



St. John Chrysostom Church

A Mission of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
www.stjohnchrysostomchurch.org

Holding Services at
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January SJCC News

My Joy in the Lord,

Welcome to a new year. May God bless all of us with continued health and progress towards salvation.

New Years are very strange things – if you think about it. They're completely human inventions. God is completely outside of time. It is his creation, not part of His being. We mark time with anniversaries and celebrations but God is constant and eternal. As King David wrote: “thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons, the sun knows its time” Is today really that much different from a week ago? Other than the number that we have to write on checks (and how many of us still write checks?) it really is not that much different. Seasons change, we get older, and, hopefully, a little wiser, but that is not because the number changes – only because time passes. May this “year” bring blessings to all and be a better one than the last one.

With love, in Christ,
Fr. Seraphim

Theophany House Blessing:

The custom of Theophany House blessings is that the priest comes to the house and has a short prayer for all who live there and sprinkles Holy Water (blessed during the service for Theophany) throughout the house (all the rooms – from top to bottom) and blesses all who live there (including all animals). I ask, that in preparation, you have a small empty bowl, a candle (some follow the custom of using their baptismal/Chrismational candles or wedding candles – but that is not required) and an icon ready on a table (dining table or kitchen table is fine) – I bring everything else.

I prefer to bless the house first and then would love to have a cup of tea with you.

I will bless the homes of the clergy and parish council on Tuesday, January 6: A&J Gisetti, M. Bourquin, S&J Weddingfeld, A&J Finger.

I will be in Lakewood on Wednesday, Jan 7: A. & C. Emmons, C. Baldwin, D&M Mantas

I will be in Golden on Thursday, Jan 8: T. Spencer, J. Hesse, R&P Rendoff

I will be in Westminster, Denver, & Lakewood on Friday, Jan 9: K. Perkins, A. Muntean, T.Wrettling

I will be in Aurora & Centennial on Saturday, Jan 10: K.Yakubik, J&L Spencer, and anyone else I have missed or who would like me to bless their house.

Inquirer's Class

We will continue with the Inquirer's Class following Vespers on January 17

Bible Study

I am in the process of negotiating an 'on-the-air' Bible Study with a local radio station. If the negotiation is successful, that will have to be our Bible Study for a while.

ON the “day” of the Nativity and Theophany (excerpt)

The Holy day of Theophany is one of the oldest holidays in the Christian calendar. It originally was the celebration of the appearance of God in the world (theo phania = God appearing) – which included both the Nativity and the Baptism of our Lord. The Nativity was split off in the 4th century in Rome, for a very specific purpose – to transfigure a pagan holiday into a Christian one, to give Christians something to celebrate at the same time as the pagans were celebrating - but did not become universal until almost the 8th century. The very early Church commemorated the Nativity in June/July (the exact date is not known) which makes sense because Shepherds would not be in the fields in December/January, but this commemoration was simply that, a remembrance, not a celebration. The Church's celebration was the Theophany, God – the fullness of the Trinity - making his appearance during the Baptism of the Son of God. But like everything else in the Church, even the Baptism was not a moment, but a process. It began with the birth of Christ, continued with the visitation of the Magi, and ended with the baptism and the beginning of the earthly ministry of our Lord.

All of these were the elements of this Holy Day. Just as Pascha was the culmination of the earthly ministry, this was the beginning, and the services and the hymns reflect this duality. Both the Hymns of holy Friday and Saturday and the Hymns of the Nativity and Theophany eves not only reflect each other thematically, but are almost identical in their poetic structures. For centuries/millenia, the only Vespertal Liturgies were those on Holy Saturday and Theophany Eve (and then also on the Nativity Eve and on Holy Thursday for the Liturgy of the Last Supper). To this day, the only days on which we celebrate Royal hours are on Holy Friday, Nativity Eve and Theophany Eve.

We celebrate this Holy day by blessing water – in remembrance of our Lord's Baptism and as a symbol of renewal – which is what Baptism is. Having blessed water, we sprinkle ourselves, and our environment with it, to remind us that all things are blessed by God and that God is in all places and times. Just as Pascha is the Feast of Feasts, the sign of the Cross is the pre-eminent act of Christians. But next to the Sign of the Cross, is the Holy Water. We use it to bless things, to bless ourselves. Just as water is used in Baptism as a sign of change -we go in one thing - “the corrupt old man” and come out something new, something changed – a Christian – so we use the water of the Theophany to signify changes in the things of this world. We sprinkle icons to make them changed from pictures to windows to heaven – aids in prayer and contemplation. We sprinkle grapes in the Fall, eggs, cheese breads, meats and all other foods on Pascha to make them special – not just food but blessings for us and our families. We sprinkle our homes, as a protection from demons and as a sign that we wish them to be dedicated to God, not just to our own welfare. We sprinkle the world because God has made us stewards of the world and we want to remind ourselves that it is holy – or should be. And finally, when we leave this life, the place where we are laid to rest is also sprinkled with Holy Water as a sign that we, who have come to that place, even in death, go forth blessing God.

Schedule of Services and Events

January

3	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
4	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday Before the Theophany
5	Mon	6:30 pm	Vesperal Liturgy and Blessing of Water	Theophany of our Lord
6			House blessings begin	
10	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
11	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday after the Theophany
13	Tue	7:00 pm	Parish Council Meeting – M. Bourquin's	
17	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:30 pm	Inquirer's Class	
18	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	
24	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:30 pm	Inquirer's Class	
25	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Zacchaeus Sunday
31	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:30 pm	Inquirer's Class	

February

1	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Sunday of the Canaanite Woman
			Vespers	
2	Mon	6:30 pm	Liturgy	Meeting of our Lord
3 – 5			Clergy Retreat in Wichita	
7	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:30 pm	Inquirer's Class	
8	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Publican & Pharisee
10	Tue	7:00 pm	Parish Council meeting – J. Weddingfeld's	
14	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:30 pm	Inquirer's Class	
15	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Prodigal Son
21	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:30 pm	Inquirer's Class	
22	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Meatfare
28	Sat	5:00 pm	Vespers	
		5:30 pm	Inquirer's Class	

March

1	Sun	9:00 am	Liturgy	Forgiveness Sunday
2			Great Lent Begins	