

SAINT INNOCENT

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

September 2019 Newsletter

Parish Mission Statement

These last few years at St. Innocent have been a bit busy as we built our parish hall, founded our cemetery, built our playground and bell tower while rebooting our church school and our normal parish life. These developments and many of the things we have done over the last nine years have been focused on establishing our church and setting it up for a healthy future. God continues to bless us!

For the last nine years, we have used a short paragraph posted on our website as a general mission statement for our community. "St. Innocent Orthodox Christian Church is a diverse community of believers seeking salvation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Like our patron saint, the 19th-century missionary to Alaska, St. Innocent, our parish seeks to bring the Early Christian faith, worship and practice - what believers called "the Way" - to the greater Middle Georgia

region." This past year we started to talk about the possibility of updating our parish mission statement.

"If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." —George Harrison. Parish mission statements are an opportunity to define parish goals, ethics, culture, and norms for decision-making. A mission statement is an articulated reason for existing; a written declaration of a parish's core purpose and focus. Last year the parish council spent some time discussing what is unique about our parish's core identity. Parish mission statements can also set a vision for the future. However, mission and vision statements are not magic, a community must seek to live out the mission and although a written guide can be useful, it never encapsulates the entirety of what God is doing in any given community.

Last month I had a few people write up a draft of what our mission statement might be. The goal was to take the information from our discussions and write a succinct paragraph. Once we have the succinct mission statement, we plan

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on taking each line to elaborate more of who we are as a community. Here are two iterations based on the same information which came from the Parish Council's discussions this past year.

Emulating the work of its patron saint, Innocent, a 19th century Russian missionary to the indigenous peoples of Alaska, St. Innocent Orthodox Christian Church strives to bring to central Georgia the faith of the early Church: in the holiness and beauty of its worship; in the truth of its two thousand year old beliefs; and in the service and fellowship of its members, who seek to embody and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the life of the world and the salvation of their souls.

Here is a reworded second version to think about.

We at Saint Innocent Orthodox Church strive to emulate the work of our patron saint, Innocent, the 19th century missionary who brought the Gospel of Christ to Alaska's indigenous peoples, by bringing to central Georgia the faith passed down to us by the early Church; expressed in the beauty and holiness of its worship, the truth and fullness of its two thousand year old beliefs, and its imitation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the servant of all, Who sacrificed Himself for the life of the world and for our salvation.

On Sunday, September 22nd we will would like your feedback and guidance in editing the above parish mission statements. All are welcome to participate.



Saturday, September 21st
@ 4pm

This year's Family Church School will kick off on Saturday, September 21st at 4 pm. Like last year we plan to have four age groupings. All classes will be taught from 4-5:30 pm and we hope families will also stay for Great Vespers. The one change this year is that we will have no sit-down meal after Great Vespers. Here are how the classes will be divided.

- Preschoolers 4-5 years old. They do a lot of arts and crafts and participate in reading activities.
- Elementary-aged children participate in several activities, where they explore Orthodox life and religion on the next level.
- We also have classes for teenagers, where they extend their knowledge of Orthodoxy by participating in readings, discussions, group activities, and arts and crafts.
- Fr. Theophan will also be offering classes for adults in the church while the children are being educated.
- We consider it a privilege to be involved in the molding of young lives and we seek to be a positive, Christ-centered influence for each family that includes St. Innocent Orthodox Church School as part of their child's life journey.

Please join us on September 21, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. for our first Church School Saturday. ***Please ensure that you fill out and return the registration form for each child to reserve his/her place during the 2019-2020 educational year.***

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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.
- On the calendar below you will notice that we have added a weekday Liturgy on a few Thursdays.
- On Wednesday, September 11th we will serve the Parakesis service instead of vespers.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, September 11th at 7 pm.
- The Great Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross talks place on Saturday, September 14th. At St. Innocent we will serve Vigil (a particularly beautiful service on this feast day) at 6 pm on Friday the 13th. We have been invited to Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church for, what is their church feast Day. Holy Cross will have Orthros at 9:30am and Divine Liturgy at 10:30am, followed by procession and the Elevation of the Holy Cross.
- Please see the calendar below for our 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

3 Elena Duran
3 Nichole Lawrence
8 Emma Mercer
9 Creed Brandley
12 Mariana Munteanu
14 Nicholai Uchakin
15 Leigh Mills
16 Elena Codreanu
17 Pres. Elena Buck
19 Allen Almquist
20 Larysa Moore
25 Jerome Gratigny
27 Bryan Gordy
29 James Olson
29 Marie Brown
30 Colin Croft

Anniversaries

1 Chris & Sandi Wilcox
1 John & Mariana Turner
16 Mark & Diane Dorogy
25 Bryan & Juliana Gordy
29 Chris & Elena Mareska

Ronald McDonald House Charity (ending on 9/15)

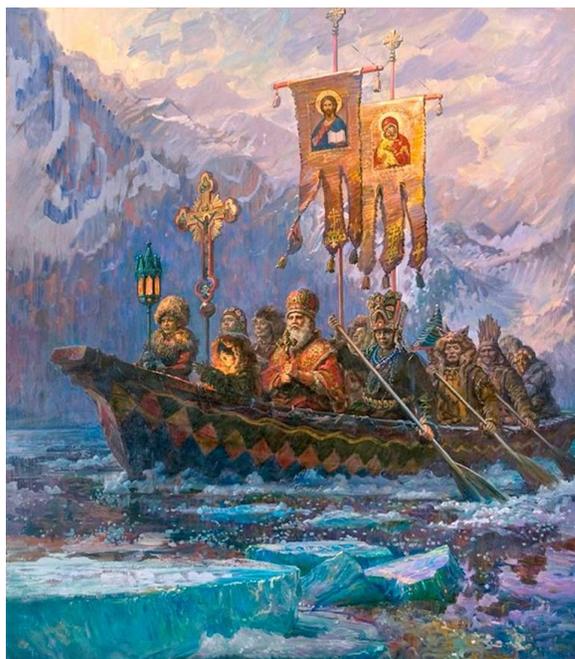
At St. Innocent we consider it part of our mission to support charitable causes heeding the Lord's exhortations to "give alms of such things as ye have" (Luke 11:41), that "thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to the needy, in thy land" (Deuteronomy 15:11). This summer's charity is the Ronald McDonald House of Central GA.

"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 gallons)
- PAPER plates, bowls (no Styrofoam)
- Plastic utensils
- Sugar
- Dishwasher detergent
- Plastic storage containers
- Draino
- 6&8 oz. cups
- Lysol spray and cleaner
- Individual cereal boxes
- Vegetable oil
- Any size Ziploc bags
- Canned fruit and vegetables, p-nut butter, spaghetti Sauce

Gratitude begets generosity,... what are you grateful for?

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Iconography Committee

At St. Innocent Church there has always been an emphasis on beauty and worshipping God “on earth as it is in Heaven.” Beauty, in the Christian sense of the word, draws people to Christ. One way the beauty of Heaven is conveyed in Orthodox churches around the world is by adorning the temple with iconography depicting the life of Christ and various saints. As St. Innocent we were blessed years ago with enough money to begin beautifying our temple. Now that we are settled in our new parish hall the time has come to refocus our energy on adorning our temple. The iconography committee is tasked with finding an iconographer, designing the iconographic scheme, and ‘phasing’ and financing the iconography project. If you are interested in being a part of this committee please let Colin Croft know. Email: stoneworkercmc@yahoo.com

Outreach Committee

We at St. Innocent Orthodox Christian Church strive to emulate the work of our parish’s patron, Saint Innocent, the 19th-century Russian missionary who brought the Gospel of Christ to Alaska’s indigenous peoples. The Orthodox Christian faith is little known in Middle Georgia and we, as a community, have been tasked with bringing the Orthodox faith to our neighbors in the greater Macon area. A few years ago we had an active Outreach Committee which was paused so that we could focus our energies on building our new parish hall. It is time to resurrect the Outreach Committee so that we can thoughtfully, by God’s grace, begin to brainstorm and form ideas about what we can be doing in our community to help people encounter our Lord Jesus Christ. Are you interested in evangelistic outreach? If you are, this committee is an opportunity for your ideas and your work to spread our faith.

Film Project

One of the ways people encounter the Orthodox Church is through the stories of those who have converted to the faith or have had experiences of God within the faith. Ted L is coming to St. Innocent at the end of September. We are hoping to be able to film a few people’s journeys to Orthodoxy and our parish. Please let Fr. Theophan know if you would be interested in telling your story. Dates of filming will be announced. Feel free to email Fr. Theophan with any questions you may have.



What is Realm?

Realm is the parish management software we have been using since early 2018. At St. Innocent we will be increasingly using Realm for parish communications, especially among various committees and groups. Please take the time to sign into realm and claim your profile. Update your information if needed. Our parish directory is on Realm. Realm is also our parish financial software which enables each member to donate, set up automatic or even text payments. You can see your giving history in Realm. Realm can be used as a private online social network for the ministries of our church, as well as a tool to increase communication between the members of these groups and ministries.

We pay for Realm, which means that it is secure. Any information you put on Realm is private and you have the ability to set your own privacy settings in your own profile. If you need help signing into Realm please let Fr. Theophan know.

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Cemetery Plots

We are now ready to sell cemetery plots at St. Innocent! If you are interested in purchasing a plot please speak to Eric Olson. The prices for plots are \$1,500 for members (as defined by our parish bylaws), and \$2,000 for non-members. If needed we can finance plot purchases.

Email: siocemetery@st-innocent.org



The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

The Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross is celebrated each year on September 14. The Feast commemorates the finding of the True Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by Saint Helen, the mother of the Emperor Constantine.

In the twentieth year of his reign (326), the Emperor Constantine sent his mother Saint Helen to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places and to find the site of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Cross. Relying upon the oral tradition of the faithful, Saint Helen found the precious Cross together with the crosses of the two thieves crucified with our Lord. However, Helen had no way of determining which was the Cross of Christ.

With the healing of a dying woman who touched one of the crosses, Patriarch Macarius of Jerusalem identified the True Cross of Christ. Saint Helen and her court venerated the Precious and Life-Giving Cross along with many others who came to see this great instrument of Redemption. The Patriarch mounted the ambo (pulpit) and lifted the Cross with both hands so that all of the people gathered could see it. The crowd responded with "Lord have mercy".

This became the occasion of the institution in all of the Churches of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross, not only in memory of the event of the finding of the Cross, but also to celebrate how an instrument of shame was used to overcome death and bring salvation and eternal life.

The Feast is an opportunity outside of the observances of Holy Week to celebrate the full significance of the victory of the Cross over the powers of the world, and the triumph of the wisdom of God through the Cross over the wisdom of this world. This Feast also gives the Church an opportunity to relish the full glory of the Cross as a source of light, hope and victory for Christ's people. It is also a time to celebrate the universality of the work of redemption accomplished through the Cross: the entire universe is seen through the light of the Cross, the new Tree of Life which provides nourishment for those who have been redeemed in Christ.

Liturgical Celebration

- 6 pm Friday Vigil (Vespers & Matins) with the Exaltation of the Cross.

On the eve of the feast before Vespers the priest, having prepared a tray with the cross placed on a bed of flowers and basil leaves, places it on the table of prothesis; after that service, the priest carries the tray on his head preceded by lighted candles and the deacon incensing the cross, processes to the holy table (altar), in the center whereof he lays the tray, in the place of the Gospel Book. Towards the end of Matins the cross is brought out to the center of the church in procession. The cross remains in the center of the temple throughout the after-feast, and the faithful venerate it whenever they enter or leave the church.

- 10:30 am Divine Liturgy @ Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church. Your invited!

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Save the Date Saturday October 19th Choir Retreat

At St. Innocent Church there has always been an emphasis on beauty and worshipping God “on Earth as it is in Heaven.” Beauty, in the Christian sense of the word, draws people to Christ. One way the beauty of Heaven is conveyed in Orthodox churches is in the chant and choral singing that makes up most of our services. We thank God for the dedicated members of our choir who have made real the sense that Heaven and Earth have united in our worship of the Holy Trinity. On Saturday, October 19th we are having a choir retreat at St. Innocent. Alexander Fecanin, the choir director at St. Symeon in Birmingham, AL (who it could be argued has one of the best OCA choirs in the country) will be our retreat leader. This retreat is open to anyone who would be interested in joining our choir. We are always looking for more people to use their talents in fulfilling our vision of incarnating beauty into our services. If you can sing, if you desire to serve our church, if you have a love for music, we are looking for you, please come to this retreat.

ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

SUFFERING

OF GLORY

IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

TUESDAY OCTOBER 15TH @ 7 PM - TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN PRESUPPOSITIONS
TUESDAY OCTOBER 22 @ 7 PM - REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING
PRESENTED BY FR. THEOPHAN BUCK

THIS EVENT IS FREE. ALL ARE WELCOME. LIGHT DRINKS AND REFRESHMENTS. CHURCH TOUR FOLLOWING CLASS

Save the Dates Tuesday October 15th & 22nd

It is safe to say that every living person will suffer in this life. At the center of the Christian faith we are given Gospel of the “suffering servant,” the innocent God/Man Jesus Christ who suffered and died for the sins of the world. As followers of Christ, we are called to take up our own crosses. How are we to understand human suffering? How can we find grace in the midst of our own personal sufferings? On Tuesday, October 15th and Tuesday the 22nd at 7pm Fr. Theophan Buck will be presenting on these topics. Fr. Theophan is the priest and pastor of St. Innocent Orthodox Christian Church. He holds an M.Div. from St. Tikhon’s seminary and is currently enrolled in a master’s program for pastoral care and counseling at the Antiochian House of Studies. All are welcome. There will be light sweets and beverages and following the talks there will be a church tour for those interested.

Please get the word out and invite people

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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 Paraklesis 7pm Parish Council Meeting	12 8:30 am MCMA Meeting 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	13 6pm Vigil for the Exaltation of the Cross	14 Strict Fast 10:30 am Liturgy for the Feast of the Cross @ Holy Cross 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
15 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:20 Catechism	16	17 9am Morning Prayers	18 6pm Daily Vespers	19 9am Divine Liturgy 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	20	21 4:30 pm Family Church School 6pm Great Vespers
22 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:20: Mission Statement Meeting	23	24 9am Morning Prayers	25 6pm Daily Vespers	26 9am Divine Liturgy 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	27	28 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
29 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape 12:20 Catechism	30					

Tentative October 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 6pm Daily Vespers	3 9am Divine Liturgy 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	4	5 5pm Confessions 6pm Vespers with <i>Litya</i>
6 St. Innocent Feast Day! 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	7	8	9 6pm Paraklesis 7pm Parish Council	10 9am Divine Liturgy 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	11	12 4-5:30pm Family Church School 6pm Great Vespers
13 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	14	15 Special Class Series 7pm Suffering in the Christian Tradition	16 6pm Daily Vespers	17 9am Divine Liturgy 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	18	19 <i>Choir Retreat</i> TBA 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
20 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	21	22 Special Class Series 7pm Suffering in the Christian Tradition	23 6pm Daily Vespers	24 9am Divine Liturgy 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	25	26 <i>Tentative Men's Retreat</i> TBA 5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
27 8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	28	29	30 6pm Daily Vespers	31 9am Divine Liturgy 1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry		<i>Archbishop Alexander will be visiting us November 2/3</i>