



Welcome!

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 fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. Please join us downstairs following the Divine Liturgy. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

This Week

- Friday, December 22**
10:00 am – Royal Hours of the Nativity
- Saturday, December 23**
5:00 pm – Great Vespers
- Sunday, December 24 – Christmas Eve**
No Adult Education (Resumes January 7)
10:00 am - Divine Liturgy
No Church School (Resumes January 7)
8:00 pm – Vigil of the Nativity
- Monday, December 25 – Nativity of our Lord**
10:00 am – Festal Divine Liturgy
- Tuesday, December 26 – Synaxis of the Theotokos**
9:30 am – Divine Liturgy

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*
Mat. Janet Mihalick, *Choir Director*

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org Dec 17, 2017

Announcements

- **Everyone is invited downstairs** to enjoy our yearly Christmas program (“Yolka” the Russian word *ёлка* means “Christmas tree”), for the children and students of our parish. Thank you to Matushka Joni, the teachers and the parents – and of course, the students – for preparing our program today!
- **We are in need of your** generous donations for Christmas flowers which adorn our temple. You may use the envelopes earmarked for Christmas flowers, or give your donation at the candle desk. Thank you and God bless you!

Thank You

- to all those who helped organize and/or contributed to our first **mini-symposium** on “Orthodox Perspectives on the Reformation.” We want to especially thank Heidi Lewis, our speakers, all those who made food, served, greeted, set-up and cleaned. May God richly bless you!
- to our December bulletin donors: **Jim and Leslie Wokutch** given in blessed memory of Deacon Joseph Mell and Olga Mell.
- to all those brought gifts for those in need on our **Angel Tree** These gifts are being distributed by the Holy Family Institute to local families. Thank you to Donya Yewisiak for coordinating.
- to all who participated in the annual leaf service project! The efforts of Matushka Joni, the Reed family, Erik Wenger, Christoph and Analiese Mertz, the Lewis family, and Noah and Jonah Loboda were greatly appreciated.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm: Known to be Hospitalized** (none)
Home: Jack Saban, Georgiann Robes, George Shaytar. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Olga Bednar, Stephanie Kowal, John Shaytar, Olga Tryszyn, Mary Zapp.

From From Mat. Nancy K. Mell and Gregory Mell for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servants, (grandmother) Katherine Dyczko (12/15/68) and Marie Baronyak. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, (grandmother) Katherine Dyczko. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants, (uncle) Joe Dichko and (grandmother) Katherine Dyczko; for the health of the Wasilko family. **From John & Nancy Pravlochak** for the health of (grandson) Alex on his 21st birthday, (son) John on his birthday and for the health of (grandson) Michael. **From Mat. Joni Soroka** for the departed servant, (mother) Barbara; for the health of our families. **From Tatyana Sechler** for the departed servants, Polina, Galina, Slava, Olga, Valentina, Bruce and Lydia,; for the health of Veronika, Tatyana, Sergey, and Daina, **From Yelena Paclawski** for the health of Dylan on his birthday (Dec. 17th).

Please consider giving a special year-end gift to our parish!



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.

Icon Donors

We are very grateful to our icon donors who generously sponsored the new iconography which is being blessed today.

- Large Icons**
- St Herman of Alaska** – Larry and Suzy Polny
- St Innocent of Alaska** - Anonymous
- St Constantine** – John Billak and Helen Billak
- St Helen** - John Billak and Helen Billak
- St Mary Magdelene** – Bob and Mary Beth Madalinsky
- St Mary of Egypt** – Kevin Maloney
- St John of Damascus** – Mark and Erin Hamilton
- St Ephrem the Syrian** – John and Valentina Barsom

- Medallion Icons**
- St Tikhon of Moscow** – Carole Lupka
- St Alexis Toth of Wilkes-Barre** – Eleanor Kovacs
- Patriarch Joseph the All-Comely** – Eric and Missy Wenger
- Blessed Aseneth** – Chris and Edith Humphrey
- St Joanna the Myrrhbearer** – Bob and Marybeth Madalinsky
- St Symeon the New Theologian** – Kevin Maloney
- St Barbara** – Barbara Naiser Memorial Donations
- St Penelope** – Doug and Jessica Baker

We also want to thank those who came to assist Fr Theodore to help paint the decorative border: Missy Wenger, Suzy Polny, Albena Ivanova, Lois Fuller, Matthew Yurkowski, and Amy Elizabeth Reed; to Bob Brewster for his heroic efforts in sponge-painting the lower wall, to all the men who built up and tore down the scaffolding; and especially to those who came on Friday afternoon to put all the pews back in place, which is a legthy and strenuous job.

May God richly bless all of you for your love of God's temple! Thank you!

Hymns and Readings for Today

Dec 17, 2017

Troparion of the Resurrection Tone 3

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm!

He has trampled down death by death!

He has become the first born of the dead!

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
and has granted to the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Forefathers Tone 2

Through faith Thou didst justify the Forefathers,
betrotting through them the Church of the gentiles.

These Saints exult in glory,

for from their seed came forth a noble fruit;

She who without seed did bear Thee.

By their entreaties, O Christ God, save our souls!

Kontakion of the Forefathers Tone 2

O thrice-blessed ones,

You did not worship the image made by man,

but armed with the invisible power of God,

you were glorified in a trial by fire.

From the midst of unbearable flames you called on
God, crying:

“Hasten, O compassionate One!

Prokeimenon of the Fathers Tone 4

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and
praised and glorified is Thy name forever

Epistle of the Sunday (Col 3:4-11)

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also
will appear with Him in glory.

Therefore put to death your members which are on
the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil
desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
Because of these things the wrath of God is coming
upon the sons of disobedience, in which you
yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

But now you yourselves are to put off all these:
anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language
out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since
you have put off the old man with his deeds, and
have put on the new man who is renewed in
knowledge according to the image of Him who

created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew,
circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian,
Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Gospel of the Sunday (Luke 14:16-24)

Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great
supper and invited many, and sent his servant at
supper time to say to those who were invited,
‘Come, for all things are now ready.’

But they all with one accord began to make
excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a
piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you
to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have
bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test
them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another
said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot
come.’

So that servant came and reported these things to
his master. Then the master of the house, being
angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the
streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the
poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’

And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you
commanded, and still there is room.’

Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into
the highways and hedges, and compel them to
come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to
you that none of those men who were invited shall
taste my supper.’”

Communion Hymns (Ps 148:1)

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the
highest! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Nativity Sermon

By **St Leo the Great (5th c)**

*I. All share in the joy of Christmas
(continued next page)*

Our Saviour, dearly-beloved, was born today: let us
be glad. For there is no proper place for sadness,
when we keep the birthday of the Life, which
destroys the fear of mortality and brings to us the
joy of promised eternity. No one is kept from
sharing in this happiness. There is for all one
common measure of joy, because as our Lord the
destroyer of sin and death finds none free from
charge, so is He come to free us all. Let the saint
exult in that he draws near to victory. Let the sinner
be glad in that he is invited to pardon. Let the
gentile take courage in that he is called to life. For
the Son of God in the fullness of time which the
inscrutable depth of the Divine counsel has
determined, has taken on him the nature of man,
thereby to reconcile it to its Author: in order that the
inventor of death, the devil, might be conquered
through that (nature) which he had conquered. And
in this conflict undertaken for us, the fight was
fought on great and wondrous principles of
fairness; for the Almighty Lord enters the lists with
His savage foe not in His own majesty but in our
humility, opposing him with the same form and the
same nature, which shares indeed our mortality,
though it is free from all sin. ...

*II. The mystery of the Incarnation is a fitting
theme for joy both to angels and to men*

Therefore the Word of God, Himself God, the Son
of God who in the beginning was with God, through
whom all things were made and without whom was
nothing made John 1:1-3, with the purpose of
delivering man from eternal death, became man: so
bending Himself to take on Him our humility without
decrease in His own majesty, that remaining what
He was and assuming what He was not, He might
unite the true form of a slave to that form in which
He is equal to God the Father, and join both
natures together by such a compact that the lower
should not be swallowed up in its exaltation nor the
higher impaired by its new associate. Without
detriment therefore to the properties of either
substance which then came together in one person,
majesty took on humility, strength weakness,
eternity mortality: and for the paying off of the debt,
belonging to our condition, inviolable nature was
united with passible nature, and true God and true
man were combined to form one Lord, so that, as
suited the needs of our case, one and the same

Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ
Jesus, could both die with the one and rise again
with the other.

Rightly therefore did the birth of our Salvation
impart no corruption to the Virgin's purity, because
the bearing of the Truth was the keeping of honour.
Such then beloved was the nativity which became
the Power of God and the Wisdom of God even
Christ, whereby He might be one with us in
manhood and surpass us in Godhead. For unless
He were true God, He would not bring us a remedy,
unless He were true Man, He would not give us an
example. Therefore the exulting angel's song when
the Lord was born is this, Glory to God in the
Highest, and their message, peace on earth to men
of good will Luke 2:14 . For they see that the
heavenly Jerusalem is being built up out of all the
nations of the world: and over that indescribable
work of the Divine love how ought the humbleness
of men to rejoice, when the joy of the lofty angels is
so great?

*III. Christians then must live worthily of Christ
their Head*

Let us then, dearly beloved, give thanks to God the
Father, through His Son, in the Holy Spirit , Who for
His great mercy, wherewith He has loved us, has
had pity on us: and when we were dead in sins, has
quickenened us together in Christ Ephesians 2:4-5,
that we might be in Him a new creation and a new
production. Let us put off then the old man with his
deeds: and having obtained a share in the birth of
Christ let us renounce the works of the flesh.
Christian, acknowledge your dignity, and becoming
a partner in the Divine nature, refuse to return to
the old baseness by degenerate conduct.
Remember the Head and the Body of which you
are a member. Recollect that you were rescued
from the power of darkness and brought out into
God's light and kingdom. By the mystery of Baptism
you were made the temple of the Holy Ghost: do
not put such a denizen to flight from you by base
acts, and subject yourself once more to the devil's
thralldom: because your purchase money is the
blood of Christ, because He shall judge you in truth
Who ransomed you in mercy, who with the Father
and the Holy Spirit reigns for ever and ever. Amen.