



Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are 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

Today

After Liturgy Trisagion for Patricia Porter

7:00 pm Vigil for the feast of Theophany

Monday, January 6

9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy with Great Blessing of Water

Tuesday, January 7

9:00 am Matins (Morning Service)

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours/Church Open

Wednesday, January 8

6:30 pm Daily Vespers

7:00 pm Bible Study

Thursday, January 9

9:00 am Matins (Morning Service)

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours/Church Open

Saturday, January 11

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, January 12

9:15 am Adult Education

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

After Services Church School

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*

Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*

Mat. Janet Mihalick, *Choir Director*

Sunday Before Theophany

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

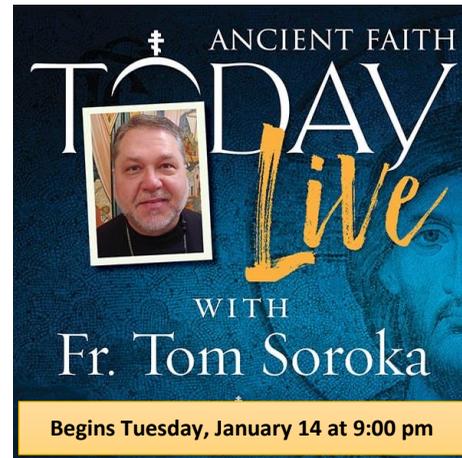
January 5, 2020

Announcements

➤ **Monday after** the Divine Liturgy we will have the Great Blessing of Water. This water is given to us by the Church as a sign of the renewal of all creation. The faithful are encouraged to bring suitable bottles to take this holy water to your homes to drink and to bless yourselves with.

➤ **Bible Study** picks up on Wednesday January 8, 2020. Join us!

➤ Anyone who wishes to have their **home blessed during this Theophany season**, please contact Fr Thomas to schedule a specific day and time.



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.

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* (none) *Home:* Nancy Pravlochak, Paul Yewisiak. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Georgiann Robes, Olga Tryszyn, Mary Zapp.

➤ **From Mat. Nancy K. Mell and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family and Michelle Bittner. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants of the Wasilko & Dyczko families; for the health of the Wasilko family, Michelle Bittner and Paul Yewisiak. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the health of Michelle Bittner and Paul & Donya. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, Nick Yurkowski; for the health of (sisters) Doris & Marsha, Michelle Bittner and Georgiann Robes. **From Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton; special intention. **From George & Nancy Shaytar** for the health of Eleanor Kovacs and Michelle Bittner. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the health and blessings for Sandi & Jan on their 75th birthdays (Jan. 5th & 8th); special intentions. **From John & Olga** for the health of Galina Vilkova and for the health and salvation of our family. **From Donya Yewisiak** for the health of (husband) Paul. **From Kristie Mertz** for the health of my family in 2020 and (mother) Janice Bosko. **From Bryan & Lilia** for the health of Sergio and Stella Spinu for the coming of their first child to be born 12/30/19. **From Larry & Suzy Polny** for the health of Bill and Anthea (lifelong friends). **From Irene Kulchock** for the departed servants, Richard Kulchock, Olga Bednar and Stephen Pravlochak. **From the John Mahalchak family** for the health of friends and family and the continued recovery of (son) John.

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.

This Week in Church School

Today's lesson: The Letter to the Hebrews

Verse (younger classes): *Hebrews 11:1-* "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Questions to ask/review:

- Give examples of people from the Old Testament who were faithful to God. Did they ever "see" God? How did they persevere?
- What does it mean that we are surrounded by a "cloud full of witnesses"?

Verse (older classes): *Hebrews 7:17-* "For He testifies: 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'"

Questions to ask/review:

- Where was the law of Moses received?
- Who were the priests of the law of Moses?
- What was the role of sacrifice in the law of Moses? How were sins taken away?
- Explain how Melchizedek was different than the Levite priests.
- What did Melchizedek do for Abraham? What happened to Melchizedek?
- How is Jesus like Melchizedek? How is Jesus also different from the Levites?
- How did Melchizedek prefigure the New Testament?

Suggested Activities at home:

- Discuss examples of things that are unseen but we know exist (ex: the wind).
- Role play the blessing of Abraham by Melchizedek.

Prayer: Lord, may we today have great faith like your servants of old. OR Lord, thank You for taking away our sins forever.

Hymns and Readings for Today

Troparion of the Resurrection) Tone 4

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: “Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen,// granting the world great mercy!”

Troparion of the Forefeast Tone 4

The river Jordan was turned back by the mantle of Elisha, after Elijah had been taken up to heaven. The waters were parted in two, and the stream became a dry path. This was truly a type of baptism, by which we pass over the stream of life.// Christ has shone forth in the Jordan to sanctify the waters.

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 Resurrection Tone 4

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master,// He has risen on the third day!

Kontakion of the Forefeast Tone 2

O Christ, in Thy compassion and infinite mercy, Thou art coming as a man to be baptized in the Jordan, in order to take away the many transgressions of us all, clothing me in the garment of ancient glory of which I was cruelly stripped bare.

Kontakion of the Forefeast Tone 4

Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John: “Do not be afraid to baptize me,// for I come to save Adam, the first-formed man!”

Prokeimenon of the Forefeast Tone 4

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance! (*Ps 27/28:9*)

Epistle of the Forefeast (2 Tim 4:5-8)

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Gospel of the Forefeast (Mk 1:1-8)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.’” John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and

those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Communion Hymn (Psalm 148)

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

The Holy Theophany

The Holy Theophany of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ the entire holy Church of God celebrates today, performing a vigil from the evening. After arriving at thirty years of age, our Lord wanted to manifest Himself to people that He was God in body. When the Lord was baptized by John, God the Father testified from above with His voice and the occurrence of the Holy Spirit, that He was His Son truly and consubstantially. From that moment He became known to all through His miracles, and His lofty teachings, that He was indeed God, Who through the Prophets was clearly proclaimed.*

He came to Baptism for this cause. When the Lord became man on our behalf, He fulfilled the law throughout His entire life. Because John came from the desert and was baptizing at the Jordan, according to the word of God spoken to him, that is according to the ordinance and the law of God, as the Evangelist Luke says (Lk. 3:2), our Lord wanted to fulfill this word as a divine law. This took place after He had reached thirty years of age, when He went to be baptized by John the Baptist, as others were doing, though He had no need to be baptized, being without sin. John, being reverent towards the Lord and aware of his own unworthiness, said: "I have need to be baptized by You, but You come to me?" But the Lord encouraged and urged John to baptize Him,

showing him that what he thought was unfitting, was indeed fitting, namely that the Master should be baptized by the servant. For this reason He said to him: "Let it be so. It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way." Righteousness is here called by the Lord the fulfillment of all the commandments, according to the divine Chrysostom (Discourse on Baptism), as if He said: "Since I fulfilled all the commandments of the divine law, this one alone remained, which is why I must fulfill this one also."

Then John let go of his resistance, and the Lord was baptized by him, and immediately came up out of the water.** And behold the heavens opened, and John saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming to Jesus. And a voice came from the heavens saying: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." By this was manifested to the Jews, that John was not greater than Christ, as it was falsely assumed by many about him. Rather he was incomparably much lower than Christ, being His servant and subject. For this reason the Spirit descended, bringing down the voice of the Father to Jesus, and He clearly showed as if with a finger, that "This is My beloved Son" was not spoken about John the Baptist, although he possessed great glory and office, but it was spoken about the baptized Jesus.

Having therefore fulfilled this lawful ordinance of baptism, the Lord loosed the curse which was given to Adam for deviating from the divine law. And redeeming us from condemnation, he ceased every lawful ritual, and raised it to be more spiritual and more perfect. This was followed by putting an end to Jewish baptism, and gave us the faithful over to be baptized in the three emersions and immersions which take place in the Baptism which has the grace of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of John being inferior.*** By the Lord being baptized in the one river, He fulfilled the shadowy and imperfect baptism, and opened the doors to the spiritual and divine Baptism of the Church. Having in this way been baptized, we owe it to keep ourselves clean, spotless and undefiled from sins, by occupying ourselves with the life-giving commandments.