



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

June 2021

Schedule of Services

- **Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles
Constantine and Helen**
Wed. June 2 6 p.m. Vigil
Thur. June 3 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- **Sixth Sunday of Pascha —
Sunday of the Blind Man**
Sat. June 5 5 p.m. Vigil
Sun. June 6 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- **Ascension of the Lord**
Wed. June 9 6 p.m. Vigil
Thur. June 10 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- **Sunday of the Holy Fathers of
the First Ecumenical Council**
Sat. June 12 5 p.m. Vigil
Sun. June 13 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- **Holy Trinity Memorial Saturday**
Sat. June 19 9 a.m. Panihida
- **Pentecost — Descent of the Holy
Spirit on the Apostles — Feast
of the Holy Trinity**
Sat. June 19 5 p.m. Vigil
Sun. June 20 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy
Followed by Vespers with Kneeling
Prayers
- **Day of the Holy Spirit**
Mon. June 21 8 a.m. Divine Liturgy
- **First Sunday after Pentecost —
Sunday of All Saints**
Sat. June 26 5 p.m. Vigil
Sun. June 27 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Pascha at St. Basil's



Holy Week Services

Below are pictures from the services that took place at St. Basil's during Holy Week.

Holy Unction



Holy Thursday



Holy Friday



Holy Saturday



Our Help Where It Is Needed

Several times a year every parish in our diocese takes special collections to help the causes which receive support primarily from such donations. This year on Palm Sunday we had a collection for the monastic communities in the Holy Land.

Now, let us take a look at other collections we are going to have through the year. On the First Sunday after the Pentecost a collection will be taken to benefit the Diocesan Youth Fund, as this day has been designated as the Day of Youth in the Church. On the Sunday before or after the civil Thanksgiving holiday a collection will be taken to benefit the Diocesan Fund for the

It goes without saying that many moral and cultural standards in our society are getting ever lower and lower. For Christians, however, the standard is the Holy Tradition, the Gospel and, ultimately, Christ. Vigilance, self-control and humility characterize true Christians. A Christian knows that he would have to give account to God for his every word and every deed.

The attitude of carelessness and irreverence which is contrary to Christian mindset is prevalent in modern society. One needs to make no effort to comply with societal standards, whereas faithfulness to the Christian ideal requires unceasing and zealous efforts.

Most of those who are reading these

words are familiar with the concept that when addressing those who are either older or of a higher ecclesiastical, or military, or career-wise rank than we are, we choose the words which reflect this difference. We know this but we do not do it. Whenever you address a priest, especially a senior one, with "Hi Father" or "Hey Father" in a conversation, or, even worse, when it is done in writing, you show your irreverence to the presbytery of the Church and, by extension, you show that you have little regard for what is holy in general.

Remember that the priest is a liturgical icon of Christ. Even if the particular priest is young, inexperienced and far from being flawless, he is still a possessor of

Assistance of Those in Need. On the Sunday before or after the feast of the Three Hierarchs (which falls on Feb. 12th on the civil calendar) a collection will be taken to benefit the Diocesan Seminarian/Education Fund.

As is obvious from the designations, all collected funds, with the exception of the one taken on Palm Sunday, will be used for the appropriate needs within our Mid-American Diocese. Thus, we are going to have four collections throughout the year. What you give in these collections should not replace your support of our own parish, but it is to be something extra which you give for this or that worthy cause. This month, on Sunday, June 27, at the end of the Divine Liturgy, as you come to venerate the Cross, a basket will be held for the Diocesan Youth Fund.

"Hey, Father!"

the grace of the priesthood which very few have. By communicating with the priest using the substandard language we reveal that we are far from an authentic and rich Christian culture. Bear in mind that we see and "understand" the world we live in through language. If we allow ourselves to impoverish our behavioral and linguistic vocabulary, we bring everything and everyone else in the world to our rather mediocre level.

P.S. Let us try to broaden our vocabulary! See how many phrases to greet one another you can come up with to replace that ubiquitous "Hi".



In spite of being born with cerebral palsy, Sofia is a fighter and overcomes all of life's difficulties with grace and hard work. In order to walk, Sofia needs two surgeries: Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy (SDR) at St. Louis Children's Hospital and Percutaneous Muscle Lengthening (PERCS) performed at Mercy Hospital scheduled for July 2021. Many have shown their support for

Sofia and contributed but a very substantial sum is still needed. Please help Sofia walk on her feet as these surgeries will truly make her unstoppable. Donations made to this campaign are tax deductible as per IRS Tax Code.

Our ruling hierarch Archbishop Peter of Chicago and Mid-America has given his blessing to our parish to help little Sofia

Help Sofia Rovnova Walk

walk. As soon as enough funds are gathered, Sofia and her mother will come to St Louis and, most likely, will stay in Fr Sergii's house. This is a unique opportunity for us to be instruments of God's healing power and lay up treasures for ourselves in Heaven "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal". God is bringing this little girl into our lives. When we come up for Dread Judgment of Christ the little Sofia could be there interceding for us.

Donations can be made at <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/sofia-rovnova-requires-two-surgeries-to-walk-sdr-and-percs-in-usa>



Ask Your Priest

Q: What is the bread

their meals after He had ascended into heaven.

that was blessed after the service on Thomas Sunday? What is the significance of it?

A: I believe the question refers to the Artos which is bread blessed immediately after the Divine Liturgy on Pascha and cut and distributed to the faithful on Thomas Sunday. It is consecrated in memory of the Risen Christ Who is the "Bread of Eternal Life descending from Heaven and nourishing us with the food of His divine mercies". The faithful partake of it on Thomas Sunday in place of Antidoron and take it home for those who were not present in church. This rite reflects the apostles custom of laying blessed bread aside in memory of Christ at



Q: During the Divine Liturgy on Pascha, the Royal Doors were open and we were able to see the priests commune within the altar. Why do the priests commune there and how is the way they commune different from the lay people? Does everyone serving in the altar commune this way?

A: The Eastern part of the church is known as the sanctuary where the Divine Services are performed and only those ordained to the major orders—bishops, priests and deacons are permitted to enter this area. (With a specific blessing altar servers are permitted to enter and assist the clergy but not to commune) Only those in major orders receive the Eucharist in the sanctuary. This is reminiscent of the ancient temple where only the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies—the sanctuary.

In the early church it is evident from historic sources that the manner of

receiving the Eucharist was the same for laypeople as it is for bishops, priests, and deacons today. I.e. the Body of Christ is placed in the palm of the hand, and the Blood of Christ is sipped directly from the Chalice. In the 4th century St. Cyril of Jerusalem instructs "make your left hand a throne for the right which is about to receive a King—the Body of Christ, approach also the chalice of His Blood ...sanctify yourself by receiving also the Blood of Christ."

The introduction of the communion spoon for the reception of Holy Communion by the laity probably occurred in the 10th or 11th century. This practice was introduced in order make giving communion to large numbers of people more efficient and less hazardous and not so susceptible to the danger of spilling the chalice. By the 14th century the communion spoon had become the accepted practice for giving communion to the laity in the Eastern Church. It is of practical and not dogmatic significance.

- Archpriest Martin

As many of you can probably tell, it's that time of year again. Summer is coming in, and with it those twin St. Louis favorites of high temperatures and high humidity. With that in mind I just wanted to make a few remarks about our electricity usage. Just as all of us pay for electricity for our homes and businesses, so too the parish pays a monthly electricity bill for the church building and grounds. It is not dissimilar to a standard residential electric service plan. Our electric provider is Ameren Missouri. As of our last billing cycle, we have used 13,600 kWh of electricity for the year, which is down approximately 51% from our cumulative usage as of this time last year. So far this year, our average monthly usage has been roughly 2,720 kWh. However, as you can imagine, this follows a seasonal cyclical path. Our highest usage this year was in the month of January, and our lowest usage month this year so far has been the month

of May. As heat rises to the top of our church cupola, it takes more energy to sufficiently heat the church in winter than cool it in summer. Having said that, the extra electricity needed to cool the building sufficiently still presents a noticeable increase in cost. The summer usage highs are not too far off the winter highs. As with everything, the financial health and future of the parish depend on each one of us. If you are the last to leave a room, please turn off the lights and unplug any unused appliances. Please keep the outside doors shut and limit excessive coming and going. Dress appropriately for the season to reduce the need for climate control. As always, please feel free to approach me with any questions!

Treasury Report

St. Basil's Icon Corner

This month, we examine the icons of St. Basil throughout the church. We have three icons depicting St. Basil the Great in the nave of the church. From a clockwise order, on the northern side, we have the churches paternal icon of St. Basil's (A), located on the iconostasis we have the second icon of St. Basil (B), and on the back southern wall, we have the third icon of St. Basil (C).

A. This icon was painted in Athens, in 1984 by a Greek Iconographer and commissioned as a donation to the Church by since reposed parishioner Marian Martin, Matushka Katherine's mother. It is painted in the classical Byzantine style. The lettering is in

A.



Greek.

The reliquary attached to the icon contains a relic of St. Basil the Great that was given to the church in ca. 2000 by a monastery in Greece.

The frame housing the icon was crafted by parishioner Anatoli Lukin and donated to house and adorn the icon in 2017.

B. This icon was specifically created digitally on canvas and executed for the church by Damascene Gallery in 2015. It is customary for each iconostasis to include an icon of the temple's patron saint which is why an icon of St. Basil the Great is part of

the iconostasis. The lettering for this icon is in English and reads as "St. Basil the Great".

B.



C.



C. This icon was painted specifically for the Church by well-known American Iconographer Jamiel Abraham and donated to the Church by Nun Photini in 1998 . The icon was given in appreciation for the donors conversion to Orthodoxy and baptism which took place at St. Basil's. This icon formerly hung on the iconostasis of the original parish church. This icon's lettering is also in English.

A couple of things to note about icons depicting great hierarchs: the saint will always be wearing an omophorion (vestment worn by Orthodox bishops around their neck and shoulders) with prominent crosses on it. The saint will also be holding either the Gospel, or a scroll symbolizing their preaching to and guiding of their flock.



As mentioned in last month's newsletter, this month, we get to know our newly illumined brother and sisters in Christ, the Eaves family. The family, consisting of father, mother, and daughter, was baptized on April 24th on Lazarus Saturday. For those present, it was a beautiful and special service where an entire family joins hands to shed their old selves and to put on the white robe of illumination. May God grant them many years!

Where are you from?

Alaina was raised in Kentucky and spent her twenties working in big cities on the east coast. Baxter was born in Miami, FL. and raised in Louisville, KY. Baxter bounced around for a while for school and work. Both Alaina and Baxter grew sick of city life so they moved to St. Louis in 2016. Their daughter, Rosalind, was born here in St. Louis two years later.

What brought you to Orthodoxy?



Baptisms at St. Basil's

For Alaina, it took a long time to realize that Orthodoxy existed. Dostoevsky was her first bite. Alaina and Rosalind started going to St. Basil's and shortly afterwards, Baxter could see the good that it was doing his wife and wanted to support her, so he started coming with her on Sundays. Both Alaina and Baxter talked a lot about the things that she was learning during her meetings with Fr. Martin and which led to Baxter discovering that Orthodoxy had fleshed out a lot of things he had been struggling with, so he inquired.

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

Rosie's saint is St. Genevieve of Paris. Rosie loves to speak French and has lots of books set in Paris so the city's patroness caught her attention this January on her feast day. We have an Orthodox app (OrthoPrax) that has the daily scriptures and menaion with lots of icons. We look at it before bed. She started asking to see St. Genevieve's icon everyday so we figured that was her choice!

Alaina really wanted someone that was a mother. She was instantly inspired by St. Helena's faith, bravery, and maternity—she, St. Helena, changed the course of history.

Baxter's is St. Mark of Ephesus. Baxter was inspired by St. Mark's valiant defense of the truth.

Do you have a favorite feast or liturgical service so far?

Rosalind likes Vigils, she loves the oil blessing. They're a treat because they're past bedtime.

Alaina likes Theophany. However, because of the Covid-19 restrictions, she hasn't been to any Paschal services so that's not her final answer.

Baxter thinks the Saturday night vigils during the winter months are beautiful with the candles lighting everything, though he is very much looking forward to his first Paschal services.

What has been the most interesting thing you have learned during your catechumenate about the Church?

Rosalind loves icons. She likes to look at them while her parents tell her the stories of the saint's lives. Her favorite icons are Theophany, Prodigal Son, and recently Palm Sunday.

Alaina feels that she came to the church so uneducated that during her weekly meetings with Fr. Martin, she would experience a paradigm-altering revelation which leaves her unable to list all of the interesting things she has learned.

Can you tell us a little bit about your immediate family?

Alaina and Baxter are in their 30s. They met right before Baxter started graduate school. Baxter started a business a few years ago and Alaina is home with Rosie who is turning 3 in May. They are expecting another baby in early November. The rest of their family lives in Kentucky, Indiana, Texas, and Florida.

What are you most excited about in your new Orthodox life?

The family is excited to live the liturgical calendar, with all of the different great feasts and saints—especially with little ones. They also look forward to becoming closer to God through His grace and nurturing a God-fearing family.

Choir Practice

All parishioners are welcome to join the choir. All voices are needed. For the month of June, choir practice will take place weekly on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm at the church.

Parish Prayer List

Archimandrite Seraphim — Health

Archpriest Andrei Papkov — Recovery

Nadia Danett — Health

Jackie (Xenia) Peck — Health

Sophia Shipton and family — Health

How did you handle/manage converting with a small child and what advice would you give others in a similar situation?

Alaina started taking Rosie to Liturgy when she was 11 months old. Baxter was not interested at the time so she was on her own. It took Alaina a really long time to get a sense of what was even happening, since she was always tending to Rosie's tears and diapers. It was really hard and still is in some ways at almost 3 years old. Baxter and Alaina took her every week and stayed as long as possible. The parents say Rosie has a lot of energy and personality so it's really essential for church to be a very normal, expected routine. They feel that going to a weekday service usually makes for an easier Sunday. Alaina can (sort of) read the Cyrillic alphabet so she tells her the names, etc., of those on the icons around the sanctuary on their "icon walks" when Rosie would get too wiggly. Icons are so accessible to children! Her parents try to get Rosie closer to the altar so that she watches the service instead of other parishioners. They would also draw closer to show her how her friends received communion. As soon as her parents learned any information, prayer, or hymn, they passed it on to her, "Look, Deacon Thomas has the Bible, he's going to read to us now." ... "It's time for the Creed!" The family reads the scriptures for Sunday the night before so it's easier to take in. They also do a simple set of nightly prayers with Rosie and she has them memorized now and recognizes them in the service. Baxter will do morning prayers with her now. As she gets older, they let her light candles at church. Rosie's parents ask her to pick someone to pray for with each candle. They also bring Rosie to the St Basil's playgroup on Wednesdays, 10:30am. The playgroup talks about major feasts and saints of the season. Rosie loves her friends. Baxter and Alaina try to make sure they attend services for all of the Great Feasts. They try to find (usually borrow from wiser, experienced parents) books about saints ahead of their feast day and do something special. They already mentioned the app they have with the daily verses and menaion. Her parents say it's become Rosie's way of admitting she's tired—"Mama, look at the icons??" Beyond any particular tip or trick, they wager the most important factor is having the faith be important to the parents. Rosie's parents noticed Rosie always wants to do what they love, what's relevant to them: cooking, their garden, French, their phones, and hopefully walking with Christ and being in His church.

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.