



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

Saturday, June 22

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, June 23

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

“When the Spirit of God descends upon a man and overshadows him with the fullness of His outpouring, then his soul overflows with a joy not to be described, for the Holy Spirit turns to joy whatever He touches. The Kingdom of Heaven is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

- St Seraphim of Sarov -

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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*

Pentecost –The Descent of the Holy Spirit

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

June 16, 2019

Announcements

➤ The 10th anniversary of Consecration Celebration of His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek will be held on **Saturday, June 29** (the feast of Sts Peter and Paul) at **St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral** (1600 Guyton Road, Allison Park, PA 15101) at **10 AM** with a Hierarchical Liturgy and a luncheon downstairs in the church hall immediately following. **This is an open invitation and there is no charge and no RSVP required** in advance. Everyone is invited to attend this special day!



➤ We're partnering with several Orthodox Churches in Pittsburgh to begin an **Orthodox Teen Fellowship**. This ministry will engage Orthodox teenagers with meaningful activities, challenging discussions and fellowship to make connections with other teens who share their Orthodox faith in God. See Kristie Mertz for more information.

➤ **Vacation Church School** week of July 8th. See Matushka Joni Soroka for details and registration!

➤ **Our June hoagie sale** will be held on Wednesday, June 26. 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, June 23. Orders can be picked up between noon and 1 pm June 26 at the church hall.

➤ There are many opportunities to **help with the ministries of our parish**. Do you have skills in writing? Photography? Videography? Audio recording? Web management? See Fr Thomas!

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm: Known to be Hospitalized:** Jack Saban (VA). *Home:* Helen Billak, Katarina Mertz (post-partum), 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 George & Nancy Shaytar** for the health of Michelle Bittner. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the departed servant, John; for the health & salvation of my family; special intentions. **From John & Olga** for the health of Anatoly & Galina Vilkov, Christopher Heuer & Ruth Heuer on their birthdays. **From Mat. Joni Soroka** for the health of Natalie and Katarina, Ethan & baby Oliver. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family, Michelle Bittner and Paul, Helen and Sasha Henry; safe travel. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, (uncle) Bill Falick; for the health of Larry & Suzy Polny on their 50th anniversary. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants, (uncle) Bill Falick and Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of Helen Billak & family and Larry & Suzy Polny on their 50th anniversary-Many Years! **From Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton. **From Kristie Mertz** for the health of Katarina. **From Jan & Chuck Widel** for the health of Michelle Bittner, Larry Polny, Georgiann Robes and Jack Saban. **From Michelle Bittner** for the health of Helen, Paul & Sasha Henry and Greg (awaiting kidney transplant). **From Larry & Suzy Polny** for the health of Helen Billak & family and for our family; for us in honor of our 50th wedding anniversary! **From Rick & Susie Porter** for the departed servant, Michael (+1994); for the health of Susan, Katarina and Susan. **From John & Nancy Pravlochak** for our departed parents; for the health of Helen, Paul & Sasha Henry and our family.

Thank you!

➤ **to Matushka Nancy Mell and Gregory Mell** for donating all of our June monthly donations in memory of the departed servant of God, Deacon Joseph Mell. Bulletin (\$60), Holy Bread (\$50), Communion Wine (\$40), Altar Candles (\$25). Incense (\$10)

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 Greenery?

On this feast according to the custom, temples and homes of the faithful relating to the characteristics of this feast are also decorated with trees, grass and flowers. This is how the Old Testament Church celebrated Pentecost, offering on this day a beginning of the harvest (Lev.23:10-22; Num. 28:26). In accordance with these customs of the Old Testament Church, probably, the room on Zion in which the Apostles received the Holy Spirit on this feast was also decorated. From here this custom was also spread throughout all the Church. The thought of the appearance of God as three strangers to Abraham at the Oaks of Mamre, where the tent of the patriarch stood, could also have influenced this custom. Celebrating the Holy Trinity, before Whom Abraham once bowed down in the Oaks of Mamre, ancient Christians on the day of the Holy Trinity spread tree branches and flowers in the temples to see that in this way the decorated temple of God more obviously represents the Oaks of Mamre and the tent of Abraham where once the Triune God had the good will to appear. Now branches and flowers are offered to God as the beginning of the renewing Spring. But at the same time they serve together as a symbol of the Church of Christ, which with the



appearance of the grace of the Holy of Spirit flourished in it, according to the expression in the church hymns, like a white lily. It also points out the renewal of the people by the power of the descent of the Holy Spirit, (serving as a symbol of His very grace which we ask for on this day and which, being recognized by true believing souls, smells sweet to them through a great variety of spiritual gifts and pious deeds), and for the future resurrection of our dead brethren for which we especially pray on this day.

Hymns and Readings for Today

First Antiphon (Psalm 19)

v. The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.

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

v. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

v. Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the universe.

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 20)

v. The Lord answer you in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob protect you!

Refrain: O Gracious Comforter, save us who sing to Thee: "Alleluia!"

v. May He send you help from the sanctuary and give you support from Zion!

v. May He remember all your offerings, and fulfill all your plans!

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

(Only-begotten Son...)

Third Antiphon (Psalm 21)

v. In Thy strength the king rejoices, O Lord, and exults greatly in Thy salvation.

Refrain: Troparion

v. Thou has given him his heart's desire, and has not withheld the request of his lips.

v. For Thou dost meet him with goodly blessings; Thou dost set a crown of fine gold upon his head.

Little Entrance

Be exalted, O Lord, in Thy strength! We will sing and praise Thy power!

Troparion of Pentecost Tone 8

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God
Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise
by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit;
through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net. / O Lover of Man, Glory to Thee!

Kontakion of Pentecost Tone 8

When the Most High came down and confused the tongues

He divided the nations;

But when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity.

Therefore, with one voice, we glorify the All Holy Spirit!

Instead of Holy God

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

Prokeimenon (Psalm 19) Tone 8

Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the universe!

Epistle (Acts 2:1-11)

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

Gospel (John 7:37-52; 8:12)

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ."

But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Hymn to the Theotokos of Pentecost

Rejoice, O Queen! Glory of mothers and virgins!
No mouth, however sweet or fluent
is eloquent enough to praise you worthily!
Every mind is overawed by your childbearing.
Therefore with one voice we glorify you!

Communion Hymn of Pentecost

Let Thy good Spirit lead me on a level path.
Alleluia.

Pentecost Icon

The position of the figures represents harmony in which no apostle is better than another. The inverse perspective prevents the apostles who are near the back of the semicircle from being painted as smaller, which would happen in the rendering of most normal paintings. In actuality, they are depicted slightly larger, particularly Peter and Paul as the chief apostles. But even then, they are among equals.

Of course, **Paul was not present during this event, but the reality of Pentecost transcends time and space, and in some sense, Paul was later mystically joined to this moment.** He is also included to show that he was in complete harmony with the other Apostles.

Why is the head of the semicircle of Apostles empty? Because it is the seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is invisibly present. As he said before ascending, "Behold, I am with you even to the end of the age." He continues to keep that promise, being invisibly present in the church, guiding us through the Holy Spirit.

The twelve rays coming from the mandorla (semicircle at the top) and the tongues of fire, sometimes shown above each Apostle, represent the Holy Spirit coming upon all of those depicted. The twelve symbolize that there are a diversity of gifts given by the one Spirit of God. In the same way, each of the twelve Apostles are seated in slightly different ways: there is harmony, but not conformity. We are all given different gifts by the same Spirit, but none of us are meant to be a copy of anyone else. It is in the Church that we see diversity in its most beautiful harmony.

Something that stumps many people: **who is the kingly figure at the bottom of the Pentecost icon?** It is Cosmos. In the most ancient Pentecost icons, the crowd from Acts two was depicted at the bottom. However, that was quickly replaced by Cosmos, who personifies all people of all nations.