



## SS. PETER AND PAUL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

### ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

*"All Things Are Possible to Him Who Believes" (Mark 9:23)*

**Metropolitan SABA**  
Primate of the Antiochian  
Archdiocese

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## SUNDAY, JANUARY 7TH, 2024 SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY PROPHET, FORERUNNER & BAPTIST JOHN

NEW-MARTYR ATHANASIOS OF ATTALIA; VENERABLE  
BRANNOCK OF BRAUNTON

**\*\*Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom\*\***

For the washing away of bodily dirtiness, God has given water. And for the washing of spiritual foulness, God has given the grace of the holy Sacrament of Confession. Every man, when he dirties his hands, washes them. No one says: "I will not wash my hands anymore, because I will get them dirty again!" But why is it then that many people say, "I will not go to Confession, because I will sin again tomorrow!" It is clear that the enemy of our salvation is enticing us not to wash our souls, so that he can gain power over them. But we must not give in to such satanic suggestions; we should confess frequently because frequent washing produces a taste for cleanliness in us.

*- Archimandrite Seraphim Aleksiev of Bulgaria*

**Great Vespers:** Saturday 6:00 pm  
(Check the Calendar for possible  
cancellation)

**Matins:** Sundays 9:20am

**Divine Liturgy:** Sundays 10:30am

**Confessions:** By appointment

**CHOIR DIRECTOR**  
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Paula Massouh

**ST. IGNATIUS ORDER**  
Jumana Misleh

**GIFT SHOP**  
Gail Bailey

We welcome all our guests and visitors worshipping with us at the Divine Liturgy.  
Please let our ushers know that you are visiting with us today. We would love to stay in touch!  
Please know that Holy Communion is offered to Orthodox Christians, after preparing themselves through prayers, fasting, & confession.  
Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to receive blessed bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy & share food with us at coffee hour.

## THE SYNAXARION

On January 7 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we celebrate the Synaxis (Gathering) of the holy and glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John. On the same day is also commemorated the translation of his most precious and holy right hand unto the city of Constantinople.

### *Verses*

*How shall this tongue of mine now praise thee, O Preacher,  
Whom Christ's tongue calleth greater than all the earthborn?  
The famous Forerunner's memorial is the lot of the seventh.*

Because John's main role in his life was played out on the day of Theophany (Epiphany), the Church from earliest times dedicated the "day after" to his memory. Among the Gospel personalities who surround the Savior, John the Baptist occupies a totally unique place by his roles in baptizing the Messiah and in baptizing people for repentance. John prepared himself in the wilderness of the desert for 30 years for his great service by a strict life, by fasting, prayer and sympathy for the fate of God's people. John was of such moral purity that, in truth, he could be called an angel (messenger) as Holy Scripture calls him rather than a mortal man. He appeared on the banks of the Jordan, to prepare the people by his preaching to accept the Savior of the world. In church hymnology, the Baptist is called a "bright morning star," whose gleaming outshone the brilliance of all the other stars, announcing the coming dawn of the day of grace, illumined with the light of the spiritual Sun, our Lord Jesus Christ. John differs from all other prophets especially in that he had that privilege of being able, with his hand, to show the world Him about Whom he prophesied. As the holy Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord—whom the Lord called the greatest of the prophets—John concludes the history of the Old Testament and opens the era of the New Testament. He bore witness to the Only-Begotten Son of God, incarnate in the flesh. John was accounted worthy to baptize Him in the waters of the Jordan, and he was a witness of the Theophany of the Most Holy Trinity at the Savior's Baptism.

On this day, we commemorate the New-martyr Athanasios of Attalia; and Venerable Brannock of Braunton. By the intercessions of Thy saints, O Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

### RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SIX

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

### APOLYTIKION OF THE THEOPHANY IN TONE ONE

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity wast made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the likeness of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ our God, Who hast appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

### APOLYTIKION OF SYNAXIS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IN TONE TWO

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with songs of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner. Thou wast shown indeed to be the most honorable of the prophets, for in the waters thou didst baptize Him Who had been proclaimed. After suffering with joy in behalf of the truth, thou didst proclaim even to those in Hades the God Who appeared in the flesh, Who taketh away the sin of the world, and granteth us the Great Mercy.

### APOLYTIKION OF SS. PETER AND PAUL IN TONE FOUR

O foremost in the ranks of Apostles, and teachers of the world, Peter and Paul, intercede with the Master of all to grant peace unto the world, and to our souls the Great Mercy.

### KONTAKION OF THE THEOPHANY IN TONE FOUR

On this day Thou hast appeared \* unto the whole world, \* and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, \* is signed on us who sing Thy praise \* and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, \* Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light unapproachable.

**For the Health of these Parishioners**

John & Lily Bitar	Showke George	Christo & Mary Christakis
Suad Shammass	Edward & Rima Rizkallah	Hanneh Daoud
Mike & Dorothy Marge	Ibrahim Saah	Vilma Bellone
Michael Shihadi	Joanna Khoury	Sherrie Zachariah & family
Nadim Zarour	Michael Amouri	Ziad, Leila Deeb & family
Qustandi & Nahida Kaibni	Tagreed Tawil & Family	Nour & Anastasia & Sonny
Nuha & family	Yousef & Ghada	Asma Ayoub
Isabel Threded	Ghassan & Zakieh Jweied	Elias, Taylor & Rami
Shakeh Kerjilian & family	Shirley Neri & family	Margo, Sam & family
Steve, Jenn & family	Fred & Grace Saah	Barbara Zamer & family
Brian, Caroline & family	Fadia, Rich & family	Edward & Eleanor Husson

**DEPARTED**

George Nassif  
 Fr. George & Kh. Jacky Rados  
 Michael & Hanneh Ghanem  
 Yousef & Afifa Masarweh  
 \* Arnold Gargani  
 \* Bob Neri

**CHURCHING**

Taya Abou-Haidar (Steven & Lianna)

**Special Prayer this Week for**

Maria Zacharias	Wyne-Hareg	Hind, Habib Debs & family
Thomasine, Everett Alvarez & Family		Michael, Laurice & family
Ruby Maggard	Jeannine & family	Joyce, Lynn & family
Gino Michaels & family	Robert & Joyce	Aristidis & Kaliopi & family
Lyndl & Michel	Ann Marie, Lorna	Nabil, Caroline & family
Joe, Susan, Stephen, Brian, Kevin, Katelin Sanford		Foutni, James, Rachael, Miriam
Steven, Lianna, Elias & Taya		Tom & Celina

**Coffee Hour** is offered by **Michael & Laurice Nassif** in loving memory of **George Nassif**.

**Zalabia & Holy Bread** are offered by **Sam & Margo Ghanem** in loving memory of **Fr. George & Kh. Jacky Rados, Michael & Hanneh Ghanem, & Yousef & Afifa Masarweh**.

If you want to offer Holy Bread or host Coffee Hour please use the codes on the side to do so.

**Coffee Hour Available Dates**

- January 21
- February 4
- February 11
- February 18
- March 3
- March 10

Host Coffee Hour



Offer Holy Bread



## Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

Thursday, January 11th, **Book Club**, 8:30-9:30 pm (zoom).

Saturday, January 13th, **Teen International Night**, 6-10 pm

Saturday, January 13th, **Antiochian Women Retreat @ Monastery of St Nina**. See below for more details & signup.

**Sunday, January 14th, *Young Adults & Professionals Post Liturgy Brunch*, 1-3 PM.**

January 19th, **Psalmody Concert**, 7:30 PM (Hosted at Our Church)

Sunday, January 21st, **Make & Distribute Sandwiches**. Following the Divine Liturgy.

Saturday, February 3rd, **Village at Home**, 9:30- 5:45

Saturday, February 3rd, **Young Adult & AV Alumni Gathering**, 5:00 pm

## Make & Distribute Sandwiches With Love

Sunday, January 21st  
After the  
Divine Liturgy



## Psalmody Concert

January 19th  
7:30 pm



Please Scan  
QR Code to Purchase Tickets

## Save the Date

March Antiochian Orthodox  
Women's Month  
**Spiritual Retreat and Tea**  
March 9, 2023

## Teen SOYO Meeting

On the first Sunday  
of every month

## Book Club

Thursday 8:30 pm - 9:30 pm

January 11, 25

February 15, 29

March 14, 28



## PROJECT MEXICO HOMEBUILDING

*May 24th through August 14th*

Week-long or multiple week construction teams  
Great for teens and tweens, adult team leaders!



Contact Svitlana Sweat, Ss P&P missions committee

## AWE Winter Retreat

At St. Nina Monastery  
*January 13, 2024*

Scan QR Code  
To Register



## January Charity Drive

### Will You Give The Water of Life?

### Digging Wells for Orthodox Missions in Cameroon

We are partnering with Fr. Anastasios Yaounde to raise approximately \$15,000 to dig wells that will radically improve life for hundreds of people and help spread Christianity in the region. As we think about Christ and the waters of Theophany, please consider if you are able to help our sisters. Thank you!

To donate online, kindly choose "Charity Drive" from the drop-down list (no in-kind donations, please).



## 1st & 3rd Tuesday

### Bible Study

(8:30 pm/  
Zoom)

REGISTER HERE



For online donations, use  
your phone's camera to  
scan this code and follow  
the link to our secure  
donation portal.



## **THE EPISTLE**

*The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord. O God, hear my prayer.*

### **The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (19:1-8)**

In those days, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the One Who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve of them in all. And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, arguing and pleading about the Kingdom of God.

## **THE GOSPEL**

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (1:29-34)**

At that time, John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of Whom I said, 'After me comes a man Who ranks before me, for He was before me.' I myself did not know Him; but for this I came baptizing with water, that He might be revealed to Israel." And John bore witness, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on Him. I myself did not know Him; but He Who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on Whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

### **Alumni & Young Adult Gathering February 3, 2024**

Camp style Vespers at  
5:00 PM  
Gathering & Pizza  
Q&A with Fr. Chris Shahid &  
Fr. Luke Toumi



### **Village at Home**

For Campers in Grades 3-12

**Saturday, February 3,  
2024**

9:30 AM-5:45 PM



## **On Epiphany, Part One**

*By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

Christmas remained connected to the feast of Epiphany, in the early Church, until the fourth century. After Christianity became a recognized religion in the Roman Empire, and then the state religion, the Church made the birth of the Lord in the flesh an independent feast, separated it from Epiphany, and appointed the feast of the sun as its date. The feast of the sun was a popular pagan feast, accompanied by celebrations unworthy of Christians. The Church had baptized, or Christianized, the pagan feast and shifted its center from the visible sun to Christ, the “sun of justice,” as the Church chants in the apolytikion of Christmas. In the Orthodox Churches, theologically, attention is focused more on the feast of the Epiphany than on Christmas. The theological significance of the Feast of the Epiphany makes it the third feast, after Easter and Pentecost.

The feast of Epiphany is popularly called the “diving” (in Arabic, ghattas). The verb “diving” is parallel, in meaning, to the verb “baptized” in the Greek language. Hence, the literal meaning of the word “baptism” in Greek is “immersion.” Therefore, Orthodox people consider this holiday as a feast for everyone whose name is “Ghattas,” like our metropolitan of Baghdad and Kuwait. In Orthodox countries, it is customary for a priest to go out with the faithful people, after the Holy Liturgy on the morning of the feast to a lake, seashore, or river, where he throws a metal cross. Young people dive into the water to retrieve it. This tradition is still alive today.

However, the ecclesiastical name is Epiphany, because the Hypostases (Persons) of the Holy Trinity were clearly revealed to mankind, for the first time, during the baptism of Christ. Mankind heard the voice of the Father, saying: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mt. 3:17), the Son was present and baptized, and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove, which descended on him. This revelation is obvious in the well-known apolytikion of the Feast: “By Your baptism O Lord...” The hymn of preparation for the feast talks about the appearance of Christ and its cause: “Christ appeared wanting to renew all creation.”

It is also called the Feast of Lights, in ancient Greek tradition, because, according to the Christian faith, baptism is illumination by the light of God. Our liturgical tradition calls those who are ready to receive baptism “those who are ready for enlightenment.” We pray that “the Lord will enlighten them with the light of knowledge and true worship.” While the kontakion of the feast brought the two themes together: “Today you have appeared to the world, O Lord, and your light has been shined upon us.”

St. John the Baptist prepared the way for Christian baptism. His call to repentance was thus: “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Mark 1:3). His baptism was a declaration of repentance, and a call to abandon a life of sin, while Christian baptism is for the forgiveness of sins and the acquisition of the grace of divine sonship. The Master, who is innocent of sin, humbly accepted the fulfillment of John’s baptism, “for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness” (Mt. 3:15), presenting himself as a model to those for whose salvation he came.

The Gospel of St. Matthew says that “heavens were opened” (Mt. 3:16) immediately after Jesus’ baptism. It’s the first time this expression had been used. After Adam and Eve fell from Paradise, heaven was closed to man, and now it opens again with the coming of the Messiah, who will restore the divine glory man had lost when he refused to live in God’s bosom and care. Also, when heaven was reopened, the voice of the Father was heard, and the Holy Spirit descended. God clearly reveals his Trinitarian mystery to humankind. From that moment on, he no longer only invites humanity to know him, but he will give it, through Christ, the desired salvation and reopen the way for it. Heaven is no longer far away; God is among us.

## ***The Divine Liturgy #3***

Although it is generally the practice in the Orthodox Church today to allow non-Orthodox Christians, and even non-Christians, to witness the Liturgy of the Faithful, it is still the practice to reserve actual participation in the sacrament of Holy Communion only to members of the Orthodox Church who are fully committed to the life and teachings of the Orthodox Faith as preserved, proclaimed and practiced by the Church throughout its history.

In the commentary on the Divine Liturgy which follows, we will concentrate our attention on what happens to the Church at its “common action.” By doing this we will attempt to penetrate the fundamental and essential meaning of the liturgy for man, his life and his world. This will be a definite departure from the interpretation of the Divine Liturgy which treats the service as if it were a drama enacted by the clergy and “attended” by the people, in which each part stands for some aspect of Christ’s life and work (e.g., the prothesis stands for Christ’s birth, the small entrance for the beginning of his public ministry, the gospel for his preaching, the great entrance for Palm Sunday, etc.). This latter type of interpretation of the Divine Liturgy is an invention, which, although perhaps interesting and inspiring for some, is nevertheless completely alien to the genuine meaning and purpose of the Divine Liturgy in the Orthodox Church.

### ***Prothesis #1***

Before the actual beginning of the Divine Liturgy, the priest enters the Church with special prayers, and puts on his liturgical vestments.

He then goes to the table of oblation to prepare the bread and wine for Holy Communion. This part of the liturgy is called the prothesis or proskomede, which means preparation. He then goes to the table of oblation to prepare the bread and wine for Holy Communion. This part of the liturgy is called the prothesis or proskomede, which means preparation.

In its present form, the prothesis probably dates from the fourteenth century. When a bishop is celebrating the Divine Liturgy, the prothesis is performed just before the offertory procession called the Great Entrance. Otherwise it is done before the beginning of the Liturgy of the Word.

At the prothesis the priest first cuts a large cube of bread from the loaf of bread, traditionally called the prosphora, which means the offering. This cube of bread is called the Lamb. It stands for Christ, the “Bread of life . . . which came down from heaven,” the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 3.24, 6.32–15).

While the priest is cutting the Lamb from the prosphora bread, he recites a verse from the Prophecy of Isaiah: “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter . . .” (Is 53.7–8). He cuts the Lamb so that the seal with which the prosphora bread is sealed is on top, in the center. The seal is a square with the symbols of Jesus Christ (IC XC) on the top and The Victor (NI KA) on the bottom. The Lamb is then cut from the bottom in the sign of a cross so that it can be easily broken into four pieces at the time of Holy Communion in the liturgy. The priest also symbolically pierces the side of the Lamb with the liturgical knife, traditionally called the spear, reciting the words of John 19.34–35.

## Make & Distribute Sandwiches with Love

Can we count on you to make a difference on Sunday, Jan 21st?

Here's the plan:

\* **On Sunday**, we will gather after the Divine Liturgy to put together a number of sandwiches and other food items to be distributed to the homeless within our circles of movement.

\* **Everyone** is invited to participate, regardless of their age.

\* To decide on how many bags we should put together, **WE NEED YOUR COMMITMENT!**

\* **Think of how many homeless or needy people** you encounter on a daily basis while going about your life. Include on this form the number you will commit to deliver that week (preferably in the beginning of the week of Jan 21 so food will not perish).

\* **One thing we ask you to do** when delivering these bags: Connect with the recipient on a personal level: look them in the eye, ask for their name, (if safe while driving) ask for their story... ***in short, show them the face of Christ, be Christ to them for a minute!***

\* **If you are not able to stay to prepare** the bags with us, but you still want to take a few bags with you, we will have some ready for you. Let us know below!

***Thank you for letting Christ work through you in our broken world!***



## Married Couples: Mark Your Calendars

for Saturday, February 10th in the evening for a special dinner at Congressional Country Club. Child Care will be provided. More details are coming.

## Forever Young! New Dates

**First Thursday of the Month: Feb 1st, March 7th, April 4th, May 2nd, June 6th**

Forever Young is a fellowship for our retired parishioners and their friends, or anyone who can attend!

We will pray together, have lunch and enjoy fellowship (maybe games) and some good speaker/topic!




Bring a friend or two even if they are not parishioners.

Please sign up to attend as many of these meetings as you can.

Details about speakers/activities for these meetings are forthcoming!

**TEEN INTERNATIONAL NIGHT**

12 05693 3053 4



**JAN 13TH 6-10PM**

Ss. Peter & Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church  
10620 River Rd Potomac, MD

**Vespers @ 6:00 PM** ↑↑↑↑

**Dinner @ 7:00 PM** ↑↑↑↑

**Then Dancing!** ↑↑↑↑

