



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

**Fourth Saturday/Sunday of Great Lent**

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA  
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org April 10-11, 2021

# 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!

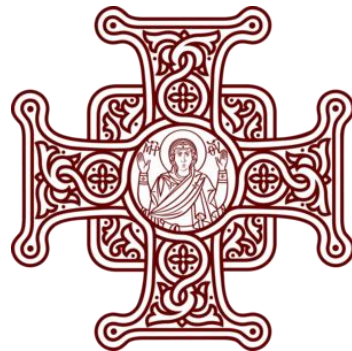
# This Week's Schedule

- Saturday, April 10**  
10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School  
5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil
- Sunday, April 11**  
10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School
- Monday, April 12**  
5:00 pm Lenten Vespers
- Tuesday, April 13**  
9:00 am Lenten Matins  
9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours
- Wednesday, April 14**  
6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy  
Fellowship meal following
- Thursday, April 15**  
9:00 am Lenten Matins  
9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours
- Friday, April 16**  
7:00 pm Akathist to the Mother of God
- Saturday, April 17**  
10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School  
5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil
- Sunday, April 18 (St Mary of Egypt)**  
10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

# 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!"

➤ Congratulations to **Subdeacon Jonathan Skowron** who is completing his studies in the two year Diaconal Vocations Program of the Orthodox Church in America. May God continue to bless him and his family.



# Prayers

- **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* (none) *Home:* George Shaytar, Paul Yewisiak. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Olga Tryszyn.
- **Vigil Lights From Henry and Yelena Paclawski** for the departed servant loving son Dylan. **From Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton and Special Intentions. **From Tatyana Sechler** for the departed servants Polina, Galina, Slava, Valentina, Bruce, Andrei. For the health of Edward, Sergey, Tatyana, Christopher, Piana, Ray, Janet, Stephanie, Kristina, Oksana. **From John Mahalchak Family** for the health of family & friends, son, John, wife, Cheryl, and Gregory. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the departed servants, (mother) Amelia, Ann, and Michael; for the health of my family and our parish; special intentions; God Bless America. **From John & Olga** for the health of Galina & Dana; for Xenia & Elizabeth and their children to be born. **From Mat. Nancy K Mell & Gregory Mell** for the departed servants, (newly departed) John (Jack) Saban and Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. **From Charles Wasilko** for the departed servant, Jack Saban. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants, Olga Kasnot and Jack Saban; for the health of Fr. Igor on his birthday. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family.

# 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).

**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:** Jeremiah

**Scripture reference:** Book of Jeremiah

**Questions to ask/review:**

- Who was Jeremiah? What kind of leader was King Josiah? What about the kings who came after Josiah?
- How did the kings respond to Jeremiah's prophecies?
- What happened to Judah (where Jeremiah prophesied)? Why was Jerusalem destroyed?
- What did God say to Judah through the belt demonstration?
- Was God "fair" to the Jewish people?
- What would you be willing to face persecution for? Why?
- What is the worst persecution you have ever faced at school?
- Can you remember a moment when you stood up for God? Is there a time when you should have stood up and be counted for your beliefs and didn't? Why?
- What qualities do you see in Jeremiah you would like to have?
- What are times and places in history when Christians have been persecuted?
- Would you rather live in a time of heavy persecution? Why or why not?

**Suggested Activities at home:**

- Read Jeremiah 10:1-16 together. It talks about God being angry when people worship idols. Have your children list their 5 favorite toys or things to do. Discuss how to avoid making idols out of these types of items or activities.

**Prayer:** Lord, keep us from idols so that we may worship only You.

# Hymns and Readings for Saturday, April 10

## **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  
deported 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 6:9-12)

But, beloved, we are confident of better things  
concerning you, yes, things that accompany

salvation, though we speak in this manner. For  
God is not unjust to forget your work and labor  
of love which you have shown toward His name,  
in that you have ministered to the saints, and do  
minister. And we desire that each one of you  
show the same diligence to the full assurance of  
hope until the end, that you do not become  
sluggish, but imitate those who through faith  
and patience inherit the promises.

## **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 7:31-37)

Again, departing from the region of Tyre and  
Sidon, He came through the midst of the region  
of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. Then they  
brought to Him one who was deaf and had an  
impediment in his speech, and they begged Him  
to put His hand on him. And He took him aside  
from the multitude, and put His fingers in his  
ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. Then,  
looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to  
him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.”

Immediately his ears were opened, and the  
impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he  
spoke plainly. Then He commanded them that  
they should tell no one; but the more He  
commanded them, the more widely they  
proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond  
measure, saying, “He has done all things well.  
He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to  
speak.”

## **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!

# On Mark 7:36

**Theophylact:** By this we are taught, when we  
confer benefits on any, by no means to seek for  
applause and praise; but when we have received  
benefits, to proclaim and praise our benefactors,  
even though they be unwilling.

**Augustine:** If however He, as one Who knew the  
present and the future wills of men, knew that  
they would proclaim Him the more in  
proportion as He forbade them, why did He give  
them this command? If it were not that He  
wished to prove to men who are idle, how much  
more joyfully, with how much greater  
obedience, they whom He commands to  
proclaim Him should preach, when they who  
were forbidden could not hold their peace.

**Gloss.:** From the preaching however of those  
who were healed by Christ, the wonder of the  
multitude, and their praise of the benefits of  
Christ, increased.

Wherefore it goes on, “And they were beyond  
measure astonished, saying, He hath done all  
things well; he maketh the deaf to hear, and the  
dumb to speak.”

**Bede:** Or he is deaf and dumb, who neither has  
ears to hear the words of God, nor opens his  
mouth to speak them, and such must be  
presented to the Lord for healing, by men who  
have already learned to hear and speak the  
divine oracles.

**Pseudo-Jerome:** Further, he who obtains  
healing is always drawn aside from turbulent  
thoughts, disorderly actions, and incoherent  
speeches. And the fingers which are put into the  
ears are the words and the gifts of the Holy  
Ghost, of whom it is said, “This is the finger of  
God.” [Ex 8:19; Luke 11:20]

The spittle is heavenly wisdom, which loosens the  
sealed lips of the human race, so that it can say, I  
believe in God, the Father Almighty, and the rest of  
the Creed. “And looking up to heaven, he groaned,”  
that is, He taught us to groan, and to raise up the  
treasures of our hearts to the heavens; because by the  
groaning of hearty compunction, the silly joy of the  
flesh is purged away. But the ears are opened to  
hymns, and songs, and psalms; and He looses the  
tongue, that it may pour forth the good word, which  
neither threats nor stripes can restrain.

# Hymns and Readings for Sunday, April 11

## **Tone 3 Troparion** (Resurrection)

Let the heavens rejoice!  
Let the earth be glad!  
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.  
He has trampled down death by death.  
He has become the first born of the dead.  
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,  
and has granted to the world//  
great mercy.

## **Tone 1 Troparion** (St. John Climacus)

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body,  
thou wast a wonderworker, O our God-bearing  
Father John.  
Thou didst receive heavenly gifts through fasting,  
vigil, and prayer,  
healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to  
thee by faith.  
Glory to Him Who gave thee strength!  
Glory to Him Who granted thee a ^crown!//  
Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

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

## **Tone 3 Kontakion** (Resurrection)

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O  
Merciful One,  
leading us from the gates of death.  
On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices;  
with the Prophets and Patriarchs//  
they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy  
power.

*Now and ever and unto ages of Ages. Amen.*

## **Tone 4 Kontakion** (St. John Climacus)

The Lord truly set thee on the heights of  
abstinence,  
to be a guiding star, showing the way to the  
universe//  
O our father and teacher John.

## **Tone 3 Prokeimenon** (Resurrection)

Sing praises to our God, sing praises! / Sing  
praises to our King, sing praises! (Ps. 46:6)

## **Epistle of the Sunday** (Hebrews 6:13-20)

For when God made a promise to Abraham,  
because He could swear by no one greater, He  
swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will  
bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”  
And so, after he had patiently endured, he  
obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by  
the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for  
them an end of all dispute. Thus God,  
determining to show more abundantly to the  
heirs of promise the immutability of His  
counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two  
immutable things, in which it is impossible for  
God to lie, we might have strong consolation,  
who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope  
set before us.

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both  
sure and steadfast, and which enters the  
Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner  
has entered for us, even Jesus, having become  
High Priest forever according to the order of  
Melchizedek.

## **Gospel of the Sunday** (Mark 9:17-31)

Then one of the crowd answered and said,  
“Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute  
spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him  
down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth,  
and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples,  
that they should cast it out, but they could not.”

He answered him and said, “O faithless  
generation, how long shall I be with you? How  
long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me.”  
Then they brought him to Him. And when he  
saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him,

and he fell on the ground and wallowed,  
foaming at the mouth.

So He asked his father, “How long has this been  
happening to him?”

And he said, “From childhood. And often he has  
thrown him both into the fire and into the water  
to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have  
compassion on us and help us.”

Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things  
are possible to him who believes.”

Immediately the father of the child cried out and  
said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my  
unbelief!”

When Jesus saw that the people came running  
together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying  
to it, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you,  
come out of him and enter him no more!” Then  
the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and  
came out of him. And he became as one dead, so  
that many said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him  
by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

And when He had come into the house, His  
disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we  
not cast it out?”

So He said to them, “This kind can come out by  
nothing but prayer and fasting.”

Then they departed from there and passed  
through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to  
know it. For He taught His disciples and said to  
them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into  
the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And  
after He is killed, He will rise the third day.”

## **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in  
the highest! (Ps. 148:1) The righteous shall be in  
everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil  
tidings! (Ps. 111:6) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

## The Ladder of Divine Ascent

Our venerable father John of Sinai wrote his  
wonderful book, **The Ladder of Divine Ascent**, in  
which he sets out the whole of Christian life as a  
divine ascent of thirty rungs to Christ. This book  
has been a treasure, a pearl beyond price, to this  
day. It is useful not only to monastic but to all  
devout Christians....St. John was true physician of  
souls and had great spiritual insight into men’s  
behavior. He made detailed observations of the  
symptoms of men’s sin-sick souls, diagnosed their  
spiritual diseases, and prescribed the appropriate  
medicine for their recover and salvation. He  
showed how one can ascend the “ladder of the  
virtues” step by step and reach the Promised Land,  
fleeing the Egypt of the passions.

To all who are diligent to have their names  
inscribed in the book of life in Heaven, the book  
points out the best path. Journeying by this way,  
we shall find that this book is an unerring guide to  
those who follow it, keeping them unharmed from  
every stumbling-stone. And it sets before us a fixed  
ladder leading from things earthly to the Holy of  
Holies; it makes manifest the God of love, Who  
stands upon its summit. I think that this was the  
ladder which Jacob, the spurner of the passions,  
saw when he was resting on his ascetic couch. And  
so, I entreat you, let us climb with zeal and faith  
up this spiritual and Heaven-scaling ladder, the  
beginning of which is the renunciation of all  
earthly things, and the end, the God of love.

The holy father judged wisely in arranging for us  
an ascent by steps equal in number to the age of  
the Lord according to the flesh; for after the  
pattern of the thirty years of the Lord’s full age, he  
described a ladder, consisting of thirty steps of  
spiritual perfection; and when we have attained to  
the fullness of the Lord’s age by ascending them,  
we shall be lawful and un stumbling. But he who  
has not attained this measure of age is still a babe,  
and in the eyes of all, he is seen to be imperfect. We  
considered it necessary first of all to insert in this  
book the life of the wise father, so that after seeing  
his labors, readers may not disbelieve his teaching.