

ST. BASIL THE GREAT ORTHODOX CHURCH
205 HIGHLAND AVENUE
DES PERES, MO 63122

ARCHPRIEST MARTIN SWANSON, PASTOR
PRIEST SERGII ALEKSEEV, ASSOCIATE PASTOR
ARCHPRIEST RADOMIR CHKAUTOVICH, ATTACHED

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND MID-AMERICA
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

February 2019

Nativity With St. Basil's

The parish of St. Basil celebrated the Nativity of Christ with a Vigil Sunday the 6th of January followed by Divine Liturgy Monday morning on the 7th. Parishioners, guests, families, and friends celebrated the Nativity of the Incarnate Word with services and breaking of the fast. Following the Liturgy on Monday, the church narthex teemed with excitement as the children sang Christmas carols anxiously awaiting the arrival of Grandfather Frost bearing gifts for the children. Festivities continued with an abundant feast and more Christmas games as we celebrated the birth of Christ. Thank you to all who helped decorate the church, the choir for singing, all who cooked dishes for the luncheon, and all who helped in any capacity for this year's Nativity.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



Special Services & Events

- Tuesday, Feb. 5 Vigil 6 P.M.
- Wednesday, Feb. 6 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M. for the feast of Blessed Xenia of St Petersburg
- Monday, Feb. 11 Vigil 6 P.M.
- Tuesday, Feb. 12 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M. for the feast of Three Hierarchs
- Thursday, Feb. 14 Vigil 6 P.M.
- Friday, Feb. 15 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M. for the feast of the Meeting of the Lord
- Wednesday, Feb. 27 Moleben 6 P.M. to St Cyril, Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles, Enlightener of the Slavs

Weekly Services:

- Saturday - Vigil 6 p.m.
- Sunday - Divine Liturgy 10 a.m.

Parish News

Choir Voices Needed

All parishioners are welcome to join the choir, all voices are needed. Choir practice is held every Wednesday evening in the church at 6:30. All members of the choir should attend as many practices as possible in order to prepare for the services of the coming week. The choir is an important ministry of the church and if you can sing, you serve God by joining the choir. WE NEED YOU!

Weekly Tours of St. Basil's

Tours of St. Basil's church are conducted by one of the parish clergy every Wednesday between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m., and are designed to acquaint the community with the church, its architecture, traditional design, iconography, and history. No appointments are necessary and the tours will accommodate both individuals and groups. Advance notice would be appreciated for groups over 5. For additional information or to schedule a group tour contact Fr. Martin at 314-835-1569.

Parish Prayer List

Reader Gennady Barabtarlo - Health
Nadya Danett - Health
Archimandrite Seraphim - Recovery

Keep our parishioners, and those who ask us to pray for them in your prayers this month. Contact Fr. Martin 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.

New "Ask Your Priest" Column

This new column will answer questions submitted by you [the parishioners] concerning Orthodoxy. Questions will be submitted to priests anonymously. Submit your questions to StBasilSTLNewsletter@gmail.com

Use eSCRIP and Amazon Smile Rebates

It costs \$0 and benefits the parish. Get cards at the candle counter. Sign up for the Amazon

rebate program to have a portion of your Amazon purchase donated by Amazon to the parish. Please find sign up instructions next to the stair case in the hall.

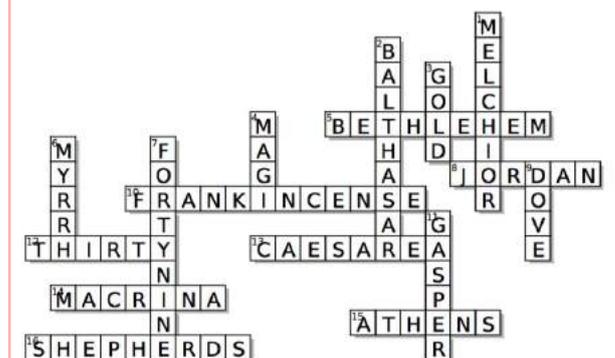
SERVERS WANTED!

Boys may begin to serve in the altar at St. Basil's from the time they begin to go to Confession (usually about 9 years old). We encourage all of our boys to serve in the altar! For more information please contact Michael Orlando.

St. Basil's Parish Facebook Page:

Check out <https://www.facebook.com/SaintBasiltheGreatSTLMO/> for daily edification and interesting updates. Like our Facebook Fanpage! "Like" us to have us appear in your Facebook Newsfeed.

January Crossword Answers



Nativity Pictures continued



seen being greeted by Marfa Alekseev and Basil Waller upon his entrance into the temple for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.

The Feast of St. Basil the Great

Despite the snowy weather, St. Basil's still managed to have a wonderful feast day celebrated with special guests including Archbishop Peter, Archimandrite Seraphim and Father Nicholas from Holy Cross Monastery, Father Deacon Jeremiah from West Virginia, and Father Michael from St. John Chrysostom in House Springs. Our feast day vigil was filled with ceremony as one of our ruling hierarchs presided in the altar. Pictures from the vigil show Archbishop Peter presiding over the vigil. The feast day has arrived and Archbishop Peter is



Archbishop Peter also presented service awards to three very deserving parishoners. Serguei and Julia Astafiev received awards for their tireless efforts maintaining the lampadas and candlestands in the church as well as running the candle stand. Brigit Hammer was awarded a grammata for her service to the parish as

newsletter editor for over nine years. They are pictured below receiving a formal decree from Archbishop Peter.



Following the liturgy, parishioners gathered in the hall to enjoy a festal luncheon and enjoy the musical talents of parishioner Julia Sakharova, her colleague, and parishioner Julia Smith. Everyone enjoyed breaking the fast again with our friends and family but most importantly with our hierarch who is always ready to teach and direct his flock. Archbishop Peter relayed to us current events in the Church as well as some personal anecdotes to bring us closer together. Thank you to all who helped make our feast day special.

The Theophany of Christ

Parishioners are seen attending the Great Blessing of the Waters which commemorates the baptism of our Lord in the river, Jordan.



Getting to Know our Priest: Father Sergii

Below we are given a few paragraphs describing Father Sergii's life.

Having concluded my studies in Christ the Saviour Seminary in Johnstown, PA, I was ordained priest on the feast of Ascension in 2001 by His Eminence Nicholas, Metropolitan of Amisos. Following my ordination, I was assigned to a parish in rural Pennsylvania. It was an old church -- by American standards -- the temple was over 90-years-old, while the priest's house even older. So there we lived with my matushka and little Ivan for four years. At the time the area where we lived was suffering from economic depression and, on visiting it again a couple of years ago, we saw that the decline has only deepened.

In 2005 I was transferred to a parish in Northwest Indiana -- virtually a Chicago suburb. It was there that our two daughters were born. In 2013 I was assigned to a parish north of Miami, FL, only to find ourselves in St Louis twelve months later.

While still living in Indiana, I remember seeing once in a while our rector Archpriest Martin in the altar of the Holy Protection Cathedral in Chicago. Yet, we were not introduced to one another, despite having very close mutual friends. When Archbishop Peter was talking about assigning me to St Louis, I remember him saying that St Basil's is one of the best parishes with a wonderful rector and a good parish community.

Our family's move to St Louis coincided with the beginning of the construction of the new temple. As we know, every good endeavor is accompanied by temptations. Those who were involved in the construction of the new temple experienced this truism fully. Fr Martin used to joke to me: "Before you came we had no problems", leaving it to me to decide whether the cause of the problems was I or the construction of the temple.

Besides helping Father Martin in the parish, in 2014 I was appointed a secretary of the

Diocesan Spiritual Court and am still carrying on this obedience.

I love history, especially so the history of the Church, with the emphasis on the life of the Church in the recent times. It is humbling to see what spiritual giants came before us, but even we are members of the same Body Christ -- the Holy Orthodox Church. Our time is also included as a chapter into the Book of the History of the Church. We look around and see those who are partakers of the grace of God, as well as those who become instruments of the enemy, the fallen angel.

Christ said: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" We can fall away from the Truth with the rest of the world, or remain with Him as sheep of His little flock, those who are faithful to Him and His Holy Church to the very end.

St. Symeon's Prophecy Explained

Excerpt from The Feasts of the Lord: The Meeting of Christ

No sooner had Symeon received Christ in his embrace than he exclaimed: "Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for my eyes have seen thy salvation which thou has prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel". This is a magnificent expression, which the Church has taken over and placed at the end of the Vespers service, as well as in other services, such as the Thanksgiving after Holy Communion of the Holy Gifts.

The righteous Symeon had been informed by the Holy Spirit that he would certainly see the incarnate Word of God before he died, and this had been accomplished because he was "favoured with the prophetic grace". When he saw Christ, his soul sought release from his body ... and therefore [did] not fear death.

"In peace, according to thy word" indicates that he is looking for his soul's departure from his body "because of the prophecy which he received" and he regards it as a rest, because "in peace" is equivalent to "in rest". The rest is also

related to peace from thoughts, because as long as the days pass, righteous Symeon is waiting for it, "always thinking about when He will come". And of course God's salvation is the incarnation, which God was preparing before all ages. Actually, He was preparing the mystery of Christ "even before the beginning of the world".

The incarnation of the Son and Word of God was also a light for the Gentiles, since the pagans, the idol-worshippers, had gone astray, were in darkness and had fallen into the hands of the demons, as well as the glory of Israel, because Christ arose and stemmed from the Israelites. So all who are grateful feel this.

These words of St. Symeon are a triumphal hymn after the revelation to him of the incarnate Son and Word of God. The Old Testament Prophets saw the back of God, His coming, which would happen in the future, but he sees His face. Christ really is the light of the world, not the sensible and ethical light, not the symbolic, but the real light, which drives away the darkness of ignorance and of the nous [spirit], but is also a glory not only of the Israelites, but of human nature altogether. Without Christ and apart from

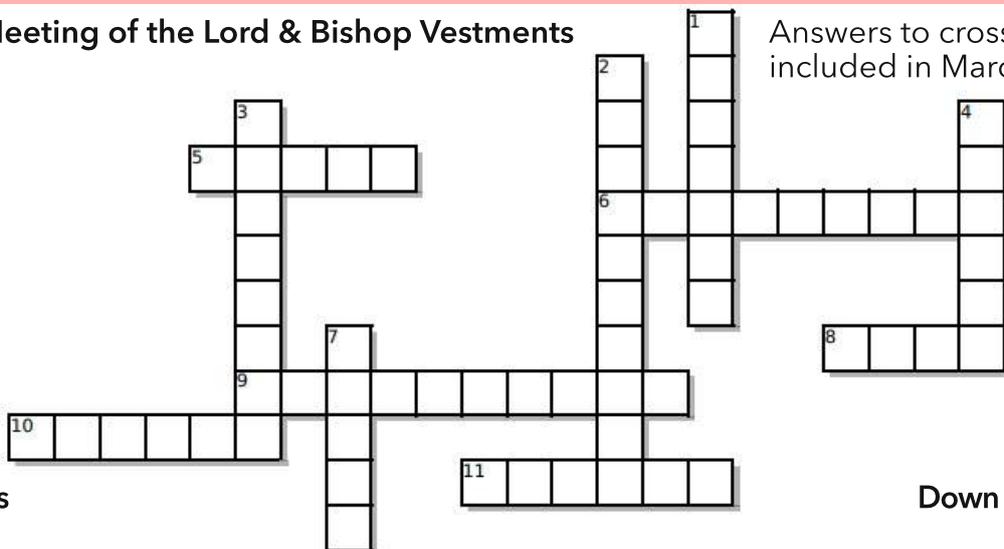
Him human nature is inglorious, formless, vague and anonymous. With Christ it acquires "form and definition".

The fact that no sooner had St. Symeon seen the incarnate Word of God than he sought release, death, is interpreted as the great joy over what he was to do next. He wanted to journey to Hades and make known the joyous news that the Messiah, the Redeemer of the world and of the righteous men of the Old Testament who were in Hell, had come. Christ satisfies this request, because, as St. Athanasios the Great says, it seems that he told him to go and appear joyously to Adam, who was living dimly in Hades, and make the joy known to Eve in her pains, saying: "Redemption has come, the saviour has come; forgiveness has come, the deliverer has come. Human nature, weep no longer, for your helper is coming and will not delay".

Therefore righteous Symeon was the first to announce to the prisoners in Hades, to all the righteous of the Old Testament, who were in Hades, for death had not been abolished ontologically, that the Christ had come Whom they awaited, and that He would also come swiftly to Hades to release them.

Meeting of the Lord & Bishop Vestments

Answers to crossword puzzle to be included in March newsletter



Across

Down

5. Worn on top of bishop's head during services.
6. Candlestick with three candles representing the three persons of the Holy Trinity.
8. Widowed prophetess that met Christ at the Temple.
9. Bishops band of brocade decorated with crosses worn around his neck and shoulders.
10. Righteous elder that met Christ at the Temple.
11. Single headed eagle rug that the bishop stands on during services.

1. T-shaped staff carried by the bishop.
2. Type of birds brought to the Temple to be sacrificed on Christ's behalf.
3. Candlestick with two candles representing the dual nature of Christ.
4. Vestment placed on the bishop when entering a church or presiding over a service.
7. Age of Christ (in days) when presented to God in the Temple.