

**Week of
January 1st
2017**

You can reach Fr. Luke at
frlukacs@gmail.com or at
(613) 925-3004

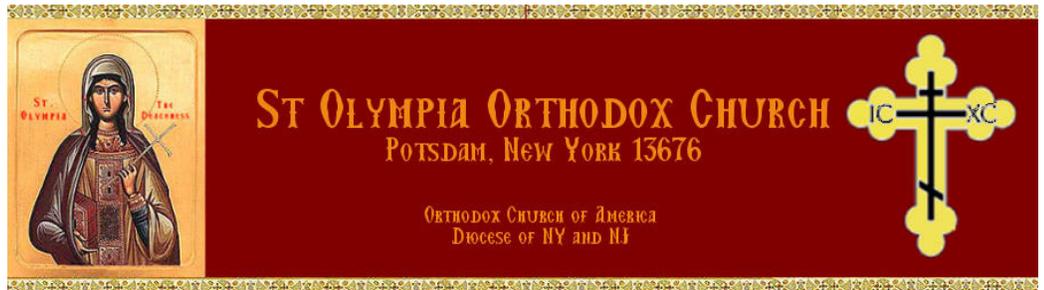
Leave a clear message
with your phone number.

Holiday Service Schedule

**Friday, January 6th
10:00 am
Liturgy for Epiphany and
Blessing of the Waters**

**Saturday, January 7th
4:00 pm
Great Vespers**

**Sunday, January 8th
10 am
Divine Liturgy**



Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church, a young and, God willing, growing community of worshippers.

Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday at 10 am at 123 Main Street in Potsdam and are primarily in English.

You can learn more about us on Facebook and at www.saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org

House Blessings

Fr. Luke will be blessing homes on Friday, January 6th (after Liturgy) and Saturday, January 7th. Phone Peggy Wheeler at 315-322-8425 to arrange for this.

God is Wonderful in His Saints: Basil the Great and Seraphim of Sarov

This week we celebrate, on Sunday, the repose of St. Basil of Cappadocia, on January 1st, 379 A.D. He was an erudite scholar, teacher and writer as well as a defender of the Orthodox faith, which earned him the title “the Great.”

St. Gregory delivered a series of Lenten homilies, which has come down to us as “The Hexaemeron” concerning the six days of creation described in the book of Genesis. In the first homily, he laments the stubborn refusal of many scholars of his day to recognize that the Universe is finite and that it had a beginning, and that God was the source of that beginning. This dilemma has continued over the centuries into our times and the question “Does the Universe have a beginning?” was being asked by theoretical and experimental physicists leading to “The Big Bang” Theory and recent discovery of the Higgs boson. But though now most of us accept that there is solid evidence of the Universe having a beginning in time, many continue experiencing difficulty in attributing this moment of creation to God.

In 357 St. Basil went to Egypt and spent time studying the ascetic and monastic life being practiced there. Upon his return home he outlined a monastic rule and he along with his brother Peter, his mother Emilia and sister Macrina began living together as monastics on the family estate. They were joined by others, who with them, followed this cenobitic rule of Christian ascetic life.





On this feast day many Greek Orthodox celebrate with a special cake/bread called a Vasilopita. It is a sweet bread or cake containing a coin, which will show up in one of the slices.

The origin of this custom is the following miracle associated with the saint:

The government had imposed an extremely harsh tax on the citizens of the empire and people were being threatened with debtors prison if they withheld anything for themselves. Seeing the misery of his flock, Basil appealed to the emperor to repeal the tax and return assets to people so that they could buy necessities of life. Finally persuading the emperor, all of the gold coins and valuable objects were returned but the saint needed a way to distribute these so that they came back to their rightful owners. So a large cake was prepared and all of the stuff was baked into it. Then each person was given a slice of it. Miraculously, each piece contained the returned gold of the one who received it.

On Monday, January 2nd, we celebrated the repose of St. Seraphim of Sarov, kneeling in prayer before his simple icon of the Holy Theotokos. Though he desired nothing more than to live as a simple monk, following the rule of St. Pachomius the desert Father for hermits, he obediently served as a spiritual guide to many people, both monastics and lay persons. St. Seraphim taught that the aim of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. "Acquire the Holy Spirit," says the saint, and thousands around you will be saved."

Stewardship

What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord... I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.

2017 is now here. If you have not yet done so, please fill out a stewardship form return it by mail or give it to a parish council member. This will help us plan for parish growth for this coming year. In addition to whatever financial support is appropriate for you, the form asks what time and talent you will share with the parish. All donations to St. Olympia Orthodox Church are now tax exempt. As 2016 draws to a close, please also consider giving a tax-exempt donation for the growth of our parish. Greg Kalicin, Parish Council Treasurer, will issue receipts upon request.

Save the Dates

Archbishop Michael's next visits to Potsdam will be:

- Wednesday, March 22, 2017, for Presanctified Liturgy
- Saturday-Sunday, September 9-10

