



St. Michael's Orthodox Christian Church

1182 Ashland St., Greensburg, PA 15601

*Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.*

- His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America
- His Grace Bishop THOMAS, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Middle Atlantic
- Archpriest John Nosal, Pastor

Sunday, December 15, 2019

To all who are present with us this morning,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Thank you for being here.

*Please join us for "coffee and..."
in the Fellowship Hall following Divine Liturgy.*

A Video of the Epistle and Gospel Readings and the Sermon is recorded on most Sundays for posting to our website, stmgbg.org.

You May Find the Text of the Divine Liturgy beginning on the bottom of page 91 of the Service Book (gold embossed cross on the reddish brown cover) or in the green-spiral-bound book; sheet music can be found in the 8.5" x 11" large, spiral-bound booklet.

At the Kiss of Peace our practice is for each of us to greet the person to our right and left with the bowing of our head, hands held in a prayerful clasp or crossed on the chest, while offering each other the seasonal Christian greeting, "Christ is in our midst!" and responding, "He is and shall be!"

Please remember that Holy Communion is reserved for those Chrismated Orthodox Christians who have appropriately prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and Confession to receive the Holy Mysteries of the Church. The bread (*anti'doron*, which means 'in place' of the gifts) which we share after Communion and at the end of the Liturgy is for all.

Being mindful we are in church, let us always remember to...

...be quiet and attentive. Let us sing, pray, stand, sit, kneel and respond where responses are indicated. Let us not talk, look around, text message, play games, etc. Especially let us work at this in the Communion line and when in line to venerate the Cross and depart. If we cannot hear the post-Communion prayers being chanted during our church departure, we are way too noisy.

...refrain from eating, drinking or chewing gum. (most obviously and especially if you will be receiving Holy Communion).

...stay put. Except in rare cases, there are few of us who cannot stay in one location for two hours (actually less, for most of us).



The mission of the members of St. Michael's Orthodox Church is to become completely loving people.

(see Lk 10:27) This will occur by the Grace of God as we strive to live holy lives, using the tools He has given us for this endeavor: prayer, fasting, charitable works, and the constant remembrance of death.

TONE 1

Arr: Basil Kazan.

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the sol - diers were
guard - ing Thy most pure Bod - y, Thou didst a -
rise on the third day, O Sav - ior, grant - ing
life to the world; for which cause the heav - en - ly
pow'rs cried a - loud un - to Thee, O Giv - er of
Life: Glo - ry to Thy Re - sur - rec - tion, O Christ;
26 Glo - ry to Thy King - dom; Glo - ry to Thy Prov - i - dence,
30 O Thou Who a - lone art the Lov - er of man - kind!

I.O.C.C. SYRIAN CHRISTIAN RELIEF

As the Syrian crisis continues, we continue to accept *donations* to do what we can to help ease the suffering there. Checks may be written to "St. Michael's" with the note "Syrian Relief." The following is a link to International Orthodox Christian Charities ((IOCC) "Response to the Crisis in Syria" page with more information on what you can do to help:

http://www.iocc.org/countries/countries_syria.aspx

Sunday, December 15, 2019

Tone: 1 *Eothinon:* 4

Greeting: Christ is in our midst! **Response:** He is and shall be!

Hieromartyr Eleutherios, bishop of Illyria & Sunday of the Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ Martyr Anthia, mother of Eleutherios; Venerable Paul of Latra; Stephen, bishop-confessor of Surozh; Venerable Tryphon of Pechenga.

THE EPISTLE READING

St. Paul to Timothy (2 Tim 1:8-18)

TIMOTHY, MY SON, do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God, Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, Who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know Whom I have believed, and I am sure that He is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us. You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelos and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphoros, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

According to St. Luke (14:16-24)

THE LORD SPOKE THIS PARABLE: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

More Than a “Feeling” — Maintaining a Loving Attitude

(from a tri-fold produced by St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church, Canonsburg)

Jesus’ miracles reveal God’s love and concern for us. But they also challenge us to strike a balance between our *heart* and our *heads*, our *feelings* and our *attitudes*.

The raising of Lazarus from the dead was perhaps Jesus’ greatest miracle. The day after He raised Lazarus, Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem. News of Lazarus’ resurrection had spread far and wide. Many responded with joy and ran to see Jesus as He entered the city, offering Him a “hero’s welcome” by waving palm branches and shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord. Blessed is the King of Israel!”

Those who had witnessed Lazarus’ resurrection shared what they had seen with others. More and more people became curious and ran to see Jesus. But the leaders of the people became jealous.

“See! There’s nothing we can do,” they moaned. “The whole world is running out to meet this Jesus.”

Short-lived excitement

The resurrection of Lazarus was exciting news. But, for most people, the excitement it generated was short-lived. Many who claimed to believe in Jesus because of this miracle soon lost interest. They were excited about what happened, but it didn’t change them.

A few days later, after Jesus had been arrested and put on trial, the same crowd which greeted Jesus so enthusiastically cried, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him! We have no King but Caesar! Crucify Him!” They failed to grasp the essential point: Jesus had not raised Lazarus to make people “feel good,” but rather, to challenge people *to respond to God’s love* — the very thing that made what happened happen! It was as if Jesus had said, “If you respond only to your feelings, you’ll *never* change your lives, you’ll never change your attitudes, you’ll never find true love.”

Our response to God’s love involves more than feelings; it requires a change in attitude.

- ◆ **Love is an attitude, not a feeling.** While love does involve emotions, it is built on concern and care, not on “good feelings.” Jesus raised Lazarus because He *loved* Lazarus and cared deeply for him, *not* because He wanted to *feel good*. While knowing that we are loved does make us feel good, we need to *know* that we are loved because others are sincerely concerned about our well-being.
- ◆ **Love is unconditional.** When Jesus showed His love for others, there were no strings attached. He didn’t expect anything in return. He didn’t say, “I’ll help you if you love me.” He didn’t think, “Okay, I’ll heal you because it’ll make me look and feel good.” Jesus raised Lazarus because He loved Him. He knew He would be criticized and condemned for what He did. Even Jesus’ disciples warned Him not to go to Bethany. Jesus’ love overcame every condition, even fear.

- ◆ **Love helps us overcome obstacles in life.** Jesus encountered people who were jealous of Him, who resented Him, who refused to listen to Him, who criticized Him, who were phly with Him, and who ultimately killed Him. Most people rejected Jesus and refused to respond to Hijm. Yet He never gave up. He refused to say, “I don’t need this. I can’t hack this. Find another Savior.” Because of His loving attitude, Jesus overcame every obstacle.

Accepting Jesus Christ’s challenge

Jesus challenges us to take a long, honest look at our own attitudes. Do we love God and others because it makes us “feel good” or because we are genuinely concerned about their well-being? Do we, like the crowds who greeted Jesus in Jerusalem, love others as long as we feel good, only to drop them when the good feelings wear off, or do we, like Jesus, love unconditionally, expecting nothing in return, or do we keep demanding more and more miracles from others in a vain attempt to “keep love alive?”

Make a commitment to strike a balance between *feelings* and *attitudes* in your relationship with God and with those whom you love. Struggle to love others with no concern for your own pleasure or glory. I doing so, you’ll find that love —*real* love — is much more than a “feeling.”

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Loving God, others, and ourselves involves more than mere *feelings*. While the Christian lifestyle demands *action*, it is rooted in our *attitudes*, not just our *emotions*.

All of us have had experiences which have changed our lives. Some of these changes are temporary. We may feel excited for a day or two, or even for several weeks, but then the feeling faces. We settle back into our old ways and routines. Other changes, however, are deeper, rooted in that joy and excitement which forever influences the way we live, act, think, and relate to others and to ourselves.

IMPORTANT THINGS...

...We’ve been invited to help Christopher Fekos, a recently released participant in our federal prison system, to establish some financial support to get him through the next four to six months. If you think you would be able to contribute toward his challenge, speak with Fr. John.

CHURCH SCHOOL ‘HELP WANTED’ –

— Parishioners talented in art, photography, creative writing or poetry to help brainstorm with and coach our children in the 2020 Parish Life Conference (PLC) Creative Arts Festival. Speak with Fotini today.

Holy Saint, Nicholas,
also known as Santa Claus,
 Holy Saint, Nicholas,
 also known as Santa Claus,
 The heretic Arius you rebuked,
 The heretic Arius you rebuked
 at the First Great Council.
 Children and sailors are some of those
 Children and sailors are some of those
 Who witness wonders through your prayers
 Who witness wonders through your prayers.



HIGHLIGHTS of UPCOMING EVENTS

- SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15** — Sarris Candy Order pick-up
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31 — 12:00 noon — Food on the Hill
MONDAY, JANUARY 6 (EPIPHANY) — House Blessings begin
SATURDAY, JANUARY 11 — Outdoor Blessing of Waters — Twin Lakes
SUNDAY, JANUARY 12 — Antiochian Women Annual Holiday Luncheon
 Jaffre's Restaurant, Greensburg; \$25 per person (see Michelle
 Gajewski); **Deadline for payment is December 29th.**
FRIDAY, JAN. 17-20 — AV Winter Family Camp

CONFESSIONS will be heard on...

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Monday, December 16; 8 to 9 pm | Monday, Dec. 23; 6 to 9 pm |
| Tuesday, Dec. 17; 10 am to 12 noon | Tuesday, Dec. 24; 11: 30 am |
| Wednesday, Dec. 18; 8:00pm | |
| Friday, December 20; 10 am to 12 | LAST CHANCE! |
| Saturday, Dec. 21; 10am to 12 | |

VOTIVE CANDLE OFFERINGS

In memory of parents, Miller and Pat Abraham - Dana Abraham
Health of Jillian Crowe - Dana Abraham
Health of Paul Capar - Dana Abraham

**Secretary Debbie will be in
on Friday, 12/20.**

**ALWAYS USE THE MOST
CURRENT BULLETIN!**

Sunday, December 15

- 8:45 AM - ORTHROS
- 9:25 AM - Choir Rehearsal
- 10:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - Church School
 - CS Teachers/Staff Meeting
 - Choir Rehearsal
- 4:00 PM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - of Monday; in Arabic;
 - Propher Haggai
 - Fr. Meletios Zafaran celebrating*

Monday, December 16

- 9:00 AM - NAT. PARAKLESIS
- 6:00 PM - Bible Reading/Study
 - Gospel of St. John
- 8:00 to 9:00 PM - Confessions

Tuesday, December 17

- 9:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - Daniel & the Three Holy Youths
- 10:00 AM to 12 - Confessions
- 7:00 PM - Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, December 18

- 6:00 PM - HOLY UNCTION
 - (As celebrated in Holy Week)
- 8:00 PM - Confessions

Thursday, December 19

- 9:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - Martyr Boniface

Friday, December 20

- 9:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - Ignatius of Antioch
- 10:00 AM to 12 - Confessions

Saturday, December 21

- 9 AM - Nativity PARAKLESIS
- 10:AM to 12 - Confessions
- 5 PM - GREAT VESPERS
 - Confessions follow

Sunday, December 22

- 8:45 AM - ORTHROS
- 9:25 AM - Choir Rehearsal
- 10:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - 40 Day Memorial-Martha Craig
 - Church School
 - Special Choir Rehearsal
- 4:00 PM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - of Monday; in Arabic;
 - Forefeast of
 - the Nativity of Christ
 - Fr. Meletios Zafaran celebrating*

Monday, December 23

- 5:00 PM - NAT. PARAKLESIS
- 6:00 to 9:00 PM - Confessions

**NATIVITY of CHRIST
SCHEDULE of SERVICES**

Tuesday, December 24

- 9:00 AM - ROYAL HOURS
& GT VESPERS
 - w/ Old Testament Readings
 - Confessions follow
- 7:30 PM - Festal ORTHROS
- 9:00 PM - DIVINE LIT'RGY
for the Nativity of Christ

Wednesday, December 25

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Friday, December 27

- 9:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
 - Protomartyr Stephen

Saturday, December 28

- 5:00 PM - GREAT VESPERS

**Fill the Toys for Tots collections bins with
new, un-gift-wrapped toys
for the tots of our community.**

