

**ST. MATTHEW THE EVANGELIST
ANTIOCHIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH
JANUARY, 2023, NEWSLETTER**

**10383 ALBION ROAD, N. ROYALTON, OH 44133
P.O. Box 33183, N. Royalton, OH 44133**

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**SATURDAY VESPERS—5 p.m.
SUNDAY MATINS—8:50 a.m. SUNDAY LITURGY—10 a.m.
CONFESSION—after Vespers and during Sunday Matins & by
appointment.**

SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICES IN JANUARY

***THE GREAT FEAST OF THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY), THE CELEBRATION OF THE
BAPTISM OF CHRIST, IS JANUARY 6. OUR SCHEDULE:***

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5TH, EVE OF THE FEAST-----

--Royal Hours, 9 a.m. (services done in succession unlike in Holy Week)

--Vespers Liturgy with Great Blessing of Water, 6:30 p.m.

January 5th is a strict one-day fast.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6TH, THEOPHANY DAY---

---Festal Matins, 8:50 a.m.

---Festal Liturgy, 10 a.m.

---Outdoor Blessing of Water, 11:30 a.m. (right after liturgy) This very
short service will be done at the lake just south of our field.

---Potluck meal right after the services. Theophany takes precedence
over usual Friday fasting---so meat, etc. are all fine! Then houseblessings start...

HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY MEMORIAL PRAYERS FOR THE VICTIMS OF ABORTION---

-This brief service will take place at the end of our liturgy
on Sunday, January 22. January 22 is the date of the infamous Roe v. Wade Supreme
Court decision (1973...recently overturned) which
legalized abortion on demand in the United States.

**PAN-ORTHODOX HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY PRAYER SERVICE, 6 P.M., SUNDAY,
JANUARY 22.** At Archangel Michael Church, 5025 E. Mill Road, Broadview Hts.
Guest speaker---Archbishop NATHANIEL of Romanian Orthodox Episcopate. Can

be viewed on Zoom, but must register before Jan. 15----

<https://forms.gle/MTqZdaA4QkXMAF3wr8>

AND JUST BARELY LOOKING AHEAD TO THE START OF FEBRUARY---The holy day of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (the 40-day Churching of Jesus as recorded in Luke 2), one of Orthodoxy's 12 Great Feast Days, is February 2. Our schedule:

Vespers with Artoklasia---Wednesday, February 1, 6:30 p.m.

Festal Matins---Thursday, February 2, 9 a.m.

Festal Liturgy with customary blessing of candles---Thursday, February 2, 10 a.m. Potluck lunch right after the services.

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS, STUDY GROUPS, MINISTRY TEAMS

PATHWAYS TO PEACE—BOTH IN PERSON AT CHURCH AND BY ZOOM—Each Monday, 7:15 pm. “A gathering place for those who are broken from hurts, hang-ups, or habits. Join us as we renew our minds and encourage each other through the love of Christ.” Call Deacon Basil, 440-665-3591, for Zoom information.

WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP—Friday, January 20, 1 p.m. All women welcome! The location is at Tara Reidy's, 274 Elmwood, Berea. For more info, call Sandy Tolbert, 440-773-9162. Beginning a new book, “The Ascetic of Love.”

WEST BIBLE STUDY—Saturday, January 21, 6 pm at the church after 5 p.m. Vespers. Studying I Corinthians.

SOUTH BIBLE STUDY—Tuesday, January 3 and Tuesday, January 17, at Craig & Cindy George's, 9451 Sherwood Trail, Brecksville. All are welcome. The study will be on the first part of Genesis.

SOMETHING NEW:

WINTER SERIES ON MODERN SAINTS---A series of 3 classes/discussions on 3 modern Saints taught by Fr. Andrew---one per month January-March. **FIRST MEETING**---WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 6:30 P.M. AT THE CHURCH. It will be on ST. PORPHYRIOS who fell asleep in Christ on December 2, 1991.

TEEN CLUB—January activities to be announced...

ST. MATTHEW'S WOMEN'S GROUP---Meeting after liturgy, Sunday, January 8.

YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY ---On the book of James. Saturday, January 14, 6 p.m., at the church. There will be refreshments! No RSVP needed, but if you want more info, please contact the study leaders: Subdeacon Samuel Harmon, 216-598-9230, samuelharmon15@gmail.com or Colton Bose, 440-567-6101, coltonmichaelbose@gmail.com

MARTHA MINISTRIES IS NOW UNDERWAY—This is a ministry to provide meals for families in need of some help—new babies, illness, grieving, etc. If you can help, see/email/call Erin Musarra at 440-799-0838. *Cooking session at church, 10 a.m., Saturday, January 21.*

ST. HERMAN'S MINISTRY TEAM—Sunday, January 15, is our parish's next monthly turn to provide a meal to the poor at St. Herman Orthodox Homeless Shelter in Cleveland. If you can help with either the providing or cooking or serving of the meal, please contact Dn. Basil, 440-665-3591. Thank you to George, Christina, & Justin Nassif for cooking the December meal and to Sondra Palivoda and Rob Rompala for serving it.

MONTHLY DELIVERY OF FOOD, CLOTHING, ETC. TO HOMELESS ON STREETS OF DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND---Sunday, January 15. Alms box to help this outreach is near hall entrance. WH

HOMESCHOOL ENRICHMENT GROUP---Friday, January 13 & 27, 9 a.m.

CHESS CLUB---After liturgy, Sunday, January 15.

SUNDAY SCHOOL RIGHT AFTER LITURGY EACH WEEK

For ages 3-19—please bring your child! For more information, call Superintendant Gail Malaniak at 440-552-4586 or gailmeen@gmail.com.

NEW MINISTRY BEGINNING AT ST. MATTHEW'S

St. Matthew's is now officially affiliated with OCLife, a "non-profit organization dedicated to equipping the Orthodox Christian community to strengthen its commitment to the sacredness of human life from conception to death, illuminating the Church's teaching on life issues through education and engagement." If you would like to get involved in this new ministry, please contact Lisa Palivoda at ldpal1703@outlook.com or Cindy George at cindygeorge127@gmail.com.

GIFTS FOR JESUS OFFERING--- If you have not yet given to our annual special Christmas offering, "Gifts For Jesus", you may still do so up until January 15th. You can mail it (St. Matthew Church, 10383 Albion Road, North Royalton 44133) Or just bring to church—please clearly mark it. It is a way to thank the Lord for being a most special gift to us by giving Him a gift for His birthday. The gifts go for the ongoing work for the Lord at St. Matthew's.

OUR CURRENT CATECHUMENS We pray for them at each liturgy. Please pray for them during the week also as they prepare to enter the Orthodox Faith by either Baptism or Chrismation.

Will Parker
Steven Rogers
Mariya Butt
Leigh Frank

Jamie & Lucas Domonokos
Mikaela Cihon
Victoria Rodgers

NEW PARISHIONERS IN DECEMBER

Constantine & Maria Kornea

6934 Parma Boulevard
Parma Heights, OH 44130

Please welcome them to our parish and add them to your directory!

SAVE THE DATE: AUGUST 18 & 19----PARISH RETREAT

Father Sergius, Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery in Pennsylvania, will be the speaker. If you are excited about bringing in this speaker and would like to help with the planning, please talk to Kh. Bonnie.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY MEET-UP

Would you like to hear an interesting love story? Well, here goes-----

Rebecca Kubicek was born on August 15, 1986. She grew up in Parma where her father was a policeman and detective. Her mother was a stay-at-home mother who later worked in the insurance business. Rebecca was the youngest of 3 daughters. She graduated from Valley Forge High School in their cosmetology program. She then worked for a beauty salon for two years.

Rebecca was brought up attending a non-denominational church which fostered in her a strong faith and love for Jesus Christ. When she was 20, Rebecca moved to Kansas City to become part of International House of Prayer (IHOP). This is a non-denominational, charismatic ministry within a church community that attracts mostly young adults. It includes non-accredited college classes, many retreats and conferences, and various other ministries. She had a positive experience there, but acknowledges that it's a place to go for a season of your life and not for the long haul.

As far as making a living, Rebecca found a job that she loves. She became a nanny. She has worked in that field full time for 17 years. In fact, this is what she does here in Cleveland.

After being part of IHOP for a time, Rebecca began to experience a restlessness. There was something missing that kept her searching for a church like "the early church." She started visiting smaller non-denominational churches. As time went on, she noticed that the churches she attended seemed to be shallow, not much meat to the teachings. It was becoming more and more about uplifting the people. Rebecca wanted more depth, more reverence, more holiness. She wondered why the most important parts of a church for her were missing from these otherwise vibrant churches. She craved a sermon that would tell everyone to repent and confess their sins.

Then one day in 2013, a Protestant friend of hers told her about a Bible study she was going to at an Orthodox church in downtown Kansas City. The friend was shocked that Rebecca did not freak out about it being Orthodox. In fact, Rebecca asked if she could go with her just to see what it was like. There was no church building, but the rented space was turned into an Orthodox place to worship. Rebecca was expecting it to be like the Catholic church, but saw it was nothing like what she expected. There was a lot of bowing and prostrations—she thinks now that it was probably a Forgiveness Vespers service. She was immediately attracted to the reverence, the honor, the humility. However, because of the location, she did not go back for a year.

Rebecca began to despair about finding the right church. She remembers praying one day for God to show her the church she should go to—even if she was wrong about her expectations. There happened to be an Orthodox church in the suburbs that she passed by frequently. It was Holy Trinity Orthodox Church (OCA). She was afraid to go by herself, but eventually worked up enough nerve to email the church. She received an answer four minutes later by the priest, Fr. Tim Sawchak. He invited her to come and chat with him. Her first thought was, "Is this normal?" She had never even spoken to any of the pastors in the churches she had attended since moving to Kansas City. A few days later, she met with Fr. Tim. He took her on a tour of the church and explained the Orthodox items and practices to her before she came to visit a service. It turned out that she and Fr. Tim had a Cleveland connection. He was the priest for St. Peter and Paul Church in Lakewood for seven years.

The next Sunday, Rebecca went to the liturgy at Holy Trinity and continued to go there on a regular basis. However, she took her time about deciding whether or not to convert. She felt like if she converted, it would be like a marriage—a forever type of commitment.

After two years as an inquirer, she told Fr. Tim she wanted to take a break and go back to her former churches to see if she really wanted to go through becoming Orthodox. One visit back convinced her that she wasn't going to miss the Protestant churches. But first, she wanted to see what IHOP ministry leaders would say about it. At her meeting with them, she only told them her name. They did not know her personally and anything about her search into Orthodoxy. She said they opened their Bibles and after a few minutes of silence, they said, "God loves this thing you are seeking Him to do regarding joining a church." Rebecca was amazed and felt this to be a confirmation that she was doing the right thing by joining the Orthodox Church.

Rebecca returned to Holy Trinity and told Fr. Tim she was ready. So, on Lazarus Saturday, 2017, she was baptized and chrismated into the Orthodox Church. Her three-year journey had ended!

Then came COVID. Rebecca decided it was time to move back to Cleveland, which she did in 2020. Meanwhile, though, even through all of her church decisions, Rebecca also was seeking God's will for her in the marriage arena. Did God want her to get married and to whom? Should she become a nun? She turned all of these concerns over to God. She dated some, but nothing ever clicked. One criteria in what she wanted in a spouse was he would have to want to adopt children, as well as possibly having their own. She was surprised that very few men she met wanted to adopt children.

In 2017, after asking God to show her His will concerning marriage, she had a very vivid experience of God's presence, followed by a dream she never forgot. It included a man she had never met. She could see his height, build and coloring, but not his face. It was obvious in the dream that she was going to marry this man. She felt God was telling her to be patient!

Three years later, just a few months before moving back to Cleveland, Rebecca met a man online. His name was William Parker. The only problem was he lived in England and because of COVID travel restrictions they could not meet in person. She realized from her past online dating experience that men on line can appear to be very nice, but in person they could be totally different, making her understandably cautious. Will and Rebecca started talking every day by phone or computer and Will seemed to really like her. Rebecca wanted to slow it down, but then he sent her a box of birthday presents in August, which made her delay telling him she wanted to slow down. Since she had just moved to Cleveland, she felt like she wanted to be free to date, but still maintain her friendship with Will. Consequently, she ended their daily online relationship in September. Will was hurt as expected, and responded by completely ending their friendship.

A year went by. The dating scene for Rebecca was totally fruitless. One day, she decided to contact Will just to see how he was doing. However, all of his contact numbers and online presence had changed. She had no way to reestablish contact. Finally, Rebecca remembered she had the birthday box he sent the last year in her closet. On it, she found his home address. Back to good old-fashioned snail mail! When he got her polite letter asking how he was, he immediately contacted her and their online friendship was reestablished. There was something different this time, and they both really wanted to see where this relationship would go. What they needed most was possible now with the COVID restrictions lifted. In December, 2021 at Christmas time, Will made a trip here to meet Rebecca. She remembered her dream from four years before and she realized that Will fit the description of the unknown man! By Boxing Day (December 26), they both knew that this relationship was going to work. On Memorial Day, five months after they met, they got engaged.

Because it worked better for immigration purposes, on October 7, 2022, they had a civil wedding ceremony in England. They will live apart until their Orthodox wedding on May 20, 2023, here at St. Matthew's. Then Rebecca will move to England to be with her husband for at least the next few years. Will is now a catechumen through St. Matthew's (mostly long distance!) preparing for Holy Chrismation this spring.

Some of their goals in life are to adopt children and to eventually buy land in the United States where they would like to homestead. A personal goal for Rebecca is to help people get well with the aid of using natural remedies. I can vouch for her on that. When we had COVID, she came over with a basket of vitamins and minerals that helped boost our immune system!

We wish Rebecca and Will God's blessings in their life together and maybe someday some of us will see them in England!



Please join ZOE for Life!®

at

Archangel Michael Orthodox Church
for a Prayer Service with Archbishop Nathaniel as we
Pray for the Unborn Children



Sunday, January 22, 2023
6:00 pm
5025 East Mill Road
Broadview Heights 44147

Prayer Service & Presentation will also be Live Streamed

Guest Speaker Presentation Follows -- 6:45 pm
Archbishop Nathaniel
Romanian Orthodox Episcopate



Registration is Free, but required in order to receive a Zoom link.
Please register using the link below before January 15th
<https://forms.gle/MTqZdA4QkXMAF3wr8>

SECOND ANNUAL

**ST. MATTHEW'S
CHILI COOK-OFF**



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What: The 2nd Annual Chili Cook-off, Bake Sale, and Silent Auction Fundraiser for Campers

When: Friday, February 10, 2023

Time: 6:00 pm

Where: St. Matthew Parish Hall

Admission Fee: Free Will Offering

Why: To raise funds for summer church camp tuition* for St. Matthew's youth.

*Note: A 2-week summer session at Antiochian Village is \$950 per camper.

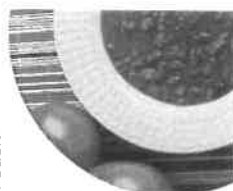
What to bring: Friends + family, your appetite, cash for chili voting + checks + credit

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Attendees will vote with \$\$ for their favorite (anonymous) chilis, and the cooks that raise the most money in each category (white, red, veggie) will each win the **2023 Golden Ladle (plus bragging rights!)**

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THERE WILL BE DELICIOUS BAKED GOODS FOR SALE AS WELL AS EXCITING SILENT AUCTION ITEMS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!



THE PLAN FOR 2023 HOUSEBLESSINGS

Due to the growth of our parish (thanks be to God!) it has become impossible to bless all parishioners' homes during the most common season for the blessings---between Theophany (January 6) and the start of Great Lent (February 27 this year). We are approaching 200 homes and it's not realistic to do them all in that short a time without an adverse effect on the parish (and maybe the priest!). There was the same problem last year although on a lesser level. Many homes did not get blessed. So here is how we will do it this year.

During the Theophany season (dates above) I will focus totally on blessing homes that did not get blessed during 2022, plus all the shut-ins. Once that process nears an end, then I will open up things to bless homes of those blessed in 2022---perhaps some of those can be done before Lent if time allows. I don't do houseblessings in Great Lent. And then after Pascha and throughout the year I can continue on with those who request it. I think it should work out that anyone who specifically requests will get their home blessed. Those who don't have their homes blessed in 2023 will be "top of the list" in 2024.

Thank you very much for your understanding! I look forward to praying with you in your homes starting in less than 2 weeks...

Happy New Year!

In Christ,

Father Andrew

2 ADDITIONAL NOTES CONCERNING HOUSEBLESSINGS

----If you had your home blessed in 2022 and wish it blessed again this year, you can let Father Andrew know. He will put you on a list; as soon as the other houseblessings (those not done in 2022) are completed, Father will start on that list.

----For health reasons, Father Andrew has to limit his food intake in this season! So either nothing or just a simple snack is fine,---and.....Doctor's orders: no sweets! If you do wish to have a meal with him, please let him know ahead of time.

THE ZOE FOR LIFE DIAPER DRIVE January 2023

The St. Matthew Sisterhood is hosting it's Annual
"Zoe for Life" Diaper Drive each Sunday in January, 2023.

We are asking everyone to please donate an unwrapped package of
diapers. Any size will do but the smaller sizes may be the most helpful.

There will be a decorated box in the church hall to receive the diapers
and you can bring them in on any Sunday in January.

As always, a monetary donation is also very helpful, and you can
make your checks out to "Zoe for Life."

Please help to make the Diaper Drive a success and may God Bless you
for helping those in great need!!

Thank you!!!



ASK THE PRIEST

THIS SECTION OF THE NEWSLETTER IS FOR QUESTIONS TO FR. ANDREW CONCERNING OUR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FAITH---ANYTHING YOU HAVE BEEN WONDERING ABOUT! JUST LET FR. ANDREW KNOW....

WHAT CEREMONIES OR PRAYERS ARE DONE FOR A DYING ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN?

Three sacraments are done prior to the death of an Orthodox Christian. Holy Unction, anointing with holy oil, is done. (The term "extreme unction" is a Roman Catholic term, not an Orthodox term.) The sacrament of Holy Unction given at the time of death is actually the same sacrament we receive if we are sick or on Wednesday evening in Holy Week. Of course, when a person is at the point of immanent death, the intent of the sacrament is different. Although a miracle of healing to get the person up from the deathbed would be wonderful, the main intent of anointing at the time of death is to prepare the Christian for his journey to God's presence and for the final and total healing of the world to come.

The sacrament of Confession also takes place---the dying person is given a last opportunity to confess any sin on their conscience and to hear the comforting words of absolution and forgiveness by God pronounced by the priest.

And the sacrament of the Eucharist, Holy Communion, is given to the dying Christian. What better way to prepare to stand before the Judgment Seat of God than by receiving one last time, in faith and repentance, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Also, there are special prayers prayed for the soul of the person at the point of death. If there is a long and difficult time of struggle, there are prayers that are prayed asking God to quickly and peacefully take the soul of the dying one. And, following the death, the Trisagion memorial service is prayed over the body of the recently departed Christian.

These sacraments and prayers, all combined together, are what are done for a dying Orthodox Christian. It is a great blessing to receive such spiritual help when we die. Therefore, family members should always do all possible to contact the priest to come to the dying one when death is immanent, no matter what time of day or night.

WHY IS OUR CHURCH CALLED "ORTHODOX"?

The word "Orthodox" derives from the early centuries of Christianity. The word was used to describe the Church as distinguished from various heretical groups who denied certain aspects of the Apostolic Faith as handed down from Christ and the Apostles. The word is of Greek origin and literally means "straight worship" or "true worship". It also came quickly to mean "true belief".

When we call our Church Orthodox we are saying that it has the true worship and true belief and is the same Church founded by Jesus Christ on the foundation of the Apostles. What a blessing and privilege and responsibility for us to be part of Christ's true, Orthodox Church, citizens of God's household! As St. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2: 19-22---"So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

WHY IS THE LITURGY ALMOST ENTIRELY SUNG, NOT SPOKEN?

When we're happy we sing (or maybe whistle!). Whistling the Liturgy would be tough!--so we sing it. The Liturgy is a time of joy, so we sing. The litanies are sung, the Gospel is sung, the variable hymns are sung by the chanters, almost all of the priest's prayers are sung, and the beautiful and majestic hymns such as the Trisagion, the Cherubic Hymn, etc., are sung by the people.

The last book of the Bible, Revelation, tells us more about heaven than any other part of the Bible and it describes it as a very musical place with lots of singing! An example is a description of heavenly worship given in Revelation 4:8---"day and night they never cease to sing, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come". In the Liturgy, we, in a mystery, enter into heaven. You know the old saying, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." So when we enter heaven in the Liturgy, we do as the heavenly beings do---we sing!

What is especially wonderful about the Liturgy at St. Matthew's (and many other parishes) is that we *all* sing. Standing in the front at the altar, I get the full effect and volume of our congregational singing---it is truly wonderful to hear.

What if you're not a very good singer and so you're reluctant to sing out? Sing anyway. Don't worry---the good singers will drown out any mistakes you make. And even if they don't, God will be pleased to hear you sing anyway, even if you're out of tune. Remember the Psalm verse---"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!" As long as it's joyous, God will graciously accept your worship in song, even if to some human ears it sounds more like noise. Of course, we should do all we can to make our Liturgy music the best offering we can give to God, but it's even more important that we all make that offering of song, even if we're not good singers.

Musical excellence is great and we should strive for it. But even more important is that we all enthusiastically worship God and offer Him our song, as humble as our talents may be. Let our words be that of Asaph who wrote in Psalm 75:9---"I will rejoice forever, I will sing praises to the God of Jacob."

**THE MAIN HYMN OF THEOPHANY, JANUARY 6TH----AS WE
CELEBRATE THE BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST**

“When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness unto Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, Who hast revealed Thyself and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee!”

St. Matthew Orthodox Church

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