



# SAINT STEPHEN BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

4141 Laurence Avenue, Allen Park, MI December 31<sup>st</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



## **Christ is born! 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

Cantor: Mary R

## 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.

**7:00pm Royal Hours for ☩ Theophany**

Cantors: Mary R & Victor A

## 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

**6:00pm Vespertine 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 of St. John Chrysostom** *for Theophany* Cantor: Victor A

*Blessing of the Rouge River to follow – Ford Field Park, 22051 Cherry Hill St, Dearborn, MI 48124*

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

## Sunday, January 7, 2024

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY. Tone 7

⊗. The Synaxis of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John.

*10th Resurrectional Matins Gospel:* John 21:1-14.

*for the Sunday after Theophany:* Ephesians 4:7-13. Matthew 4:12-17.

**8:15am Matins** *for Sunday*

Cantor: Victor A

**9:30am Akathist** – *Reader Service; Confessions* – *in Sacristy*

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

Cantors: Mary H & Cecilia

Reader: TBD

*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. Classes Resume.*

*5pm Discussion of the Book of Revelation via Zoom*

**7:00pm Vespers** *for Monday*

# Monday, January 8, 2024

Post-festive Day of the Theophany. Our Venerable Father George the Chozebite (614). Our Venerable Mother Dominica (474). Our Holy Father and Confessor Emilian (767).  
James 2:14-26. 1 Peter 2:21b-3:9. Mark 10:46-52. Mark 12:13-17.

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, January 9, 2024

Post-festive Day of the Theophany. The Holy Martyr Polyeuct (230).  
James 3:1-10. 1 Peter 3:10-22. Mark 11:11-23. Mark 12:18-27.

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

**9:30am Third & Sixth Hour**

**10:00am Divine Liturgy**

Cantor: Mary R

## LEGEND

⊕	Great Feast	by tradition, a strict fast day (no meat, dairy, eggs, fish, wine, or oil)
⊕	Feast with an All-night Vigil	by tradition, wine and oil are permitted (no meat, dairy, eggs, or fish)
+	Feast with the Polyeleos at Matins	by tradition, fish, wine, and oil are permitted (no meat, dairy, or eggs)
⊗	Feast with the Great Doxology at Matins	by tradition, dairy, eggs, fish, wine, and oil are permitted (no meat)
⊗	Feast with Six Stichera at Vespers	

## Great Blessing of the Rouge River

On Theophany, Saturday January 6th at 11:30 a.m. Father John will bless the Rouge River in Dearborn. Location: FORD FIELD PARK, 22051 Cherry Hill St, Dearborn, MI 48124, two blocks north of Michigan Avenue. Access to parking lot off Monroe Avenue. Blessing will occur at the Duck Pond bend in the river. This is an ancient tradition observed on this Great Feast.

## House Blessings

House Blessings will begin on Theophany (January 6th) and ideally finish before it's leave-taking on January 15th. It's not too soon to start thinking about what day would be best to invite the priest for this annual blessing. There are envelopes for this purpose in your boxes for 2024. Or you can sign up on the sign-up sheet in the narthex.

## **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](https://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=QzZNM59GUE9KTIkxU01DdVdCeTRLZz09>

Meeting ID: 830 5400 2720

Passcode: 389460

## Upcoming Retreat Opportunities

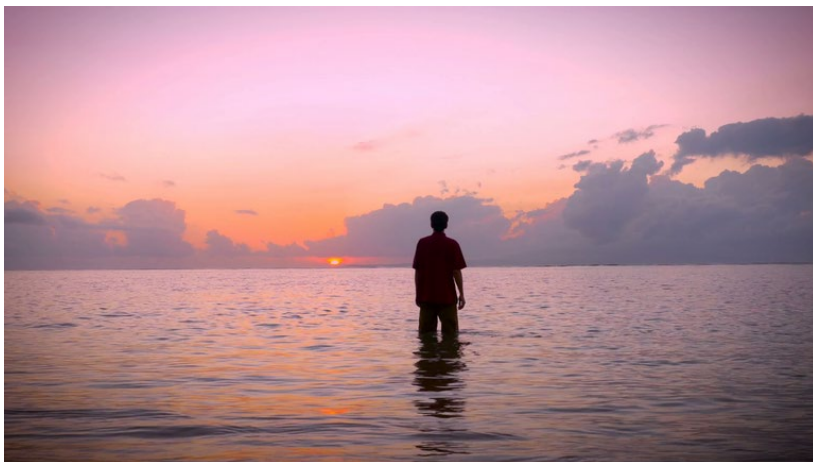
We encourage you to check for more opportunities!

<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 Apathia: 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**

# 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  
Gene Gabbavy  
Jackie Gabbavy  
Jim Humeník  
Joseph Humeník  
Ruth Humeník*

*Pam Rowan  
Helen Yatcko  
Andy Yatcko  
Members of  
the Senga Family*



## **Annual Stewardship Appeal**

A blessed Theophany to you! Have you considered your pledge to this year's Stewardship Appeal? The Eparchy of Parma relies on your continued support to provide for our various programs and outreaches. Please make your pledge today! 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.

## **Rides to Church**

If you need a ride or would like to offer a ride to others, please contact Victor Jiompkowski (313-930-0801 / v.jiompkowski1111@att.net) so he can help make the arrangements. We are 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 Jiompkowski 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 24<sup>th</sup> was **60**. 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 24<sup>th</sup> was **\$3,108.56** Average Weekly Collection: **\$2,080.95**

Sun: \$1059; Christmas: \$845; Holy Day: \$47; Online: \$1,022.52; Candles: \$74; Flowers: \$37; Fuel: \$12; Horizons: \$12

“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