

January 3, 2021

**FOREFEAST OF AND SUNDAY BEFORE THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD
HOLY PROPHET MALACHI AND THE VENERABLE GENEVIEVE OF PARIS**

Live Streaming of Divine Services

St. George is open for all parishioners or visitors. If you cannot attend, please pray with us through our livestream which can be seen on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SaintGeorgeOrthodoxChurchFlintMI>

If you have a smart TV, you actually have a web browser and YouTube app built in. All you have to do is start the browser app for YouTube and put the link in the address bar.

Welcome to St. George! Thank you for attending today's Divine Services. Every Sunday we remember the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The word "*Liturgy*" means *work of the people* that means everyone participates through singing, praying, hearing the teaching, and opening our hearts to allow God's grace to enter. We believe Holy Communion to be a sign that in Christ we have all things in common, share an identical faith, and are united fully to the Orthodox Church. Anyone interested in learning more about our faith are encouraged to speak with one of our clergy. Holy Communion can be given to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting (no food or drink from midnight the night before), the Sacrament of Confession (7 years and older) within the last 2 months, and being at peace with others. Everyone is invited to receive the final blessing of the priest and Holy Bread at the end of Liturgy.

In the **Divine Liturgy** of **St. John Chrysostom** *{the Golden-Mouth}*,
The **Special Hymns** we sing are on the [Bilingual sheets from Fr. Joe's Email](#).

Holy Bread Offerings

- Awatef Deligorges and Family for the health of their family and in loving memory of husband, father, and grandfather **Alexander** (40 day).
- George and Jeanette Nassif for their health and the health of their family and in loving memory of **Adel** (23 year), **Joseph, Paul, Amenee, Ferris, Joseph, Rose, Mona, Khouriya Joanne, Nick, Nabelah,** and **Barbara**.
- We also pray for the servants of God who have fallen asleep in the Lord: **Patricia** "Patsy" Dotson (+November 27th, mother-in-law of our office manager Kelly Dotson), **Evelyn** Lozon, (+November 28th, friend of Dn. Mike), **Darla** Harris, (+November 29th, step-mother of Lee Harris), **Khalil** Kheirallah (+December 2nd, brother of Kamal), **Lois** Teunion (+December 6th), **Diane** Ghattas (+December 7th, wife of Elie), **Georgette** Abuaita (+December 8th, aunt of Janet Abueita), **Katrina** Ayyad (+December 9th, mother of Abla Abufarha), **James** Gorr (+December 21st, father of Dr. Melissa Bathish), and **Hannan** Awad (+December 24th, sister of Wafa Alsaouri).

- Prayers are offered for our parishioners who are ill, recovering, or in need, especially His servants: **Metropolitan Paul** and **Archbishop John** who are in captivity, **Sahar** Abdallah, **Asma** Abuaita (sister of Janett), **Sami** and **Shafiq** Abuaitah, **Fr. Joseph** Abud, **Anwar** Abueita, **Wadia** Albaba, **Khalid** Al-Khoury, **Nabil** Andoni (brother of Vera Daoud), **Levi** Cooper, **Vera** Daoud, **Jimmy** David, **Evelyn** Delbridge, **Vera** Farah, **Averie** Fisher (niece of Sandy Thomas), **Mariam** Ghanim (Manal's mother), **Phyllis** Good, **Barbara** Gress, **Carol** Haddad, **Shawna** Hale, **Gracyn** Haskins (granddaughter of Mike and Nancy Silpoch), **Donald** and **JoAnn** Hawkins, **Nassem** Helal (father of Amani Helal), **Daisy** Isaac, **Nawal** and **Nimer** Iseid, **Sally** Joseph, **Michael** Khal, **Nakhleh** Khoury, **Nicola** Khoury, **George** and **Jeanette** Nassif, **Aida** Raffoul, **Deborah** Salim, **Ellis** Salim, **Nicholas** Saseen, **Michael** Silpoch, and **William** Sophiea Jr; **Essa**, **Julianna**, and newborn **Natalia** Abuaita (December 17th); **Gary**, **Katrina**, and newborn **Robert** Andrew Gagne (December 18th).
- We also pray for those who are with child: **Nawal** (John) Abud [son of Fr. Joe and Kh. Leslee], Dr. **Lindsey** [Farah] (Dr. Ryan) Brunner, and **Jenny** [Abueita] (Tony) Salsa.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ST. BASIL'S BREAD (VASILOPITA) We remember and celebrate St. Basil the Great on January 1st. As part of our celebration is the making of St. Basil's Bread with two special coins (one for adults and one for children) and prayers over the bread (normally in our Banquet Center, but this year in the church right after the sermon). See the end of the bulletin for more information.

Parish Council Vacancies

- If you would like to be nominated or would like to nominate qualified (*see below*) parishioners for the 3 expiring terms on the Parish Council, please submit names to a member of the **Nominating Committee** (Habeeb Ghattas, Aida Nassar, or Fr. Joe). The deadline to be a nominee is January 13th and all nominees must attend a **Parish Council Nominee Seminar** on Monday, January 18th from 7-8pm. *If you will be attending, please let Fr. Joe know.* If this day and time does not work for you, speak with Fr. Joe to reschedule another time before this date.

Parish Council Qualifications (from our Parish Constitution)

- *No member of the Parish Council shall be under the age of 18 years of age (excluding any ex-officio member) and no Voting Member of the Parish shall be eligible to become a member of the Parish Council unless such person has been a voting member of the Parish for a period of one (1) year and has fulfilled the canonical requirements of the Orthodox faith. Further, nominees must worship at St. George at least 3 out of 4 Sundays a month (prior to the Covid-19 pandemic); shall be exemplary (model) members of St. George; participate in extracurricular ministries of the parish (such as: Fundraising, Parish Council committees, Educational, etc.); participate in the Holy Sacraments of Confession and Communion on a regular/frequent basis; has signed the yearly Offering Form; and attend a Nominee Seminar.*

2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES AND CHURCH CALENDARS All Adult Envelopes have been mailed ~ if you do not receive them, please call the office and leave a message including your name. The calendars can be picked up in the Lounge (*please take one per family*) and are a gift from our Ladies Auxiliary, **THANK YOU, LADIES!** **Parents**, please make sure your child picks up their envelopes which are also in the Lounge.

CHURCH SCHOOL HAS BEGUN! We want ALL of our St. George children in our education program. To make this happen, we need email addresses for our children and their parents! Please send them to Director Janet Abueita (cooeita@aol.com) as soon as possible so none of our children are left out and they can enjoy and learn about our life in Christ. Every month, our registered students will receive a packet of fun things in the mail (an email is sent to everyone on Fr. Joe's parishioner email list). Then on the last Sunday of each month our teachers have our CS Zoom Sunday at 12 Noon! Be a part of the FUN and send your email addresses to Janet TODAY!

9TH ANNUAL DORMITION MONASTERY DINNER Our Genesee County Orthodox Community is working hard to bring you our 9th Annual Winter Dinner for the Dormition Monastery on January 21, 2021 as a VIRTUAL ONLINE event!

- Vespers LIVE from the monastery in Rives Junction, Michigan
- Themed talks on a subject important to our lives:
 - Two from our own local priests
 - Final talk from Mother Abbess Gabriella
- Perhaps a short Q&A session afterwards - maybe even in a panel discussion format!

We are excited to continue this January tradition, while participating in Vespers from the monastery church and to offer it to a wider audience; using the internet to invite the whole world to our local event! More to come in the next few weeks!

OUR STEWARDSHIP, OFFERINGS, & DONATIONS Though everyone cannot attend church due to limited capacity or other reasons, **our stewardship, offerings, and donations are still very badly needed.** PLEASE help your parish by continuing to offer! If you cannot come to church, you can simply go to our parish website (<https://saintgeorgeflint.org/>) and donate on-line or you can bring or mail your offerings to St. George, 5191 Lennon Road, Flint, MI 48507. As always, THANK YOU for your generosity and love of our St. George!

PLEASE FOLLOW OUR PROCEDURES Because of serious health concerns, **we all must wear masks at all times over our mouths and nose.** Please remember we can venerate icons by bowing (*not kissing or touching*) and the same for the priest's hand and the chalice at Holy Communion. Further, **our clergy and chanters are the only ones who should be singing at this time.** If you want to sing, please do it **softly and with your mask on.**

COMING EVENTS

This Week	There is no fasting from Christmas Day December 25 th until January 5 th ~ <u>the 12 Days of Christmas!</u> The traditional fasting discipline (<i>no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine, olive oil or their by-products</i>) is then observed on Tuesday, January 5 th in preparation for Theophany. There is no fasting on Wednesday, January 6 th , the Feast of our Lord's Theophany. The traditional fasting discipline (<i>no meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, wine, and olive oil</i>) is also observed on Friday as normal.
Tuesday	<i>Vesperal Divine Liturgy</i> and <i>Blessings of Water for Theophany</i> 6pm
Saturday	<i>Great Vespers</i> and <i>Confessions</i> 5pm

Thank you and God bless

... **Elie** Ghattas for offering our **Holy Water Icon Bottles** for the health of his family and in loving memory of wife *Diane* ~ may her memory be eternal.

PARKING LOT PLEDGES: WE NEED YOU!

Our goal is \$80,000 (we have raised over \$46,000 from 2 groups and only 25 families) and we are so thankful for those who have donated and pledged. WE NEED YOU to step up so we can pay off this loan as soon as possible. If you have not already, please pick up a form, fill it out, and send it to the church. Remember our donations to the Parking Lot are separate (*above and beyond*) our weekly offerings.

Jamal and Manal Abuaita
 Khader and Lucy Abuaita
 Fr. Joe and Leslee Abud
 Laila Abud
 Anwar and Janet Abueita
 Rose Ayoub
 Anonymous
 Dn. Mike & Pam Bassett
 Hiam and Areen Bathish
 Tony Daoud

Ayman and Wafaa Elias
 John and Theresa Farah
 Betty Froberg
 Dr. David & May Gantos
 Subdeacon George and
 Suad Gantous
 Nasri and Carol Haddad
 Ronald Haddad
 Elias and Amirah Hanna
 Ladies Auxiliary

Samir & Nashwa Meshraky
 George & Jeanette Nassif
 St. George Preschool
 Fadi & Evette Rishmawi
 Raji and Sue Salomon
 Bill and Sue Shaheen
 Elaine Shaheen
 Richard Shaheen
 Bob and Lois Teunion
 Valentine Gala (2020)

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The Two Great Commandments ~ “Love thy God with all your heart, mind...” and secondly, “Love thy neighbor...”

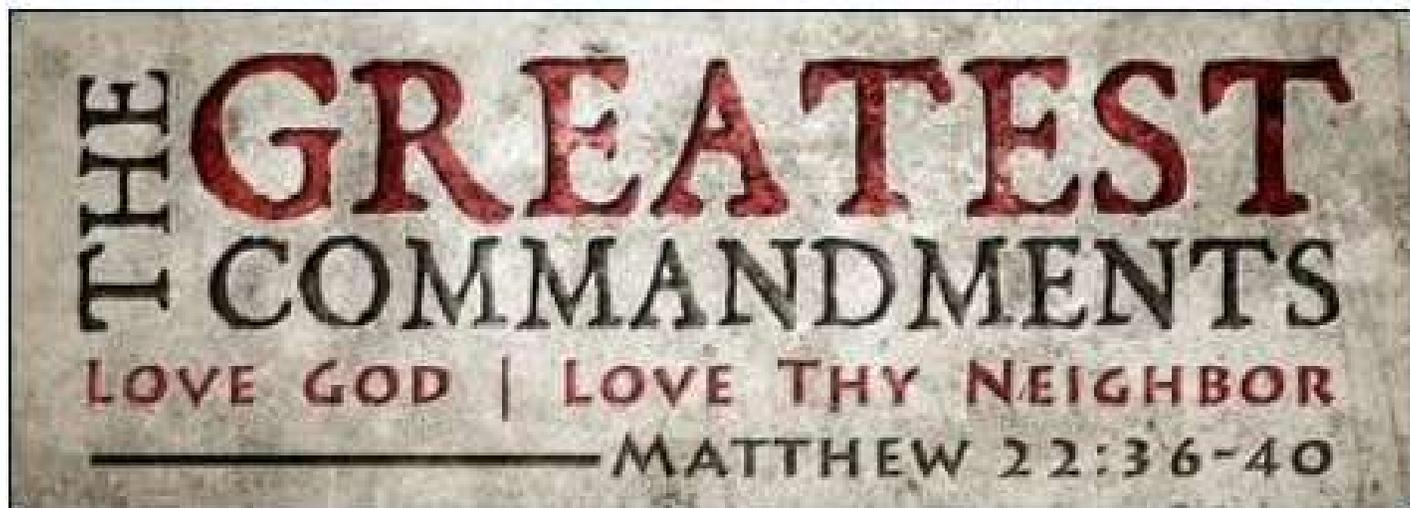
by Abbot Tryphon, head of All-Merciful Savior Monastery on Vashon Island, Washington

We live in a world bombarded with thousands of messages, some subtle and some not-so-subtle, of merchandising that impacts the way we interact with others, and the way we relate to God. Much of what we collect from these messages is selfish in nature, alienating us from one another.

We become so self-absorbed that we fail to live authentically as Christians, being peacemakers, working towards justice, failing to forgive those who’ve wronged us, and not being compassionate towards those in need of mercy and charity. *“Those who hear the word ought to give proof of the work of the word in their own souls”* (St. Macarius the Great).

If we wear a cross around our neck, make the sign of the cross in perfect order, keep the fast periods, but have not the love of the poor we have gained nothing. Christ Himself told us that we cannot love God Whom we’ve not seen, if we do not love our neighbor. If we do not give alms to the poor and speak out for human justice, we will have gained nothing. If we do not treat everyone with respect and love, and show mercy to all, we have not Christ in us.

We must put on Christ with the rising of the sun, and with it’s going down. Christ must be in every word we speak and in every action of our heart. He must reign supreme in our lives, that all see Christ in us, just as we must see Christ in every person with whom we come in contact. *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me”* (Galatians 2:20).



THE TRADITION OF THE VASILOPITA

(pronounced "vǎ-sē-LŌ-pē-tǎ ")

The tradition of baking and cutting a special "pita" (which can mean a loaf of bread, a cake, or even a pie!) each year on January 1st is observed in honor of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia - hence its name Vasilopita (*Basil's bread*). This tradition is observed in both parish churches and in the homes of the faithful. What is the meaning of this tradition and how did it begin? For centuries upon centuries parents, grandparents, and Godparents have related the following story to Orthodox children about St Basil and the Vasilopita.



One year, during a time of terrible famine, the emperor levied a sinfully excessive tax upon the people of Caesarea. The tax was such a heavy burden upon the already impoverished people that to avoid debtors' prison each family had to relinquish its few remaining coins as well as pieces of jewelry, including precious family heirlooms. Learning of this injustice against his flock, St Basil the Great, the archbishop of Caesarea, took up his bishop's staff and the book of the holy Gospels and came to his people's defense by fearlessly calling the emperor to repentance. By God's grace, the emperor did repent! He cancelled the tax and instructed his tax collectors to turn over to St. Basil all of the chests containing the coins and jewelry which had been paid as taxes by the people of Caesarea.

But now St. Basil was faced with the daunting and impossible task of returning these coins and pieces of jewelry to their rightful owners. After praying for a long time before the icons of our Master Christ and His All-holy Mother, St. Basil had all the treasures baked into one huge "pita." He then called all the townspeople to prayer at the cathedral and, after Divine Liturgy, he blessed and cut the "pita," giving a piece to each person. Wondrously each owner received in his piece of Vasilopita his own valuables. They all joyfully returned home, giving thanks to God who had delivered them from abject poverty and to their good and holy bishop, St. Basil the Great.

In remembrance of that miracle wrought by God as a result of St Basil's love and defense of his people, Orthodox Christians have observed the tradition of the Vasilopita each year on January 1st - the date on which St Basil reposed in the Lord in the year 379. In some places the Vasilopita is prepared as a loaf of rich bread (like that used for Artoklasia), while in other places it takes the form of a spicy sheet cake (without frosting). But no matter what form a Vasilopita may take, they all have one thing in common - each contains a single coin. After placing the bread dough or batter in the proper baking pan, the baker makes with the foil wrapped coin the sign of the Cross over it, closes his/her eyes, and then secretly places it into the unbaked Vasilopita.

After the Vasilopita is baked and cooled, it is blessed and cut following Divine Liturgy

for the feast of St. Basil on January 1st. At churches it is blessed and cut in the parish fellowship hall by the bishop or priest, and in homes it is blessed and cut by the head of the household. The blessing of the Vasilopita usually begins with the Apolytikion of St. Basil the Great, chanted in Tone 1:

Thy sound hath gone forth into all the earth that received thy word.
Thereby thou hast divinely taught the Faith;
Thou hast made manifest the nature of things that be;
Thou hast adorned the ways of man.
O namesake of the royal priesthood,¹ our righteous Father Basil,
Intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Then the following prayer may be said:

Let us pray unto the Lord. Lord, have mercy. O Creator of all things, Lord and King of the ages, plenteous in mercy and bountiful in goodness, who didst accept the Magi's gifts in Bethlehem, who art the Bread of life that came down from heaven, who by Thine authority didst establish the seasons and the years and dost hold our life in Thy hands. Hear us who pray to Thee on this holy day upon our entrance into the new year of Thy goodness and bless (+) this loaf/cake, which has been offered to Thy glory and in honour of our Father among the Saints Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Do Thou who art Benevolent, look down from Thy holy heaven and send down upon us, upon those who have offered these gifts and upon them that partake thereof, Thine heavenly gifts, for our hope is in Thee, the living God, unto the ages. Bless this parish (home, school, foundation, etc) and our entrances and exits; replenish our life with all good things and direct our footsteps that we may keep Thy divine commandments, for man shall not live by bread alone; Through the intercessions of Thy Most pure Mother, of our Father among the saints Basil the Great and of all Thy saints who from all ages have been well pleasing to Thee. Amen.

The sign of the Cross is then made over the Vasilopita with a knife while saying, "*In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*" All respond "*Amen.*" Then pieces of the Vasilopita are cut in the following order:

- 1st piece is set aside for Christ;
- 2nd piece for the Theotokos;
- 3rd piece for St. Basil, and the;
- 4th piece for the poor.

Then pieces are given to all present, beginning with the eldest and ending with youngest. He or she who receives the piece containing the coin is traditionally considered to be especially blessed for the New Year.

¹ In Greek the name Basil means "royal" or "kingly."