



News Brief to the Parishioners of

Saint Luke Orthodox Church

Erie, CO

January 2024

stlukeorthodox.org

“Today hath paradise been opened to men, and the Sun of righteousness hath shone for us.”

-from the Great Sanctification of Water service

There’s something profound -in an understated kind of way- about having your home blessed on Theophany. We’re all supposed to make our homes the “little church” where God is worshipped. The church in the home is in parallel to the parish church. And sometimes, that’s exactly what happens: sometimes people pray with their family, sing praise with their family, and come together as a family to do in a smaller way the things we do as a community in our parish church. At other times, however, more earthly cares dominate and the candles in our little church are blown out by the winds of day-to-day life. A normally family will have some ebb-and-flow, and our homes are always “under construction” spiritually.

Once a year on Theophany, the big and little church converge as one. The liturgy at the “big church” extends out to the little churches. The priest comes to visit and our family home is prayerfully recommitted to God. The gap between church and home is closed. In the prayer of the service we remember Zacchaeus, whom our Lord visited, whose own household had drifted away -but not so far that they could not be restored. A new hope of salvation came to Zacchaeus and his family. There is a slight difference between how this service is usually done in Orthodox countries versus how we do it here in the United States. Overseas, the priest exits



the church at the end of the Great Blessing of Water service and straightaway visits all the homes in the immediate vicinity of his parish. Chanting the hymns of the feast, he does not stop until all the nearby faithful homes blessed. Here in North America, where we live greater distances (thanks in large part to the automobile) the priest makes a schedule of visits. Out of practical necessity, the house

blessing has to be a stand-alone service rather than an immediate extension of the Festal Church services. Nevertheless, we bring

the waters of the feast to protect, sanctify and purify every home that receives them. The waters of Theophany are a foretaste

of the waters seen in the Prophet Ezekiel 47: “Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east).” In the vision the

waters extend from the Temple to the whole land, where they restore it to an Edenic state, filled with the fruit trees of Paradise: “Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”

May God’s grace be poured out to overflowing in your homes and families this year and may you have a bright and blessed Feast!

Chronology of Events

Please note: Events are in addition to every Sunday Divine Liturgy at 9 AM and Saturday Vespers at 4:00 PM; Wednesday Night Liturgies: January 17th and 24th at 5:30 PM. Adult Education: Thursdays 10:30 AM.

- Orthros & Divine Liturgy, with Coffee Fellowship and Vasilopita following: January 1 at 8:30 AM
- Royal Hours of Theophany: January 5 at 9:30 AM
- Presentation by Andrew Kern/CIRCE: January 5 at 11:00 AM
- Vespersal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil & Great Blessings of Water: January 5 at 5:30 PM Potluck Feast following
- Myrrhbearers Meeting: Sunday January 7 after Divine Liturgy, during Coffee Fellowship
- St. Luke Co-op: Monday January 8 at 10:30 AM to 3:30 PM
- HOPE Group Meeting: Monday January 8 at 6:30 PM
- Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday January 9 at 5:30 PM
- Trisagion Prayers & All Night Vigil for Elizabeth Richter: Tuesday January 9 at 7:30 PM
- Funeral for Elizabeth Richter: Wednesday January 10 at 10:00 AM, Meal of Mercy and Burial following
- Men's Breakfast Group: Saturday January 13 at 9:00 AM
- Christmas Un-Decorating: Saturday January 13 at 11:00 AM
- Catechism Class: Saturday January 13 at 2:30 PM
- Trisagion Memorial Prayers: January 14, after Liturgy, remembering John Dunham, Tina Adcock, Frank Adcock
- Sunday Potluck Fellowship: January 14, no assigned dishes, bring something delicious to share
- Sunday School Teacher Meeting: Wednesday January 17 at 7:00 PM
- Wedding of Kathrine Fasbender and Chris Johnson: Saturday January 20 at 3:00 PM
- Great Vespers Saturday January 20: Canceled
- St. Luke Co-op: Monday January 22 at 10:30 AM to 3:30 PM
- HOPE Group Meeting: Monday January 22 at 6:30 PM
- Catechism Class: Saturday January 27 at 2:30 PM

News Updates

*Update on our parish financial situation
from Rob Bell, Parish Council Treasurer*

Preliminary financial results for November are \$25,000 worse than budgeted, primarily due to lower than expected offerings. Expenses were greater than offerings so we have dug into already low cash reserves to meet the month's bills. Disregarding funds committed to the storm repairs which will be paid by mid-January, we are simply much too close to a situation of counting on what comes in for a month to pay what's due for the month.

• Year-end offerings & statements

As in past, we will provide offering statements per IRS requirements and as a convenience for parishioners' tax preparation. Offerings will be reflected on 2023 offering statements for those received: in the offering plates by Sunday evening December 24th or via EasyTithe by December 31st. Statements will be provided during January 2024. If you have questions please contact Rob at treasurer@stlukeorthodox.org or 240.447.3243.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of voting members will be held in our Parish Hall on Sunday, January 28th after Diving Liturgy. "Voting members" are active in attendance, at least 18 years of age, in sacramental good standing, and support the parish by tithing or giving at least \$1,000 annually (unless special circumstances apply as determined by Fr. Raphael). All are welcome to attend. During the meeting we will elect two voting members to the parish council. Liz Thompson and Mitch Paxton have been nominated for the elected positions. If you wish to nominate from the floor, please contact Fr. Raphael or Peter Mustian for details on this. Fr. Raphael, as pastor, will appoint Rob Bell for another term, our current parish council Treasurer. At the annual meeting we will also approve a budget for 2024. Parish Council will meet on January 9 to review and recommend the new budget, all are welcome. We will provide an activity for the children during this Annual Meeting. Please let Frances know if you have teenagers who would be willing to help with the children.

Ministry Updates

We need Ministry Leaders to fill vacancies in the following Ministries: Building Maintenance, Grounds Maintenance, Web/IT Team, Audiovisual team, Feasts/Festivals, Medical Response Team, and Safety Team. If you are a part of these ministries (or want to join) and would like to lead, please talk to Fr. Raphael.

- The Temple Cleaning Teams needs more volunteers to help keep our church clean and tidy. Please contact MaryDel if you can help: mdhiskey@comcast.net
- The Greeting Team needs volunteers to help give a warm and informative welcome to our members, friends, and visitors. Please contact Kelly Hesse if you can help: hessefam9@gmail.com

Children, Youth and Family

- **Sunday School** for all ages picks up again Sunday January 7th, diving back into our study of Romans. In January, youth and children will also explore lessons on the Creative Festivals. This year's theme is "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). Children and youth can compete in several categories: visual arts, photography, digital arts, and poetry. Last year, many of our children and youth received awards. Please let Frances know if you would like to help with the Creative Festivals. Sunday School teachers will meet on Wednesday, January 17 at 7:00 PM.
- **St. Luke Home-school Co-op** meets every other Monday. We have a few late morning activities: ballet class and handcrafts. Next is lunch and fellowship and then we gather for contemplation and recitation of a Psalm, artist and composer study, folk singing and folk dancing. Depending upon the needs and ages of your children mothers and their child/children can come for both morning and afternoon or just for morning activities or for just the afternoon. Please contact Shelli Sittler if you are interested sksittler@gmail.com
- **Youth Group**
Our Youth Council met on December 31 during Coffee Fellowship and we hope to have a more complete schedule to you for the coming new year. In the meantime:
 - ~Interested in attending Winter Camp in January 12-15? Contact Mimi Sawaked: mimisawaked@gmail.com
 - ~Interested in attending Project Mexico July 30-August 5? Contact Matt Richardson: cirrusio@pm.me
 - ~Interested in attending Camp St. Raphael June 23-29 (Fr. Raphael will attend) or Antiochian Village Camp July 14-26 (Fr. Raphael will attend)? Registration for AV Camp opens January 7. Contact admin@stlukeorthodox.org
 - ~Interested in attending Rocky Mountain Orthodox Camp July 22-25? Contact Steve Knudtsen: sknudtsen8@gmail.com (see poster on Bulletin Board)
 - ~Interested in the Bible Bowl at the Parish Life Conference? Contact Mimi Sawaked: mimisawaked@gmail.com
- **Girls' Basket Ministry** now has 18 young ladies serving in this ministry. What a celebration! Friendly reminder: If you know you will not be in church on the Sunday your daughter is assigned, please try to switch with someone else. If your daughter wants to participate, please contact Janelle Payne, dj72002@comcast.net

Adult Education Class with Fr. Daniel

We will resume classes on January 11th when we discuss St John Chrysostom. On January 18th we have the last class on the early Fathers with discussion on St. Cyril of Alexandria. Beginning on January 25th and for the next seven classes I will offer The History of the Divine Liturgy. These classes will conclude before the beginning of Great Lent. There will be no classes during Great Lent. I will offer a series of classes on the later Church Fathers sometime in the future. All are welcome to the classes.

Antiochian Women

- Antiochian Women of St Luke hosted an Advent Retreat for the whole parish on the weekend of December 8-9, 2023. The retreat was recorded and you can listen here: <http://tinyurl.com/2023StLukeAdventvideos>
- Save the date: Women's Retreat to be held on Saturday, February 17 - led by AW Vice President Aimee Colyer on the topic of "The Grace of God in Women."
- Ladies Lunch Bunch organizational meeting in early January had to be postponed due to schedule conflicts and illness. This will hopefully be re-scheduled. The idea is to have a regular time each month when women from the parish meet at a local restaurant to share lunch and fellowship.
- Sign up for the AW of St Luke newsletter here: <https://tinyurl.com/AWStLukenews>. The last newsletter went out 11/27, please check your spam filters if you haven't been receiving the newsletters!

Caregiver Support Group

As our population ages, more people are providing caregiving. A person might be an ill spouse or partner, a child with a disability, or an aging friend or relative. About 1 in 3 adults in the US is an informal or family caregiver. While caregiving can have many rewards, it is also important to remember to care for yourself. A caregiver support group is a great way to receive support and learn about available resources from people who are going through similar experiences each day. If there is interest, Fr Stephan will begin facilitating a caregiver support group in January. If you have interest in this group, please call or email Debby Stephan (303-619-1941 or debbyk323@icloud.com) to sign up and receive additional information by January 14.

Lift Up Uganda

School Sponsors

Thank you to all our School Sponsors for the students at St Nektarios Nursery and Primary School for 2024. All 40 sponsors from 2023 agreed to renew their sponsorship for 2024. Additionally, several more parishioners will sponsor in 2024. That means that 57 students will be able to attend school in 2024 and have brighter futures. You are changing lives, one child at a time. The student's Tuition and Uniform requirements will be met for all 3 terms of 2024 by their sponsor. Parents/guardians will provide food and other requirements. Knowing that their child will have an entire year of school with no interruptions provides relief. What a joy it is to find an 11 or 12 year old who wants to start second grade now, as they had been unable to attend school regularly. The children and their parents know what a gift an education provides. Letters will come when Richard Okello returns from Holiday break back to St Vladimir's Seminary around January 12. More good news is that construction has started on a 6th grade classroom which will be completed by February 5 which is the start of the first term of 2024. Your Giving Tuesday donations to Lift Up Uganda made this goal possible.



Uganda Priest Support

- Thank you to several parishioners at St Luke for their donations toward a Thrivent service project to help the priests in northern Uganda. With their Action Team prepaid credit cards Lift Up Uganda was able to buy 17 boxes of charcoal and incense for the churches in Uganda from the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline, MA. Ryan Mohrmann, Thrivent representative (formerly of St Luke) helped us to facilitate this important project of "Christmas kits" for the priests. I will ship the boxes to Fr Simon Menya in Gulu, Uganda who will

distribute to the priests. We could do this as an annual project if there is enough interest from Thrivent members. Perhaps we could also do a similar project for Pascha. Please contact Sue Nelson with questions. ssnelson22@aol.com

• Congratulations Axios Richard Okello, who will be ordained as Deacon on January 7 in Gulu Uganda.

Community Outreach

Lakota Christmas Outreach

We had a very successful outreach this year for the Lakota on the Rosebud Indian Reservation! Total donations were \$2,210. We were able to purchase every item on the wish list, including \$250 in cash to purchase gift cards. I am always amazed at the generosity of our parish to the needy and the poor. This outreach will help many people this Winter as they hand out basic supplies to those always in desperate need. I wish everyone could visit the Reservation for just one day and see how their gifts brought smiles to the children and families receiving these gifts. Please see the list of purchased items on the bulletin board, as well as the thank you letter from Nancy La Pointe, Care Coordinator and Marlies White Hatt, Director of SGU Tiwaha Glu Kini Pi ("Bringing the Family Back to Life").

Myrrhbearer Intercessory Prayer Group

Here at St. Luke's, we believe in the power of prayer. We are committed to the practice of prayer both individually and corporately. As a result, we see the hand of God moving in our lives, and in the lives of those around us. The Myrrhbears' Intercessory Prayer group is the St. Luke ministry team of Orthodox Christian women communicants who commit themselves to daily prayer in the morning and the evening, fasting as prescribed by the Orthodox Church, daily spiritual readings and reflection, intercession and study, and participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of our parish. We consult with Fr. Raphael, our spiritual director. Every request is held in confidence sharing only with the clergy. Prayer requests are prayed for each day for one month. Orthodox Christians are remembered in Liturgy prayers. Opportunities for corporate prayer are open to anyone who would want to attend Liturgy on Sunday, midweek, or a Vesper service. We know that it's not always easy to open up and share what's going on in your life. But life gets messy, and no matter who we are, we need people to come alongside and support us in prayer. If you need prayer for a specific need, let us know and your request will go to our committed team of prayer warriors. We pray over many requests each day so please keep it an appropriate length so we can give each request equal attention. In addition to requesting prayer from a Myrrhbearer, there is a prayer box in the Narthex that is checked weekly.

The Myrrhbearer members you may contact are: Sh. Margaret Ashton, Daya Colborn, Margaret Evans, Marilyn Geerdes, Heather Hennigh, Carol Hynes, Sue Nelson, Olga Peyton, Denise Rice, Rita Rosson, Elaine Senko, Heather Wicht, and Kat Wolff.

Choir

Please join our Choir Family! Singing in the St. Luke Liturgical Choir is a lot of fun and will connect you to our choir family. We wish to welcome our newest members: Rose Faissal (alto) and Aimee Colyer (soprano). We are always in need of singers for all sections. Not ready to commit? Try out a practice on December 2 or 16 at 10A or any Sunday at 8A in classroom #4.

Bookstore News

True Vine Bookstore has recently added a number of new books and icons, including writings of church fathers and saints, children's books and icons of various saints. The bookstore staff is always happy to order items for you, often at a significant wholesale discount. Looking for a special gift for a loved one? Check out the hand carved icon in the bookstore by local iconographer, Anna Vander Wall. She resides in northern Colorado and was trained by Jonathan Pageau and Christopher Gosey. She is available for commission requests.

OCF: College Students

Greetings CU Boulder OCF! Students are on winter break this months. Meetings will resume in January. All meetings are in Ketchum room 1B64. All students, staff and faculty are invited for Bible Study and pizza. Contact Robbie Macdonald roma9153@colorado.edu

More News

Word Magazine

The Word Magazine is a free publication for members of our church provided by the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese. Paper or digital copies published. Sign up here: <http://ww1.antiochian.org/address-updates>

The Great Doxology

Our Parish continues to learn the Great Doxology in all eight tones, as appointed in our Liturgical Guide. All new music settings take time to become familiar, please be patient and follow the chanters as you pick up the melody during parts of it. Pick up your copy of each Sunday's tone in the Narthex.

Care of our Temple

We have two weekly cleaning teams that work very hard to keep our temple beautiful. Please be mindful of our shared sacred space. Wipe muddy and snowy feet on mats in the Narthex. It is good to keep an eye on the children when they are eating blessed bread so that unnecessary crumbs are not going onto the floor. Please remove your trash, kleenex, etc. and place in the trash bins in the Narthex.

Live Streaming Services

Our Sunday 8a Orthros and 9a Sunday Divine Liturgy “live streaming” continues on our YouTube channel “stlukestream”. The link below may be copied and pasted into your web browser. As a “subscriber” to our YouTube channel, you can get an alert - if you wish to know when a live stream is on.

<https://tinyurl.com/StLukeStreamChannel>

Looking ahead to 2024

Fr David will be part of an Orthodox Tour to Egypt called “Journey Through the Land of the Pharaohs and the Desert Fathers,” February 21 - March 3 (7), 2024. Both classical and Christian sites will be seen. Fr. Illya Gotlinsky of Orthodox Tours will lead this, with around 17 laity from around the country. Fr David would be happy to have a few more local people join him, and is glad to answer questions about this and future pilgrimage ideas. See flyer on the bulletin board or visit: <https://orthodoxtours.com>



Saturday Catechism Classes — 2023/2024

Beginning in September, Fr. Raphael will offer a series of introductory classes for Inquirers and Catechumens at St. Luke. These classes are geared for all those interested in learning more about the Orthodox Church, for those interested in becoming Orthodox, and for our own members who may never have gone through a series of catechism classes. **These classes will be held on Saturday afternoon before Vespers at 2:30PM.**

	Date	Topic
I.	09/16	Introduction & Revelation
II.	09/30	Nicene Creed - Part I "I believe in One God..."
III.	10/14	Nicene Creed - Part II Who is Jesus Christ?
IV.	10/28	Nicene Creed - Part III The Holy Trinity
V.	11/11	The Holy Scripture & Canons
VI.	12/02	Hagiology & Mariology
VII.	12/16	Sacraments and Worship
VIII.	01/13	Divine Liturgy
IX.	01/27	Iconography
X.	02/10	Spirituality
XI.	02/24	Developing a Rule of Prayer
XII.	03/09	Confession & Entry into the Church

*Dates, times and topics are subject to revision. See future News Briefs for updates.

