

Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:**For Health of:****David Seaman**, Brother-in-law of Linda Jankowski**For Eternal Memory of:****Nadja_Boschuk**, Mother of Barbara Funk**Readings:**

- **2 Timothy 4:5-8 (Sunday before Theophany)**
- **Mark 1:1-8 (Sunday before Theophany)**
 - 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 (blessing of water)
 - Mark 1:9-11 (blessing of water)

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."

Brethren, I want you to know, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same supernatural food and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased."

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 3rd Sunday of each month**Coffee hour –** after Liturgy, downstairs in the Community Room**Church School -** Sunday 9:30 AM (no classes 1st 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:

- Our Orthodox **Church Calendar for 2014** is available at the candle stand. It is the St. Tikhon's Lectionary Wall Calendar that contains Icons from the Monastery. It contains the readings for the year along with feast and fast days.
- **Dues and assessments** are now being collected for the year 2014. Total Parish Membership Fee is \$200. Partial payments are gladly accepted. Please indicate on the check that it is to be applied to Membership.
- **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, February 2nd, after coffee hour.

Special Announcements:

- Upcoming bulletins can be sponsored; this can be done with the signup sheet at the candle stand.
- Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail to: 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
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Sunday Bulletin

Church of the Mother of God

"The Joy of All the Sorrowful"

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Baptism of Our Lord
Eve of the Theophany

**Glory to
Jesus Christ!**

**Glory
Forever!**

*Of old, the river Jordan
turned back before Elisha's mantle at Elijah's ascension.
The waters were parted in two
and the waterway became a dry path.
This is truly a symbol of baptism
by which we pass through this mortal life.
Christ has appeared in the Jordan to sanctify the waters!*

Troparion - Eve of the Theophany

Today the Church remembers:

EVE OF THEOPHANY • Sunday before Theophany

- Hieromartyr Theopemptus, Bishop of Nicomedia, and Martyr Theonas (303)
 - Ven. Syncletica of Alexandria (ca. 350) • Prophet Micah (9th c. BC)
- Virgin Apollinaria of Egypt (ca. 470) • Ven. Phosterius the Hermit (9th c.)
 - Ven. Menas of Sinai (6th c.) • Ven. Gregory of Crete (ca. 820)
 - Ven. Romanos, Martyr (1694).

January 5, 2014

28th Sunday After Pentecost

Tone 3 of the Octoechos