

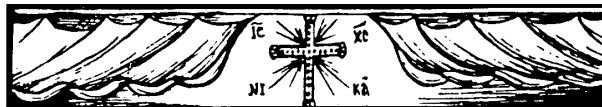


Welcome!

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

- Tonight**
5:00 pm – Vespers at St Alexander Nevsky, Allison Park
- Monday, April 1**
5:00 pm Lenten Vespers
- Tuesday, April 2**
5:00 pm Lenten Vespers
- Wednesday, April 3**
6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Lenten Fellowship Meal
- Thursday, April 4**
5:00 pm Lenten Vespers
- Friday, April 5**
7:00 pm Akathist to the Passion of Christ
- Saturday, April 6**
9:00 am -Cleaning and Repair Day
4:30 pm Confessions
5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil
- Sunday, April 7 – St John of “The Ladder”**
9:00 am Adult Education
10:00 am Divine Liturgy



Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*
Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*
Mat. Janet Mihalick, *Choir Director*

Third Sunday of Great Lent

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org
March 31, 2019

Announcements

➤ This Saturday beginning at 9:00 am we will have a “Cleaning and Repair Day” to attend to items that are beyond the scope of normal janitorial tasks. We will be cleaning the chandelier, doing some painting, clearing the flowerbeds and other work. Can you give a few hours to help? We would greatly appreciate it!

➤ Everyone is invited to the Diocesan **Vespers** at St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Allison Park at 5pm.

➤ **The Lenten season has begun.** The Church prescribes that we refrain from eating meat and dairy products throughout the entirety of Lent and Holy Week. While it is understood that some find the prescription challenging, **everyone is encouraged to do something, and not to ignore the fast, which is both unchristian and unorthodox.** Most importantly, we are also to “fast from sin as we fast from food.” May God strengthen you in your Lenten journey to enter the Lord’s Pascha.

➤ Please consider supporting our **annual Easter Basket for Families in Need.** You will see the flyer in today’s bulletin. Please see Donya Yewisiak with any questions and to participate. We are also in need of cash donations. God bless you for your generosity!

➤ **“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.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be Hospitalized*; Jack Saban (VA). *Home:* 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 Michelle Bittner. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of (sisters) Doris & Marsha. **From Doris Wasilko** for the health of Marsha and Michelle Bittner. **From George & Nancy Shaytar** for the health of (sister) Barbara, Michelle Bittner, Jack Saban and Marsha Wasilko. **From Dawna Beckett** for the health of Christopher Beckett on his 24th birthday. **From Michelle Bittner** for the health of Jack Saban, Greg (awaiting kidney transplant); special intentions. **From John & Olga** for the health of Anatoly & Galina Vilkov and Rachel Heuer & child to be born. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the departed servants, John, William and Theodore–Memory Eternal; for the health of Charles–Birthday Blessings; special intentions. **From John & Nancy Pravlochak** for the departed servants, William Mamay and Lenny Soroka; for the health of our family. **From Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton and Richard Hogya. **From Irene Kulchock** for the departed servants, Stephen Pravlochak (3/29/79) and Bridget Kulchock (3/21/06).

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.



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.

Today in Church School

Today's lesson: Great Schism and Crusades

Questions to ask/review:

- What year did the Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Roman Catholic) Churches separate (1054 AD)?
- What led to this sad event?
- What did the Western Church add to the creed?
- What power did the Bishop of Rome claim to have?
- What were the Crusades? Why did they begin?
- What happened in the 4th crusade (1204 AD)?
- What was the outcome of the Crusades?

Suggested Activities at home:

- Build castles and forts. Discuss the Crusades and some unintended consequences.
- Explores pictures from the Holy Land today.
- Prayer: Lord, may all who worship you be united to your holy Church.

Thank you

➤ **to our March donors!** To **Lindy Hamilton** for donating the bulletins (\$60) for the month of March in prayerful remembrance of parents Russell and Ethel Marie Hamilton. To **Charles Wasilko** for the Holy Bread (\$50) on the occasion of his birthday. To **Dawna Beckett** for Altar Candles (\$25) in memory of departed husband, Greg. To **Donya Yewisiak** for Communion Wine (\$40) in memory of departed brother, Reader Leonard Soroka. To **Lindy Hamilton** for Incense (\$10) in memory of twin brother, Russell W Hamilton.



Hymns and Readings for Today

March 31, 2019

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 Cross Tone 1

O Lord, save Thy people,
and bless Thine inheritance.
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians
Over their adversaries;
And by virtue of Thy Cross,
preserve Thy habitation.

Kontaion of the Cross Tone 7

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Paradise;
It has been mysteriously quenched by the wood of the Cross!
The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished;
For Thou, O my Savior, didst come and cry to those in hell:
Enter again into Paradise!

Instead of "Holy God"

Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify.

Prokeimenon of the Cross Tone 6 (Ps 27)

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance!

Epistle of the Sunday (Heb 4:15-5:6)

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You." As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek".

Gospel of the Sunday (Mk 8:34-9:1)

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

Communion Hymn (Ps 148)

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest! The light of Thy countenance has shown on us, O Lord!



On the Precious Cross

"Many indeed are the wondrous happenings of that time: God hanging from a Cross, the sun made dark, and again flaming out; for it was fitting that creation should mourn with its Creator. The Temple veil rent, blood and water flowing from His side: the one as from a man, the other as from What was above man; the earth was shaken, the rocks shattered because of the Rock; the dead risen to bear witness of the final and universal resurrection of the dead. The happenings at the Sepulchre, and after the Sepulchre, who can fittingly recount them? Yet not one of them can be compared to the miracle of my salvation. A few drops of Blood renew the whole world, and do for all men what the rennet does for milk: joining us and binding us together."

St. Gregory the Theologian

"The Most High planted in the middle of Paradise The thrice blessed wood, the gift of life for us, In order that, in approaching it, Adam might find eternal and immortal life, But he did not strive earnestly to know this life, And he failed to attain it, and revealed death. However, the robber, seeing how the plant in Eden Had been beautifully transplanted in Golgotha, Recognized the life in it and said to himself: 'This is what my father lost formerly In Paradise.'"

St Romanos the Melodist - On the Adoration at the Cross

"The cross is the door to mysteries. Through this door the intellect makes entrance in to the knowledge of heavenly mysteries. The knowledge of the cross is concealed in the sufferings of the cross. And the more our participation in its sufferings, the greater the perception we gain through the cross. For, as the Apostle says, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.'"
The Ascetical Homilies of St. Isaac of Syria



About this Sunday

On this third Sunday of the Great Fast we celebrate the Veneration of the precious and life-giving Cross. Since during the forty days of the Fast we are also in a way crucified, mortified to the passions, contrite, abased and despondent, the precious and life-giving Cross is offered to us as refreshment and confirmation, calling to mind the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and comforting us. If our God was crucified for our sake, how great should be our effort for His sake, since our afflictions have been assuaged through the Lord's tribulations, and by the commemoration and the hope of the Cross of glory. For as our Savior in ascending the Cross was glorified through dishonor and grief, so should we also endure our sorrows, in order to be glorified with Him. Also, as those who have traveled a long hard road, weighed down by the labors of their journey, in finding a shady tree, take their ease for a moment and then continue their journey rejuvenated, so now in this time of the Fast, this sorrowful and laborious journey, the Holy Fathers have planted the life-giving Cross, for our relief and refreshment, to encourage and make easier the labors that lie ahead. Or as when there is a royal procession, the king's scepter and banners precede him, and then he then himself appears, radiant and joyous in his victory, causing his subjects to rejoice with him. So then our Lord Jesus Christ, desiring to show His sure victory over death and His glory on the day of the Resurrection, sends His scepter before Himself, the sign of His kingship, the life-giving Cross, to gladden and refresh us, as it greatly fortifies and enables us to be prepared to receive the King with all possible strength, and to praise Him in His radiant victory.

This week lies at the middle of the holy Forty Day Fast. The Fast is like a bitter source because of our contrition and the sadness and sorrow for sin that it brings. And as Moses plunged the branch in the bitter waters of Marah, making them sweet, so God, Who has led us through the spiritual Red Sea away from Pharaoh, through the life-giving wood of the precious and life-giving Cross, sweetens the bitterness of the Forty Day Fast, and comforts us as those who were in the wilderness, up until the time when by His Resurrection He will lead us to the spiritual Jerusalem. And since the Cross is called, and indeed is, the Tree of Life, it is the very tree that was planted in the Garden of Eden. So it is fitting that the Holy Fathers have planted the Tree of the Cross in the middle of the Forty Day Fast to commemorate both Adam's tasting of its sweet fruit and of its being taken from us in favor of the Tree of the Cross, tasting of which we shall in no way die, but will have even greater life.