



# SAINT STEPHEN BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

4141 Laurence Avenue, Allen Park, MI December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
ststephen@parma.org 313-382-5901  
*website: saintstephenbyzantine.church*

Priest: Rev. John R.P. Russell, M.Div.  
412-378-0308  
jrprussell@gmail.com

Deacon: Rev. Deacon Lawrence Hendricks

Cantors: Dominique Azcuy, Victor Azcuy, Daniel Barillas,  
Guillermo Barillas, Debra Grega Beckerman, Cecilia  
Hendricks, Pani Mary Hendricks, Pani Katie Russell,  
Mary Russell, David Woods, Mary Woods

Hall Manager: Victor Azcuy  
ststephenshall123@gmail.com (239) 895-8931



**Glory to Jesus Christ! Welcome to St. Stephen!**  
You are welcome here. Join us in prayer and worship  
of almighty God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## **About the Parish**

St. Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church, led by the Holy Spirit, is called to evangelize – to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to welcoming and caring for all of God's children.

We are a parish of the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Eparchy of Parma, Bishop Robert (Pipta) is our bishop. Archbishop William (Skurla) of Pittsburgh is our Metropolitan. We are in communion with our holy father Francis, the Pope of Rome.

“Eastern Catholics are in [comm]union with Rome. We share the same faith and the same mysteries, however, our way of expressing them follows the same tradition as the Orthodox Churches.”  
– our former pastor Fr. Joseph Radvansky in *A Brief Explanation of the Eastern Catholic Churches*.

# LITURGICAL SERVICE TIMES

Sunday & Saturday morning at 10:00am

Wednesday & Friday evening at 7:00pm

**4:00pm Great Vespers** for Sunday – followed by Confessions

## Sunday, December 17, 2023

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS. Tone 4.

☩ The Holy Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Children, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael.

*Vespers Paramia:* Isaiah 43:9-14 • Wisdom 3:1-9 • Wisdom 5:15-6:3.

*7th Resurrectional Matins Gospel:* John 20:1-10.

Colossians 3:4-11. Luke 14:16-24.

**8:15am Matins** for Sunday

**9:30am First & Third Hour** (Reader Service); **Confessions** – in Sacristy

**10:00am Divine Liturgy** – for the people of the parish      Cantors: Mary H & Cecilia  
Reader: Daniel B

*for the health of John Schimele, from Bea & Paul Baize (12-12)*

*for the descendants of Melvyn & Josefa, from Sarah Marron (12-15)*

*After Liturgy: Fellowship & Potluck in the hall. ECF classes. Catechism Class*

## Cookie Sale in the Hall!

*5:00pm Revelation Discussion. On Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84684461827> or in the small hall*

**7:00pm Vespers** for a day of alleluia – with prostrations

## Monday, December 18, 2023      Day of Alleluia

The Holy Martyr Sebastian and his Companions (287).

Hebrews 8:7-13. Mark 9:42-10:1.

*7:00pm Byzantine Book Club - online: [meet.google.com/xuc-eiuo-sia](https://meet.google.com/xuc-eiuo-sia)*

*or in person: 8461 Barrington Drive, Ypsilanti, MI 48198*

## Tuesday, December 19, 2023      Day of Alleluia

The Holy Martyr Boniface (290).

Hebrews 9:8-10, 15-23. Mark 10:2-12.

*7:00am Coffee with Fr. John – a casual meetup on Zoom*

**10:00am Third & Sixth Hour** with prostrations

## Wednesday, December 20, 2023

⊗ Pre-festive Day of the Nativity. The Holy Martyr Ignatius the God-bearer (107).  
Hebrews 10:1-18. Mark 10:11b-16.

**7:00am First & Third Hour**

*6:00pm Confessions*

**6:30pm Vespers &**

**7:00pm Divine Liturgy for Thursday**

*+George Gonschak*

Cantor: Mary R

## Thursday, December 21, 2023

Pre-festive Day of the Nativity. The Holy Martyr Juliana of Nicomedia (304).  
Hebrews 10:35-11:7. Mark 10:17-27.

*6:30pm Councils Meeting*

## Friday, December 22, 2023

Pre-festive Day of the Nativity. The Holy Great Martyr Anastasia (304).

First Hour: Micah 5:2-4a; Hebrews 1:1-12; Matthew 1:18-25.

Third Hour: Baruch 3:36-4:4; Galatians 3:23-4:5; Luke 2:1-20.

Sixth Hour: Isaiah 7:10-16; 8:1-4, 8-10; Hebrews 1:10-2:3; Matthew 2:1-12.

Ninth Hour: Isaiah 9:6-7; Hebrews 2:11-18; Matthew 2:13-23.

Hebrews 11:8, 11-16. Mark 10:23b-32a.

**10:00am Royal Hours for ☩ Christmas**

Cantor: Victor A

*6:30pm Confessions*

**7:00pm Vespers for Saturday**

Cantor: Mary W

## Saturday, December 23, 2023

Saturday before the Nativity of the Lord. The Holy Ten Martyrs of Crete (250).  
Commemoration of the Dedication of the Great Church of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople.  
Galatians 3:8-12. Luke 13:18-29.

**10:00am Divine Liturgy**

*+Melvyn & +Josefa, from Sarah Marron*

Cantor: TBD

**4:00pm Great Vespers for Sunday – followed by Confessions**

# Sunday, December 24, 2023

*Christmas Eve*

THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY. THE SUNDAY OF THE ANCESTORS. Tone 5  
Vigil of the Nativity. The Holy Great Martyr Eugenia (262).

*Vespers Paramia:* Genesis 14:14-20 • Deuteronomy 1:8-11, 15-17 • Deut. 10:14-21.

*8th Resurrectional Matins Gospel:* John 20:11-18.

Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40. Matthew 1:1-25

**8:15am Matins** for Sunday

Cantor: Victor A

**9:30am First & Third Hour** (*Reader Service*); **Confessions** – *in Sacristy*

**10:00am Divine Liturgy** – *for the people of the parish*

Cantors: Mary H & Cecilia

Reader: Lance

+George Gonschak (12-20)

+Melvyn & +Josefa, from Sarah Marron (12-23)

*After Liturgy: Fellowship & Potluck in the hall. No Classes. Decorate the Church for Christmas!*

**4:00pm Great Vespers** for ☩ Christmas Cantors: Mary H, Cecilia. Reader: Mary W

*Koljady (Christmas Carols) and Holy Supper in the hall*

Cantor: Mary W

**9:00pm All-Night Vigil** (*Great Compline & Matins*) for ☩ Christmas

Cantors: Victor A & Mary W

# Monday, December 25, 2023

*Christmas!*

☩ THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

*Vespers Paramia:* Genesis 1:1-13 • Numbers 24:2-3. 5-9, 17-18 • Micah 4:6-7; 5:2-4 •

Is. 11:1-10 • Baruch 3:35-4:4 • Dan. 2:31-36, 44-45 • Is. 9:6-7 • Is. 7:10-16a; 8:1-4, 8b-10

Galatians 3:15-22 & Hebrews 1:1-12.

Matthew 13:31-36 & Luke 2:1-20.

*Matins Gospel:* Matthew 1:18-25

*for the Nativity:* Galatians 4:4-7. Matthew 2:1-12.

*for the day:* Hebrews 11:17-23, 27-31. Mark 10:46-52.

**9:30am Koljady** (*Christmas Carols*) in the church

**10:00am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil** for ☩ Christmas Cantor: Mary R. Reader: Zac

# Tuesday, December 26, 2023

⊗. The Synaxis of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.  
The Holy Martyr Euthymius, Bishop of Sardis.

*for the Synaxis:* Hebrews 2:11-18. Matthew 2:13-23.

*for the day:* Hebrews 12:25, 26, 13:22-25. Mark 11:11-23.

**10:00am Third & Sixth Hour**

**6:00pm Great Vespers &**

Cantor: Victor A

**7:00pm Divine Liturgy** *for our patronal feast of St. Stephen – with procession*

*+Stephen L. Kastura, from Kathleen Johnston*

## LEGEND

⊕ Great Feast

⊕ Feast with an All-night Vigil

⊕ Feast with the Polyeleos at Matins

⊗. Feast with the Great Doxology at Matins

⊗. Feast with Six Stichera at Vespers

by tradition, a strict fast day (no meat, dairy, eggs, fish, wine, or oil)

by tradition, wine and oil are permitted (no meat, dairy, eggs, or fish)

by tradition, fish, wine, and oil are permitted (no meat, dairy, or eggs)

by tradition, dairy, eggs, fish, wine, and oil are permitted (no meat)

## In Remembrance of Christmases Past

from Victor Jiompkowski

In remembrance of things past and the ways our religious community celebrated this holy season, I recommend four videos that can be found on YOUTUBE.

In the search section type in RUSYN KOLJADY and CARPATHO RUSYN and you should come to these four videos:

Winter Concert Part 2 from St Mary's OCA Minneapolis, Mn year 2015

Koljady Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas carols St. Mary's Byzantine Choir Mahonoy City, Pa year 2014

Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas Eve Dinner. This was filmed in Europe.

Lemko Rusyn caroling in Carpathians. These are folk carols. Also, there are pictures of exteriors and interiors of the Byzantine Wooden Churches. There are pictured icon screens made of wood including carved wooden icons.

## Adopt a Family

Our parish is adopting a family in need for Christmas. Thank you to everyone for taking the paper ornaments with the ages and wanted items on them. Please purchase the item, wrap it, and put the ornament on it as a tag and return the gift to the table. **We need the gifts by Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> in order to get them to the family in time for Christmas.**

There is also a box under the table for non-perishable food items. For example: corn, stuffing, etc. Please place any items you have in this box. THANK YOU!!

## Guild Cookie Sale

The next Guild Fundraiser will be the COOKIE SALE taking place on **Sunday, December 17** after liturgy in the hall. There will be a variety of cookies to pick from. \$15.00 per container. Just pick your favorites!

## Bible Discussion – Revelation: God’s Gift of Hope

St. Stephen Parish is studying and discussing the Book of Revelation.

Biblical prophecy can be very difficult to understand; as a result, many people simply skip over the books dealing with biblical prophecy. The book we’ll be using, *Revelation: God’s Gift of Hope*, provides a helpful Catholic interpretation of perhaps the most mysterious book in the Scriptures. Through this study, participants will see the book of Revelation with new eyes and will grasp hold of its intended, hope-filled message.

To get started, follow this link to an introduction:

[Introduction to the book of Revelation K Perrotta Nov 2023](#)

<https://voicethread.com/myvoice/thread/25505738/151063639/136824465>

Our meetings are on **Sundays at 5:00pm**

December 17; January 7, 14, 21, 28; February 4, 25; March 3, 17, 24; April 7, 14, 21, 28

## Byzantine Book Club

We are reading and discussing *Poustinia: Encountering God in Silence, Solitude, and Prayer* by Catherine Doherty. Meetings are most Mondays at 7pm.

You may join in person at the Hendricks Homestead

(8461 Barrington Drive, Ypsilanti, MI 48198)

or online through the link: [meet.google.com/xuc-eiuo-sia](https://meet.google.com/xuc-eiuo-sia)

[Join by phone](https://meet.google.com/xuc-eiuo-sia) (US) +1 662-510-4431 PIN: 111 641 182#

## Coffee with Fr. John

*a casual meetup on Zoom*

Perhaps you have questions and haven't been able to find a moment to ask. Or perhaps you'd just like to hang out for a while in the morning before work. You're invited to share some time as we journey together through this life in Christ. This will be an online meeting through Zoom at 7am on Tuesdays. You can join with or without video.

Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83054002720?pwd=QzZNMNS9GUE9KTIkxU01DdVdCeTRLZz09>

Meeting ID: 830 5400 2720

Passcode: 389460

## Annual Stewardship Appeal

Giving is a way of opening ourselves to opportunity. When we choose to be God's opportunity of help and love for another person, we place ourselves in God's design for giving and receiving from one another. Let us stand in awe of the holiness of God today as we practice recognition of our Lord by giving back to him.

Visit us online at [parma.org](https://parma.org) to submit your one-time or monthly donation to the Stewardship Appeal. Thank you for your generosity!

St. Stephen's goal this year is \$7,300.

So far, 17 contributors have donated \$2218, which is about 30% of our goal.

## 2023 Christmas Services

*Christmas is on a Monday this year,  
which means the services are arranged differently than usual.*

When December 24<sup>th</sup> falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the day of strict fasting and the celebration of the Royal Hours in preparation for Christmas are moved to the preceding Friday, since Saturday and Sunday are never days of strict fasting in the Byzantine tradition. We do abstain from certain foods, such as meat, on Saturdays and Sundays during fasting seasons and on this Christmas Eve, but we eat other foods after Divine Liturgy in the mornings. *(To fast is to spend some time eating nothing. On strict fast days, such as Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, the Byzantine tradition is to fast (or eat nothing) until Vespers (sunset) or until Ninth Hour (about 3pm). This is not a law in our particular Church but may be followed voluntarily).*

Divine Liturgy is celebrated *every* Sunday morning. This is true even if Christmas Eve (December 24<sup>th</sup>) falls on a Sunday, as it does this year. On Sunday morning at 10am, therefore, as we always do, we will celebrate the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.

Since Divine Liturgy is celebrated on the morning of December 24<sup>th</sup>, it is *not* celebrated *again* in the evening. *(It is a general rule in our tradition that the Divine Liturgy is only celebrated once per day in each church).* Therefore, Vespers for Christmas will be celebrated by itself, still with a Gospel, but without the Divine Liturgy, at 4pm on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>. Our parish Holy Supper will follow this, beginning with the singing of our Christmas Carols (*Koljady*) in the hall. The All-Night Vigil for Christmas (Great Compline & Matins) will begin at 9pm on Sunday night. We will begin singing our Christmas Carols (*Koljady*) again at 9:30am on Monday morning. Finally, the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil for Christmas will be celebrated Monday morning at 10:00am, since it was not celebrated the night before. *Christ is born! All of this is as described in the Typikon (2023 Typikon, pp. 93 - 96).*



## Upcoming Retreat Opportunities

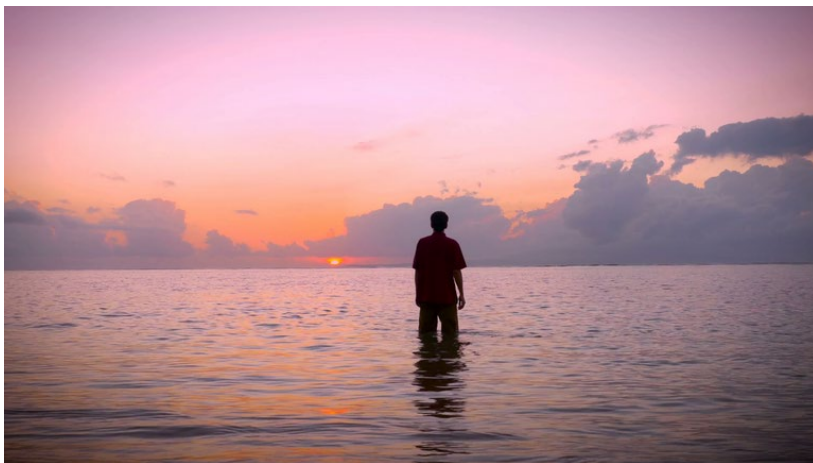
We encourage you to check for more opportunities!

<https://www.parma.org/retreats>



**The 11th Annual Women's Retreat** will take place February 16-18, 2024, at Our Lady of the Pines Retreat Center in Fremont, Ohio. The retreat master will be Fr. Lukas Mitro, administrator of the Holy Resurrection Church in Euclid, Ohio. The topic is The Beatitudes: The Way of Life. More information coming soon!

**The Third Annual Men's Retreat** will take place March 15-17, 2024, at Our Lady of the Pines Retreat Center in Fremont, Ohio. The retreat master will be Father Thomas J. Loya, the pastor of the Annunciation of the Mother or God parish in Homer Glen, Illinois.



The topic is Fallen Passions to Apatheia: Pursuing the Virtuous Life. More information coming soon.

## St. Nicholas Apostolate

The St. Nicholas Apostolate is a means for members in our parish to practice Christian love through giving charitable donations and volunteering. The St. Nicholas Apostolate is facilitating donations from the parish for three funds modeled after the three purses of St. Nicholas. He was a wealthy man before he became a priest and bishop, and he chose to use his wealth to save three impoverished women from slavery by giving each of them a sack of gold coins for a dowry. St. Nicholas is often shown holding three purses or three coins. The three purses of the St. Nicholas Apostolate will be used to support the following:

- 1) charitable organizations  
(such as Day House, Image of God Pregnancy Center, & Fish & Loaves)
- 2) fellow parishioners in need
- 3) neighbors and strangers who come to the parish seeking help.

One way that parishioners are encouraged to practice Christ's command to "help those that ask" is through monetary donations. Someday soon, a donation box next to an icon of St. Nicholas will be placed in the narthex with envelopes for parishioners to donate to a purse of their choosing or simply to make an unrestricted gift. Donations for the first purse, charitable organizations, are given directly to the organizations. Donations for the second and third purses, our parishioners and our neighbors, are distributed by Fr. John Russell as he deems appropriate. All donations are tax deductible. In the near future, volunteer opportunities will also be organized for the parish to participate in.

**The St. Nicholas Apostolate is not a philanthropic club, but rather is a vehicle for the parish community to respond to God's commandment to love our neighbor, especially our neighbors in need.**

"On the subject of mutual charity, you have no need for anyone to write you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another.... Nevertheless, we urge you... to progress even more." (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10).

Contact Fr Deacon Lawrence ([frdeaconlawrence@yahoo.com](mailto:frdeaconlawrence@yahoo.com)) for more information.

## **Synodal Process**

From the survey and the conversations with parishioners in the context of reflections on the Beatitudes, we have formulated some goals for St. Stephen's.

### **\* Develop opportunities for adult religious education**

In the survey, parishioners expressed some reservations about their readiness to share the Christian faith with others. It seems that further education would be helpful. In order to develop something that will best meet parishioners needs, we need to ask more specific questions to discover areas in which they would most like to learn and formats they would find most helpful.

Action: we will create some ways of inquiring into educational needs in the parish during the fall. In the new year we will begin to present new educational opportunities.

Our goal is to involve at least 20 percent of the active adults in the parish in new educational experiences by Pascha next year.

### **\* Encourage and help parishioners to go on retreats**

Most parishioners report that they do not often or ever go on retreats. Taking retreat time is a normal practice in Christian life. While retreats in the eparchy are routinely brought to parishioners' attention, more could be done to encourage and help them.

Action: we will give more attention to helping parishioners see the value of taking retreats and will work to identify and promote retreats and help people attend them (transportation, etc.).

We would like to see 10 percent of the active adults in the parish attend a retreat by the end of 2023.

### **\* Develop outreach opportunities**

In conversation over the Beatitudes, parishioners expressed the need for ways of serving neighbors in need and also for deepening community life within the parish. Developing outreach opportunities in a way that also deepens parishioners relationships with each other would help to meet this need.

Action: We have revived the long defunct St. Nicholas Apostolate as a way of involving parishioners in service to needy neighbors—and to each other in the parish. The apostolate will encourage donations for help to individuals outside and inside the church and will help parishioners learn about, support, and participate in selected local nonprofit organizations.

Our goal is to involve at least 20 percent of the active adults in the parish in this apostolate.

**Please continue to let us know your thoughts about the parish and about these initiatives in particular. You may always call or write:**

**313-382-5901**

**4141 Laurence Avenue, Allen Park, MI 48101**

**ststephen@parma.org**



*His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory's*  
**NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE 2023**

*To Be Prayed Every Evening of the Nativity Fast*

Most-merciful Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, at Your Holy Birth, the choirs of angels proclaimed peace on earth. At Your Glorious Resurrection, You came to Your disciples saying "Peace be with you!" As we prepare to celebrate Your coming in the flesh, send Your peace upon the whole world, especially upon the Holy Land and all other places of warfare and unrest. Cleanse us of all impurity, O Lord, so that our hearts may be filled with Your peace which surpasses all understanding. In this way, may we live peacefully according to Your commandments in our families, communities, and churches. For You are the King of Peace and the Savior of our Souls, and to You we give glory forever. Amen!

American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese 2023—All Rights Reserved

# Prayer List

*Pray for the healing of* John Aral, Barb Barnes, Don & Theresa Butella, Dorothy Brooks, Pat Carlson, Louise Dalbo, Lawrence Thomas Dion, Chris Lauffer, Michael Mykeloff, Judith Ng, Ron Ostrowsky, Thomas Payeur, & Edith Santo

## Rides to Church

If you need a ride or would like to offer a ride to others, please contact Victor Jiomkowski (313-930-0801 / v.jiomkowski1111@att.net) so he can help make the arrangements. The St. Nicholas Apostolate is still looking for a second person to help coordinate rides to church for people having trouble getting to services. If you are interested in helping with this, please contact Victor Jiomkowski or Father John.

## Church Cleaning

Please sign up to clean our church. Sign up for any week you're available to clean and clean the church on any day of that week. Betty & LeAnn are signed up to clean this week. Thank you to Phyllis, Ceil, & Char for cleaning last week.

## CHARITABLE GIVING

*from St. Stephen Parish*

*We donate \$50 per month to Fish & Loaves Community Food Pantry*

*We donated \$615 for the retirement of our nuns.*

*Since our last contributions,*

for the Church in Central & Eastern Europe, we have collected \$85.

for Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan, we have collected \$138.

for Peter's Pence, we have collected \$40.

for Catholic Home Missions, we have collected \$40.

## Image of God Pregnancy Center

Our parish helps to support Image of God Pregnancy Center (4151 Seminole St., Detroit), a place of hope for disadvantaged women on the city's east side for the past 11 years. Their facility provides vital resources at no cost to current and expecting mothers, from pregnancy testing to professional counseling, in Detroit's most underserved area.

**ATTENDANCE** – *Thank you for praying with us.*

Attendance at Divine Liturgy on December 10<sup>th</sup> was **71**.

Average Sunday attendance  $\approx$  **59, which is about 53% of our parishioners**

Devote yourselves “to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship,  
to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

**COLLECTION** – *Thank you for supporting your parish.*

Collection for December 10<sup>th</sup> was **\$1,294.67** Average Weekly Collection: **\$2,049.52**

Sunday: \$525; Christmas: \$50; Online: \$577.17; Candles: \$50; Flowers: \$80

“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion,  
for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:7).



**Saint Stephen**

BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH