

The Theophany of Our Lord

January 6

Services:

At St Philip Church

Saturday, January 5 - Strict Fast

Royal Hours, 8:45 am

Divine Liturgy, 10 am

Great Blessing of Water, 11:15 am

Great Vespers & Artoklasia, 6 pm

Sunday, January 6

Orthros 8:45 am, Liturgy 10 am

Great Blessing of Water, 11:30 am

Outdoor Blessing of Water @ Lenape Park, 1 pm



Scripture readings:

St. Mark 1:9-11; Titus 2:11-15,
3:4-7; St. Matthew 3:13-17

The Synaxarion:

On January 6 in the Holy Orthodox Church we celebrate the Holy Theophany, or Epiphany, of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Verses:

Christ's Baptism, having rent open the Heavens,
leadeth therein all such as do not defile it.
On the sixth the Forerunner baptized Christ in the river.

When our Lord reached thirty years from His physical birth, He began His teaching and saving work. He Himself signified this "beginning of the beginning" by His baptism in the River Jordan. St. Cyril of Jerusalem says, "The beginning of the world: water; the beginning of the Good News: Jordan." At the time of the baptism of the Lord in water, the Father was revealed to the sense of hearing; the Spirit was revealed to the sense of sight, and in addition to these, the Son was revealed to the sense of touch. The Father uttered His witness about the Son, the Son was baptized in the water, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove hovered above the water. John the Baptist witnessed and said about Christ, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world." When John immersed and baptized the Lord in the Jordan, the mission of Christ in the world and the path of our salvation were shown. That is to say: The Lord took upon Himself the sins of mankind and died under them (immersion) and became alive again (the coming out of the water); and we must die as the old sinful man and become alive again as cleansed, renewed and regenerated. This is the Savior and this is the path of salvation. The Feast of the Epiphany (Theophany in Greek) is also called the Feast of Illumination. For us, the event in the River Jordan illuminates, by manifesting to us God as Trinity, consubstantial and undivided. Also, every one of us through baptism in water is illumined by this, that we become adopted by the Father of Lights through the merits of the

Son and the power of the Holy Spirit. Unto Christ be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

Apolytikion (Tone One)

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity wast made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ our God, Who hath appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

Kontakion (Tone Four)

Thou hast appeared today to the world, and Thy light, O Lord, has been signed upon us who with full knowledge sing to Thee. Thou hast come, Thou hast appeared, O Unapproachable Light.

More Resources:

<http://ww1.antiochian.org/theophany>

<https://www.goarch.org/epiphany>

How to Celebrate the Feast:

Observe a Strict Fast on the eve of Theophany.

Make it a priority to attend Festal services. Invite a friend to church.

Bring a fitting container to the Water-Blessing service to take home Holy Water.

Sign up for a **Home Blessing** in the Narthex.

Pray, read about, & discuss the Gospel narratives of Christ's baptism in the Jordan.

Make sure you wear, prayerfully and purposefully, your baptismal cross.

Look at photo-albums of your family members' baptisms.

Give Alms. Help someone. Be bold in generosity!

Visit relatives, friends and neighbors (especially those in assisted living, who are homebound, or in the hospital).

Listen to an AncientFaith.com podcast on the Theophany of Our Lord.

Questions for reflection: How is Christ's Baptism an appearance of God? How is our baptism a participation in Christ's Baptism?