

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

A u g u s t 2 0 2 5

2 0 5 H i g h l a n d A v e n u e
D e s P e r e s , M O 6 3 1 2 2

A parish of the Diocese of Chicago
and Mid-America of the Russian
Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

Clergy

Archpriest Sergii Alekseev, Parish Rector
Protopriest Radomir Chkautovich
Priest Thomas Nichols
Deacon Ephraim Galloway
Deacon Ivan Alekseev
Deacon Daniel Simpson



Schedule of Services

- **Holy Prophet Elijah**
 - Sat., Aug. 2 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **8th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - Sat., Aug. 2 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Aug. 3 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon**
 - Fri., Aug. 8 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
 - Sat., Aug. 9 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **9th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God**
 - Sat., Aug. 9 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Aug. 10 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Procession of the Precious Wood of the Cross**
 - **Holy Maccabean Martyrs**
 - Wed., Aug. 13 Vespers and Matins 6 P.M.
 - Thur., Aug. 14 Divine Liturgy followed by the Blessing of the Water 8 A.M.
- **10th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Seven Holy Youths of Ephesus**
 - Sat., Aug. 16 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Aug. 17 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Transfiguration of the Lord**
 - Mon., Aug. 18 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Tue., Aug. 19 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **11th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Afterfeast of Transfiguration**
 - Sat., Aug. 23 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Aug. 24 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Dormition of the Theotokos**
 - Wed., Aug. 27 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Thur., Aug. 28 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **12th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Afterfeast of Dormition**
 - **Holy Martyrs Florus and Laurus**
 - Sat., Aug. 30 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Aug. 31 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.

Tombstone for Reposed Fr. Martin

The grave cross for Fr. Martin and Matushka Katherine was installed on July 9th at the site of their burial at Holy Cross Monastery in West Virginia, and stands as a beautiful and solemn marker of their final resting place. Fr. Martin, born on October 14, 1940, reposed in the Lord on September 20, 2022, after a life of faithful service to the Church and to the parish of St. Basil's. Matushka Katherine, born on June 12, 1935, fell asleep in the Lord on August 24, 2023, and is lovingly remembered for her devotion to her husband and her kindness to all the members of St. Basil's. We also extend heartfelt thanks to all who made it possible to erect this beautiful tombstone

through their generous donations. Their support is a reflection of the deep love and gratitude this community holds for Fr. Martin and Matushka Katherine.

May their memory be eternal.



Getting to Know the Faithful

While the Pirtle family was baptized back on November 23rd, 2024, and has been actively involved in our parish ever since, we're glad to feature this interview as a chance for everyone to learn more about their story and faith journey. Their journey into the Orthodox Church, along with their continued presence and service among us, has been a blessing to many. This interview offers a glimpse into their story, their reflections on the faith, and the grace they've experienced along the way.

Where did you both grow up?

Zach is a Saint Louis native, raised in Maplewood, while Meagan was raised in Ironton on a goat farm.

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

Zach has stayed in St. Louis to be near family, while Meagan moved to St. Louis to pursue her art.

How did you both meet?

Zach and Meagan met at an art gallery, where Meagan was showing her work.

Can you tell us a little bit about your family?

Zach and Meagan have three children: Ezekiel, Magnolia, and Maple. Most of their time is spent at their



home in Ironton, enjoying the outdoors. On weekends, they come to St. Louis for church and to spend time with family.

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

Our family was introduced to Orthodoxy in 2021 while on our journey to find the true Church. Zach and Meagan listened to Father Spiridon online for two years before hearing from a local friend about St. Basil's.

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

The first service we attended was the feast of Saint Basil, which truly stood out to us as a special experience.

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

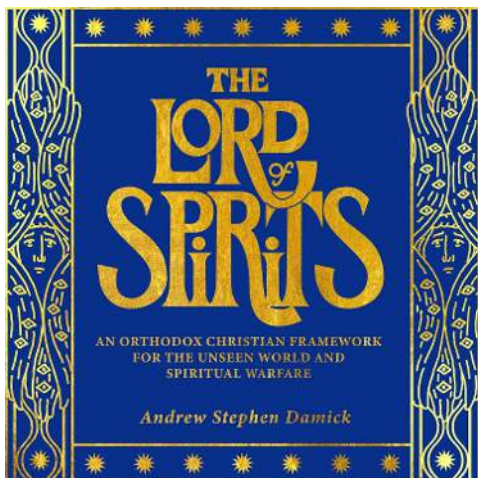
Prophet Zacharias and Saint Mary of Egypt were chosen for their names and for their specific ways of devotion to God.

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

Understanding the Orthodox view of death and life with God really stood out and truly helped bring us closer to Orthodoxy.

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

The Lord of Spirits: An Orthodox Christian Framework for the Unseen World and Spiritual Warfare by Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick and *Letters to Spiritual Children* by Abbot Nikon Vorobiev.



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

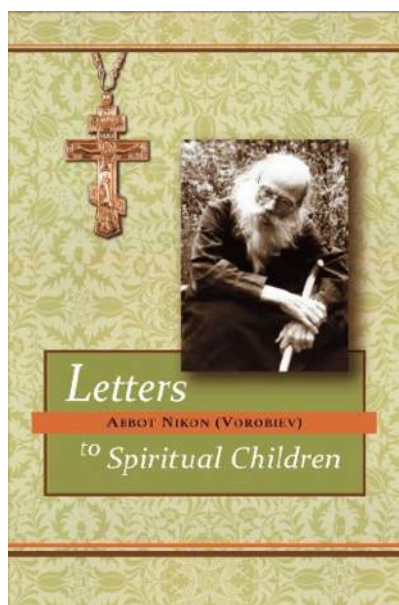
New Catechumens at St. Basil's

We are pleased to announce that Zachary Clark and Ashley Wertheimer have been received as catechumens in the Holy Orthodox Church. The prayers for the making of a catechumen were read over them on Sunday, July 13th, marking the beginning of their formal journey toward Holy Illumination. We ask that the entire parish keep them in prayer as they continue to grow in faith, understanding, and commitment to Christ

Pascha was a very special experience, especially the midnight service.

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

Coming into the Orthodox Church offers more than just an individual understanding of your relationship with God—it truly offers you a church family. It gives your family, especially your children, a sense of responsibility and an opportunity to bring their gifts to God. It's a beautiful place to learn self-discipline with your children and to cultivate godly motives that honor the Church and encourage active participation.



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

Saint John of Shanghai—his modern experience as a saint would be a beautiful witness.

Is there anything else you would like to share with the parish?

We are filled with gratitude toward

this church for receiving our family so gracefully, and we pray we can offer what the Church needs in return.

and His Church. May this time of preparation be one of grace, guidance, and deepening love for the truth of the Gospel.



Aid for Flood Victims in Texas

Below is an address from Archbishop Gabriel urging us to pray for all affected by the flooding in Texas. He offers words of comfort and provides information on how we can assist those in need through donations and acts of service.

To the Faithful of the Diocese of Chicago & Mid-America:

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain..." –*Revelation 21:4-5*

It was with great sorrow that we learned of the devastating flooding of the Guadalupe River, and the death of so many as a result of the deluge. We join in mourning and prayer with the people of central Texas who have suffered such heartbreaking tragedy with the death of their loved ones, so many of them children.

It is important that the causes of this tragedy be studied so that such horror can be avoided in the future. But now is not the time for recriminations, blame, or the assigning of guilt. Now is the time for rescue, recovery, and the applying of comfort. "*Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*" (Matthew 5:4)

Let us now be those who comfort. I call upon the

faithful of our Mid-American diocese to assist in every way possible in this task. For some in Texas, perhaps we can even lend our talents to the recovery efforts underway. For many, we can donate to the International Orthodox Christian Charities or the American Red Cross to support those laboring following this tragedy. For all, we can pray for the souls of those who were lost, those who grieve, and those who labor in the recovery efforts in Texas.

Our first reaction to such a tragedy must be prayer, but if we can add action to that prayer, surely this is pleasing to God, for our Lord "*...came not to be served, but to serve...*" (Matthew 20:28) Let us then, who bear His name as Christians, emulate Him in our service, giving our time, talent, and treasure in any way possible to our brothers and sisters in Texas in their time of need.

†*Archbishop Gabriel*

Gabriel, Archbishop of Montreal & Canada
Locum Tenens, Diocese of Chicago & Mid-America

International Orthodox Christian Charities:

<https://iocc.org/blog/iocc-monitors-flooding-in-central-texas>

American Red Cross:

<https://www.redcross.org>

Focus on FOCUS

The parish plans to serve Sunday dinner, scheduled for **August 3rd**. If you are interested either by providing food for or helping cook it, or by distributing the meal and pantry items on location, then please sign up through the following SignUpGenius website.

Thank you very much for your faithful service in providing the materials for our hygiene kits



during the month of July. The FOCUS ministry was extremely appreciative of the kits we donated. Again, thank you for your service.

For August, we have been asked to supply the FOCUS Pantry with **15 oz. cans of fruit with pop-tops** (peaches, pears, mandarin oranges, fruit cocktail, pineapple chunks), **15 oz. cans of vegetables with pop-tops** (corn, peas, green beans, carrots, mixed), and **packages of Ramen noodles (not the cups, and no pork flavors please)**. The pop-tops are important since many of our guests do not carry a can opener with them on the street. 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 **August 24th**.

If you would like to donate money directly to the FOCUS ministry, you may use the QR code to the right. If you would like to write a check or draw from retirement funds, please contact Joseph Steineger directly so he can help walk you through that process.

Newly Illumined at St. Basil's

On Thursday, July 10th, Maximus, the third child of Priest Thomas Nichols and his wife, Florita, was baptized into the Holy Orthodox Church. The service was celebrated with family, godparents, and parish members present. We give thanks to God for this joyful occasion and pray that Maximus will grow in faith and love for Christ. May God grant him many years!

On the History of the Dormition Fast

Excerpt from an Interview with Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl (2019)

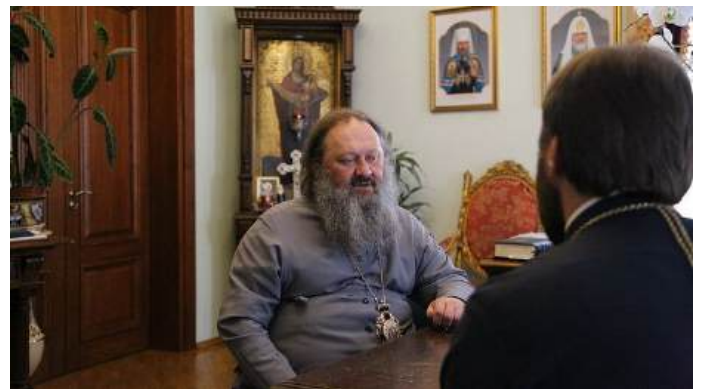
The Dormition Fast has been known since the first centuries of Christianity; it is a fast of sorrow and grief. When the Mother of God was with the disciples after the Resurrection of Christ, they rejoiced at the constant blessing, communication, and direction she gave, and, as the holy Patriarch Tarasios and other holy hierarchs write, they all desired to see the face of the Mother of God, because such grace and power came from her that you could truly feel it, and it would be light and pleasant for your soul.

In the words of Christ the Savior, when the Bridegroom is taken away, then begins fasting, abstinence, and various types of grief and feelings. This is how it happened with the Mother of God. The Archangel Gabriel brought her tidings of her transfer to the mansions in the

For those who are interested, FOCUS is **now serving Wednesday morning breakfast** to those experiencing need. If you are interested in helping at the Wednesday breakfast meals, please contact Matushka Christine McDonald at 417.861.6649



Kingdom, to her Son in Paradise. And the Mother of God prepared for this event. Although she knew everything, still, the Holy Fathers say, as a human she was worried and agitated in her soul.



And when the Lord wanted to take His mother's soul into His hands, there was a noise outside (the apostles had arrived before it), and she passed into the hands of her Son and God.

Of course, the joy of the Mother is sorrow for the people, because the apostles and all those who were living in Jerusalem at the time were left without their intercessor before her Son. Many

lost their benefactor, but in having passed to the life beyond the grave, she remains among us and with us.

Therefore, the fast took its beginning after the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. We experience this great tragedy, but we know that, *"In giving birth thou didst preserve thy virginity, in falling asleep thou didst not forsake the world, O Theotokos. Thou wast translated to life, O Mother of Life, and by thy prayers thou dost deliver our souls from death"* (Troparion of the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos).

This fast is both sad and joyous, because we have received both joy and comfort. Another great feast falls during this fast—the Transfiguration.

The Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus

Parish Prayer List

Schema-Archimandrite Panteleimon — Repose

Reader Symeon Campbell — Health

Photini Mills — Health

Julianna Campbell — Health

Inna Dagaeva — Health

Mark Wiebenga — Health

Deacon Daniel Simpson — Health

Barbara Westervelt — Health

Ruth Bradley — Health

Tatiana Zyryanova — Health

Matrona Leber — 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.

Christ took place before His suffering, as the Gospel testifies. Moses and Elias appeared to the Lord, one from among the prophets who had died, the second from among the living. According to prophecy, Elias will come again before the Second Coming of the Savior to preach; he will be killed, and he will be numbered among the martyrs.

Therefore, the Church does not celebrate this joyous feast of the Transfiguration during Great Lent, so as not to interrupt the fast of Holy Week, but this feast is celebrated during the Dormition Fast. In being transfigured on Mt. Tabor, the Lord showed all of mankind that man will be transfigured and that it will be the Light of Christ that transfigures him.

Being transfigured, the Orthodox faithful receive Divine grace in prayer and fasting. Therefore, the Dormition Fast, as I have already said, is both sad and joyous at the same time: sad because we are parting with the Mother of God, but joyous because we are gaining an intercessor, a patron, the co-ruler of Heaven and Earth with her Divine Son, and for us—a joy and comfort.

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:

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|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| • Doc | • Tyler | • Jacob |
| • Zachary | • Shiloh | • Rachel |
| • Theodore | • Ethan, | • Justin |
| • Evan | Allison, | • Zachary |
| • Ryan | and | • Ashley |
| • Eythan | children | |