

# THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF SAINT ELIZABETH THE NEW-MARTYR

Volume XXI

Number 18

30 December 2019 / 12 January 2020

**SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (Tone 5)**

**Commemoration of the Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed,  
David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord**

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES THIS WEEK

### SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY (Tone 5)

**Prophet-King David, St Joseph, Apostle James**

*Saturday, 11 January 29 December, o.s.)*

6:00 PM Vigil Service;  
Confessions

*Sunday, 12 January (30 December, o.s.)*

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours  
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy;  
Trapeza (coffee hour)  
12:00 PM Parish Christmas Party at Morrow's

### **CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD; ST BASIL**

*Monday, 13 January 31 December, o.s.)*

6:00 PM Vigil Service;  
Confessions

*Tuesday, 14 January (1 January, o.s.)*

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours  
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy;  
Blessing of St Basil's Bread

### **Eve of Theophany**

*Friday, 17 January (4 January, o.s.)*

9:00 AM Royal Hours of Theophany

### **Eve of Theophany**

*Saturday, 18 January (5 January, o.s.)*

8:30 AM Baptism of Melania Machuskiy  
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy of St John  
11:00 AM Great Vespers & Blessing of Water

### **THEOPHANY OF THE LORD**

*Saturday, 18 January (5 January, o.s.)*

6:00 PM Vigil Service;  
Confessions

*Sunday, 12 January (30 December, o.s.)*

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours  
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy;  
Great Blessing of Water  
Trapeza (coffee hour)

## FASTING DAYS

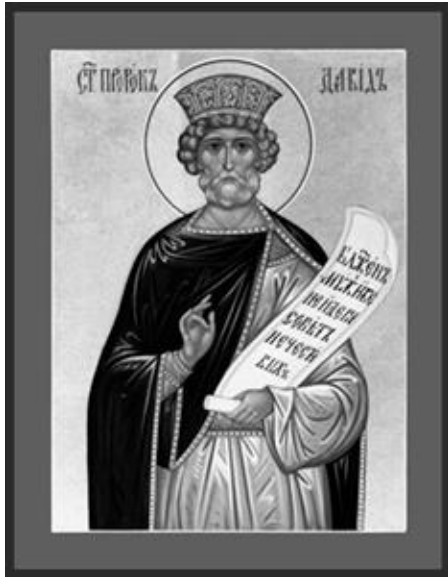
**Week of 12 January**

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

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Week of 12 January**

<i>Su</i>	<b>Sunday after the Nativity of the Lord</b>	
	Gal. §200 (1:11-19)	Mt §4 (2:13-23)
<b>31ST WEEK after PENTECOST</b>		
<i>M</i>	Heb. §329 (11:17-23, 27-31)	Mark §54 (12:13-17)
<i>Tu</i>	<b>CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD; St Basil the Great</b>	
	<i>Vespers Paramia:</i> (1) Genesis 17:1-7, 9-12, 14 • (2) Proverbs 8:22-30 • (3) Proverbs 10:31-11:12	
	<i>Matins Gospel:</i> John §36 (10:9-16)	
	2 Tim. §298 (4:5-8)	Mark §1 (1:1-8)
	Col. §254 (2:8-12)	Luke §6 (2:20-21, 40-52)
	Heb. §318 (7:26-8:2)	Luke §24 (6:17-23a)
<i>W</i>	James §50 (1:1-18)	Mark §56 (12:28-37)
<i>Th</i>	James §51 (1:19-27)	Mark §57 (12:38-44)
<i>F</i>	<b>Eve of Theophany of the Lord: Royal Hours</b>	
	<i>1st Hour:</i> Isaiah 35:1-10 • Acts §33 (13:25-33a) • Mt §5 (3:1-11)	
	<i>3rd Hour:</i> Isaiah 1:16-20 • Acts §42 (19:1-8) • Mark §1 (1:1-8)	
	<i>6th Hour:</i> Isaiah 12:3-6 • Rom. §91 (6:3-11) • Mark §2 (1:9-15)	
	<i>9th Hour:</i> Isaiah 49:8-15 • Titus §302 (2:11-14; 3:4-7) • Mt §6 (3:13-17)	
<i>Sa</i>	<b>Eve of Theophany of the Lord: Vespers Liturgy</b>	
	<i>Vespers Paramia:</i> (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	
	1 Tim. §284 (3:14-4:5)	Mt §5 (3:1-11)
	Col. §249a (1:3-6)	Luke §88 (18:2-8a)
<i>Su</i>	<b>THEOPHANY: BAPTISM OF THE LORD</b>	
	<i>Matins Gospel:</i> Mark §2 (1:9-11)	
	Titus §302 (2:11-14; 3:4-7)	Mt §6 (3:13-17)



## THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

A special collection for the Haiti Mission of ROCOR will be taken at St Elizabeth's during the Sundays of January. As you know, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and our Haitian Orthodox brethren are too poor to fully support the needs of their young church. They need the help of those of us who have more than enough. Please give generously.

**Father David and Matushka Faith**, Fr Deacon Seraphim and Matushka Anna Gail, Fr Deacon Steven and Matushka Hannah, Fr Dcn Stephanos and Matushka Juliana, 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 Feast of the Nativity 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*, *Fr Deacon Stephanos*, *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.

**There is no fasting, nor prostrations or kneeling** in prayer, from 7 January through 17 January (n.s.), even on Wednesdays and Fridays. This is because we joyfully celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord not just for one day, but throughout this period.

**The Eve of Theophany (5 / 18 January) is a fast day** on whatever day it falls, even Sunday. By fasting on this day, we prepare to celebrate the Feast of Theophany. We eat no meat, meat products, eggs, dairy products, or fish on this day. In the Russian practice, wine and olive oil are permitted on this day on whatever day it falls. In Greek practice, wine and oil are only permitted on the Eve of Theophany when it falls on Saturday or Sunday.

**Fasting is not permitted on the Feast of Theophany** (6 / 19 January) when the Feast falls on a Wednesday or Friday. The joy of this great Feast of the Saviour precludes fasting.

**The Feast of the Theophany of the Lord** Jesus Christ is celebrated on 6 / 19 January. It commemorates the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan and is one of the most important of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church. The unique pattern of liturgical services for this Holy Day exactly parallels that Christmas, underscoring the fact that in the early Church the events that these two Feasts commemorate were

originally celebrated on the same day, and that the Feast of Theophany is no less important than the Nativity. In fact, there is one element added to the Feast of Theophany which is not present at Christmas: the Great Blessing of Water. This very special sacramental rite is ordinarily only performed twice each year: on the Eve of Theophany and on the Day of Theophany itself. (On the other days of the year, the Lesser Blessing of Water is performed instead.) The faithful should attend as many of the services as they are able for the Feast.

**The Feast of Theophany is celebrated** for nine days, from the Feast day itself through the *Apodosis* (Leave-taking) of the Feast on 27 January (n.s). The festal period of this Feast is one day longer than the usual eight days, underscoring how important this Feast is in our liturgical calendar. The troparion and kontakion of Theophany are chanted or read at all the services of the Church on each of the nine days. To celebrate the Feast at home, the troparion of the Feast (*'When Thou wast baptized in the Jordan ...'*) can be sung instead of the 'Our Father' before meals, while the kontakion of the Feast (*'Thou hast appeared today unto the whole world...'*) can be sung instead of the usual thanksgiving troparion after each meal. It would also be most appropriate to sing the troparion and kontakion of the Feast at the end of our morning and evening prayers at home.

**Those who would like Theophany Water** should bring bottles with them to church on the Feast or the Sunday following. Holy Water is always available to those who wish it year round. Just give your bottle to one of the clergy or an altar server after any service and they will fill it for you.

**All homes in the parish should be blessed** at Theophany. Ideally this is done during the Festal Period (19-27 January, n.s.), but in any case the house blessings should be completed before the beginning of the Great Fast (2 March, n.s., this year.) Please arrange a time with Father when he can come and bless your home.

**Concerning Confession and Holy Communion:** Those who have been to Confession any time since the Eve of the Nativity of the Lord may receive Holy Communion at the Liturgies on St Basil's Day (14 January, n.s.), the Eve of Theophany (18 January, n.s.), and the Feast of Theophany itself (19 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 Vigil Service 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 the Theophany may receive Holy Communion at the Liturgy the following two Sundays under the same conditions.

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## Saint Basil and our Spiritual Roots

By Protopresbyter Vasilios Kalliakmanis

Whenever there's mention of Saint Basil, we always highlight his studies in Athens, his ascetic life in Pontus, his lack of possessions, his contributions to society, and his literary oeuvre. It's certainly true that the author of that outstanding theological text, the Divine Liturgy, distinguished himself as a diligent student, charismatic ascetic, selfless social worker and consummate writer.

What may not be so widely known is that, apart from that of his parents, an important role in the upbringing of the leading ecumenical teacher was played by his grandmother. Recalling his grandmother, Saint Basil the Great says: "Macrina the famous, through whom we were taught the words of the most blessed Gregory." Grandmother Macrina transfused the spirit of life into her grandchildren. She passed on the experience which she had drawn from Saint Gregory the Wonderworker of New Caesarea.

We all know that the shining examples of the extended family define both the formation of character and the emergence of a saint. For instance, Saint Paul recalls his forebears, who worshiped the true God and is grateful for that. He also remembers the unfeigned love of Lois, the grandmother of Timothy, and of his mother, Eunice (see 2 Tim. 1:3-5), thanks to whom Timothy knew "the Holy Scriptures from infancy" (2 Tim. 3:15).

Something similar happened in the life of Saint Basil, too. The late Professor Stylianos Papadopoulos gives a wonderfully graphic depiction of the relationship between

the grandmother and her grandchildren. "Macrina, that is Saint Basil's grandmother, was the great figure who influenced and literally shaped three generations in the family... From early childhood two extremely intelligent grandchildren, Macrina and Basil, clung to her. The wrinkled old lady was the very beauty of the spiritual life. The children saw it in her clear forehead, despite the fact that it was lined by time and a hard life.

The children's souls were pure, expansive and extremely receptive. The grandmother was a heavy rain cloud. The children were the parched earth. The miracle happened every day. The rain fell, sometimes gently, sometimes in torrents. The earth drank in the rain and, initially, stored it - processing, transforming and understanding it would come later. The teaching and theology of the elderly Macrina were her memories: the first church in Pontus, struggle and hardships for the faith, the hidden and stony paths of virtue. Whatever wild spiritual storm might disturb the souls of Basil and his sister, the teaching of the grandmother remained steadfast and acted as a compass, as a pointer to the truth, as a means of finding balance."

It would seem that this balance and measure have been lost in recent times. With the ascendancy of the so-called nuclear family and the independence of young couples away from the family home, the contribution of the "extended family" to the raising of children has all but disappeared. The role of the grandfather and grandmother, as well as that of uncles, aunts and godparents has diminished as regards the Christian upbringing of the young.

Perhaps it's time to redefine their roles? Instead of television and the internet, which have become "private tutors," might it not be an idea to reacquaint young people with our spiritual roots, so that they can find balance and measure? To reconnect not only with their actual forebears but also with their spiritual ancestors? As a wise and experienced teacher, Saint Basil has much to say to young people about how to avoid the pitfalls of the times and to draw light from the life-giving source of the Spirit.



[orthodoxyouthresources.com/2020/01/saint-basil-and-our-spiritual-roots.html](https://orthodoxyouthresources.com/2020/01/saint-basil-and-our-spiritual-roots.html)