



Volume 30, Number 1
JANUARY 2021

The Cathedral Messenger

A Publication of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Cathedral

Remembering the Persecuted this Christmas

Covid restrictions are mild compared with what many of the faithful endure

(Adapted from an article in the Wall Street Journal by Cardinal Timothy Dolan and IDC President Toufic Baaklini)

For the first time in their lives, millions of Americans have been ordered by their government not to attend church. For millions of persecuted Christians across the globe, this is the only reality they know. The theme of persecution lies at the heart of the Christmas story.

The Holy Family were forced to flee their native land due to state-sponsored oppression.

As citizens of a global superpower whose lawmakers are responsive to their citizens, we are called to stand in solidarity with persecuted Christians. The U.S. government has shown during this difficult year that it is responsive to such advocacy. At the same time, 2020 has presented unprecedented challenges for persecuted Christians world-wide.

In Nigeria, according to Gregory Stanton of Genocide Watch, more than 27,000 Christians have died since 2009 at the hands of Fulani militants, Boko Haram and other Islamic militias—exceeding the number of ISIS casualties in Iraq and Syria.

More than one million Christians in Saudi Arabia remain unable to worship at all, and Iran continues to



harass and imprison Christian converts. In China, Christian churches face a brutal crackdown by a government that persecutes other faiths as well.

Lebanon, a nation St. John Paul II described as “more than a country . . . a message to the world,” has the most Christians per capita in the Middle East and is at serious risk of becoming a failed state. Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatens Christians in Turkey and

beyond. Greek Orthodox Christians painfully witnessed the Istanbul’s Hagia Sophia Cathedral and Chora Church converted into mosques. Turkish-backed militias have persecuted Armenian and Syriac descendants of Christians who survived the Ottoman Genocide in northeast Syria and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh).

We hope President-elect Biden will build on the accomplishments of the Trump administration, namely its assistance to genocide survivors and priority on international religious freedom as a centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy. At the same time, Mr. Biden should correct the Trump administration’s shortcomings, particularly its failure to confront Turkey meaningfully.

As for America’s Christian citizens, we must never become complacent in the face of adversity. We must roll up our sleeves, organize, and advocate for persecuted members of the body of Christ.

Dean, V. Rev. Paul O’Callaghan • St. George Orthodox Christian Cathedral

7515 East Thirteenth Street • Wichita, KS 67206-1223 • (316) 636-4676 • <http://www.stgeorgecathedral.net>

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

Nativity 2020



*"Magnify, O my soul,
her who is more honorable and exalted in glory than the heavenly hosts.
I behold a strange and wonderful mystery:
the cave a heaven, the Virgin a Cherubic throne,
and the manger a noble place in which hath lain Christ the uncontained God.
Let us therefore praise and magnify Him."*

Nativity Ode 9, First Canon

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

We humbly offer gratitude to our Savior for every precious gift He bestows upon us as we warm ourselves by the fire of His cave. May the Nativity of our Lord and Savior bring you joy and imbue the hearts of people throughout the world with peace, reconciliation, understanding and love for one another. May you be granted a grace-filled, joyous feast and a blessed new year replete with both spiritual and physical health.

Yours in the service of Christ,

+JOSEPH

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop BASIL



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Diocese of Wichita and
Mid-America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

The Nativity of Christ – 2020



To the Christ-loving Priests, Deacons, Monastics and Lay Folk of this God-protected Diocese:

I embrace and greet you with a holy kiss and the joyous festal proclamation:

Christ is born – المسيح ولد
Χριστὸς Γεννᾶται – Христос рождается
Hristos se rodi – Hristos se našte

May God the All-holy Trinity grant you and your households the happiest of Feasts and a New Year filled with His abundant and rich blessings. With assurance of my continued love, prayers and blessings, I remain

In Christ the Incarnate Word of God,

+ Bishop Basil

+Bishop Basil

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

1559 North Woodlawn Street, Wichita, KS 67208-2429
(316) 687-3169 Phone BpBasil@aol.com (316) 636-5628 Fax



MEMORY ETERNAL

Dave Distefano, 12/13
of Omaha, NE
father of Bryan Distefano

Frank George Sr., 12/26
of Palestine, TX
father of Margo Elkouri

Don't
Forget!

St George Orthodox Cathedral 2020 Annual Parish Meeting

to be held Sunday, January 31st, 2021

1:00p Zoom

MABROOK! BLESSINGS!

baptisms

Mia Katherine Braswell, 12/22
daughter of Porter & Juliana Elkouri Braswell

Jeremy & Harlowe Baine, 12/26

birth

Clementine Ruth Hahn, 12/2
daughter of David & Emily

chrismations

Janet Barbara Butler, 12/26

Amy Elizabeth Glover, 12/26

MANY YEARS!

STEWARDSHIP

2021 PLEDGE STATUS

So far, 130 pledge cards for 2021 have been turned in for a total amount of \$502,126. The total pledges for 2020 received at this time last year were 133 in the amount of \$538,870. Please complete your 2020 pledges. If you need a pledge card, contact the office or pick up one at the bengarri. Thank you

2021 PLEDGE PAYMENTS

If you would like the convenience of not writing checks, you may have your pledge payments automatically withdrawn from your account on the 15th of each month. Contact Doren Rhoades in the office for more details.

An Introduction to Eastern Christianity The Uniqueness of the Orthodox Christian Tradition

January 13: The Spirit of Orthodoxy Christianity –

The Mystical Tradition of Orthodoxy

January 20: The Vision of Orthodox Christianity –

The Meaning of the Incarnation of Christ and His Redemption

January 27: The Story of Orthodox Christianity –

An Introductory History of the Orthodox Church

February 3: The Bible in Orthodox Christianity –

How Orthodox Christianity Views the Bible

February 10: Worship in Orthodox Christianity –

An Introduction to the Wealth of Orthodox Worship

All presentations will follow

Wednesday Vespers at 7:30pm,

in-person and live stream at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82361961493?pwd=a1dhdENzVS80YmxhVitUYTNFdGIMZz09>

Meeting ID: 823 6196 1493 **Passcode:** 67206

This will be broadcast on our usual Facebook and YouTube links as well

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnOr97Azd-C5YM3NDDt-xEXA>



Women's Faith & Growth

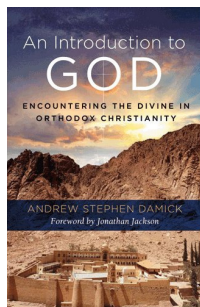
Join us Thursday
January 21st, 7:15p

on ZOOM

Studying book by
Fr Andrew Stephen Damick

"An Introduction to God"

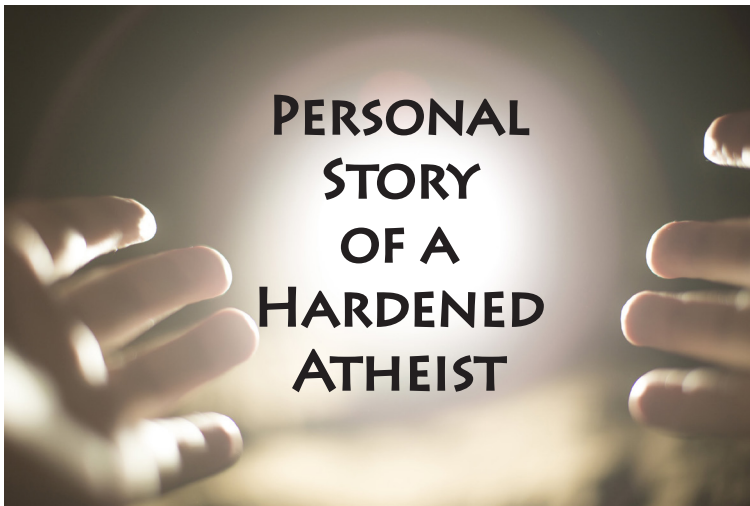
Contact Carol Farrow for more info



JANUARY FASTING



January 1st & 6th are fast free. January 5th is a fast day. Otherwise, the traditional fasting (from meat, poultry, fish, eggs & dairy products) is observed on Wednesdays & Fridays.



<https://blog.obitel-minsk.com/2019/05/stop-saying-glory-to-god-for-all-things-a-personal-story-of-a-hardened-atheist.html>

A testimony offered by Hieromonk Synesios:

“A few years ago, I was the parish priest of St. Vasileios church (Piraeus) and was called to hear the confession of a young man, Xenophon, 42 years old.

When I arrived, his days were numbered. Cancer with rapid metastases had affected his brain too. He was all alone at the ward, the bed next to him was empty, so we were all alone.

This is what he told me about how he came to Faith, since he was a “hardened atheist” in his own words:

‘I arrived here about 35 days ago, in this ward of two beds. Next to me was another patient, about 80 years old. He was suffering from cancer too, in his bones, and although he was experiencing excruciating pain, he was constantly praising the Lord “Glory to God! Glory to God for all things!” He also recited more prayers which I heard for the first time in my life since I was an atheist who had never set my foot to church. Often, all those prayers comforted him and he slept for a couple of hours. Then, after 2-3 hours, he woke up again from the excruciating pain, and he would start over

“My Christ, I thank you! Glory be to Thy Name! Glory to God! Glory to God for all things!” I was moaning with my pain, and this patient at the next bed to mine was glorifying God. I was blaspheming Christ and the Theotokos, and he was thanking God, thanking him for the cancer which he had given to him, and for all the excruciating pain he was suffering.

I was so rebellious and indignant at this! Not only for the excruciating pain I was suffering, but also for his never-ending Doxology. He was also partaking daily of Holy Communion, while I was throwing up in disgust.

– ‘Will you please shut up! Shut up and stop saying all the time ‘Glory to God!’ Can’t you see that this God, Whom you are thanking and glorifying, this same God is torturing us with such cruelty? What kind of God this is? No, He does not exist!’

And the patient on the next bed would meekly answer me: ‘He does exist, my child, and He is also a most loving Father, because with all this illness and pain, He cleanses me from my many sins. If you had worked on some rough task, and your clothes and your body stank, would you not need a rough brush to clean all this dirt? Likewise, God is using this disease as a balm, as a beneficial cleansing for my soul, in order to prepare it for the Kingdom of Heaven’.

His replies got even more on my nerves and I was blaspheming gods and demons. All my reactions were sadly most negative, and all I did was to keep on screaming: ‘There is no God. ... I do not believe in anything. ... Neither in this God nor in His Kingdom ...’

I remember his last words: ‘Wait and you shall see with your own eyes how the soul of a Christian who believes is separated from his body. I am a sinner, but His Mercy will save me. Wait, and you will behold and will believe!’

continues next page

And that day came. The nurses wanted to place a screen, as is their duty, but I protested against and stopped them. I told them ‘No, don’t do this, because I want to watch how this old man will die!!!’

So I watched him and he was glorifying God all the time. He also said a few ‘Hail, Unwedded Bride’ for the Theotokos, which as I later found out, they are called ‘Salutations’. He would also chant “Theotokos Virgin Mary ...”, “From my many sins ..” and “It is truly right to bless you, Theotokos ...”, and he would also make the sign of the Cross a number of times.

Then ... he raised both of his hands and said “Welcome, my Angel! Thank you for coming with such a bright synodeia to take my soul. Thank you! Thank you!” He raised his hands a little bit more, he made the sign of the Cross, he crossed his arms on his chest and fell asleep in the Lord. Suddenly, the ward was filled with Light, like ten

and more bright suns had risen all together, such was splendour of the light with which this ward was lit!” And not only was this ward lit, but a heavenly fragrance spread around, inside the ward, even outside the corridor, so powerful that those patients in the neighbouring wards who were not asleep and could get out of their beds, they came out and started walking up and down the corridor, trying to discern where this special fragrance was exuded from.

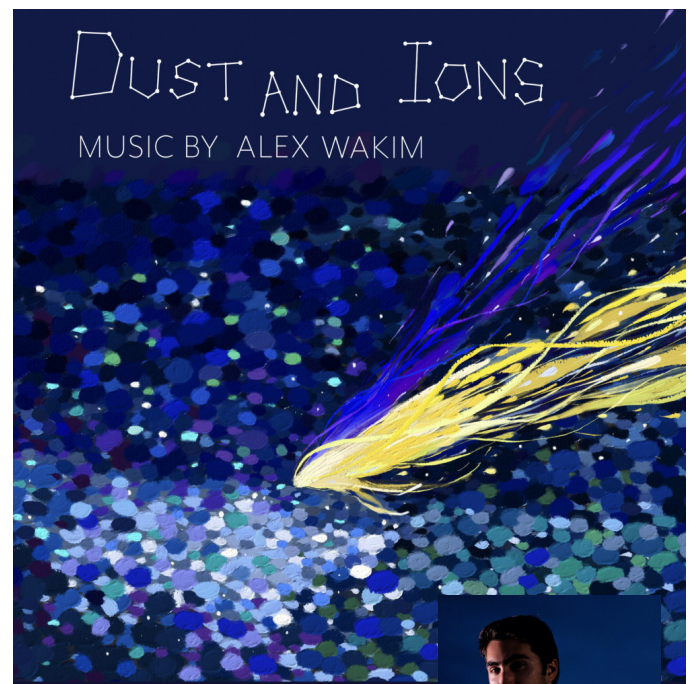
Thus, my Father, I, the hardened atheist did believe and called for you to hear my Confession.’

Xenophon was firm and merciless with his old self, but the Mercy of our Lord was great, really great! He offered a clear confession, received Holy Communion a couple of times, and departed in deep repentance, in peace, a holy death, himself glorifying God!”



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ACADEMY

Looking for a school that is smaller, safer and smarter? Christ the Savior Academy offers a strong classical, Christian curriculum, exceptional, dedicated teachers and a beautiful culture in which to learn. Our smaller class sizes and commitment to safety have enabled us to have an uninterrupted Fall semester of in-person learning. Enrollment is now open. Please contact (316) 201-4810 or refer to the CSA website for more information.



Dust and Ions

by Alex Wakim
now available

Find on [Spotify](https://open.spotify.com/album/1a2b3c4d5e6f7g8h9i0j), as well as on the web <https://alexwakim.com/>. It's available on all other platforms as well. Check it out!

Community Support

by Traci Spencer

we'd love to have you join us!

"for I was hungry and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me" — Matthew 25: 35-36

Completed Projects

Atischwin Institute

The Community Support team gave \$1,000 to Atischwin Institute to help people dealing with addictions experience sobriety, recovery, healing, and community.

ICT SOS

The Community Support team gave \$1,000 to ICT SOS to support their ministry to provide for the men and women who suffer from Human Trafficking and their efforts to find healing from trauma and community.

The Treehouse

The Community Support team gave \$500 to The Treehouse to help their wonderful ministry to women and children.

Wichita Indian Methodist Church

The Community Support team gave \$500 to help their ministry as they have many financial needs.

The Lord's Diner

The Community Support team gave \$500 to The Lord's Diner; in addition to serving monthly to this wonderful ministry to our homeless population in Wichita. Mikell Awwad continues to lead as team of faithful St. George volunteers that serve the 3rd Sunday of every month at The Lord's Diner. Glory to God!!

What's Coming Up?

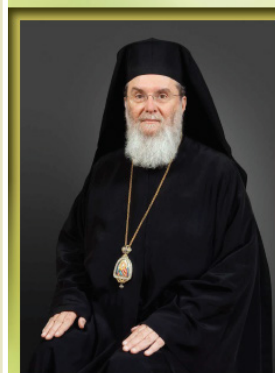
2021 Agencies

The Community Support team will vote on 2021 agencies that St. George will serve in January.

We will either meet via email or in person (depending on COVID situation) in January. We normally meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month!

January 1, 2021 Honor Bishop Basil Support Diocesan Missions

Honor Bishop BASIL on his name day, the Feast of St. Basil the Great, January 1, with a gift to the Endowment Fund that bears his name for establishing and maintaining missions within the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America. Make mail your check to St. George Cathedral - Wichita - payable to "St George Cathedral and earmark "Bishop Basil Endowment", and take this opportunity to honor Bishop BASIL.



Contribute by January 31, 2021

Time to Update

To: St. George Parish

In order to best keep in synch and in communication with **YOU** regarding notices, updates or anything relating to parish announcements, we ask that you please keep **US** up to date of any changes - as in a new home address, home/mobile phone numbers, or any email address edits.

Email: gina@stgeorgecathedral.net or call the Cathedral office - 636-4676.

Thank you.



May health and happiness follow you and yours during the year to come!

The Cathedral Messenger

St. George Orthodox Christian Cathedral

7515 East 13th Street North

Wichita, KS 67206-1223

www.stgeorgecathedral.net

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In the case of freezing rain, icing, or heavy snow, Daily Vespers, weekday Liturgies, meetings, and activities may be cancelled. If possible, an e-mail notification will be sent out by the Cathedral Office. In cases of uncertainty, please contact the Cathedral Office or Fr. Paul or Fr. Calinic's cell phone number.

