



## Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

## Schedule This Week

### Sunday, December 3

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

### Tuesday, December 5

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am to 12:00 pm Office Hours

7:00 pm Festal Vigil

### Wednesday, December 6: St Nicholas of Myra

9:30 am Festal Liturgy

### Thursday, December 7

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am to 12:00 pm Office Hours

### Saturday, December 9

Noon to 2:00 pm Pan Orthodox Choir Reh.

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Great Vespers/Cathedral Vigil

### Sunday, December 10

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

**To our Visitors: Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to come forward to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) at the conclusion of the service.**

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, Rector

Deacon Luke Loboda, Attached

Deacon John Skowron, Attached

Rdr James Wargo and Danielle Bartko, Choir Dirs

### Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

December 3, 2023

## Announcements

### ➤ Patronal Feast of St Nicholas of Myra

**Tuesday, December 5** 7:00 pm Festal Vigil

**Wednesday, December 6** 9:30 am Festal Liturgy

**Informal brunch following Liturgy** in the Educational Building. Join us!

Our special guests on Wednesday will be Fr Alexander Rentel, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America and Fr Alessandro Margheritino, Secretary.

➤ **Our annual Angel Tree drive is off to a great start!** If you've not had an opportunity to complete it online, **the list is also available today in print at the candle desk.** Would you please consider helping? Choose a child, purchase one or more new gifts that are suggested, and return it to the Church by next Sunday, December 10. Thank you! *The online list will be updated later this afternoon,*

➤ Everyone is cordially invited to our **St Nicholas Day Dinner next Sunday, December 10** (free of charge) after the Divine Liturgy. **Additionally, we are looking for helpers to prepare some of the food on Saturday, December 9 at 3:00 pm.** Please see Tom Hoffman or Clayton Harris for more details.

➤ All women of the parish are invited to a **St Nick's Women Holiday Party** on Friday, December 15 at 6:00 pm (come anytime) at the home of Karlie Lewis in Fox Chapel. Contact Karlie for more info!

## Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized* Donya Yewisiak (*beginning Monday, Beaver Hospital*); *Home:* John Mahalchak (son). *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Michael Soroka.

➤ **Vigil Lights** From **Mat. Nancy K. Mell & Gregory Mell** for the departed servants, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family and Donya Yewisiak. From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servant, grandfather, Theodore Dyczko; for the health of Donya Yewisiak. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of Donya Yewisiak. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the health of Donya Yewisiak. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton and the Scott & Hamilton families. From **Nancy Shaytar & George M. Shaytar** for the departed servant, George; for the health of Donya Yewisiak. From **Richard & Sonia Blaha** for the newly departed servants, Olga, Martha, George, and Carole; for the departed, mother, Dorothy, Uncle John, grandfather, Leo Michael, and Angela; for the health of family, friends, siblings; for special intentions, peace, and birthday of godchild, Nickolas Cherie, Christopher, & Anthony. From **Irene Kulchock** for the departed servants, Richard Kulchock and Mary Tricsli (11/22/23). From **Tatyana Sechler** for the departed servants, Polina, Galina, Slava, Valentina, Luba, Bruce, Marina, Maria, and Diana; for the health of Christopher, Thomas, Tatyana, Daniel, Veronika, Nina, Roman, Olga, Joe, and Will.

## Thank You

➤ to our **December donors:** **Jan Widell** (Bulletin \$60) in memory of departed members of the Puskar and Morris families; **Donya Yewisiak** (Holy Bread \$50) in memory of Matushka Olga Soroka; **Mat. Joni Soroka** (Altar Candles \$50) in memory of Barbara Naiser; **Lindy Hamilton** (Communion Wine \$40) in memory of twin brother, Russell Hamilton; **John Mahalchak Family** (Incense \$10) for the health of friends and family.

*St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.*

## This Week in Church School

**Today's lesson:** St. Paul's Letters to Philemon and Titus

**Verse (younger classes):** Philemon 16- "no longer as a slave but more than a slave - a beloved brother..."

### Questions to ask/review:

- Who was Philemon? Who was Onesimus? Explain what happened between them.
- Does God love some people more than others?

**Verse (older classes):** Titus 2:15- "Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority."

### Questions to ask/review:

- Who was Titus? Where was he serving the Church?
- What does it mean to "exhort"?
- How is "exhorting" different from "nagging"?
- When should a leader of the Church exhort?
- How should we react to exhortation? Can you think of an example in your life?

### Suggested Activities at home:

- Reread the stories of Joseph with Potiphar, the Hebrew people in the days of Moses, the slaves in early American history. Retell the story of Onesimus, the runaway slave who went back to ask forgiveness of his master Philemon.
- Encourage your child to make an extra effort to listen for examples of exhortation in Sunday's sermon. Discuss with them what they heard.

**Prayer:** Lord, bless with freedom all those held in slavery around the world. Amen. OR Lord, teach me to respond to exhortation and exhort others. Amen.



# Hymns and Readings for Sunday, December 3

## **Tone 1 Troparion** (Resurrection)

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: “Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom!// Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!”

## **Tone 4 Troparion** (St Nicholas)

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility, and a teacher of abstinence. Because of your lowliness heaven was opened to you! Because of your poverty riches were granted to you! O holy Bishop Nicholas, pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

## **Tone 2 Troparion** (Prophet Zephaniah)

We celebrate the memory of Thy prophet Zephaniah, O Lord; through him we beseech Thee:// “Save our souls!”

## **Tone 1 Kontakion** (Resurrection)

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Thyself. Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. Adam exults, O Master! Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to Thee:// “Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.*

## **Tone 4 Kontakion** (Prophet Zephaniah)

Thou hast been revealed by the Spirit of God to be brilliant, O Prophet Zephaniah, for thou didst proclaim the coming of God: “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Proclaim Him, O Jerusalem!// Behold, your King is coming to save mankind!”

*Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

## **Tone 6 Kontakion of the Theotokos**

Steadfast protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator, do not despise the cry of us sinners, but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our intercessions and to intercede for us, O Theotokos For you always protect those who honor you.

## **Tone 1 Prokeimenon** (Resurrection)

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us / as we have set our hope on Thee! (Ps. 32:22)

## **Epistle of the Sunday** (Ephesians 5:9-19)

(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says:

“Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.”

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

## **Gospel of the Sunday** (Luke 18:18-27)

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ ”

And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.”

So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

And those who heard it said, “Who then can be saved?”

But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

## **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (Ps. 148:1) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

# On the Will of God

God isn’t merely the provider of health, longevity and prosperity, much less earthly immortality, but also the dispenser of the heavenly gifts and graces, of the salvation of our immortal soul. It’s a great mystery, which is hidden in the depths of the Orthodox spiritual life: that the faithful can experience the sweetness, the beauty and the peace of eternal life deep in their soul, despite their many external adversities.

It’s vital that we all wake up immediately and put other priorities in place in our life. As Christ says, we should seek the Kingdom of Heaven and then add all the rest. Those who don’t have serious bodily ailments may still be suffering from more serious spiritual ones: spiritual incapacity, spiritual blindness, hardness of heart and so on.

We want a God who’s easy, obedient, generous with gifts, whom we hold in our hand, so that we can live well and happily, in which case we’ll thank him and glorify him. We don’t allow him to send us trials for our edification, to admonish us strictly, to prevent us making mistakes. We want control of our life so that we can do what we like. When things work out as we want, we say how good God is; but when something goes wrong, we don’t just find fault with him, we want nothing to do with him. We think him harsh, fearsome, strict and implacable.

There’s no Byzantine icon of God smiling; he looks you straight in the eye, with complete sincerity and understanding. Without a trace of pity, revenge, threat, terror, fear or compulsion. We have an astonishing, unique, wonderful God who surprises us, moves us, shakes us up and shocks us in order to transfigure us. We should allow him to speak and tell us what he wants, rather than what we want to hear.

- Elder Moses the Athonite