



# Newsletter February 2023

Christ is Baptized, In the River Jordan!

**St. Michael the Archangel**

**Serbian Orthodox Parish**

Saturday Vespers 6:00 PM & Sunday Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

[www.stmichaelshsv.org](http://www.stmichaelshsv.org)

See also **St. Michael's Website** for the calendar.

**Feb 1 Wednesday:** †6 pm Moleben to St. Michael

**Feb 4 Saturday:**

NO CATECHUMEN CLASS

†6:00 Vespers

**Feb 5 Sunday:** Publican and Pharisee

†10:00 am Typica **led by Emma Pcsolyar** (Fr. Gregory out of town to visit Patriarch)

**Feb 8 Wednesday:** †6 pm Moleben to St. Michael

†7 pm *Christian Ending* Study Group

**Feb 11 Saturday:**

†4:00 pm Catechumen/Inquirer Class

†6:00 Vespers

**Feb 12 Sunday: Prodigal Son**

†8:45am Orthros

†10:00am Divine Liturgy

**Feb 14 Tuesday**

†6:00 Vespers for Meeting of the Lord

**Feb 15 Wednesday: The Meeting of our Lord**

†8:45 am Orthros

†10:00 am Divine Liturgy

**Feb 18 Saturday**

†2:30 pm St. Sophia Sisterhood Meeting

†4:00 pm Catechumen/Inquirer Class

†6:00 Vespers

**Feb 19 Sunday: Meat-Fare Sunday**

†8:45 am Orthros

†10:00 am Divine Liturgy

†12:15 pm *Christian Ending* Study Group

**Feb 21 Tuesday:** †6 pm Church Board Meeting

**Feb 22 Wednesday:** †6 pm Moleben to St. Michael

**Feb 25 Saturday:**

†4:00 pm Catechumen/Inquirer Class

†6:00 Vespers

**Feb 26 Sunday: Forgiveness Sunday**

†8:45 am Orthros

†10:00 am Divine Liturgy

**Feb 26 Monday: Beginning Great Lent Fast**

**COFFEE HOUR (Fast)**

Feb 05: Morgan

Feb 12: Novak

Feb 19: Pcsolyar

Feb 26: Phillips

**Mar 05: Platt**

**Mar 12: Ramirez**

**Mar 19: Sievers**

**Mar 26: Tanner**

**Apr 02: Veres**

**Apr 09: Zarzaur**

**Apr 16: PASCHA**

**BIRTHDAYS**

1st: Joe Bergantz

7th: Michele Platt

9th: April Mahafza

11th: Ezra Jones

11th: Lazarus Jones

14th: Eszter Veres

15th: Charles Malmade

19th: Timea Veres

20th: Leonard Adams

21st: Kurt Weber

24th: Madi Terry

28th: Eric Morgan

**ANNIVERSARIES**

22nd: Pavel & Anya Sievers

**SAVE THE DATE**

**"Christian Ending" book study group on**

*Wednesday, February 8 at 7:00 pm and Sunday,*

*February 19 after coffee hour.. We plan to form a*

Burial Committee research resources for Orthodox

burial in Huntsville. Any questions please contact:

[mrs.ann.schultz@gmail.com](mailto:mrs.ann.schultz@gmail.com)

**St. Sophia Sisterhood Meeting:** Saturday,

February 18 at 2:30 pm at Kim Gilbert's home.

RSVP [stephlitter@gmail.com](mailto:stephlitter@gmail.com).

**Church Board Meeting:** Tuesday, February 21, 6 pm

**PRAYERS FOR:** Fr. Michael Boyle's recovery from

hip surgery.

**THANK YOU:** Sue Braun for the beautiful flowers to

decorate the hall tables and sanctuary for our

Nativity Potluck. Sue Braun, Kim Gilbert & Serena

Harwell for organizing the Nativity potluck. Mary

Catherine Ballew for flower decorations for the

Feast of Theophany.

**Feasts:** This past month, we celebrated the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord on January 6th which included Royal Hours and Vespers Liturgy. On January 7, Matins and Divine Liturgy were served followed by a festive potluck meal. On January 13th, about 80 parishioners gathered at the Schultz home for the annual Nativity Celebration with a great potluck meal including plum pudding, wassail, live music, movie & activities for the kids. Then on Wednesday, January 18th, we served the Vespers Liturgy for Theophany at 6 pm followed by the indoor blessing of the waters. The next day, January 19, the Matins & Liturgy were served for Theophany followed by the outdoor blessing of the waters at Brahan Springs Park in Huntsville. This year we had a large turnout and there was no rain but the winds were around 30 mph.

**Catechumen & Inquirers Classes:** resume on Saturday afternoons at 4:00pm, on February 11. Fr. Gregory & Mat. Ann will be out of town on February 4.

**Moleben & Akathist Services to St. Michael** resume on Wednesday evenings beginning February 1.

**"A Christian Ending" Book Club Study Group to form a Burial Committee:** will meet on **Wednesday, Feb. 8** after the Moleben Service at about 7:00pm and also on **Sunday, Feb. 19** after Coffee Hour. The purpose of this study group is to learn about the Orthodox approach to funeral and burial arrangements and establish local resources. We hope to form a committee that can assist with these arrangements when one of our parishioners reposes. Contact Mat. Ann Schultz if you have questions: mrs.ann.schultz@gmail.com

**Funerals:** Our newest parishioner John Driver reposed in the Lord on December 31st. His funeral was held on January 5th and the burial service on January 6th. Alevtina Shirov, (grandmother of Irina Bachtel), reposed on January 17th and her funeral service was held on January 18th. May their memory be eternal!

**New Property Update:** We learned on Friday, January 13th that our revised civil plans had been approved by the City of Madison! This is a huge step forward that we had been working on for about six months. We have now scheduled the completion of the utilities installation and are working on scheduling the paving work. In the meantime, our architect is finishing up the final drawings so that we can submit these to several contractors for bids. As soon as we choose the best bid, we will obtain the financing, and could begin construction as early as March.

### LOOKING AHEAD...

**Patriarchal Visit:** Fr. Gregory, Mat. Ann, Charles, Benj & Bill will be attending the upcoming Patriarchal Liturgy on behalf of St. Michael's with Patriarch Porfirije in Chicago Feb. 4 & 5.

**Feasts:** We will celebrate the **Feast of the Meeting of the Lord** with Vespers at 6pm on *Tues. Feb. 14* & *Matins/Liturgy at 8:45am & 10am on Wed. Feb. 15.*

**St. Sophia Sisterhood:** A meeting will be on **Saturday, February 18 at 2:30 pm** at Kim Gilbert's house at 109 McDermotts Way, Madison, AL 35758. Please RSVP Stephanie Litter: stephlitter@gmail.com

**Great Lent:** will begin on **Monday, February 27th**. We will be doing the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete at 6pm on 2/27, 2/28 and 3/2; and on Wed., 3/1, we will be serving the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy at 6pm. (please fast after lunch if you wish to receive Holy Communion).

**Lenten Spiritual Study Group:** will begin **March 1** on Wednesday evenings following the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy about 7:30pm. After a simple fasting meal, we will be drawing from Sacred Scripture & Holy Tradition to strengthen & deepen our spiritual lives during this Holy Season

## GREAT LENT: OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

We are now in the preparatory weeks leading into Great Lent. The Holy Fathers have arranged the Divine Services and all the Lenten practices of fasting, prayer, almsgiving, spiritual reading and confession for our spiritual benefit.

St. Paul compared our whole Christian life to an athlete running a race. In Hebrews 2:1-2 he writes, “*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and **let us run with patience the race that is set before us**...*” To be a Christian, is to be a spiritual athlete. Everyone knows that an athlete must exercise and train in order to compete successfully in their sport. The Holy Church has given us the practice of “asceticism” as our means of spiritual exercise and training. Yet, this idea of asceticism is often misunderstood and even rejected by many.



Archbishop Averky writes about this in his book *The Struggle for Virtue*. “...the words *ascetic* or *asceticism*...ordinarily bring about a kind of superstitious horror in modern people who consider themselves Christians, but who live far from the spirit of the Church and the spiritual life, being wholly given over to a secular life of distraction....Many understand asceticism [as] akin to walking barefoot over burning coals or to hanging oneself up by one’s ribs—as is done, for example, by Indian yogis and fakirs, to general amazement... Normally ‘asceticism’ is understood as self-restraint, the restriction of one’s natural needs to the possible minimum, but without any thought of *why and for what reason* this is done, one may think erroneously and incorrectly that such self-restraint is *an end in and of itself* for these people, who are some kind of eccentrics voluntarily refraining, for unknown reasons and purposes, from the natural and therefore lawful pleasures that man’s bodily nature enjoys...Without this [spiritual effort] there can be no success in the spiritual life.”

He goes on to describe how ascetic effort is necessary for our salvation; that we must constantly practice the performance of good works....that the performance of good works is opposed by evil habits rooted in our soul and body, and that the practice of performing good deeds, accompanied by the suppression of bad habits, is called asceticism. As St. Paul says, “*And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires*” (Gal. 5:24).

Besides the general practice of fasting by abstaining from meat and dairy products, we should also ‘fast’ from judging our brother, and instead focus on our own shortcomings, asking God’s help to improve our Christian life. Spiritual reading is a time-honored and extremely valuable practice during Great Lent. Taking time to read from the Scriptures and beneficial spiritual books will plant seeds that will bear rich spiritual fruit. Giving generously of our time, talent and treasure in support of God’s Church and those in need also draws down the Grace of the Holy Spirit into our lives. Attending all the Divine Services you possibly can is another vitally important practice during Great Lent; and one should also make time for prayer in our homes. Even a few minutes of prayer before going to work in the morning and before retiring for the evening will be of great spiritual benefit.

The Serbian Church requires that at a minimum, *one must give Confession and receive Holy Communion at least once a year to be considered a member in good standing*. That said, please consider coming for Confession and Holy Communion as often as possible for your benefit. One spiritual father said “Confession is like dusting your house. If you only do it once a year, it is quite a big job. Frequent dusting makes keeping your house clean much easier!” May God bless us with a wonderfully transforming Lenten Season that we may experience the joy of Christ’s Resurrection this Pascha to the fullest!



## AROUND THE PARISH



Funeral for parishioner John Driver.



New bookshelf for the Historical Society.





THE SCHULTZ ANNUAL NATIVITY PARTY





## THEOPHANY





## HOUSE BLESSINGS JANUARY 2023





## PRAYER LIST

### LIVING

#### Church Members and Orthodox Friends

Fr. Michael Boyle, Ray & Vicki Kendall, Ashley Zarzaur, Shawn & Oksana Falconbury, Wanda (Christine) Gilbert and Pat Darzi. Please pray for God's help with building of the future Church and hall on our new property on Madison Blvd.

#### Friends of Members, Inquirers, and Catechumens

Joseph Bishoff, Sam Johnson, Scot Dill, Taylor and Erin Terry, Rob Christiansen, Brian & Mary Catherine Ballew, David Reid, Logan & Nathan Hays, Christine Bazala.

### REPOSED

**Orthodox:** Alevtina Shirotov, John Driver, Shannon (Brigid) McBride, Dolores Gelemy (Pat Darzi's sister), Anna Kobasa (mother of Helen Bergantz), Monk Maximos Rossi, Alexander Fedoseenko (Oksana Falconbury's father) Matushka Ann Hopko, Madelyn Lloyd, John Leonforte, Larissa Newman, Tamara Savina, Jim Nordness, Patriarch Iriney, Metropolitan Amphiloque, Fr. James Barfield, Carl Brennan, Fr. Michael Vanderhoef, Fr. Patrick Kinder, Bill McKenney, Eli Grba, Fr. Athanasius Shaw, Gennadiy Zhmaylo, Fr. Chris Williamson, Gregory Hughes, Ron Waskerwitz, Christopher Pamfilis, Alexa & Hayden Hannig, Nicolae Caracalean, Olga Gulas, Valentina, Vangie Pamfilis, Milan Petrovic, Boris and Mary Kochoff, Fryni McCreary, Nelia Friedman, Natalie Elliott. **Nonorthodox:** Doris Lee Rayfield Beck

### CONFESSIONS

Confession may be heard Saturdays after Vespers, Sunday 9:40-10am before Divine Liturgy, or contact Fr. Gregory to arrange a time. Please come early Sunday morning so we can begin Liturgy by 10:00 am.

### COMMITTEES/CHAIRPERSONS

**Sub-deacons:** Bob Zarzaur, Joe Bergantz and Hal Pastrick

**Choir Leader Coordinator:** Matushka Ann

**Choir Leaders:** Leonard Adams, Benjamin Litter, Charles Malmede, Emma Pcsolyar & Matushka Ann

**Readers/Acolytes:** Leonard Adams, Steve Cox, David Hogan, Rick Kaiser, Benjamin Litter, Charles Malmede, Eric Morgan

**Sisterhood President:** Stephanie Litter

**Sisterhood Vice President:** Kim Gilbert

**Sisterhood Treasurer:** Anya Sievers

**Sisterhood Secretary:** Emma Pcsolyar

**Auditors:** Sarah Braun, Christine Ramirez and Madi Terry

**Sunday School Director:** Matushka Ann

**Sunday School Coordinator:** Stephanie Litter

**Flower Arranging Coordinator:** Christine Ramirez

**Bookstore:** Matushka Ann

**Library:** Bill Tanner

**Building Maintenance:** Sub-deacon Bob Zarzaur & Rick Kaiser

**Live-streaming & Website:** Charles Malmede

**Facebook/Instagram:** Stephanie Litter

**Newsletter Bulletin:** Steve Gordon

**Candle/Supplies:** Rick Kaiser

### CHURCH COUNCIL: 2022 TO 2023

**Parish Administrator:** Father Gregory Schultz

**President:** Sub-deacon Moses (Bob) Zarzaur

**Vice President:** Michele Platt

**Treasurer:** Caleb Eversole

**Secretary:** Rick Kaiser

**Members at Large:** John Duda, Serena Harwell, Benjamin Litter, Charles Malmede and Hal Pastrick

Please note: the Church telephone number is:  
**256-881-2449**

Office hours at Church are not available at this time.

