

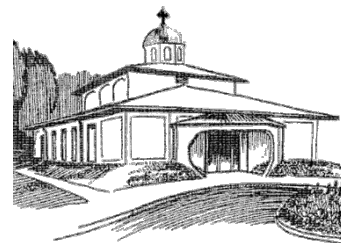


St Nicholas Orthodox Church

*A Parish of the Diocese of the Midwest
of the Orthodox Church in America*

9650 Johnnycake Ridge Road, Mentor, OH 44060

<https://saintnicholas-oca.org/>



Parish Rector: Fr Mark Therrien + (252) 813-6993 + fr.mark.therrien@gmail.com



Services & Events for the Week Starting January 14, 2024

- Sunday, January 14 *32nd Sunday after Pentecost, Tone 7, Apodosis (Leave-taking) of the Theophany*
9:00a Church School
9:45a Third Hour || 10:00a Divine Liturgy || Coffee hour
- Week of January 14 House blessings to commence
- Thursday, January 18 6:30p Parish Council Meeting
- Saturday, January 20 4:30p Confessions || 5:30p Great Vespers
- Sunday, January 21 *33rd Sunday after Pentecost, Tone 8, Our Venerable Father Maximus the Confessor*
9:00a Church School
9:45a Third Hour || 10:00a Divine Liturgy || Coffee hour



Stewardship for January 7, 2024

Operating: \$3,825; Maintenance: \$160; Icons: \$10;
OCA/Diocesan Dues: \$865; Candles: \$139; Uganda:
\$85; Parish Charities: \$125; Seminary: \$20

“Again we pray for those who bring offerings and do good works in this holy and all-venerable temple . . .”
(from the final petition of the Augmented Litany)

Thank you for your generosity!



NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

Regarding House Blessings

I will start blessing houses this week. There are sign-up sheets, dividing our parish by zip codes so that I can start to plan the visitation schedule. Of course, since this is my first year doing this, it will likely take me a big longer to visit everyone, especially as I am also learning the area. I ask for your patience as I learn this rhythm. *For the blessing, please prepare a list with the names of the living members of your household to be prayed for as part of the brief service.*

Today's Feast of the 'Leave-Taking' of Theophany

Today we celebrate the last day of Theophany. In English, the term that we use for this celebration is *leave-taking*: It is the day that we *take leave* of the feast.

Etymologically, the terms that we use for this celebration in other languages are interesting to consider. The term in Slavonic is *отдание (otdaniye)*; in Greek, it is *ἀπόδοσις (apodosis)*. Unlike our English word, these terms have the connotation of *giving something back*, or of *returning something to the one from whom it came*, or of *restoring something to its proper owner*.

I think that this way of thinking about the present celebration is revelatory for how we would approach it. Liturgically, a feast represents a major high-point in the year. Services are joyous and radiant; there is much singing. This is especially true of the feast of the Lord's Baptism (Theophany), since we had the great privilege of serving the beautiful Great Blessing of Water.

In experiencing the Lord's glory in this way, then, we are liturgically in something of a state like the disciples on Mt Tabor. And so, we might start thinking: “Lord, it is good for us to be here...” And of course, it is good to enjoy the feasts; that is why the Church has post-festal

periods. But at the same time, we cannot feast all of the time. Rather, as the Church knows, the rhythm of the year requires that we return to something more somber. And so, today, having been blessed to keep such a joyous feast, we *return it* or *offer it back to God*—knowing that, just as the joy of the feast was for our salvation, so too is our willingness to give up this temporal joy in order not to lose what this joy is really about: Growing closer to our Lord and becoming more like him.



Feast & Fast Days During the Coming Week

This week there are a number of important commemorations. One especially noteworthy is on Wednesday. On this day, we celebrate St Anthony the Great, one of the Church's most important ascetics. We have a beautiful narrative of his life, written by St Athanasius the Great. This text was enormously popular in the early Church. From Greek, it was translated into many languages and reached a wide audience (especially, to note, among laypeople living in the world).

If you are looking for some spiritual literature to read this week, you can easily find a translation online if you simply do a search for *Life of St Anthony*. In the meantime, here are some highlights from it that we might ponder for our own lives:

- St Anthony became an ascetic because he was in Church listening to the Gospel, and responded at once to the Lord's command to leave all that he had for the sake of God. *Are we attentive to God's word in this way? When we hear it, do we actively try to think about how to appropriate it in our own lives?*
- St Anthony performed innumerable miracles. And yet, he never took credit for any of them. Instead, he only ever spoke of the Lord as acting through him. *Do we see our spiritual gifts and talents as being our own? Or do we recognize that, in fact, they come from God, and that we are merely the vessels of God's grace?*
- St Anthony became a very experienced ascetic master over his life. And yet, his constant refrain was that, as a Christian, he must begin his labor anew each and every day. *Do we realize the awesome nature of each new day as a gift from God and, thus, as a new opportunity to make progress towards him? Or do we settle into our routines in such a way that we become apathetic to God and to our spiritual lives?*

May St Anthony pray for us during this week especially. And please note: Because of his importance in the Church, this week there is a mitigation for fasting on

Wednesday (fish allowed). Friday, however, remains a regular fasting day.



Coffee Hour Today to Honor Fr Drew's Service

Today there will also be a special coffee to honor Fr Drew for his service to this parish. Please stay to celebrate. *Many years to you, Fr Drew!*



Parish Prayer List

If you know of someone who is in special need of prayer, please email me so that I might add the person to the prayer list. In the meantime, please remember especially:

Perry (Capitan), Julian, Sarah Crivella, Joella (LuAnn Dzura's daughter), Anna Como, Barb, Emily Finazzo, (friend of the Rendas), David Campbell (Debbie Clements' brother), Patrick Leahy (Dave K.'s brother-in-law), Rick Wagner (Merrick and Mia's grandfather), Patricia (Rosemary Bagley's mother), Bruce (Kristen Moore's father), Joseph Chuppa, Ronald (in baptism, Thomas) (Collin Moore's father), Bruce (Kristen Moore's father), the suffering Christians of Ukraine, the Middle East, and Armenia

Birthdays this week: 1/16: Grace Walker; 1/17: Stephen Hoffacker; 1/19: Miranda Oberhausen; 1/20: Emmaline Smith

Name Day Today (1/14): Nina Chongris

Expecting: Greg & Grace, Jairus & Riley, Weston & Rachel, Joseph & Venessa, Jon & Alexandria

Newborns: Esther (Stephen & Rebecca), Henry Jude (Peter & Caitlin)

Newly Departed: Paris Santone (Debbie Covelli's nephew), Joseph Demanski, Cathy Ubancic (friend of the Rendas), Patricia (Michael Abernathy's grandmother), Nun Elizabeth (of Holy Transfiguration Monastery)



A Project in the Works...

As I settle in, I am starting to develop a few projects. One will be a **catechetical class** for inquirers into the faith, catechumens, and those who have recently entered the Church. It could also be for anyone else who wants to learn more about the faith. *More information to come.*