



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, January 7: Synaxis of St John the Baptist

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

Tuesday, January 9

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Wednesday, January 10

6:30 pm Daily Vespers

7:00 pm Bible Study

Thursday, January 11

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Saturday, January 13

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Parish Vigil

Sunday, January 14

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

Synaxis of St John the Baptizer

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

January 7, 2024

Announcements

➤ **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. Some pious Orthodox Christians will take a few pieces of the antidoron bread home and eat a small amount each day along with drinking holy water. This is an ancient and holy 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.

➤ Our **annual Yearly Parish Meeting** will be held on Sunday, January 28 after the Divine Liturgy. Only adult parish members in good standing (participants in the sacramental life of the church and financially supporting) may vote in the meeting. Any questions about eligibility should be directed to Fr Thomas.

Looking ahead:

Monday, March 18 – Great Lent Begins

Sunday, March 31 – Western Easter

Sunday, May 5 – Holy Pascha

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 servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family and Donya Yewisiak. From **Doris Wasilko** for the health of sister, Marsha. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, Nick Yurkowski; for the health of sisters, Doris & Marsha. From **Mat. Joni Soroka** for the health of father, John Naiser on his 93rd birthday. From **Dawna Beckett** for the departed servants, Gregory, Donald, and Michael; for the health of my family. From **Richard & Sonia Blaha** for the departed servants, father, Pete, mothers, Dorothy & Betty, brother, Robert, and a special friend; for the health of family, friends, siblings, and serving soldiers; for special intention, peace, and birthdays. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton and Rowyn Scott. From **John Mahalchak family** for the departed servant, Dimitri Mahalchak; for the health of friends & family, John, Cheryl, Gregory, Cindy, Daniel, and Mary.

Thank you

➤ to our **January donors:** Matushka Nancy MNeil and Gregory Mell (All categories: Bulletin \$60, Holy Bread \$50, Altar Candles \$25, Communion Wine \$40, Incense \$10) in loving memory of the departed servant of God, Deacon Joseph Mell.

This Week in Church School

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

Verse (younger classes): Hebrews 11:1- "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Questions to ask/review:

- Give examples of people from the Old Testament who were faithful to God. Did they ever "see" God? How did they persevere?
- What does it mean that we are surrounded by a "cloud full of witnesses"?

Verse (older classes): Hebrews 7:17- "For He testifies: 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'"

Questions to ask/review:

- Where was the law of Moses received?
- Who were the priests of the law of Moses?
- What was the role of sacrifice in the law of Moses? How were sins taken away?
- Explain how Melchizedek was different than the Levite priests.
- What did Melchizedek do for Abraham? What happened to Melchizedek?
- How is Jesus like Melchizedek? How is Jesus also different from the Levites?
- How did Melchizedek prefigure the New Testament?

Suggested Activities at home:

- Discuss examples of things that are unseen but we know exist (ex: the wind).
- Role play the blessing of Abraham by Melchizedek.

Prayer: Lord, may we today have great faith like your servants of old. OR Lord, thank you for taking away our sins forever.

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, January 7

Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Thy grave,
seeking Thy most pure body.
Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it.
Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.
O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, //
glory to Thee.

Tone 1 Troparion (Feast)

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan,
the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.
For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee,
and called Thee His beloved Son;
and the Spirit in the form of a dove
confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ our God, Who hast revealed Thyself //
and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

Tone 2 Troparion (Forerunner)

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with
hymns of praise,
but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O
Forerunner.
Thou wast shown in truth to be the most
honorable of the Prophets,
for thou wast deemed worthy to baptize in the
streams of the Jordan Him Whom they
foretold.
Therefore, having suffered for the truth with
joy,
thou didst proclaim to those in hell God Who
appeared in the flesh,
Who takes away the sin of the world, //
and grants us great mercy.

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

Tone 6 Kontakion (Forerunner)

The river Jordan trembled, and was driven back,
filled with fear at Thy coming in the flesh,

while John drew back in awe
as he fulfilled the ministry of the Spirit.
The ranks of Angels stood amazed
when they beheld Thee baptized in the stream.
And we who were in darkness are filled with
light. //
We praise Thee, O God made manifest, as Thou
dost enlighten all.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 4 Kontakion (Feast)

Today Thou hast shone forth to the world, O
Lord,
and the light of Thy countenance has been
marked on us.
Knowing Thee, we sing Thy praises:
“Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, //
O unapproachable Light.”

Tone 1 Prokeimenon (Sunday After)

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

Tone 7 Prokeimenon (Forerunner)

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord / and
shall hope in Him. (*Ps. 63:11a*)

Epistle of the Sunday (Ephesians 4:7-13)

ut to each one of us grace was given according
to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He
says:

“When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men.”

(Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean
but that He also first descended into the lower
parts of the earth? He who descended is also the
One who ascended far above all the heavens,
that He might fill all things.)

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some
prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors
and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for
the work of ministry, for the edifying of the
body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of
the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of
God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the
stature of the fullness of Christ;

Gospel of the Sunday (Matthew 4:12-17)

Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in
prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving
Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum,
which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun
and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which
was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles:
The people who sat in darkness have seen a
great light,
And upon those who sat in the region and
shadow of death
Light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say,
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Hymn to the Theotokos (Feast)

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin
Theotokos,
more honorable than the heavenly hosts!

No tongue knows how to praise thee worthily, O
Theotokos;
even angels are overcome with awe praising
thee.
But since thou art good, accept our faith;
for thou knowest our love inspired by God!
Thou art the defender of Christians, and we
magnify thee.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in
the highest! (Ps. 148:1) The righteous shall be
in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear
evil tidings! (Ps. 111:6) Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia!

The Spirit of God Descending Like a Dove

But why in the fashion of a dove? Gentle is that
creature, and pure. Forasmuch then as the Spirit too
is a Spirit of meekness, He therefore appears in this
sort. And besides, He is reminding us of an ancient
history. For so, when once a common shipwreck had
overtaken the whole world, and our race was in
danger of perishing, this creature appeared, and
indicated the deliverance from the tempest, and
bearing an olive branch, Genesis 8 published the good
tidings of the common calm of the whole world; all
which was a type of the things to come. For in fact the
condition of men was then much worse, and they
deserved a much sorer punishment. To prevent your
despairing, therefore, He reminds you of that history.
Because then also, when things were desperate, there
was a sort of deliverance and reformation; but then
by punishment, now, on the contrary, by grace and an
unspeakable gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15) Therefore the
dove also appears, not bearing an olive branch, but
pointing out to us our Deliverer from all evils, and
suggesting the gracious hopes. For not from out of an
ark does she lead one man only, but the whole world
she leads up into heaven at her appearing, and
instead of a branch of peace from an olive, she
conveys the adoption to all the world's offspring in
common.

Reflect now on the greatness of the gift, and do not
account His dignity the less for His appearing in such
a likeness. For I actually hear some saying, that such
as is the difference between a man and a dove, so
great is that between Christ and the Spirit: since the
one appeared in our nature, the other in the likeness
of a dove. What must we say then to these things?
That the Son of God did indeed take upon Him the
nature of man, but the Spirit took not on Him the
nature of a dove. Therefore the evangelist also said
not, in the nature of a dove, but in the form of a dove.
Accordingly, never after did He so much as appear in
this fashion, but at that moment only.. For the truth
of an economy is one thing, and the condensation of
a temporary vision another. (*Chrysostom*)