

St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Church

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

7202 FM 2920 ~ Spring, TX 77379 ~ (281) 251-6000

www.StAnthonyTheGreat.org

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday-Friday 9:00a-3:00p ~ Office is closed on Mondays

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24 December 2017

WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS AND GUESTS If you would like to receive our weekly email of events and services, please complete the Welcome Card located in the pew pocket, and place it in the offering tray or give it to one of the ushers. You are welcome to join us next door for coffee and fellowship following the service.

RECEIVING COMMUNION While only Orthodox Christians who have spiritually prepared themselves by fasting, prayer and confession may receive Holy Communion, all are welcome to venerate the Cross and receive the blessed bread at dismissal.

CELL PHONES and all other electronic devices should be shut off during Divine Liturgy.

BULLETIN DEADLINE To include information in the bulletin, please notify the Church Office by 9:00AM Wednesday at OfficeOfStAnthony@gmail.com.

PRAYER REQUESTS To be included on the prayer list, or to join the parish prayer chain, please contact the Church Office.

TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

BREAD OF OBLATION is offered by Randa Nassif

COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by Besty Andjelich and Missy Galagaza

CHURCH OFFICE will be closed Monday, December 25th through Friday, December 29th. Office hours will resume beginning Tuesday, January 2nd, from 9:00AM to 3:00p Tuesday through Friday.

SPAGHETTI LUNCHEON starts January 11th! Please feel free to take information cards and share them with your friends, family and neighbors! Cards are on the information tables in the narthex and in the hall.

DEADLINE FOR PARISH PHOTO DIRECTORY is next Sunday, December 31st. Forms are available in the narthex and in the hall.

COFFEE HOUR/HOLY BREAD SIGN-UP CHART FOR 2018 is in the hall on the information table.

SCHEDULE OF THIS WEEK'S DIVINE SERVICES

TONIGHT Sunday, Dec. 24	5:00 p 6:00 p	Festal Orthros Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of CHRIST
Christmas Day, Dec. 25	~	No Services
Wednesday, Dec. 27	~	No Services
Saturday, Dec. 30	4:30 p 5:00 p	Confession (or by appointment w/Fr. Anthony) Great Vespers
Sunday, Dec. 31	8:45 AM 10:00 AM	Orthros Divine Liturgy

~ PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE NO SERVICES CHRISTMAS DAY, DECEMBER 25TH ~

UPCOMING MEETING AND ACTIVITIES

SERVICES FOR THE FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY will be served on Friday, January 5th, with Orthros at 5:30p, followed by Divine Liturgy and the Blessing of the Waters at 6:30p.

SPAGHETTI LUNCH COMMITTEE If you would like to volunteer your time for our weekly Spaghetti Luncheons, please join us for our preliminary meeting on Tuesday, January 9 @ 10:30AM. Please call the Church Office (281-251-6000) if you plan to attend this meeting.

FIRST SPAGHETTI LUNCH will be Thursday, January 11th from 11 AM to 2 p. Come and join us for great food and fellowship!

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING is scheduled for Thursday, January 11th, at 7:15p.

NOTICES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

STRIVE TO TITHE Our General Pledge Fund Drive for the coming year has commenced. The goal is for each of us to offer the Biblical tithe (or 10%) of our income. Understandably, giving a tithe can be difficult, financially burdensome and maybe even impossible, but we can certainly strive for it little by little. Pledge forms are available in the narthex and on the information table in the Hall. As of December 3rd there are 29 pledging families for 2018.

ADULT EDUCATION AND CATECHISM CLASS led by Deacon Photios begins after everyone has received Holy Communion and meets in the old Fellowship Hall.

DO YOU WANT TO BE IN THE PARISH PHOTO DIRECTORY? It's never been so easy! Three simple steps: (1) Take a "selfie" (or an actual family photo) (2) Complete the form found in the narthex or hall information tables (3) Email photo and form to Bonnie at OfficeofStAnthony@gmail.com. **The deadline is December 31st.**

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT NEWS AND EVENTS

WINTER CAMP January 12-15, 2017 at Camp St. Raphael. Registration is open. Please register here:

<https://www.eventbee.com/v/wamp2018#/tickets>. There are less than 5 spots left for male campers, and a wait list has begun for female campers.

Every Thursday 11 am - 2 pm

Spaghetti Luncheon

\$ 8.00

The graphic features a plate of spaghetti with meat sauce and a fork twirling a piece of spaghetti. The text is in a mix of cursive and bold sans-serif fonts.

Our parish is partnering with Italian Café (19620 Kuykendahl) to provide our community with a weekly luncheon every Thursday from 11-2 beginning on January 11th. It will be open to the public, and to you and your friends! While it will not be our responsibility to do any cooking, it is a great opportunity for you to provide our parish with your time. We will need greeters and helpers to volunteer. Please call the Church Office to sign up!

Why Should I Have My Home Blessed?

Fr. Anthony Baba

The title of this article is one of the questions I usually ask the children who are at the homes I go to bless. The basic question is pointing to the icon of Jesus and the Virgin and asking them who those people are. For me, seeing the children is the best part of blessing a home. In fact, when I was a child, my favorite time of year was when my priest was coming to bless our home. Besides the fact that my mother used to make me and all my siblings clean every square inch of the house, I anticipated his arrival with such joy and eagerness.

Among the many things I learned from him was his ability to connect with children. He too would ask questions, and one of the questions he would ask us was, “Do you take showers?” Not to be disrespectful but the first thought was, “What?” followed by, “Are you serious, Father?” Of course we shower. Then he’d ask, “What do you use when you shower?” And the response followed, “Umm, well Father, we use shampoo, conditioner, and body soap...” hoping that that was the answer he was looking for, but unfortunately it wasn’t. “What else do you use?”

Of course, water. It’s what we use to cleanse ourselves. It’s no different when we have our homes blessed. We use water, Holy Water, to sprinkle and cleanse our homes from the spiritual sins that stain not just the carpet on our living room floors, but the sins that lurk there and in every room. Do we have arguments? Do we quarrel with our siblings? Do we let the “sun set on our anger?” Even if we live in a peaceful and perfect home, sin infiltrates. As Americans, we’re accustomed to showering at least once a day. Can you imagine showering once a year? Or even worse, never showering?

The season of Theophany, when our Lord and Savior was baptized and through His baptism sanctified the waters and all of creation, is the time of year when we are all called to participate in this mystery. If you’ve never had your home blessed, I encourage you to. If you’re accustomed to having your home blessed every year, don’t stop! And if you need to have your home blessed “out of season”, as the old Jackson Five song goes, “just call my name, and I’ll be there.”

HOME BLESSING SEASON

Begins in January

Fr. Anthony and Fr. John will be blessing homes this coming January.

If you would like to have your home blessed, please fill out this form and give it to either Fr. Anthony or Fr. John

Name: _____

City: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Preferred time of visit (circle one): **Morning** or **Evening**

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

SUNDAY OF THE GENEALOGY

Entrance Hymn of Ordinary Sundays

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, save us, who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 4)

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

Troparion of the Sunday Before the Nativity (Tone 2)

Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Troparion of the Paramon (Eve) of the Nativity (Tone 4)

As the fruit of David’s seed, Mary was registered of old * with the Elder Joseph in the little town of Bethlehem, * when she conceived with a seedless and pure conception. * Behold, the time was come that she should bear her Child, * but no place was found within the inn for them; * yet the cave proved a delightful palace * for the pure Lady and Queen of all. * For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforeside.

Troparion of our Patron, St. Anthony

Thou didst become like the zealous Elijah, and didst follow John the Baptist in his upright ways, as a dweller in the wilderness, thou didst steady the world by prayer, O Father Anthony, intercede with Christ our God for our soul’s salvation.

Kontakion of the Preparation of CHRIST’S Nativity (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin cometh, cometh unto the cave to give birth to the Word who was born before all ages, begotten in a manner that defies description. Rejoice therefore, Oh universe if thou should hear and glorify with the Angels and the shepherds. Glorify Him who by His will shall become a new born babe and who is our God before all ages.

THE EPISTLE

Blessed are Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

For Thou art justified in all that Thou hast done for us.

The reading is from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11:9-10, 32-40)

Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

THE GOSPEL

The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (1:1-25)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ were fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus.