

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF SAINT ELIZABETH THE NEW-MARTYR

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Volume XVI

Number 17

29 December 2014 / 11 January 2015
SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST:

Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James Brother of the Lord

THIS WEEK AT ST ELIZABETH'S

SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY (*Tone 6*)

Saturday, 10 January (28 December o.s.)

6:00 PM Vigil Service; Confessions

Sunday, 11 January (29 December o.s.)

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

12:00 PM Annual Parish Christmas Party

CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD; St Basil the Great

Tuesday, 13 January (31 December o.s.)

6:00 PM Vigil Service; Confessions

Wednesday, 14 January (1 January o.s.)

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy;

Blessing of Vasilopita

Forefeast of the Theophany of the Lord

Friday, 16 January (3 January o.s.)

9:00 AM Royal Hours of Theophany

SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY (*Tone 7*)

Eve of the Theophany of the Lord

Saturday, 17 January (4 January o.s.)

6:00 PM Vigil Service; Confessions

Sunday, 18 January (5 January o.s.)

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy;

Great Blessing of Water;

Trapeza (coffee hour)

THEOPHANY OF THE LORD

Sunday, 18 January (5 January o.s.)

6:00 PM Vigil Service; Confessions

Monday, 19 January (6 January o.s.)

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy;

Great Blessing of Water

FASTING DAYS THIS WEEK

Day of Week	Date	Commemoration and Type of Fast
Sunday	18 January (5 Jan, o.s.)	Eve of Theophany Strict Fast: wine, & oil permitted

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Su	Sunday after the Nativity of the Lord	
	9th Resurrectional Matins Gospel: John §65 (20:19-31)	
	Gal. §200 (1:11-19)	Matt. §4 (2:13-23)
32ND WEEK after PENTECOST		
M	James §53 (2:14-26)	Mark §54 (12:13-17)
Tu	James §54 (3:1-10)	Mark §55 (12:18-27)
W	James §55 (3:11-4:6)	Mark §56 (12:28-37)
Th	James §56 (4:7-5:9)	Mark §57 (12:38-44)
F	Forefeast of Theophany of the Lord: Royal Hours	
	1st Hour: Isaiah 35:1-10 • Acts §33 (13:25-33a) • Matt. §5 (3:1-11)	
	3rd Hour: Isaiah 1:16-20 • Acts §42 (19:1-8) • Mark §1 (1:1-8)	
	6th Hour: Isaiah 12:3-6 • Rom. §91 (6:3-11) • Mark §2 (1:9-15)	
	9yj Hour: Isaiah 49:8-15 • Titus §302 (2:11-14; 3:4-7) • Matt. §6 (3:13-17)	
Sa	Saturday before Theophany	
	1 Tim. §284 (3:14-4:5)	Matt. §5 (3:1-11)
Su	Sunday before Theophany	
	10th Resurrectional Matins Gospel: John §66 (21:1-14)	
	2 Tim. §298 (4:5-8)	Mark §1 (1:1-8)

NAMEDAYS, BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

LAST WEEK

Namedays – 9th (St Stephen the Protomartyr): Deacon Steven Barker, Sbdcn Stephanos Bibas, Stephen Skuratovskiy.

Birthdays – 6th: Hariton Bibas; 7th: Justin Whitacre; 8th: (Miss) Nina Fitzgerald.

Chrismation Anniversaries – 6th: Rdr Philip Hotz, Jennifer Mary Hotz, Noah George Hotz (2008); David Seneko (2013).

THIS WEEK

Namedays – 11th (Prophet-King David): David Seneko, Fr David Straut; 14th (St Basil the Great): Vasilissa Seneko; 15th (St Seraphim of Sarov): Dcn Seraphim Komleski; 15th (St Juliana of Lazarevo): Juliana Bibas.

Birthdays – 17th: Theodore Darenkov.

THE REST OF JANUARY

Namedays – 20th (St John the Baptist): Ivan Darenkov; 25th (Martyr Tatiana): Tanya Morrow; 27th (St Nina of Georgia): (Mrs.) Nina Fitzgerald, (Miss) Nina Fitzgerald.

Birthdays – 27th: George Seneko.

Wedding Anniversaries – 25th: Ivan & Katya Darenkov.

THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Father David and Matushka Faith, Fr Deacon Seraphim and Matushka Anna Gail, Fr Deacon Steven and Matushka Hannah, and Reader Gregory and Claudia Maxey would like to thank all the Parishioners who gave cards and very generous gifts to their families on Christmas. The love that this demonstrated was overwhelming. May the Incarnate Lord abundantly bless you for your kindness.

Many thanks to those who donated for flowers for the Feasts of the Nativity and the Theophany of the Lord. We also thank those who cleaned the church in preparation for the Feast, to those who picked up the Christmas flowers, and to those who decorated the church for the Feast. The church is very beautiful!

Many thanks to all those who made the services for Christmas so splendid: *Claudia Maxey*, who arranged the music and choir rehearsals for Christmas; *Reader Gregory*, who directed the choir on the services for the Nativity; *the Members of the Choir*, who attended rehearsals and those who sang at the festal services; *Fr Deacon Seraphim, Fr Deacon Steven, our Subdeacons, Readers, and Servers* who assisted at the Christmas services.

St Elizabeth's Annual Christmas Party will take place today after the Divine Liturgy at the home of the Morrow Family at 90 Somerville Road; Basking Ridge, New Jersey 07920. All parishioners are urged to attend. We thank John and Tanya for opening their home to our Parish for the last several years.

January 14th on our secular calendar is January 1st on the Julian calendar. As such, it is often referred to as "Russian New Year", because in pre-revolutionary Russia, from the time of Tsar Peter the Great, the Western European custom of observing the New Year on 1 January was adopted. The Russian Orthodox Church, however, continued the ancient custom of celebrating the Church New Year in September, not January. For the Church, 1 / 14 January is the double Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord and St Basil the Great. On this day, which is eight days after Christmas, the Lord Jesus Christ, in obedience to the Law of Moses, was brought by his parents to be circumcised. On this day also, one of the preeminent Fathers of the Church, Basil the Great, fell asleep in the Lord. This Feast is of a rank just below that of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church.

The Church began to celebrate the memory of Saint Basil the Great almost at once after his death. In a homily on his death, Saint Amphilochius, the Bishop of Iconium, said: "Not without reason and not by accident was the divine Basil released from the body and translated from earth to God on the day of the Circumcision of Jesus, which is celebrated between the days of the Nativity and Baptism of Christ. Therefore, this most blessed one, in preaching and praising the Nativity and Baptism of Christ, extolled the spiritual circumcision, and

himself, having put off the body, was deemed worthy of ascending to Christ precisely on the sacred day of the commemoration of Christ's Circumcision. For this cause it has been enacted to honor the memory of Basil the Great on this present day annually with celebration and solemnity."

We will have a full schedule of services for St Basil's Day at St Elizabeth's. The Vigil Service will be served on the eve of the Feast (13 January) at 6 o'clock and the Divine Liturgy on the morning of the Feast (14 January) at 9:30. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy we observe the beautiful custom of blessing and distributing 'St Basil's Bread' (called in Greek *Vasilopita*).

The tradition of baking and cutting a special 'pita' (which can mean a loaf of bread or a cake) each year on 1 / 14 January is observed in many Orthodox cultures in honour of our Holy Father Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. The word *Vasilopita* is a compound Greek word that means the sweet 'bread of Basil'. This age old tradition is observed in both parish churches and in the homes of the faithful. This custom began in the fourth century, when Saint Basil the Great, who was a bishop, wanted to distribute money to the poor in his Diocese. He commissioned some women to bake sweetened bread, in which he arranged to place gold coins. Thus the families in cutting the bread to nourish themselves, were pleasantly surprised to find the coins. In remembrance of St Basil's love and defense of his people, Orthodox Christians have observed the tradition of the *Vasilopita* each year on 1 / 14 January, the date on which St Basil reposed in the Lord in the year 379. In some places the *Vasilopita* is prepared as a loaf of rich bread (like that used for *Artoklasia*), while in other places it takes the form of a spicy sheet cake (without frosting). But no matter what form a *Vasilopita* may take, they all have one thing in common: each contains a single coin. After placing the bread dough or batter in the proper baking pan, the baker makes with the foil wrapped coin the sign of the Cross over it, closes his/her eyes, and then secretly places it into the unbaked *Vasilopita*. After the *Vasilopita* is baked and cooled, it is blessed and cut following Divine Liturgy for the feast of St Basil on January 1. At churches it is blessed and cut in the by the bishop or priest (often parish fellowship hall), and in homes it is blessed and cut by the head of the household.

Concerning Confession and Holy Communion: Those who have been to Confession in the past two weeks may receive Holy Communion at the Liturgy on St Basil's Day (14 January, n.s.), provided that no serious sin has been committed which would require another Confession and that the other usual preparations for Holy Communion are observed (i.e. attendance of the Services the evening before Holy Communion, reading the Pre-Communion Prayers, and the forgiveness of others). Likewise, those who have been to Confession for the Feast of St Basil may receive Holy Communion at the Liturgy the following two weeks under the same conditions.

The Royal Hours of Theophany will be served on Friday morning at 9:00 because Theophany falls on a Monday this year. There will be no Vespertal Liturgy the Royal Hours.

The Parish Council will meet on the fourth Sunday of this month rather than the second Sunday, so as to conflict with our annual Parish Christmas Party next Sunday and the busy Sunday before the Feast of Theophany.