

# ALL SAINTS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

*Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America*  
4129 W. Newport Ave., Chicago, IL 60641  
773-231-6177 • [www.allsaintsorthodox.org](http://www.allsaintsorthodox.org)

**Sunday, January 5, 2024**

The Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ

Sunday Orthros, Divine Liturgy, & Blessing of the Waters, 8:30am



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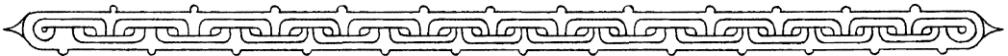
**The Second Antiphon:** O Son of God, who was baptized by John in the Jordan, save us who sing unto Thee: Alleluia!

**Entrance Hymn for Theophany:** Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! God is the Lord and hath revealed Himself to us. O Son of God, who was baptized by John in the Jordan, save us who sing unto Thee: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

**Troparion for Theophany (Tone 1):** When Thou, O Lord wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest! For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, and called Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, who hast revealed Thyself, and hast enlightened the world: Glory to Thee!

**Kontakion for Theophany (Tone 4):** Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, and Thy light O Lord, hast shone on us, who with understanding praise Thee. Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, O light unapproachable!

**In place of the Trisagion Hymn:** As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia!



## THE EPISTLE READING

*For the Theophany of our Lord*

Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.

**The reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to Titus (2:11-15; 3:4-7)**

My son Titus, the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world; awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good deeds. Declare these things; exhort

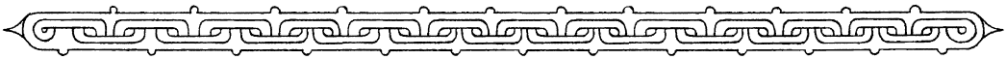
and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you. When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by His grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

## **THE GOSPEL READING**

*For the Theophany of our Lord*

### **The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (3:13-17)**

At that time, Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by Thee, and Thou dost come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”



**Hymn to the Theotokos (Tone 2):** O my soul, magnify her who is more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly hosts! Every tongue is at a loss to be worthy to extol thee, and even an unearthly mind is powerless to praise thee, O thou Theotokos. Thou art gracious; do thou receive our faith, for thou dost know our godly desires. Thou art the protection of Christians; thee do we magnify!

**Communion Hymn (Tone 1):** The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. Alleluia!

## :: THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD ::

Fr. Nicholas Belcher



On January 6, the Holy Orthodox Church celebrates the feast of Theophany, the baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the waters of the Jordan. The feast is called Theophany – a "revelation of God" – because the foreshadowing of the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament is made manifest. The God-Man, Jesus Christ, descends into the waters, the voice of the Father testifies to His Sonship, and the Holy Spirit confirms the proclamation of the Father through

appearing in the likeness of a dove.

There are two important themes that arise from the readings appointed for the Vespers of the feast dealing with water: one is the power God has over the waters and the other is the way God appointed water as a means of purification.

In ancient Near Eastern cultures, the ebbs and flows of the waters were life and death. Flooding was needed to grow their crops, but flooding could also cause destruction. The balance between these two types of flooding meant that the pagan gods of the ancient world needed to show authority over the waters. The first reading from Genesis shows the True God as the one who not only manages flood waters, but Himself "created the heavens and the earth." He separated the land from the waters and marked the boundaries of the seas.

The readings continue to show the mastery God gave His servants over the waters. God had Moses command the Red Sea to be parted, allowing the children of Israel to escape the slavery of Egypt. God instructed Moses to throw a tree of the land of Marah into bitter waters, and the waters were turned sweet. God showed His continued faithfulness by stopping the flow of the Jordan when the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant stepped into the water, and the children of Israel crossed over with dry feet. Before Elias was parted from Elisha, he struck the Jordan with his mantle so that the two could cross over – again with dry feet.

We also see that God uses water as a means of purification – both from sin and from sickness. Elisha ordered Naaman the Syrian, suffering from leprosy, to immerse himself

seven times in the Jordan River to be "made clean." After immersing himself, Namaan's flesh was "restored like the flesh of a child." In the prophecy of Isaiah, the Lord commands: "Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil doings from before my eyes." In this case, the purification is not from disease but from evil. The washing is the beginning of repentance – "cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow."

Finally, in the Gospel reading appointed for Vespers, we see the baptism done by the culmination of the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist. We hear that he preached a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As crowds came to him, including tax collectors and soldiers, they asked what they should do in response to the cleansing they received in the waters, and St. John preached how they should live their lives in holiness going forward.

These readings set the stage for the glorious mystery that is the Baptism of Our Lord. We learned in the first reading from Genesis that God created all things by His Word, He separated the land from the waters by His Word, and He marked the boundaries of the waters by His Word. Now the very Word of God, who was born in the flesh in the previous feast, descends in the waters to be immersed in the waters. He does not command His servant and prophet, John the Baptist, to strike the waters that He may cross with dry feet, but He commands His servant and prophet to place his hand on His Head to immerse Him into those waters! The Jordan, in acknowledgment of the Master, changes course, but the Master nonetheless wills its waters to cover over Him.

We know that the Lord was pure and without sin, yet He deigned to be washed. He suffered no corruption or disease, yet He deigned to be cleansed. With no need, only to "fulfill all righteousness," did the Lord come to His Baptism. And because of the unity of His Divinity and His Humanity, and because of His Divine Humility, the Lord is not cleansed or purified or washed – the waters themselves become pure, holy, and sanctified by Him! At this moment, the Father's voice reveals Him as the Son and the Spirit confirms it.

So what is revealed in this Theophany? God's self-revelation as the Holy Trinity came not in great miracles or in displays of mighty power but in the Almighty Son and Word of God bowing His Head in humility and obedience out of His love for the Father and for us. We see that our path to purification and sanctification must also come in imitation of

Our Lord. We must learn the way of humility, the way of obedience and the way of love. Only then can we partake of the great grace that God pours out on us during this wondrous feast, where the Church declares:

*Today the celestials celebrate with the terrestrials, and the terrestrials commune with the celestials. Today the assembly of noble and great-voiced Orthodox rejoiceth. Today the Master cometh to baptism to elevate mankind above. Today the Unbowable boweth to his servant to deliver us from slavery. Today we have bought the kingdom of heaven, for the kingdom of heaven hath no end. Today the land and the sea have divided between them the joy of the world, and the world hath been filled with rejoicing.*

## Announcements and Upcoming Events

*For a full calendar of events and services at All Saints, see our website [www.allsaintsorthodox.org](http://www.allsaintsorthodox.org)*

### **Today: The Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ**

- Festal Orthros & Divine Liturgy, beginning 8:30am, followed by the Blessing of the Waters
- Coffee hour provided by families R-Z

*No morning prayers at the church this week; regular morning prayers will resume Tuesday, Jan. 14.*

**Wednesday, Jan. 8:** Vespers, 7pm

### **Saturday, January 11:**

- Ladies' Christmas clean-up, 4pm
- Ladies' meeting, 5-7pm. (See announcement below)
- Great Vespers, 7pm

### **Next Sunday, January 12:**

- Orthros & Divine Liturgy, beginning 8:30am
- Coffee hour provided by families A-F
- Church school resumes, after Liturgy and coffee hour

**THEOPHANY.** We will observe Theophany this weekend. If you have any holy water bottles from previous years, please reverently dispose of the old holy water outside (not down the drain), and bring the bottles back to be refilled. We have a limited number of bottles at the church for those who do not have one already.

**LADIES GROUP MEETING.** Our next ladies' group meeting will be Saturday, Jan. 11, at 5pm (before Vespers). The meeting will be for the purposes of planning the coming year's activities, you have the option of attending in-person or online. The ladies of the church will be receiving an email with more information from the All Saints Antiochian Women email. Please see Shay Saba if you have any questions, or if you are not on the email list.

**PARISH COUNCIL** will next meet on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 7:30pm (via Zoom).

## Volunteer Schedule

Date	Reader	Prospora	Greeter	Coffee	Food
<b>Sun., Jan. 5</b> <i>Theophany</i>	Paul K	Sandy A	Azizeh	Lydia A	R-Z
<b>Sun, Jan. 12</b>	Joseph L	Debbie K	Nancy L	Zach C	A-F
<b>Sun., Jan. 19</b>	Richard C	Pat K	John O	Alina S	G-K
<b>Sun., Jan. 26</b>	Sd Joseph	Domitille	JoAnne T	Domitille	L-P
<b>Sun., Feb 2</b> <i>Presentation</i>	Christy K	Cristina P	Azizeh C	Lydia A	R-Z

***For Sunday coffee hour**, the last names of our church members have been divided into four parts alphabetically (A-F, G-K, L-P, and R-Z). On your assigned week, please bring something simple to share with everyone for coffee hour.*

***If you have children**, monitor them as they go through the coffee hour line, and make sure they don't take more than they can eat. Please also help your children clean up after themselves.*

***Weekly clean-up will be the responsibility of those providing coffee hour**, but of course, things go faster when we all pitch in and help!*



# DAILY BIBLE READINGS

JANUARY 5-11, 2024

ADAPTED FROM THE  
LECTIONARY OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ARCHDIOCESE

**Sunday, January 5: Holy Martyrs Theopemptus and Theonas**  
2 Timothy 4:5-8 / Mark 1:1-8

**Monday, Jan. 6: The Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ**  
Isaiah 35:1-10 / Isaiah 55:1-13 / Isaiah 12:3-6  
1 Corinthians 10:1-4 / Mark 1:9-11

**Tuesday, Jan. 7: Synaxis of St. John the Forerunner**  
Exodus 14:15-29 / Acts 19:1-8 / John 1:29-34

**Wednesday, Jan. 8: Domnica the Righteous of Constantinople**  
Exodus 15:22-16:1 / Titus 1:1-16 / Luke 3:23-38

**Thursday, Jan. 9: Peter, Bishop of Sebaste**  
Isaiah 1:16-20 / Titus 2:1-3:2 / Luke 4:1-13

**Friday, Jan. 10: Gregory of Nyssa**  
Genesis 32:1-10 / Titus 3:3-15 / Luke 4:14-30

**Saturday, Jan. 11: Righteous Father Theodosius the Cenobiarch**  
Ephesians 6:10-17 / John 2:1-12

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WWW.ANTIOCHIAN.ORG

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN SABA, ARCHBISHOP OF NORTH AMERICA  
ARCHIMANDRITE JEREMY DAVIS, VICAR FOR THE DIOCESE OF TOLEDO & THE MIDWEST