

# Newsletter February 2018

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.stmichaelsv.org/](http://www.stmichaelsv.org/)



Click [here for St. Michaels Website Calendar](#)

**Sunday, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> – Sunday of the Prodigal Son**

†8:45am Orthros

†10:00am Divine Liturgy

**Tuesday, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> – Church Council**

†6:00pm Meeting

**Wednesday, Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> – †6:00 pm Vespers & Study Group**  
w/soup, salad and bread

**Sunday, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> – Sunday of the Last Judgment**  
**(Meatfare)**

†8:45am Orthros

†10:00am Divine Liturgy

**Wednesday, Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> – †6:00 pm Vespers & Study**  
Group w/soup, salad and bread

**Thursday, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> – The Meeting of Our Lord, God**  
**and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Sunday, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> – The Sunday of Forgiveness.**  
**(Cheesefare Week, Meat is excluded).**

†8:45am Orthros

†10:00am Divine Liturgy

**Monday, Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> – Great Lent begins**

**Wednesday, Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> – †6:00 pm Vespers & Study**  
Group w/soup, salad and bread

**Sunday, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> – First Sunday of the Great Lent:**  
**Triumph of Orthodoxy**

†8:45am Orthros

†10:00am Divine Liturgy

**Sunday, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> – Host Holy Cross—Sts. Constantine**  
**& Helen †6:00 pm Vespers & Potluck Supper**

**Wednesday, Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> – †6:00 pm Vespers & Study**  
Group w/soup, salad and bread

Fr. Gregory is available for house blessings by appointment after January 19 – Theophany.

**Coffee Hour: (\*Lenten Fast)**

Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> – Zarzaur \*Mar. 4<sup>th</sup> – Ellis/Fontane

Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> – Bergantz \*Mar. 11<sup>th</sup> – Haddock

Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> – Cox \*Mar. 18<sup>th</sup> – Hartley

\*Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> – Darzi/Baker \*Mar. 25<sup>th</sup> – Harwell/Couch

Note: *If you cannot be at church on your Sunday, please arrange to trade places with someone from the coffee hour list that can.*

**Birthdays:**

1<sup>st</sup> – Joe Bergantz

7<sup>th</sup> – Michele Platt

9<sup>th</sup> – Alexandra Pickle

9<sup>th</sup> – MaryAnn Lee

10<sup>th</sup> – Ivan Kuranova

15<sup>th</sup> – Charles Malmede

16<sup>th</sup> – Elena Meagher

18<sup>th</sup> – Greg Barth

21<sup>st</sup> – Kurt Weber

22<sup>nd</sup> – Marina Kuranova

**Anniversaries:**

22<sup>nd</sup> – Pavel & Anya Sievers

27<sup>th</sup> – Sandy & Roger Ellis

**Thanks:** *Ray & Vicki Kendall* for loaning the 220 volt space heater for our children's recreation room at the Schultz Christmas party. *Vicki Kendall* for sewing the beautiful new acolyte robes and chalice veils. *Sandy Ellis* for her attendance and preparation of Nativity and Theophany services. *Sisterhood—Iryna, Michele, Anna, Sandy and others* for coordinating potluck meals. *Joe Bergantz* for leading Christmas carols on Nativity with the use of his bells. *Marc and Kathy Couch* for help with the Nature Club outing to the Crane Festival. *Marc Couch's* research and presentation on "Safety and Security."

# St. Michael's News

**The Nativity of our Lord:** This year, the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord fell on Sunday, January 7, making it possible for more parishioners to attend. On the Eve of the Nativity (Jan. 6), St. Michael's celebrated a Vespers service, followed by the traditional Russian Holy Supper. After a beautiful Nativity service the following morning, Joe Bergantz brought out his famous Christmas chimes and we played many familiar carols to everyone's enjoyment! That evening, the annual open house celebration took place again at the Schultz residence with the usual Christmas cheer including a big steaming hot bowl of Old English wassail! A St. Michael's theater was set up in the garage and the 20 or so children who attended watched several delightful children's movies.

**St. Michael Nature Club:** Participated in this year's Crane Festival at Wheeler Wildlife Refuge in Decatur. There were an estimated 12,000 Sandhill Cranes, 6 rare Whooping Cranes and all kinds of other ducks, geese and water birds, numbering in the 40,000 range! Quite an impressive sight. Since the weather was very cold, we attended a raptor show at the Princess Theater in downtown Decatur as well. Auburn University students showed 7 live raptor species, from the smallest screech owl to the largest golden eagle.

**The Theophany of our Lord:** A Vespers service was held on Jan. 18 followed by the indoor blessing of the water. The next morning, Orthros and Divine Liturgy were served followed by the outdoor blessing of the waters at Brahan Springs Park. It was a beautiful, crisp, sunny day and the ducks and geese were using the lake as an airport, taking off and landing throughout the service. The Holy Trinity was truly manifest with us as the Grace of the Holy Spirit uplifted everyone!

## Coming up:

**Meeting of the Lord:** One of the Twelve Great Feasts, the Meeting of the Lord will be celebrated with a Vespers service on Wed., Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. On Thurs., Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>, Orthros will begin at 8:45am and Divine Liturgy at 10am. This feast celebrates the presentation of the infant Jesus in the Temple when Righteous Symeon held the Lord in his arms and proclaimed "*Now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.*"

**Great Lent:** Meat-fare Sunday will be February 11 (when we say "farewell" to meat) and the following week of Feb. 12 is "Cheese-fare week." The idea is to use up our dairy products and fish may also be eaten that week. Then Great Lent will begin on Monday, Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>. Our aim will be make a good beginning by serving the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete at 6pm on Mon., Tues. and Thurs. that week. On Wednesday, we will serve the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts at 6pm (if you wish to receive Holy Communion, please fast after lunchtime).

**Work Party on the New Property:** On Saturday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>, there will be a work party at the new property at 8122 Madison Blvd. from 9am to 4pm. We will be working on cleaning up some of the limbs, etc. left from the logging, as well as spreading some gravel turnarounds for easier access. Lunch will be provided.

**Sunday of Orthodoxy:** On Sunday, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, at 6pm, St. Michael's will host Holy Cross/St. Constantine & Helen's Greek Orthodox Church for the Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers. As the host, St. Michael's will provide a Lenten (potluck) meal afterwards in the church hall.

**St. Michael Nature Club:** There will be a hike planned on Sat. Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> at the Beaver Dam/Tupelo Swamp Boardwalk. We'll plan to meet at 9am in the parking lot. Please Google "Beaverdam Boardwalk at Old Hwy 20 SW And County Line Rd, Huntsville, AL for directions.

# January Photos



Christmas Eve  
January 6, 2018  
Twelve Dish Supper



January Photos (Continued)



Schultz Annual  
Christmas Party



## January Photos (Continued)



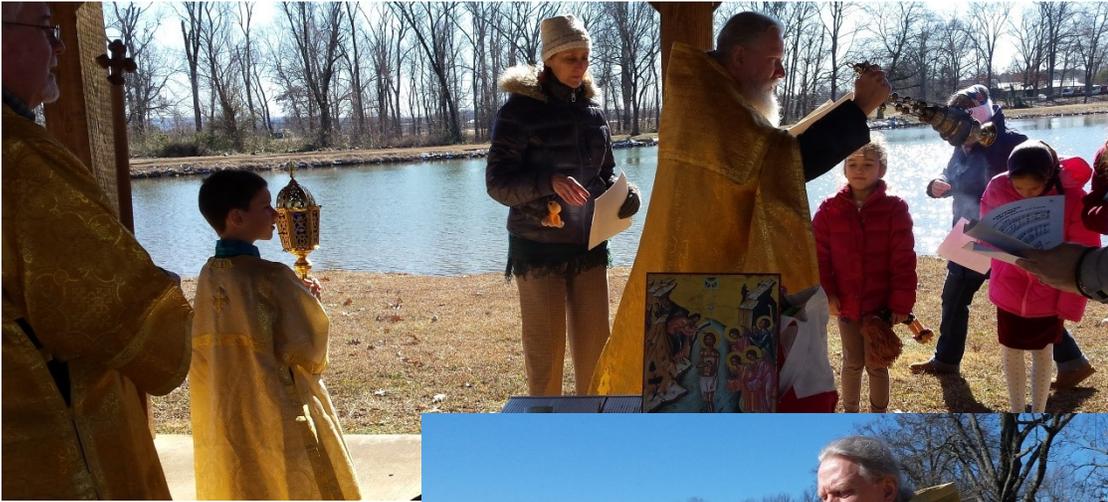
Schultz Christmas Party (*above*)  
Children watch movie (*right*)



Nature Club at Crane Festival (*above*)  
Raptor Show (*right*)



## January Photos Continued



Theophany  
Outdoor Blessing  
of the Waters at  
Brahan Spring  
Park



## Guidelines for the Great Lenten Journey

As we prepare for and enter into this year's Lenten season, it's good to take a few moments to reflect on the significance of the Lenten Fast for our spiritual lives. The Holy Church has wisely set aside this forty-day fast each year in preparation for Pascha. Our Holy Fathers have arranged the Divine Services and all the Lenten practices such as fasting, prayer, almsgiving, spiritual reading, confession for our spiritual benefit. Sometimes, in our weakness, we may look at Great Lent as a burdensome affair. Forty days seems like a long time to go without our favorite foods. All those extra prayer services might seem tedious. Then there's the very 'tone' of Great Lent, which may seem somber, dark and dreary. No one would argue that standing for long hours in prayer, keeping the fast, doing prostrations, and so on, are not easy for that lower part of ourselves, our bodies, that seeks comfort and pleasure. Yet, it is precisely because of our weakness that the Holy Church has given us the season of Great Lent!

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, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" 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 Gospel and Sacred Tradition have given us the practice of "asceticism" to describe the process of spiritual exercise and training.

In the book *The Struggle for Virtue* by Abp. Averky, he examines the idea of asceticism: "...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."

Abp. Averky 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!

## Prayer List:

**Living:** **Church Members & Orthodox Friends:** Please pray for God's help with building the future Church and hall on our new property on Madison Blvd.; Lisa Craft, Ivan Fontane, Loren Capsopoulos, Leslie Hargrave, Phil Harwell & family, Weston Letsoon, Cate, David, Anna & Joseph Queener, Tim Waskerwitz, Kurt Weber, Fr. Parthenios, Sean Perry, Fr. Dcn James Hughes, Martin Gureasko.  
**Friends of Members:** Anna Kobasa (mother of Helen Bergantz), Mahasin Tadros

**Reposed:** Gregory Hughes, Ron Waskerwitz, Christopher Pamfilis, Alexa & Hayden Hannig, Nicolae Caracalean, Valentina, Vangie Pamfilis, Milan Petrovic, Boris and Mary Kochoff, Fryni McCreary, Nelia Friedman, Natalie Elliott.

**Fr. Gregory is available for house blessings by appointment:** Luke 10:5 "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!'"

**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-deacon—Bob Zarzaur  
Choir Director—Sandy Ellis  
Ass't Choir Director—Matushka Ann  
Readers/Acolytes—Steve Cox, Matthew Hartley, David Hogan, Rick Kaiser, Ray Kendall, Charles Malmede & Hal Pastrick  
Sisterhood President—Iryna Haddock  
Sunday School Director—Matushka Ann  
Sunday School Teachers—Serena Harwell and Pavel Sievers  
Library & Bookstore—Matushka Ann  
Building Maintenance—Sub-deacon Bob Zarzaur & Rick Kaiser  
Welcoming Committee Coordinator—Charles Malmede  
Website—Charles Malmede  
Newsletter Bulletin—Rick Kaiser  
Candle/Supplies—Rick Kaiser

### Church Council—2017 to 2018

Father Gregory Schultz—Parish Administrator  
Sub-deacon Bob Zarzaur—President  
Michele Platt—Vice President  
Matthew Hartley—Treasurer  
Pavel (Elliot) Sievers—Secretary

**Members at Large**—Joe Bergantz, Kathy Couch, Rick Kaiser, Charles Malmede and Hal Pastrick

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

Office hours at the Church are as follows.\*

Tues: 10:00 am—4:00 pm; Wed: 12 noon—6:00 pm; Thurs: 10:00 am—4:00 pm

*\*Please note: while Fr. Gregory will normally be at the Church during these times, pastoral needs are given priority (ie.: when someone is ill, etc.) If you need to see him, please call ahead.*