



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

This week is fast-free to avoid the sins of the Pharisee, for the sake of our salvation.

Saturday, February 23

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

Sunday, February 24

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

➤ Important Upcoming Dates:

- Meatfare Sunday – March 3
- Cheesefare Sunday – March 10
- Great Lent Begins (Clean Monday) – March 11
- Western Easter – April 17
- Holy Pascha – April 28

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*

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

February 17, 2019

Announcements

➤ **Congratulations to Kate and John Skowron** on the baptism of their daughter, Greta Josephine and to her godparents, Elisa Mari and Phil Sophis. May God grant them many blessed years!

➤ **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 next meal will be on February 23.

➤ **Our February hoagie sale** is being held on Wednesday, February 27. 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, February 24. Orders can be picked up between noon and 1:00 pm February 27 at the church hall.

➤ Congratulations to our newly elected **Parish Council** for 2019:

- President – John Kowalcheck
- Vice President – *Vacant*
- Recording Secretary – Aaron Pease
- Treasurer – Albena Ivanova
- Financial Secretary – Kristie Mertz
- Members: Michelle Bittner Robert Brewster, Dn Luke Loboda, Olga Noskov, Jonathan Skowron, Fr Thomas Soroka (*ex officio*)

Prayers

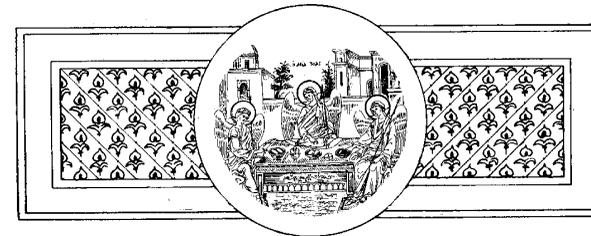
➤ **Ill and infirm: Known to be Hospitalized; Jack Saban (VA). Home: Nancy Pravlochak, Georgiann Robes. Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home: Olga Bednar, Garnette Kerchum, Olga Tryszyn, Mary Zapp.**

➤ **Vigil Lights from Mat. Nancy K. Mell and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family and Reader Leonard Soroka. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of (sisters) Doris & Marsha and Jack Saban. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the health of Nancy Pravlochak. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servant, (brother) Raymond; for the health of the Wasilko family. **From John & Olga** for the departed servant, Ann Marie Kowalcheck; for the health of Anatoly & Galina Vilkov. **From Bob & Mary Beth Madalinsky** for the health of Leonard Soroka. **From Rose Helen Kozemka** for the departed servant, (sister) Gloria Kozemka Henze +1/10/19. **From George & Nancy Shaytar** for the departed servant, Mary Lugin.

Thank you

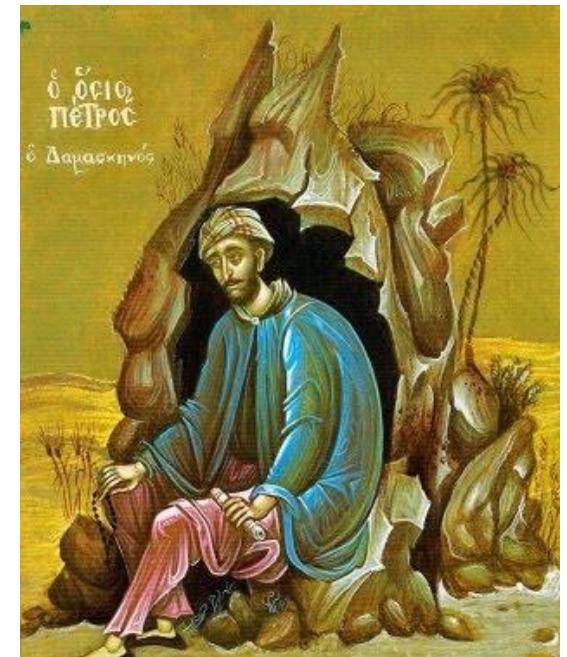
➤ **to Bob and Mary Beth Madalinsky** for donating the bulletins in the month of February in memory of Ann Kunca.

➤ **to Kristie Mertz, Susan Porter, Matushka Joni Soroka and Deacon Luke Loboda** for their assistance with yesterday's St Nicholas Symposium. May God bless you for your faithfulness.



Do Not Despair

Even if you are not what you should be, you should not despair. It is bad enough that you have sinned; why in addition do you wrong God by regarding him in your ignorance as powerless? Is he, who for your sake created the great universe that you behold, incapable of saving your soul? And if you say that this fact, as well as his incarnation, only makes your condemnation worse, then repent; and he will receive your repentance, as he accepted that of the prodigal son (Luke 15:20) and the prostitute (Luke 7:37-50). But if repentance is too much for you, and you sin out of habit even when you do not want to, show humility like the publican (Luke 18:13): this is enough to ensure your salvation. For he who sins without repenting, yet does not despair, must of necessity regard himself as the lowest of creatures, and will not dare to judge or censure anyone. Rather, he will marvel at God's compassion." *St. Peter of Damaskos, "Book I: A Treasury of Divine Knowledge, That Should Not Despair Even if We Sin Many Times," The Philokalia: The Complete Text (Vol. 3)*



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.

Hymns and Readings for Today

Troparion of the Resurrection Tone 5

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
Co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation from the Virgin.
For He willed to be lifted up on the cross in the
flesh
to endure death
and to raise the dead,
by His glorious resurrection.

Troparion of St Nicholas Tone 4

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.

Kontakion from the Lenten Triodion Tone 4

Let us flee from the pride of the Pharisee!
Let us learn humility from the Publican's tears!
Let us cry to our Savior:
"Have mercy on us, //
O only merciful One!"

Prokeimenon (Psalm 12) Tone 5

Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us
from this generation forever.

Epistle of the Sunday (2 Tim 3:10-15)

But you have carefully followed my doctrine,
manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love,
perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which
happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—
what persecutions I endured. And out of them all
the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to
live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.
But evil men and impostors will grow worse and
worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must
continue in the things which you have learned and
been assured of, knowing from whom you have
learned them, and that from childhood you have
known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make

you wise for salvation through faith which is in
Christ Jesus.

Gospel of the Sunday (Luke 18:10-14)

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a
Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The
Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God,
I thank You that I am not like other men—
extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax
collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that
I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off,
would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but
beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a
sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house
justified rather than the other; for everyone who
exalts himself will be humbled, and he who
humbles himself will be exalted."

Communion Hymn (Ps 148)

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

Triodion: Our Preparation

For it was our Holy Fathers' idea that through the
entire Triodion would be commemorated in a
concise form all God's benefits to us from the
beginning, using it as a reminder for all of us that
we were created by Him, and were exiled from
Paradise through the tasting of the fruit, rejecting
the commandment that was given to us for our
knowledge, and we were cast out through the envy
of the arch villain serpent and enemy, who was
made to crawl for his arrogance. That we remained
cut off from the benefits of Paradise and were led
by the devil. That the Son and Word of God, having
suffered in His mercy, bowing the heavens,
descended and made His abode in the Virgin and
became man for our sake, showing us through His
life the ascent into the heavens, through humility
first of all then fasting and the rejection of evil and
through His other deeds. That He suffered and rose
from the dead and ascended once more into
heaven, and He sent down the Holy Spirit upon His
holy disciples and Apostles, who all proclaimed Him

to be the Son of God and the most perfect God.
And that once more the divine Apostles acted
through the grace of the most Holy Spirit and
gathered all the saints from the ends of the earth
through their preaching, filling the world on high,
which was the intention of the Creator from the
beginning. Now the purpose of the Triodion
intended by the Holy Fathers on these three
present feasts of the Publican and the Pharisee,
the Prodigal Son, and the Second Coming is a kind
of preparatory lesson and stimulation to prepare
ourselves for the spiritual labors of the Fast, having
put aside our usual corrupt habits. First of all they
present to us the parable of the Publican and the
Pharisee, and they call the week following
precursory. For those who desire to go off to do
military battle, first ascertain the time of the battle
from the leaders, so that having cleaned and
polished their weapons, and preparing well all their
other matters, and having removed all obstacles
from their path, they earnestly go forth to their
labors, taking the necessary supplies. Often before
battle they tell anecdotes and tales and parables to
incite their hearts to zeal, driving off idleness, fear,
despair and other inadequate feelings. So the
divine Fathers herald the coming fast against the
armies of demons as a passion which holds fast
our souls to cleanse ourselves of the poison
accumulated over a long period of time. Not yet
possessing those benefits, let us strive to obtain
them, and arming ourselves properly, so let us set
off to the labors of the Fast.

Now the first weapon among the virtues is
repentance and humility. And the temptation to
attain the greatest humility is pride and arrogance.
So they place before us first of all this present
trustworthy parable from the Divine Gospel. It
encourages us to shun the desire for the pride and
arrogance of the Pharisee, and to cultivate the
opposite desire of the Publican for humility and
repentance. For the greatest and most grievous
passion is pride and arrogance, since this is how
the Devil fell from the heavens before the morning
star and was cast into darkness. Because of this
Adam, the father of our race, was driven from
Paradise through partaking of the fruit. Through this
example the Holy Fathers encourage all not to be
proud of their successes, but always to be humble.
For the Lord sets Himself against the proud, but He

gives grace to the humble. Better a man who has
sinned, if he knows that he has sinned and repents,
than a man who has not sinned and thinks of
himself as righteous. For Christ said, "I say to you
that the Publican went down to his house justified
rather than the Pharisee." This parable reveals that
no one should exalt himself, even though he has
done good deeds, but rather should always be
humble and pray from his heart to God, for even if
he should fall into the most serious sin, salvation is
not far off.

Today in Church School

Today's lesson: The Seven Ecumenical Councils

Questions to ask/review:

- Who presides over the councils? Why are they called? What example was set by the Jerusalem council in the book of Acts?
- What is meant by "heresy"?
- What was decided at each of the Seven Ecumenical Councils?
- How did each decision clarify our understanding of God and our salvation?
- What was added to the Nicene Creed by the Second Ecumenical Council?
- What was the role of St. Cyril of Alexandria in the Third Ecumenical Council?
- Why were the teachings of Nestorius dangerous to the Church?

Suggested Activities at home:

1. Use the icon of the Theotokos in your icon corner to begin a discussion of the importance of Mary being the "Mother of God". This name reminds us that Christ was both God and man.
2. Prayer: Lord, we honor your mother, Mary the Theotokos, as we are taught by Your servant St. Cyril of Alexandria.

