

January 2017



SAINT INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

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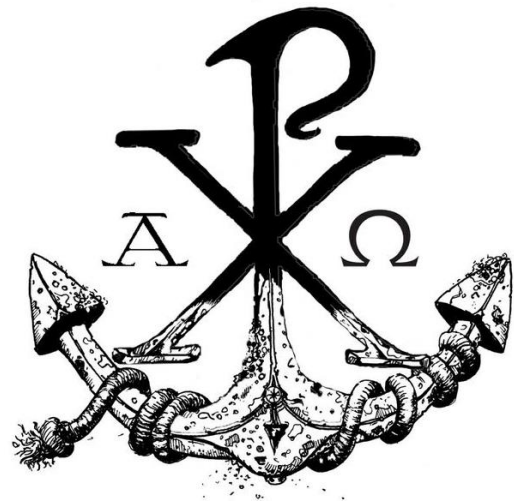
January 2017 Newsletter

Happy New Year!

The author of Ecclesiastes tells us, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven." He then goes on to list a multitude of seasons we exist in, "A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal..."

As we begin the year of 2017 it is a good time to reflect on the particular season we find ourselves in. What have you passed through in this past year? What season are you in? As the priest I am generally aware of the general seasons that people are living in and through. In 2016 there were many transitions for members in our community. Some lost loved ones, while others gave birth; some drew closer to the church, while others withdrew; some of us are looking for work, while others are looking to retire. Each season carries its own struggle and potential joy. It is a good thing to be aware of the season we find ourselves in.

The thing about seasons is that they come and go without regard to how we feel about them. We do not have any control over the



transitions that we may have to go through in the coming year. If we are honest with ourselves, most of us have very little control over anything. Our world, personal, local, and/or global can easily descend into chaos rather quickly. We would love to believe that we can somehow order and arrange all things to work out the way we would like them to. However, it only takes one surprise overnight stay at the hospital to teach one that life is very unpredictable and that our plans are easily thrown out by circumstances.

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As Christians one of the things we are trying to achieve in uniting ourselves to Christ is communing with our God who is outside of time and change. All the practices of our faith are there to help us unite ourselves to Christ. Our God is not subject to change and the constant fluctuations that we go through day to day. The author of Hebrews tells us that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." True stability is only found in Christ. Christ is the only one who can walk on waves, calm the winds, or even sleep in the midst of the storm. Christ is the only one who has faced and conquered death. It is in drawing close to Christ that we can partake in His immovability that is rooted in eternity and absolutely unshakable.

Think about the apostles, it is doubtless that they suffered and were pressed with various needs and even were persecuted and martyred. Yet, the apostles and martyrs seem to look beyond and through their current circumstances to something greater. Christian saints have always considered themselves "sojourners" on earth who were seeking a heavenly homeland. Christ himself is the promise land.

In this coming year we will all face many transitions and changes whether we want to or not. Hopefully we won't have too many surprises but either way we have no control. Whatever season we may personally be in, as Christians, our ultimate goal, personally and as a community, is to unite ourselves to Christ. May our Lord give us grace to make the main goal of our year the pursuit of putting our lives in Christ so that while we are sojourning through the various seasons of life we may be able to lay hold of eternity.

In Christ,

Fr. Theophan

Announcements

- Thursday January 5th is a fast day. Friday the 6th is a feast day.
- We will celebrate The Great Feast of Theophany with Great Vespers on Thursday the 5th at 6pm followed by the blessing of the water. On Friday the 6th at 9am we will serve the Festal Diving Liturgy.
- On Sunday, January 8th after the Divine Liturgy we will process to Amerson River Park to celebrate the great blessing of the waters followed by food and fellowship.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Thursday, January 19th at 7pm.
- We will be serving the Paraklesis on Friday, January 27th. Please submit name of those whom you would like us to pray for.
- *New, change in time!* Confessions are heard every Saturday *after Great Vespers* or before Sunday Liturgy between 9:15-9:40am if there is a need.

Book Club

On Tuesday, January 10 at 6:30pm we will meet at Jessica's place for the Book Club. The book we will be discussing is *Words for Our Time: The Spiritual Words of Matthew the Poor*. Copies are available in our bookstore for \$17. Light refreshments will be provided by the host. All are welcome.

Many Years!

| | | |
|------------------|----|----------------------|
| Birthdays | 1 | George Moore |
| | 6 | Olga Uchakin |
| | 14 | Esme San Bonaventura |
| | 17 | Peter Hintermaier |
| | 21 | Carmen Luca |
| | 24 | Leann Almquist |
| | 27 | Anton Osobov |

| | | |
|----------------------|----|---------------------|
| Anniversaries | 1 | Colin & Molly Croft |
| | 12 | Ray & Patti Lanier |

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Seminarian Update

Dn. Seth Earl to be ordained

St. Innocent Church has helped Dn. Seth and Mat. Stephany with tuition throughout their time at seminary at St. Vladimir's.

His Grace Alexander, Bishop of Dallas and the South (OCA) will ordain Deacon Seth Earl to the Holy Priesthood on Tuesday, January 10th. The ordination will take place during the Divine Liturgy on the feast of St Gregory of Nyssa at 9:30 am, at St. John the Wonderworker in Atlanta, Ga. Please remember Dcn Seth and Stephanie in your prayers as they take this next step in ministry. *Service Times:*

Monday, January 9th: Great Vespers at 6pm

Tuesday, January 10th: Hierarchical Liturgy 9:30am



Theophany House Blessings

It is a tradition in the Orthodox Church to have your house blessed every year between the feast of Theophany (January 6) and the beginning of Lent (February 26 this year). In many places, after the water is blessed on the day of Theophany the priest would begin to go house to house, blessing with the Theophany water. In our times many people live further away from Church so it has become the custom for the priest to be invited to a particular home to do a house blessing.

House blessings are the spiritual version of a spring cleaning. Over the year our houses slowly collect dust and dirt, likewise our homes over the year can become “spiritually dirty”. It is therefore important to cleans and refresh our living environment.

In general the priest will bring all that is needed to bless the house. There are a few things the homeowner can provide such as an icon of Christ and a candle. Also, a list of first names for whom prayers are to be offered, including members of the family and all those living in the house. The list should have a clear distinction between the living and the dead.

Traditions surrounding the blessing differ according to local custom. In general, when the priest comes, all who are present in the house gather around the icon with the candle. Often the family will say the Trisagion Prayers and then help the priest sing of the Troparion of the Feast of Theophany. Then a family member, often the head of the household, leads the priest through the house with the candle. As he goes, the priest sprinkles holy water, and prays for a blessing upon each room and the activity that goes on there. For a houses which have never been blessed the process is a little more involved, the priest will discuss this with you.

It is a pious custom in many cultures to offer the priest a donation. This donation is never required or even expected.

If you desire to have your house blessed please sign up at Church or you can email or call me to set a date and time. I look forward the opportunity to visit all of your homes.

(I have two Saturdays on the calendar below that I hope to organize multiple house blessings in one day. I will need help with this. I was thinking one Saturday would be for Macon and the next could be for Warner Robins area.)

January 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1 9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45 Agape Cutting of the Vasilopita | 2 | 3 | 4 6pm Daily Vespers | 5 Strict Fast 9-1pm CPE 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 6pm Great Vespers with Blessing of Waters | 6 9am Divine Liturgy for Theophany | 7 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions |
| 8 9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy Blessing of the Waters at Amerson River park With Picnic | 9 Bishop Alexander in Atlanta | 10 9:30am Divine Liturgy w/ Priestly Ordination @ St. John's in Atlanta 6pm Book club | 11 6pm Daily Vespers | 12 9-1pm CPE 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry | 13 | 14 8-4pm Fr. Theophan @ McRae Mission 10am Church Cleanup 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions |
| 15 9:15 Church school 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape | 16 | 17 | 18 6pm Daily Vespers | 19 9-1pm CPE 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry 7pm Parish Council | 20 | 21 <i>(House Blessing Day)</i> 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions |
| 22 9:15 Church school 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:15 Parish Update | 23 | 24 | 25 6pm Daily Vespers | 26 9-1pm CPE 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry | 27 6pm Paraklesis <i>(Prayer group)</i> | 28 <i>(House Blessing Day)</i> 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions |
| 29 Zacchaeus Sunday 9:15 Church school 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape | 30 | 31 | | | | |

February 2017

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|--|--|--------------|--|
| | | | 1 6pm Great Vespers w/Litya for the Meeting | 2 9am Divine Liturgy for the Meeting of Christ in the Temple 9-1pm CPE 1-4pm Central State | 3 | 4 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions |
| 5 Publican and Pharisee 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape | 6 | 7 | 8 No Fast 6pm Daily Vespers | 9 9-1pm CPE 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry | 10 No Fast | 11 8-4pm Fr. Theophan @ McRae Mission 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions |
| 12 Prodigal Son 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape | 13 | 14 Fr. Theophan @ DOS Pastoral Conference in TX <i>7pm Bolingbroke Community Club</i> | 15 Fr. Theophan @ DOS Pastoral Conference in TX 6pm Readers Vespers | 16 Fr. Theophan @ DOS Pastoral Conference in TX | 17 | 18 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions |
| 19 Last Judgment 9:40am 3 & 6 th Hours 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape | 20 Meat Fast | 21 Meat Fast | 22 Meat Fast 6pm Daily Vespers | 23 Meat Fast 9-1pm CPE 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry | 24 Meat Fast | 25 Meat Fast 6pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Confessions |
| 26 Forgiveness Sunday 9:40 Hours 10am Divine Liturgy Followed by Forgiveness Vespers 12:45pm Agape | 27 Great Lent Begins 6:30pm Compline with the Great Canon | 28 6:30pm Compline with the Great Canon | | | | |