

(No Bulletin Sponsors This Sunday)

**Readings:**

- Timothy 4:5-8 (Sunday Before)
- Mark 1:1-8 (Sunday Before)

**TIMOTHY**, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

**The beginning** of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight' John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

**Saturday service: Vespers – 6:30 PM****Sunday service:****Hours – 9:40 AM****Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM****Private Confession – Half hour before any service.**

See Fr Matthew for other times.

**General Confession – 9:45 AM on the first Sunday of each month****Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month****Coffee hour – after Liturgy, downstairs in the Community Room****Church School - Sunday 9:30 AM (no classes 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month)****We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.****Announcements:**

- **There will be a Vespertal Liturgy** for the Feast of the **Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ tomorrow evening, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30.** Remember to bring a container to bring Holy Water home with you. **His Grace, Bishop Michael will be celebrating the service.**
- **Home Blessings –** There will be a sign-up sheet at the candle stand to inform Father that you wish to have your home blessed this year.
- The next **meeting of the Sisterhood of the Protection of the Theotokos** will be on Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, after coffee hour.
- The next **meeting of parish council** will be on Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, after coffee hour.
- Our **Annual Parish Meeting of the Parishioners** will be Sunday February 8, 2015 right after coffee hour. The annual meeting of the parishioners is for the election of the Parish Council and its officers, reports by the Rector and Council members, and for other business. Please contact Trudy Ellmore, the Council President, if you have an item that you want included on the agenda or if you plan to nominate someone for a Parish Council position.
- Our Orthodox Church Calendar for 2015 is available at the candle stand. It is the St. Tikhon's Lectionary Wall Calendar that contains Icons of feast days. It also contains the readings for the year along with feast and fast days.

**Special Announcements:**

- Parish dues for 2014 are still being accepted. Just a reminder.
- **Any Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail to:** [Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org](mailto:Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org)

**The Great Blessing of Water:**

The Great Blessing of Water takes place in the Orthodox Church on the **Feast of the Epiphany, January 6**, often called, as it is in the Orthodox service books, the **Theophany**. The word "epiphany" means the shining forth or manifestation or appearance or revelation. The word "Theophany" means the shining forth or manifestation or appearance or revelation of **God**. The emphasis in the present day celebration is on the appearance of Jesus as the human Messiah of Israel and the divine Son of God, One of the Holy Trinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

**Manifestation of the Messiah** - In His baptism by John in the Jordan River, Jesus manifested Himself for the first time as the Messiah of Israel. At the baptism John refers to Christ by the messianic title of the "**Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.**" (John 1:29) At this time as well the voice of the Father calls Jesus the "**Beloved**" which is also a messianic title from the Old Testament. (Isaiah 42:1, Luke 3:22, Mark 1:11) And it is written that the Spirit of God descended and rested upon Jesus, which also shows Him to be the long-awaited Messiah, the Redeemer of the world. (Isaiah 61:1-2, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, John 1:33)

**The Blessing of Water** - The Great Blessing of Water is prescribed in the Church on the Feast of the Epiphany following both the liturgy on the eve of the feast as well as the liturgy on the feast day itself. Usually this blessing is done just once in the churches at the time when most people can be present. It begins with the chanting and censing of the water placed in the center of the church building, surrounded by candles and flowers as the sign of the beautiful world of God's original creation and ultimate glorification through Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Kingdom of God. Sometimes the blessing is done outdoors at a place of natural flowing water.

The service of the Great Blessing of Water itself reveals the meaning of the event for the Christian People. The readings from the Holy Scriptures, particularly the messianic words from the Prophecy of Isaiah, and the litanies and prayers and hymns all serve to tell us what the great meaning of the Epiphany, and indeed of the entire Christian Faith, is for us men and our world. We only have to read the service carefully and celebrate it faithfully in the church for this meaning to become evident to our hearts and minds.

**Sanctification of the World** - It is the faith of Christians that since the Son of God has taken human flesh and has appeared in the world, immersed in the streams of the Jordan River (which is itself full of biblical significance), all flesh and all matter is sanctified and made pure and holy in Him, purged of its death-dealing qualities inherited from the devil and the evil and wickedness of men.

- Fr. Thomas Hopko

See us on the web at: [ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin](http://ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin)

E-Mail us at: [Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org](mailto:Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org)

**Orthodox Church of the Mother of God**

*"The Joy of All the Sorrowful"*

*Founded 1966*

115 Hudson St. Mays Landing, New Jersey 08330

**V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce,**

**Temporary Rector**

Email: [docandm1@verizon.net](mailto:docandm1@verizon.net)

Phone: 856-227-6915



Glory to  
Jesus Christ

Glory  
Forever

Sunday before  
Theophany

*Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John:*

*"Do not be afraid to baptize me.*

*For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed man."*

Troparion — Tone 4

**Today the Church remembers:**

**Forefeast of the Theophany • Sunday before Theophany •** Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles: James (Jacob), the brother of the Lord; Mark the Evangelist; Luke the Evangelist; Cleophas, the brother of Joseph the Betrothed; Simeon, the son of Cleophas; Barnabas; Justus; Thaddæus; Ananias; Stephen the Archdeacon; Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, and Parmenas of the Seven Deacons; Timothy; Titus; Philemon; Onesimus; Epaphras; Archippus; Silas; Silvanus; Crescens; Crispus; Epenetus; Andronicus; Stachys; Amplias; Urban; Narcissus; Apelles; Aristobulus; Herodion; Agabus; Rufus; Asyncritus; Phlegon; Hermes; Patrobus; Hermas; Linus; Gaius; Philologus; Lucius; Jason; Sosipater; Olympas; Tertius; Erastus; Quartus; Euodius; Onesiphorus; Clement; Sosthenes; Apollos; Tychicus; Epaphroditus; Carpus; Quadratus; Mark, called John; Zenas; Aristarchus; Pudens; Trophimus; Mark; Artemas; Aquila; Fortunatus; and Achaicus. (1st c.) • Ven. Theoctistus, Abbot at Cucomo, in Sicily (800) • Repose of St. Eustathius I, Archbishop of Serbia (ca. 1285) • St. Aquila, Deacon, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—14th c.) • Martyrs Zosimus the Hermit and Athanasius the Commentarisius (Superintendent of Prisoners), Anchorites, of Cilicia (3rd-4th c.) • Ven. Euthymius and twelve other Monks, martyred at Vatopedi (Mt. Athos—1285) • Ven. Onuphrius of Chilandari (Mt. Athos), Martyr (1818).

January 4, 2015

30<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Tone 5 of the Octoechos