

# THE TROPHYBEARER

## *Pastoral Thoughts*

It never fails that when you go to any store like Walmart, the day after Christmas, you see employees taking down all the Christmas cards and putting up Valentine's Day cards. I can't believe it. Is it Valentine's Day already? I realize they forgot a more important holiday before Valentine's Day, Theophany. This feast is usually completely forgotten by most people. Everybody knows Christmas, but how many know what Theophany is all about? While the Nativity is indeed the mother of all feasts, Theophany, linked to the Nativity, should be just as important to us. Let us take a few moments and discuss this major feast.

On Christmas, we celebrate that Jesus Christ was born. This Christ is Perfect God being the Second person of the Trinity who is of one essence with the Father, thereby having everything that the Father has except being begotten. The Christ is also Perfect man, being one of us, He is also of one essence with us and thus has everything we have except sin. This event happened at the fullness of time and had cosmic ramifications. The Nativity unites all creation, thus uniting man and God, created and uncreated. This is a perfect union in that humanity remains humanity, and Divinity remains unconfused.

On Theophany, which means God revealing himself, the Nativity is made real to the world. He shows Himself to be God by the Father's voice (Thou art my beloved Son; with thee, I am well pleased [Mark 1:11b]) and the Holy Spirit (descending upon him like a dove; [Mark 1:10b]). He shows Himself to be a man by accepting the will of Father ( But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." [Matthew 3:15]) and by being baptized by John. Christ sanctifies both nature, by being baptized in water and relationships by giving honor to John.

Is there any preparation? Yes! Preparation for the world involved the prophets (Isaiah the prophet,{said} "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. [Mark 1:2b-3]) and through the witness of St. John, ("After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." [Mark 1:7b-8]).What about preparation for us? Yes! We prepare through fasting (January 5), confessing sins, Holy Communion, prayer, and worship.

So, we can see that this great feast expresses the reality that God became man and dwelt among us. This becoming man in no way diminished his Godhood but rather linked to it our humanity. Nobody except those involved would know the Nativity by itself; for this reason, God shows himself by being baptized in the Jordan. Of course, none of this happened without some preparation. We must prepare ourselves for not just this feast but for the Second Coming of Christ. As with anything, there are ramifications. If we profess to believe that Jesus is the Godman, then the world that is sitting in darkness will inevitably retaliate with persecution of some sort. We must be of good cheer because Christ overcame the world for us, and it can do no harm. Let us go out into the world proclaiming our faith in the Godman Jesus Christ. Let us live the life that Saint Paul calls us to live. If we are to make a New Year resolution, let us resolve to be faithful and keep this resolution because we know not the time or the hour of the dread coming of the Lord. Amen.



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# PARISH NEWS

## Epistle Readers

Anyone wishing to become an Epistle Reader, Please Contact Father Michael

Sunday, January 7, 2024:

Synaxis of Saint John the Baptist: Alexa Florence

Sunday, January 14, 2024:

Sunday after Theophany: Scot Johnson

Sunday, January 21, 2024:

12th Sunday of Luke: Georgjean Pitsoulakis

Sunday, January 28, 2024:

15th Sunday of Luke: Gus Pappas

## Evening Meal Volunteers

January 24, 2024: Susan Coin and Cathy Farrell.

February 28, 2024: Dr. Vickie Pyevich and Adrienne Johnson.

March 27, 2024: Diane Whitehead.

April 24, 2024: Helen Moorehead and Marge Stratton

Anyone interested in taking part in this worthwhile ministry should contact Mary Winters at 563-726-2880

## Parish Council Sunday Duty Schedule

January 7, 2024: Tom Bakeris, Nick Coin, Mariellen Crosson, and Vickie Pyevich

January 14, 2024: Mary Kay Eckert, Gus Pappas, Ted Pitsoulakis, and Diana Spurgetis

January 21, 2024: Kathy Begyn, Joe Burmeister, Dennis Spurgetis, and Mary Rankin

January 28, 2024: Tom Bakeris, Nick Coin, Mariellen Crosson, and Vickie Pyevich

## Welcome Your Eminence

Please join Father Michael, Deacon Paul, and the Esteemed Parish Council in welcoming our spiritual father, His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago, to our Parish Family as he leads us in the celebration of the Vespers Divine Liturgy on Friday, January 5, 2024, the Eve of Theophany. May God grant him many years of health and joy to guide His Church!

## Clothing Collection

We are collecting hats/gloves/mittens/coats for the less fortunate...

If you would like to donate, please place them on the Christmas tree in the Narthex until January 7, 2024.

## PROSPHORA MAKERS

Sunday, January 7, 2024: Open  
Sunday, January 14, 2024: Open  
Sunday, January 21, 2024: Open  
Sunday, January 28, 2024: Open

### VASILOPITA

The community observance of the Vasilopita is most impressive. The priest begins the spiritual portion of the observance with a series of supplications for the health and peace of the world. Pieces are cut for Christ and His Holy Church, the Patriarch, Archbishop, Clergy and Laity, etc. (This tradition is taken from the ancient Christian observance of evening meals within the community.) Many pieces of bread are then distributed to the faithful, and all monies received from this event are sent to the Children's Home of St. Basil's Academy in Garrison, New York. All of the proceeds from the entire observance are sent for the needs of the Children's Home, like the one originally founded by St. Basil over 1500 years ago. Our Vasilopita celebration is on January 14, 2024!

### COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Sunday, January 7, 2024: Open  
Sunday, January 14, 2024: Open  
Sunday, January 21, 2024: Open  
Sunday, January 28, 2024: Open

# LIVES OF THE SAINTS

## The Circumcision of the Lord (January 1)

Since the Mosaic Law commands that if a woman give birth to a male child, he should be circumcised in the foreskin of his flesh on the eighth day (Lev. 12:2-3), on this, the eighth day from His Nativity, our Saviour accepted the circumcision commanded by the Law. According to the command of the Angel, He received the Name which is above every name: JESUS, which means "Saviour" (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31 and 2:21).

## Saint Basil the Great (January 1)

Saint Basil the Great was born about the end of the year 329 in Caesarea of Cappadocia, to a family renowned for their learning and holiness. His parents' names were Basil and Emily. His mother Emily (commemorated July 19) and his grandmother Macrina (Jan. 14) are Saints of the Church, together with all his brothers and sisters: Macrina, his elder sister (July 19), Gregory of Nyssa (Jan. 10), Peter of Sebastia (Jan. 9), and Naucratius. Basil studied in Constantinople under the sophist Libanius, then in Athens, where also he formed a friendship with the young Gregory, a fellow Cappadocian, later called "the Theologian." Through the good influence of his sister Macrina (see July 19), he chose to embrace the ascetical life, abandoning his worldly career. He visited the monks in Egypt, in Palestine, in Syria, and in Mesopotamia, and upon returning to Caesarea, he departed to a hermitage on the Iris River in Pontus, not far from Annesi, where his mother and his sister Macrina were already treading the path of the ascetical life; here he also wrote his ascetical homilies.

About the year 370, when the bishop of his country reposed, he was elected to succeed to his throne and was entrusted with the Church of Christ, which he tended for eight years, living in voluntary poverty and strict asceticism, having no other care than to defend holy Orthodoxy as a worthy successor of the Apostles. The Emperor Valens, and Modestus, the Eparch of the East, who were of one mind with the Arians, tried with threats of exile and of torments to bend the Saint to their own confession, because he was the bastion of Orthodoxy in all Cappadocia, and preserved it from heresy when Arianism was at its strongest. But he set all their malice at naught, and in his willingness to give himself up to every suffering for the sake of the Faith, showed himself to be a martyr by volition. Modestus, amazed at Basil's fearlessness in his presence, said that no one had ever so spoken to him. "Perhaps," answered the Saint, "you have never met a bishop before." The Emperor Valens himself was almost won over by Basil's dignity and wisdom. When Valens' son fell gravely sick, he asked Saint Basil to pray for him. The Saint promised that his son would be restored if Valens agreed to have him baptized by the Orthodox; Valens agreed, Basil prayed, and the son was restored. But afterwards the Emperor had him baptized by Arians, and the child died soon after. Later, Valens, persuaded by his counsellors, decided to send the Saint into exile because he would not accept the Arians into communion; but his pen broke when he was signing the edict of banishment. He tried a second time and a third, but the same thing happened, so that the Emperor was filled with dread, and tore up the document, and Basil was not banished. The truly great Basil, spent with extreme ascetical practices and continual labours, at the helm of the church, departed to the Lord on the 1st of January, in 379, at the age of forty-nine.

His writings are replete with wisdom and erudition, and rich are these gifts he set forth the doctrines concerning the mysteries both of the creation (see his Hexaemeron) and of the Holy Trinity (see On the Holy Spirit). Because of the majesty and keenness of his eloquence, he is honoured as "the revealer of heavenly things" and "the Great."

Saint Basil is also celebrated on January 30th with Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint John Chrysostom.

## The Theophany of Our Lord

About the beginning of our Lord's thirtieth year, John the Forerunner, who was some six months older than Our Saviour according to the flesh and had lived in the wilderness since his childhood, received a command from God and came into the parts of the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Then our Saviour also came from Galilee to the Jordan and sought and received baptism though He was the Master and John was but a servant. After that, there came to pass those marvelous deeds, great and beyond nature: the Heavens were opened, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Him that was being baptized, and the voice was heard from the Heavens hearing witness that this was the beloved Son of God, now baptized as a man (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:1-22). The Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great mystery of the Trinity were demonstrated in these events. It is also from this that the present feast is called "Theophany," the divine manifestation of God's appearance among men. On this venerable day, the sacred mystery of Christian baptism was inaugurated; henceforth, the saving preaching of the Kingdom of the Heavens began.

## The Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs

This common feast of these three teachers was instituted a little before the year 1100, during the reign of the Emperor Alexis I Comnenus, because of a dispute and strife that arose among the notable and virtuous men of that time. Some of them preferred Basil, while others preferred Gregory, and yet others preferred John Chrysostom, quarreling among themselves over which of the three was the greatest. Furthermore, each party, in order to distinguish itself from the others, assumed the name of its preferred Saint; hence, they called themselves Basilians, Gregorians, or Johannites. Desiring to bring an end to the contention, the three Saints appeared together to the saintly John Mavropous, a monk who had been ordained Bishop of Euchaita, a city of Asia Minor, they revealed to him that the glory they have at the throne of God is equal, and told him to compose a common service for the three of them, which he did with great skill and beauty. Saint John of Euchaita (celebrated Oct. 5) is also the composer of the Canon to the Guardian Angel, the Protector of a Man's Life. In his old age, he retired from his episcopal see and again took up the monastic life in a monastery in Constantinople. He reposed during the reign of the aforementioned Emperor Alexis Comnenus (1081-1118).

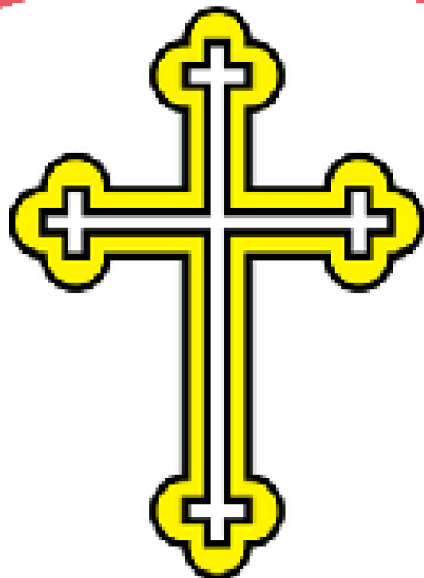
SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX  
CHURCH

# SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL

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SUNDAYS FOLLOWING HOLY  
COMMUNION BEGINNING ON JANUARY 7,  
2024

Train up a child in the way he should go,  
and when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs  
22:6 RSV)



# CHILDREN FOR CHRIST

## Sunday Church School for the Soul!



In Sunday Church School Your Kids Can...

One: Make friends for life

Two: Learn about Jesus Christ and the Scriptures

Three: Have lots of fun!

So what are you waiting for? Sign your children up today!

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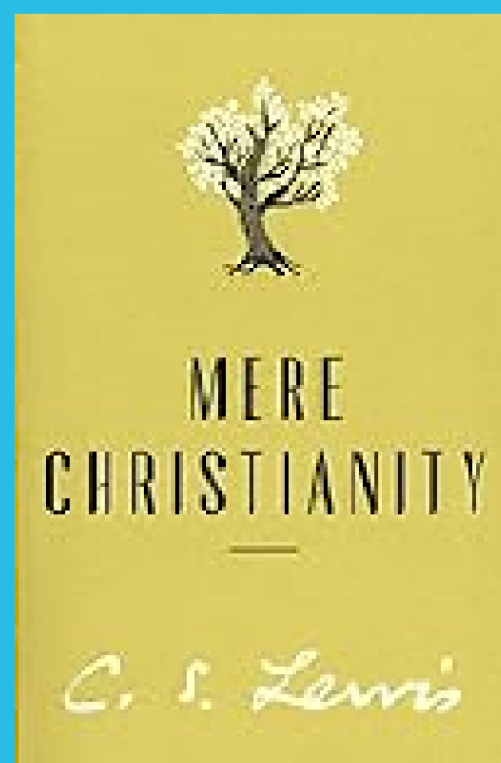
For inquiries please email Deacon Paul at [out\\_bee\\_speeds@yahoo.com](mailto:out_bee_speeds@yahoo.com).

Join us for a literary journey!

# Let's explore: Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis.

Every Thursday at 7 PM  
starting on January 11,  
2024.

Join us either in person (in our  
parish library) or via zoom Book  
Study.



# 2024 JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	<b>1</b> <b>The Circumcision of Our Lord Saint Basil the Great</b> <b>Fast Free</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great	<b>2</b> <b>Fast Free</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Fast Free</b> 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	<b>4</b> <b>Fast Free</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Eve of Theophany</b> <b>Fast Day</b> 4:00 p.m. Hierarchal Vespers Divine Liturgy followed by the Blessing of the Waters celebrated by His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago Fasting reception to follow	<b>6</b> <b>The Holy Theophany of our Lord</b> <b>Fast Free</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy *Please Note: The Great Blessing of the Waters will occur following Orthros, as is the ancient Tradition of the Church
<b>7</b> <b>The Synaxis of Saint John the Baptist</b> <b>Parish Council Oath of Office</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School classes begin following Holy Communion	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Fast Day</b> 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	<b>11</b> 7:00 p.m. Book Study: Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis (join us either in person (in our parish library) or via zoom)	<b>12</b> <b>Fast Day</b>	<b>13</b> +Sacrament
<b>14</b> <b>Sunday after Theophany</b> <b>Parish Vasilopita</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School classes following Holy Communion	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 6:30 p.m. Parish Council meeting	<b>17</b> <b>Feast Day of Saint Anthony the Great</b> <b>Oil and Wine Allowed</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	<b>18</b> <b>Feast Day of Saints Athanasios and Cyril</b> <b>Patriarchs of Alexandria</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Assumption 7:00 p.m. Book Study: Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis (join us either in person (in our parish library) or via zoom)	<b>19</b> <b>Fast Day</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> <b>12th Sunday of Luke</b> <b>Oil and Wine Allowed</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School classes following Holy Communion	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Fast Day</b> 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum Evening Meal 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	<b>25</b> <b>Feast Day of Gregory the Theologian</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George 7:00 p.m. Book Study: Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis (join us either in person (in our parish library) or via zoom).	<b>26</b> <b>Fast Day</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> <b>15th Sunday of Luke</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School classes following Holy Communion	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> <b>The Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs</b> 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Assumption Church				