
Saint Innocent

Orthodox Christian Church

August 2019 Newsletter & Calendar



Annual Parish Report

Submitted to the Diocese of the South

Every year we are asked to write a parish report and send it to the Diocese of the South to report on the highlights of our past year. Parish reports give everyone around the diocese a chance to see what is going on in any given parish. If you are interested in other parishes around our deanery and diocese feel free to read them: <https://www.dosoca.org/2019-assembly-documents>.

Here is our report: We have had another blessed year at St. Innocent. Our Sunday attendance has held steady and increased a bit to around 55-65 on an average Sunday. We continue to have visitors and people moving to our area that join our community. This Pentecost we Chrismated four new adult members into the Church. Our choir continues to be one of our best assets. Prison ministry continues. We continue to post sermons and classes on YouTube and Fr.

August 2019

and be regularly invited to the local colleges to give presentations on Orthodox Christianity.

As you may remember, last year we finished our new parish hall and over this past year we have been settling into it. It is amazing what having proper fellowship space does for a community! Our new facilities make having classes and having guest speakers much easier. As a result, we started a new Church School program which meets once a month on Saturday and is followed by Vespers and then food and fellowship. Being a parish with a sixty-mile radius, having Church School once a month and adding fellowship makes sense and has improved our participation. We also had an outreach event last fall which offered two classes to the general public entitled "From Christ to Constantine." This past Lent we brought in three monastic speakers, a sister from St. Elizabeth's Convent, the nuns from Mary and Martha Monastery, and Fr. Seraphim from the Mull Monastery. Finally, this year we celebrated our annual Pascha party at the new parish hall, and had record attendance. The parish hall is helping our parish grow, develop, and establish itself. In the past we have always felt a bit hamstrung by our lack of fellowship space.

Since we have been a parish which always seems to have a project going on, we wanted to make sure we weren't becoming overly self-focused. As we discussed this concern with the parish a volunteer came forward and we formed a charity group this past year. Each fasting season we raise funds for various needs. Our people are very generous and in the past year we have supported a pregnancy center, the various monastic visitors, a homeless ministry, and a group that helps kids with cancer. This past year we set a record with charity giving.

While being charitable, by God's grace, we were also able to add beautiful bells and a "bell tower" to our parish which has added beauty to our services. The purchasing of the bells felt as though every movement we made was ordained by God's grace and providence. The wood for the bell tower was donated and a dedicated parishioner and master carpenter built our new structure at low cost. We had a few members of St. Symeon in Birmingham come and teach us some basics of bell ringing. While this was going on, we also received funds to order a large, Amish style wooden boat playground which we recently built behind our parish



This year has also had a lot of administrative developments. For our Cemetery, we finalized all the bylaws, rules and regulations and easement documents and after a long wait the pins were placed. In short, our Cemetery is in business. We also came up with an iron clad Parish Hall Usage document to protect us in the future. It's nice to have an honorable Judge as a member of our community!

Now that we have the facilities and everything is settling into order, in the coming year we are praying that God will reveal to us what direction or project we need to begin to work on. It would be nice to organize more outreach events to bring our community to our parish. We may also, if it pleases the Lord, begin to focus on the first phase of iconography for our beautiful temple.

We are a thankful community and as we head into our 23rd year it is our prayer that God would continue to grace us, guide us, and send us spiritually hungry people and help us to do His work in the Middle Georgia region. day, and thus have to miss holy services.

August 2019



**Ronald McDonald
House Charities®**

Central Georgia

Seasonal Charity

We will be partnering with the Ronald McDonald House of Central GA to support their mission during August to mid-September. "It is the mission of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Georgia to provide care and support for families of seriously ill, critically injured or medically fragile children being treated at area medical facilities." "We believe in keeping families together." Many families do not have the resources to live near the hospital their child is receiving treatment. Since 2002, Ronald McDonald House has provided comfortable beds, warm meals, hot showers, laundry facilities, internet access, and emotional support to over 7,500 families. They have 13 rooms and due to high demand are building 16 more. Our charitable donations will go a long way towards offsetting the \$120.00 per day expense for each family. We will be collecting items for their "Wish List" in addition to our financial donations. Please indicate the charity on your check on the subject line and place any cash in an envelope indicating the charity. Most needed Wish list items include: Individually wrapped crackers, cookies, granola bars. Laundry detergent. Trash bags (4,8, and 39 gallon). PAPER plates, bowls (no Styrofoam). Plastic utensils. Sugar. Dishwasher detergent. Plastic storage containers. Drano. 6&8 oz. cups. Lysol spray and cleaner. Individual cereal boxes. Vegetable oil. Any size Ziploc bags. Canned fruit and vegetables, p-nut butter, spag. sauce. Gratitude begets generosity,... what are you grateful for?



News & Announcements

- There are a few finishing touches that need to be done on the playground so please keep an eye on your children. Especially, since we have no ground cover yet for their protection if they fall.
- There will be a Church School Meeting for teachers on Sunday, August 4th during coffee hour.
- The Dormition Fast is from August 1st through the 15th. Orthodox Christians are asked to abstain from meat and dairy during the fast.
- There are two Great Feasts in August, Holy Transfiguration on the 6th and the Dormition of the Theotokos on the 15th. Please see the service schedule below for service times.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, August 21st at 7 pm.
- Fr. Theophan will be out of town at the Antiochian House of Studies for his fall residency from August 26th through the 30th.
- Please see the calendar below for liturgical schedule.
- If you would like to partake of the Sacrament of Confession the best times are before or after any scheduled service.

Many Years!

Birthdays

2 Mason Hough
8 Susie Savage
11 Rachel Marble
13 Seraphin Curington
14 Jacob Plummer
18 Dimetri Lickwar
23 Olivia Savage
23 Sarah Savage
23 Stephanie Curington
23 Tony Lopez
24 Nadia Stephens
26 Eric Olson
28 Maksimus Lickwar

Anniversaries

6 Fr. Theophan & Pres. Elena Buck
13 John & Heidi Hintermaier
15 Barry & Bianca Lee
20 Linda & Paul Tutcher
20 Olga & Peter Uchakin
27 Allen & Leann Almquist



Why do we fast before Dormition?

"So why do we fast before Dormition? In a close-knit family, word that its matriarch is on her deathbed brings normal life to a halt. Otherwise important things (parties, TV, luxuries, personal desires) become unimportant; life comes to revolve around the dying matriarch. It is the same with the Orthodox family; word that our matriarch is on her deathbed, could not (or at least should not) have any different effect than the one just mentioned. The Church, through the Paraklesis Service, gives us the opportunity to come to that deathbed and eulogize and entreat the woman who bore God, the vessel of our salvation and our chief advocate at His divine throne. And as, in the earthly family, daily routines and the indulgence in personal wants should come to a halt. Fasting, in its full sense (abstaining from food and desires), accomplishes this. Less time in leisure or other pursuits leaves more time for prayer and reflection on she who gave us Christ and became the first and greatest Christian. In reflecting on her and her incomparable life, we see a model Christian life, embodying Christ's retort to the woman who stated that Mary was blessed because she bore Him: blessed rather are those who hear His word and keep it. Mary did this better than anyone. As Fr. Thomas Hopko has stated, she heard the word of God and kept it so well, that she of all women in history was chosen not only to hear His Word but give birth to it (Him). So while we fast in contemplation of her life, we are simultaneously preparing ourselves to live a life in imitation of her. That is the purpose of the Dormition Fast." from the Antiochian website by Daniel Manzuk hall. Again, God has been good to us!

Feast Day traditions!

- **The Paraklesis Service** (Supplicatory Canon to the Theotokos) is traditionally sung during the Dormition Fast (August 1-14). This service is also sung during times of distress. We will have the paraklesis service on Wednesday the 7th and Friday the 9th.
- **Blessing of the first fruits on the Feast of Transfiguration.** On the Great Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord it is traditional to bless grapes and fruit after the immediately after the Festal Divine Liturgy. This is part of an ancient tradition, dating back to ancient Israel, of setting apart and blessing the first-fruits of the harvest as a way of giving part of it back to God in thanksgiving. For Orthodox Christians, the blessing of fruit is done on the day commemorating the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ, when He let the light of His divinity shine through His human body to be seen by some of His disciples. Aside from celebrating the bounty God has provided, the blessing of fruit also serves as a reminder that everything God has created is good and can further our relationship with Him.
- **Blessing of Flowers and Fragrant Herbs on Dormition.** Holy Tradition tells us that all the Apostles, with the exception of St. Thomas, were transported mystically to Jerusalem in order to be with the Mother of God – the Theotokos – as she reposed, and to be present at her burial. When the Apostle Thomas arrived the next day, the Apostles opened the tomb so that he could kiss her farewell. As the tomb was opened, the body of the Most Pure Virgin was missing, and the cave was filled with flowers and the sweet fragrance of Paradise. This was a sure sign of her great purity and holiness to the faithful. Therefore as part of our celebration of Dormition we bless flowers and fragrant herbs – and the faithful traditionally keep them in their homes. The herbs, used as natural medicine, are blessed in commemoration of the numerous healings and the extraordinary grace bestowed on the pilgrims at the blessed tomb of the Mother of God. During times of family strife or illness, it is a pious custom to place the flower petals in the house censer, together with the incense, and cense the whole house with it.

August 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	2	3 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
4 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy Back to School Prayers 11:45am Agape Catechism	5 6pm Vigil for the Great Feast of Transfiguration	6 9am Transfiguration Liturgy with blessing of grapes & fruit	7 6pm Paraklesis to the Mother of God	8 8am MCMA Meeting 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	9	10 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
11 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	12	13 9am Morning Prayers	14 6pm Vigil for Dormition w/ Lamentations	15 9am Dormition Liturgy with blessing of herbs & flowers	16	17 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
18 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape Catechism	19	20 9am Morning Prayers	21 6pm Daily Vespers 7pm Parish Council Meeting	22 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	23	24 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
25 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	26 <i>Fr. Theophan @ Antiochian House of Studies through Friday</i>	27	28 6pm Readers Vespers	29 The beheading of St. John the Baptist	30	31 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers

Tentative September 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Church New Year 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape Catechism	2	3 9am Morning Prayers	4 6pm Daily Vespers	5 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	6	7 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
8 Nativity of the Theotokos 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	9	10 9am Morning Prayers	11 6pm Daily Vespers	12 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	13 6pm Vigil for the Exaltation of the Cross	14 Strict Fast 9am Liturgy for the Feast of the Cross 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
15 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	16	17 9am Morning Prayers	18 6pm Daily Vespers	19 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	20	21 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
22 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	23	24 9am Morning Prayers	25 6pm Daily Vespers	26 9am Morning Prayers 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	27	28 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
29 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	30					