



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

7:00 pm Bridegroom Matins

Monday, April 22 – Holy Monday

7:00 pm Bridegroom Matins

Tuesday, April 23 – Holy Tuesday

7:00 pm Bridegroom Matins

Wednesday, April 24 – Holy Wednesday

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Thursday, April 25 – Holy Thursday

9:30 am Vespers Divine Liturgy

7:00 pm Twelve Passion Gospels

Friday, April 26 – Great and Holy Friday

9:00 am Royal Hours

3:00 pm Great Vespers

7:00 pm Lamentation Matins/Procession

Saturday, April 27 – Great and Holy Saturday

9:00 am Vespers Divine Liturgy

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST / HOLY PASCHA

9:00 pm Nocturn/Procession

Resurrection Matins

Paschal Divine Liturgy

Blessing of Baskets and Fellowship

Sunday, April 28 – Resurrection/Holy Pascha

12:00 pm (noon) Paschal Agape Vespers

Blessing of Baskets

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*

Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*

Mat. Janet Mihalick, *Choir Director*

Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

April 21, 2019

Announcements

➤ This week is called "Holy Week" or "Great Week" in the Orthodox Faith. It is the most sacred week of the year. It is the week that we have been preparing for since February 17! This week we are called to walk in the Spiritual strength we have developed during the Great Lenten season. We turn our thoughts from our own spiritual development to the Lord's Passion and Resurrection. Make this week special!

- Turn off the TV, computer, and any media.
- Attend the Divine Services all week.
- Fast as much as you are able, especially on Great and Holy Friday.
- Pray that God would grant you a pure Pascha.
- **Last day for Holy Confession is Thursday.** May God strengthen you as you accompany the Lord Jesus Christ to his Cross, Death, and Resurrection.

➤ We are in need of **red dyed hard-boiled Easter Eggs** to distribute after the Paschal Liturgy. Please see the sign-up sheet downstairs if you can help! We would greatly appreciate it!

➤ **Can you read in a foreign language?** We are in need of as many foreign language readers as possible to **read the Paschal Gospel on Saturday night.** Please see the sign-up sheet in the Vestibule or speak to Fr Thomas as soon as possible. Thank you!

➤ **All altar servers** should be prepared to serve on Holy Pascha. Please see Deacon Luke.

➤ **Hoagies** on Wed. May 1 – See Bob Madalinsky

➤ **Mother's Day Brunch** on Sun. May 12 – All Men should donate \$10. See Bob Madalinsky soon.

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 departed servant, (father) Charles; for the health of Michelle Bittner; for Helen Billak on her birthday. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants, (father) Charles and (cousin) Michael Wasilko; for the health of Michelle Bittner & Marsha. **From George & Nancy Shaytar** for the health of Michelle and Alise. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servants, (father) Charles (4/20/01) and (aunt) Ann Wasilko (4/19/93); Happy Birthday & Many Years to Helen! **From Michelle Bittner** for the health of Jack Saban and Greg (awaiting kidney transplant); special intentions. **From Lilia, Sergio and Stela** for the health of Bryan, Lilia, Sergio, Stella and Connie. **From Donya Yewisiak** for the departed servant, Reader Leonard (40 days). **From John & Nancy Pravlochak** for the health of our family and (granddaughter) Julia on her 21st birthday. **From Cathy Namisnak** for the health of Michael Namisnak and Michelle Bittner. **From Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton and Richard Hogya. **From John & Olga** for the health of Anatoly & Galina Vilkov, Rachel Heuer & her child to be born. **From Irene Kulchock** for the departed servant, Richard Kulchock (4/29/18).

Thank you

➤ to all those who helped **bind the pussy willows and palms** for today's feast. God bless you!

➤ to those who provided the **children's breakfast** meal after yesterday's Divine Liturgy. Thank you!

➤ to **Matushka Nancy Mell and Gregory Mell** for sponsoring the bulletin and all donation categories (\$210 total) in 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.

Holy Week

Please make every effort to attend as many of the Holy Week services this week as possible, but at a minimum Thursday night, Friday afternoon, Saturday morning and evening. May God strengthen you!

The **first three days of Holy Week** remind us of Christ's last instructions with his disciples. The Matins services of the evenings of Palm Sunday, Holy Monday, and Holy Tuesday, anticipating the events of the next day, share a common theme. These Bridegroom Services are derived from the Parable of the Ten Virgins, which calls for preparedness at the Second Coming, for the "thief comes in the middle of the night." (Matt. 26:1-13)

Holy Thursday begins with the celebration of vespers and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil with a commemorating the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. In the evening, anticipating the Matins of Friday morning, the Holy Passion service of the reading of the Twelve Gospels is conducted. In these readings Christ's last instructions to his disciples are presented, as well as the prophecy of the drama of the Cross, Christ's prayer, and his new commandment.

Great and Holy Friday begins with reading of the Royal Hours leading up to Vespers of Friday afternoon, at which time the removal of the Body of Christ from the Cross is commemorated. In an evening service, called the Lamentations at the Tomb, the faithful carry the *Plashchenitsa*, the painted or embroidered cloth representation of Christ, from the altar around the church before placing it in the Sepulcher, a bier symbolizing the Tomb of Christ. This procession, with the faithful carrying lighted candles, represents Christ's descent into Hades. (*continued below..*)

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.

Hymns and Readings for Today

April 21, 2019

First Antiphon (Psalm 115)

v. I love the Lord because He has heard the voice of my supplication.

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

v. Because He inclined His ear to me; therefore I will call on Him as long as I live.

v. The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of hell laid hold on me.

v. I suffered distress and anguish, so I called on the Name of the Lord.

v. I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

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

Second Antiphon (Psalm 116)

v. I kept my faith, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted."

Refrain: O Son of God, who sat upon the foal, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!

v. What shall I render to the Lord for all the things He has given me?

v. I will receive the cup of salvation, and call on the Name of the Lord.

v. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people.

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

Third Antiphon (Psalm 117)

v. O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

v. Let the house of Israel say: For He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

Refrain: **Troparion** of the Feast

v. Let the house of Aaron say: For He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

Let all those who fear the Lord say: For He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

Troparion of the Feast *Tone 1*

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,

Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death: "Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!"

Another Troparion of the Feast *Tone 4*

When we were buried with Thee in baptism, O Christ God,

we were made worthy of eternal life by Thy Resurrection.

Now we praise Thee and sing:

"Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!"

Kontakion of the Feast *Tone 6*

Sitting on Thy throne in Heaven, carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God, Accept the praise of angels and the songs of children, who sing:

"Blessed is He Who comes to recall Adam!"

Prokeimenon of the Feast *Tone 4 (Ps 118)*

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 (*Phil 4:4-9*)

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Gospel of the Feast (*Jn 12:1-18*)

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped

His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!"

Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt."

His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

Hymn to the Theotokos of the Feast

God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us! Celebrate the feast and come with gladness! Let

us magnify Christ with palms and branches singing: "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!"

Communion Hymn (*Ps 148*)

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

Holy Week continued...

Great and Holy Saturday Vespers and a Divine Liturgy of St. Basil are served, marked with readings of Psalms and Resurrection hymns that tell of Christ's descent into Hades, celebrated as the "First Resurrection" of Adam and the conquering of Death. It is appointed by the typikon to be celebrated in the afternoon, though it is served in the morning in many places.

This service comes from the ancient liturgical tradition of the Church of Constantinople and was its primary Paschal service. The hymn "Arise O God" from the Psalms was the original primary Paschal hymn before "Christ is risen" came to take its place. Its place as the ancient Constantinopolitan Paschal celebration is what gives the service such a bright and resurrectional character.

Pascha, the Feast of Feasts, traditionally begins just before midnight with the church in complete darkness. As midnight approaches the priest taking a light from a vigil light within the altar passes the flame to the faithful for their candles. Then the priest leads the faithful out of the church in procession singing of Christ's resurrection. After circling the church three times, as the procession nears the entrance door of the church, the priest leads in the singing of the hymn of Resurrection. "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!" At this point the priest and faithful enter the well-lighted church for the remaining part of Matins and the breaking of the fast with the Divine Liturgy. After conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, in many communities, the faithful retire to an agape meal to break the Fast together, and then return home as dawn arrives. Later in the day of Pascha the faithful again gather for prayer with lighted candles in a vespers service, singing the hymn "Christ is Risen from the Dead," and greeting each other joyously, "Christ is risen" and responding with, "Indeed He is risen."

Palm Sunday

After Lazarus had been raised from the dead, many, on beholding this event, came to believe in Christ. And indeed, a resolution was passed by the Jewish synagogue that Christ, and Lazarus himself, should be killed. Jesus, therefore, departed, letting evil run its course, and the Jews meditated how they might kill Him on the Feast of Passover. Some time after His flight, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, and there, after a supper had been made, Lazarus ate with Him; his sister Mary poured out ointment on Christ's feet. On the following day, He sent His Disciples to fetch the ass and the foal. He Who has Heaven for His throne entered Jerusalem, riding on the foal of an ass. The children of the Hebrews themselves spread their garments under Him and, cutting down palm branches, threw some of them in the way and carried others in their arms, and they cried out as they escorted Him: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel."

This took place because the All-Holy Spirit moved their tongues to praise and laud Christ. Through the palms (the name given by the Hebrews to the tender branches) they signified Christ's victory over death. For it was customary for the victors of athletic contests and wars to be honored and borne about with branches of evergreen trees. The foal signified us, the people of the Gentiles, sitting and resting on whom Christ is proclaimed victor, conqueror, and King of all the earth.

About this Feast the Prophet Zacharias said: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; for behold, thy King is coming to thee, meek and riding on an ass and the foal of an ass." And again, about the children, David says: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou perfected praise." When Christ entered the city, the whole of Jerusalem quaked and, goaded on by the High Priests to defend it, the crowds sought to do away with Him. He eluded them by hiding, and when He did appear, He spoke to them through parables.

By Thine ineffable compassion, O Christ our God, make us victors over irrational passions, and vouchsafe us to behold Thy clear victory over death, Thy radiant and life-bearing Resurrection, and have mercy on us. Amen.

Today in Church School

Today's lesson: The Protestant Reformation (Pt 1)

Questions to ask/review:

- What were "indulgences"? Why did this and other practices/beliefs in the Western church cause controversy?
- Who was Martin Luther? What did he teach? How do his teachings differ from Orthodoxy?
- Who was John Calvin? What did he teach? How do his teachings differ from Orthodoxy?

Suggested activities at home:

- Attend as many Holy Week services as possible this week! When reflecting upon each service as a family, emphasize the beauty and depth of these services.
- Prayer: Lord, may all Christians be united again someday, as You are one.

You are cordially invited to the Soroka residence in Moon Township (207 Parliament Drive) for the annual Paschal Open House on Friday, May 3 beginning at 5:00 pm. We look forward to seeing you at this wonderful yearly event. End Bright Week with your Church family!

"And so the Lord was handed over to their savage wishes, and in mockery of His kingly state, ordered to be the bearer of His own instrument of death, that what Isaiah the prophet foresaw might be fulfilled, saying, 'Behold a Child is born, and a Son is given to us whose government is upon His shoulders.' When, therefore, the Lord carried the wood of the cross which should turn for Him into the sceptre of power, it was indeed in the eyes of the wicked a mighty mockery, but to the faithful a mighty mystery was set forth, seeing that He, the glorious vanquisher of the Devil, and the strong defeater of the powers that were against Him, was carrying in noble sort the trophy of His triumph, and on the shoulders of His unconquered patience bore into all realms the adorable sign of salvation: as if even then to confirm all His followers by this mere symbol of His work, and say, 'He that does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me (Mt 10:38). (St Leo the Great, Pope of Rome)

Traditional Paschal Basket

Many Slavic cultures have the tradition of bringing a basket of food to Church on Pascha (Easter) to be blessed after the Divine Liturgy. It normally contains many of the foods that were not eaten during the long Lenten fast.



Pascha is a rich yeast bread made with eggs and butter. It's often richly decorated with braids, crosses or the initials indicating "Christ is risen"

Eggs are hard boiled and often colorfully decorated, sometimes with intricate designs

Chocolates and other sweets are sometimes included in the basket, especially for those who have abstained from confections during the fast

Horradish sometimes mixed with beets is a traditional accompaniment to the various meats traditionally consumed

Cheese Pascha is a rich desert made of cheese and sugar. It's often molded into a pyramidal shape and decorated with candied fruits



Cheese, usually freshly made from egg curds and sweetened with sugar, is a common dish in some Slavic cultures

Meats such as ham and kolbassi, usually smoked, are a common element in Paschal baskets. Some cultures may include lamb

Butter is traditionally included since dairy products were not eaten during the Lenten period. The butter is sometimes formed in the shape of lamb

Alcoholic beverages are often included in the celebration of the Lord's Resurrection. The Lenten weekday fast prescribes abstinence from alcohol

Kulich is a sweet cake, usually baked in a cylindrical shape and covered in frosting. It's often eaten with cheese pascha