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# ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

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## ***Annual Parish Meeting Report by Fr. Theophan Buck***

In Exodus Chapter 17 the Israelites were at war with the Amalekites. The most notable thing about their battle was that when Moses held up his arms, Joshua and his small army were empowered by God. As the battle raged on, Moses's arms grew tired, when he dropped them, the Israelites started to lose. Seeing this, Aaron and Hur, grabbed stones and piled them up for Moses to sit, and they held up Moses' hands until the sun went down. Aaron and Hur's support of Moses empowered Joshua's army and led to the Israelite victory.

Behind every good Priest, besides his wife and family, there are the people who support the work of the priest and the Church. They support God's work by loving the priest, encouraging him, challenging him, and ultimately by supporting the work of the Church so that the mission and ministries of the parish can flourish.

God has been gracious to our community and to me and my family. I want to take a moment to thank God for the gifts of this past year. I thank God for our dedicated choir director and choir, along with our dedicated altar servers and church decorators. I thank God that we have a dedicated catechist (Gary Cox) and for all our faithful Church School leaders and teachers. I am grateful that we continue to have a robust fellowship and that every week people bring food and are willing to clean up afterward. People have opened their homes for the men's and women's retreats and for other fellowships. I thank God that our community is generous and gives regular charity. We are also is a welcoming community that wants to spread the Orthodox Christian faith.

I'm especially thankful to work with our Parish Council and I want you to know that these people care deeply about our community and we have worked hard this year assessing the needs of the parish, not just on a maintenance level, but with an eye toward the future. From the top down we are developing a leadership culture that is open, transparent, and

spiritually enriching. Each member of the Parish Council is actively engaged in a ministry of our parish. There is a lot to be thankful for as I feel my proverbial arms lifted up by our community. As a result of all of these efforts, we can thank God that we have grown quite a bit in the last year. May He continue to bless us!

I want to briefly remind you of where we were just a year ago at this time. In January 2021 we were still under Covid restrictions where we were only allowed to have 40 people in the church at any given service. In January there were still people we had not seen since the pandemic started. At that time, when and if we fellowshipped, it was outside on the back porch. It wasn't until May that we were able to drop Covid restrictions. Since then, we have had a lot going on and we have seen people come back to church. In 2021 our Church School was rebooted. We had our first Visitor Sunday and celebrated our 25th anniversary in October. We had a Lenten Retreat with Fr. David Rucker. The parish council worked through the Orthodox Christian Leadership Initiative. We received by Baptism or Chrismation, four new families into our community. At the same time, we have had a steady stream of visitors and many new Catechumens, enough to run two cohorts for a while. We have also had many new people move to our area make our community their church home. As hard as it is to believe, we have grown over this past year by 20%. Again, there is a lot to

be thankful for.

Let me remind you, of our mission. Our mission at St. Innocent is to make Jesus Christ and His Gospel the center of everything we do. We will do our best to continue to have beautiful worship, to preserve and teach the faith, to do what we can to foster community. We want to continue to be a generous charitable parish while at the same time inviting others to come and see.

Looking forward there few key things I hope to see in 2022. Aside from doing the good things we do and building on them, I look forward to the arrival and installation of our 25th-anniversary bell. We are in the planning process of expanding our parking and possibly having a road for access to the cemetery. I would like to see the Iconography Committee become active again so that we can find an iconographer and start the first phase of the beatification of our temple with the funds that we have been already been given. I would like to see our Evangelical Outreach committee become active so that we can strategize and make plans for future events and advertising. Aside from these focal points, one of the main projects I will be working on is helping people get plugged into our community, committees, and ministries.

One of the ways we grow in Christ is by offering our natural and God-given talents to build up the Body of Christ. To help people plugin I have created, with some help, a Mission

and Ministries document which gives an outline of the various opportunities at St. Innocent for service.

This document will be updated again soon when we reconstitute our committees in February. The goal of the Mission and Ministries document is to make it easier to see who is coordinating each ministry or committee and also to show areas that need coordinating or help. The Mission and Ministries document is not exhaustive. Do you see something missing from our community? Your input, ideas, and willingness to serve will help us to either support what we have or even grow our ministries at St. Innocent.

If I had to have a 5-year plan this is what it would look like. I would like to see Colin be ordained a deaconate in a year or so from now. I would like to see the first phase of the iconography project complete within the next two years. New leaders would be mentored and brought into the PC and our other ministries. I would like to see our parish become more organized in our care for one another. I would like to see our debt on the parish hall paid off. If I were being bold, in the next 5-10 years I would like to have plans for our church temple to be expanded to accommodate more people. However, we make plans but our goal is to have endless projects but rather to be obedient to the Holy Spirit. It is important that we never lose sight of what we are here for, which is that, "By the grace of the Holy Spirit, we

pray that our parish would become a life-giving spring of the Orthodox Christian faith for the people of Middle Georgia.”

We have a lot to be thankful for at St. Innocent. May God help us to be good stewards of what He has given us, and may He continue to bless us in the coming year.

## News and Events

- Thank you to all of those who were able to present and attend our Annual Parish Meeting.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, Feb. 16th at 7pm. If you are interested in seeing the work of the Parish Council you are always welcome to join us in person.
- The 13th through the 20th is a fast free week.
- We will begin to fast from meat on February 28th
- Please see the calendar below for our full liturgical schedule.



Sunday Church School is scheduled for February 13th. Don't forget to bring your children!

## Many Years!

### February Birthdays

- 1 Oliver Chauta
  - 2 Loukas Wilcox
  - 8 Elliana Ennis
  - 11 John C. Savage
  - 12 Gary Cox
  - 13 Marianne Savage
  - 19 Sondra Franceil
  - 24 Don Eberhart
- Anniversaries

### Anniversaries

- 9 Eric & Lee Olson
- 10 Jerome and Diana Gratigny



### What is Realm?

- Realm is our parish directory where each member can manage and update their own profile and privacy.
- Access to Zoom links for classes and book studies.
- A place to ask for prayer from our community.
- Realm is our online donation portal as well as the place where you can pledge, or even see their own giving history, or get tax statements.
- Realm can be used as an online meeting place for various ministries of the church, as well as a tool to increase communication between the members of these groups and ministries.





## 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 (March 7th 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 time 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 can become “spiritually dirty”. It is therefore important to cleanse 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, a candle, and 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 houses that 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/gift. This offering to the priest is never required or even expected.

If you desire to have your house blessed please signup either by talking to Fr. Theophan in person or through the sign-up emails that will be sent out. I look forward to the opportunity to visit all of your homes.

Right now Fr. Theophan is planning on going house to house on:

- Saturday, February 5th in Warner Robins
- Saturday, February 12th in Macon
- Saturday, February 19nd

# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2022

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week <b>FEBRUARY 13th</b>	 <i>TRIODION WEEKS</i> <b>Publican and the Pharisee</b> Epistle: 2 Timothy 3: 10-15 Gospel: Luke 18: 10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week <b>FEBRUARY 20th</b>	 <b>The Prodigal Son Returns!</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20 Gospel: Luke 15: 11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare <b>FEBRUARY 27th</b> FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 <b>The Last Judgement</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8: 8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25: 31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare <b>MARCH 6th</b> FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 <b>Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!</b> <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> Epistle: Romans 13: 11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 13th</b>	 <i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> <b>SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY</b> Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 20th</b>	 <b>ST GREGORY PALAMAS</b> Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 27th</b>	 <b>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b> <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> Epistle: Hebrews 4: 14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8: 34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bowl!
4th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 3rd</b>	 <b>ST JOHN of the LADDER</b> Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9: 17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent <b>APRIL 10th</b>	 <b>ST MARY of EGYPT</b> Epistle: Hebrews 9: 11-14 Gospel: Mark 10: 32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! <b>APRIL 17th</b> GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> <b>ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM</b> Epistle: Philippians 4: 4-9 Gospel: John 12: 1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <b>APRIL 22nd</b>	 <b>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</b> <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! <b>APRIL 24th</b> NO FASTING!	 <i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> <b>HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!)</b> Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: Jan 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!



**ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
**7301 Rivoli Road - Macon, Georgia 31210**



FEBRUARY 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan 30 <b>Three Holy Hierarchs</b>  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship <b>12:15pm Annual Parish Meeting</b>	Jan 31	1   <b>6pm Vespers/Vigil for the Meeting of the Lord</b>	2 <b>MEETING OF THE LORD</b>  <b>9am Festal Divine Liturgy for the Meeting</b>	3	4	5   10-4pm Warner Robins House Blessings 1:30pm Catechism (New Group) 5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6pm Great Vespers
6 <b>Zacchaeus Sunday</b>  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy with Blessing of the Candles 11:45am Food and Fellowship	7	8   7:00pm Book Study	9   6:00pm Daily Vespers	10	11	12   10-4pm Macon House Blessings  5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers 7:00pm Panikhida for Margaret Dorogy
13 <b>Publican &amp; Pharisee</b>  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship <b>Church School Sunday</b>	14	15   7:00pm Book Study	16 No Fast   6:00pm Daily Vespers	17	18 No Fast	19   10-4pm House Blessings  1:30pm Catechism (New Group) 5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
20 <b>Prodigal Son</b>  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	21 <b>DOS Pastoral Conference</b>	22 <b>DOS Pastoral Conference</b>	23 <b>DOS Pastoral Conference</b>	24 <b>DOS Pastoral Conference</b>	25	26   9am Memorial Saturday Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
27 <b>Last Judgment</b>  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	28 <b>Beginning of the meat fast</b>	Mar 1   7pm Book Study	Mar 2   6:00pm Lenten Vespers	Mar 3	Mar 4	Mar 5   1:30pm Catechism  5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers

Please consult the Sunday bulletin for changes to the monthly calendar.



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MARCH 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Feb 27</b> <b>Last Judgment</b>  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	<b>Feb 28</b> <b>Beginning of the meat fast</b>	1  7pm Book Study	2  6:00pm Lenten Vespers	3	4	5  1:30pm Catechism  5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
6  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am <b>Forgiveness Vespers</b> 12:30pm Food and Fellowship	7  <b>Great Lent Begins</b>  6:30pm Compline with Canon of St. Andrew	8  6:30pm Compline with Canon of St. Andrew	9  6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	10  6:30pm Compline with Canon of St. Andrew	11  6:30pm Akathist Service	12  5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
13  <b>Sunday of Orthodoxy</b>  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am <b>Divine Liturgy with Icon procession</b> 11:45am Food and Fellowship	14	15  7pm Book Study	16  6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	17	18  6:30 Akathist Service	19  <b>3-5 pm Lenten Retreat</b>  5 pm Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
20  <b>St. Gregory Palamas</b>  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:20am <b>Lenten Retreat Continued</b>	21	22  7pm Book Study	23  6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	24	25  <b>ANNUNCIATION</b>  10am Vesperal Divine Liturgy for Annunciation 6:30pm Akathist Service	26  5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Vigil for the Ven. Cross
27  <b>Ven. Precious Cross</b>  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	28	29  7pm Book Study	30  6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy	31	Apr 1  6:30pm Akathist Service	Apr 2  5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers

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