

St. Elijah -Aliquippa Expands Theophany Celebration!

The St. Elijah Serbian Orthodox Church in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania has been celebrating the Great Feast of Theophany on a consistent basis since the parish was established in 1914.

The Divine Liturgy of the Feast with the Great Blessing of Waters has been a regular part of the celebration. This year Father George Popovich decided to expand the celebration to include the blessing of the water in a lake nearby.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the church on the Feast of Theophany.. Father George, Father Rodney Torbic and Deacon Daniel August served. George Milosh directed the glorious festal responses of the St. Elijah Choir.

The Great Blessing of Water was central to the celebration. Father George blessed the complete interior of the church and each parishioner individually. Joy filled the air.

Following the Divine Liturgy, the parish community travelled to the nearby lake at Hopewell Community Park. Sunday School teachers and students joined the St. Elijah Choir and faithful parishioners in the short journey to the lake.

Popadjia Iris Popovich beautifully decorated a cross for the feast. The decorated cross was available for veneration during the Divine Liturgy and was taken to the lake for the water blessing.

The St. Elijah Choir, church school students and faithful gathered on the snow-covered ground for the service of the blessing of the lake. As Father George and choir sang the troparion of the feast, the decorated cross was placed in the water.

Father George placed the decorated cross in the lake three times and blessed all in attendance. He greeted all with “Bog Se Javi! God has revealed Himself!” This was a first of a new and wonderful tradition for the St. Elijah parish.

The Lord Jesus Christ’s Baptism in the Jordan centered attention to the importance of the water in life and in God’s Creation. The parish’s outreach effort in blessing the lake will have a healthy effect on the greater community.

Thank God for Father George’s initiative to bless the lake. Thank God for the St. Elijah Choir, church school teachers and students and faithful parishioners braving the cold weather for this wonderful blessing.

Thank Popadjia Iris for decorating the festal cross. All in attendance will have the memory of this first blessing of the lake. It will serve as a lasting reminder of Jesus Christ entering the Jordan and the importance of God’s Creation.

Father Rodney Torbic

