of parish's finances for years to come). With the parish steadily growing and the world around us getting more unpredictable and unstable, we believe the completion of the adornment of the temple should not be put off. The iconography work which has begun now will beautify the church,

will serve our community for generations to come and will make St Basil's a God's House worthy of the "worship in spirit and truth". Iconography work has commenced in the altar and the rest of the church will be adorned in phases, as the faithful generously donate for this project.

Donations can be deposited in the box specifically allocated for this project near the candle kiosk.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPIRITUAL CHILDREN: CONCLUSION ARCHBISHOP THEOPHAN OF POLTAVA (†1940)

On Following the Commandments of God

We can be united with God only through fulfillment of the commandments of God. This is the only true path. Besides this path there can be no true union with the Lord but only a fantasy and spiritual deception, which is the essence of the so-called mysticism. But the path of doing the commandments

of God is the path of constant podvig. Our nature is decrepit and damaged, and it is inert to doing the commandments of God. Therefore, a distinctive and essential feature of Orthodox asceticism is the constant self-compulsion to fulfill the commandments of God. Through the fulfillment of the commandments of God we experience the weakness of our nature. But we must not limit ourselves to this experiential knowledge, otherwise we may fall into despondency and despair. We must, convinced of the weakness of our nature, pray for grace-filled help from the Lord, for the filling of our nature with the grace of God. It is precisely for this we are given an experiential knowledge of our weakness, and not for despondency. From this point of view, everything you are experiencing is understandable. You are going through an experimental school of knowing the infirmities of your nature. And you just have to use the fruits of this teaching correctly. As you honestly force yourself to do the commandments of God, there will be born within you the knowledge of the weakness of your nature, and from this knowledge and in proportion to it, one of the main Christian virtues will be born - humility. The grace of God is given only to humility, not for labors, although the very humility is born from labors. This is the general law of true asceticism. But every specific situation requires correct discernment of the will of God and how it is to be fulfilled. It is necessary at all costs to fulfill the will of God, but, at the same time, we may not for a moment forget that our God is God Who is both holy and full of love. What it really means is that the real evil must be cast aside in any circumstances, but one should treat human weaknesses with condescension, being mindful of one's own weaknesses! Every time try to imagine what the Lord Saviour would do in this case, and I think that you will find the right way out of your predicament!

Concerning the Struggle with the Passions

Until we reach the harbor of dispassion, we need to fight with passions and sinful thoughts. There are victories and falls in this struggle. But the struggle must be waged until the end of our life, and this struggle can be successful only when it is waged correctly. Moreover, the struggle is waged correctly when we hope to conquer our passions and evil thoughts not by our own strength but by the divine might. This is why we have to continuously call upon the help of the Lord through the unceasing calling of the name of God. "The virtue has two parts from God and one part from me", says St. Gregory the Theologian. "Flog your enemies with the name of Jesus, for there is no stronger weapon in heaven and earth" (The Ladder of Divine Ascent 21:7), says St John of the Ladder. "Let the remembrance of Jesus be present with each breath" (27:61). Consequently, when we either forget to call upon the Lord to help us or rely too much on our own strength, then the grace of God departs from us, and we fall. What needs to be done to avoid this is quite clear. When your house is in disorder, you do not need to be concerned with someone else's house, leaving it to the Lord to put it in order.

IS MORMONISM CHRISTIAN?: CONCLUSION ADAPTED FROM INSTITUTE FOR RELIGIOUS RESEARCH

8. Is The Bible The Unique and Final Word of God?

The Bible teaches and orthodox Christians through the ages have believed that the Bible is the unique, final and infallible Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1,2; 2 Peter 1:21) and that it will stand forever (1 Peter 1:23-25). God's providential preservation of the text of the Bible was marvelously illustrated in the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

By contrast, the Mormon Church teaches that the Bible has been corrupted, is missing many "plain and precious parts" and does not contain the fullness of the Gospel (Book of Mormon — 1 Nephi 13:26-29; Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 3, pp. 190-191).

9. Did The Early Church Fall Into Total Apostasy?

The Bible teaches and orthodox Christians through the ages have believed that the true Church was divinely established by Jesus and could never and will never disappear from the earth (Matthew 16:18; John 15:16; 17:11). Christians acknowledge that there have been times of corruption and apostasy within the Church, but believe there has always been a remnant that held fast to the biblical essentials.

By contrast, the Mormon Church teaches that there was a great and total apostasy of the Church as established by Jesus Christ; this state of apostasy "still prevails except among those who have come to a knowledge of the restored gospel" of the Mormon Church (Gospel Principles, pp. 105-106; Mormon Doctrine, p. 44).

Conclusion: The above points in italics constitute the common gospel believed by all orthodox Christians through the ages regardless of denominational labels. On the other hand, some new religions such as Mormonism claim to be Christian, but accept as Scripture writings outside of the Bible, teach doctrines that contradict the Bible, and hold to beliefs completely foreign to the teachings of Jesus and His apostles.

Mormons share with orthodox Christians some important moral precepts from the Bible. However, the above points are examples of the many fundamental and irreconcilable differences between historic, biblical Christianity and Mormonism. While these differences do not keep us from being friendly with Mormons, we cannot consider them brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible specifically warns of false prophets who will teach "another gospel" centered around "another Jesus," and witnessed to by "another spirit" (2 Corinthians 11:4,13-15; Galatians 1:6-9). Based on the evidence presented above, we believe Mormonism represents just such a counterfeit gospel.

It has been pointed out that if one claimed to be a Mormon but denied all the basic tenets of Mormonism — that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, that the Book of Mormon is true and divinely inspired, that god was once a man who progressed to godhood through keeping the laws and ordinances of the Mormon Church, and that the Mormon Church was divinely established — the Mormon Church would reject such a person's claim to being a Latter-day Saint. One cannot fairly call oneself a Mormon if one does not believe the fundamental doctrines taught by the Mormon Church. By the same token, if the Mormon Church does not hold to even the basic biblical truths believed by the greater Christian community down through the ages, how can Christians reasonably be expected to accept Mormonism as authentic Christianity?

If the Mormon Church believes it is the only true Christian Church, it should not attempt to publicly present itself as a part of a broader Christian community. Instead it should tell the world openly that those who claim to be orthodox Christians are not really Christians at all, and that the Mormon Church is the only true Christian Church. This in fact is what it teaches privately, but not publicly.

Praying for catechumens is a very important responsibility of an Orthodox Christian. So important, that a special litany or series of petitions in the Divine Liturgy is completely dedicated to asking the Lord to have mercy on all catechumens preparing for illumination. "*Let us the faithful pray for the catechumens, that the Lord will have mercy on them.*"

Let us fulfill the words of the litany and pray for our fellow brothers and sisters:

*Alexander
Rob, Melinda and family
Marshal*

*Misty and children
Tyler
Lauren*

*Jeremy
Reid, Amber, and Charles
Doc*

CATECHUMEN CORNER

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Archpriest Martin Swanson — Repose
Katherine Swanson — Health
Archimandrite Seraphim — Health
Jackie (Xenia) Peck — Health
Photini Mills — Health

Tatiana Zyryanova — Health
Gloria Pappas — Repose
Julianna Campbell — Health
Dimitry Johnson — Health
John Surgant — 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.