



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 26

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, September 27

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, September 29

9:00 am Daily Matins

10:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Wednesday, September 30

7:00 Bible Study (online only)

Thursday, October 1 - Protection of the MOG

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

10:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Saturday, October 3

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, October 4

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

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

16th Saturday/Sunday after Pentecost

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org September 26/27, 2020

Announcements

➤ **Church School News:** Church School will begin next Saturday and Sunday. We'll be providing Church School lessons as best we can **on both days** to the students that come to church on either of those days. In order to do that, we need an accurate count of those who plan on attending. Additionally, we are in need of an additional teacher for Sunday. If you can devote your gifts to this worthy ministry, please contact Matushka Joni as soon as possible.

➤ **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 **continues through the week. 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.



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, Fred Zelesnik. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Olga Tryszyn.

➤ **Vigil Lights From the Mertz Family** for the newly departed (mother) Caroline Mertz-Teunissen. **From John Kowalcheck and Olga Cozza**, for the health and salvation of our family. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the departed servants Amelia, John, Nicholas, Nicholas, Theodore; for the health of my family; for special intentions. **From Doris Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family. **From Mat. Nancy and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant Dn Joseph Mell; for the health of family. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family. **From Charles Wasilko** for the health of sisters Doris and Marsha. **From Lindy Hamilton** for the departed servant of God Matushka Janet Mihalick; for the health of Elaine Hamilton. **From the John Mahalchak Family** for departed family and friends; for the health of John, Cheryl, Gregory, and friends and family; for a safe trip.

➤ **Thank you to our September donor, Margie Speth** (Bulletin \$60, Holy Bread \$50, Communion Wine \$40, (Candles \$25, Incense \$10) for the health of her family and in memory of her departed family members.

Protection of the Mother of God

This miraculous appearance of the Mother of God occurred in the mid-tenth century in Constantinople, in the Blachernae church where her robe, veil, and part of her belt were preserved after being transferred from Palestine in the fifth century.

On Sunday, October 1, during the All Night Vigil, when the church was overflowing with those at prayer, the Fool-for-Christ Saint Andrew (October 2), at the fourth hour, lifted up his eyes towards the heavens and beheld our most Holy Lady Theotokos coming through the air, resplendent with heavenly light and surrounded by an assembly of the Saints. Saint John the Baptist and the holy Apostle John the Theologian accompanied the Queen of Heaven. On bended knees the Most Holy Virgin tearfully prayed for Christians for a long time. Then, coming near the Bishop's Throne, she continued her prayer.

After completing her prayer she took her veil and spread it over the people praying in church, protecting them from enemies both visible and invisible. The Most Holy Lady Theotokos was resplendent with heavenly glory, and the protecting veil in her hands gleamed "more than the rays of the sun." Saint Andrew gazed trembling at the miraculous vision and he asked his disciple, the blessed Epiphanius standing beside him, "Do you see, brother, the Holy Theotokos, praying for all the world?" Epiphanius answered, "I do see, holy Father, and I am in awe."

The Ever-Blessed Mother of God implored the Lord Jesus Christ to accept the prayers of all the people calling on His Most Holy Name, and to respond speedily to her intercession, "O Heavenly King, accept all those who pray to You and call on my name for help. Do not let them go away from my icon unheard."

Saints Andrew and Epiphanius were worthy to see the Mother of God at prayer, and "for a long time observed the Protecting Veil spread over the people and shining with flashes of glory. As long as the Most Holy Theotokos was there, the Protecting Veil was also visible, but with her departure it also became invisible. After taking it with her, she left behind the grace of her visitation."

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 26

Tone 2 Troparion of Saturday

Apostles, martyrs, and prophets,
Holy hierarchs, saints, and righteous ones,
Having fought the good fight and kept the faith,
Ye have boldness towards the Saviour.
Intercede for us with Him, for He is good. //
and pray that He may save our souls.

Tone 2 Troparion (St. John)

Beloved Apostle of Christ our God,
hasten to deliver a defenseless people!
He who allowed thee to recline on His breast,
receives thee as thou dost bow before Him.
Implore Him, O John the Theologian,
to disperse the persistent threat from the
heathens, //
entreating for us peace and great mercy!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Tone 8 Kontakion of Saturday

The universe offers thee the God-bearing
martyrs,
As the first fruits of creation, O Lord and
Creator, //
Through the Theotokos and their prayers
establish Thy Church in peace.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 2 Kontakion (St. John)

Who shall declare thy greatness,
O virgin disciple,
for thou dost pour forth wonders and art a
source of healings, //
and prayest for our souls as theologian and
friend of Christ.

Tone 8 Prokeimenon of Saturday (Psalm 31/32)

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O ye righteous.

Epistle of the Saturday (1 Corinthians 10:23-28)

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.

Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."

If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."

Gospel of the Saturday (Luke 4:31-36)

Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority. Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in their midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."

Communion Hymn of Saturday

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous. Praise befits the just. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! (Ps 33:1)

The Devil & Demons

In addition to the created spiritual powers who do the will of God, there are, according to the Orthodox faith, those who rebel against Him and do evil. These are the demons or devils (which means literally those who "pull apart" and destroy) who are also known both in the Old and New Testaments as well as in the lives of the saints of the Church.

Satan (which means literally the enemy or the adversary) is one proper name for the devil, the leader of the evil spirits. He is identified in the serpent symbol of Gen 3 and as the tempter of both Job and Jesus (Job 1.6; Mk 1.33). He is labelled by Christ as a deceiver and liar, the "father of lies" (Jn 8.44) and the "prince of this world" (Jn 12.31; 14.30; 16.11). He has "fallen from heaven" together with his evil angels to do battle with God and his servants (Lk 10.18; Is 14.12). It is this same Satan who "entered Judas" to effect the betrayal and destruction of Christ (Lk 22.3).

The apostles of Christ and the saints of the Church knew from direct experience Satan's powers against man for Man's own destruction. They knew as well Satan's lack of power and his own ultimate destruction when man is with God, filled with the Holy Spirit of Christ. According to Orthodox doctrine there is no middle road between God and Satan. Ultimately, and at any given moment, man is either with God or the devil, serving one or the other.

The ultimate victory belongs to God and to those with Him. Satan and his hosts are finally destroyed. Without this recognition—and still more—the experience of this reality of the cosmic spiritual struggle (God and Satan, the good angels and the evil angels), one cannot truly be called an Orthodox Christian who sees and lives according to the deepest realities of life. Once again, however, it must be clearly

noted that the devil is not a "red-suited gentleman" nor any other type of grossly-physical tempter. He is a subtle, intelligent spirit who acts mostly by deceit and hidden actions, having as his greatest victory man's disbelief in his existence and power. Thus, the devil attacks "head-on" only those whom he can deceive in no other way: Jesus and the greatest of the saints. For the greatest part of his warfare he is only too satisfied to remain concealed and to act by indirect methods and means.

Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Pet 5.8).

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph 6.11-12).



Hymns and Readings for Sunday, Sept 27

Tone 7 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death.
To the thief Thou didst open Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change
weeping into joy,
and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ
God,
to proclaim that Thou art risen,//
granting the world great mercy.

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.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Tone 7 Kontakion (*Resurrection*)

The dominion of death can no longer hold men
captive,
for Christ descended, shattering and destroying
its powers.
Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and
cry:
“The Savior has come to those in faith;//
enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!”

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion (*Theotokos*)

Steadfast protectress of Christians,
constant advocate before the Creator,
do not despise the cry of us sinners,
but in your goodness come speedily to help us
who call on you in faith.

Hasten to hear our intercessions and to
intercede for us, O Theotokos
For you always protect those who honor you.

Tone 7 Prokeimenon (*Resurrection*)

The Lord shall give strength to His people. / The
Lord shall bless His people with peace. (*Ps*
28/29:11)

Epistle of the Sunday (2 Corinthians 6:1-10)

We then, as workers together with Him also
plead with you not to receive the grace of God in
vain. For He says:

“In an acceptable time I have heard you,
And in the day of salvation I have helped you.”

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is
the day of salvation.

We give no offense in anything, that our
ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we
commend ourselves as ministers of God: in
much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in
distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in
tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;
by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by
kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by
the word of truth, by the power of God, by the
armor of righteousness on the right hand and on
the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report
and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as
unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and
behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed;
as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet
making many rich; as having nothing, and yet
possessing all things.

Gospel of the Sunday (Luke 5:1-11)

So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to
hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake
of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by

the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them
and were washing their nets. Then He got into
one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked
him to put out a little from the land. And He sat
down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

When He had stopped speaking, He said to
Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down
your nets for a catch.”

But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master,
we have toiled all night and caught nothing;
nevertheless at Your word I will let down the
net.” And when they had done this, they caught
a great number of fish, and their net was
breaking. So they signaled to their partners in
the other boat to come and help them. And they
came and filled both the boats, so that they
began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell
down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me,
for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

For he and all who were with him were
astonished at the catch of fish which they had
taken; and so also were James and John, the
sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.
And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid. From
now on you will catch men.” So when they had
brought their boats to land, they forsook all and
followed Him.

Communion Hymn of Sunday

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

On Illness

*But if we are sons, we are heirs also: heirs indeed
of God and joint heirs with Christ, provided,
however, we suffer with Him that we may also be
glorified with Him (Rom. 8:17).*

Our Saviour and the God-bearing Fathers teach
that our only concern in this life should be the
salvation of our souls. Bishop Ignatius says:
"Earthly life—this brief period—is given to man
by the mercy of the Creator in order that man
may use it for his salvation, that is, for the
restoration of himself from death to life" (The
Arena). Therefore, we must "look upon
everything in this world as upon a fleeting
shadow and cling with our heart to nothing of
it...for we look not at the things which are seen,
but at the things which are not seen; for the
things which are seen are temporal, but the
things which are not seen are eternal" (St. John
of Kronstadt, Spiritual Counsels). For Orthodox
Christians, the center of our life is not here, but
there, in the eternal world.

How long we live, what disease or illness
accompanies our death—such things are not the
proper concern of Orthodox Christians. Although
we sing "many years" for one another at
Namesdays and other celebrations, this is only
because the Church in her wisdom knows that
we indeed need "many years" to repent of our
sins and be converted, not because a long life
has any value in itself. God is not interested in
how old we are when we come before His
Judgment, but whether we have repented; He is
not concerned about whether we died of a heart
attack or cancer, but whether our soul is in a
state of health.

Therefore, "we should not dread any human ill,
save sin alone; neither poverty, nor disease, nor
insult, nor malicious treatment, nor humiliation,
nor death" (St. John Chrysostom, On the
Statues), for these "ills" are only words; they
have no reality for those who are living for the
Kingdom of Heaven. The only real "calamity" in
this life is offending God. If we have this basic
understanding of the purpose of life, then the
spiritual meaning of bodily infirmity can be
opened for us.