

**The Weekly Messenger – January 4, 2026**  
**St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church**  
**237 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103**

**Father Kakhaber Kurtanidze (Father Kai) 484-843-4209 [fr.kai@stjcaoc.org](mailto:fr.kai@stjcaoc.org)**

Website: <https://stjcaoc.org/> Email address: [info@stjcaoc.org](mailto:info@stjcaoc.org)

**This Week Epistle: Sunday before Theophany II Timothy 4:5-8 Gospel: Mark 1:1-8**

**Next Sunday-Epistle: Sunday after Theophany Ephesians 4:7-13 Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17**

**Home Blessings:** Father Kai wants to visit and bless your home in 2026. Call Father Kai 484-843-4209 or, email [fr.kai@stjcaoc.org](mailto:fr.kai@stjcaoc.org) If Father Kai does not answer your call leave a message with your name, address and phone number. He will contact you to arrange a date and time for his visit. What to have ready for your home blessing: *An Icon, candle, small bowl for Holy Water, List of family names to be prayed for one column living, one column departed.*

**Upcoming Events:**

**Saturday Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026 Vespers 5:00 pm**

**Jan 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026** Blessing of the water and Part 1 of the Icon Auction during coffee hour

**Monday, Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 2026** Vespers Liturgy 6 pm Theophany/Epiphany

**Jan 11<sup>th</sup>** Part 2 of the Icon Auction during coffee hour

**Monday Jan 12<sup>th</sup>** Parish Council meeting via ZOOM 7:30 pm

**Jan 25<sup>th</sup>** Memorial Jim Bendo 2 years

**Feb 8<sup>th</sup>** Soup-er Bowl Sunday

**Week of Feb 19<sup>th</sup>** Fr. Kai visits Albania with Bishop Nikodhim

**Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>** Annual Women's Day Dance - Save the date and plan to attend!

**Commemorations for the Departed:** Archbishop Nikon, Protopresbyter Arthur Liolin Chancellor Emeritus of the Albanian Archdiocese, the victims of the war in Gaza and the rest of the Middle East, the victims in Ukraine, William Schaeffer, Ottavio Mallozzi, Soteria Douris, William Rubis (2 yrs), June Mitrocsak (10 yrs.), Elaine Quirias (10 yrs.), Joseph Gjoka (37 yrs.), Deacon Stephen Stefani & those servicemen who have fallen asleep in the Lord in the service of their country.

**Commemorations for the Living:** His Grace, Bishop Nikodhim Archpriest Matthew Tate, the people affected by the war in the Gaza and the rest of the Middle East, the people in Ukraine, Joe Matozzo, Joanne Risley, Billy Cotto, Christina Schaeffer, Marjana Kokalari, Betty Subashi, Gerald Mondlak, Nancy, Stephanos Sarris, Dhimitri Ndrecka, and the men and women serving in the Armed Forces. *If you have a name to add to the Commemorations for the departed or the living, please email [info@stjcaoc.org](mailto:info@stjcaoc.org)*

**Coffee Hour:** The 2026 Coffee Hour Sign-up sheet is posted in the side vestibule. Please pick a date and sign up or go online to sign-up. [COFFEE HOUR SIGNUP ONLINE](#)

**Jan 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026** Vjollca Gjergo

**Jan 11<sup>th</sup>** NO SPONSOR

**Jan 18<sup>th</sup>** NO SPONSOR

**Jan 25<sup>th</sup>** Bendo Family in Memory of Jim (2 yrs.)

**Feb 1<sup>st</sup>** NO SPONSOR

**Feb 8<sup>th</sup>** Souper Bowl Sunday

**Monthly Giving for January: Paper Towels**



**Epiphany/Theophany** The sixth of January is the feast of the Epiphany. Originally it was the one Christian feast of the “shining forth” of God to the world in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth. It included the celebration of Christ’s birth, the adoration of the Wisemen, and all of the childhood events of Christ such as His circumcision and presentation to the temple as well as His baptism by John in the Jordan. There seems to be little doubt that this feast, like Easter and

Pentecost, was understood as the fulfillment of a previous Jewish festival, in this case the Feast of Lights. Epiphany means shining forth or manifestation. The feast is often called, as it is in the Orthodox service books, Theophany, which means the shining forth and manifestation of God. The emphasis in the present-day celebration is on the appearance of Jesus as the human Messiah of Israel and the divine Son of God, One of the Holy Trinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit.



**We have a new Altar Server** Nikolas Brahollari started serving in the Altar 2 weeks ago. He is very excited to serve and we are very excited to have him! Altar servers can begin around age 5-6 depending on their ability to follow directions and stand somewhat still for about 45 minutes. If you are interested in your child serving in the Altar please speak with Father Kai.

**Congratulations and Many Years Father Kai** who celebrated his 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary as Pastor at St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church. He began his ministry on January 1, 2023.

**Annual Icon Auction Part II:** January 11<sup>th</sup> 2026. If you are interested in a particular Icon that we currently do not offer please let a member of Parish Council know the name of the Icon.

**If you mailed a Christmas donation to the church, please to check your bank statements** to be sure any checks you sent to the church have been cashed. We will distribute a list of donations that were received next week. Thank you very much for your generosity!

**Soup-er Bowl Sunday:** We will have our 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Soup-er Bowl Sunday on Feb.8<sup>th</sup> following the Divine Liturgy. We are asking our parishioners to make a homemade soup. We will offer the soup at coffee hour for a small donation. The proceeds will be donated to a homeless shelter.

**Women's Day Celebration and Dance:** March will be here before we know it. Our annual Women's Day Dance is being held on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 5:30 – 10:30 pm in the Church Hall. A buffet dinner and continuous dancing are included! More information to follow.

**Per Shume Vjet Gezuar! January Namedays:** 1st St. Basil, 7th St John the Baptist, 11th St Theodosius, 14th St Nina, 17th St Anthony, 18th St Athanasius, 20th St Euthymius, 23rd St Dionysius of Korca, 25th St Gregory, Jan 30th Hierarchs (Basil, Gregory, John Chrysostom)

**Welcome to our visitors.** Father Kai, the members of our Parish Council and our church community thank you for celebrating the Divine Liturgy with us. We invite you to join us for coffee hour and fellowship in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy.

*If you have something for the Weekly Messenger, please email <mailto:info@stjcaoc.org>*

*Gëzuar Vitin E Ri! Happy New Year!*