

SAINT STEPHEN BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

4141 Laurence Avenue, Allen Park, MI December 24th, 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 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

⊗ Synaxis of the Theotokos & Ever-Virgin Mary. 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

Wednesday, December 27, 2023 *no fasting!*

⊗ THE HOLY APOSTLE, FIRST MARTYR AND ARCHDEACON STEPHEN.

Our Venerable Fr. and Confessor Theodore, Brother of Theophane the Hymnographer (845).

for Stephen: Acts 6:8-7:5, 47-60. Matthew 21:33-42.

for the day: James 1:1-18. Mark 11:22b-26.

6:00pm Confessions

6:30pm Koljady &

7:00pm Divine Liturgy *for Thursday*

Cantor: Erin Holmes

for the health of John Fedoush, from Mary Novak

Thursday, December 28, 2023

Post-festive Day of the Nativity. The Holy Twenty thousand Martyrs of Nicomedia (302).

The Blessed Martyr Gregory Khomyshyn, Bishop of Stanislaviv (1945).

James 1:19-27. Mark 11:27-33.

Friday, December 29, 2023 *no fasting!*

Post-festive Day of the Nativity. The Holy Innocents killed by Herod in Bethlehem.

Our Venerable Father Marcellus, Hegumen of the Akimetes (486).

James 2:1-13. Mark 12:1-12.

7:00am First & Third Hour

6:30pm Confessions

7:00pm Vespers *for Saturday after the Nativity*

Saturday, December 30, 2023

Saturday after the Nativity. The Holy Martyr Anyisia (406).

The Venerable Zoticus, Priest and Protector of Orphans (4th Century).

1 Timothy 6:11b-16. Matthew 12:15-21.

10:00am Divine Liturgy

Cantor: TBD

+Robert Dubensky, from Sarah & Oscar Dubensky-Obando

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

Sunday, December 31, 2023

THE SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY. Tone 6

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY AND JUST JOSEPH THE BETROTHED, DAVID THE KING, AND JAMES THE BROTHER OF GOD. Leave-taking of the Nativity.

Our Venerable Mother Melany of Rome (438).

9th Resurrectional Matins Gospel: John 20:19-31.

Galatians 1:11-19. Matthew 2:13-23. 1 Timothy 1:15-17. Luke 19:1-10.

8:15am Matins for Sunday

Cantor: Victor A

9:30am Koljady in the church; Confessions – in Sacristy

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

Cantors: Mary H & Cecilia

Reader: Dominique

for the health of John Fedoush, from Mary Novak (12-27)

+Stephen L. Kastura, from Kathleen Johnston (12-26)

+Robert Dubensky, from Sarah & Oscar Dubensky-Obando (12-30)

After Liturgy: Fellowship & Potluck in the hall. No classes.

6:00pm All-Night Vigil for the Circumcision of our Lord & St. Basil

Cantors: Victor A & Mary H

New Year's Party until Midnight

Monday, January 1, 2024

⊕ THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

HOLY FR. BASIL THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA (379).

Vespers Paramia: Genesis 17:1-7, 9-12, 14 • Proverbs 8:22-30 • Proverbs 10:31-11:12.

Matins Gospel: John 10:9-16.

for the Circumcision: Colossians 2:8-12 & for Basil: Hebrews 7:26-8:2.

for the Circumcision: Luke 2:20-21, 40-52 & for Basil: Luke 6:17-23a.

12:30am Moleben of Thanksgiving

12 noon Divine Liturgy for the Circumcision of our Lord & St. Basil (note special time)

for the health of Dennis Materniak, from the Richardson Family. Cantor: Mary W

Tuesday, January 2, 2024

Pre-festive Day of the Theophany. Our Holy Father Sylvester, Pope of Rome (335).
Our Venerable & God-bearing Father Seraphim, Wonderworker of Sarov.

1 Timothy 3:14-4:5. Matthew 3:1-11 (*readings for the Sat. before Theophany*)

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

10:00am Third & Sixth Hour

Wednesday, January 3, 2024 *no fasting!*

Pre-festive Day of the Theophany. The Holy Prophet Malachi.
The Holy Martyr Gordius (304). Venerable Mother Genevieve of Paris.

2 Timothy 4:5-8. Mark 1:1-8. (*readings for the Sun. before Theophany*)

7:00am First & Third Hour

6:00pm Confessions

6:30pm Vespers &

7:00pm Divine Liturgy for Thursday

Cantor: Victor A

for the health of Nancy Patterson, from the Richardson Family

Thursday, January 4, 2024

Pre-festive Day of the Theophany. The Synaxis of the Holy Seventy Apostles.
Our Venerable Father Theoctist, Hegumen at Cuomo in Sicily (800).

Romans 8:8-14. Luke 10:1-15.

Friday, January 5, 2024 Day of Strict Fast

Vigil of the Theophany. The Holy Martyrs Theopempt and Theona (c. 350).
Our Venerable Mother Syncletica (4th Century). The Holy Prophet Micah.

1st Hour: Isaiah 35:1-10 • Acts 13:25-33a • Matthew 3:1-11

3rd Hour: Isaiah 1:16-20 • Acts 19:1-8 • Mark 1:1-8

6th Hour: Isaiah 12:3-6 • Romans 6:3-11 • Mark 1:9-15

9th Hour: Isaiah 49:8-15 • Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7 • Matthew 3:13-17

Royal Hours for ☩ Theophany

6:00pm Vespertal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil for Theophany Cantors: Mary H & Cecilia

After Liturgy: Holy Supper in the Hall (Meatless Potluck)

Reader: Mary W

10:00pm All-Night Vigil for Theophany

Saturday, January 6, 2024

⊕ THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

Vespers Paramia: (1) Genesis 1:1-13 • (2) Exodus 14:15-18, 21-23, 27-29a •
(3) Exodus 15:22-16:1a • (4) Joshua 3:7-8, 15-17 • (5) IV [III] Kings 2:6-14 •
(6) IV [III] Kings 5:9-14 • (7) Isaiah 1:16-20 • (8) Genesis 32:1-10a •
(9) Exodus 2:5-10 • (10) Judges 6:36-40 • (11) III [I] Kings 18:30-39 •
(12) IV [III] Kings 2:19-22 • (13) Isaiah 49:8-15

for the Vesperal Divine Liturgy: 1 Corinthians 9:19-27. Luke 3:1-18.

Matins Gospel: Mark 1:9-11

for Theophany: Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7. Matthew 3:13-17

10:00am Divine Liturgy

Cantor: TBD

Blessing of the Detroit River to follow – exact location to be determined.

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

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)

Adopt a Family

Thank you to all who gave for our family in need. They were most appreciative.

Donation from the Greek Catholic Union

The Greek Catholic Union, one of the premier fraternal benefit societies in the country, has donated to the St. Nicholas Apostolate of St. Stephen Church \$500 for the benefit of our parish and the surrounding community.

-Victor Jiompkowski, GCU Parish Coordinator

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 the following **Sundays at 5:00pm**

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

[Join by phone](#) (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

2023 Christmas Services

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

When December 24th 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 22nd, 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 24th) 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 24th, 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 24th. 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 Typicon, pp. 93 - 96).*

Upcoming Retreat Opportunities

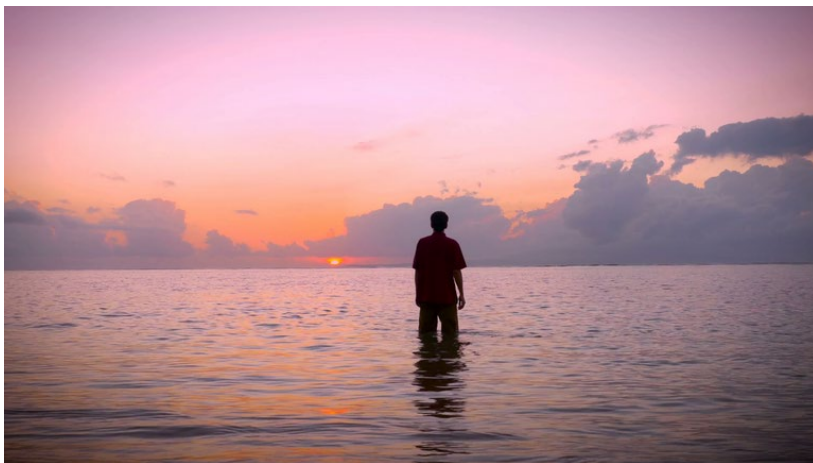
We encourage you to check for more opportunities!

<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) 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

Prayer List

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

Christmas Flowers offered in memory of

Members of the Barrillas Family

Joseph Humenik

Helen Yatcko

Andy Yatcko

Members of the Senga Family



Annual Stewardship Appeal

Christ is born! Glorify Him! Consider the Father's Gift of the Christ Child and how you can offer your time, talent, and treasure back to God in thanksgiving. Help support the Eparchy of Parma's Annual Stewardship Appeal through a one-time or monthly donation at parma.org. Thank you for your generosity and a blessed Nativity to you!

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

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

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. Thank you to Betty and LeAnn for cleaning this week. Veronica has signed up to clean this week.

CHARITABLE GIVING

from St. Stephen Parish

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

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 17th was **58**. Average Sunday attendance ≈ **59**

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 17th was **\$2,797.17** Average Weekly Collection: **\$2,079.30**

Sun: \$1462; Christmas: \$100; Holy Day: \$10; Online: \$397.17; Candles: \$48; Flowers: \$10; Fuel: \$90; Special Donation: \$680
(The Guild Cookie Sale brought in \$410)

“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