



# 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.. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

# This Week

## Today

**After Liturgy** – Trisagion for the Departed  
In memory of Stephanie Kowal (40<sup>th</sup> day)  
In memory of John Shaytar (9<sup>th</sup> day)

## Wednesday, February 7

**6:30 pm** – Daily Vespers  
**7:00 pm** – Bible Study

## Saturday, February 10

**9:30 am** – Memorial Divine Liturgy  
**11:30 am** – Pan-Orthodox Choir Rehearsal  
**4:30 pm** - Confessions  
**5:00 pm** – Great Vespers  
**5:30 pm** – Parish Choir Rehearsal

## Sunday, February 11

**9:15 am** – Adult Education  
**10:00 am** – Divine Liturgy  
Church School following

**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 Feb 4, 2018

# Announcements

➤ **Please see the enclosed 2018 Lenten Schedule** in today's bulletin. Please give prayerful consideration to your increased participation in the beautiful and meaningful services of the Lenten season. Let us journey together to the Holy Pascha! **Great Lent begins on Monday, February 19 and Pascha is on Sunday April 8.** (Western Easter is on Sunday, April.

The schedule is subject to change. Please consult the online calendar on our website for the latest information. Any changes will also be communicated via email and an updated version of the calendar issued.

Please note that the significant change this year is the time of the Paschal services. The Lenten pastoral letter will be sent this week to explain the reasons for this change.

➤ **Sisterhood News:** There will be a very brief Sisterhood meeting today to confirm Alexandra Gajewski as our Vice President.

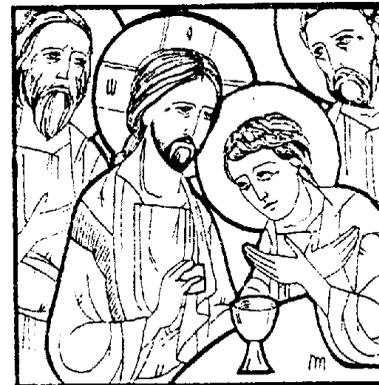
➤ **Our annual Blini** (Russian crepe) dinner will be held on Cheesefare Sunday, February 18. Details coming soon! Next week, Meatfare Sunday, our coffee hour will feature a variety of meat dishes sponsored by the men of our parish.



# Prayers

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

➤ **From Mat. Nancy K. Mell and Gregory Mell** for the departed servants, John Shaytar and Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servant, John Shaytar; for the health of the Wasilko family; special thanks. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, John Shaytar. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants, (uncle) Mike Dyczko and John Shaytar; for the health of the Wasilko family. **From John Kowalcheck & Olga Cozza** for the departed servant, John Shaytar; for the health of Anatoly & Galina Vilkov. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the health of my family; special intentions. **From George M. Shaytar** for the departed servant, (uncle) John Shaytar. **From George & Nancy Shaytar** for the departed servant, (brother) John.



# Thank You

➤ to Matushka Nancy Mell and Gregory Mell for their donation of all monthly categories for the month of January, in beloved memory of Deacon Joseph Mell. God bless you!.

**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.**

# Prodigal Son

## Synaxarion of the Sunday of the Prodigal Son

*If anyone be a prodigal as I, take courage and turn back; for the gates of God's mercies are opened to all.*

On this day we celebrate the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, dedicated as the second service of the Triodion by the divine Fathers for the following reason. There are some who recognize much in themselves that is unbecoming, who live a life of great dissipation from their youth, whose lives are full of drunkenness and immorality, who having fallen thus into the depths of evil, become despondent, giving birth to pride, from whence they have no desire to advance to any of the virtues, preferring their bondage to evil and falling ever deeper into evil. Having a fatherly love for even these individuals, and desiring to lead them out of their despair, the Holy Fathers prescribed this parable for the second preparatory Sunday in order to tear up the passion of despair by the roots, to lead them to acceptance of the virtues, and to demonstrate to sinners the abundance of God's compassion upon sinners and prodigals in His great goodness and love for mankind. For there is no sin which cannot be overcome by the knowledge of His love for mankind, and this is what is presented in this parable of Christ.

Now the sons of man, that is of the Word, God and Man, are two: the righteous and the sinful. It is the eldest who abides ever in God's blessings, following His commandments and remaining always by Him. But the younger son, having become attached to sin and renouncing his closeness to God through shameful deeds, has wasted God's love for mankind and for him and has lived as a prodigal. For having completely rejected Him after whose image he was created, and having followed an evil demon, willingly enslaving himself to this demon's pleasure, he was unable to fulfill his desire.

# Hymns and Readings for Today

## **Troparion of the Resurrection Tone 2**

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!

## **Troparion of the Meeting of our Lord Tone 1**

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Grace! From you shone the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those who sat in darkness. Rejoice and be glad, O righteous Elder, you accepted in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who grants us the Resurrection!

## **Kontakion of the Triodion Tone 3**

I have recklessly forgotten Thy glory, O Father, and among sinners I have scattered the riches which Thou gavest me. And now I cry to Thee as the Prodigal: I have sinned before Thee, O Merciful Father: Receive me a penitent and make me as one of Thy hired servants.

## **Kontakion of the Meeting of our Lord Tone 1**

By Thy Nativity Thou didst sanctify the Virgin's womb and didst bless Simeon's hands, O Christ God. Now Thou hast come and saved us through love. Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of Man!

## **Prokeimenon (Psalm 118) Tone 2**

The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation!

## **Epistle of the Sunday (I Cor 6:12-20)**

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

## **Gospel of the Sunday Luke 15:11-32)**

Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.



"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."'"

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and

kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'

## **Communion Hymn (Ps 148)**

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest!

## **Prodigal Son continued**

For sin is an unsatisfying thing that becomes an habitual source of temporary pleasure. It may be compared to the husks that are fed to swine. At first it seems that they might be something tasty, but they turn out to be very dry and are much like weeds, which is how sin takes possession. For the Prodigal Son had hardly come to his senses when, perishing from hunger for virtue, he comes to his father, saying, "Father, I have sinned before heaven and before thee, and I am not worthy to be called thy son." Yet the father receives him in repentance, not reproaching him, but embracing him and kissing him in a display of divine and fatherly love. And he clothes him, a symbol of baptism, putting a ring on his finger, a symbol of the grace of the all-Holy Spirit. He also puts sandals on his feet, not so much as a protection from some serpent or scorpion that might sting him on his path to God, but rather as a means of crushing the heads of those creatures. And then in a tremendous display of joy he slaughters the fatted calf for him, his only-begotten Son, and the Father grants him communion of his body and blood. Now the elder son expresses his amazement at his father's limitless mercy. But the lover of mankind exhorts him to silence with loving and kind words of humility, saying, "Thou art ever with me, and it was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for my son was formerly dead in his sin and is alive again, having repented of the foolish things he has done. He was lost, since he was far from me in his licentious habits, and he was found by me, suffering in my compassion and calling him back in my mercy." This parable may be applied to us as

well, which is why the holy Fathers have prescribed it for today. We who have sinned as the prodigal are encouraged to weed out despair and fear through repentance, confession and good deeds. For this is a great aid and a powerful weapon against the assaults of the adversary.

In Thine ineffable love for mankind, O Christ our God, have mercy upon us. Amen.



## Today in Church School

**Today's lesson:** Prodigal Son

### **Questions to ask/review:**

- Where did the son go? Why? What did he do with his money?
- Where did he end up, doing what? Why did he go back to his father?
- What did he say? What did his father do and say?
- How did the older brother react to the return of his brother? Why?
- What did the father say to the older brother?
- Was the father "fair" to the brothers? What does this teach us about God's mercy?
- Discuss how God's forgiveness goes beyond our earthly concepts of "fairness".
- When have we acted like the younger brother in our life? The older brother?

### **Suggested activities at home:**

- Read the scripture together before bed: Luke 15:11-32.
- Read Matthew 20:1-16 together. Discuss the parallels of the stories.
- Discuss a past visit to a farm or act it out with farm toys. How do the pigs eat? How do they animals act? Why would the Prodigal Son want to go back home?
- Role play the Father, Prodigal Son, and older brother.
- Prayer: Lord Jesus, Thank you for the love of our earthly fathers and our heavenly Father. Amen.