



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, March 6

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

Saturday, March 9

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

Sunday, March 10 – Cheesefare Sunday

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

➤ Important Upcoming Dates:

- Cheesefare Sunday – March 10
- Great Lent Begins (Clean Monday) – March 11
- *Western Easter* – April 21
- 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 Last Judgment

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org
March 3, 2019

Announcements

➤ Everyone is invited downstairs to enjoy **one last meat feast** before the meat fast begins tomorrow. Thank you to our Orthodox Men's Group for providing today's Meatfare-themed coffee hour!

➤ **Monday begins Cheesefare week.** During this week, on ALL days (including Wednesday and Friday) all eggs, cheese, and other dairy products are permitted, as well as fish.

In the Russian/Slavic tradition, this week is called *Maslenitsa*. It is a pre-Lenten festival where *blini* (thin crepe-like pancakes) are eaten with a variety of cheese, fruit, and vegetable fillings, usually covered in sour cream or fruit sauces.

➤ Next week we'll have our **annual Blini Luncheon** sponsored by the St Nicholas Sisterhood. Delicious blini will be served with all the fillings and toppings, along with pancakes for the children. \$8/ Adult, and \$4/Children 7 and up. Children 6 and under are free. Tickets will be sold at the door.

➤ **“Spiritual Self-Care: Warming Up Our Parishes”** is a Lenten retreat on Saturday, April 13 at St Mary Orthodox Church (OCA) in the Southside led by Mother Christophora of Holy Transfiguration Monastery of Ellwood City. Divine Liturgy begins at 9:30 am followed by a Lenten brunch. The talk begins at 11:30 am and the retreat will end around 1:00 pm. The event is free and open to the public.

➤ **The Lenten schedule** is now available online at our website at orthodoxpittsburgh.org. Check the online calendar often for the latest updates.

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 servants, Dn. Joseph Mell & (newly departed) Barbara Banosky; for the health of family and Michelle Bittner. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of (sisters) Doris & Marsha, Jack Saban and Michelle Bittner. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the health of Michelle Bittner. **From Doris Wasilko** for the health of Michelle Bittner; Happy Birthday & Many Years to Chuck! **From Tatyana Sechler** for the departed servants, Polina, Galina, Slava, Bruce, Valentina, Andrei, Gina, Marina and Lida; for the health of Diana, Adrianna, Edward, Thomas, Christopher, Tatyana, Veronika and Yarolsav. **From Margie Speth** for the health of Brad, Meg, Kim and Lee. **From Donya Yewisiak** for the health of Reader Leonard and Michelle Bittner. **From Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton and Richard Hogya. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the health of Michael on his birthday and support for Michelle & family; special intentions.

Thank you

➤ **to Lindy Hamilton** for donating the bulletins for the month of March in prayerful remembrance of parents Russell and Ethel Marie Hamilton.



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.

Doing Lent as a Family

It's really important, I think, that as children grow into adults they take charge of their Lenten efforts. Ultimately, the fast should be an offering. In the liturgy, we offer up wine and bread and we offer up our hearts, and God transforms them. During the fast, we are offering up our efforts and our repentance and our hearts, and praying that God will transform them! Simply following the rules of the fast is what the Pharisees do, but making a heartfelt offering is what we Christians must do if we hope to participate in this amazing divine transformation. By inviting the kids to work out what their fast will look like, we begin to establish that this is their personal offering to God.

My younger children will add the Prayer of St. Ephraim to their daily prayers for Great Lent. They love the prostrations, and it's such a simple and beautiful prayer. We usually talk about the vocabulary words in the prayer early in the fast, but once they've got a few words, the prayer is so simple and direct that it just makes sense to them. I like to print up several copies of the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim to set around the prayer corner, though the kids quickly learn it by heart. The older kids might choose to increase their personal prayer rules more than this, but I find that St. Ephraim's prayer is beloved by all ages.

This year for the study portion of our fast, we'll be doing daily Lenten meditations together. The family (or just certain kids) might find daily readings too much, so you could skip some of them, or you could pick a different book. I think choosing to read one of the Holy Gospels is a wonderful way to study through the Lenten season, and you can pace yourself in a way that works for your family's rhythm and schedule.

We pray that your Lenten offering brings you great joy this year. May it be blessed! (*Elissa Bjeletich*)

Hymns and Readings for Today

Troparion of the Resurrection Tone 7

By Thy cross, Thou didst destroy death!
To the thief, Thou didst open paradise!
For the myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping
into joy!
And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ
God
to proclaim that Thou art risen,
granting the world great mercy.

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 of the Triodion Tone 1

When Thou, O God, shalt come to earth with glory,
all things shall tremble
and the river of fire shall flow before Thy judgment
seat;
the books shall be opened and the hidden things
disclosed;
then deliver me from the unquenchable fire,
and make me worthy to stand at Thy right hand, O
righteous judge.

Prokeimenon (Psalm 29) Tone 7

The Lord shall give strength to His people! The
Lord shall bless His people with peace!

Epistle (I Cor 8:8-9:2)

But food does not commend us to God; for neither
if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are
we the worse. But beware lest somehow this liberty
of yours become a stumbling block to those who
are weak. For if anyone sees you who have
knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the
conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to
eat those things offered to idols? And because of
your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for
whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against

the brethren, and wound their weak conscience,
you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my
brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I
make my brother stumble.

Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not
seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work
in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet
doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my
apostleship in the Lord.

Gospel (Matthew 25:31-46)

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all
the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the
throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered
before Him, and He will separate them one from
another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the
goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand,
but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to
those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My
Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from
the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and
you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me
drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was
naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you
visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord,
when did we see You hungry and feed You, or
thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a
stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?
Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and
come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to
them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did
it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it
to Me.’

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand,
‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting
fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was
hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and
you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did
not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me,
sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

“Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord,
when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger
or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to
You?’ Then He will answer them, saying,
‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not
do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to
Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting
punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Communion Hymn (Ps 148)

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

Today in Church School

oday's lesson: The Fall of Rome and Rise of the
Byzantine Empire

Questions to ask/review:

- Name some of the tribes who conquered parts
of the Western Roman empire.
- How did the fall of Rome impact the importance
of the bishop of Rome (pope)?
- What does the word “pope” mean?
- There were 5 major bishops (patriarchs) at that
time. Where did they rule? (Rome,
Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem,
Alexandria)
- With the fall of Rome in the West, what city
became the leader of the Christian world?
(Constantinople)
- What is this Eastern Empire called? (Byzantine
empire)
- Who was Justinian? What were his
achievements?
- What is the Hagia Sophia? What are mosaics?

Suggested Activities at home:

Using books or internet, study examples of
Byzantine religious art and architecture. Pictures of
the Hagia Sophia and icon mosaics are helpful.
Discuss the similarities that can be observed in all
Orthodox churches and specifically in Greek
Orthodox churches.

- Create mosaic art with seeds or tiles.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the beauty You allow us
to create to glorify You.

Thoughts on Judgment

Christians, always rejoice, for evil, death, sin, the
devil and hell have been conquered by Christ. But
when all of this is conquered, is there anyone in the
world who can bring our joy to naught? You are the
lord of this eternal rejoicing as long as you do not
give in to sin. Joy burns in our hearts from His truth,
love, resurrection, and from the Church and His
saints. Joy burns in our hearts all because of
sufferings for Him, mockings for Him, and death for
Him, insofar as these sufferings write our names in
heaven... The risen God-Man Christ, the founder of
the Church, constantly pours out this joy into the
hearts of His followers through the Holy Mysteries
and good deeds. Our faith is fulfilled in this eternal
joy, insofar as the joy of faith in Christ is the only
true joy for human nature. (*St. Justin Popovich*)

Don't be deceived regarding the knowledge of
what will be after your death: what you sow here,
you will reap there. After leaving here, no one can
make progress. Here is the work, there the reward;
here the struggle, there the crowns. (*St.
Barsanuphius the Great*)

The Saviour of our race, employing all means to
free man from deception, has shared with us who
obey Him heavenly and divine good things. But to
the disobedient he has shown that there awaits
them not temporal torments that abide for a time,
but eternal and everlasting torments. (*St. Photius
the Great*)

God gives His communion to all who love Him.
Communion with God is life and light and
sweetness with all the good things that He has. But
those who of their own will forsake him he rewards
with separation from Him, which they themselves
have chosen. As separation from light is darkness,
so also alienation from God is deprivation of all
good things which He has. But the good things of
God are eternal and without end, so that the loss of
them is eternal and without end. Thus sinners shall
be the cause of their own torments, just as the blind
do not see the light, although it is shining on them.
(*St. Irenaeus of Lyons*)