



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

27th Saturday/Sunday After Pentecost

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

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, December 12

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, December 13

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Church School following

Tuesday, December 15

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Thursday, December 17

9:00 am Daily Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Saturday, December 19

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church Sch.

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, December 20

10:00 am Divine Liturgy



Announcements

➤ On November 15 we began the **Nativity Fast** to prepare ourselves for the Great Feast of the Lord's Nativity. May God strengthen you!

The St. Nicholas Food Pantry needs your donations! Our monthly food pantry will be open to the community on the last Saturday of each month from 4-5 pm. Saturday, January 30th, 2020 will be the first day. Please help support this parish ministry and our local community by bringing non-perishable donations to stock our pantry. See the enclosed list for recommended donations. All donations can be placed in the donation box by the back door of the church basement. Please contact Mat. Ashley or Kate Skowron for additional information. May God bless you for your generosity!

➤ In response to the rising COVID-19 cases, His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek has directed that **masks be worn by everyone** during all services, meetings, and activities on church property, until further notice.

Nativity of Christ 2020

Wednesday, December 23

10 am Royal Hours

Thursday, December 24

9:30 am Vespers Liturgy

8 pm Vigil of the Nativity

Friday, December 25

10 am Festal Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 26

10 am Divine Liturgy

Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* (none) *Home:* Geroge Shaytar, Sandi Tirpak, Paul Yewisiak, *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Olga Tryszyn.

➤ **Vigil Lights** from **Charles Wasilko** for the health of sisters Doris and Marsha. From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants, parents Charles and Mary; for the health of the Wasilko family; Congratulations to the Reader Chuck! From **Mat. Joni** for the departed servant of God Barbara; for the health of family. From **John Kowalcheck and Olga Cozza** for the health of Elizabeth Kowalcheck; for the health and salvation of our family; for the health of Galina Vilкова. From **Mat. Nancy and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant of God Dn Joseph Karavlan; for the health of family, especially Phillis and Dave. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servant Marie Baronyak; Many Years to Fr Tom, John Skowron, and Chuck!

Thank You

➤ to our **December** donors: Bulletin (\$60) from **Jan and Chuck Widel** in memory and for the health of the Puskar and Morris families; Altar Candles (\$25) from **Donya Yewisiak** in memory of Matushka Olga Soroka; Incense (\$10) from the **John Mahalchak family** for the health of their family.



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.

Joy in the Nativity of Christ

Let us be glad in the Lord, dearly-beloved, and rejoice with spiritual joy that there has dawned for us the day of ever-new redemption, of ancient preparation, of eternal bliss. For as the year rolls round, there recurs for us the commemoration of our salvation, which promised from the beginning, accomplished in the fullness of time will endure for ever; on which we are bound with hearts up-lifted to adore the divine mystery: so that what is the effect of God's great gift may be celebrated by the Church's great rejoicings. For God the almighty and merciful, Whose nature as goodness, Whose will is power, Whose work is mercy: as soon as the devil's malignity killed us by the poison of his hatred, foretold at the very beginning of the world the remedy His piety had prepared for the restoration of us mortals: proclaiming to the serpent that the seed of the woman should come to crush the lifting of his baneful head by its power, signifying no doubt that Christ would come in the flesh, God and man, Who born of a Virgin should by His uncorrupt birth condemn the despoiler of the human stock. Thus in the whole and perfect nature of true man was true God born, complete in what was His own, complete in what was ours. And ours we call what the Creator formed in us from the beginning and what He undertook to repair. For what the deceiver brought in and the deceived admitted had no trace in the Saviour. Nor because He partook of man's weaknesses, did He therefore share our faults. He took the form of a slave without stain of sin, increasing the human and not diminishing the Divine: because that emptying of Himself whereby the Invisible made Himself visible and Creator and Lord of all things as He was, wished to be mortal, was the condescension of Pity not the failing of Power.

Hymns and Readings for Saturday, Dec 12

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 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, now and ever and unto ages of
ages. Amen.*

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.

Tone 8 Prokeimenon of Saturday (Psalm 31/32)

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

Epistle of the Saturday (Galatians 5:22-6:2)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no
law. And those who are Christ's have crucified
the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live
in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us
not become conceited, provoking one another,
envying one another.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass,
you who are spiritual restore such a one in a
spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest
you also be tempted. Bear one another's
burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Gospel of the Saturday (Luke 13:18-29)

hen He said, "What is the kingdom of God like?
And to what shall I compare it? It is like a
mustard seed, which a man took and put in his
garden; and it grew and became a large tree,
and the birds of the air nested in its branches."

And again He said, "To what shall I liken the
kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a
woman took and hid in three measures of meal
till it was all leavened."

And He went through the cities and villages,
teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.
Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who
are saved?"

And He said to them, "Strive to enter through
the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will
seek to enter and will not be able. When once
the Master of the house has risen up and shut
the door, and you begin to stand outside and
knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for
us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not
know you, where you are from,' then you will
begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your
presence, and You taught in our streets.' But He
will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you
are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of
iniquity.' There will be weeping and gnashing of
teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and
Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of
God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come
from the east and the west, from the north and
the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.

Communion Hymn of Saturday

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

The Nativity Binds the Devil

And, dearly beloved, this very fact that Christ
chose to be born of a Virgin does it not appear to
be part of the deepest design? I mean, that the
devil should not be aware that Salvation had
been born for the human race, and through the
obscurity of that spiritual conception, when he
saw Him no different to others, should believe
Him born in no different way to others. For
when he observed that His nature was like that
of all others, he thought that He had the same
origin as all had: and did not understand that He
was free from the bonds of transgression
because he did not find Him a stranger to the
weakness of mortality. For though the true
mercy of God had infinitely many schemes to
hand for the restoration of mankind, it chose
that particular design which put in force for
destroying the devil's work, not the efficacy of
might but the dictates of justice. For the pride of
the ancient foe not undeservedly made good its
despotic rights over all men, and with no
unwarrantable supremacy tyrannized over those
who had been of their own accord lured away
from God's commands to be the slaves of his
will. And so there would be no justice in his
losing the immemorial slavery of the human
race, were he not conquered by that which he
had subjugated. And to this end, without male
seed Christ was conceived of a Virgin, who was
fecundated not by human intercourse but by the
Holy Spirit. And whereas in all mothers
conception does not take place without stain of
sin, this one received purification from the
Source of her conception. For no taint of sin
penetrated, where no intercourse occurred. Her
unsullied virginity knew no lust when it
ministered the substance. The Lord took from
His mother our nature, not our fault. The slave's

form is created without the slave's estate,
because the New Man is so commingled with the
old, as both to assume the reality of our race
and to remove its ancient flaw.

When, therefore, the merciful and almighty
Saviour so arranged the commencement of His
human course as to hide the power of His
Godhead which was inseparable from His
manhood under the veil of our weakness, the
crafty foe was taken off his guard and he
thought that the nativity of the Child, Who was
born for the salvation of mankind, was as much
subject to himself as all others are at their birth.
For he saw Him crying and weeping, he saw
Him wrapped in swaddling clothes, subjected to
circumcision, offering the sacrifice which the
law required. And then he perceived in Him the
usual growth of boyhood, and could have had no
doubt of His reaching man's estate by natural
steps. Meanwhile, he inflicted insults, multiplied
injuries, made use of curses, affronts,
blasphemies, abuse, in a word, poured upon Him
all the force of his fury and exhausted all the
varieties of trial: and knowing how he had
poisoned man's nature, had no conception that
He had no share in the first transgression
Whose mortality he had ascertained by so many
proofs. The unscrupulous thief and greedy
robber persisted in assaulting Him Who had
nothing of His own, and in carrying out the
general sentence on original sin, went beyond
the bond on which he rested, and required the
punishment of iniquity from Him in Whom he
found no fault. And thus the malevolent terms of
the deadly compact are annulled, and through
the injustice of an overcharge the whole debt is
cancelled. The strong one is bound by his own
chains, and every device of the evil one recoils
on his own head. When the prince of the world
is bound, all that he held in captivity is released.
Our nature cleansed from its old contagion regains
its honourable estate, death is destroyed by death,
nativity is restored by nativity: since at one and
the same time redemption does away with slavery,
regeneration changes our origin, and faith justifies
the sinner.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, Dec 13

Tone 2 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal,
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead.
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead,
all the powers of heaven cried out://
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”

Tone 2 Troparion (*Forefathers*)

Through faith Thou didst justify the Forefathers,
betrotting through them the Church of the gentiles.
These saints exult in glory,
for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit:
she who bore Thee without seed.//
So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us!

Tone 7 Troparion (*St. Herman*)

O joyful North Star of the Church of Christ,
guiding all men to the Heavenly Kingdom,
teacher and apostle of the True Faith,
intercessor and defender of the oppressed,
adornment of the Orthodox Church in America:
Blessed Father Herman of Alaska,
pray to our Lord Jesus Christ//
for the salvation of our souls!

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

Tone 2 Kontakion (*Resurrection*)

Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior,
seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb!
The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld
this and rejoiced with Thee,//
and the world, my Savior, praises Thee forever.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion (*Forefathers*)

You did not worship the graven image,
O thrice-blessed ones,
but armed with the immaterial Essence of God,
you were glorified in a trial by fire.
From the midst of unbearable flames you called
on God, crying:
“Hasten, O compassionate One!
Speedily come to our aid,//
for Thou art merciful and able to do as Thou
dost will!”

Tone 4 Prokeimenon (*Forefathers*)

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, /
and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever!
(*Song of the Three Holy Children, v. 3*)

Epistle of the Sunday (Colossians 3:4-11)

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Gospel of the Sunday (Luke 14:16-24)

Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.’ ”

Communion Hymn of Sunday

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*) Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just! (*Ps. 32:1*) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Holy Forefathers

On the Sunday that occurs on or immediately after the eleventh of this month, we commemorate Christ's forefathers according to the flesh, both those that came before the Law, and those that lived after the giving of the Law.

Singing in the service for this day “the god-pleasing life” of the Old Testament righteous men, the Holy Church thus represents our intellectual look at the whole universe of great virtues, such as: the God-loving gentleness and

meekness of the first martyr in the world, Abel, the holy zeal for the glorification of the name of God, Enos, the high divine thinking and the fear of God, Enoch, the firmness in faith and piety, Noah among the general depravity of his contemporary world, the wonderful faith and obedience to the word of God, Abraham, filial obedience, Isaac up to the preparation to be offered as a burnt offering according to the command of God, the kind domestic bravery, Sarah, the penetrating maternal love, Rebecca, the mild humility, Jacob who earned the rage of Laban and Esau, the holy chastity, Joseph who was more than ready to suffer and die, rather than to sin before God, the unhampered invincible patience in the sufferings and misfortunes, Job, the meek, wise leadership, Moses and Samuel, the inspiring courage through faith, Joshua son of Nun, Barak, and Gideon, the high self-sacrificing love for their country and people, Judith and Esther, the plaintive and contrite repentance, David and Manasseh, the ascetic and divinely intellectual life, Elijah and Elisha, the zeal for the glory of God of the holy prophets, the unhampered invincible dedication to the law of God and usual patriotism of the three youths in Babylon and the rest of the good deeds of all the other Old Testament men we celebrate, "of whom the world was not worthy" (Hebrews 11:38). According to the teaching of St. Gregory the Theologian, each of these virtues stand by themselves «as a special way to salvation, and undoubtedly results in any one of the everlasting and blessed abodes; for as the generations of life are various, so are the abodes of God are many (John 14:2), and in them are divided and are assigned to everyone according to his worthiness. Therefore let one fulfill his virtue, one to another, the other of the many, and whoever, if it is possible, and in everything; only let everyone go without stopping, let everyone strive forward and follow steadily in the steps of the good leaders, who directly leads a path for him, and makes his way through the narrow gate (Matthew 7:14) to lead to the heights of the blessed heaven»