

MAY 2024



# 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  
Protopriest Radomir Chkautovich  
Priest Thomas Nichols  
Deacon Ephraim Galloway

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

- **Holy and Great Wednesday, May 1**
  - Holy Unction 6 P.M.
- **Holy and Great Thursday, May 2**
  - Vespers with the Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
  - Matins with the Reading of Twelve Passion Gospels 6 P.M.
- **Holy and Great Friday, May 3**
  - Royal Hours 9 A.M.
  - Vespers with bringing out of the Shroud 4 P.M.
  - Matins with the Procession around the temple 6 P.M.
- **Holy and Great Saturday, May 4**
  - Vespers with the Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.
  - Blessing of Paschal Baskets — Noon
  - Blessing of Paschal Baskets 9:30 P.M.
  - Reading of the Acts of the Holy Apostles 10 P.M.
  - Blessing of Paschal Baskets 10:30 P.M.
  - Blessing of Paschal Baskets 11 P.M.
  - Midnight Office 11:30 P.M.
  - Paschal Procession, Matins and Liturgy — Midnight
  - Blessing of Paschal Baskets — after the Liturgy  
Followed by the breaking of the fast
- **Day of the Resurrection, Sunday May 5**
  - Blessing of Paschal Baskets 1:30 P.M.
  - Paschal Vespers 2 P.M.
  - Blessing of Paschal Baskets 2:45 P.M.
  - Pot-luck Parish Paschal Banquet 3 P.M.
- **Great Martyr George the Trophy-bearer**
  - Mon., May 6 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M. *At House Springs*
- **Second Sunday of Pascha**
  - **Thomas Sunday**
    - Sat., May 11 Vigil 5 P.M.
    - Sun., May 12 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Tue., May 14 Radonitsa**
  - **Commemoration of the Departed**
    - Panihida at St. Basil's 9 A.M.
    - Panihida at St. Matthew's Cemetery 10 A.M.
    - Panihida at House Springs 11 A.M.
- **Third Sunday of Pascha**
  - **Myrrh-bearing Women**
    - Sat., May 18 Vigil 5 P.M.
    - Sun., May 19 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Translation of the relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker**
  - Tue., May 21 Vigil 6 P.M.
  - Wed., May 22 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Fourth Sunday of Pascha**
  - **Sunday of the Paralytic**
    - Sat., May 25 Vigil 5 P.M.
    - Sun., May 26 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Mid-Pentecost**
  - Tue., May 28 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
  - Wed., May 29 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
  - Followed by the Lesser Blessing of the Water

# HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE EXPLAINED

## Holy Wednesday (May 1)

6:00 P.M. Holy Unction – *This is the Mystery of healing of soul and body. Only baptized Orthodox Christians seven years old and older (i.e. those who confess their sins, since the Holy Unction is for those who repent) may come to be anointed.*

## Holy Thursday (May 2)

8:00 A.M. Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great – *Commemorating the Mystical Supper. All Christians should try to commune at this Liturgy – the day the Lord communed His disciples with His precious Body and Blood.*

6:00 P.M. Matins with the Reading of the 12 Passion Gospels. All the Gospel accounts of the events of Holy Thursday and Friday (divided into twelve readings) are read in front of the Golgotha in the center of the temple. *The faithful stand with lit candles during the Gospel Readings.*

## Holy Friday (May 3) – Most Solemn Day of the Year

9:00 A.M. Royal Hours and Typica are read with the Golgotha being in the center of the temple.

4:00 P.M. Great Vespers (with the Reading of the Gospel account of the Passions of the Lord), at the end of which the Holy Shroud – a cloth icon depicting taking of the Body of Christ from the Cross – is solemnly brought out of the altar and placed in the middle of the church.

6:00 P.M. Matins, during which the Lamentations (the lamentation of the Mother of God over her crucified Son) are sung and the Procession with the Shroud (symbolizing the carrying of the lifeless Body of the Lord to the Tomb) around the temple takes place.

## Holy Saturday (May 4)

9:00 A.M. Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great for Holy Saturday. Fifteen Old Testament Readings (recounting the events which point to the Resurrection of the Lord) are read. After the Epistle Reading, all the church vestments are changed from black and purple to white, signifying that the Lord descends into Hades to destroy the power of the enemy and to raise Adam and Eve, along with all the righteous of old.

Noon (approximately) At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy – Blessing of Paschal Baskets

9:30 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. The 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

11:00 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 (May 5)

Midnight: *All the Lights (lampadas and candles) are put out. The priest comes out of the altar with a lit Paschal triple candle and passes the flame to the candles which the faithful hold in their hands (passing the flame one to another).* Paschal procession around the temple. Matins begin outside in front of the closed main doors of the temple. After Matins, the Paschal Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom begins. The services usually end around 2:30 A.M. *The faithful stay in the church hall to break the fast together.*



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

### **Pascha Sunday afternoon (May 5)**

1:30 P.M. Blessing of Paschal Baskets

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

2:45 P.M. Blessing of Paschal Baskets

3:00 P.M. Parish Pascha Potluck (every family brings something to share with everyone) and Egg Hunt for the children.

## **FOCUS ON FOCUS**

On Sunday, April 15th, it was again our parish's turn to provide volunteers to FOCUS. A team of approximately a dozen parishioners of all ages met at St. Michael the Archangel church in downtown St. Louis. After a short orientation by Fr. Matthew, the team plated and served over 120 meals to poor and homeless



residents of our city. Volunteers talked with the guests (a powerful act of love for these often lonely men and women), staffed the in-house food pantry, and, after the meal, cleaned the facility. Glory to God, Who teaches us by command and example to love our neighbors!

Thank you to everyone who donated clothing for our April FOCUS pantry donation. Holy Archangel Michael parish, where our local FOCUS chapter is based, will be undergoing renovations during the months of May, June, and July. God willing, the renovations will be completed by August. This time of repair will impact both how we will serve our next Sunday Supper on June 9th and how we will donate our pantry goods.

For our **Sunday Supper on June 9th**, we will prepare meals in a "to-go" or picnic style. We will probably not need as many volunteers for this Sunday Supper. Volunteers will mostly just hang out and talk to our guests as we give away meals. Since it will be outside, we should prepare for the warm St. Louis summer weather. A signup sheet is posted in the narthex for anyone interested in serving at FOCUS.

Regarding our **pantry donations**, we are asked to give funds instead of goods during May, June, and July. You can supply your monetary donation in one of three ways:

- By cash – please put your cash donation in an envelope with "FOCUS" written on the outside, and put it in our parish donation box
- By check – same as above; please make the check out to St Basil Orthodox Church and put "FOCUS" in the memo line; put the check in our parish donation box
- Directly to FOCUS through the following link or QR code

<https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=E334599&id=86>

If you have any questions, please email Joseph Steineger at [jsteineger@gmail.com](mailto:jsteineger@gmail.com).

## **MEETING THE NEWLY ILLUMINED**

Below, we include an interview with Newly Illumined Russell Helbig who was one of the eight baptized on April 13th.

### ***Where did you grow up?***

I grew up in Southern Illinois, an hour east of St. Louis.

### ***If you didn't grow up in St. Louis, what brought you to the area?***

Dianne and I returned home after 40 years in Kansas, Michigan, and North and South Carolina. Our families are nearby and my parents need assistance.

### ***How did you hear about the Orthodox Church and what made you want to convert?***



God slowly led me to Orthodoxy for 30 years. While training for Lutheran ministry, I read about Orthodoxy's cure of the soul, Russian novelists of the Silver Age, and the noetic light by which Russia's new martyrs shone so brightly during Soviet persecution. There was something warm, holy, and very dear about Russian Orthodoxy. Soon Dianne and I traveled to Russia to adopt a daughter. We hosted Ukrainian doctors bringing children from Chernobyl for medical care. I continued reading and was befriended by a Greek Orthodox priest, Fr. Mark Lichtenstein (GOARCH), who patiently answered many questions. I was also befriended by Father Luke and others at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Church in northern Illinois. I pored over hundreds of theological papers online. Finally, after eight years of analysis and prayer, I recognized that Orthodoxy is the historic, true, organic Body of Christ. And I was ready to make a sacrifice to receive it.

***What was something memorable about your first time attending an Orthodox service?***

I was stunned by profound love. Love in reverencing icons. Love in prayers for the reposed and saints of all conditions. Love in the children. Love in single parent converts, spending for lodging and eight-hour commutes when it was unaffordable yet put first because of love. The quiet love of peaceful, determined faithfulness. Deep love saturated the atmosphere and very walls.

***Who is your patron saint and why did you choose him?***

St. Theophan the Recluse, overcoming ambition, sacrificed a bishop's rank to withdraw from the world to a cell whereby he asceticised toward holiness. From this inner well he then blessed many, issuing writings and letters guiding many from popular Protestant error to the Orthodox phronema.

***What was one of the most interesting things you learned during your catechumen classes/process?***

Some Protestants seek pure doctrine while others seek momentary elated experience. Orthodoxy, however, is an experience lived already now in eternal communion with saints, martyrs, Fathers and angels. We are blessed beyond comprehension to have two millenia of liturgical wealth as we pass through the years of our lives to the hour when our noetic vision will open to clearly see the magnificent, stunning host of fellow holy ones who are our truest friends. Every worship service, every choir note, every prayer is an opening moment in our eternal conversation with God.

***Do you have any favorite book or resource you found most spiritually helpful during your catechumenate?***

*The Departure of the Soul* is a must-read. It prompts sober reflection on preparation for our death, which may come at any hour, readying us for an experience very rarely articulated by non-Orthodox – and then rarely with the insight revealed by saints. A second great book is the *Apophthegmata Evergetinos* (in the church library), an anthology of great wisdom by the Desert Fathers. It is easy reading and most helpful.

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

I had not experienced a full year of Orthodoxy, yet I was deeply impressed with the Great Canon and Reading of the Life of Venerable Mary of Egypt. The honesty of reckoning with our sinful condition was refreshing and shocking due to my own sinfulness. Overall, the sheer quality of theological richness and the musical composition of choral materials leave me in awe. Hundreds, if not thousands, of monastics, priests, and laymen contributed to the liturgical cycle as we have it. I'm excited to live through it for many years!

***What advice or recommendation would you give to someone that is contemplating becoming an Orthodox Christian?***

Don't rush. I chafed during the eight years I waited to be received into Orthodoxy, yet now I thank God for it. I had time to think through the theology, reconsider who I really am, pray deeply for guidance, and experience the full range of moods and emotions and perspectives until finally – having thought it through for the hundredth time – the same answer occurred every time: it is Orthodoxy. That preparation time enabled me to withstand the storm that broke when family were informed that I was separating from the Lutheran ministerium to become Orthodox. I had answers. I had resolve. And I finally received peace.

***If you could have tea with a saint, with whom would it be?***

## APRIL ACTIVITY ANSWERS

O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition, and idle talking give me not. But rather a spirit of chastity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

St. Seraphim of Sarov. I would ask him to help me identify impediments and recommend improvements that my noetic eye may be healed more completely and rapidly. Lord, have mercy on me.

**Is there anything else you would like to share with the parish?**  
Thank you for receiving me, every one of you.

## BAPTISMS AT ST. BASIL'S

The infant son of Hiram and Ekaterina Gay, Alexander (pictured to the right), was baptized at St. Basil's on Tuesday, April 9th.

Eight catechumens were baptized on Saturday, April 13th. The group consists of (pictured below from left to right) Shannon, Brandon, Christiano, Anthony, Matthew, Christian, Andrew, and Russell. Everyone in the group had been attending services and catechumen classes with Father Thomas for the last year or longer.



Also baptized in April were Gabriel and Gabrielle on Sunday, April 21st following the Divine Liturgy. Both have also been attending

services and catechumen classes with Deacon Ephraim. They are pictured to the right.

Please join us in welcoming these newest infants into the Holy Orthodox Church! May God grant them many years!



## NEWSLETTER ACTIVITY

Fill in the blanks with the words found in the word bank to complete the Hypakoe of Pascha.

RISEN	LIGHT	SEPULCHER
DEATH	MARY	MANKIND
MORTAL	DEAD	STONE

Foretelling the dawn, the women came with \_\_\_\_\_, and found the \_\_\_\_\_ rolled away from the \_\_\_\_\_, and heard from the angel: why seek ye among the \_\_\_\_\_, as though He were a \_\_\_\_\_, Him Who liveth in everlasting \_\_\_\_\_? Behold the grave-clothes. Go quickly and proclaim to the world that the Lord is \_\_\_\_\_ and hath slain \_\_\_\_\_. For He is the Son of God Who saveth \_\_\_\_\_.

## PARISH PRAYER LIST

Archimandrite Seraphim — 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  
John, Xenia, and Faith — Recovery  
Christopher — Recovery  
Katherine Swanson — 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.

## CATECHUMEN CORNER

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:

<i>Doc</i>	<i>Zachary</i>
<i>Ricardo</i>	<i>William,</i>
<i>Ryan</i>	<i>Medea, and</i>
<i>William</i>	<i>George</i>