

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

September 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

- **13th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - Sat., Sept 2. Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Sept. 3 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
 - At the conclusion of the Liturgy — Moleben for the children starting a new school year
- **Meeting of the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God**
 - **Martyrs Adrian and Natalia**
 - Fri., Sept. 8 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **14th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Venerable Job of Pochaev**
 - **Venerable Moses the Black**
 - Sat., Sept. 9 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Sept. 10 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Beheading of the Prophet John the Forerunner**
 - Sun., Sept. 10 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Mon., Sept. 11 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Right-believing Great Prince Alexander Nevsky**
 - **Parish Brotherhood Patronal Feast**
 - Tue., Sept. 12 Moleben 6 P.M.
- **15th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Right-believing Prince Peter and Princess Fevronia of Murom**
 - Sat., Sept. 16 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Sept. 17 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **1st Anniversary of Archpriest Martin's Repose**
 - Wed., Sept. 20 Panihida 9 A.M.
- **Nativity of the Theotokos**
 - Wed., Sept. 20 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Thurs., Sept. 21 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **16th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross**
 - Sat., Sept. 23 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Sept. 24 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Exaltation of the Precious Cross**
 - Tue., Sept. 26 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Wed., Sept. 27 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Martyrs Faith, Hope, Love and their mother Sophia**
 - Sat., Sept. 30 Moleben 9 A.M.

ST. BASIL'S REMEMBERS MATUSHKA KATHERINE SWANSON

St. Basil's beloved matushka Katherine Swanson, the widow of our founder Archpriest Martin, fell asleep in the Lord early in the morning on August 24th. She was visited by many parishioners over the past year since Father Martin's repose and especially in the last weeks of her life. Matushka's body was brought into the church on the afternoon of August 30th and her funeral service was held the next day on August 31st. The funeral service was preceded by vespers and matins the night before and liturgy on Thursday morning.

In many ways, matushka helped build St. Basil's into the parish it is today with her constant support of her husband, Father Martin, and her dedication to the needs of the growing parish of St. Basil the Great. It is also through matushka and her family's influence that God led Father Martin to the Orthodox Church. Please keep the soul of our departed matushka in your prayers these first 40 days, that the Lord may have mercy on her during her personal judgment.



FUNERAL FOR DEPARTED MATUSHKA KATHERINE SWANSON



BAPTISMS AT ST. BASIL'S

Michael Damke and Jackson (Job) Pecaut were baptized by Father Thomas on August 26th at St. Basil's. Both young men have been attending services and studying Orthodoxy in Father Thomas's weekly catechesis classes. Now that their studies are complete, they have received their rebirth into the Orthodox Church. May God grant the newly illumined many years!



FOCUS ON FOCUS

Thank you for your faithful service on the early evening of August 13th, when we fed 67 guests with our meal. The numbers have significantly risen in the last two months, so we will need to prepare roughly 100-125 meals to keep up with the demand. Our next meal will be served on **October 8th**. 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.

Thank you as well for your faithful service in providing cans of fruit, SpaghettiOs, and beef stew during the month of August. The FOCUS ministry was very appreciative of our donations.

For the months of September and October, we have been asked to supply the FOCUS Pantry with **10-14 oz. boxed cereals** (sugary kinds like Frosted Flakes, Fruity Pebbles, etc. that are easy on damaged teeth), **boxes of oatmeal packets**, and **32 oz. containers of shelf-stable milk**. Please look for an email from Fr Sergii with details about these items. A flier is posted in the trapeza with tear-away tabs for reminders. Please donate these items in the large plastic container in our parish coat closet. We would like to supply a healthy donation by **September 17th** and a second healthy donation by **October 22nd**.

UPCOMING FESTIVAL AT ST. BASIL'S

St. Basil's will hold a parish festival after Divine Liturgy on **October 1st**. The event is organized by the Sisterhood of St. Macrina, however, everyone is encouraged and welcome to participate in the preparations and to help on the day of the event. The festival will serve foods and beverages from the many cultures celebrated by the community of St. Basil's. There will also be crafting activities, yard games, and face painting available. If you would like to help in any of these areas, please contact Matushka Svetlana Alekseev for further information.

ICONOGRAPHY CONTINUES AT ST. BASIL'S

Iconographers Ivan Storchak and Roman Martynenko continue their work in the center dome of the church and are working to add seraphim along the dome walls surrounding the icon of Christ Pantocrator. The inscription "Blessed is He Who cometh in the name of the Lord" will also be added along the circumference of the Lord. Sections of the scaffolding erected in the center of the nave were temporarily removed in August to allow the iconographers and



parishioners a better view from the ground of the impressive icon. The pictures to the right and left show the progress on the dome from the ground floor.



Please continue to keep Roman and Ivan in your prayers that they may be safe ascending and descending the scaffolding to complete their work.

A reminder: the iconography is funded by the generous donations of the faithful which can be deposited in the box specifically allocated for this project near the candle kiosk.

UPCOMING PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place in the church hall on Sunday, **September 17th**, immediately following the Divine Liturgy and prior to serving the meal. All adult baptized members of the parish should attend. Parish council members will present their annual reports and hold a general discussion on parish matters.

MEETING THE NEWLY ILLUMINED



Below, we include an interview with newly illumined Rob and Melinda Westervelt whose family was baptized at St. Basil's last month.

How long have you both known each other?

We officially met 23 years ago, in February of 2000, at Biola University in Southern California. We were married in July of 2001.

Where did you both grow up?

Rob grew up in Southern California (Newhall), and Melinda grew up in Montana (Kila and Jordan) and Alaska (Petersburg).

Can you tell us a little bit about your family?

We have three children: Abraham (13), Rosalind (11), and William (7). Our kids were all born into a small community in Oregon wine country and appreciate the beauty of nature. As a family we enjoy playing games, going on walks, traveling, reading, talking, and eating good food. At church Abraham has started serving in the altar, Rosalind likes to help with the food for trapeza, and William loves to play outside with his friends.

What brought you to the Orthodox Church?

We come from a Protestant background and I (Rob) was concerned about how frequently the beliefs in the churches were changing. I wanted to know where was the church that the gates of hell would not prevail against? I wanted a faith that would sustain our family for the rest of their lives. A dear friend of mine in California had been Orthodox for more than 20 years, and I asked him about his faith. He explained that Orthodoxy showed him how to live. He taught me the Jesus Prayer and recommended three Orthodox churches in the St. Louis area. St. Basil was at the top of his list. I arranged a meeting with Fr. Sergii in late August of 2021 and began attending in September of that year. My family joined me a few months later, and we've been attending ever since.

What was the catechumen process with your older children?

It's really an ongoing process that had its beginning when Rob first visited St. Basil and started delving seriously into Orthodox beliefs and practice. To be honest, we haven't had a formalized catechumen process, but we often discuss Orthodoxy as it relates to relationships, theology, worship, our understanding of the Scripture, worldview, and to all of life. We teach them things as we learn them. The kids all have their own prayer books (thanks to their godparents) and prayer corners now. Abraham is learning through his service in the altar. But Father Sergii gave us good advice early on: Be hard as a stone on yourself but gentle as a rose petal on others. This is the approach we try to take with our children as they grow in their faith.

How did you explain this new faith to them?

We try to show them the faith more than explain it to them. We also let them experience it through attending services and getting to know how the Church operates, so to speak. That being said, having come out of Protestantism, we use our previous experiences and understanding to help them see the similarities and differences between it and Orthodoxy, and we use those examples to help explain why we are Orthodox. The kids still have many Protestant friends, so they regularly comment on the

differences they see between the two approaches to faith. They often say how happy they are to be Orthodox and to be a part of the community at St. Basil.

Are there any specific books or materials you would recommend for parents to use with their children/family that you found useful?

We haven't used very many resources aimed specifically at children, although we are certainly open to any good recommendations that others may have! Our approach as parents has been to learn by participating in the services, reading Orthodox books and websites, listening to Orthodox monks and priests online, and asking questions of Father Sergii and Father Thomas as well as trusted Orthodox believers around us. We then share with our children the things we learn and explain things to them that they may not understand.

There can be a lot of new things for children to get accustomed to in the Orthodox Church (confession, communion, etc.) How did you prepare your family for these new practices?

Again, we took a more gentle approach as Father suggested. We introduced things little by little and incorporated them slowly over time (and we are still adding to our faith practice and understanding). We didn't become baptized Orthodox believers until everyone was ready. This took about a year and a half of just attending as a family. To our great surprise, not only were our kids excited about being baptized, but Rob's mother, Barbara, got baptized along with us!

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

Rob chose St. John the Forerunner. He chose him because he resonated with the Great Prophet's admonition that "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:10).

Melinda chose St. Emmelia of Caesarea, the mother of multiple saints. St. Emmelia "instilled the Orthodox faith in her children, teaching them to pray and devote their lives to the service of the Church." Melinda feels that her most important role is the raising of her children, and St. Emmelia's example is something to emulate.

Abraham chose St. George the Trophy Bearer because he was inspired by his bravery and willingness to stand for what he believed in.

Rosalind chose St. Brigid of Ireland because she admired her kindness and generosity (even as a child) to the poor and needy.

William chose St. Christopher. His middle names are Christopher Benedict, and St. Christopher seemed more suited to William's personality and character than St. Benedict.

What are your and your children's favorite things about being Orthodox so far?

The food. Ha, ha. In all seriousness, we really value that the Church is a true community, that Orthodoxy is a continuation of the original Church, that nothing in Church practice is done without a purpose and meaning, that the faith traditions and practices have been passed down--unchanging--through the centuries, and that Orthodoxy is a way of life and offers a true path of continued growth. We appreciate the emphasis on humility. We also greatly value the beauty of the music, the aesthetics of the church buildings, and the beautiful and transcendent iconography and artwork. And we are actually serious about enjoying all the food and eating lunch together each week!

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

We appreciate Father Sergii and Joseph Steiner for their unending patience and willingness to answer our many questions and to discuss the ideas that were especially challenging for us during the catechesis process. We also appreciate Father Thomas for his leadership under Father Sergii as well as Deacon Ephraim for his faithful dedication. We are also very grateful for the members of this congregation of believers, and we are thankful to be a part of such a warm and welcoming community!

YOUTH HANGOUT AT ST. BASIL'S

On Thursday, August 10th, the young people of St Basil's came together for a time of fun and connection. The party was hosted by the Stiller family: Adam and Misty and their children Penelope, Silas, Amos, and Evangeline. Conveniently, the Stillers live not far from the church. The event was well attended, with nearly twenty of our youth present. The event included a variety of activities both planned and spontaneous: a pizza dinner, water balloons, card games, tire-swinging, wrestling, a hotly-contested rock-paper-scissors tournament, and a bonfire with s'mores. We are grateful that Our Lord has entrusted us with so many vibrant young people and look forward to gathering again in the coming months.



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:

Doc
Jill
Ricardo

Christiano
Peter and infant
Ivan

CATECHUMEN CORNER

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Archimandrite Seraphim — Health
Archpriest Moses Berry — Health
Reader Symeon Campbell — Health
Photini Mills — Health
Tatiana Zyryanova — Health
Julianna Campbell — Health
Dimitry Johnson — Health

Inna Dagaeva — Health
Mark Wiebenga — Health
Daniel Simpson — Health
Cheryl (Xenia) Light — Health
Archpriest Martin Swanson — Repose
Katherine Swanson — Repose
Gloria Pappas — Repose

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.