



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 31

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

Monday, January 1: Circumcision of XC/St Basil

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, January 2

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Thursday, January 4

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Friday, January 5

7:00 pm Festal Vigil

Saturday, January 6: Theophany of Our Lord

9:30 am Festal Liturgy

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Parish Vigil

Sunday, January 7

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

Leavetaking of the Nativity of Christ

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

December 31, 2023

Announcements

➤ As we prepare for the conclusion of 2023, we express our gratitude to all those who have prayerfully supported our parish over the past year through offering your time and talents and your financial gifts. **Please consider offering a year-end gift to support all of our ministries and needs.** As costs rise, we rely on your faithful and generous gifts. Thank you!

➤ **Offering envelopes** are available for those who need them. Anyone who would like a full packet of donation envelopes (with weekly, monthly and feast day envelopes) should request one at the candle desk. This year we also have single envelopes that will be at the candle desk all year long for those who don't need a full packet of envelopes. Thank you for your generosity!

➤ It is our Orthodox tradition to take newly blessed water to your homes for blessing and drinking. On Saturday morning, after the Theophany Festal Liturgy, we will bless water. **Everyone is encouraged to attend this major feast and bring a clean, suitable container for holy water to keep in your home.** Some pious Orthodox Christians will take a few pieces of the antidoron bread home and eat a small amount each day with holy water. This is a beneficial custom.

➤ As we begin 2024, our parish will be entering into the next phase of our **dome replacement project. We ask you to prayerfully consider giving specifically to these enhancement projects, above and beyond your regular giving.** These projects will certainly require our sacrificial giving in order to have a suitable place of worship now and for years into the future.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized* (none); *Home:* John Mahalchak (son). Donya Yewisiak. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Michael Soroka.

➤ 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 health of Nancy Shaytar and Donya Yewisiak. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, Stacy Morton; for the health of sisters, Doris & Marsha. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family and Nancy Shaytar. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton and the Scott & Hamilton families. From **Mat. Joni Soroka** for the departed servants, Mat. Olga Soroka and Barbara Naiser; for the health of Donya Yewisiak. From **Richard & Sonia Blaha** for the departed servants, ,godfather George, Uncle George, Esther, William, and Kum Michael; for the health of family, friends, siblings; for special intentions, peace, anniversaries and birthdays. From **John & Olga** for the health of Galina Vilкова, Andre Kroz, and Matthew Heuer on his birthday. From **Tatyana Sechler** for the departed servants, Polina, Galina, Slava, Valentina, Luba, Marina, and Diana; for the health of Christopher, Thomas, Tatyana, Daniel, Veronika, Nina, Roma, and Beth.

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 friends and family.

This Week in Church School

Today's lesson: (St. Paul's) Letter to the Hebrews

Verse (younger classes): Hebrews 1:4- "having become so much better than the angels..."

Questions to ask/review:

- What are angels? What is a messenger?
- Give examples of angels in the Bible. What types are there?
- Who has a guardian angel?
- When do you hear about the angels during Divine Liturgy?

Verse (older classes): Hebrews 4:12- "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Questions to ask/review:

- Give examples of figures in the Bible who made mistakes.
- Did they try to hide their sin from God? What happened?
- Can we hide our sins from God? Should we try?
- What should we do when we sin? How will God respond?
- How is the word of God sharper than a two-edged sword?

Suggested Activities at home:

- Look for pictures of angels. Make angels from materials at home like paper plates and paper towel tubes.
- Encourage your child to prepare for confession (if they haven't done so yet) during the Nativity season. What sins have they hidden from their minds and God?

Prayer: Lord, send my guardian angel to watch over me. OR Lord, may your Word open my heart, so that I may be healed. me His Spirit, that He may save me.

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.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, December 31

Tone 5 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation from the Virgin;
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the
flesh,
to endure death,
and to raise the dead//
by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 4 Troparion (Feast)

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God,
has shone to the world the light of wisdom!
For by it, those who worshipped the stars,
were taught by a star to adore Thee,
the Sun of Righteousness,
and to know Thee, the Orient from on high.//
O Lord, glory to Thee!

Tone 2 Troparion (Righteous Ones)

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph,
to David, the ancestor of God;
thou hast seen a Virgin great with child;
and thou didst give glory with the shepherds;
thou didst worship with the Magi,
and didst receive the news from the Angel.//
Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

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

Tone 3 Kontakion (Righteous Ones)

Today godly David is filled with joy;
Joseph and James offer praise.
The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ
fills them with great joy.
They sing praises to the One ineffably born on
earth,//
and they cry out: “O Compassionate One, save
those who honor Thee!”

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 3 Kontakion (Feast)

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent
One,
and the earth offers a cave to the
Unapproachable One!
Angels with shepherds glorify Him!
The Wise Men journey with the star,//
since for our sake the eternal God was born as a
little Child!

Tone 8 Prokeimenon (Feast)

Let all the earth worship Thee and praise Thee;
/let it praise Thy Name, O Most High! (Ps. 65:3)

Tone 4 Prokeimenon (Righteous Ones)

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of
Israel. (Ps. 67:35a)

Epistle of the Sunday (Galatians 1:11-19)

But I make known to you, brethren, that the
gospel which was preached by me is not
according to man. For I neither received it from
man, nor was I taught it, but it came through
the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For you have heard of my former conduct in
Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God
beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I
advanced in Judaism beyond many of my
contemporaries in my own nation, being more
exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my
fathers.

But when it pleased God, who separated me
from my mother’s womb and called me through
His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might
preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not
immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor
did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were
apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and
returned again to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to
see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.
But I saw none of the other apostles except
James, the Lord’s brother.

Gospel of the Sunday (Matthew 2:13-23)

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel
of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream,
saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His
mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I
bring you word; for Herod will seek the young
Child to destroy Him.”

When he arose, he took the young Child and His
mother by night and departed for Egypt, and
was there until the death of Herod, that it might
be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord
through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I
called My Son.”

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived
by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he
sent forth and put to death all the male children
who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts,
from two years old and under, according to the
time which he had determined from the wise
men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by
Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

“A voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted,
Because they are no more.”

Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of
the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in
Egypt, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and
His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for
those who sought the young Child’s life are
dead.” Then he arose, took the young Child and
His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning
over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was
afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a

dream, he turned aside into the region of
Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called
Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was
spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a
Nazarene.”

Hymn to the Theotokos (Feast)

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin
Theotokos,
more honorable and more glorious than the
heavenly hosts.

I behold a strange, most glorious mystery:
heaven—the cave;
the cherubic throne—the Virgin;
the manger—the place where Christ lay:
the uncontainable God, Whom we magnify in
song.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in
the highest! (Ps. 148:1) The Lord has sent
redemption to His people. (Ps. 110:8a) Alleluia,
Alleluia, Alleluia!

For which reason He (God the Father) sent
the Word, that He might be manifested to
the world; and He, being despised by the
people [of the Jews], was, when preached
by the Apostles, believed on by the Gentiles.
This is He who was from the beginning,
who appeared as if new, and was found old,
and yet who is ever born afresh in the
hearts of the saints. This is He who, being
from everlasting, is to-day called the Son;
through whom the Church is enriched, and
grace, widely spread, increases in the
saints, furnishing understanding, revealing
mysteries, announcing times, rejoicing over
the faithful, giving to those that seek, by
whom the limits of faith are not broken
through, nor the boundaries set by the
fathers passed over. (St Polycarp of Smyrna, c
early 100s AD)