



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

Saturday, September 12

- 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
- 4:30 pm Confessions
- 5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, September 13

- 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
- 7:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Monday, September 14: Exaltation of the Cross

- 9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, September 15

- 9:00 am Daily Matins
- 10:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Thursday, September 17

- 9:00 am Daily Matins
- 9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Saturday, September 19

- 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
- 4:30 pm Confessions
- 5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, September 20

- 10:00 am Divine Liturgy



Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*
Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*

Sat/Sun before the Elevation of the Cross

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org September 12/13, 2020

Announcements

➤ **Iconography Project:** The Iconography in the altar (the Ascension of Christ) has been completed. The work on the entrance to the church (narthex), candle kiosk, and children's ("cry") room **will begin later this week, when Fr Theodore returns to our church. We appreciate everyone who has shown interest in supporting this project.** You will note on the walls that are being prepared hand written notes concerning icons that will go in those places. A donation list will be prepared and sent.

➤ If you did not have an opportunity to give a gift to support the work of the **St Elisabeth Convent in Minsk, Belarus**, please consider doing so today. (If you're making a check or submitting it online, please earmark it for "Belarus"). Thank you!



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:* Geroge Shaytar, Paul Yewisiak,. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Olga Tryszyn.

➤ **Vigil Lights From the John Mahalchak Family** for departed family and friends; for the health of friends and family, especially Gregory, John, Cheryl. **From Ron and Geraldine Puskar**, for the departed servant of God Mary Capo. **From Nancy Shaytar** for the departed servant Mat. Janet Mihalick. **From Marsha Wasilko** in remembrance of September 11, 2001. **From Mat. Nancy and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant Dn Joseph Mell; for the health of family. **From Doris Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family. **From Mat. Joni Soroka** for the health of John and for the departed servant, Ernest John. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the departed servant (mother) Amelia; for the health of Kyrie, Aleah; for special intentions. **From John Kowalcheck and Olga Cozza** for the health of Galina Vilcova and for Daniel Kowalcheck on his birthday. **From Charles Wasilko** for the health of sisters Doris and Marsha.

Sophia and Her Daughters

The Holy Martyrs Saint **Sophia** and her daughters **Faith, Hope and Love** were born in Italy. Their mother was a pious Christian widow who named her daughters for the three Christian virtues. Faith was twelve, Hope was ten, and Love was nine. Saint Sophia raised them in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Saint Sophia and her daughters did not hide their faith in Christ, but openly confessed it before everyone.

An official named Antiochus denounced them to the emperor Hadrian (117-138), who ordered that they be brought to Rome.. When the holy virgins and their mother came before the emperor, everyone present was amazed at their composure. They looked as though they had been brought to some happy festival, rather than to torture. Summoning each of the sisters in turn, Hadrian urged them to offer sacrifice to the goddess Artemis. The young girls remained unyielding.

Then the emperor ordered them to be tortured. They burned the holy virgins over an iron grating, then threw them into a red-hot oven, and finally into a cauldron with boiling tar, but the Lord preserved them.

The youngest child, Love, was tied to a wheel and they beat her with rods until her body was covered all over with bloody welts. After undergoing unspeakable torments, the holy virgins glorified their Heavenly Bridegroom and remained steadfast in the Faith. They subjected Saint Sophia to another grievous torture: the mother was forced to watch the suffering of her daughters. She displayed adamant courage, and urged her daughters to endure their torments for the sake of the Heavenly Bridegroom. All three maidens were beheaded, and joyfully bent their necks beneath the sword. In order to intensify Saint Sophia's inner suffering, the emperor permitted her to take the bodies of her daughters. She placed their remains in coffins and loaded them on a wagon. She drove beyond the city limits and reverently buried them on a high hill. **Saint Sophia sat there by the graves of her daughters for three days, and finally she gave up her soul to the Lord.** Even though she did not suffer for Christ in the flesh, she was not deprived of a martyr's crown. Instead, she suffered in her heart. Believers buried her body there beside her daughters.

The relics of the holy martyrs have rested at El'zasa, in the church of Esho since the year 777.

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.

Hymns and Readings for Saturday, Sept 12

Tone 4 Troparion of the Feast

Your nativity, O Virgin,
has proclaimed joy to the whole universe!
The Sun of righteousness, Christ our God,
has shone from you, O Theotokos.
By annulling the curse,
He bestowed a blessing.//
By destroying death, He has granted us eternal
life.

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

Tone 4 Kontakion of the Feast

By your nativity, O most pure Virgin,
Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness,
Adam and Eve – from the corruption of death.
And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin,
celebrate and sing to you://
“The barren woman gives birth to the
Theotokos, the nourisher of our Life.”

Tone 3 Prokeimenon (Song of the Theotokos)

My soul magnifies the Lord, / and my spirit
rejoices in God my Savior.

Epistle of the Day (1 Corinthians 2:6-9)

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written:
“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

Gospel of the Day (Matthew 10:37-11:1)

He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”

Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

Hymn to the Theotokos of the Feast

Magnify, O my soul, the most glorious birth of the Mother of God!

Virginity is foreign to mothers;
childbearing is strange for virgins.
But in you, O Theotokos, both were accomplished.//
Therefore all we nations of the earth
unceasingly magnify you.

Communion Hymn of Saturday

I will receive the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! (Ps 115/116:13)

The Scandal of the Cross

“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” (1 Cor 1:23-24)

Such were the responses to the gospel when the Apostle Saint Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth and, in spite of two thousand years having intervened, the reaction is still very much the same today. The Gospel of Christ is the power and the wisdom of God to those who accept it, but it is dismissed as foolishness by the worldly and a stumbling block to the religious.

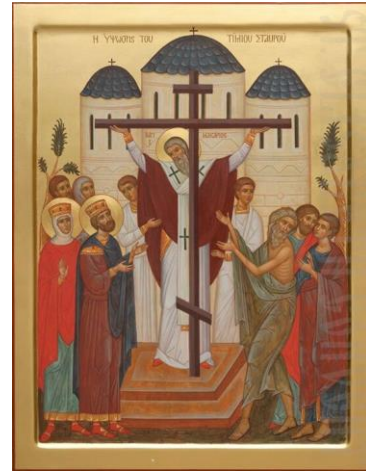
The Greek word translated as “stumbling block” in the Bible is *skandalon*, from which derives our English word scandal. The Apostle Paul tells us that the Jews seek signs because that is what the prophets gave them, although even then they did not believe. Their expectation of the Messiah was of one who would triumph over Israel’s enemies and establish Jerusalem as the centre of the world. Death by crucifixion was shameful and unthinkable. This was the Roman means of execution for the lowest of criminals. Their Messiah was to be exalted, not humiliated. Today it is one of the reasons for the Jewish rejection of our Lord, whilst Islam, although according him the status of a great prophet, refuses to admit his death on the cross. For Muslims the sovereignty of God would not permit His servant to suffer such an ignominious death, but would deliver him from his enemies.

The modern secular world is not very much different. It can accept Jesus as a good man, as a philosopher and teacher who suffered for his beliefs, but we find that the doctrines of the incarnation, the virgin birth, the crucifixion and

physical resurrection are dismissed as irrational and not in accord with the supremacy of human reason.

Saint John Chrysostom highlights the paradox that it is in the very offence of the cross that we discover its call. He says, “The gospel produces the exact opposite of what people want and expect, but it is that very fact which persuades them to accept it in the end. The apostles won their case, not simply without a sign, but by something which appeared to go against all the known signs. The cross seems to be a cause of offence, but far from simply offending, it attracts and calls believers to itself.”

The message of the cross has such a power because it is a crucial component in the economy of salvation. Just as the cross of the Lord preceded His Resurrection, so our dying to sin and submission to His purpose, leads to our new life. Symbolised by our immersion in the baptismal waters, we rise to become partakers of the divine nature and incorporated into the Body of Christ. We suffer with Him that we may be glorified together (Romans 8:17); He tells us that if we suffer reviling, persecution and falsehoods for His sake we should “rejoice and be exceedingly glad” because our reward in heaven will be great (Matthew 5:11-12). Indeed, the glory we receive through bearing the cross is beyond our comprehension. Saint Paul says, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).



Hymns and Readings for Sunday, Sept 13

Tone 5 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation from the Virgin;
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the
flesh,
to endure death,
and to raise the dead//
by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 4 Troparion (*St Nicholas*)

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.

Tone 4 Troparion (*Forefeast*)

We offer in supplication
the life-creating Cross of Thy goodness, O Lord,
which Thou hast granted to us
although we are unworthy. //
Through the Theotokos, save all Orthodox
Christians, O only Lover of man!

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

Tone 5 Kontakion (*Resurrection*)

Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior,
shattering its gates as Almighty,
resurrecting the dead as Creator,
and destroying the sting of death.
Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O
Lover of man, //
and we cry to Thee: O Lord, save us!

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (*Sunday Before*)

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

Epistle of the Sunday Before (*Galatians 6:11-18*)

See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Epistle of the Sunday (*2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4*)

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?

And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

Gospel of the Sunday Before (*John 3:13-17*)

No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Gospel of the Sunday (*Matthew 22:1-14*)

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding."' ' But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then

he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

"But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

"For many are called, but few are chosen."

Communion Hymn of Sunday

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! (*Ps 148:1*)

Rejoice, O Cross of the Lord,
through which mankind has been delivered
from the curse!

Thou art a sign of true joy,
shattering our enemies by thine Exaltation.
O Cross, worthy of all honor,
thou art our help, thou art the strength of
kings.

Thou art the power of the righteous.
Thou art the majesty of priests.
All who sign themselves with thee are freed
from danger.

O rod of strength, under which we like
sheep are tended,
thou art a weapon of peace round which the
angels stand in fear.

Thou art the divine glory of Christ,
Who grants the world great mercy.