

SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY

December 18, 2016

Saints Commemorated today: St. Sebastian the Martyr & His Companions and our Righteous Father Michael Syngelion the Confessor

EPISTLE READING

Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40

Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundation, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets - who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 1:1-25

The book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

ENTRANCE HYMN: 1ST TONE

(Page 45 in "The Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom")

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, and while the soldiers were guarding Thy Sacred Body, Thou, O Savior, didst rise on the third day and gave Life to the World. Wherefore the Powers of the Heavens cried to Thee, O Giver of Life; Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ; Glory to Thy Kingdom; Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who alone are Merciful.

FOURTH MODE

As the first-called of the Apostles, and brother of their leader O Andrew, entreat the Master of all that peace be granted unto the world and great mercy to our souls.



PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION

The election for the 2017 Parish Council will take place today immediately following Liturgy until 2pm. The following people are running: Colleen Allen, Tom Allen, Joanne Bilionis, Christ Kurtis, John Madias, Mary Scott and Michael Zachariades.

We would like to thank those members who will not be returning this year for their service to the parish: Tina Assimos, Bill Giannakakis, Alex Himonas, Chris Katris and Mary Jo Tirikos. Your time and dedication have been greatly appreciated. We also thank our returning members: Esther Arvanitis, Dina Blatter, George Callas, Chris Kirgios, Kelly Popyk and Chris Strafford.

CHURCH SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT/LUNCHEON

The Church School Christmas Pageant and Luncheon is today immediately following Divine Liturgy. The entire parish is invited to join us.

CHRISTMAS PASTRY SALE CONTINUES

Due to the winter storm this past weekend, bake sale traffic was lower than expected, so we have leftover items we need to sell at full retail price in order to achieve our profit goals/needs. Toward that end, we are continuing the sale to parishioners and the public until all inventory is sold. Please let your family, friends and coworkers know they can still purchase pastries by calling the church office to place an order and arrange for pick up: 277-4688. The following pastries are available: Baklava, Yalaktobouriko, Kataifi, Floyeres, Vasilopita, Diples, Christopsomo, Kourambietes, Koulourakia, Moustokouloura, Paximathia, White Chocolate Mouse Log, Amigthalota. Thank you for helping with this effort. Regards, Spyro Sinis-Terezis

PROSFORO COMMITTEE

Jesus is the Bread of Life Who offers Himself for our salvation. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood you have no life in you; he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:53-54). **We are in need of parishioners willing to join the Prosforo Committee. Generally it means making the Prosforo for two Sundays during the year and occasionally making extra for weekday Liturgies. Please contact the office if you are able to volunteer. Thank you.**

DISCRETIONARY FUND

The Discretionary Fund is to assist families that face financial crisis, students that need financial aid, single moms, philanthropic institutions in this city and overseas, people with catastrophic illnesses, and missions for the Archdiocese, etc. Thank you for your support. If you would like to help please contact Father George or make donations payable to the Discretionary Fund.

BULLETIN FLYERS

We will no longer be including flyers in the weekly bulletin. They are on the table in the Fellowship Hall. This week there are flyers for: **90th Anniversary Letter, Apollo Dance Troupe, Direct (Auto) Debit forms.** Please take what you need.

REQUEST FOR TRANSFERRING PARISHIONERS

We are blessed to welcome new parishioners to Saint Andrews. We ask that you pick up a welcome packet from the table in the Fellowship Hall. You should call the office and schedule an appointment with Father prior to beginning to receive the Sacraments. *We also ask transferring parishioners to follow the Uniform Parish Regulations, Art 18, Sec 2: "A parishioner wishing to move from one Parish to another must present a letter of transfer from the Priest of the Parish from which he or she is moving stating that he or she is in good standing."*

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

There should be NO talking in the Narthex during the Divine Liturgy. (No one should be congregating in the hallways or Fellowship Hall). It is completely disrespectful to God and to the worship service of our Church.

Please remember to dress appropriately and modestly for church services. There is no chewing gum, talking or crossing your legs in church. Everyone should arrive on time for the Liturgy. Do not leave trash

(bulletins, paper, etc) in the pews. It is considered disrespectful for anyone attending Orthodox Christian services to cross their legs during service, chew gum or come in late. Also women who are planning on taking Communion should not wear lipstick or should remove it before going up for Communion. **TURN OFF CELL PHONES.** Thank you.

A NOTE TO OUR VISITORS

People of different religious affiliation or tradition who behave in a respectful manner are always welcome at the liturgical services of our Holy Orthodox Church but **ONLY MEMBERS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH who share a common faith and practice a specific spiritual discipline may participate in the Church's sacraments and receive Holy Communion at the Orthodox Divine Liturgy. The Greek Orthodox Church has a closed communion and no intercommunion with any other Christian body.** We are blessed by your presence with us and thank you for your understanding. May God bless you always.

A NOTE TO ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS PLEASE NOTE: The proper preparation for receiving Holy Communion is: 1) prayer; 2) keeping the fast throughout the year (Wednesdays, Fridays, Great Lent, fast of the Holy Apostles, fast of the Dormition and the Christmas Fast, etc); and 3) most important, participating in the Sacrament of Holy Confession and Repentance. **ALSO follow these guidelines as you approach for Holy Communion: Take the red cloth from the person before you and place it under your chin. Say your baptismal name. Open your mouth wide and receive the Holy Spoon in your mouth, lower your lips on the Holy Communion spoon and carefully remove the Holy Eucharist so that there is nothing left. After partaking of the Sacrament blot your lips and hand the red cloth to the person behind you. Receive one piece of antidoron, return to your seat and read the post communion prayer. Lipstick, lip gloss, lip balm, etc, should be removed prior to approaching the chalice. Receiving the precious Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ should not be treated like a fast food service. You should come on time for the Divine Liturgy (that means at the beginning) and not leave until the completion of the service.** *This means that every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. It follows that if anyone eats the Lord's bread or drinks from his cup in a way that dishonors him, he is guilty of sin against the Lord's body and blood. So then, everyone should examine himself first, and then eat the bread and drink from the cup. For if he does not recognize the meaning of the Lord's body when he eats the bread and drinks from the cup, he brings judgment on himself as he eats and drinks. That is why many of you are sick and weak, and several have died. If we would examine ourselves first, we would not come under God's judgment. But we are judged and punished by the Lord, so that we shall not be condemned together with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:26-32).*

At the time of communion, please allow families with infants to approach first, followed by the children and then the adults. Thank you.

The Communion Prayer is located in the Divine Liturgy Books on page 40 (old edition) and 66 (new edition). Everyone is encouraged to participate in the reciting of the Communion Prayer together.

MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

Please remember to check the ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR when scheduling activities. They should **not** be scheduled during service times. This is disrespectful to God and unacceptable. Thank you.

REMINDER FOR PARENTS

For the convenience of parents with crying children, a "cry room" is located off the Narthex for your use. **ATTENTION PARENTS: PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CHILDREN ARE NOT WANDERING AROUND THE CHURCH DURING SERVICES. THIS IS VERY DISRUPTIVE TO EVERYONE. THANK YOU!**

ST. NEKTARIOS CHAPEL

Please remember that although the St. Nektarios Chapel does not have an Iconostasis, the altar is still the altar and as in the main church only the priest should be in the altar. When Metropolitan Iakovos consecrated the church of St. Andrew he also consecrated the Chapel and it should be treated with the same respect and reverence. Please consider all of the raised area in the Chapel the altar and do not enter it or touch anything on the altar table. Thank you.

YOUR PRAYERS HELP...

"...I was sick and you visited Me..." St. Matthew 25:36. "Holy Father, Physician of our souls and bodies have mercy, forgive and heal thy servants." The following brothers and sisters in Christ need your constant prayers and love, *recovering at home or ill at home/hospital*: Artemis Hoke (Holy Cross Rehab), Rose

Rorres (home), Anna Efthimiou (home), Jim Zeinis (home), Anthoula Pefanis (home), Tom Allen (home), Nick Limberopoulos.

In nursing homes or home bound: Diana Katsanis (Golden View), Esther Magrames (Waterford), Phyllis Leonakis (Wellbrooke), Amelia Morris (Miller's Merry Manor, Walkerton), Joan Rekos (Signature), and Telesila Yustwan (home).

Today's **Ushers** are: Manolis Anagnostou, George Mighion, Chris Strafford, Pete Arvan, Mike Chronopoulos. If you are not serving in the pangari today, you should join everyone in the Sanctuary. Thank you.

Today's **Epistle Lesson** will be read by **an Altar Boy**.

Nick Proicou prepared Prosforo for this morning. May our God grant you spiritual joy always.

No Coffee Hour.

THIS WEEK

Monday, December 19	Orthros 9am Vespers 4:30pm
Tuesday, December 20	Orthros 9am Vespers 4:30pm
Wednesday, December 21	Paraklesis to St. Nektarios 9am Vespers 4:30pm
Friday, December 23	Holy Service of the Royal Hours 9am
Saturday, December 24	Holy Nativity Eve 9:00 Orthros 10:00 Divine Liturgy Great Vespers 5pm
Sunday, December 25	Holy Nativity 9:00 Orthros 10:00 Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil

LOOKING AHEAD

Monday, December 26	Orthros 9am Vespers 4:30pm
Tuesday, December 27	St. Stephen the First-Martyr 9:00 Orthros 10:00 Divine Liturgy
Wednesday, December 28	Paraklesis to St. Nektarios 9am Vespers 4:30pm
Thursday, December 29	14,000 Infants (Holy Innocents) 9:00 Orthros 10:00 Divine Liturgy
Friday, December 30	Paraklesis to the Theotokos 9am Vespers 4:30pm
Saturday, December 31	Great Vespers 5pm
Sunday, January 1	St. Basil the Great Circumcision of Christ 9:00 Orthros 10:00 Divine Liturgy

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

June 9-11, 2017

Greek Festival

2016 Financial Report
(Does not include Festival)

Dec 16 Income	Dec 16 Expenses	Monthly Balance	Dec 15 Income	Dec 15 Expenses	Dec15 Balance
\$6,847.01	\$11,343.51	--\$4,496.50	\$91,492.40	\$36,606.67	\$54,885.73

YTD Income	YTD Expense	YTD Balance	15 YTD Inc	15 YTD Ex	15 YTD Bal
\$244,379.88	\$321,499.96	--\$77,119.98	\$339,336.11	\$319,578.52	\$19,757.59

Stewardship Report

Dec Pledge Income	Dec Pledge Goal	Difference goal/income	YTD Pledge Inc	YTD Pledge Goal	Difference goal/income
\$3,612.00	\$19,000.00	--\$15,388.00	\$160,298.00	\$250,000.00	--\$89,702.00

*Year-to-date as of December 9, 2016

October 2016 we received \$19,108 in stewardship. (The goal was \$24,000)

October 2015 we received \$10,807 in stewardship. (The goal was \$23,000)

3rd Quarter 2016 we received \$29,030 in stewardship. (The goal was \$52,000)

3rd Quarter 2015 we received \$36,460.50 in stewardship. (The goal was \$45,000)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!!!

Dear Friends,

Recently we celebrated the day our Greek Orthodox parish was first established. This milestone marks the 90 year-long spiritual presence of our Orthodox faith in Michiana. I would like to express my gratitude to all those who, so long ago and with so many personal sacrifices, made it possible for us to worship together as members of our beloved parish.

I think of those first Greek immigrants, especially the women, who made it their personal mission to start a new Greek Orthodox parish in South Bend, Indiana. Women working tirelessly to raise funds to purchase the first building, and years later another converting them to their Orthodox place of worship, before starting to build our current church. I can see them baking, cleaning, organizing banquets, raising funds, running festivals and other fundraisers not for personal gain, but to accomplish their mission. I feel so lucky to have been welcomed by some of these sweet, pious and devout women and to have been taught firsthand what it means to love Christ and His church.

Today, I also think of all the priests that faithfully served this parish. Most came with their own families, served generations of faithful, and became part of our families. They blessed our homes, provided us with spiritual guidance, rejoiced and shared the happy moments of our lives through weddings and baptisms, and consoled us when we lost loved ones. Each of these priests left their own imprint on the parish. Our own Father George came to South Bend 16 years ago and, during his tenure, has overseen many weddings, baptisms, conversions to the faith and, sadly, many funerals. He has been the driving spiritual force behind numerous projects. Our love and gratitude for our parish clergy is a given. 90 years of personal sacrifices by both laity and clergy has made us privileged enough to be close to the place we resort to when we need to pray, to find solace, and to recharge our batteries before going about our daily lives.

Today, it is impossible not to think of what all these pioneers, clergy and laity, left for us: a legacy of giving, self-sacrifice, and deep love towards our Lord, our Panayia, and our patron saint. With their example, they still show us what we ought to do: not be complacent and rest on what we inherited but, instead, try to improve what we received and pass it on to the next generations of Orthodox faithful.

On behalf of Father George and the Parish Council I would like to thank first the Ladies of the Good Samaritan Club of St. Andrew for their tireless efforts in hosting a successful 90th Anniversary Celebration. To the ministries and those who serve on them thank you for your assistance on this milestone event. Mostly importantly thank you to all those parishioners, near and far, without your presence and financial support the 90th Anniversary Celebration would not have been such a huge success. In coming together to honor and remember those who have passed, and to celebrate those who now work for St. Andrew, through your generosity, we were able to raise **\$51,759.83** for the St. Andrew Endowment Fund. Thank you for reaching into your hearts and giving such a phenomenal amount in one day to our beloved St. Andrew.

May God bless our parish and our extended families and friends, and may He guide each of us to work with love and harmony for a successful next 90 years and beyond. This is our chance to leave our own legacy to the beautiful story of St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox parish of South Bend, Indiana.

Sincerely,

Christos Kirgios
Parish Council President