

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

Newsletter

Diocese of Toledo-Orthodox Church in America

2143 S. Center Road – Burton, Michigan 48519

Served by: Fr. Matthew-Peter Butrie – Protodeacon Kerry Luke Gonsler

Email: stnicholasburtonmi@gmail.com Facebook: www.facebook.com/stnicholasburton

Website: www.saintnicholasburton.org Church Office: 810-744-0070

Services: Sunday - 9:30 a.m. Hours 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Wednesday- adult education 11:15 am

Saturday – 5 pm Vespers followed by Confessions

Holydays: Vespers & Liturgy as announced

“May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.” St. Jude 1:1

OCTOBER 2024

THE PROTECTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD (October 1)

Hymns from Vespers for her feast

Today the radiant feast of your protecting veil has come, O most pure Virgin. You enlighten, more than the sun, those who in faith and purity of heart confess you as the true Mother of God, and who cry out to your Son: “O Christ God, by the prayers of the Ever-Virgin, who in purity and without corruption gave birth to You, preserve Your inheritance from the enemies that war against it, and since You are merciful, preserve our souls in peace!”

Your Son’s people are unable to praise you fittingly as they desire, O most pure Lady; for you always defend all the faithful, protecting them with your precious veil, and praying for the salvation of all who with faith honor you, the pure and true Theotokos.

Let us the faithful assemble today to praise the all-immaculate Queen of all, the most pure Virgin, the Mother of Christ our God, for she mercifully ever stretches out her hands to her Son! And it is she whom glorious Andrew beheld in the air protecting the people with her precious veil. Let us sing to her with tenderness of heart: Rejoice, O protectress, defender, and salvation of our souls!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Having cleansed our hearts and minds, let us with the Angels splendidly keep festival, as we sing the song of David to the Virgin, the bride of the King of All, Christ our God: “Arise, O Lord, into Your resting place; You and the ark of Your holiness”; for You have adorned her as a beautiful palace, O Master, and have made her an inheritance for Your city, so that, by her prayers and Your mighty power, she might defend it from pagan adversaries.

FROM FATHER'S DESK

Beloved, Matushka Lisa shared this post with me from Facebook penned by Michael Stan. It is a beautiful reflection on how we Christians approach death and life. I hope it speaks to your heart, too. Love, Fr Matthew

“Someday you will throw dirt on me.” by Michael Stan

I am an Orthodox Christian. Not a good one, though, but I digress. In the past week I've been asked by three different people what religion I am. After telling them I'm an Orthodox Christian, the following question they've all asked can be reduced to a one-word response, “Why?”

It's a great question, and one I ponder often; not because I don't know why I'm an Orthodox Christian, but because I think everybody is expecting to hear something honest, vulnerable, and relatable. When speaking about my faith, I try to be thoughtful and careful with my words. After all, the faith I am part of should not be measured by me and my abundant shortcomings as a frail human being who happens to be Orthodox, but rather, be measured by the perfect completeness the 'Faith which has established the universe' offers creation, specifically, the crown jewel of creation: humanity. And recently, the 'perfect completeness' was manifested in the most unique and beautiful way.

Last weekend my parish family buried a local pillar of Orthodoxy; June Bagby. There are many things I could say about June, and many stories to share. Like me, June was not a perfect soul, but she loved the Lord with all her heart and wasn't shy about encouraging those around her to love Him too, especially children. In my opinion, she had the gift of tears, both in the spirit of repentance, and in the joy of the resurrection. This may sound odd to many, but her funeral was so joyful. Certainly, tears were shed losing a loved one so abruptly. Though I heard many say something along the lines of, “June lived for her death.” In Orthodoxy, death isn't anything to be feared, because we have the hope and faith in Jesus Christ and His crushing of death.

Just as my parents did with me, I took my daughter Zoë to the funeral; it was her second funeral to attend in her short little life, but her first Orthodox funeral. I can imagine the concept of death is damn near impossible to make sense of for a four-year-old. During the service I was met with questions like, “Is she sleeping?” and “Will she wake up?” I even received feedback from Zoë about the “special bed” being nice because it had a lid. Standing there in the Church with my daughter, singing the hymns of Divine Liturgy, followed by the Funeral was so grace filled, so healing, and so necessary.

In the West, and in our secularized society, funerals are often sad, hopeless affairs. Many opt for cremation and “celebrations of life,” rather than funerals. Death has become sterile, avoided and taboo. It has become selfish and prideful.

Not in Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy looks death in the face and deals with it. We don't sterilize it and ignore it. The Orthodox funeral service is so therapeutic; so sobering, and so inspiring. The focus is not the eulogy, just like the focus of the Divine Liturgy is not the sermon. Zoë and I stood there singing and praying.

Throughout the service, I'd bend down and do my best to explain to Zoë what is going on; what's being said, and what it means. And as per usual, I gently directed her when to make the sign of the cross, when to bow her head when a blessing was given and giving her a heads up when we could respond “Amen.”

At the end of the funeral in the Orthodox Church, every person has the opportunity to pay final respects - in Orthodoxy, however, we give the last kiss. That's right. We kiss the deceased with our lips, to venerate him or her for the last time. After the final kiss, more prayers are said, the body is blessed, and the casket is closed. The casket is then reverently escorted out of the Church while the congregation sings, “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal; Have mercy on us.” How profound! We pray for mercy, which, in Greek is a VERY BIG word, encompassing great meaning. Mercy is healing, renewal, grace, compassion, charity,

comfort, etc. How profound to pray such a prayer while our deceased loved one is being taken from the Church to the cemetery! How healing! How appropriate!

When we arrived at the cemetery, the closed casket was presented to all. Zoë pointed to the casket and asked, "Is June still in there?" I knelt in the grass to get to her level and responded, "Yes sweetheart, she is. Now we just have a few more things to do to help her rest until Christ comes again." More prayers were said, and the casket and burial plot were blessed. After the graveside service concluded, the casket was carried to and placed into the vault. The vault was then transported to the plot where it was lowered into the ground. I wanted Zoë to witness all of it. She observed patiently, quietly, and with great attention, soaking it all in. As I knelt behind her, with my arms wrapped around her for comfort and security, I could only wonder what was happening in that beautiful mind of hers.

As is the Orthodox custom, after the body is put into the ground, the faithful gather around, grab a handful of dirt, and toss it into the plot where the person lay, as if to begin the process of burial. That's exactly what Zoë and I did - we grabbed some dirt and threw it into the hole in the ground. I gave Zoë a big hug and said, "My sweetheart, I'm so proud of you. You did so well and have been so helpful. This is what we do as Orthodox Christians. This is how we show our love one last time."

She looked at me and asked, "Daddy, will you die?" I looked her in the eyes, took a deep breath, and gently said, "Yes. Everybody will die someday. And someday you will throw dirt on me just like we did for June, and for many others who we love." We held hands and walked to the car.

Immediately following the funeral was a baptism back at the Church. Talk about a shift! That's right, a baptism of an adorable little baby being enlisted as a warrior for Christ. Now, Zoë was very much looking forward to the baptism, because she absolutely LOVES babies, and loves Church. Combine the two and Zoë is there. The baptism was beautiful. Like the funeral, the Baptism is very honest about the reality of life, death, and salvation; the services are honest about the reality of good and evil, of light and of darkness; they acknowledge, candidly, the battlefield of life on earth and the need for Christ yesterday, today, and forever. Because the fact is: we cannot do it on our own. I cannot. Plain and simple.

As I reflect on the dynamic of the day, I can't help but find the absolute normality of it all. Where there's death, there's life. Where there's a funeral, there's a baptism. In both instances the Church militant and triumphant celebrated a victory. In both instances, mercy was being prayed for. In the same day, two different people crossed a threshold from the material to the immaterial; and met Christ face to face.

As Saint John Chrysostom says in his Paschal Homily, which is read during every Pascha (Easter) service, "O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep."

These words of hope and celebration ring in my ear as I consider what I told my daughter in the cemetery, "Someday you will throw dirt on me." And because of that reality, I'm an Orthodox Christian. I am an Orthodox Christian because the Orthodox Church teaches us how to pray, how to grieve, how to heal, and how to hope; it teaches us, and gives us wholeness; it possesses, understands, and pours out insane amounts of Grace and Mercy. Whether you are in the womb or in the tomb, and at every moment in between, the Church is there praying, "Kyrie Eleison" / "Lord, Have Mercy." How comforting. How healing. How beautiful.

I'm Michael. I am an Orthodox Christian. And someday, you will throw dirt on me.

Hours Schedule

<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>
6 Barry	3 Barry	1 Phil
13 Lucy	10 Lucy	8 Barry
20 Alexander	17 Angelo	15 Lucy
27 Phil	24 Alexander	22 Angelo
		29 Alexander

If you are unable to make your assigned reading date, please find a replacement.

Reader Schedule

<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>
6 Katherine	3 Katherine	1 Katherine
13 Phil	10 Phil	8 Phil
20 Angelo	17 Alexander	15 Alexander
27 Alexander	24 Angelo	22 Katherine
		29 Angelo

If you are unable to make your assigned reading date, please find a replacement.

Candle Stand Attendant Schedule

<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>
6 Dennis Goodman	3 Dennis Goodman	1 Dennis Goodman
13 Christine Panoff	10 Susie Ford	8 Susie Ford
20 Christine Panoff	17 Christine Panoff	15 Ian & Stephanie P.
27 Ian & Stephanie P.	24 Ian & Stephanie P.	22 Christine Panoff
		29 Susie Ford

If you are unable to make your assigned date please find a replacement. Let Susie know of any changes or if you cannot find a replacement (810-407-3016).

HOURS, READERS & CANDLE STAND. Please look at each month's newsletter as the schedule may have changed.

10 YEARS LATER - 2014 PARISH HEALTH WORKSHOP In November 2014 Mr. Joseph Kormos presented three areas of focus for our parish as we were preparing for our 100th anniversary: 1- Worship, 2- Charity, 3- Financial Generosity. Last month, ten years on since that workshop, we looked at Worship. This month let's look at 2- Charity.

Many parishes have a line item in the budget for charity and involvement in hands-on charitable works. A line item in our budget means we designate funds to charity whether or not we know they will be received through donations. This is important. The idea is that we don't offer up what we have left over but we dedicate a portion of our parish income to those in need, locally and worldwide. It means we don't wait to see what comes in for charity but rather we take the leap of faith in God to commit these funds in advance with the prayerful hope that the need will be supplied through our stewardship.

Since 2014 our parish sets aside a tithe (10%) of the net proceeds from fundraisers for charity. Stewardship envelopes and online giving have charity as a category for donation. At the conclusion of Liturgy, the charity plate is at the front of church to accept people's offerings for charity. Additionally, on the third Wednesday of each month we hand out \$10 Meijer food gift cards to those who come to our door in need. Every year since it has been available, our parish has received the charitable matching grant from the Diocese. At present the Diocese matches charitable contributions up to \$1,000. From our parish's charitable funds we offer \$1,000 and the Diocese sends us a check for \$1,000 so we can purchase enough gift cards for the year. Additionally, since the parish health workshop in 2014 members of the parish assist at the North End Soup Kitchen on the first Thursday of each month from 9 am to 12:30 pm. If you are able, join us for work and fellowship as we prepare a meal for those in need. We have a small, dedicated crew (3 to 4 persons) who come every month. We also have bins at church for donations of food items and for Catholic Charities monthly needs. and In all these ways our parish is fulfilling the command of Christ to give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty and clothing to the naked. - Fr. Matthew

SERVICE DURING INFANT LOSS AWARENESS MONTH on Sunday, October 13 at 12:30 pm will be a service for parents who have lost an infant at any stage of development – miscarriage, stillbirth, SIDS, disease, abortion, accident, or other causes – and for their infants who have gone into their rest before us.

PRAYER SERVICE for the sick & suffering are held at St. Mary Magdalene the second Tuesday of the month at 6 pm. Email names to smmocafenton@gmail.com

NORTH END SOUP KITCHEN Please come & minister to Christ with our brothers & sisters on October 3 from 9 am-12:30 pm. “Feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead.” St. John Chrysostom.

CONFESSIONS the sacrament of Confession is offered on Saturdays after Vespers and by appointment. Call the parish office 810-744-0070 or e-mail stnicholasburtonmi@gmail.com to make an appointment.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES are on Wednesdays at 11:15 am. We are continuing with [Psalms and the Life of Faith](#) by Elder Aimilianos looking at twelve of the one hundred and fifty Psalms.

INQUIRERS'/CATECHUMENS' CLASS led by Reader Alexander Gonser after the Divine Liturgy. Feel free to join in and let other inquirers know about these classes introducing the Orthodox faith.



at St. Nicholas on Saturday, October 26 from 2 to 4 pm. Decorate your trunks and bring treats! This is open to the community / all Orthodox churches.

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE Church School kick off is Sunday, September 15 with stuffed pepper dinner, bringing dessert to share. Income for August exceeded expenses. The picnic and dance fundraiser made \$5,009 profit with 10% (\$500) to charity account. The picnic and dance is planned for Sunday, August 17, 2025. Mike Fioritto, CPA, has been a great help with Quickbooks accounting. Nominating committee will meet on Saturday, September 14. Sunday, November 3 will be the date for elections to parish council, auditors, and lay delegate to the 2025 diocesan conference. Possible free-will luncheon on November 3. Trunk or Treat will be Saturday, October 26 before Vespers. We will participate in the Angel Tree program this year, buying gifts for children in need. A lot of work was done in the pavilion and painting still needs to be done (gable ends) and garage. The barbecue pit was fixed up with new plywood and painting. The roof on the small kitchen in the pavilion is leaking in one spot. In the tunnel between the altar and the boiler room the brackets have rotted away so that the pipes (water lines and electrical lines) are sagging. Not an expensive item but it must be addressed. New aluminum was put on the shrine of our Lady of Iveron by the icon to channel water out. Filters in air conditioning in the church and hall were changed and coil washed in big unit in hall. Parish development forum was attended by Chris Taylor and he informed us that our parish is doing the vast majority of the things that can be done are being done by our parish - outreach via digital presence, calendar, welcome gift bags for newcomers, etc. One item that was suggested was a video interview with different age groups, converts and cradle Orthodox, to speak about their experience and be posted on our parish webpage and YouTube channel for seekers and inquirers to learn a little more about the Church before their visit. Eileen & Cindy Branoff will be co-chairing the Angel Tree program this year.

PARISH COUNCIL meeting is Tuesday, October 8 at 6:30.

FALL SALAD LUNCHEON at Assumption on October 10 11:30 am-1:30 pm. \$15 per plate which includes a cheese triangle, appetizers & beverage. There will also be a bake sale.

PARISH MEETING FOR THE ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCIL, AUDITORS & LAY DELEGATE

takes place on Sunday, November 3. To vote you must have submitted a pledge card & received Confession and Communion within the past year. Only one vote per person: if you fill out an absentee vote please do not fill out a ballot on November 3. The nominees will be published in the bulletins on October 13, October 20, October 27, and November 3. The November newsletter will also list the names of the nominees.

- Absentee ballots are available in the office beginning Oct. 14
- Absentee ballots must be returned by November 1

A luncheon, with sloppy joes & coleslaw, will follow the meeting. A free will offering taken.

OUR CHARITY MINISTRIES

NORTH END SOUP KITCHEN we serve on Thursday, October 3 from 9 to 12:30 pm.

HOPE IN A BOX is collecting Toothpaste, Toothbrushes & Socks in October. Place the items in bags then put in the Blue Box in the hall. Catholic Charities Community Closet will distribute the items.

FOOD DRIVE Place non-perishable food items in the other blue box in the hall.

 <h2 style="margin: 0;">HOPE IN A BOX</h2>	
Oct	Toothpaste, Toothbrushes and Socks
Nov	Dish & Laundry Soap
Dec	Socks, Towels, Toiletries & New Toys

October Coffee Social Volunteers & Sponsors	
6	
13	
20	
27	

MAKE YOUR FAITHFUL GIVING EASY AND CONVENIENT WITH GIVELIFY

Go to the website and on the home page click on the box Give now with Givelify which will walk you through the donation process; this is a secure site. (2.9% + \$0.30 of your donation goes to Givelify as a fee.)
*Please consider adding a little extra to your donation to cover the fee we are charged. If you do not wish to donate online, you may write a check to St. Nicholas Orthodox Church and send it to the parish address: 2143 S Center Rd, Burton, MI 48519.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP/SEMINARIAN OFFERING On the first Sunday of the month an envelope will be placed in the bulletin for this fund to be placed in the plate when it is passed. There is also a category marked "Seminarian" on your stewardship envelopes that you can include with your regular giving. This helps to support parish seminarians, those training to become catechists, and kiosk expense for theological materials for inquirers.

ELEVATION OF THE CROSS flowers were donated by Christine & Angleo Panoff in memory of their grandsons Andrew & Matthew Panoff.

FACEBOOK PAGE Please visit, like, and follow our parish page: www.facebook.com/stnicholasburton Please share posts to your page. This increases the number of people who know about our church. Those who have been at coffee fellowship have seen the number of inquirers who have been coming to Sunday Divine Liturgy. 2,100 people have liked our Facebook page and 2,200 people have followed it.

YOUTUBE CHANNEL subscribe to our YouTube channel Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church Burton to receive notifications of upcoming livestreams for services. Livestreams begin at 9:30 with Hours.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES, & NAMESDAYS

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Ellyn Serra
- 3 Alyson Wilhelm
- 7 Jacob Abu-Aita
- 9 Sarah Neely
- 11 Tammy Bolinger
- 12 Stacy Brock
- 13 Allen Adams
- 14 Cameron Stevens
- 15 Eugene Akkerman
Stephanie Stikovich
- 23 Taïsa Akkerman
- 25 Phil Brown
- 27 David George
Taras Evanenko
- 29 Bruce Borkovich
- 31 Jack Todorovsky



NAMESDAYS

- 3 Dennis Goodman
Dennis Jernigan
- 4 Bernita Brown
- 8 Taïsa Akkerman
- 18 Protodeacon Kerry Luke Gonser
Luke John Borkovich
Luke Shann
- 20 Diana Mitevski
Diane Broadfoot
Diane Todorovsky
- 23 James Shann
- 26 Jack (Dmitri) Todorovsky
John (Dimitrios) Todorovsky
- 29 Anastasia Tecla Butrie
Anastasia Pirkovic
Anastasia Whittaker
Stacy Jean Binelli
Stacy Brock
Stacy Grousopoulos
- 30 Milan Stikovich

ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Michelle & Dat Gerzevske (2011)
- 13 Irina Sivergina & Oleg Dashevsky
- 17 Peter & Marilyn Branoff (2004)
- 18 David & Barbara Vuckovich (1986)
- 20 David & Cortney Batzos (2007)
- 25 Michael & Ellyn Serra (1986)

If your name is missing or has the incorrect information in the birthday, anniversary or namesday list please call the office: (810) 744-0070

DAILY INTERCESSION FOR OUR SICK AND HOMEBOUND

VISITATION TO THE SICK If you would like Fr. Matthew to make a visit to home, hospital, or nursing home, please contact the office 810-744-0070.

DAILY INTERCESSION FOR OUR SICK AND HOMEBOUND

The following are our brothers and sisters of St. Nicholas who are currently homebound, suffering from chronic illness, in recovery or in need of special prayers. Please remember them in your prayers and reach out to them with a card, a phone call or a visit! Please call the office to schedule a visit for Holy Communion.

Deacon John Bocek
Paul Ellis
Bill Haw

Mary Karayanis
Nick Karayanis
Macy Lemmen

Angelo Popoff
Helen Popoff
Ron Salhany

Bill Tadrick
Wendy Tadrick
Dave Vuckovich







To aid in your outreach, here is a listing of the addresses and phone numbers of our Homebound:

Paul Ellis	2360 Stonebridge Dr	Flint, MI 48532	
Mary & Nick Karayanis	2238 Old Hickory	Davison, MI 48423	810-653-1169
Angelo & Helen Popoff	2221 Bellemeade Dr.	Davison, MI 48423	810-653-3867
Dave Vuckovich	9352 Morrish Rd	Swartz Creek, MI 48473	810-348-4733 (Barb)

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 810-744-0070

stnicholasburtonmi@gmail.com Website: www.saintnicholasburton.org

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <i>Protection of the Theotokos</i> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:15 am adult ed.	2 No Liturgy No adult ed. †	3 9 am to 12:30 pm North End Soup Kitchen Office Closed	4 †	5 No Vespers
					61 st Diocesan Conference at St Elia Church, Akron, OH	
6 9:30 Hours 10 am Divine Liturgy Church School-St. Peter and Cornelius	7	8 6:30 pm Parish Council 6 pm Prayer Service @ St. Mary	9 Holy Apostle James (Jacob) son of Alphaeus  9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:15 am adult ed.	10 Office Closed	11 †	12 5 pm Vespers confessions
61 st Diocesan Conference						
13 9:30 Hours 10 am Divine Liturgy Church School-Council of Jerusalem 12:30 pm service for unborn who have died	14	15	16 † 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:15 am adult ed.	17 Office Closed	18 St Luke  	19 5 pm Vespers confessions
20 9:30 Hours 10 am Divine Liturgy Church School- Spread of the Gospel	21	22	23 Holy Apostle  James (Jacob), brother of the Lord 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:15 am adult ed.	24 Office Closed	25 †	26 2-4 pm Trunk n Treat 5 pm Vespers Confessions
27 9:30 Hours 10 am Divine Liturgy Church School- St. Paul and His Journeys, Part 1	28	29	30 † 9:30 am Divine Liturgy 11:15 am adult ed.	31 Office Closed	† Fast  Wine & Oil Permitted (no meat)  Fish Permitted (no other meat)	