

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, February 20

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School
Trisagion in memory of Edward Aleksander Martin

Tuesday, February 22

9:00 am Daily Matins
9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Wednesday, February 23

6:30 pm Daily Vespers
7:00 pm Bible Study (Hebrews 8)

Thursday, February 24

9:00 am Daily Matins
9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Saturday, February 26

9:30 am Memorial Divine Liturgy
4:00 pm Community Food Pantry
12:00 pm to 2:00 pm Pan Orthodox Choir
5:00 pm Cathedral Vigil / Social Night

Sunday, February 27

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*

Prodigal Son Sunday

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org February 20, 2022

Announcements

➤ **Women's Night Out** this Tuesday at 7:30 pm at Matushka Kate Skowron's home in Mt Lebanon. Please contact her for details and the address! All are welcome!

➤ **The Orthodox Men's Book Group** will begin a new book for the Lenten period. We will meet each month once. The first meeting will be Tuesday, March 1. The book is "Arise, O God" by Father Andrew Stephen Damick. See Dn Luke Loboda with any questions.

➤ **Lenten Prayer Partners:** This Lent, we will begin our second Lenten Prayer Partners program with the youth (3rd grade and above) and adults in our parish. **The goal is to create a structured opportunity for youth to have fellowship with adult members of our parish.** Each youth will be paired with an adult to share weekly prayer requests and answer simple get-to-know-you questions. This is not a large time commitment and enriches our church community! **If you are interested in participating, please contact Dn. Luke or Mat. Ashley** (ashley.loboda@gmail.com, #412-715-2163).

➤ **Mark your calendar!** A choir from **St Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary** will be visiting our parish on **Saturday, April 2 at 5:00 pm** to sing the Vigil service. Join us to be inspired by their beautiful and prayerful singing and help us support the theological education of our young seminarians.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* (none) *Home:* George Shaytar. *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, newly departed, David Namisnak and Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servant, David Namisnak; for the health of Sandi Tirpak. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of sisters, Doris & Marsha. From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servant, David Namisnak; for the health of Michael Soroka. From **Mat. Joni Soroka** for the health of John Naiser, Michael Soroka and niece, Sophie on her 16th birthday. From **Donya Yewisiak** for the departed servant, David Namisnak; for the health of Sandi Tirpak. From **John Mahalchak family** for the health of friends & family, Cheryl, John, Gregory, Cindy, Kevin, and Kayla Elizabeth. From **Natalie Aitken Toooh** for the departed servants and in loving memory of brothers, Ethan & Kevin, nephew, Nicholas, Dad, Lee Aitken, David Namisnak and Amelia Kuck; for the health of family. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine, Victoria & Rowyn. From **Tatyana Sechler** for the departed servants, Polina, Galina, Slava, Diana, Bruce, and Luba; for the health of Tatyana, Veronika, Sergei, Adrianna, and Kristofer. From **Daniel Glozzer** for the departed servants, Bonnie Sue Glozzer; for the health of me and Edward Turk; to better health and faith. From **George & Nancy Shaytar** for the departed servants, John Shaytar, Garnette Kerchum, and David Namisnak; for the health of brother, Nick on his birthday. From **Nancy Shaytar** for the health of husband, George. From **John & Olga** for the health of Galina Vilko; for the health & salvation of our family.

Thank You

➤ to our February donors, **Bob and Marybeth Madalinsky** (Bulletin \$60, Holy Bread \$50, Communion Wine \$40, Altar Candles \$25, Incense \$10).

This Week in Church School

Today's lesson: Prodigal Son

Questions to ask/review:

- Where did the son go? Why? What did he do with his money?
- Where did he end up, doing what? Why did he go back to his father?
- What did he say? What did his father say?
- How did the older brother react to the return of his brother? Why?
- What did the father say to the older brother?
- Was the father "fair" to the brothers? What does this teach us about God?
- Discuss how God's forgiveness goes beyond our earthly concepts of "fairness".
- When have we acted like the younger brother in our life? The older brother?

Suggested activities at home:

- Read the scripture together before bed: Luke 15:11-32.
- Read Matthew 20:1-16 together. Discuss the parallels of the stories.
- Discuss a past visit to a farm or act it out with farm toys. How do the pigs eat? How do the animals act? Why would the Prodigal Son want to go back home?
- Role play the Father, Prodigal Son, and older brother.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank you for the love of our earthly fathers and our heavenly Father. Amen

➤ Important upcoming dates:

Feb 27 – Meatfare Sunday
Mar 6 – Cheesefare (Forgiveness) Sunday
Monday, Mar 7 – Beginning of Great Lent
Apr 17 – Palm Sunday (*Western Easter*)
Apr 24 – Pascha: Resurrection of Christ

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, February 20

Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal,
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead.
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead,
all the powers of heaven cried out://
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”

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.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 3 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)

I have recklessly forgotten Thy glory, O Father; and among sinners I have scattered the riches which Thou gavest me.
And now I cry to Thee as the Prodigal:
“I have sinned before Thee, O merciful Father; receive me as a penitent, // and make me as one of Thy hired servants!”

Tone 2 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

The Lord is my strength and my song; / He has become my salvation. (Ps. 117:14)

Epistle of the Sunday (1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Gospel of the Sunday (Luke 15:11-32)

Then He said: “A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’”

“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

“Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’

“But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’

“And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that

we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’”



Communion Hymn of Sunday

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



Synaxarion

If anyone be a prodigal as I, take courage and turn back; for the gates of God's mercies are opened to all.

On this day we celebrate the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, dedicated as the second service of the Triodion by the divine Fathers for the following reason. There are some who recognize much in themselves that is unbecoming, who live a life of great dissipation from their youth, whose lives are full of drunkenness and immorality, who having fallen thus into the depths of evil, become despondent, giving birth to pride, from whence they have no desire to advance to any of the virtues, preferring their bondage to evil and falling ever deeper into evil. Having a fatherly love for even these individuals, and desiring to lead them out of their despair, the Holy Fathers prescribed this parable for the second preparatory Sunday in order to tear up the passion of despair by the roots, to lead them to acceptance of the virtues, and to demonstrate to sinners the abundance of God's compassion upon sinners and prodigals in His great goodness and love for mankind. For there is no sin which cannot be overcome by the knowledge of His love for mankind, and this is what is presented in this parable of Christ.

Now the sons of man, that is of the Word, God and Man, are two: the righteous and the sinful. It is the eldest who abides ever in God's blessings, following His commandments and remaining always by Him. But the younger son, having become attached to sin and renouncing his closeness to God through shameful deeds, has wasted God's love for mankind and for him and has lived as a prodigal. For having completely rejected Him after whose image he was created, and having followed an evil demon, willingly enslaving himself to this demon's pleasure, he was unable to fulfill his desire. For

sin is an unsatisfying thing that becomes an habitual source of temporary pleasure. It may be compared to the husks that are fed to swine. At first it seems that they might be something tasty, but they turn out to be very dry and are much like weeds, which is how sin takes possession. For the Prodigal Son had hardly come to his senses when, perishing from hunger for virtue, he comes to his father, saying, "Father, I have sinned before heaven and before thee, and I am not worthy to be called thy son." Yet the father receives him in repentance, not reproaching him, but embracing him and kissing him in a display of divine and fatherly love. And he clothes him, a symbol of baptism, putting a ring on his finger, a symbol of the grace of the all-Holy Spirit. He also puts sandals on his feet, not so much as a protection from some serpent or scorpion that might sting him on his path to God, but rather as a means of crushing the heads of those creatures. And then in a tremendous display of joy he slaughters the fatted calf for him, his only-begotten Son, and the Father grants him communion of his body and blood. Now the elder son expresses his amazement at his father's limitless mercy. But the lover of mankind exhorts him to silence with loving and kind words of humility, saying, "Thou art ever with me, and it was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for my son was formerly dead in his sin and is alive again, having repented of the foolish things he has done. He was lost, since he was far from me in his licentious habits, and he was found by me, suffering in my compassion and calling him back in my mercy." This parable may be applied to us as well, which is why the holy Fathers have prescribed it for today. We who have sinned as the prodigal are encouraged to weed out despair and fear through repentance, confession and good deeds. For this is a great aid and a powerful weapon against the assaults of the adversary.

In Thine ineffable love for mankind, O Christ our God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

On the Prodigal Son

Family relationships shape us all profoundly.

8Our sense of what it means to love and to be loved, of how we should treat others and what we should expect from others, is shaped by our relationships with those who cared for and guided us in our formative years, as well as by those with whom we share our lives today. For good, bad, or somewhere in between, our family members are part of who we are.

It is not surprising, then, that the Lord told a story about a father with two sons in today's gospel lesson. The Church calls today the Sunday of the Prodigal Son in order to help us see more clearly who we are in relation to our Heavenly Father as we prepare for Lent. For no matter how far we have run away from our identity as the beloved children of God, He desires our restoration. He runs to greet the repentant sinner and welcomes us back into the family.

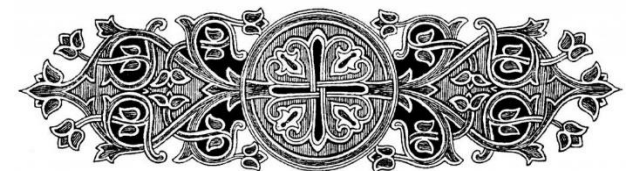
Certainly no one in that time and place would have expected the father in the story to do anything like that. Even the prodigal son himself asked only to become a servant in his father's house, for he knew what he had done by asking for his inheritance. He had basically told his father that he meant nothing to him but a source of money. And since the old man would not hurry up and die, he wanted his inheritance so that he could have nothing more to do with him ever again. Perhaps the father knew that the son needed to learn from the consequences of his tragic mistakes. So he gave him the money, which the son quickly wasted in partying and immorality. Soon no one treated him like a son, but instead like a lowly servant so miserable that he would have happily eaten the slop fed to the pigs.

At that point, the young man came to himself and realized what he had done and how wretched he was. He knew that he had dealt a fatal blow to his relationship with his father, but maybe the old man would still receive him back as a servant. As he came close to the house, however, the young

man was amazed to see his father running out to greet him and then to restore him fully as his son. He did not speak a critical word to the young man, but only showed him love and rejoiced that a lost son had returned home, that one who was dead to him had been restored to life.

As we prepare for Lent, we must learn from this parable that there are no limits to our Lord's mercy, no restraints on His compassion or forgiveness for those who humbly take the journey home. Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ is the Second Adam Who came to restore us as the children of God, as those created in the divine image and likeness. Consequently, we must not avoid repentance out of fear that God will reject us, that we alone are somehow so wicked that He would never welcome us back. Remember that the Father is not a harsh, stern, hateful judge who is out to get us. Likewise, the Son did not come to condemn and punish, but to save. He accepted and blessed everyone who came to Him in humble repentance during His earthly ministry, including corrupt tax-collectors, a woman caught in adultery, Gentiles, the demon-possessed, and His own apostles who had denied and abandoned Him. Christ even prayed for the forgiveness of those who nailed Him to the Cross. His mercy will extend to us also if we will turn to Him from the depths of our hearts.

Both the prodigal and the elder brother needed to be reconciled with their father. The same is true of each and every one of us this Lent. We will gain the spiritual strength to do so through prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other spiritual disciplines. These are tools to help us come to ourselves, to wake us up and lead us back to a right relationship with our Heavenly Father. No matter whether we identify more with the older or the younger son, our Lord's calling to us is essentially the same: Come home and join in the great celebration of the Heavenly Kingdom. (*Fr. Philip LeMasters*)



An Orthodox Christian Primer

Orthodox Christianity is the life in faith of the Orthodox Church, inseparable from that concrete, historic community and encompassing its entire way of life. The Orthodox Christian faith is that faith "handed once to the saints" (Jude 3), passed on in Holy Tradition to the apostles by Jesus Christ, and then handed down from one generation to the next, without addition or subtraction.

The sole purpose of Orthodox Christianity is the salvation of every human person, uniting him to Christ in the Church, transforming him in holiness, and imparting eternal life. This is the Gospel, the good news, that Jesus is the Messiah, that he rose from the dead, and that we may be saved as a result.

Orthodox Christians worship the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the Holy Trinity, the one God. Following the Holy Scriptures and the Church Fathers, the Church believes that the Trinity is three divine persons (hypostases) who share one essence (ousia). It is paradoxical to believe thus, but that is how God has revealed himself. All three persons are consubstantial with each other, that is, they are of one essence (homoousios) and coeternal. There never was a time when any of the persons of the Trinity did not exist. God is beyond and before time and yet acts within time, moving and speaking within history.

The source and unity of the Holy Trinity is the Father, from whom the Son is begotten and also from whom the Spirit proceeds. Thus, the Father is both the ground of unity of the Trinity and also of distinction. To try to comprehend unbegottenness (Father), begottenness (Son), or procession (Holy Spirit) leads to insanity, says the holy Gregory the Theologian, and so the Church approaches God in divine mystery, approaching God apophatically, being content to encounter God personally and yet realize the

inadequacy of the human mind to comprehend him.

The second person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, begotten before all ages by the Father without a mother, was begotten in time by the Virgin Mary the Theotokos without a father. He is the Logos, the Word of God, and he became flesh and dwelt among us, as says the beginning of the Gospel of John. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. This is the doctrine of the Incarnation, that God became a man.

Jesus is God, the second person of the Holy Trinity. He is the I AM revealed to Moses. He is the way, the truth and the life. He is the God before the ages, come to Earth as a little child and then died on the cross as a man and rose from the dead. He and the Father are one, for he is consubstantial with the Father. During his passion and death on the cross, one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh.

He is the Messiah, the Christ—the Anointed One of God, foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament. He is the Savior of the world, the Lamb of God, the Son of Man. As described in the Gospels, Jesus Christ was born of a woman, grew into a man, preached, healed, taught his disciples, died in physical reality on the cross, and then rose bodily from the dead on the third day. He then ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father. Of all mankind, he alone is without sin.

The Church is the Body of Christ, a theanthropic (divine-human) communion of Jesus Christ with his people. The sole head of the Church is Christ. The traditional belief in the Church is attested to in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. By this is meant that the Church is undivided and not many (one), sanctified and set apart for the work of God (holy), whole and characterized by fullness and universality (catholic), and has at its

essence the going out into all the world to preach the Gospel and baptize the nations (apostolic).

The community of the Church is the locus of salvation for mankind; it is truly the Ark in which mankind may be saved from the flood of corruption and sin. In it, Christians sacramentally work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), worshipping the Holy Trinity in spirit and in truth. The Church is the pillar and ground of truth (I Tim. 3:15) and thus may be relied upon in the Christian's struggle to apprehend the one truth for himself. The Church is eternal, and the gates of Hell will never prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

Holy Tradition is the deposit of faith given by Jesus Christ to the Apostles and passed on in the Church from one generation to the next without addition, alteration or subtraction. Vladimir Lossky has famously described the Tradition as "the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church." It is dynamic in application, yet unchanging in dogma. It is growing in expression, yet ever the same in essence.

Unlike many conceptions of tradition in popular understanding, the Orthodox Church does not regard Holy Tradition as something which grows and expands over time, forming a collection of practices and doctrines which accrue, gradually becoming something more developed and eventually unrecognizable to the first Christians. Rather, Holy Tradition is that same faith which Christ taught to the Apostles and which they gave to their disciples, preserved in the whole Church and especially in its leadership through Apostolic succession.

The central location in Holy Tradition is occupied by the Holy Scriptures, the written witness to God's revelation in the Church. As such, the Scriptures are always interpreted from within the Tradition which was the context for their writing and canonization.

Worship in the Orthodox Church is understood to be the highest calling of mankind, to fall down at the feet of the Almighty God, the Holy Trinity, and to be given over entirely to him, becoming united mystically with him in the holy mysteries. To worship God is to fulfil the purpose for which we were created.

Orthodox worship is liturgical, that is, following specific ritual patterns and cycles in reverent dignity and embracing the whole of the human person. Its reverence and awe are due to its being understood as entering into the very throne room of the Creator. Orthodox worship is transformative in its nature, bringing the Christian more deeply into communion with God and with his cooperation changing him into a holy person, a saint.

A secondary but essential component of worship in Orthodoxy is to teach the dogmas of the faith, forming the Christian in the doctrines of the Church.

Orthodox Christian anthropology teaches that man was created by God to worship him in communion with him, made in his image to attain to His likeness. All human beings are thus of infinite value, because they bear the indelible stamp of their Creator. All human beings are composed of both a soul and body, which are permanently part of human nature. Man was created sinless, but not perfected, and so though Adam was pure when he was created, he was created as a being of dynamic progress, capable of growing more and more like God.

At the fall of man, Adam and Eve not only sinned in violation of God's commandments, but their ontological state shifted. Their nature was not changed in itself, but the image of God in them became obscured by sin, which is an ontological separation from God. Fallen man is thus not totally depraved, but rather suffers from the disease of sin which renders holiness much more difficult to attain.

Welcome to Our New Members!

Jeremiah Martin has deep roots in Southwest Pennsylvania. He grew up on a farm in Washington County and attended the First Church of the Nazarene in Washington, PA until departing for college. After college, Jeremiah lived in Norway for many years, and in the past decade, he has visited Russia half-a-dozen times.

Kseniia Martin was born in Turkmen SSR and grew up in Krasnovodsk. When she was 16, she and her mother moved to the Orenburg region of Russia (where they have family). Kseniia attended university in the city of Orenburg and lived there until moving to the United States in 2018.



Jeremiah and Kseniia share a love of letter writing and met through this interest in 2012. They met in person during Jeremiah's first trip to Russia in 2014. Jeremiah and Kseniia were engaged in Moscow in June 2015 and married in the United States in December 2018. In February 2021, Jeremiah and Kseniia's son, Edward Aleksander, was born prematurely at Magee-Womens Hospital in Pittsburgh and wasn't expected to survive. At this point in time, Jeremiah had been agnostic for more than a decade, and although Kseniia had been baptized Orthodox, she was not a practicing Christian. Even so, they reached out through the hospital for an Orthodox priest. This is how they met Father Tom, who baptized Edward Aleksander before he passed.

Jeremiah and Kseniia began attending St. Nicholas regularly in April 2021 and, praise be to God, were eventually restored to the Faith. Jeremiah will be united with the Orthodox Church at his chrismation today.



Derek Cummins grew up in Burgettstown, PA, and first gave his life to Christ while touring with a heavy metal band in 2011. He moved to Nashville, TN in 2012, married his faithful, loving wife, Rebekah, in 2013, and earned a Master's Degree in Theological Studies in 2015. Derek and Bekah moved back to the Pittsburgh area where he became an Associate Pastor in a non-denominational church, focusing on youth & young adult ministries.

Orthodoxy first came into the picture when a visit from a Messianic Jewish Rabbi sent Derek looking for his own "long-lost" Tradition of Christian worship. He first visited St. Nicholas for one of the St. Nicholas Symposiums on the Holy Scriptures and his first service in the parish was the midnight

Pascha of 2018. Thus began a long, arduous journey toward entering the Church, with Derek resigning his pastorate in 2020. He now works as a freelance media producer for Ancient Faith Radio, Dn. Nicholas Kotar and other content creators.

Derek has two lively, beautiful children (Asher, 5; Laurel, 1) and one more on the way! In his [very little] spare time he enjoys playing drums & guitar, live jazz, reading, craft coffee, and good conversation."

Welcome to Our New Members!

Chad Whitacre was born in Cambridge, England, and was baptized into the Church of England as an infant. His family soon returned to the United States and settled in Sewickley, where Chad was raised as an Anglican along with his older brother, Seth. Their father is an Anglican priest and emeritus New Testament scholar at Trinity School for Ministry, and their mother is a retired STEM teacher and church organist whose father was a Baptist minister and church historian at Gordon-Conwell Seminary. Growing up, Chad's family would embark on "adventures in Christianity." Thus, his first memory of the Divine Liturgy is a Pascha service at Holy Cross in Mt. Lebanon around age 8 or 10. For a year in college he attended St. Joseph's in Wheaton, IL and Holy Ghost in Ambridge, but decided to remain Protestant. Chad met his wife Jessica at Wheaton College; both studied Ancient Languages and Theology. They were married in 2000, and have four children: Leah (20), Miriam (17), Samuel (14), and Ruth (11).



Chad is employed as the Head of Open Source for a San Francisco software startup, Sentry. Previously he started or helped to start an online education program, an organic farmers' cooperative (where he befriended an Amish clan), a web design company, a scheduling app for schools, a crowdfunding platform, numerous open source projects, Grace Anglican Church in Edgeworth, and the Anglican Church in North America. He enjoys reading theology and working on creative projects under the name Gospel Desk. He also plays the saxophone and tries to keep up with Samuel on a vintage mountain bike.

Chad's journey to Orthodoxy begins with his father, who was a catechumen prior to choosing Anglicanism. His father named him after St. Chad of Lichfield (7th c.), intentionally choosing a name that would be suitable if he ever became Orthodox. In 2011, Chad tried to start a new denomination called Christian Minimalism, which gave him an appreciation for Christ's having already started the Church. He returns to Orthodoxy now to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, to participate in the worship of God and the fellowship of the saints at St. Nicholas, and to contribute in the wider Church as God wills. Glory to God!



Julie Burns was born in Iksan, South Korea and was adopted into the Burns family at five months old. She was raised in a strong Christian home and attended a non-denominational Protestant church until college. She was introduced to Orthodoxy by one of her college roommates and closest friends. During her time at college, she explored a few Orthodox churches in the area. Also at that time, readings such as The Way of a Pilgrim and surprisingly Franny and Zooey sparked growth in her love for Eastern spirituality and Orthodoxy even further. After graduating and making the commitment to become Orthodox, she found St. Nicholas through a friend and fellow seeker who was attending regularly. After establishing a relationship with the parish and seeking continual encouragement and guidance from Fr. Tom, she became a catechumen in October of 2021.

Julie graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in May of 2021 after studying Psychology and Korean Language & Culture. She lives in Imperial, PA and is currently working at Pitt as an administrator in the Social Sciences Division. She enjoys spending time with her niece and nephew, discovering new places with friends, Korean cooking, Penguins hockey, playing piano and guitar, and bubble tea.