



SAINT 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
Deacon Ephraim Galloway
Deacon Thomas Nichols

December 2021

Schedule of Services

- **24th Sunday after Pentecost**
Afterfeast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple
Sun. Dec. 5 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Great Martyr Catherine**
Mon. Dec. 6 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
Tue. Dec. 7 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Kursk-Root "Of the Sign" Icon of the Theotokos**
Thur. Dec. 9 Vigil 6 P.M.
Fri. Dec. 10 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **25th Sunday after Pentecost**
Sat. Dec. 11 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Dec. 12 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Apostle Andrew the First-Called**
Sun. Dec. 12 Vigil 6 P.M.
Mon. Dec. 13 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Great Martyr Barbara and Venerable John of Damascus**
Thur. Dec. 16 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
Fri. Dec. 17 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **26th Sunday after Pentecost**
Holy Hierarch Nicholas the Wonderworker
Sat. Dec. 18 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Dec. 19 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Conception of Theotokos by St Anna**
Tue. Dec. 21 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
Wed. Dec. 22 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Holy Hierarch Iosaph of Belgorod**
Thur. Dec. 23 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **27th Sunday after Pentecost**
Sunday of Holy Forefathers
Sat. Dec. 25 Vigil 5 P.M.
Sun. Dec. 26 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Holy Prophet Daniel**
Wed. Dec. 29 Vigil 6 P.M.
Thur. Dec. 30 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.

Brotherhood of St. Alexander Nevsky

Brotherhood Secretary Bryan Kopel

November 7th marked the first official meeting and celebratory feast of St. Basil the Great Church's Brotherhood of St. Alexander Nevsky. Under the blessing of His Eminence Peter, Archbishop of Chicago & Mid-America, on the feast of Protection of the Mother of God on Oct. 1/14, 2021, the brotherhood's inaugural gathering began with a Moleben Before Beginning of Any Good Work, and proceeded to the announcement of the charter rules and voting on positions within the brotherhood.

As the charter itself succinctly summarizes:

It is the brotherhood's objective that on the one hand, those who enter its membership may perfect themselves morally in Christian virtue, in accordance with the teaching of the Russian Orthodox Church under the pastoral guidance of their Rector and in close contact with the life of the Church; and on the other hand, the brotherhood's objective is to render active aid to its parish church and to

carry out, in a practical manner, the duties of the parish.

The duties of the brotherhood are:

- Assisting in preparing the church building for Divine Services.

- Monitoring the temple interior and exterior with the purpose of preventing any activities potentially harmful or dangerous.

- Assisting in maintenance of the physical aspect of the temple, both interior and exterior (e.g., painting, repairing the church building, etc.).

- Aiding in the spread of the Orthodox Faith in the Greater St Louis area.

- Concern for those who are Orthodox, but who do not attend services, that they will begin to attend services, partake of the Holy Mysteries of the Church, and become fully incorporated into the parish life.

- Care for the financial well-being of the parish (for this purpose special fundraising activities may be established).

Jacob Laseter, often seen serving in

the altar, was elected by the members as its first Head of the Brotherhood. John Alekseev, having received the second most votes for the former position, was elected as his assistant. Daniel Simeon Hill was elected treasurer without contest, and likewise Bryan Basil Kopel was elected secretary (although Father Sergii thought “Chronicler” was a more resplendent title for the position. This Chronicler humbly agrees).

There will be a yearly celebration of the Brotherhood on September 12th, the day commemorating the translation of St. Alexander Nevsky’s relics.

Please contact Jacob Laseter if you wish to join our brotherhood

in keeping the parish safe, sound, and secure as we grow together in Christ.



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



SISTER S.: For traditional Orthodox Christians in Greece, their hair stands on end at the idea of doing the liturgy in the vernacular Greek. To them it is almost like blasphemy, because modern Greek is so flat and commonplace in comparison to the richness and beauty of ancient Greek.

Liturgical Languages and Living Tradition

Part III

RTE: Along with this, I don’t believe we can so easily dismiss this idea of “holy languages.” In their Lives and in contemporary accounts, Saints Cyril, Methodius, and their disciples who assisted them with translation (several of whom were also saints) insisted that Slavonic was a gift from God: that He had revealed the formation of the early alphabet. Slavonic and Greek, as well as other traditional Orthodox languages have been hallowed by thousands of years of saints’ writings, liturgies, and prayer. If we disregard them as meaningless “ethnic accretions”, we are cutting ourselves off from our Orthodox roots.

I’ve often wondered if Protestant divergences from traditional Christian doctrine might partially have been a result of the King James and other English translations of the Bible not carrying the fullness of the Greek?

SISTER S.: That certainly could have played into it, because every translator, whether he knows it or not, injects his own views into the translation. You can see this in the Protestant King James version, in the incident where Christ is teaching the people, and “a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto Him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked.’ But He said, ‘Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.” This is not correct. That “but” isn’t in the Greek. In Greek it is a continuation, as if it read, “And, he said unto her ...” Also, the “yea rather” is better translated something like “yes, and even more.” It doesn’t have that feeling of contradiction and contrast. And we have to remember that this translation was done by people who were losing their veneration for the Mother of God, so whether intended or not, people’s views do enter into translation.

RTE: That’s very helpful. Another argument for widespread translation that western converts often raise is that “Orthodox tradition says that every country and people are to have the services and the liturgy in their own language. We are just following this tradition.” This is important, as long as we understand that even a good translation is at best an approximation and that these translations took time. Many decades after the initial Valaam missionary effort in Alaska, St. Innocent was still requiring his missionary priests to translate one Gospel into each dialect (which often meant first creating an alphabet for the dialect), along with some basic catechetical books. At the same time, he strongly encouraged the learning of Slavonic and Russian, so that the native catechists and clergy would have a solid understanding of Orthodox belief.

In promoting this, I’ve even heard native English-speakers criticize Greeks and Slavic speakers for retaining Church Greek or Slavonic in services because it is hard for contemporary Greeks, Russians and Slavs to understand. They say, “It should be in modern Greek or Russian”

SISTER S.: Of course, Saints Cyril and Methodius translated the Greek into the Slavic of the time. My understanding is that the

Slavonic used in the Gospel and the services is a very literal translation of the Greek, where new words were composed to correspond to the Greek words. It was as exact as they could make it. Modern Russian speakers who haven't studied Slavonic may only have a partial comprehension, yet it is very understandable that most Orthodox Christians in those countries do not want to throw out the richness of the Slavonic tradition for a necessarily inferior modern Russian translation.

RTE: As a vivid example of this, I recall that not long ago, an official in the Russian State Department told me that he had been present at a state function where an Orthodox bishop was asked to give a prayer. Wanting to "relate" to the mostly secular officials, the bishop gave the prayer in modern Russian. The whole contingent of diplomats were in agony trying to stifle their laughter, as everyone in Russia knows something of Church Slavonic through studying linguistics, history or literature, and even to the ears of secular civil servants it sounded deeply wrong. And, in fact, the officially secular Russian Federation celebrates the Church Feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius as one of Russia's national holidays. Everyone recognizes the importance of their contribution.

To be continued.

St. Basil's Book Review: *The Religion of the Apostles*

Catechumen Bryan Kopel

The Orthodox Church can seem mysterious to those coming in from the outside. Even to those who have grown up Orthodox, it can be difficult to summarize the story of God's creation and how we fit into it. So much of our life in Christ is characterized by a myriad of little moments, struggles, prayers, and interactions that extend beyond any doctrinal creed or historical account. This is not some fatal flaw in the tradition of our faith, but the inevitable consequence of the mysterious and comprehensive life of God we enter into as members of the Church.

Relationships between people are complicated enough to describe, so perhaps it should be unsurprising that summarizing how the divine life intersects with our own would be more complicated still. Ultimately these things are best experienced sacramentally rather than distilled into clinical definitions.

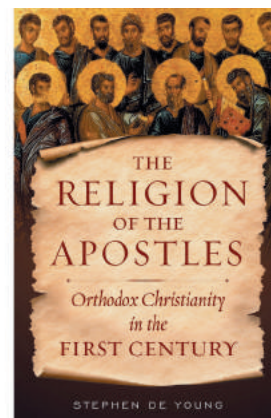
Our faith is not blind or relegated to obscurantism. We do not simply incorporate customs uncritically or engage in empty rituals. There truly is one grand story of reality of which we all partake. From Genesis to this very moment, we are all living in the same unbroken family of faith as the plans of the Most Holy Trinity unfold without interruption. Some heretical thinkers have proffered a multi-phasic analysis of God's action that breaks up His divine work into neat boxes of which we play no part. It can be tempting, after all, to reduce the scope of God's word to story arcs, allegories, and accounts from the distant past that require laborious excavation in order to yield any present relevance. We must resist this temptation of simplification by embracing the more immediate but ineffable reality of God's persistent presence that entails those details of history, culture, and the particular of which His world is so filled.

In the concise treatise on our faith compiled by Fr. Stephen De Young in his popular new work, *The Religion of the Apostles: Orthodox Christianity in the First Century*, he provides historical and scriptural evidence to argue for the Orthodox Church as the

true Israel of God. The many fundamental traditions of Orthodox worship are traced back to antecedents in pre-Christian Judaism. The incense, icons, sacrificial meal with God, forgiveness of sins, prayers, psalms, and priesthood all find their form out of the Temple and the synagogues of the first century Jews. Far from starting a new religion, the apostles were the heirs to the oldest religion of all: the relationship of Adam and Eve with their Creator. What we know as modern Judaism arose centuries after the Resurrection of Christ and in many ways as a rejection of Christianity.

The history of Christianity is not a return to simplicity by the rejection of all that came before in light of Christ, but rather one of fulfillment and development through the Church that Jesus created. We are heirs to an unbroken chain of faith and practice that spans from Adam to us. We worship amidst a great cloud of witnesses who find themselves quite at home with their extended family and helping us grow in the likeness of God.

This book was recommended to me by Archimandrite Seraphim at Holy Cross Monastery during my recent visit, and I happily pored over it in the course of one evening. Not many works of theology have brought me to tears of repentance, but this one certainly humbled me. *The Religion of the Apostles* helped me to glimpse myself from the heavenly and eternal perspective, and not from the little lens of life that put me at its center. Rather, I could start to behold through his summary the splendor of God's grand design and the family of love He invites us to join. The 271 pages are packed with profound insights too numerous to justly summarize here. I highly recommend reading this book at least once.



New Catechumen at St. Basil's

This month, we had one person become a catechumen and, therefore, further unite himself to the Orthodox Church. Ahsan Khan became a catechumen before the Divine Liturgy on Sunday November 28th. Please keep Ahsan in your prayers, as he continues to study and learn about the Orthodox faith.

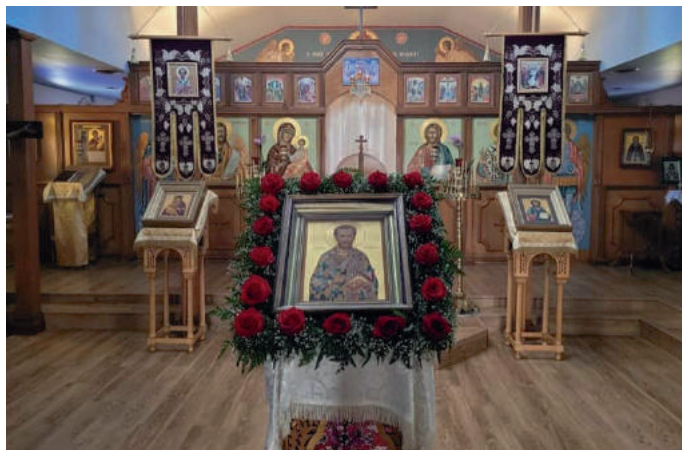
Feast of St. John Chrysostom

The Friday after Thanksgiving in America is so often cloaked in the ignominious spectacle of Black Friday greed, but this year, our parish gave honor to St. John Chrysostom in the Divine Liturgy celebration of his name day at the temple that bears his name in House Springs, Missouri. St John's Church came into being as the temple for Holy Cross Hermitage monastic community started by Hieromonk Kallistos in 1986. After several years, the small monastic brotherhood which called House Springs its home was forced to relocate to the hollows of West Virginia, where today it flourishes and grows from strength to strength.

Archpriest Sergii celebrated the Divine Liturgy with Deacon Thomas, and delivered a homily reminding us of the importance of obedience for young and old, the family and the church, as exemplified in the life of St. John Chrysostom himself, who preferred monastic quiet to the tumult of parish life and ecclesiastical responsibilities. Nevertheless, his numerous gifts

of intellect and oration were endowed by God for the edification of the church, and so he submitted the course of his life to the service God intended for him. Fr. Sergii said that no church should have an empty altar on the name day of its patron saint, and so our clergy, choir, and congregation came to obediently attend to this need in love. Besides the usual English and Church Slavonic, some of the hymnody was sung in Georgian — not otherwise heard during our typical services, which helped mark the special occasion of the temple they love.

After receiving the Divine Gifts and venerating St. John Chrysostom's rose-adorned icon, among the many others packed into the cozy, stained-glass and wooden nave, the faithful celebrated his feast with many delightful dishes of fish, vegetables, and toasts of wine in honor of the feast. All in attendance agreed that they would love to pray at more services at St. John Chrysostom Orthodox Church. May we never forget that obedience to God, while often at odds with our sinful passions, always bears fruit in the end. He is faithful. Let us be faithful, too.





The Kirn family (Micah, Rachel, and Noelle) was baptized on November 6th and put on the white garment of salvation. Pictured to the right are the family with their godparents, Parishioner Nicole Steineger, Matushka Svetlana, and Deacon Thomas. Stay tuned for a brief interview with the family where we get to know them and learn about their journey to the Orthodox Church.

Kirn Family Baptism

A New Birth at St. Basil's

St. Basil's is happy to welcome another newborn into the Orthodox family. Parishioners Mark (Baxter) and Helena (Alaina) Eaves welcomed their second child on November 4th. Baby Cecilia and the family are doing well and we ask that you keep them in your prayers.

St. Herman Midwest Youth Conference at St. Basil's

This year, the Midwestern St Herman's Youth Conference will take place in St Louis, and St Basil's is happy to announce that the conference participants will sing at our church the Vigil on Wednesday, Dec. 29 and the Divine Liturgy on Thursday, Dec. 30 — the feast of Holy Prophet Daniel and Three Holy Youths. The conference is from December 27th-31st and will be hosted primarily at Camp Wyman in Eureka, St. Basil's parish, and various other locations in the St. Louis area, as the conference also plans to volunteer with FOCUS and have outings to other St. Louis locations. The conference is for high school and college aged youths from 14 years and older. Conference registration closes on December 17th and registration fees are \$250. However, scholarships are available and inquiries can be made to Fr. Nicholas Park: frnicholaspark@protonmail.com or 972-839-2439

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Where:
St. Basil Orthodox Church,
St. Louis, MO

When:
Dec 27-31, 2021

Who:
Youth ages 14 and older

Cost:
\$250.
Financial assistance is available.

For more info, scan here:



St. Herman DCMA Youth Conference 2021

"Orthodoxy! Truth in a Heterodox World"

Join in activities such as a bonfire, talent show, games and more!

This year, we will volunteer at FOCUS North America in St. Louis

Fr. Turbo Quails "Who do you say that I am? Finding Christ in an age of false christs"

Matushka Elizabeth Naasko "Tuning In: Finding Truth in the Noise of the World. In a world filled with lots of messages, how to filter out the noise to find the Truth."

More info: <http://tiny.cc/n3fuz>

Newsletter Activity

Word Scramble

The names of the saints and icons have been scrambled. Unscramble the letters to reveal the name.

- ICSLHONA _____
- EENHICRTA _____
- RNEAWD _____
- RKUSK-OORT _____
- NEALID _____
- NANA _____

- AEDNALERX VSYNKE _____
- OMNPAAR _____
- SYDINOPR _____
- AMNREH _____
- ABRAARB _____
- SBASAB _____

ATTENTION: Choir Practice Update

All parishioners are welcome to join the choir. All voices are needed. Choir practice will take place on Wednesday evenings, for the month of December, at 6:30 pm at the church.

November Cryptogram Answer

H O L Y G O D , H O L Y M I G H T Y , H O L Y
 J P V R Q P S J P V R N U Q J K R J P V R
 I M M O R T A L H A V E M E R C Y O N U S !
 U N N P G K L V J L O C N C G F R P D X Y

Parish Prayer List

- Nadia Danett — Health
- Jackie (Xenia) Peck — Health
- Nora (Zoe) Resz — 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.