



# LIFE AT ST. NICHOLAS

## THE SUNDAY BULLETIN OF ST. NICHOLAS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

**DECEMBER 8, 2024**

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### CELEBRATING OUR PATRON SAINT

A spectacular celebration was held this past Thursday honoring St. Nicholas, our Patron Saint, where over 250 people were in attendance. We were blessed to host our friends at Hope Network and Shepherds of Independence as well as the faithful of the Orthodox community. The joyous festivities began with Vespers followed by dinner. A variety of activities occurred throughout the evening: a brief choral concert honoring our patron, children's story time and crafts, photos with St. Nicholas, holiday musical entertainment, and a closing inspirational message from St. Nicholas. We want to thank all of the volunteers from set-up, serving, and clean-up. A special thank you to Mike Sirotko and Nawal Swart for the delicious meal. We are grateful to the singers, story time readers, craft workers, and to Subdeacon Nicholas for portraying our patron. Finally, thank you to Dn. Justin, Greg Storey and the committee members who worked tirelessly to bring this blessing to our community.



### THIS WEEK

#### Sunday, December 8

8:50AM—Orthros & Orthodox Education

10AM—Divine Liturgy  
Liturgical Musicians  
Appreciation Sunday

#### Monday, December 9

5:30PM—Works of Mercy:  
Foster Care Christmas Store

#### Tuesday, December 10

5:30PM—Parish Council  
Higher Partnership Meeting

#### Wednesday, December 11

6PM—Advent Paraklesis  
followed by Confession

#### Thursday, December 12

10AM—Bible Study  
11AM—St. Xenia's Circle  
12PM—Forerunners  
Advent Luncheon  
7:30PM—OK Mama:  
Moms Night Out

#### Saturday, December 14

9AM—Women of St. Nicholas  
Breakfast & Cookie Exchange  
10:30AM—Liturgical  
Choir Rehearsal  
6PM—Great Vespers @  
followed by Confession

### THE ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS MEMBERS

St. Ignatius Members, remember to wear your cross to church **next Sunday, December 15**. The Order will be hosting Coffee Hour that Sunday, so if you are interested in the Order, they will be very visible! All members have received an email indicating what to bring for Coffee Hour. Contact Alan Abraham for additional information.

### ALMSGIVING

#### CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

#### ENGAGING IN SERVICE: Foster Care Christmas Store

Tomorrow, December 9 @ 5:30PM

Our Parish, in partnership with Catholic Charities, (360 Division Avenue SE Suite 3A), will set up and stock this year's Grand Rapids Foster Care Christmas Store. It is a full night of work and fellowship followed by a pizza dinner provided. Over 1,200 children will receive Christmas gifts and winter clothing as a result of this effort.

#### CARING FOR THE NEEDY: Santa's Helpers-Project Mexico

Donate now—December 22

The children at St. Innocent Orphanage are looking forward to opening Christmas presents. Please give generously by check, Venmo, or through our website donation link [stnicholasgr.com/contributions/](http://stnicholasgr.com/contributions/). Include "Santa's Helpers" in the memo.

#### FEEDING THE HUNGRY: Meijer "Simply Give" Double Match

Donate now—December 22

We refer many Camelot Community neighbors to the Church of the Servant Food Pantry, so making a donation to St. Nicholas for the "Simply Give" Double Match Program will feed the hungry right here in our neighborhood. Your \$10 donation will result in a \$30 food donation. Please donate by check, Venmo, or through our website donation link [stnicholasgr.com/contributions/](http://stnicholasgr.com/contributions/). Include "Simply Give" in the memo.

### Council Corner

PC UPDATES

#### PURCHASE AGREEMENTS UPDATE

The purchase agreements for the 2210 property have been finalized and are with the seller for signing. Our goal is to complete the closing process by the end of 2024. Financing has been secured through United Bank. We will share more updates once the agreements are signed. Thank you for your continued prayers and support!

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT BECOMING A PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER? REACH OUT TO US!

Are you interested in being on the Parish Council, but you're not sure exactly what that entails, how much time it requires, or what your responsibilities would be? Reach out to a current Parish Council member or Father Michael with any questions or concerns you may have. If you're thinking the Parish Council might be a good way for you to serve your parish, now or in the future, let's talk!

#### Sunday, December 15

8:50AM—Orthros & Orthodox Education

10AM—Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour Hosted by  
The Order of St. Ignatius

#### LOOKING AHEAD

#### Wednesday, December 18

6PM—Advent Paraklesis  
followed by Confession

#### Tuesday, December 24

9AM—Royal Hours

5PM—Vespers Liturgy  
of Christmas Eve

#### Wednesday, December 25

8:45AM—Orthros

10AM—Divine Liturgy

#### Sunday, January 5

Feast of Theophany

2PM—Outdoor Blessing of Water

### COFFEE HOUR

**Hosts Needed: December 22 & 29**

To use the electronic sign up feature, go to: [stnicholasgr.com/coffeehour](http://stnicholasgr.com/coffeehour). You can still sign up to host a Coffee Hour by using the paper sign-up sheets located on the easel in the Atrium.

### VERSE OF THE WEEK

*As it is written  
in Isaiah the prophet,  
"Behold, I send my messenger  
before your face,  
who will prepare your way,  
the voice of one crying in the  
wilderness:"  
Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,"*

Mark 1:23



## NATIVITY POINSETTIAS

If you would like to offer a Christmas poinsettia "*in Eternal Memory*" or "*for the Good Health*" of your loved ones, submit the form to the Plexiglas box located on the table in the Narthex **by next Sunday, December 15**. The electronic form is available at [stnicholasgr.com/advent/](http://stnicholasgr.com/advent/).

## FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

### WOMEN OF ST. NICHOLAS: Breakfast/Cookie Exchange

**Saturday, December 14 @ 9AM**

Join us for breakfast and fellowship. Bring some of your favorite Christmas cookies to exchange and take home some new varieties made by your fellow parishioners. Bring as many or as few as you would like, and then choose the same number you came with to take home. Contact Marian Lambert if you have questions. Hope to see you there!

### FORERUNNERS: Advent Gathering

**Thursday, December 12 @ Noon**

Please join us for a very special celebration. We are welcoming all Grand Rapids Orthodox clergy to join us. Our special speaker will be Fr. Gregory Hogg who will speak on Advent. We will also celebrate the season with Orthodox hymns! Please bring a Lenten dish. Beverages will be provided. Please contact Barbara or Eileen with your attendance by **Monday, December 9**. We look forward to an afternoon of fellowship, festivity, and friendship!!

### OK MAMA: Moms & Kids Playdate

**Friday December 20, 10—11:30AM**

OK Mamas! It's time for our littles to spread some Christmas Cheer! We will meet at a senior home (location TBA) where we will help our littles in the simple and joyful act of service, of singing carols, and handing out cards (hand made by our Mamas- Thanks!) to some residents! Join us for a delightful time! Find us on Facebook or talk to Teresa or Hannah for more information.

## STAY IN THE FELLOWSHIP LOOP!

Stay up to date with your fellowship group by checking the links for upcoming information:

### MEN

[stnicholasgr.com/men](http://stnicholasgr.com/men)

### WOMEN

[stnicholasgr.com/women](http://stnicholasgr.com/women)

### OK MAMA

[O.K. Mama](#) Facebook group

### FORERUNNERS

[stnicholasgr.com/forerunners](http://stnicholasgr.com/forerunners)

### YOUNG ADULTS

Ethan DeJonge or Dn. Justin for the **GroupMe** app invitation.

### YOUTH

[stnicholasgr.com/youth](http://stnicholasgr.com/youth)

## SCHEDULING WITH FR. MICHAEL

To make an appointment, please call the Church Office and arrange. For those who would like to arrange their own appointments, please go to [stnicholasgr.com/appointments](http://stnicholasgr.com/appointments) and do so directly online.

## SUBMISSION REMINDERS

Announcements and Holy Oblations are due by noon each Wednesday.

### Submit Announcements:

[announcements@stnicholasgr.com](mailto:announcements@stnicholasgr.com)

### Submit Holy Oblations:

[stnicholasgr.com/holyoblation/](http://stnicholasgr.com/holyoblation/)

or by completing an envelope located on the Parishioner's Table in the Narthex.

## PARISH COUNCIL

Please use the following email address when communicating with the Parish Council:

[parishcouncil@stnicholasgr.com](mailto:parishcouncil@stnicholasgr.com)

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

For updated information go to: [stnicholasgr.com/parishioners](http://stnicholasgr.com/parishioners)

## OUR MISSION—WHAT WE DO

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church is a worshipping community living and sharing the Faith Christ gave to the Apostles.

## WHY WE EXIST

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church exists to seek and share Christ's love so that all will find Eternal Life in Him.

## YOUTH IN ACTION

### CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR

There will be no Church School or Adult Education on 12/22 and 12/29 due to the Christmas Holidays.

### TEEN SOYO: ADVENT PARAKLESIS POTLUCK

**Wednesday, December 11**, following the 6PM Paraklesis

Teens! Come to the Advent Paraklesis service and be immersed in the beauty of the Church's preparation for Christmas. Then join us for a fasting meal until around 8PM. Please bring a Lenten dish to share!

### CHURCH SCHOOL & SHEPHERDS OF INDEPENDENCE CHRISTMAS PARTY

**Thursday, December 19 @ 4:45-8PM /**

Church School kids and their parents are again invited to help host a Christmas Party for the residents at Shepherds of Independence (400 Morgan St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504). This is an opportunity for our kids to serve others in the community and to enjoy and share the Christmas season with others.

- ⇒ 4:45PM: arrive and prepare
- ⇒ 5PM: serve dinner & then eat dinner together
- ⇒ 6PM: host and play Bingo
- ⇒ 7PM: help Santa give gifts and sing along

If your students are in JOY or SOYO you may drop them off, but if your kids are younger, a parent will need to stay with them. All parents are welcome!

### JOY & SOYO CHRISTMAS CRUNCH TIME

**Saturday, December 21 @ 9:30-11:30AM**

Once again, JOY & SOYO kids will be gathering to serve others and give their confessions as we prepare for our Lord's birth! This year, in addition to making Christmas cards for our homebound, we'll be preparing 100 emergency hygiene kits for IOCC. Please sign up to donate items for the hygiene kits [HERE!](#)

### CHURCH SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Our youngest students, in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd classes, have been working on lots of practical life skills. They have also been introduced to the items on the altar, the liturgical calendar and colors, and the vestments of the priest. They work hands on with each of these items/topics so that they can really understand them and their place in the Liturgy and life of the church. They also regularly practice reverent processions with the Holy items to aid in the catechists' understanding of the objects' purpose and importance. Here are a few action shots from each class's processions:



### DECEMBER TEEN NIGHT

Last Sunday, our Teens held their December Teen Night. We enjoyed some delicious meatless lasagna provided by Mike Sirotko, then decorated our Christmas tree in the Cultural Center to accompany the upcoming St. Nicholas Day Celebration. We spent some time discussing the Nativity Fast with Dn. Justin. Afterwards, we thought about ways to prepare ourselves during the Advent season for Christ's arrival on Christmas before wrapping up the evening with Evening Prayers. ALL Teens are welcome to join us for our SOYO activities. Keep a lookout for upcoming events!

