



St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church

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Very Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis, Pastor
Stephen Sarantis, President, Parish Council
Jackie Sarantis, Office Administrator

Pastoral Message from Fr. George, January 2, 2026



Καλή Χρονιά! Blessed New Year!

On behalf of St. Christopher Church,
I wish you a Happy & Blessed New Year 2026

Fr. George's Homily for January 1st

The Circumcision of Christ and St. Basil the Great

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, as we stand at the threshold of a new year, the Church gives us a profound gift: a dual feast that speaks to the heart of our faith and the direction of our lives—the Circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ and the memory of our Father among the Saints, Basil the Great.

1. The Circumcision of Christ: Humility and Fulfillment

Eight days after His birth, the Lord of Glory submitted to circumcision according to the Law given to Abraham. Why would the Creator of the Law place Himself under the Law? The Fathers



teach us that Christ did this for two reasons:

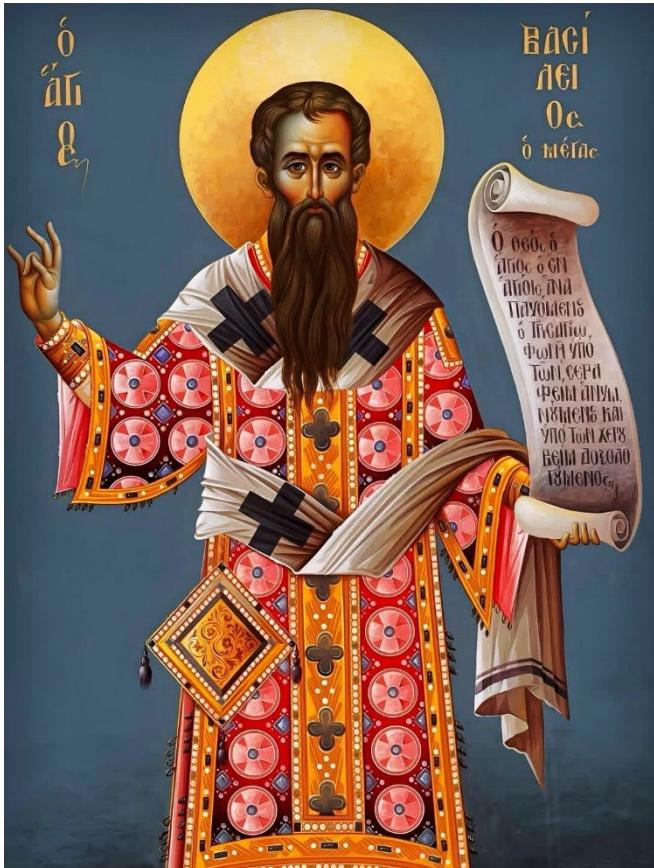
- **To affirm His true humanity.** He was not an illusion, as some heretics claimed, but truly took on flesh for our salvation. His blood was shed even as an infant, foreshadowing the Cross.
- **To fulfill and transform the Law.** Circumcision of the flesh gives way to circumcision of the heart, which is Baptism. St. Paul writes: *"You were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands... by the circumcision of Christ"* (Col. 2:11). Through Baptism, we enter the New Covenant, cutting away sinful passions and living in purity.

This act of humility by Christ is a lesson for us: if the Lord Himself embraced obedience, how much more should we submit our lives to God's will?

2. The Naming of Jesus: Our Salvation

On this same day, the Divine Infant received the name Jesus—"Savior." His name reveals His mission: to save us from sin and death. Every time we invoke His name in prayer, we proclaim this truth and draw near to His

grace. Let us never take this name lightly. It is our refuge, our strength, and our hope.



3. St. Basil the Great: A Model for the New Year

It is no coincidence that St. Basil reposed on this day. He embodied the spiritual circumcision that Christ inaugurated. Basil cut away pride and worldly ambition, choosing humility and asceticism. He gave his wealth to the poor,

organized hospitals and homes for the destitute, and defended the Orthodox faith against heresy with courage and wisdom.

When threatened by imperial power, Basil stood firm: *"Exile means nothing to me... Death would be a kindness, for it brings me sooner to God."* His life teaches us that true greatness comes through humility and sacrificial love.

St. Basil reminds us that theology is not abstract—it is lived in love. He wrote:

“The bread which you keep belongs to the hungry; the coat which you preserve in your wardrobe belongs to the naked; the shoes that are rotting in your possession belong to the barefoot; the money which you keep hidden belongs to the needy.”

(Homily on Luke 12:18)

And again:

“When you receive from God the ability to help others, do not think only of yourself. Let your hand be open to those who suffer.” *(On Social Justice)*

4. Practical Applications for Our Parish Life

As we begin a new year, these feasts invite us to reflect and act:

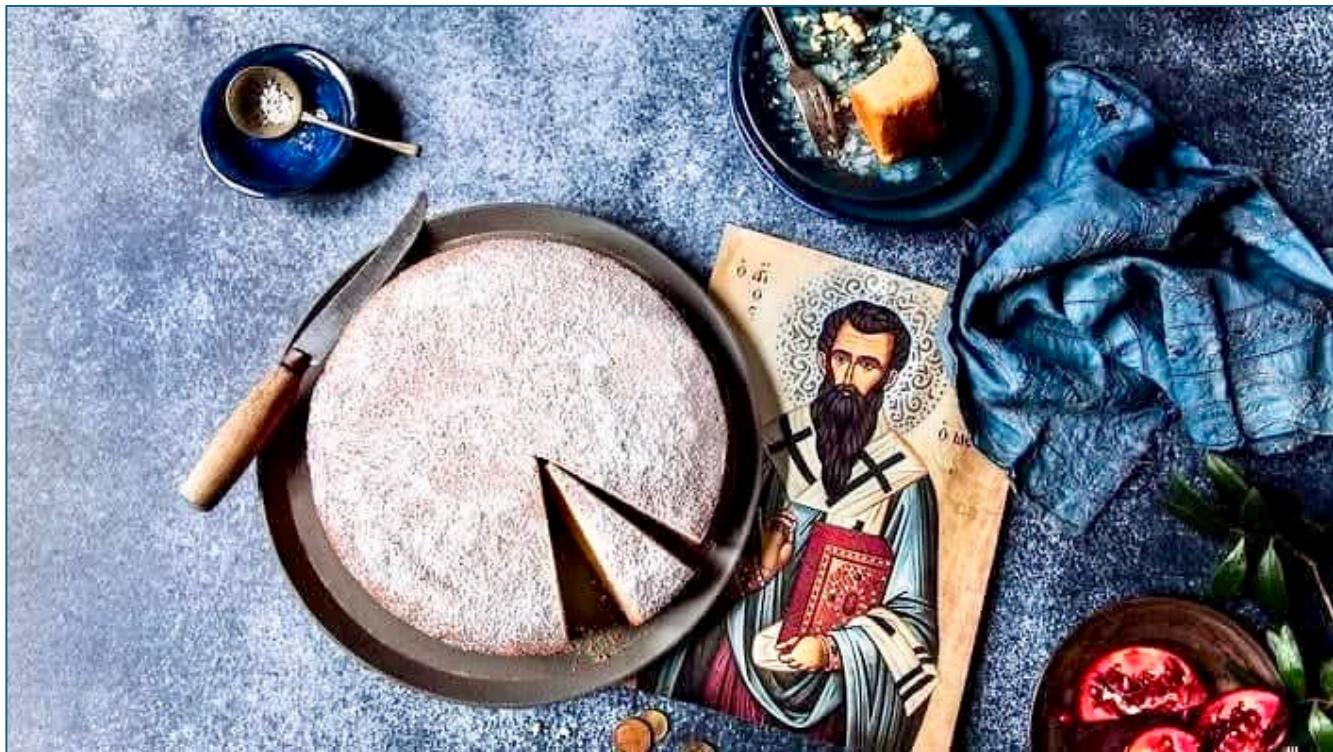
A. Renew Your Spiritual Life

- Make a commitment to daily prayer. Begin and end each day invoking the name of Jesus.

- If you are not confessing your sins and asking forgiveness for your shortcomings, let Christ “circumcise” your heart by removing sin.
- Parents: teach your children the meaning of their baptism and the power of Christ’s name.

B. Live the Vasilopita Tradition with Purpose

- When you cut the Vasilopita today, remember St. Basil’s generosity. The coin is not just for luck—it symbolizes blessing and responsibility. Whoever finds it should offer a small act of charity this week.



C. Practice Charity and Stewardship

- St. Basil built homes for the poor and hospitals for the sick. How can we imitate him?
 - Support our parish ministries for those in need.
 - Volunteer at a local shelter or food pantry.
 - Make stewardship a priority—not just financial, but offering your time and talents.



D. Strengthen Family and Community

- Share a family meal today and pray together before eating.
- Visit someone who is alone or sick. Bring the joy of Christ's name into their home.

E. Grow in Knowledge of the Faith

- St. Basil was a scholar and teacher. Join a Bible study or adult education class this year.
- Read the lives of the saints with your children. Let their examples inspire your home.

Prayer for the New Year

O Lord Jesus Christ, You who were circumcised on the eighth day and received the name above all names, bless this new year with Your grace and mercy. Grant us health of body and soul, peace in our homes, and love in our hearts. Through the prayers of St. Basil the Great, make us generous in charity, steadfast in faith, and joyful in hope. Keep us from sin and guide us in every good work, so that at the end of this year we may glorify Your holy name. For You are our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Fr. George's Spiritual Vitamin B12s for 2026: *Monthly Orthodox Sayings from the Saints*

January — St. Basil the Great (Jan 1)

"The bread you keep belongs to the hungry... the money you hide belongs to the needy."

St. Basil (c. 330–379), Bishop of Caesarea, defended the Nicene faith, organized monastic life, and poured his wealth into hospitals and homes for the poor.

February — St. Polycarp of Smyrna (Feb 23)

"Eighty-six years I have served Him... how then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"

St. Polycarp (c. 69–155), Bishop of Smyrna and Apostolic Father, authored the Letter to the Philippians and was martyred for Christ.

March — St. John Climacus (Mar 30)

"Humility is the only thing that no devil can imitate."

St. John (c. 579–649), abbot of Sinai, wrote The Ladder of Divine Ascent, a classic guide to spiritual growth.

April — St. Gregory the Theologian (Jan 25)

"Yesterday I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him."

St. Gregory (c. 329–390), Archbishop of Constantinople, defended the Trinity and shaped Orthodox theology with his orations.

May — St. Athanasius the Great (May 2)

"He became man that we might become god."

St. Athanasius (c. 296–373), Patriarch of Alexandria, championed the Nicene Creed and wrote On the Incarnation.

June — St. John Chrysostom (Nov 13)

"Nothing is colder than a Christian who does not seek to save others."

St. John (c. 347–407), Archbishop of Constantinople, famed preacher, composed the Divine Liturgy and died in exile.

July — St. Paisios the Athonite (Jul 12)

"If you want to help the Church, first correct yourself."

St. Paisios (1924–1994), modern Athonite elder, known for ascetic life, wise counsel, and love for pilgrims.

August — St. John of Damascus (Dec 4)

"The whole earth is a living icon of the face of God."

St. John (c. 675–749), monk of Mar Saba, authored The Fountain of Knowledge and defended icons during Iconoclasm.

September — St. Silouan the Athonite (Sep 24)

"Keep your mind in hell and despair not."

St. Silouan (1866–1938), Russian monk of Mount Athos, taught humility and love for enemies; glorified in 1987.

October — St. Maximus the Confessor (Jan 21)

"He who loves God cannot help but love every man as himself."

St. Maximus (c. 580–662), monk and theologian, defended Christ's two wills; suffered exile and mutilation for the faith.

November — St. Nektarios of Aegina (Nov 9)

"Seek God every day, but seek Him in your heart."

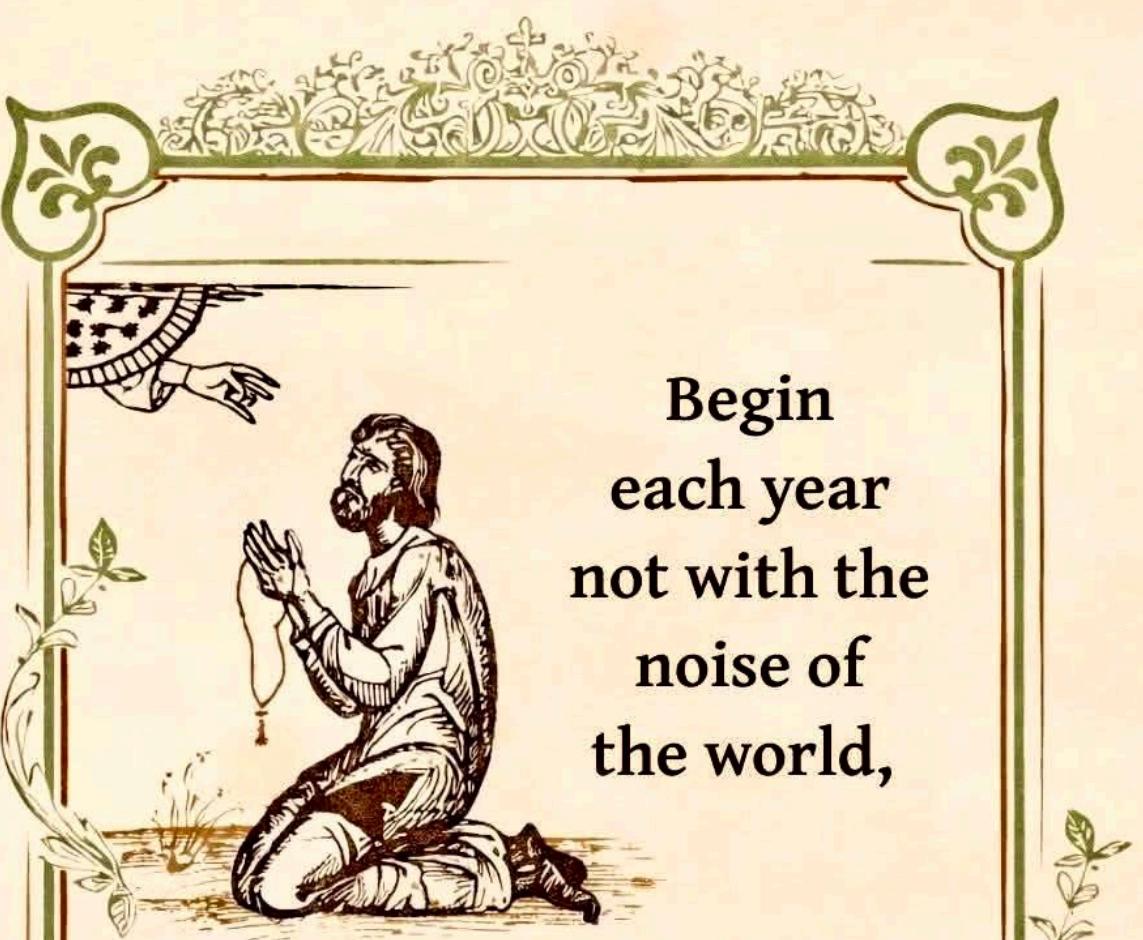
St. Nektarios (1846–1920), Metropolitan of Pentapolis, Wonderworker of Aegina, founded Holy Trinity Monastery and is renowned for miracles.

December — St. Seraphim of Sarov (Jan 2)

"Acquire the Spirit of peace, and thousands around you will be saved."

St. Seraphim (1754–1833), Russian starets and hermit, extended monastic teaching to laypeople; canonized in 1903.

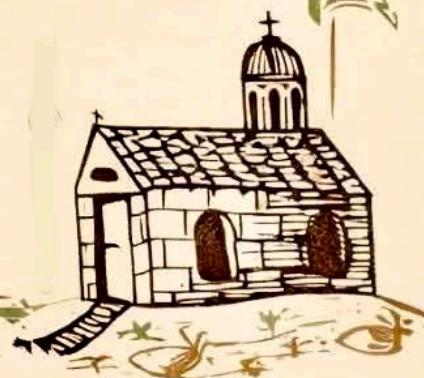
+Fr. George Tsahakis, January 1, 2026



Begin
each year
not with the
noise of
the world,

but with the silence
of the soul - seeking
Christ, and all
will be well.

St Ephraim the Syrian





HELP ME, MY
GOD, TO
CONQUER THE
WORLD WITHIN
MYSELF; AND
I shall easily
CONQUER THE
WORLD OUTSIDE
ME.

**SAINT NIKOLAJ
VELIMIROVIĆ**

ST. CHRISTOPHER CHURCH VASILOPITA DINNER & AUCTION

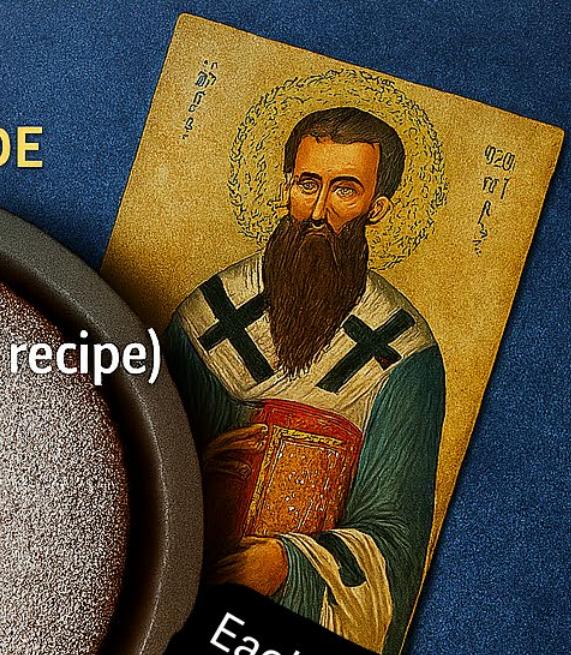
Saturday, January 10th | 5-8 PM
All Saints Church

**PLEASE BRING YOUR
FAVORITE HOMEMADE
BAKED GOODS:**

- Vasilopita
(Make your favorite recipe)
- Seasonal
Cakes & Breads,
- Cookies, Cupcakes,
Pies, and More!

PROCEEDS BENEFIT:
St. Basil's Academy
Bloom Our Youth
Paradise4Kids

Contact Marinda Tsahakis at
678-938-7753 to share what baked
item(s) you are bringing for auction.



Each family is asked
to bring a dinner side
dish that feeds 8.
Meats, desserts, &
beverages are
provided so don't
bring those items.

Join Us Often with Your Family

Saturday, January 3rd

11:30 Sacrament of Holy Baptism

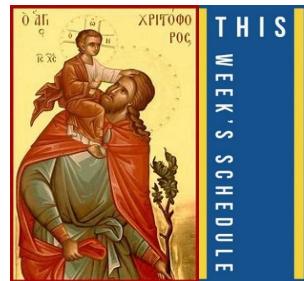
Sunday, January 4th – Sunday Before Holy Theophany

8:00 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy, Memorial for Nick Christodoulopoulos

10:30 Blessing of Five Loaves & January Commemorations

(We thank Presbytera Marinda and Fr. George for offering the five loaves)



Monday, January 5, Vigil on the Forefeast of Holy Theophany (Strict Fast)

8:00 Great Hours, followed by Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great & the Great Blessing of the Waters

Tuesday, January 6, The Theophany of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ

9:00 Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, followed by Great Blessing of the Waters

Wednesday, January 7, Synaxis of John the Holy Glorious Prophet, Baptist, & Forerunner

9:00 Divine Liturgy

Saturday, January 10 (at All Saints Anglican Church)

5:00 Philoptochos Vasilopita & Auction *(Bring your homemade baked goods for auction. Each family is asked to bring a dinner side dish; NO meats, desserts, and beverages please... they are being provided.)*

Sunday, January 11, Sunday After Holy Theophany

8:00 Orthros; 9:00 Divine Liturgy, followed by Parish Council Oath of Office

10:45 Religious Education Classes

12:00 Parish Council Meeting