

the smallest gift, determines if we'll be entrusted with more talents and gifts. Entering into the joy of our master implies that our heart is already in a condition of joy, free from possessiveness and laziness. (v.21,23)

Eighth, our perception and attitude towards God affects how we live. Do we see God as someone harsh and ruthless or has generous and loving? Are you afraid of God so that you life is inhibited and stilted as opposed to courageously fulfilling your potential? (v.24-25)

Ninth, idleness and laziness (v.26) imply a self-centeredness that is wasteful of God's gifts (v.27). When Jesus says,

"Take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents." (v.28) and "For to everyone who has will more be given and He will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away." (v.29), He is saying that our wicked, slothful attitudes will cause us to want to consume and possess more, to be jealous and covet more. On the other hand, generosity and productiveness give us satisfaction and fulfillment, contentment and peace.

Tenth, in managing what God has given us, our productiveness (or lack thereof) will affect our salvation, our eternal standing with God. Outer darkness is in opposition to the "joy of your Master."

Conclusion- Think very carefully about what God has given you. He has given everything that you have. Now think about how you're managing it. Think of your baptismal

robe/garment/outfit that signified your new life in Christ. It's probably in a box, in a closet buried under many other boxes collecting dust. Is your faith in God, including the ethics, morals and values that He teaches through the Church, also buried somewhere collecting dust? Or are you putting on the robe of righteousness and faith and trust in God everyday, going out and sharing it and producing more faith, more trust and more righteousness making His Kingdom on earth ever present and more powerful?

<http://www.stgeorgegoc.org/pastors-corner/fr-ricks-sermons/top-ten-principles-about-talents>



# St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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**Fr Steven Hosking**

Rector

**Phone:** 860-866-5802

**Email:** [frsteve@stalexischurch.org](mailto:frsteve@stalexischurch.org)

## Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

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Bulletin for Sunday, January 27, 2019

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## Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, it is offered "*on behalf of all, and for all.*" As Orthodox Christians

we stand against racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God.

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatian 3:28)

## Weekly Services

Tuesdays at 8:30a - Daily Matins  
Wednesdays at 6:00p - Daily Vespers (The Church is open at 4:30p for "Open Doors" - confession, meditation and reflection).  
Thursday at 8:30a - Daily Matins  
Saturday at 5:30p - Great Vespers  
Sunday at 9:30a - Divine Liturgy

**Members of our Parish Council are:**

*Greg Jankura - Council President*

*Natalie Kucharski - Council Treasurer*

*Kyle Hollis - Member at Large*

*Glenn PenkoffLedbeck - Council Secretary*

*Michael Kuziak - Council Vice President*

*Roderick Seurattan - Member at Large*

**Pastoral Care - General Information**

- *Emergency Sick Calls* can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 866-5802, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.
- *Anointing in Sickness*: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.
- *Marriages and Baptisms* require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!
- *Funerals* are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

## Announcements

**Souper Bowl Sunday - Chili/Chowder Cookoff**

Next Sunday, Feb 3, is our annual Souper Bowl Sunday. This year, contributions will be made to OCMC and we will have

a presentation from Dori and Michael Kuziak on their recent mission trip to Albainia.

Bring your favorite receipe of chili or chowder. If you don't have one, then salads, desert or other food stuffs would be welcome. We will also be collecting canned foods and nonparishable foods for donation to Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Pantries.

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**Mortgage Update**

To the St Alexis parish

We are close to meeting our goal to pay off the church mortgage.

As of 12/31/18, \$42,300 has been donated in both contributions and matching gift. The remaining balance on the mortgage stands at \$7,000.

To date, half of the St Alexis family has contributed to this effort. We have also solicited and received donations from former members.

We are so close. Please contribute and help us to pay it off entirely by the start of Great Lent.

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**House Blessings**

Last call for scheduling house blessings!

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**Painting Party**

On Saturday, Feb 9th, we will come together to paint the sanctuary. The paint has been purchased, and volunteers have

this is somewhat rare because of the unique characteristics of the Orthodox Church lectionary. I'll spare you the details.

We can learn several *principles* from Jesus' teaching in the Parable of the Talents.

First, this Parable, and many before it in the Gospel of Matthew, make references to the Kingdom of Heaven is like, or will be, or shall be compared to (v.1). These stories are illustrating the qualities and characteristics of heaven. Yet, they are not just referring to a future kingdom but a potential kingdom that can exist here and now.

Second, what is a talent (to talanto, ta talanta)? A Greek coin with a value of 5,000 - 6,000 denarii (denari = Roman silver coin equivalent to a days wages of a common laborer). Thus one talent = 15 years wages of a laborer. It obviously represents property, money and material wealth.

However, Lev Gillet writes in the Year of the Grace of the Lord, "The goods which the master entrust to his servants signify all the natural gifts granted by God to his creatures: health, intelligence, riches, etc. All these exist through God and for God; we are no more than keepers charged with administering these divine assets. But the talents signify, above all, the supernatural gifts, the communication of divine life to men and the graces with which we are showered at every instant."

Third, everyone is given at least one talent (v.14-15) so we should never think or belief that God our Master has forgotten about us and didn't give us even one single gift for Christmas.

Fourth, God has given more gifts to some than others each according to his or her ability (v.15). We should not be looking at other people's talents and wishing we could have theirs, nor should we be judging others because we have more talents. God has given us exactly what we need and certainly no more than we can handle.

Fifth, we are expected to be productive and use our talents to multiply them (v.16-17). If we want to have more gifts and talents, we must use the one(s) God has entrusted to us. Trading and investing money to build assets involves risk. Employing and sharing our gifts and talents also implies risk that we may suffer loss or rejection or persecution in doing God's work. If we want to really play it safe, we'll go and bury our talent, taking no risk at all.

Sixth, at some point in the future we must give an account for what's been placed in our care. What did we do with our gift and talent and what did we do with the fruits or proceeds that it brought forth? I think this describes our death, our departure from this life. We will not take any of the possessions with us. At that point they will be returned to the master. However, this accounting happens whenever we are asked to give to someone in need or some organization or cause, the Church included, that helps other people. Will we be like the persons with ten talents and the two talents and willingly give everything to its rightful owner-the one who needs it most (v.20,22)?

Seventh, joy in this life comes from good management and good stewardship. If know how to discipline yourself to be productive and to share, even and especially with

with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' As he said these things he cried out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

Laziness often attacks those who labor in piety, and frequently it overcomes a person who is negligent. To drive away this passion, the holy Fathers advise us to hold on to the memory of death, eternal torments, and the blessedness of the righteous—being guided in this with humility, which—by drawing down the mercy of God—will completely free us from the captivity of laziness.

### St. Macarius of Optina

Mitrakos, Thomas. *Wisdom of the Divine Philosophers*. Orthodox Calendar Company.

## Reflection



talent."

As we'll learn today, there is very little that should be buried in our life except sin.

Today we read the well known Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), however

Introduction-

"A hot headed woman told the famous Protestant Reformer, John Wesley, 'My talent is to speak my mind.' Mr. Wesley replied, 'Woman, God wouldn't care a bit if you would bury that

stepped forward. We will begin at 8:30a and work through the day to complete the job.

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### Book/Bible Study

We will begin our new bible study on February 5th (9am) and again on February 7th (7pm). We will study the Apocalypse of St. John, also known as the Book of Revelation. Because of the complexity of this *prophecy*, we will take a rather unique approach to studying this book of the Bible, in that we will look into the liturgical implications and impact rather merely taking a textual review. All you will need for the bible study is a copy of the Orthodox Study Bible; at this point I do not recommend reading any particular commentary as a preparation.

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### 25th Anniversary Events and Dates

- *25th Anniversary Dinner (May 18th)* - More specific details for this will be forth coming soon.
- *Guest Speaker, Nicole Roccas, author of "Time and Despondency" (Jun 1st)* - Dr Roccas has agreed to visit and talk with us about her book and other related events. This event will be open to the public. I would like to have a few volunteers to help with the coordinating this event.
- *Wedding of Anastasia Elliott and Malcolm Littlefield (Jun 30th)*
- *Rummage Sale (Sept 21st)* - We will need a whole parcel of volunteers for this. More details will be forth

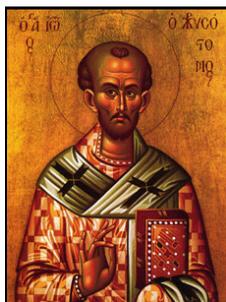
- coming.
- *Lyra Concert (Oct 19th TENTATIVE)* - We have reserved the Clinton Town Auditorium for this event, which will be open to the public. We will need a few volunteers to help coordinate with this event.
- *Diocesan Assembly (Oct 25-26)* - Planning for this event is well underway. We will still need a few volunteers for this very important event.

I am in the process of filing for a Diocesan Grant to help fund the activities.

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**LOOKING (WAY!) AHEAD: Youth Rally, August 12-17, 2019:** The Year 2019 Annual Diocesan Youth Rally will take place August 12-17, 2019. Youth Rally is open to all Diocesan Youth who have finished 5th grade and who have not yet celebrated their 18th birthday. Volunteer Adult Staff Members are required to make this event possible. Staff Members will arrive a day early, on Sunday evening, August 11, and stay the entire week. For further information, please contact Fr. John Hopko, who will once again this summer serve as Youth Rally Director and Rector. Fr. John can be reached by email at [terryvilleorthodoxchurch@gmail.com](mailto:terryvilleorthodoxchurch@gmail.com) and by telephone at 860-582-3631.

## Saints and Feasts



**January 27**

## Removal of the Relics of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

This event took place on this day in the year 438, when Saint Theodosius the Younger had been Emperor for thirty years; he was the son of Arcadius, and Eudoxia, who had exiled Saint John. The Archbishop of Constantinople at that time was Proclus, who had been the Saint's disciple (see Nov. 13 and Nov. 20).



**January 28**

## Ephraim the Syrian

Saint Ephraim was born in Nisibis of Mesopotamia some time about the year 306, and in his youth was the disciple of Saint James, Bishop of Nisibis, one of the 318 Fathers at the First Ecumenical Council. Ephraim lived in Nisibis, practicing a severe ascetical life and increasing in holiness, until 363, the year in which Julian the Apostate was slain in his war against the Persians, and his successor Jovian surrendered Nisibis to them. Ephraim then made his dwelling in Edessa, where he found many heresies

to do battle with. He waged an especial war against Bardaisan; this gnostic had written many hymns propagating his errors, which by their sweet melodies became popular and enticed souls away from the truth. Saint Ephraim, having received from God a singular gift of eloquence, turned Bardaisan's own weapon against him, and wrote a multitude of hymns to be chanted by choirs of women, which set forth the true doctrines, refuted heretical error, and praised the contests of the Martyrs.

Of the multitude of sermons, commentaries, and hymns that Saint Ephraim wrote, many were translated into Greek in his own lifetime. Sozomen says that Ephraim "Surpassed the most approved writers of Greece," observing that the Greek writings, when translated into other tongues, lose most of their original beauty, but Ephraim's works "are no less admired when read in Greek than when read in Syriac" (Eccl. Hist., Book 111, 16). Saint Ephraim was ordained deacon, some say by Saint Basil the Great, whom Sozomen said "was a great admirer of Ephraim, and was astonished at his erudition." Saint Ephraim was the first to make the poetic expression of hymnody and song a vehicle of Orthodox theological teachings, constituting it an integral part of the Church's worship; he may rightly be called the first and greatest hymnographer of the Church, who set the pattern for these who followed him, especially Saint Romanos the Melodist. Because of this he is called the "Harp of the Holy Spirit." Jerome says that his writings were read in some churches after the reading of the Scriptures, and adds that once he read a Greek translation of one of Ephraim's

It has shown to the world the riches of poverty; it has revealed to us the heights of humility. Teaching us by your words, O Father John Chrysostom, // Intercede before the Word, Christ our God, to save our souls!

### Tone 2 Kontakion (Resurrection)

Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with You, // and the world, my Savior, praises You forever.

### Tone 1 Kontakion (St John Chrysostom)

Most glorious John Chrysostom, the Church of Constantinople greatly rejoiced, receiving the gift of your holy ^relics; keeping them as a treasure of great price. Through your intercession, // they bring the grace of healing to those who praise you in hymns. "Rejoice, splendid adornment of the Prophets!"

## Gospel and Epistle Readings

## Epistle Reading

### The Reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:12-16

Brethren, put on as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

## Gospel Reading

### The Reading is from Matthew 25:14-30

The Lord said this parable: "A man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts

## and Commemorations



William, Sophia, Robert, Ann, Evelyn, Nina, John, Alex, Luke, Kathryn, Anastasia, Malcolm, Veronica, Darlyne, Irene, Nancy, Elena, Jevon, the new born Stella Anna, Ivan and Joscean.

And for... Sofie, Katrina, Olena, Valeriy, Olga, Tatiana, Dimitri, Alexander and Maxim.

All of our College Students: Alex, Kaitlyn, Jack, Sam, Connor, Nadia, Isaac and Matthew.

*Many Years! to:* Mary Ella Luft on the occasion of her birthday.

*Memory Eternal:* Mother Alexandra, the former Princess Ileana of Romania, Abbess of [Monastery of the Transfiguration](#)

Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;

All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalize,

those who have no one to pray for them;

All Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.

All those who have perished due to hatred and intolerance and all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

*Today we commemorate:*

Translation of the Relics of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (438). New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.

## Hymns of the Day

### **Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)**

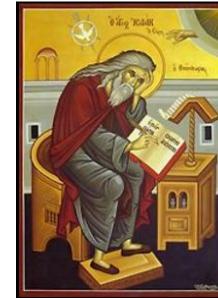
When You descended to death, O Life Immortal,  
You destroyed hell with the splendor of Your Godhead.  
And when from the depths You raised the dead,  
all the powers of heaven cried out://  
"O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!"

### **Tone 8 Troparion (St John Chrysostom)**

Grace shining forth from your lips like a beacon has enlightened the universe.

works, "and recognized, even in translation, the incisive power of his lofty genius" (De vir. ill., ch. CXV).

Shortly before the end of his life, a famine broke out in Edessa, and Saint Ephraim left his cell to rebuke the rich for not sharing their goods with the poor. The rich answered that they knew no one to whom they could entrust their goods. Ephraim asked them, "What do you think of me?" When they confessed their reverence for him, he offered to distribute their alms, to which they agreed. He himself cared with his own hands for many of the sick from the famine, and so crowned his life with mercy and love for neighbor. Saint Ephraim reposed in peace, according to some in the year 373, according to others, 379.

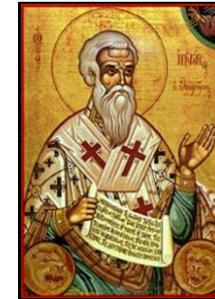


### **January 28**

#### **Isaac the Syrian, Bishop of Ninevah**

The great luminary of the life of stillness, Saint Isaac, was born in the early seventh century in Eastern Arabia, the present-day Qatar on the Persian Gulf. He became a monk at a young age, and at some time left Arabia to dwell with monks in Persia. He was consecrated Bishop of Nineveh (and is therefore sometimes called "Saint Isaac of Nineveh"), but after five months received permission to return to solitude; he spent many years far south of Nineveh in the mountainous regions of Beit

Huzaye, and lastly at the Monastery of Rabban Shabur. He wrote his renowned and God-inspired Ascetical Homilies toward the end of his long life of monastic struggle, about the end of the seventh century. The fame of his Homilies grew quickly, and about one hundred years after their composition they were translated from Syriac into Greek by two monks of the Monastery of Mar Sabbas in Palestine, from which they spread throughout the monasteries of the Roman Empire and became a guide to the hesychasts of all generations thereafter.



### **January 29**

#### **Removal of the Relics of Ignatius the God-bearer**

Saint Ignatius was a disciple of Saint John the Theologian, and a successor of the Apostles, and he became the second Bishop of Antioch, after Evodus. He wrote many epistles to the faithful, strengthening them in their confession, and preserving for us the teachings of the holy Apostles. Brought to Rome under Trajan, he was surrendered to lions to be eaten, and so finished the course of martyrdom about the year 107. The remnants of his bones were carefully gathered by the faithful and brought to Antioch. He is called God-bearer, as one who bare God within himself and was aflame in heart with love for Him.

Therefore, in his Epistle to the Romans (ch. 4), imploring their love not to attempt to deliver him from his longed-for martyrdom, he said, "I am the wheat of God, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found to be the pure bread of God."

Saint John Chrysostom has a homily in honour of the translation of the Saint's relics (PG 50:587).



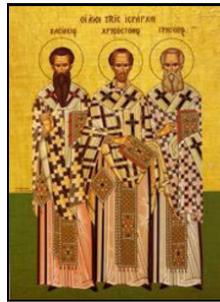
## January 31

### Cyrus & John the Unmercenarys

These Saints lived during the years of Diocletian. Saint Cyrus was from Alexandria, and Saint John was from Edessa of Mesopotamia. Because of

the persecution of that time, Cyrus fled to the Gulf of Arabia, where there was a small community of monks. John, who was a soldier, heard of Cyrus' fame and came to join him. Henceforth, they passed their life working every virtue, and healing every illness and disease freely by the grace of Christ; hence their title of "Unmercenarys." They heard that a certain woman, named Athanasia, had been apprehended together with her three daughters, Theodora, Theoctiste, and Eudoxia, and taken to the tribunal for their confession of the Faith. Fearing lest the tender young maidens be terrified by the torments and renounce Christ, they went to strengthen them in their contest in martyrdom; therefore they too were seized.

After Cyrus and John and those sacred women had been greatly tormented, all were beheaded in the year 292. Their tomb became a renowned shrine in Egypt, and a place of universal pilgrimage. It was found in the area of the modern day resort near Alexandria named Abu Kyr.

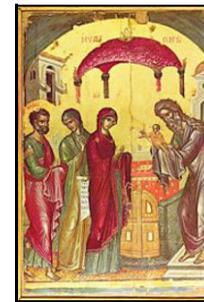


## January 30

### Synaxis of The Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, & John Chrysostom

This common feast of these three teachers was instituted a little before the year 1100, during the reign of the Emperor Alexis I Comnenus, because of a dispute and strife that arose among the notable and virtuous men of that time. Some of them preferred Basil, while others preferred Gregory, and yet others preferred John Chrysostom, quarreling among themselves over which of the three was the greatest. Furthermore, each party, in order to distinguish itself from the others, assumed the name of its preferred Saint; hence, they called themselves Basilians, Gregorians, or Johannites. Desiring to bring an end to the contention, the three Saints appeared together to the saintly John Mavropous, a monk who had been ordained Bishop of Euchaita, a city of Asia Minor, they revealed to him that the glory they have at the throne of God is equal, and told him to compose a common service for the

three of them, which he did with great skill and beauty. Saint John of Euchaita (celebrated Oct. 5) is also the composer of the Canon to the Guardian Angel, the Protector of a Man's Life. In his old age, he retired from his episcopal see and again took up the monastic life in a monastery in Constantinople. He reposed during the reign of the aforementioned Emperor Alexis Comnenus (1081-1118).



## February 01

### Forefeast of the Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple

## Parish Calendar

### Service and Events

January 10 to February 4, 2019

#### Thursday, January 10

House Blessings

#### Sunday, January 27

15th Sunday of Luke  
Buildings and Grounds Ministry Meeting  
Akathist to St John Chrysostom  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, January 28

Ephraim the Syrian

6:00PM Finance Committee

#### Tuesday, January 29

Akathist to St Ignatius  
Mary Ella Luft - B  
Removal of the Relics of Ignatius the God-bearer  
8:30AM Daily Matins

#### Wednesday, January 30

Synaxis of The Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, & John Chrysostom  
Akathist to Three Holy Hierarchs  
6:00PM Evening Vespers

#### Thursday, January 31

Cyrus & John the Unmercenarys  
8:30AM Daily Matins

#### Friday, February 1

Alexis Boyd  
Trypho the Martyr  
Blessing of Candles  
6:00PM Great Vespers

#### Saturday, February 2

The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple  
Meeting of Our Lord  
5:30PM Great Vespers

#### Sunday, February 3

Souper Bowl Sunday  
16th Sunday of Matthew  
Liturgical and Education Ministry meeting  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, February 4

Isidore of Pelusium

## Prayers, Intercessions