



St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
Weekly Newsletter
Sunday, November 1, 2020

We Want to Hear from You!

We are preparing to place the order for 2021 offering envelopes. Please complete this brief, two question survey to help us place an accurate order for envelopes:
<https://forms.gle/GFtcMcqyj6Ldo2PfA>.

Upcoming Meetings

- Choir Practice - Tuesday 10/27 at 7pm
Contact [Matt Gordon](#) for link
- 12 Baskets (meeting)
Saturday 10/31 at 1-3pm
Contact [the church office](#) for more details
- Parish Council – Sunday 11/8 at 1pm
Office will send Zoom link

Upcoming Events

- 12 Baskets (distribution)
Thursday 11/5 at 8pm
Contact [Vicki McGraw](#) for more details
- Eastern Dioceses Fall Retreat
November 12-15
See [Antiochian.org](#) for more information

Philly OCF

- Bible study - Tuesday 10/27, 11am
[Zoom link](#)
Mtg ID #880 5713 0161
Password: Scripture
- Regular Meeting - Monday 11/2, 8pm
[Zoom link](#)
Mtg ID #835 2215 9264
Password: Fellowship

5th Sunday of Luke

1 Corinthians 12:27-31, 13:1-8

Luke 16:19-31

- The following services will be held in the church and streamed on the [website](#):
 - **Saturday 10/31** – Vespers, 5pm
 - **Sunday 11/1** – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
 - **Wednesday 11/4** – Paraklesis, 6:30pm
 - **Friday 11/6** – Vespers for St. Raphael of Brooklyn and Prayer Walk
 - **Saturday 11/7** – Orthros and Liturgy (St. Raphael), 9:30am
- To attend one of the services listed above at the church, please sign up via Sign Up Genius ([November services](#)). When doing so, please keep in mind the following:
 - reserve the number of slots for family members attending (For example, if there are 3 household members attending, reserve 3 slots.)
 - those who are elderly, have pre-existing conditions, or currently are not feeling well are asked to remain home.
 - children who are too young to keep a mask on are asked to remain home.
- To set up a time to receive communion, please sign up via the [Sign Up Genius](#). Please reserve only one slot per household unit. Prior to arriving at the church for communion, please say the [Morning Prayers](#) and the [Prayers of Preparation before Communion](#).
- Confession is also being scheduled by appointment. To set up an appointment, please email the church office and provide a few dates/times you are available. The office will email you to confirm your appointment time.

If you attend a service, you must wear a mask/face covering out of care for ourselves, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and our neighbors.

Special Appeal

October is Youth Month and Seminary Month in the Antiochian Archdiocese when we typically take a collection in support of the seminary students. Metropolitan JOSEPH's letter regarding this appeal is attached to the Parish Life Notes and posted on the church's homepage. If you would like to make a special donation in support of this work, you may either mail a check to the church or make a gift online via PayPal, noting "Seminary Month" in the memo line of the check or online form.

Adopt-a-College Student

We are currently gauging interest from both our college students and parishioners in the Adopt-a-College Student program. If you would like to pray for a student or support them in some other way, please contact the church office at office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org to be put on the list.

St. Katherine Women's Group

The Antiochian Women of the East cordially invite all Antiochian Women to join our Fall Retreat and Meeting on November 14, from 11:00am - 1:30pm with Mother Gabriella of the Holy Dormition Monastery as our special guest. [Click here to register!](#)

Church History

This week we continue a series on the Essentials of Faith. The hope is that we can all learn and be edified, and come to a "knowledge of the Truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), and to witness to the things of faith that were "delivered to the saints" (Jud. 1:3) in the Church, which is the "pillar and ground of Truth". (1 Tim. 3:15) May God bless the labor. These lessons are taken from Fr. Thomas Hopko's series The Orthodox Faith.

Russia: Spiritual Renewal

The seeds of spiritual renewal, planted in the previous century especially through the work of Saint Paisy Velichkovsky, blossomed in Russia in the 19th century, even though the Church continued to live under the domination of the State. While the Church was subject to strict governmental control and censorship, and while there was no patriarch and no church councils during the entire century, the life of faith continued to show itself in the lives of the Russian saints, missionaries, theologians, and writers of the period.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The 2020-21 Sunday School year will begin on Sunday, November 8, and all students will be studying the 12 Great Feasts of the church. Classes will rotate through an activity each week, and everything will be done remotely. The schedule for November is listed below. Parents will be receiving additional information from your child(ren)'s teacher and the church office next week prior to the first session.

Feast: Entrance of the Theotokos (11/21)

November 8

- Elementary school: Class (via Zoom)
- Middle school: At home resources
- High school: Ask Abouna

November 15

- Elementary school: At home resources
- Middle school: Ask Abouna
- High school: Class (via Zoom)

November 22

- Elementary school: Ask Abouna
- Middle school: Class (via Zoom)
- High school: At home resources

November 29

No Sunday School

Many of the disciples of Saint Paisy Velichkovsky in Moldavia returned to Russia in 1801 after the new young Tsar Alexander I (r. 1801–1825) granted political pardon to those who had fled from Russia in the previous years. These disciples spread the ideals and practices of the Non-Possessors—contemplation and mysticism (hesychasm) in hermitages and small monasteries (sketes), spiritual eldership, healing and prophetic gifts, and missionary zeal—all of which had been virtually submerged in Russia ever since the victory of the Possessors in the 16th century. It has been said of Saint Paisy that he “was for Russian monasticism at the end of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries, as well as for contemporary monks living a true monastic life, the same as Saint Anthony the Great was for the Egyptian monks and the desert dwellers of the Levant. From him stems also that great tradition of Optina elders, headed by Hieromonk Leonid.”

The Elders of Optina

The Optina Pustyn Monastery had dwindled to almost nothing by the end of the 18th century, but Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, seeing its potential, sent a disciple of Saint Paisy, named Avramy, to go there and direct the rebuilding process. The first in the illustrious line of holy, clairvoyant Optina elders (*startsi*) was Elder Leonid (1768–1841), who came there in 1829 after spending some time at the Monastery of Valaam which had sent the famous missionary team to Alaska, including Saint Herman. Elder Leonid suffered great persecution from his fellow monks, who were not used to the practice of spiritual eldership, and who perhaps resented the many visitors who came to the holy elder seeking spiritual guidance. Eventually Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev intervened to defend him.



At his death, Elder Leonid was followed by Saint Makary (1788–1860) in the office of staretz at Optina. An intellectual from the gentry class, Makary, according to John Dunlap, “carried on a vast correspondence with laymen and clergy from all over Russia. It was during Makary’s tenure as staretz that the Russian intelligentsia began to flock to Optina, finding there the light which eluded them in Western philosophy and social action movements.”

Under the protection and patronage of the imposing Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow (r. 1821–1867), Saint Makary worked along with the famous Slavophile philosopher Ivan Kireevsky (1806–1856) and several excellent Patristic scholars and translators to publish in Russian a number of Patristic writings by Saint Isaac the Syrian, Saints Barsanuphius and John, Saint Mark the Ascetic, Saint Maximus the Confessor, Saint Theodore the Studite, Saint Symeon the New Theologian, Saint Gregory of Sinai, and others. Saint Makary wrote to one of his spiritual children, “I have told you nothing that is an invention of my own. All of what I say comes from the writings of the Fathers.”

Saint Amvrosy (1812–1891) succeeded Saint Makary as staretz of Optina in 1865, after Saint Makary groomed him for this office during the many years he served as Saint Makary’s cell attendant. Amvrosy was so impressive as a spiritual teacher and living saint that the great Orthodox Christian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881) modeled Elder Zossima in his masterwork, *The Brothers Karamazov*, upon him. Dostoevsky wrote that he also was inspired particularly by Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk of the previous century.

The great line of spiritual eldership at Optina continued into the 20th century with Elder Joseph (1837–1911), who had been Saint Amvrosy’s cell attendant for many years, Elder Anatoly (d. 1922), and Elder Nektary (d. 1928).