



Whether you're searching for a new church home or just visiting, we're 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 use the QR Code as your offering today. Please join us downstairs following the service. We want to get to know you! God bless you!



This Week

Sunday, December 1

10:00 am Divine Liturgy / Church School

Tuesday, December 3

No Services (see announcement)

Thursday, December 5

9:00 am Matins

9:30 am Office Hours

7:00 pm Festal Vigil

Friday, December 6: Feast of St Nicholas

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 7

3:30 pm Exploring Orthodoxy

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Parish Vigil

Sunday, December 8

10:00 am Divine Liturgy / Church School

6:00 pm Holy Unction (St Alexander Cathedral)

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*

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

December 1, 2024

Announcements

➤ This Friday is the Patronal Feast of our parish, St Nicholas of Myra. **On Thursday evening at 7:00 pm we will serve the festal Vigil and Friday morning at 9:30 am we will celebrate the Divine Liturgy.** All are encouraged to attend!

➤ On Tuesday morning, Fr Thomas will be making a presentation to the students of parishioner, Dr Russell Martin, at Westminster College in New Wilmington PA. Therefore, **Matins and Office Hours on Tuesday have been canceled.**

➤ Would you please consider a special **financial offering to help defray the costs of flowers** for the Nativity holiday? Thank you for your love of God's House! Earmark your offering for flowers.

➤ **Our annual St Nicholas Day Dinner** will be held on Sunday, December 8 after the Divine Liturgy. There is no cost. See you there! His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek will lead the Divine Liturgy for us.

➤ **The Sacrament of Holy Unction** (anointing for the healing of the sick) will be held on Sunday, December 8 at 6:00 pm at St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Allison Park.

➤ Last Call! **Parish Christmas Card Project** benefits the monthly community food pantry. We ask each parishioner/family to donate \$10 to have their name(s) listed on the card which will be sent to parishioners in early December. Please see Jan Widell or Marsha Wasilko to participate.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized* Bob Brewster (Presbyterian Oakland); *Home:* Sonia Blaha, John Mahalchak (son). William Warnak, Nancy Shaytar, Natalie Toooh. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Natalie Popovich, Michael Soroka.

➤ **Vigil Lights** From **Mat. Nancy K. Mell & Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. From **Doris Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family and cousin, Cynthia Bottomly. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of Bob Brewster and Paul Fuller. From **Donya Yewisiak** for the health of Paul Fuller. From **Mr. & Mrs. Richard Blaha** for the departed servants, parents, brother, family, and newly departed; for the health of family, friends, siblings, serving soldiers & Paul; for special intention, peace, anniversaries, and birthdays. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of the Hamilton & Scott families. From **Mat. Joni Soroka** for the departed servant, mother, Barbara; for the health of father, John; special intentions. From **John Mahalchak Family** for the departed servants, John, Veronica, Dimitri, Anna, and Helen; for the health of friends and family, John, Cheryl, John, Daniel, Mary, Kayla Elizabeth, Priya Elizabeth, Gregory, Cindy, Jerome, Joseph, and Margaret; Happy Birthday to my wife, Cheryl. From **Nancy Shaytar** for the departed servants, husband, George, Andrew & Anna Shaytar and Michael & Sophia Kraynak. From **Kristie Mertz** for the health of Janice, Cheryl, and Ellie. From the **Yurkowski family** for the departed servant, Julia Yurkowski. From **John Kowalcheck** for the departed servant, Carol Ann Kowalcheck; for the health of Galina Vilkoova and Olga Cozza.

Thank You

➤ to our **December** donors: **Donya Yewisiak** (\$50 for Festal Altar Candles) in memory of mother, Matushka Olga Soroka. **Jan and Chuck Widell** (\$60 for Bulletin) in memory of departed family and for the health of family and friends.

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: Balaam

Scripture reference: Numbers 22-24

Questions to ask/review:

- Who was King Balak? Who was Balaam?
- Why did Balak want to curse the Israelites? What was Balaam's first response?
- Why did Balaam decide to go to meet with Balak?
- What happened when Balaam left with his donkey?
- How did God use His angels? What did Balaam learn?
- Did Balaam obey God?
- Do you obey God? Reflect on a time you struggled like Balaam.
- What are angels? What are other examples of angels in the Scriptures? Who encountered an angel?
- Who is Lucifer? What do we call Lucifer now?
- What are prophets? What is their role?

Suggested Activities at home:

- When driving in the car together, say "Stop Donkey!" each time you see a red light or stop sign.
- Create a diorama illustrating Balaam's journey.

Prayer: Lord, stop us if we go the wrong way, like You did for Balaam.



Hymns and Readings for Sunday, December 1

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 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 2 Troparion (Prophet Nahum)

We celebrate the memory
of Thy prophet Nahum, O Lord;
through him we beseech Thee://
“Save our souls!”

Tone 6 Kontakion (Resurrection)

When Christ God, the Giver of Life,
raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery
with His mighty hand,
He bestowed resurrection on the human race.//
He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life,
and the God of all.

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

Tone 4 Kontakion (Prophet Nahum)

Illumined by the Spirit, thy heart was a vessel of
illustrious prophecy,
seeing far-off things as though they were
present.//

Therefore, we venerate thee, glorious prophet
Nahum.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion (Theotokos)

Steadfast protectress of Christians,
constant advocate before the Creator,
do not despise the cry of us sinners,
but in your goodness come speedily to help us
who call on you in faith.
Hasten to hear our intercessions and to
intercede for us, O Theotokos
For you always protect those who honor you.

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

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

Epistle Ephesians 2:4-10 (Sunday)

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His
great love with which He loved us, even when
we were dead in trespasses, made us alive
together with Christ (by grace you have been
saved), and raised us up together, and made us
sit together in the heavenly places in Christ
Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show
the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness
toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have
been saved through faith, and that not of
yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works,
lest anyone should boast. For we are His
workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good
works, which God prepared beforehand that we
should walk in them.

Gospel Luke 18:18-27 (Sunday)

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good
Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good?
No one is good but One, that is, God. You know

the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’
‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear
false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your
mother.’ ”

And he said, “All these things I have kept from
my youth.”

So when Jesus heard these things, He said to
him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you
have and distribute to the poor, and you will
have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

But when he heard this, he became very
sorrowful, for he was very rich.

And when Jesus saw that he became very
sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those
who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!
For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye
of a needle than for a rich man to enter the
kingdom of God.”

And those who heard it said, “Who then can be
saved?”

But He said, “The things which are impossible
with men are possible with God.”

Communion Hymn

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

We, as Orthodox Christians, affirm as
clearly and unambiguously as any
Lutheran, for example, that
“salvation is by grace” and not by our works.
Unlike medieval Catholicism, Orthodoxy does
not hold that a person can build up a “treasury
of merits” that will count in our favor at the
Judgment Seat of Christ. What will matter then
is our having surrendered our sin to God
through confession, and our gestures of love
(Mt. 25), together with the unshakable

conviction that “Jesus Christ is Lord,” and the
unique Way to eternal life.

Orthodoxy does recognize, however, the
importance of our “cooperation” with God, what
we term “synergy.” “Salvation,” as we usually
understand the word, is only the beginning of a
pilgrimage that leads us through this life,
through our physical death, and into life beyond.
Salvation, accomplished by the death and
resurrection of Christ, means freedom from the
consequences of our sinfulness: separation from
the holiness and love of the God who desires
only that we be saved and enter into eternal and
joyful communion with himself. If we were not
continually tempted to fall back into sin, there
would be no need for such a “synergy.” Then we
could declare, with absolute confidence, “once
saved, always saved!” Temptation and spiritual
struggle, however, mark every day of our life.
And the way we face and, by the grace of God,
overcome those forces (demonic powers), is
precisely through the “spiritual warfare,” the
ascetic struggle that enables us to confront
those forces day by day and overcome their
destructive influence.

This is why, in the same letter to the Colossians,
the apostle can declare: “I rejoice in my
sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I
complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions
for the sake of his body, the Church” (1:24). We
may not suffer as Paul did, risking our very life
for the gospel, enduring torture, hardship,
hunger and rejection by one’s own people.
Nevertheless, our small efforts, of fasting,
prostrations, intense participation in long
liturgical services—like almsgiving and other
acts of love offered to those in need—enable us
also to share in Christ’s own sufferings, which
he will endure in us and for us until he comes
again in glory. That participation is essential;
yet it is not the means by which we are saved.

