

December 20, 2009 – 28th Sunday after Pentecost – Tone 3. Sunday before Nativity. Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, Bishop of Antioch (107). Ven. Ignatii, Archimandrite of the Kiev Caves (1435). St. Philogonius, Bishop of Antioch (323). St. Daniel, Archbishop of Serbia (1338). St. Anthony, Bishop of Voronezh (1846). Repose of St. John of Kronstadt. **Epistle:** Heb. 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40. **Gospel:** Matt. 1:1-25.

Next Sunday, Dec. 27 – 29th Sunday after Pentecost, Sunday after Nativity, Firstmartyr Stephen – Tone 4. **Epistle:** Gal. 1:11-19. **Gospel:** Matt. 2:13-23.

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S (Dec. 20, 2009)

TODAY

11:30 PM Children's Christmas Program
5:00 PM Food Box assembly

MONDAY

10:00 AM Food Box & Gift distribution

TUESDAY

6:00 PM Vespers
6:30 PM Path to Salvation Class

THURSDAY (Christmas Eve Day)

9:00 AM Royal Hours
1:00 PM Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil
5:00 PM Vigil of the Nativity

FRIDAY (Feast of the Birth of Christ)

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy of St. John

SATURDAY (2nd Day of Christmas)

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy: Gathering of Theotokos
6:00 PM Great Vespers

SUNDAY (Dec. 27; 3rd Day of Christmas)

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy: Sun. after Nativity
11:15 AM Choir Christmas Concert

CHRIST(MAS) & HANUKKAH

Christ Jesus kept Hanukkah. "Now it was the Feast of Dedication (Heb., *Hanukkah*) in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple..." (John 10:22). Hanukkah, or Dedication (lit., renewal), is the annual Jewish celebration of the rededication of the Altar and Temple accomplished in 164 B.C. Judas Maccabeus and his brothers reclaimed the Altar and Temple from the Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes. "Then Judas and his brothers and the congregation of Israel decided that each year at that time the days of the consecration of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight full days beginning on the twenty-fifth of the month of Chislev" (1 Macc. 4:59).

The Jewish lunar month of Chislev corresponds to our month of December, so Hanukkah always occurs around the same time as Christmas. Christ Himself kept Hanukkah not merely as a coincidence, but as its *fulfillment*. Christ is the Altar; He is the Temple, and we are literally dedicated to God in Him.

"...The purification of the temple took place on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which was Chislev (i.e., December). They celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the Feast of Tabernacles...Therefore, carrying ivy-wreathed wands, beautiful olive branches, they offered hymns of praise to Him Who made possible the purifying of His own place" (2 Macc. 10:5-7). The feast's meaning in Christ is summarized in the Gospel: "The Word became flesh and dwelt (lit., *tabernacled*) among us" (John 1:14). So you see, Hanukkah is really about Christmas, the coming of God in the flesh – Christ Jesus born of the Virgin.

The Apostle Paul writes, "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4-5). This is not just the holiday season; it is the time of holy days. We do not share a generic spirit of celebration, but the Holy Spirit Who brings us Christ in the flesh. Let us dedicate our lives to Christ and the salvation in His name.

The Friend of the Bridegroom

"He Must Increase and I Must Decrease" (John 3:29-30)

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church
Orthodox Church in America

2220 Reeves Road NE Warren, Ohio 44483
Church Phone: 330-372-3895 www.stjohnswarren.com
General Office Hours: 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM (TThF)

Fr. Jonathan H. Cholcher, Rector...330-980-0134 (Cell)

Pastoral Emergencies 10 PM - 7 AM ... 330-469-2907

Judy Reed, Sisterhood/Repasts... Home: 330-793-5145

Cell: 330-519-5730

John Tutoki, Hall Coordinator..... 330-469-9531

Saturday: Vespers at 6:00 PM Sunday: Liturgy at 9:30 AM

Feast Day Liturgy - 9:30 AM Sunday School (after Liturgy)

GENERAL INFORMATION

12-13-09: 110 (attendance); **\$2,331.00** (collection).

12-20-09: candle commemorations – **Theotokos**: blessed memory of George Taninecz; **Altar**: blessed memory of John and Margaret Yenchochik; **Christ**: birthday of JoAnn Kaschak.

Please Pray for:

Living: Vera (Campbell, at home); **Linda** (Keriotis); **Chariessa** (Stitchik, sister of Mark Malacky); **Lillian** (Motil, cousin of Pauline Struble); **Charles & Ed** (co-workers of Diane Cholcher); **Kerya** (Brisbine); **Melanie** (Smith, cousin of Vera Campbell); **Aaron** (Meterko); **Helen** (Stan); **Maryann** (Lalli) & **Craig** (Parana, friends of the DiGiacobbes); **Pauline** (Struble); **Linda** (Cuckovich).

Departed: Helen (Mindek; d. 11/14/09); **Teresa** (Kloss, aunt of Vera Campbell); **Mary** (Wainwright; d. 11/28/09, aunt of Karen and Norman George); **Jason** (Tutoki; d. 11/25/09).

This Month's Charity – December 2009:

[charity envelope or baskets after Liturgy]

St. Mary of Egypt Orthodox Monastery (in Cleveland)

COMING EVENTS SCHEDULE

Dec. 21 Christmas Food Box distribution

Dec. 24 Eve of Christmas: Royal Hours (9 AM); Vespers Liturgy (1 PM); Vigil of Nativity (5 PM)

Dec. 25 Nativity (Birth) of our Lord Jesus Christ: Divine Liturgy (9:30 AM)

Jan. 6 Mahoning River Blessing (by the Warren Amphitheatre; 4:00 PM)

Jan. 7 Gathering of St. John the Baptist (patronal feast day)



SPIRITUAL FORMATION:

1) Church (Sunday) School & Bible Class:

for all ages, following Divine Liturgy – adults are studying the Divine Liturgy.

2) Path to Salvation Class:

Tuesdays following Vespers (about 6:30 PM) – currently studying the Life and Feasts of the Theotokos;

3) Classic Literature Reading Group:

Wednesdays, 11:00 AM, at Borders Café (near the Eastwood Mall) – currently reading *Siddhartha*, by Hermann Hesse; engaging the culture with the Faith!

4) St. John's Society (for teens):

most Sundays at 6:00 PM, for fellowship, mutual education, service, and encouragement!

+ **Charity of the Month for December: St. Mary of Egypt Orthodox Monastery.** St. Mary's Monastery is led by Abbess Mother Theonymphie and provides valuable physical and spiritual assistance to many needy persons and families in the heart of Cleveland. For more information, you may visit the Monastery website, www.saintmaryofegypt.org, or see its newsletter on the bulletin board.

+ FOOD & GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS:

Thank you to all who contributed gifts and food for children and families. Glory to Jesus Christ! If you signed-up but forgot to bring a ham for the food boxes, please bring it to Church by 10:00 AM tomorrow morning as we will be giving them out then.

+ **Looking ahead...**the annual Blessing of the Waters of the Mahoning River will take place on Theophany, January 6, at 4:00 PM. Children are encouraged to attend after school. We also plan to provide a brunch after Liturgy on our patronal Feast Day, Jan. 7, the Synaxis (Gathering) of St. John the Baptist.

+ Our annual Parish Meeting will take place on Sunday, **February 21**, 2010. At that meeting we will review events of the past year, adopt a fiscal budget for 2010, and consider the work God has placed before us for the coming year and beyond.

+ **Compact Disc of Christmas Music** – St. John's Choir recorded Christmas music which will be available on a compact disc sometime around this Christmas season. If you would like a copy of the CD, speak with our Choir Director, Vadim Stehnach, to reserve one.

+ **Thank you to Rick Watson and crew** for providing and replacing all the ceiling tiles in the Church Hall. They also replaced burned out light bulbs making the space noticeably brighter. We appreciate your service in the house of the Lord.

+ **Charity of the month, January, 2010:** the Monastery of St. John the Theologian in Hiram, Ohio. Please continue to give as you are able to our charity of the month using the Charity envelope in your envelope packet and after Liturgy in the basket collections.

His Eminence Job
Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest
May his memory be eternal!

*Our Archpastor, Vladyka Job, fell asleep
in the Lord this past Friday, December 18.
He had just met with our Cleveland Deanery
Priests the day before in Mentor, Ohio.*

*A Parastas was served for Archbishop Job last
evening at St. John's before Great Vespers; his funeral will take place this week in Chicago, and his body will be
laid to rest in Black Lick, Pennsylvania.*

May his soul dwell with the righteous!