

**St. Matthew Orthodox Church
Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of the Midwest**

Father John Thetford

**607 Ravenswood Drive
Green Bay, WI 54302**

From the desk of Father John.....

Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be!

At the end of this month, we will celebrate the All Holy Feast of our Lord's Nativity. Due to family obligations, I know it can be difficult to come to the full cycle of services on Christmas Eve, but I would encourage everyone to plan on making it to at least one of the two Christmas Eve services. On the morning of Christmas Eve, we will serve a Vespereal Divine Liturgy, and in the evening, we will serve a Vigil.

At the Vespereal Liturgy, several Old Testament prophecies of Christ's birth are read, with special hymns about these prophecies being sung as well. The hymns of Christ's birth emphasize the prophecy of Micah which foretells Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Saviour, and the prophecies of Isaiah about the appearance and character of the Messiah:

The Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel, which translated is, God with us (Is 7.14–15).

God is with us, understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us (Is 8.9).

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end (Is 9.6–7).

The Vigil of Christmas has two parts, Compline and Matins. The Compline begins with the solemn chanting of "God is with us!" from the prophecy of Isaiah. There is also the singing of the Troparion and Kontakion of the feast, along with the special hymns glorifying the Saviour's birth.

At the beginning of the Christmas Matins, which together with Compline form the Christmas Vigil, the six matinal psalms begin as usual with the words that the Angels sang at Christ's birth: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will among men" (Lk 2.14).

Part way through the Matins of the Vigil, the gospel reading from Matthew (1.18–25) tells of the birth of Christ. And then the canon hymns and verses glorify His appearance on earth:

Christ is born, glorify Him. Christ is from heaven, go to meet Him. Christ is on earth, be ye lifted up. Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing out with gladness, all ye people. For He is glorified (First Ode of the Christmas Canon).

I look forward to celebrating these holy services with you. And when we see one another, just as we say "Christ is Risen!" at Easter, we will say our special Christmas greeting: Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



Church Christmas Tree and Carol Sing

Children are invited to decorate our Church Christmas tree on Friday, **December 24 at 2:30 pm.**
This will be followed by a Carol Sing in Herrick Hall.
Everyone is invited to attend and sing!



December Liturgical Calendar

Wednesday, December 1, 6:00 PM Daily Vespers
 Saturday, December 4, 5:00 PM Great Vespers
 Sunday, December 5, 9:10 Hours, 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
 Wednesday, December 8, 6:00 PM Daily Vespers
 Saturday, December 11, 5:00 PM Great Vespers
 Sunday, December 12, 8:30 AM Matins, 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
 Monday, December 13, 9:10 Hours, 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy (Saint Herman)
 Wednesday, December 15, 6:00 PM Daily Vespers
 Saturday, December 18, 5:00 PM Great Vespers
 Sunday, December 19, 9:10 Hours, 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
 Wednesday, December 22, 6:00 PM Daily Vespers
 Friday, December 24, 8:45 AM Vesperal Liturgy (Christmas Eve)
 Friday, December 24, 4:15 PM Vigil (Christmas Eve)
 Saturday, December 25, 9:10 AM Hours, 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy (The Nativity of our Lord)
 Sunday, December 26, 9:10 AM Hours, 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy
 Wednesday, December 29, 6:00 PM Daily Vespers

The Advent Fast: Advent began **Monday, November 15.** By fasting, we train ourselves in discipline, and become better prepared to spiritually receive Christ on the feast of the Nativity. Please ask Fr. John if you have any questions about this fasting season.



Coffee Hour reminder: Our potluck social gathering is dependent on us bringing a dish of food, cookies, fruit, baked goods, etc., for us all to share. Please keep in mind if we are fasting when you bring food to share. Thank you for all of those who contribute and help with set up and clean up at our weekly gathering.
Everyone is welcome!!!

Parish Council President's Perspective.....Paul Novak



Brothers and Sisters,

We have been blessed with the addition of our new Iconography. While our eyes are drawn to the 22 Saints on the walls, I want to highlight in this message the Icon's of the Annunciation that adorn the left and right wall space behind the Iconostasis. The Annunciation (or *Evangelismos* in Greek) to the Theotokos is one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church, celebrated on March 25.

According to the Gospel of Luke 1:26-38, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce to her that she would conceive and bear a son, even though she "knew no man." According to holy tradition, Mary had come home to her parents when she was only fifteen when she was visited by Gabriel. This date was selected by the Church Fathers to be exactly nine months ahead of the Nativity of Our Lord, indicating that Christ was conceived in perfection at that time "of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary," as stated in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

This iconography presents the joy about the announcement of the coming of Christ. It depicts the Archangel Gabriel (on the left wall) and the Virgin Mary (on the right wall). The Archangel has his feet spread apart showing his joy and urgency

of the good news he is bringing. In his left hand, Gabriel holds a staff, which is symbolic of a messenger. He extends his right hand towards Mary as he announces the blessing to be bestowed upon her by God.

On the right wall the Virgin Mary stands on an elevated platform, indicating that as the Mother of God she is greater in honor than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, who without corruption gave birth to God the Word. In her hands, she holds a spindle of scarlet yarn, which depicts the task she was assigned of preparing the purple and scarlet material to be used in making the veil for the Temple in Jerusalem. At the top of the icon the segment of a circle represents the divine realm, from which three rays emerge. This demonstrates the action of the Holy Spirit coming upon her. This icon marks the crowning of our salvation and the revelation of the mystery before all ages. For the Son of God becomes the son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaims to the ever-virgin Mary:

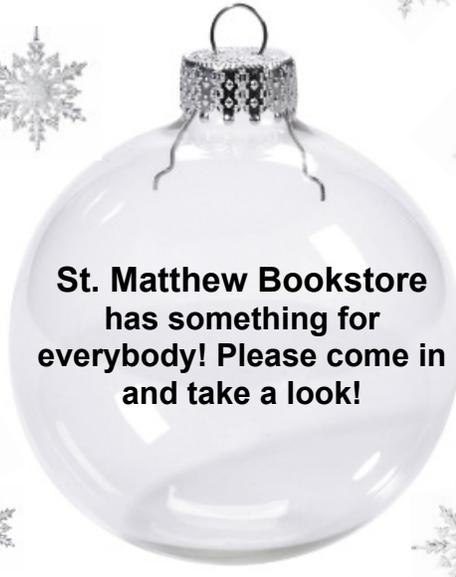
"Hail, O full of grace, the Lord is with you. Today is the beginning of our salvation, The revelation of the eternal mystery! The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin As Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Lord is with You! "Troparion for the Feast.

In Christ,
Paul M. Novak





**Sunday School Singing:
Sunday, December 26**



**St. Matthew Bookstore
has something for
everybody! Please come in
and take a look!**



**Adult Choir Practices:
Sunday, December 5 and 19**

December Ministry Team

Our focus this month is supporting House of Hope and the A&A Alexandrina Crisis Pregnancy Center. These two programs support homeless moms and mothers who are finding themselves in a crisis pregnancy situation. House of Hope cares for and supports young homeless moms by providing a safe, structured place to live. A&A supports women, men and their children with support in a time of a crisis pregnancy. A&A provides pregnancy testing and free ultrasounds. Both organizations provide counseling, support with material goods and referrals to other local agencies.

Help us support them this month by filling the laundry baskets with items from their wish lists. (The list of suggested items will be on the Ministry Team table in Herrick Hall.)

Thank you for your faithful support as we continue to reach out to the vulnerable in our community.

The Ministry Team



ZDRALE (week of) 11/28/21 for 12/5
NOVAK (week of) 12/5/21 for 12/12
SCHAHCZAENSKI (week of) 12/12/21 for 12/19
JULIAN (week of) 12/19/21 for 12/26
TOMAC (week of) 12/26/21 for 1/2/2022
WEILAND (week of) 1/2/22 for 1/9
SARSAMA (week of) 1/9/22 for 1/16
MYKHAYLYUK (week of) 1/16/22 for 1/23
ODMAN (week of) 1/23/22 for 1/30

Many thanks!!

From the SMOC Treasurer, Tom Julian

As we reflect on the wonderful events that made 2021 a memorable year at SMOC, I am guessing we will think about our outstanding new Priest and his family, phase II of our iconography project and the many new faces we get to enjoy at liturgy. I hope you will also remember that these past few years have been a time of uncertainty for many folks, but despite circumstances, the church ministries go on and work and worship continues. Only the faithfulness in giving generously from our church family allows this to happen year after year.

You will soon receive your 2022 pledge cards and hear us ask again for you to keep our parish engaged in the work of the Kingdom. Please fill out your pledge card so the Parish council can prepare a 2022 budget and expense projection. Please use the blue or pink giving envelopes for your pledges and gifts so you can receive reports on your giving. Finally, give your tithes and offerings joyfully and regularly whether weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. I know that your gifts will be multiplied to you as promised by our Lord. God has heaped blessing on us, so praise him in words, songs and the giving of our first fruits.



SMOC Men's Group

Men's Group on Saturday, December 11 at 2:00: All of the men of the parish (including inquirers and catechumens!) are invited to meet in Herrick Hall for lunch and some discussion on Saturday, December 11 at 2:00. Please let either Fr. John or Chuck Bayerl know if you will be attending...Chuck is providing fish and potatoes. Please bring a dish to share. If you have questions, please check with Fr. John or Chuck Bayerl.

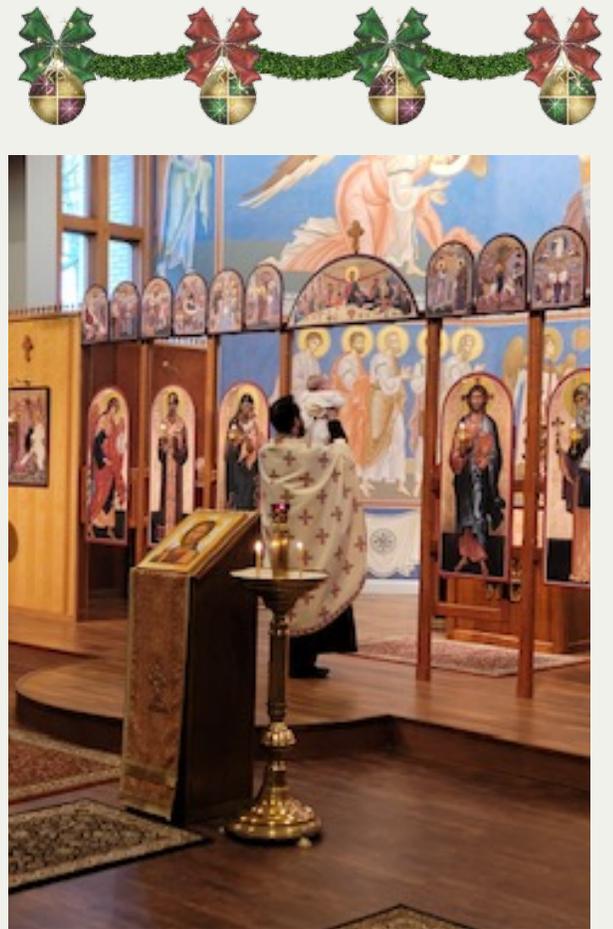




Received into the Church by Baptism

Congratulations and blessings to Elizabeth and Peter Parry on the baptism of their daughter, Alexandra Irene Marianna Parry, on Saturday, November 13. Alexandra's baptismal sponsors are Pedro and Keely Sarsama.

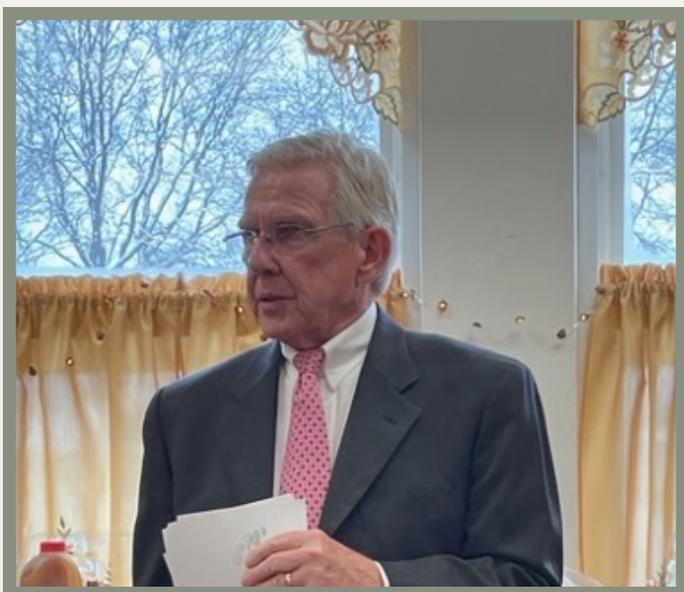
May God grant you many years!



39th Annual St. Matthew Dinner

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of the 39th Annual St. Matthew Dinner on Sunday, November 14. The food and fellowship were absolutely wonderful. Special thanks to this year's coordinators, Dorothy Olson and Lisa Ocokoljich! It was an awesome celebration and we are so grateful for everyone's help with set-up and clean-up.

A special thank you, also, to Jeff Zdrle for his presentation of the history of St. Matthew. It was wonderful!



Happy December Birthday!!



- 1 - Kirill Pitkevich
- 1 - Anastasia Sarsama
- 2 - Mary Petersen
- 4 - Gabriel Phillips
- 5 - Micki Dangutis
- 6 - Julian Sarsama
- 6 - Maria Nistor
- 8 - Brandon Enck
- 11 - LinLan Holzman-Crass
- 11 - Natalya Tomac
- 12 - Eva Pitkevich

- 13 - Michael Jeffers
- 15 - Bob Phillips
- 19 - Eric Johnson
- 21 - Marina Lyudmer
- 24 - Mark Schahczenski
- 25 - Tara Enck
- 26 - Barbara Crass
- 30 - Alexandra Schweiner
- 30 - Jeff Zdrle
- 31 - Sylvia Sarsama

Many Years!



December Wedding Anniversaries

15 - Bernie and Dorothy Olson
26 - Chuck Bayerl and Elaine Gavares
30 - Dale and Mary Petersen



Sweet Potato and Butternut Squash Soup

(makes a 6 qt crock pot of soup)

- 3 tsp olive oil (1/4c water during fast)
- 2c finely chopped onion
- 8c chopped peeled Butternut Squash
- 2-8oz sweet potatoes peeled and chopped
- 2c frozen corn kernels (or fresh or canned/drained)
- 4c (1 box) veg(during fast) or chicken broth
- 4 Tbsp fresh chopped ginger or 4 tsp powdered ginger
- 2 tsp ground coriander



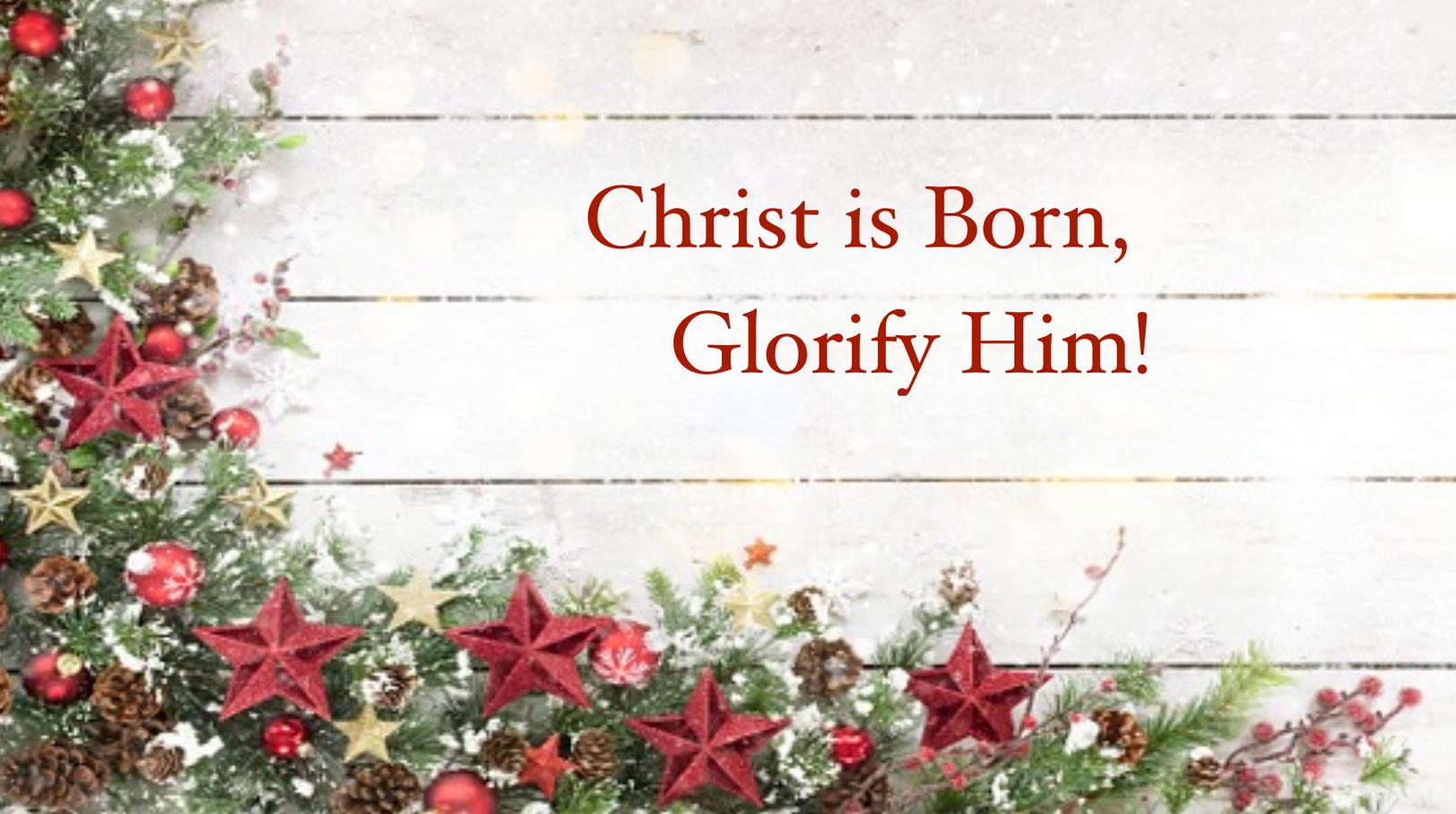
In dutch oven or large pot, warm oil over med-hi heat (if during the fast, use water instead of oil) and saute onion, stirring until edges begin to brown. Add broth and the remaining ingredients. Bring to boil. Cover and turn heat down to low and cook 15-20 minutes, until squash is tender. Remove from heat. With a slotted spoon, place solids in food processor retaining liquids in pot. Puree solids in food processor and return puree to pan. Whisk so all is blended and reheat in pot. If desired, squash may be placed in a crock pot and kept warm until serving. Note: 1 med butternut squash makes about 5 cups of diced cubes.

Other things happening at SMOC:

- **Book Study/Bible Study** is meeting every **Tuesday at 10:30 am**.
- **Adult Education class** is meeting every **Wednesday** after Daily Vespers at **6:00 pm**.
- **Movie Night on December 2 at 7:00 pm:** On **December 2**, the “Upper Room” teens and young adults group will be meeting to watch the film “Chariots of Fire” at 7:00 pm. Any other interested adults and older kids in the parish are welcome to come as well.
- **Speaker at Coffee Hour on December 5:** At 11:45 on Sunday, December 5, a representative of Alexandrina Pregnancy Resource Center in Green Bay (<https://greenbaypregnancyhelp.com/>) will visit our coffee hour to give a brief presentation on the work that they do. Our parish's Ministry Team will be supporting this Pro-Life pregnancy resource center through donations of needed items this December.
- The next Parish Council meeting will be held via Zoom on **Tuesday, December 14** at 6:00 pm. If you would like to attend as a guest, please let President, Paul Novak know at paulnovak11@gmail.com.



Phase II of our Iconography project is now complete by iconographer Dmitry Shkolnik.
You can view photos of the installation at <https://www.smocgb.com/photos>



**Christ is Born,
Glorify Him!**