

**ST. MATTHEW THE EVANGELIST
ANTIOCHIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH
JANUARY, 2022, NEWSLETTER**

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**SATURDAY VESPERS—5 p.m.
SUNDAY MATINS—8:50 a.m. SUNDAY LITURGY—10 a.m.
CONFESSION—after Vespers and 9:45 a.m. on Sundays**

EXTRA WORSHIP SERVICES IN JANUARY

---THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY) SERVICE SCHEDULE ---

THE CELEBRATION OF THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST:

Wednesday, January 5, Eve of the Feast

Royal Hours & Typica, 9 a.m.

Vesperal Divine Liturgy with Great Blessing of Water, 4 p.m.

Thursday, January 6, Theophany Day

Festal Matins, 8:45 a.m.

Festal Liturgy, 10 a.m.

Outdoor Blessing of Water—right after liturgy (it's just a few minutes

long service) at lake just south of our property. **POTLUCK FOLLOWING**

Then houseblessings begin.....

2022 HOME BLESSINGS

The annual blessing of homes will for the most part take place between Theophany, January 6 and the start of Great Lent, March 7. If needed (commonly it is) some more can be done after Pascha.

Due to the increased size of the parish in the last couple of years (lots more homes to bless!) and also due to the hesitancy of some (due to COVID) to have visitors in their home, it will be up to parishioners (except our shut-ins) to specifically request a houseblessing. Generally speaking, you won't be contacted but will have to request it.

Houseblessings will have to be shorter (like in 2021) than they often were in past years when there were less homes. Visits will be only 15-30 minutes long. If you wish to have me over for more time than that, your home can be scheduled late in the houseblessing season when things are slowing down.

You are welcome to have a bowl of water out to be blessed----if not, I always brings holy water along. An icon and candle are good, but not required.

I will wear a mask in your home if you request, but not during the actual ceremony.

There is certainly no obligation or expectation of food or coffee. ***Remember, please, no sweets!***

I look forward to being with you in your home soon! Happy New Year and Blessed Theophany!

-----*Father Andrew*

GIFTS FOR JESUS

If you did not make a special "Gift For Jesus" offering for the parish at Christmas but still wish to do so-----you can either mail in or put in offering box a special Christmas donation to the parish any time up through January 16.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL (usually once a month)—January 16 beginning promptly during Coffee Hour. Adults should bring food to the board room in back of hall if they wish to attend. Kristi Tartara will speak on her experience of how illness gave her faith like a child----in a talk entitled "There's Always Hope".

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.

NORTH BIBLE STUDY---Not meeting in January—because host family, the Parkers, will be out of state.

WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP—Friday, January 21, 1 pm. All women welcome! The location is at Tara Reidy's, 274 Elmwood, Berea. For more info, call Sandy Tolbert, 440-773-9162.

WEST BIBLE STUDY—Saturday, January 22, 6 pm at the church. Studying Wisdom of Sirach.

SOUTH BIBLE STUDY—January 4 & 18, 6:30 pm at Craig & Cindy George's, 9451 Sherwood Trail, Brecksville. All are welcome. The study will be on the book of Ruth.

NEXT TEEN CLUB MEETING---After liturgy on January 2. Colton Bose will lead a discussion on his decision to become an Orthodox Christian.

ST. HERMAN'S MINISTRY TEAM—Sunday, January 17, is our parish's next monthly turn to provide a meal to the poor at St. Herman Orthodox Homeless Shelter in Cleveland. The meal will be cooked at St. Herman's kitchen that afternoon and then served at 5:30. If you can help with either the cooking or serving or donating for the food on November 21, please speak with Deacon Basil. Thank you to Jon Scordos and Ron Hakaim for providing and cooking the December meal and to Al and Caleb Blazek for helping serve it.

OUR PARISH'S MINISTRY OF DELIVERY OF FOOD, CLOTHING, ETC. TO THE HOMELESS ON THE STREETS OF CLEVELAND will not take place in January.

HOMESCHOOL SUPPORT GROUP---Friday, January 14, 9 a.m.

OUR CONDOLENCES TO—

--Sam Daher and family on the falling asleep in Christ of Sam's father, Butch Drozdowski, on

---Michael Palmer & Scott Palmer on the falling asleep in Christ of their mother, Sue Palmer, on December 22

ST. MATTHEW'S MESSAGE BOARD

LILY SCANLON IS AVAILABLE TO BABYSIT. I have taken the Babysitter's course through University Hospitals where I learned CPR, basic first aid, and choke rescue. Call me at 440-319-6270. I live in Berea and can travel as long as it's not too far away.

SOME INFO ABOUT HOUSEBLESSINGS FROM FATHER ANDREW . . . *WHY ARE HOMES BLESSED NEAR THE START OF THE NEW YEAR?*

The main season for blessing homes is during the weeks after Theophany (or Epiphany) on January 6, when we celebrate the baptism of Jesus Christ. At the services for that feast holy water is blessed. Then, in the days and weeks following, the priest goes to the homes and blesses the homes and families with that holy water. There are two main reasons for this blessing of homes: 1. To remind us of Christ's baptism and of our own baptisms. 2. As a prayer for God's blessing on our homes and families in the new year.

God made our bodies as well as our souls and He is concerned about every aspect of our lives, not just "spiritual" things. Our health, our house, our cars, our pets (I have blessed everything from dogs to iguanas to pigs to horses to fish, etc., etc.)----all are important to God. So, at the houseblessing, we ask for His blessings on them all.

Even though houseblessings are usually done in the weeks after Theophany and before the start of Great Lent they can be done at other times of the year, such as when someone moves into a different home during the year or, if for whatever reason, it wasn't possible to have the blessing done in the Theophany season. ***HOW SHOULD A HOME BLESSING BE PREPARED FOR?***

The first thing is to get it scheduled! Unlike most years, this year it is up to you to contact me to schedule (see the other houseblessing article in this newsletter to see more about that) If possible try to schedule it when all family members can be present.
—Father Andrew.

CONGRATULATIONS TO-----

---Victoria Shaker who received the blessing to become a Catechumen on December 19th in preparation for entering the Orthodox Church at a later date.

NEW PARISHIONERS IN DECEMBER

ELIAS KARAM

16204 Shurmer Road
Strongsville, OH 44136
440-846-9404

DR. JONATHAN & KRISTINA TARTARI

Stephanie, Elle
4012 Olde Orchard Trail
Richfield, OH 44286
Jonathan---440-523-1072 Kristina--330-221-5395

Jonathan_jtartara@protomail.com

Kristina k_tartara@yahoo.com

DR. KARL & DR. AGNI WAGNER

Karl IV, Zoe

111 Partridge Lane

Chagrin Falls, OH 44022

Karl--734-673-3174 Agni--216-965-1099

Karl karlwagner2@yahoo.com

Agni agniwagner@yahoo.com

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

OUR CURRENT CATECHUMEN LIST----We pray for them at each liturgy. Please pray for them during the week as well as they prepare to enter the Orthodox Church.

James, Katie, Liam, Matrim, Nolan, Oaken, & Phaedryn Bunch

Colton Bose

Mariya Butt

Jamie & Lucas Domonkos

Stephen Kulchar

Michael Palmer

Victoria Thorp

Victoria Shaker

OUR CHURCH FAMILY MEET-UP

I'd like to introduce you to one of our newer parishioners—Jerry Lee Morrision, a resident of Scenic Pointe Nursing Home in Millersburg, Ohio. When you go to visit Jerry, you may be greeted when you asked him how he is with, “Tre—men—dous! Couldn't be any better. Thanks be to God!”

Jerry was born in 1969 in Millersburg. He was named after Jerry Lee Lewis, the famous rock star piano player. His dad was a diesel mechanic and his mother worked for the county. He was raised with two awesome sisters, as Jerry describes them. His relationship with his father (now deceased) was quite rocky. He turned to alcohol at an early age in an attempt to cope with his problems.

The huge turning point in his life came in 1988 when he was 18. He was living in Florida at that time. One day after becoming very drunk, he entered a liquor store and tried to rob it. The store owner had a gun and shot Jerry in the head. Everyone thought he would die, but God had other plans for him.

Slowly, he started to recover. He was transported to Green Springs, Ohio, for rehabilitation. This is where he learned to walk again. As a result of his injury, Jerry is paralyzed on his left side and he has lost a large percentage of his vision, but otherwise his recovery has been miraculous.

He tells me that in 1989, a year after his gunshot wound, he had a “radical conversion” to Christ. After four years of living for Christ, he fell away, but eventually came back to the Lord. I asked him what brought him back and he said he was tired of being miserable. “Not walking with the Lord equals misery.”

Jerry attended Liberty Bible School (Baptist) in Virginia. There he studied the Bible. But he learned even more by studying on his own. He would read the Bible through every two months. He has memorized parts of the gospels, the book of James, Galatians, and several other books. This he says is his hobby—to study the holy scriptures and to pray.

In 2004, he was invited to an Orthodox vespers service at his sister's house in Millersburg. Father David Tillman was serving. Jerry had a negative view of Orthodoxy, but he decided to go to the service and convince the Orthodox they were wrong. He said, “I was going to use an arsenal of scriptures to gun them down.” Instead they fought back quoting scripture. Jerry recognized that the Holy Spirit was present and he became convinced of the truth of Orthodoxy. He was soon chrismated.

An Orthodox parish was established in Nashville, Ohio, about 10 miles from Millersburg, around 2004. Jerry attended that church, but unfortunately, it lasted less than a year.

Jerry has lived in a nursing home for the last 17 years. Someone picks him up twice a month to attend the liturgy at St. Gregory Palamas Monastery. He became a member of St. Matthew's about a year ago.

What a blessing it was for me to interview Jerry. He is such an example of how we all should be—living 100% for Jesus Christ. For him it is all or nothing. He describes his relationship with Christ, “It is just phenomenal. There is so much joy, peace, and contentment. He speaks to my heart. I am so thankful to God for my extreme physical limitations which have been a total blessing. At times when I do struggle, I go back to Proverbs 3:5 which says, ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding.’ I am only His

humble slave.” He goes on to say, “You can’t just say you believe in God. Every single area of your life has to be changed to the glory of God.”

As for his goal for the remaining time of his life on this earth, he said, “To convert the whole world to Jesus.”

I will end with what Jerry shared with me as though he were sharing with me a treasure. He quoted from Psalm 25:14, “The Lord confides in those who fear Him.” I will never read that verse again and not think of the excitement and joy this promise gives Jerry.



--*Khourie Bonnie*

THE ZOE FOR LIFE DIAPER DRIVE January 2022

The St. Matthew Sisterhood is hosting it's Annual Zoe for Life Diaper Drive each Sunday in January, 2022.

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!!!

