



## 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 21

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

### Tuesday, January 23

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

### Wednesday, January 24

6:30 pm Daily Vespers

7:00 pm Bible Study

### Thursday, January 25

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

### Saturday, January 27

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Parish Vigil

### Sunday, January 28

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

### Thirty-third Sunday after Pentecost

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org January 21, 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!

➤ 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.

➤ **Yearly reports** for the annual meeting are due in electronic format to Deb Burgess TODAY. Please contact Deb for info.

### 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 servants, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family and Donya Yewisiak. From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants, father, Charles, grandmother, Susan Wasilko, and Dn. Joseph Mell. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servants, Dn. Joseph Mell and grandmother, Susan Wasilko; for the health of Gregory Mell on his birthday. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servants, brother, Raymond (1/10/17), parents, Charles & Mary, and grandmother, Susan Wasilko; Happy Birthday & Many Years to Nancy Shaytar, Jan Widel, and Sandi Tirpak! From **Rdr. Alexei** for the health of Abigail. From **the Porter family** for the newly departed servant, Richard. From **Richard & Sonia Blaha** for the departed servants, Helen, Robert, Garrie and Paul; parents, brother, newly departed Uncle John Blaha and Richard Porter; for the health of family, friends, siblings, and serving soldiers; for special intentions, peace, anniversaries and birthdays. From **John & Olga** for the health of Galina Vilkova. From **Kristie Mertz** for the health of Annaliese. From **John Mahalchak family** for the health of friends and family, John, Cheryl, Daniel, Mary, Gregory, Cindy, and Sarah.

## Thank you

➤ to our **January donors:** Matushka Nancy MNell 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

**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:** First Letter of St Peter

**Verse (younger classes):** 1 Peter 2- “you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house...the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.”

**Questions to ask/review:**

- How is God like a rock?
- What is a cornerstone?
- Why does Peter call Christ “the chief cornerstone”?

**Verse (older classes):** 1 Peter 1:25- “But the word of the Lord endures forever.”

**Questions to ask/review:**

- Who was Peter? What was his role in the early Church?
- What is Scripture? Where did the books of the Bible come from?
- How does the Word of the Lord “endure forever” in the Church? Give multiple examples.
- What misunderstanding do some Christians have about the role of Scripture?
- What does Orthodoxy teach about Scripture and Tradition?

**Suggested Activities at home:**

- Using blocks or other materials, construct a building. Find a cornerstone and decorate it. Try to build on different surfaces. Discuss the meaning of building our lives on firm foundations.
- Play Jenga!
- Explore the different letters of the Scriptures that we have studied. Make a collage of your favorite verses..

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to build my life on You as my rock OR Lord, may Your Word endure with me throughout my life. Amen.

# Hymns and Readings for Sunday, January 21

## **Tone 8 Troparion** (Resurrection)

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One!

Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!//

O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, 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.

## **Tone 8 Troparion** (Ven. Maximus)

O Champion of Orthodoxy, teacher of purity and of true worship,

the enlightener of the universe and the adornment of hierarchs;

all wise Father Maximus, thy teachings have gleamed with light upon all things.//

Intercede before Christ God to save our souls!

## **Tone 8 Kontakion** (Resurrection)

By rising from the tomb, Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam.

Eve exults in Thy Resurrection,//

and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

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

## **Tone 3 Kontakion** (St Nicholas)

O Saint you revealed yourself in Myra as a priest,

for you fulfilled the Gospel of Christ

by giving up your soul for your people,

and saving the innocent from death.//

Therefore you are blessed as one well learned in the grace of God.

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

## **Tone 8 Kontakion** (Ven. Maximus)

Let us the faithful fittingly praise the lover of the Trinity,

the great Maximus who taught the God-inspired faith,

that Christ is to be glorified in His two natures, wills, and energies;//

and let us cry to him: “Rejoice, herald of the faith!”

## **Tone 8 Prokeimenon** (Resurrection)

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God!

## **Epistle of the Sunday** (Colossians 1:12-18)

...giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

## **Gospel of the Sunday** (Matthew 22:1-14)

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.’” ’ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

## **Communion Hymn**

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

## **St Maximus the Confessor on God**

1. First the intellect marvels when it reflects on the absolute infinity of God, that boundless sea for which it longs so much. Then it is amazed at

how God has brought things into existence out of nothing. But just as 'His magnificence is without limit' (Ps. 145:3. LXX), so 'there is no penetrating His purposes' (Isa. 40:28).

2. How can the intellect not marvel when it contemplates that immense and more than astonishing sea of goodness? Or how is it not astounded when it reflects on how and from what source there have come into being both nature endowed with intelligence and intellect, and the four elements which compose physical bodies, although no matter existed before their generation? What kind of potentiality was it which, once actualized, brought these things into being? But all this is not accepted by those who follow the pagan Greek philosophers, ignorant as they are of that all-powerful goodness and its effective wisdom and knowledge, transcending the human intellect.

3. God is the Creator from all eternity, and He creates when He wills, in His infinite goodness, through His coessential Logos and Spirit. Do not raise the objection: 'Why did He create at a particular moment since He is good from all eternity?' For I reply that the unsearchable wisdom of the infinite essence does not come within the compass of human knowledge.

4. When the Creator willed. He gave being to and manifested that knowledge of created things which already existed in Him from all eternity. For in the case of almighty God it is ridiculous to doubt that He can give being to anything when He so wills..

5. Try to learn why God created; for that is true knowledge. But do not try to learn how He created or why He did so comparatively recently; for that does not come within the compass of your intellect Of divine realities some may be apprehended by men and others may not. Unbridled speculation, as one of the saints has said, can drive one headlong over the precipice.