



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

Wednesday, January 9

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

Saturday, January 12

4:30 pm Confessions
5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, January 13

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

Holy Theophany / The Baptism of Christ

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

January 6, 2019

Announcements

➤ **Congratulations** to Eric and Missy Wenger on the **baptism of their son, Elias**, today. May God grant the Wenger family many blessed years!

➤ **Congratulations** to Kate and John Skowron on the **birth of their daughter, Greta Josephine**, born on Thursday, January 3, weighing 8.3 lbs, 20.5 in long. May God grant the Skowron family many years!

➤ **The 2019 Envelopes** are available in the vestibule. Please financially support your church on a regular basis.

➤ **Our annual parish meeting** will be held on Sunday, January 27 after the Divine Liturgy. Only members in good standing (spiritually and financially) may participate.

➤ **Anyone who would like to have Fr Thomas come to bless their home** should contact him directly at frthomas@orthodoxpittsburgh.org. Everyone is encouraged to have their home blessed during this season of the year.

➤ An open spot is available for one male on a **pilgrimage to Holy Cross Hermitage** leaving on Friday, Feb 15, returning on Sunday Feb/17. Please see Albena Iossifova for more information.

➤ **Our January hoagie sale** is being held on Wednesday, Jan 30. Italian Hoagies and wraps are \$6.50 each and the Turkey hoagies and wraps are \$7.00 each. Orders can be placed by calling 412-974-9912, faxing 724-926-4052 or emailing rjmbmsam1@verizon.net. Orders are due on Sunday evening, Jan 27. Orders can be picked up between noon and 1 pm Jan 30 at the church hall.

Prayers

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

➤ **From Mat. Nancy K. Mell and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servants, Mat. Olga Soroka and Barbara Naiser; for the health of sisters, Doris & Marsha and (neighbor) Betty Castellucci. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servants, Mat. Olga and Barbara Naiser; Happy Birthday & Many Years to Jan Wide! **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants of the Wasilko & Dyczko families; for the health of the Wasilko family. **From The Yurkowski family** for the departed servant, Nicholas Yurkowski (1/1/93). **From Donya Yewisiak** for special intentions. **From Larry & Suzy Polny** for the health of Virginia & Larry. **From Pearl Jula Petkash** for the departed servant, Donald Eugene Petkash. **From Mat. Joni Soroka** for the newly departed servant, (godfather) Larry; for the health of (father) John on his 88th birthday (1/6).

St. Nicholas Community Dinner: All are Welcome- Please join us in supporting this monthly hot meal ministry to our surrounding community. The meals will be served on the **last Saturday of each month from 4-5 pm in the church basement**. Help is needed to prepare & serve the food, set-up & clean-up, and to greet our guests. Please contact Mat. Ashley (Ashley.loboda@gmail.com, #412-715-2163) or Sasha Gajewski (alexandra.mihalick@gmail.com) if you are interested in helping out with any aspect of this ministry. Our first meal will be on January 26.

Thank you

➤ to George and Nancy Shaytar for donating the bulletins for the month of January in memory of John Shayar.

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.

Why Holy Water?

Saint Seraphim, after hearing confessions of pilgrims, always gave them to drink from a cup of Holy Water. Venerable Ambrose sent a bottle with Holy Water to a terminally ill person, and the incurable illness, to the amazement of doctors, was gone. The elder Heiroschemamonk Seraphim Vyritsky always gave advice to sprinkle food products with Holy Water from the Jordan River, which, in his words, "by itself sanctified everything." When someone was very ill, elder (geronda) Seraphim blessed him to take a tablespoon of Holy Water every hour. The elder used to say that there was no stronger medicine than Holy Water and Holy Oil.

Saint John Chrysostom has said that the Water of Theophany remains unspoiled for many years, being fresh, pure and pleasing as if it has been drawn from a living spring at this moment. This is the miracle of God's grace, which even now everyone can see!

According to Church teaching, holy water is not merely water of spiritual significance, but a new spiritual-corporeal creation, an intertwining of heaven and earth, of grace and matter, and a close one at that. This is why the holy water, according to Church holy Canons, is viewed as a kind of lower degree of Holy Communion: in those cases, when a penance and prohibition against approaching (to receive) the Holy Body and Precious Blood is imposed on a member of the Church due to committed sins, there is a provision, usual to Canons: "He may drink holy water only."

The Water of Theophany should be found in the home of every Orthodox Christian. It is carefully kept in the holy corner next to holy icons and a lit vigil light.

One should drink this water daily, especially during sicknesses and times of trouble. After prayer, make the sign of the cross drink this holy water with thanksgiving to God for all things.

Hymns and Readings for Today

The First Antiphon of the Feast

v. When Israel went forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, (Ps.113/114:1)

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

v. Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion. (ibid., v. 2)

v. The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back. (ibid., v. 3)

v. What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou didst flee? Thou Jordan, that thou didst turn back? (ibid., v. 5)

v. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Second Antiphon of the Feast

v. I love the Lord because He has heard my voice and my supplication. (Ps.114/116:1/1)

Refrain: O Son of God, baptized in the Jordan, save us who sing to thee: Alleluia.

v. Because He inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on Him as long as I live. (ibid, v. 2)

v. The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish, then I called on the name of the Lord. (ibid., vv. 3-4)

v. Gracious and righteous is the Lord; our God is merciful. (ibid., v. 5)

v. Glory to the Father...
“Only Begotten Son...”

The Third Antiphon of the Feast

v. O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever. (Ps. 117/118:1) Let the house of Israel now confess that the Lord is good; for His mercy endures forever. (ibid., v. 2)

Refrain: Troparion of the Feast

v. Let the house of Aaron now confess that the Lord is good; for His mercy endures forever. (ibid., v. 3)

Let those who fear the Lord now confess that the Lord is good; for His mercy endures forever. (ibid., v. 4)

Refrain: Troparion of the Feast

Troparion of the Feast Tone 1

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest!

For the voice of the Father bear witness to Thee, calling 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!

Kontakion of the Feast Tone 4

Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, And Thy light, O Lord, hast shone on us,

who with understanding, praise Thee: Thou hast come and revealed Thyself,

O Light Unapproachable!

In Place of Holy God (Gal 3:27, c.f. Rom 6:3)

As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Prokeimenon of the Feast (Psalm 118) Tone 4

Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us!

Epistle of the Feast (Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7)

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Gospel of the Feast (Matthew 3:13-17)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”

But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Hymn to the Theotokos of the Feast

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

No tongue is capable of praising you worthily; the angelic mind is over-awed in exalting you, O Theotokos!

But accept our faith, since you are gracious and know our divine love. You are the Protectress of Christians and we praise you!

Communion Hymn (Titus 1:11)

The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men. Alleluia!

On Theophany by St Sophronius of Jerusalem

Today the grace of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended upon the waters.

Today the Sun that never sets has risen and the world is filled with splendor by the light of the Lord.

Today the moon shines upon the world with the brightness of its rays. Today the glittering stars make the inhabited earth fair with the radiance of their shining.

Today the clouds drop down upon mankind the dew of righteousness from on high. Today the Uncreated of His own will accepts the laying on of hands from His own creature.

Today the Prophet and Forerunner approaches the Master, but stands before Him with trembling, seeing the condescension of God towards us. **Today** the

waters of the Jordan are transformed into healing by the coming of the Lord.

Today the whole creation is watered by mystical streams. Today the transgressions of men are washed away by the waters of the Jordan.

Today Paradise has been opened to men and the Sun of Righteousness shines down upon us. Today the bitter water, as once with Moses and the people of Israel, is changed to sweetness by the coming of the Lord.

Today we have been released from our ancient lamentation, and as the new Israel we have found salvation. Today we have been delivered from darkness and illuminated with the light of the knowledge of God.

Today the blinding mist of the world is dispersed by the Epiphany of our God.

Today the whole creation shines with light from on high.

Today error is laid low and the coming of the Master has made for us a way of salvation.

Today things above keep feast with things below, and things below commune with things above.

Today the triumphant assembly of the Orthodox keeps this holy festival with great joy.

Today the Master hastens towards baptism that He may lift man up to the heights.

Today He that bows not, bows down to His own servant that He may set us free from bondage.

Today we have purchased the Kingdom of Heaven: for the Lord’s Kingdom shall have no end.

Today earth and sea share the joy of the world, and the world is filled with gladness.

The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee and were afraid. The Jordan turned back, seeing the fire of the Godhead descending bodily and entering its stream. The Jordan turned back, beholding the Holy Spirit coming down in the form of a dove and flying about Thee. The Jordan turned back, seeing the Invisible made visible, the Creator made flesh, the Master in the form of a servant. The Jordan turned back and the mountains skipped, looking upon God in the flesh; and the clouds gave voice, marveling at Him who has come, the Light of Light, true God of true God.

For today in the Jordan they saw the triumph of the Master; they saw Him drown in the Jordan the death of disobedience, the sting of error, and the chains of hell, and bestow upon the world the baptism of salvation.