

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, March 19

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School
4:30 pm Diocesan Vespers St Alexander (Allison Park)

Monday, March 20

5:00 pm Lenten Vespers

Tuesday, March 21

9:00 am Lenten Matins (Morning Service)
9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Wednesday, March 22

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Lenten Fellowship Meal following Liturgy

Thursday, March 23

9:00 am Lenten Matins (Morning Service)
9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Friday, March 24

7:00 pm Vigil for the Annunciation

Saturday, March 25: Annunciation

9:30 am Divine Liturgy with icon of St Anna
Sung by St Tikhon's Seminary Choir

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, March 26

10:00 am Divine Liturgy / Church School after

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, Rector
Deacon Luke Loboda, Attached
Deacon John Skowron, Attached

Rdr James Wargo and Danielle Bartko, Choir Dirs

Veneration of the Precious Cross

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org March 19, 2023

Announcements

➤ We warmly welcome **His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek** to our parish today. May God grant him good health and long life to rightly divide the word of truth! Many years, Master!

➤ Congratulations to **Alexei Listvinsky** who was tonsured to the office of Reader today by Archbishop Melchisedek. Alex will be attending St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in the fall. May God grant him many blessed years!

➤ You are invited to our first **St. Nicholas Regional Synaxes!** The term synaxis (plural is synaxes) is a traditional Orthodox word that refers to a gathering of believers. The purpose of our regional synaxes is to provide opportunity for spiritual growth, make our faith more intentionally woven into our daily lives, and build spiritual interconnectedness amongst members. We will join in a short prayer service, discussion, and then a meal. Everyone is welcome and encouraged regardless of age, family size, etc! The gatherings are based on geographic location. If you did not receive an email, please contact Deacon Luke or Melissa Graff for your information about your region.

➤ **Mark your calendar!** A choir from **St Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary** will be visiting our parish this **Saturday, March 25 for the Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am accompanied by the miraculous icon of St Anna.** Join us to be inspired by their beautiful and prayerful singing and help us support the education of our seminarians. We ask that you considering giving a substantial donation to support their important work. God bless you!

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* (none)
Home: Irene Kulchock, John Mahalchak (son), Natalie Toooh. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, George Shaytar, Michael Soroka.
➤ **Vigil Lights** From **Mat. Nancy K. Mell & Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton and family & friends; special intentions. From **Doris A. Wasilko** for the departed servants, Uncle Michael Wasilko and cousin, Michael Wasilko. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servants, Uncle Mike Wasilko and cousin Michael Wasilko.. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servants, Uncle Michael Wasilko and cousin, Michael Wasilko. From **John Mahalchak family** for the health of family, friends, John, Cheryl, Gregory, Cindy, Daniel, and Mary; for a successful surgery for son, John. From **John & Olga** for the health of Galina Vilcova and the health & salvation of our families.. From **Mr. & Mrs. Richard Blaha** for the departed servants, parents, Teresa, John, and Priscilla; newly departed Mary Ann, David, Donnie, Janet, and David; for the health of Dad, Leo, family, friends, siblings, & serving soldiers; special intentions, birthdays, & peace.

Thank You

➤ to our **March** donor: Donya Yewisiak (Altar Candles \$25) in loving memory of brother, Leonard Soroka.



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: Icons, Islam, and St. John of Damascus

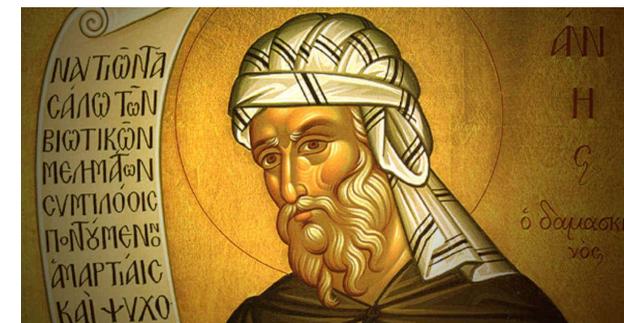
Questions to ask/review:

- Who was Muhammad? What did he believe about Jesus?
- What are followers of Muhammad called?
- How did Muhammad spread his religion?
- What parts of the world became ruled by Muslims?
- What threats did Constantinople face?
- Why did some people begin to destroy icons? What was this called?
- Why do we use icons in worship?
- Who was St. John of Damascus? How did he defend the use of icons? What is the proper way to use icons?
- Why was the Seventh Ecumenical Council called? What was decided by the council?
- How does this entire lesson relate to what we celebrate on the Sunday of Orthodoxy?

Suggested Activities at Home:

- Pray each day facing your home icon corner; if you don't have one, this would be a great week for you and your child to set one up.
- Venerate an icon and discuss the teachings of St. John of Damascus. Discuss the difference between veneration and worship.

Prayer: Lord, bring Your gospel back to the lands once rich in Christ. Thank you for bringing the holy icons back into your Church.



Hymns and Readings for Sunday, March 19

Tone 7 Troparion (Resurrection)

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death.
To the thief Thou didst open Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change
weeping into joy,
and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ
God,
to proclaim that Thou art risen,//
granting the world great mercy.

Tone 1 Troparion of the Cross

O Lord, save Thy people,
and bless Thine inheritance!
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians
over their adversaries;
and by virtue of Thy Cross,//
preserve Thy habitation!

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

Tone 7 Kontakion (Cross)

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the
gates of Eden;
it has been mysteriously quenched by the wood
of the Cross.
The sting of death and the victory of hell have
been vanquished;
for Thou, O my Savior, hast come and cried to
those in hell://
“Enter again into Paradise!”

Instead of the Trisagion we sing:

Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O
Master, and Thy holy Resurrection we glorify.

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Cross)

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine
inheritance! (Ps. 27:9a)

Epistle of the Sunday (Hebrews 4:14-5:6)

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest
who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the
Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For
we do not have a High Priest who cannot
sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all
points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us
therefore come boldly to the throne of grace,
that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help
in time of need.

For every high priest taken from among men is
appointed for men in things pertaining to God,
that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for
sins. He can have compassion on those who are
ignorant and going astray, since he himself is
also subject to weakness. Because of this he is
required as for the people, so also for himself, to
offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this
honor to himself, but he who is called by God,
just as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become
High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You
are My Son, today I have begotten You.”

As He also says in another place: “You are a
priest forever according to the order of
Melchizedek.”

Gospel of the Sunday (Mark 8:34-9:1)

When He had called the people to Himself, with
His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever
desires to come after Me, let him deny himself,
and take up his cross, and follow Me. For
whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but
whoever loses his life for My sake and the
gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a
man if he gains the whole world, and loses his
own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange
for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and
My words in this adulterous and sinful
generation, of him the Son of Man also will be

ashamed when He comes in the glory of His
Father with the holy angels.”

And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you
that there are some standing here who will not
taste death till they see the kingdom of God
present with power.”

Instead of “It is truly meet...,” we sing:

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace:
the assembly of angels and the race of men. O
sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the
glory of virgins, from whom God was incarnate
and became a Child – our God before the ages.
He made your body into a throne, and your
womb He made more spacious than the heavens.
All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace.
Glory to you!

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in
the highest! (Ps. 148:1) The light of Thy
countenance has shone on us, O Lord. (Ps. 4:7a)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**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**

➤ **St. Nicholas Food Pantry Donations:** Please
help support our monthly food pantry clients
with donations of toiletries and personal items
(toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner,
soap, chapstick, feminine hygiene products,
toilet paper, etc). Any donations can be placed
in the church basement by the food pantry
cupboards. Thank you for supporting our local
community members and this ministry.

Children & Confession: When should children
start coming to confession? While there is no
one-size-fits-all answer, children usually begin

participating in the sacrament around second
grade (age 8). Each year, we reserve confession
on Lazarus Saturday morning (this year, April 8)
for children, especially those who will be
coming for the first time. In the coming weeks,
there will be a special class during Sunday
School for those children planning on coming to
confession on April 8. More details to come.
Please contact Fr. Tom or one of the deacons
with any questions.

The Middle of the Fast

On this third Sunday of the Great Fast we celebrate
the Veneration of the precious and life-giving
Cross. Since during the forty days of the Fast we
are also in a way crucified, mortified to the
passions, contrite, abased and despondent, the
precious and life-giving Cross is offered to us as
refreshment and confirmation, calling to mind the
Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and comforting us.
If our God was crucified for our sake, how great
should be our effort for His sake, since our
afflictions have been assuaged through the Lord’s
tribulations, and by the commemoration and the
hope of the Cross of glory.

This week lies at the middle of the holy Forty Day
Fast. The Fast is like a bitter source because of our
contrition and the sadness and sorrow for sin that
it brings. And as Moses plunged the branch in the
bitter waters of Marah, making them sweet, so
God, who has led us through the spiritual Red Sea
away from Pharaoh, through the life-giving wood
of the precious and life-giving Cross sweetens the
bitterness of the Forty Day Fast, and comforts us
as those who were in the wilderness, up until the
time when by His Resurrection He will lead us to
the spiritual Jerusalem. And since the Cross is
called, and indeed is, the Tree of Life, it is the very
tree that was planted in the Garden of Eden. So it
is fitting that the Holy Fathers have planted the
Tree of the Cross in the middle of the Forty Day
Fast to commemorate both Adam’s tasting of its
sweet fruit and of its being taken from us in favor
of the Tree of the Cross, tasting of which we shall
in no way die, but will have even greater life.