



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's Schedule

Saturday, April 3

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, April 4

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

Monday, April 5

5:00 pm Lenten Vespers

Tuesday, April 6

9:00 am Lenten Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Wednesday, April 7

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Fellowship meal following

Thursday, April 8

9:00 am Lenten Matins

9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Friday, April 9

7:00 pm Akathist to the Passion of Christ

Saturday, April 10

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, April 11 (St John Climacus)

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

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

Third Saturday/Sunday of Great Lent

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

April 3-4, 2021

Announcements

➤ **As we continue through our Lenten journey**, be encouraged about all of the good things that are happening around us: daily services at our church, the lessening effect of the pandemic, the gathering of ourselves together, renewing friendships and fellowships, the return of many to work and employment, the coming celebration of the Resurrection of Christ **together as one parish**, and the unspeakable splendor of the services and accompanying celebrations. These and many other things are a sign of the God's mercy and grace which he

richly pours out on us. Do not be weighed down with anxiety and despair! Give glory to God for His bounty and riches which He bestows us on us in Christ. Join in to the continuing observance of the Great Lenten services, accompanied by your efforts of

fasting, prayers, and almsgiving. Prepare yourselves properly for the upcoming services of Holy Week beginning with Lazarus Saturday (April 24) and culminating in the Holy Pascha (Sunday, May 2). "O give thanks to the Lord for He is gracious, for His mercy endures for ever!"



Prayers

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

➤ **Vigil Lights** From **John and Nancy Pravlochak** for the departed servants Olga Kasnot and Michelle Bittner; for the health of our grandchildren, especially granddaughters Christine and Carolyn. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the newly departed Olga Kasnot; Happy Birthday and Many Years to Fr Igor! From **Alexandra Tirpak** for the newly departed friend Arlene; for the health of family; for special intentions. From **Mat. Nancy and Gregory Mell** for the newly departed Olga Kasnot; for Dn Joseph Mell; for the health of family. From **John Kowalcheck and Olga Cozza** for the health of Nora and Elizabeth and their children to be born; for the health of Galina and Dana. From **Chuck Wasilko** for the departed servant Olga Kasnot. From **Kristie Mertz** for the departed servant Olga Kasnot. From **John Mahalchak** for the healing of son John Jr. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton; for special intentions; for departed servant (brother) Russell.

Thank You

➤ **to Lindy Hamilton** for sponsoring all categories of monthly donations for in April, in memory of her twin brother, Russell: (Bulletin \$60, Holy Bread \$50, Communion Wine \$40, Altar Candles \$25, Incense \$10).

This Week in Church School

Today's lesson: Isaiah

Scripture reference: Book of Isaiah

Questions to ask/review:

- Who was Isaiah? Where did he live? How were Judah and Israel separate?
- What is a prophet? What did prophets speak about? What are some ways God can speak to us?
- What are some of the major prophecies of Isaiah?
- What happened to Judah when Isaiah's warnings went ignored?
- What are the consequences of going against God's will? Is it fair for every bad deed to have a bad consequence?
- Does God sometimes let people "get by" without suffering the consequences? Is that fair?
- What about others who do wonderful deeds all their lives and never get any recognition? Is God fair? Explain

Suggested Activities at home:

- Create your own incense burner using a tuna can. Make a tuna can incense burner. Freeze the can full of water. Use hammer and nails to make holes that produce a pleasing design on the sides. Remove ice. Punch 3 holes along the top rim and cut a length of wire for each. Twist wires to attach to can and to each other to make a hanger.

Prayer: Lord, may your Eucharist cleanse us of our sins. Amen.



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, April 3

Tone 2 Troparion of the Righteous Departed

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 of the Righteous Departed

Remember the souls of Thy servants, O Lord, for
Thou art good,
And insofar as they have sinned in this life,
forgive them.
For no one is sinless but Thee, who givest the
departed rest.

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

Tone 8 Kontakion for the Departed

With the saints give rest, O Christ, to the souls
of Thy servants,
where sickness and sorrow are no more
neither sighing, but life everlasting!

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 8 Theotokion for the Departed

We have thee as a wall and a haven
and an intercessor well-pleasing unto God, //
Whom thou hast borne O Virgin Theotokos, the
salvation of the faithful.

Tone 8 Prokeimenon of Saturday (Psalm 31/32)

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

Tone 6 Prokeimenon for the Departed

Their souls shall dwell with the blessed. (Ps.
24:13a)

Epistle of the Saturday (Hebrews 10:32-38)

But recall the former days in which, after you
were illuminated, you endured a great struggle

with sufferings: partly while you were made a
spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations,
and partly while you became companions of
those who were so treated; for you had
compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully
accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing
that you have a better and an enduring
possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore
do not cast away your confidence, which has
great reward. For you have need of endurance,
so that after you have done the will of God, you
may receive the promise:

“For yet a little while,
And He who is coming will come and will not
tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith;
But if anyone draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him.”

Epistle for the Departed (1 Thes 4:13-17)

I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren,
concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest
you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if
we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even
so God will bring with Him those who sleep in
Jesus.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord,
that we who are alive and remain until the
coming of the Lord will by no means precede
those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will
descend from heaven with a shout, with the
voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of
God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then
we who are alive and remain shall be caught up
together with them in the clouds to meet the
Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be
with the Lord.

Gospel of the Saturday (Mark 2:14-17)

As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of
Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to

him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed
Him.

Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi’s
house, that many tax collectors and sinners also
sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for
there were many, and they followed Him. And
when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating
with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to
His disciples, “How is it that He eats and drinks
with tax collectors and sinners?”

When Jesus heard it, He said to them, “Those
who are well have no need of a physician, but
those who are sick. I did not come to call the
righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Gospel for the Departed (John 5:24-30)

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My
word and believes in Him who sent Me has
everlasting life, and shall not come into
judgment, but has passed from death into life.
Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming,
and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of
the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For
as the Father has life in Himself, so He has
granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has
given Him authority to execute judgment also,
because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at
this; for the hour is coming in which all who are
in the graves will hear His voice and come
forth—those who have done good, to the
resurrection of life, and those who have done
evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. I can
of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My
judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My
own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

Communion Hymn for the Departed

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous. Praise befits
the just. (Ps 33:1) Blessed are they whom Thou
hast chosen and taken, O Lord. Their memory is
from generation to generation. (Ps. 64:4a;
101:12b) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



The Risk of Prayer

The main elements of Great Lent are prayer and
fasting. Prayer presupposes faith. A person who
does not pray is helpless, insecure, blind and
alone.

They are attached to the earth, to matter, they do
not know how to fly high, to sail in the heavens, to
have necessary celestial assistance. They are
magnetized, bound, clinging to the perishable
earth. They do not detach easily. They try to
treasure the earth. They are constantly looking for
pleasures, to make them happy, but rather they
give them pain. It is sad and worthy of lamentation
to see them seeking joy in the mud. The ascent to
heaven begins with repentance, sincere
repentance, compunctionate remorse. It is worth
feeling that you were not created for the dirt.
Empathy does not really make you happy.
Adherence to the hereafter is a serious mistake and
has costs with bitter consequences. It is not
impossible to climb higher than the peaks. It is
possible for everyone. As long as they want it, they
love it. At first we are hesitant, cowardly, scared,
we do not want to risk it.

In fact, we consider prayer elusive, strange,
unnatural, impossible, not for us. We think it is a
game which is impermissible and resistant, that
we are very sinful for such a thing. Prayer is not
just for the saints. But if one prays modestly and
humbly, one begins to sweeten one's heart, to be
illuminated, to be strengthened and to rest. They feel
that praying is worth it. They feel gladness,
rejoicing, security, empowerment and comfort.
They understand that it is a great need of the soul,
their physical movement, their inherent
functioning. It becomes a good habit and not a
formal act. A daily indulgence and gift. As the body
needs daily food to be maintained, so does our
immortal soul. One cannot love God and not
connect with Him, not talk to Him and pray. They
always think about Him and invoke Him. The
memory of God is a prayer. When you remember
your loved one you rejoice. Divine invocation is an
occasion of great joy, peace and blessing.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, April 4

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 1 Troparion of the Cross

O Lord, save Thy people,
and bless Thine inheritance!
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians
over their adversaries;
and by virtue of Thy Cross,//
preserve Thy habitation!

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

Tone 7 Kontakion (Cross)

Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden;
it has been mysteriously quenched by the wood of the Cross.
The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished;
for Thou, O my Savior, hast come and cried to those in hell://
“Enter again into Paradise!”

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Cross)

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

Epistle of the Sunday (Hebrews 4:14-5:6)

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot

sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.”

As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”

Gospel of the Sunday (Mark 8:34-9:1)

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

Communion Hymn

The light of Thy countenance has shone on us, O Lord. (Ps. 4:7a) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Precious Cross

*Let the whole earth venerate the Cross,
Through which it learned to worship Thee, O Word.*

Since through the forty-day Fast we are also crucified in a certain way, deadened as we are by the passions, and feel a sense of bitterness, so that we become exhausted and fall down, for this reason the Precious and Life-giving Cross is set forth, to refresh and strengthen us, and to remind us of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. It exhorts us with this thought: If our God was crucified for us, how much ought we to do for Him! It lightens our burdens by comparing them with the afflictions of the Master. It reminds us of the glory that comes through the Cross and gives us the hope of this glory. For, as our Savior ascended the Cross and was glorified through being led around dishonorably and by the bitter treatment that He received, so must we also act, in order that we may be glorified with Him, even if we suffer some unpleasantness for a time.

And we venerate the Cross in other ways. Just as those who traverse a rough and lengthy road and have grown faint through weariness, if they should happen to find a tree that affords plenty of shade, sit down for a while and are refreshed, and, as if rejuvenated, accomplish the remainder of the journey; so now in the season of the Fast and on the laborious road that we traverse, the Life-bearing Cross was planted in the midst by the Holy Fathers, providing us with relaxation and refreshment and making those

who have become weary well-equipped and nimble for the subsequent toil. Or, just as at the coming of a king, his banners and scepters precede him, and then he arrives in person, rejoicing and taking delight in his victory and at the same time making his subjects glad; even so our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is soon going to display the Trophy of victory over death and come forth in glory on the day of Resurrection, has sent His scepter in advance, the royal Banner, the Life-giving Cross, preparing us to make ready and welcome Him soon as King, and to praise Him Who has gloriously triumphed.

By the middle week of Holy Lent, the holy period of forty days resembles the spring of Marah because of the discipline that we apply to our bodies and because of the bitterness and weariness that are in us as a result of fasting. Therefore, just as the Divine Moses threw the tree into the middle of that spring and made it sweet, so also God, Who has led us through the noetic Red Sea and away from Pharaoh, sweetens the bitterness from the forty days of fasting with the life-giving Tree of the Precious and Life-giving Cross, consoling us as we spend time in the desert until He leads us up to the noetic Jerusalem through His Resurrection.

Or, since the Cross is called the Tree of Life and is this Tree, and since the Tree of Life was planted in the middle of the Paradise of Eden, it was appropriate that the most Divine Fathers should plant the Tree of the Cross in the middle of the holy forty days, thereby simultaneously reminding us of Adam’s gluttony and describing his restoration through the Tree of the Cross. For if we taste of this Tree, we shall no longer die, but be made alive.

By the power of Thy Cross, O Christ our God, protect us from the assaults of the Evil One, and vouchsafe us, having passed through the arena of the forty days with ease, to venerate Thy Divine Passion and Thy Life-bearing Resurrection; and have mercy on us, for Thou alone art good and lovest mankind.