

# ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

JANUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

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## ***A New Year A new Mission Statement***

This past September I wrote in the newsletter of the discussion we were having about our parish mission statement. In the subsequent months, this topic was discussed by a group of parishioners and then, after a lot of discussions, finalized by the parish council in November. As a preparation for our upcoming Annual Meeting and as we begin 2020 it is good for us to finally publicize what we worked hard to come up with.

Before you read the statement below, let's take a moment to remember the purpose of mission statements. Google says: "A mission statement is a short statement of why an organization exists, what its overall goal is, identifying the goal of its operations:

what kind of product or service it provides, its primary customers or market, and its geographical region of operation." As a church community, our goal for the mission statement is to provide a guide that is both true to the life of our parish while at the same time challenging us to grow in Christ. Also, our mission statement communicates to people outside of our parish what they might expect from us when they visit or join our community.

It is important to note that mission statements are meaningless if the leadership and the community do not try to make them tangible by participating in the mission itself. For the leadership of the parish, the priest, parish council, and the various heads of ministry, the mission statement will be the measuring stick for all of our future decisions. As a community, each one of us needs to contemplate how it is that we can participate in the mission of our parish.

Here is what we came up within our discussions:

*"At St. Innocent Orthodox Church, we seek to make Jesus Christ and His Gospel the center of everything we do, glorifying God in the beauty of our worship and carefully preserving the faith practices of the Early Church, which was born at Pentecost. We press toward the goal of becoming more like our Lord and Savior, desiring to love and care for one another and for those in the wider community. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, we pray that our parish would become a life-giving spring of the Orthodox Christian faith for the people of Middle Georgia."*

On a personal note, when the statement was finalized, I felt energized because it presents an image of what I would consider an ideal parish. In short, St. Innocent is a church I want to be a part of! Let me point out a few things I found inspirational. 1. We want Jesus Christ and His Gospel to be at the center of everything we do. 2. Our worship is beautiful and central to our mission. 3. We have the treasures of the Orthodox faith which we are tasked with preserving and passing down. 4. We want to be a community where people feel loved both on the inside and outside of our community. 5. We are and want to be a place where people make a connection with Jesus Christ and find health and healing.

Our annual meeting is on Sunday, January 26th. Please join us to hear about our year in review and our plans for this year. May God bless us and enable us to be the church He would have us to be!

## News and

## Announcements

- Thank you to all of those who donated to the Care Cottage. We received around \$450 in donations and a lot of toys and other items. Thank you for your generosity!
- The Great Feast of Theophany falls on a Monday this year. We will have the Great Blessings of the Waters following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday the 5th and we will be blessing the Ocmulgee River at Amerson Water park after the Liturgy on Sunday the 12th.
- Family Church School is scheduled for Saturday, January 11 @ 4pm.
- On Sunday the 12th we will be Chrismating a few people at 9:30am.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Thursday January 15th at 7pm.

## Many Years!

### Birthdays

January 1 George Moore

1 Edward Demenchonok

3 Sandra Olsen

6 Alexander Gratigny

6 Olga Uchakin

14 Esmé San Bonaventura

15 Oksana McCan

16 Mary-Sophia Savage

17 Peter Hintermaier

20 David Scouten

21 Timothy Marble

24 Leann Almquist

27 Anton Osobov

### Anniversaries

1 Colin & Molly Croft

12 Ray & Patti Lanier

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## ***Parish Council Highlights***

The parish council will be sharing short updates from our monthly meetings. Here are the highlights from our December 2019 meeting.

Thinking/planning for the future of the parish:

- The council reiterated their commitment to being prayerful and intentional about using our new mission statement to guide future decision making.
- We will begin identifying people who are interested in serving as treasurers for the parish and training them before they take on that important role in our parish community.
- A new Stewardship Committee will be formed early in 2020; stay tuned for more information!
- The council continued discussions about how to best allocate any extra money at year-end, from putting some towards short-term needs, to paying off our mortgage more quickly, to putting money into an emergency fund. These financial discussions and how our financial decisions affect the parish's direction and future, happen at most, if not all meetings.
- The council made preparations for our annual meeting, going through the proposed budget, assigning tasks to ensure everything is in order for a smooth meeting,

- and discussing overall themes that we want to highlight in going over the past year and looking ahead to 2020.

Taking care of maintenance needs:

- The council discussed and followed up on maintenance issues like varnishing the church doors, cleaning up the playground area, and finding cost-effective lighting solutions for the church sign and driveway areas.
- In the coming months, look for new altar server robes for our faithful crew of youth altar servers and for new shelving and storage coming to the two classrooms in the parish hall!

## ***Annual Parish Meeting Sunday, January 26th***

Once a year, every year at St. Innocent Church we gather together in Christ to have our Annual Parish Meeting.

Our Annual Parish Meeting is an opportunity to review the mission of our parish and how we are accomplishing that mission. What is our vision? What are we doing to accomplish the vision that God has given us?

The Annual Meeting is also an opportunity to connect with our community as a whole, to hear about the work of the various committees, to give input, and help shape the direction of our parish for the future. The business side of the annual meeting involves voting on various measures that directly affect the life of our community such as electing parish council members and approving next year's parish budget.

As a member of St. Innocent Orthodox Church, your attendance is vital to the health and success of our parish in the years to come. Please save the date and make it a point to attend this important community gathering.

In Acts 1 after our Lord ascended it is recorded that the Apostles and 120 people gathered in the "upper room." It was in the context of a meeting that God in His mercy and wisdom poured out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. May God bless us with the same blessing He sent upon His Apostles in that upper room.



## ***Theophany House Blessings***

It is a tradition in the Orthodox Church to have your house blessed every year between the feast of Theophany (January 6) and the beginning of Lent (Feb 23 this year). In many places, after the water is blessed on the day of Theophany the priest would begin to go house to house, blessing homes with the Theophany water. In our time many people live further away from Church so it has become the custom for the priest to be invited to a particular home to do a house blessing.

House blessings are the spiritual version of a spring cleaning. Over the year our houses slowly collect dust and dirt, likewise, our homes over the year can become "spiritually dirty". It is therefore important to cleans and refresh our living environment by re-inviting God to dwell in our homes.

In general, the priest will bring all that is needed to bless the house. There are a few things the homeowner can provide such as an icon of Christ and a candle. Also, a list of first names for whom prayers are to be offered, including members of the family and all those living in the house. The list should have a clear distinction between the living and the dead.

Traditions surrounding the blessing differ according to local custom. In general, when the priest comes, all who are present in the house gather around the icon with the candle. Often the family will say the Trisagion Prayers and then help the priest sing of the Troparion of the Feast of Theophany. Then a family member, often the head of the household, leads the priest through the house with the candle. As he goes, the priest sprinkles holy water and prays for a

holy water and prays for a blessing upon each room and the activity that goes on there. For houses which have never been blessed the process is a little more involved, the priest will discuss this with you.

It is a pious custom in many cultures to offer the priest a donation/gift. This donation/gift is never required or even expected. If you desire to have your house blessed please sign up at Church or you can email or call me to set a date and time. I look forward the opportunity to visit all of your homes.

## **House Blessing Sign up**

On Saturday, January 11th  
Houses in the  
Macon area.

On Saturday, January 18th  
Houses in the  
Warner Robins area.

January 25th

If you would like to have your house blessed at one of the scheduled Saturday's please sign up by following this link:  
Theophany Sign up Sheet 2020  
<https://forms.gle/FzJ2pfvtBv2LQZLY7>

*If you sign up for one of the days above Fr. Theophan will contact you the week before to let you know a time frame for his visit.*

## January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 No Fast  6pm Daily Vespers	2  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	3 No Fast  9am Royal Hours	4  5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
5  8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy w/ Blessing of the Waters 12:15am Agape	6  9am Divine Liturgy For Theophany	7  9am Morning Prayers	8  6pm Daily Vespers	9  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	10	11  10-3pm House Blessings Macon  4pm Family Church School  6pm Great Vespers
12  9:30am Chrismations 10am Divine Liturgy <b><i>Blessing of the Waters at Amerson Water Park w/picknic</i></b>	13	14  9am Morning Prayers	15  6pm Daily Vespers	16  9am Divine Liturgy  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	17	18  9-4pm House Blessings Waner Robins  5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
19  9:40am exorcisms 10am Baptismal Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape	20	21  9am Morning Prayers	22  6pm Daily Vespers	23  9am Divine Liturgy  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	24	25  9-4pm House Blessings  5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
26  8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Agape <b><i>12:15pm Annual Parish Meeting</i></b>	27	28  9am Morning Prayers	29  6pm Daily Vespers	30  9am Divine Liturgy  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	31	

## Tentative February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1  5pm Confessions 6pm Vigil
2 <i>Great Feast of the Christ's Entrance into the Temple</i> 9:40am Hours 10am Festal Divine Liturgy with blessing of Candel 11:45am Agape	3	4  9am Morning Prayers	5  6pm Daily Vespers	6  9am Divine Liturgy  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	7	8  5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
9 Publican and Pharisee  8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15am Agape	10	11 Fr. Theophan @ DOS Pastoral Conference in Miami, FL	12 No Fast Fr. Theophan @ DOS Pastoral Conference in Miami, FL  6pm Reader's Vespers	13 Fr. Theophan @ DOS Pastoral Conference in Miami, FL	14 Fr. Theophan @ DOS Pastoral Conference in Miami, FL	15  5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
16 Prodigal Son  8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15am Agape	17	18  9am Morning Prayers	19  6pm Daily Vespers	20  9am Divine Liturgy  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	21	22  5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers
23 Last Judgment  8:45am Matins 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15am Agape	24 Meat Fast	25 Meat Fast  9am Morning Prayers	26 Meat Fast  6pm Daily Vespers	27 Meat Fast  9am Divine Liturgy  1-4pm Central State Prison Ministry	28 Meat Fast	29 Meat Fast  5pm Confessions 6pm Great Vespers