



Newsletter January 2021

Christ is in our midst!

St. Michael the Archangel Serbian Orthodox Parish

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

Website: www.stmichaelshsv.org

See [St. Michaels Website for Calendar](http://www.stmichaelshsv.org)

Saturday, Jan. 2 – NO CLASS TODAY

†6:00 pm Vespers

Sunday, Jan. 3 – Virgin-martyr Juliana

†8:45am Orthros

†10:00am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, Jan. 6 – Christmas Eve

†9:00am Royal Hours

†6:00pm Vespersal Liturgy

Thursday, Jan. 7 – Nativity of the Lord!

†6:00 Matins

†10:00am Divine Liturgy

(Followed by Christmas Potluck & Christmas Caroling)

Friday, Jan. 8 – Schultz Christmas Party

6 pm – 10 pm Christmas Open House at Schultz's

See Matushka Ann, RSVP per Sign-up Genie.

Saturday, Jan. 9 – NO CLASS TODAY

†6:00 pm Vespers

Sunday, Jan. 10 – Joseph, King David & James

†8:45am Orthros

†10:00am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, Jan. 13 – †6:00 pm Moleben Service

Saturday, Jan. 16 – †4:00 Inquirers/Catechumen Class

†6:00 pm Vespers

Sunday, Jan. 17 – Synaxis of Seventy Apostles

†8:45am Orthros

†10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Monday, Jan. 18 – Indoor blessing of the waters

†6:00 pm Vespers

Tuesday, Jan. 19 – Theophany of the Lord!

†8:45am Orthros

†10:00am Divine Liturgy

†12:30pm Outdoor blessing of waters

Wednesday, Jan. 20 – †6:00 pm Moleben Service

Saturday, Jan. 23 – †4:00 Inquirers/Catechumen Class

†6:00 pm Vespers

Sunday, Jan. 24 – Theodosius the Great

†8:45am Orthros

†10:00am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, Jan. 27 – †6:00 pm Moleben Service

Saturday, Jan. 30 – †4:00 Inquirers/Catechumen Class

†6:00 pm Vespers

Sunday, Jan. 31 – St. Athanasius the Great

†8:45am Orthros †10:00am Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour: (*Nativity Fast)

*Jan. 3 – Platt

Jan. 10 – Rivers

Jan. 17 – Sievers

Jan. 24 – Tanner

Jan. 31 – Tedford

Feb. 7 – Veres/Freude

Feb. 14 – Zarzaur

Feb. 21 – Ainsworth

Feb. 28 – Baker

Jan. Birthdays:

3rd – Olesya Phillips

3rd – Bill Tanner

12th – Anna Jones

17th – Pavel Sievers

17th – Heather Tanner

18th – Ivan Fontane

21st – James Manley

24th – Cassandra Sage

26th – Steve Cox

30th – Neli Manley

Jan. Anniversaries

14th Anthony & Anya Freude

Save the Date: Wednesday, January 6, 2021, 6 pm Vespersal Liturgy.

Thursday, January 7, **Nativity of our Lord**, 8:45 Matins, 10:00 Liturgy followed by Potluck, see *Matushka Ann*, mrs.ann.schultz@gmail.com.

Friday, January 8, 6 pm – 10 pm **Christmas Open House at Schultz's**, see *Matushka Ann*, RSVP per Sign-up Genie.

Thanks to: Anna, Alexandra and Helena Jones for donating the Christmas garland and decorating the Christmas tree.

December 2020 Photos



Above Left: Liturgy was celebrated on December 4, 2020 for the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos.

Above & Below Right: Christmas tree and garland decorations by Anna, Alexandra and Helena Jones

Below Left: Monica supervises as Constantine Baker holds St. Nicholas' bishop's staff on December 20, 2020



December 2020 Photos



Baptism of our newest member: *Matthias Litter* on December 13, 2020



The Nativity of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ

Each year as we celebrate the Feast of Christ's Nativity, We are surrounded by many customs and traditions. Some stores begin putting up Christmas decorations and playing the familiar Christmas carols as early as September. As we get closer to western Christmas, the decorating, shopping for presents and parties can become almost a frenzy of activity. Yet, for those of us who celebrate Christ's Nativity according to the Julian Calendar, there can be an awkward period between December 25th and January 7th when the decorations are taken down and things return to 'business as usual.'

On the one hand, it's good that the world around us acknowledges Christmas each year, but on the other hand, the over emphasis on the secular and human aspects of Christ's Nativity, seems to compete with the spiritual meaning of this great Feast. Fortunately, our Orthodox Church has preserved for us the great mystery of Christ's Incarnation through the Divine Services, writings of the Holy Fathers and Sacred Tradition.

In order to better appreciate the true meaning of the Incarnation, we must go back to the Garden of Eden, for it was there that our ancestors Adam and Eve disobeyed God's commandment and brought about the Fall of our human race. Not wishing to leave mankind in this sorrowful condition, God decided to be born as a man of the Most Pure Virgin Mary in order to open the way back to our heavenly home and bring salvation to all those who would believe in Him and follow His commandments.

St. Theophan the Recluse compared this with the following image: *"A king promises freedom to a man who is imprisoned in a dungeon and bound with fetters. The prisoner waits a day, then another, then months, and years. He sees no fulfillment of the promise, but does not lose hope, and believes in the king's words. Finally, he sees signs that it is coming soon. His attention increases—he hears a noise; someone is approaching with cheerful words. Now the locks fall and the liberator enters. "Glory to Thee, O Lord!" the prisoner involuntarily cries, "The end of my imprisonment has arrived, and soon I will see God's light!"*

This image resonates with the famous statement of St. Athanasius the Great: *"The Son of God became man, that we might become god."* In the Gospel of John 10:34, the Lord says *"Is it not written in your Law, I said ye are gods?"* The Holy Fathers tell us that when we receive the Grace of the Holy Spirit at our Baptism, we are reborn into a new spiritual life. With God's help and the help of the Church, we can receive the strength to struggle against the sinful passions and acquire the virtues. However, our participation in the Holy Sacraments of Confession and Communion and all the rest, are essential in order for us to 'become God-like' through *deification* as our Holy Fathers called it. Let's reflect on these things that we might better be able to give thanks to God for this great gift of His Incarnate Son, Who frees us from death and sin and offers us salvation and eternal life!

The News at St. Michael's –January 2021

Feasts & Fasts: During the month of December, we celebrated **The Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple** on Friday, 12/4. Then, on Friday, 12/25, we celebrated the **Feast of St. Herman of Alaska**, followed by a potluck feast meal. Moleben & Akathist services were also held most Wednesday evenings in December.

Education: The Nativity Spiritual Study Group began after the Moleben Services on Wednesday evenings. A simple fasting meal of soup, salad and bread was also served. In addition, Inquirer/Catechumen classes were held on most Saturday afternoons.

Visit from St. Nicholas: On Sunday, 12/20 following the Divine Liturgy, St. Michael's had a visitor: St. Nicholas of Myra. St. Nicholas told the children about his life and then handed out gifts of 'gold' coins and tangerines and each child received an icon of St. Nicholas. As charming a character as "Santa Claus" is, it's important that our children learn who the REAL St. Nicholas is!

Baptism: Congratulations to Benj and Stephanie Litter on the Baptism of their new baby Matthias after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 13th! Eric and Wendy Morgan were on hand to serve as little Matthias' Sponsors. May God grant them many years!

LOOKING AHEAD...

Upcoming Feasts & Fasts: The **Feast of the Nativity of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ** will be celebrated with the Vespertal Liturgy on Wednesday, Jan. 6th at 6pm and on Thursday morning Jan. 7 with Matins at 8:45am and Divine Liturgy at 10am, followed by a potluck meal. (*Please note that the Vespertal Liturgy is a Communion Service, so anyone wishing to receive Holy Communion should fast after lunch time on Wed. Jan 6th*). We will also celebrate the **Feast of Theophany** with Vespers at 6pm on Monday, Jan. 18th and on Tuesday, Jan. 19th with Matins at 8:45am and Divine Liturgy at 10am. The **INDOOR Blessing of the Waters** will take place after Vespers on Monday 1/18, so please bring your Holy Water bottles so you can take some home (please be considerate of others and bring moderate sized bottles — 12oz or less, so everyone can get some. If you run out, you can always ask for more later). The **OUTDOOR Blessing of the Waters** will take place after the Divine Liturgy on Tuesday, Jan. 19th.

Catechumen & Inquirers Class: Classes will resume on Saturday afternoons at 4:00pm beginning with January 16th.

St. Michael Moleben & Akathist Services: These services will continue on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 pm starting on Wednesday, January 13th at 6pm.

New Property Development and Capital Campaign: The dirt work is going well and the stormwater system should be going in soon, followed by the paving and utilities. In the meantime, thank you to everyone who has made a pledge for "Phase 3:" (*the new Church & Fellowship Hall construction*)! That said, we still have not yet received pledges from some of our parishioners. Please remember to fill out and sign your pledge form and give it to Treasurer Matthew Hartley. You can simply hand it to him at church, or scan it and email it to him at hartley1979@yahoo.com; or mail it to St. Michael's Church, 4319 Spartacus Dr., Huntsville, AL 35805. As the saying goes, 'this is crunch time!' We just need to ensure that we have enough monthly pledges to be able to make the payments on a construction loan. In the fundraising world, this is called a '*stretch gift*' because we all need to stretch a little to make it to the finish line.

Prayer List:

Living: **Church Members & Orthodox Friends:** Please pray for God's help with building of the future Church and hall on our new property on Madison Blvd.; Kathy Couch, Vicki Kendall, Becky Brennan, Pat Darzi's speedy recovery from surgery. **Friends of Members:** Anne Kobasa (mother of Helen Bergantz), Mahasin Tadros

Reposed: 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.

Confessions: May be heard Saturdays after Vespers; Sunday 9:40—10 am 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,

Hal Pastrick & Anthony Freude

Choir Director—Ray Kendall

Ass't Choir Director—Matushka Ann

Readers/Acolytes—Leonard Adams, Steve Cox,
Matthew Hartley, David Hogan, Rick Kaiser, Ray
Kendall, Benjamin Litter, Charles Malmede
& Eric Morgan

Sisterhood President—Iryna Haddock

Sisterhood Treasurer—Michele Platt

Sunday School Director—Matushka Ann

Sunday School Teachers—Serena Harwell, Pavel
Sievers

Sunday School Teaching Assistants—Stephanie Litter

Bookstore—Matushka Ann

Library—Bill Tanner

Building Maintenance—Sub-deacon Bob
Zarzaur & Rick Kaiser

Welcoming Committee Coordinator—Charles
Malmede

Live-streaming & Website—Charles Malmede

Newsletter Bulletin—Rick Kaiser

Candle/Supplies—Rick Kaiser

Facebook/Instagram—Stephanie Litter

Church Council—2020 to 2021

Father Gregory Schultz—Parish Administrator

Sub-deacon Moses (Bob) Zarzaur—President

Michele Platt—Vice President

Matthew Hartley—Treasurer

Rick Kaiser—Secretary

Members at Large—Joe Bergantz, John

Duda, Benjamin Litter, Charles Malmede and

Hal Pastrick

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

Office hours at the Church are cancelled at this time.

Please contact Fr. Gregory concerning any pastoral needs.