



FROM THE AMBIVON

ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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December 15th, 2024 25th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 8. Sunday of the Forefathers.

Hieromartyr Eleutherius, Bishop of Illyria, his mother, Martyr Evanthia, and Caribus the Eparch (2nd c.). Ven. Paul of Latros (955). St. Stephen the Confessor, Archbishop of Sourozh, Crimea (8th c.). Ven. Tryphon, Abbot of Pechenga (Kol'sk), and his martyred disciple, Jonah (1583). Martyr Eleutherius at Constantinople (3rd c.). Ven. Pardus, Hermit, of Palestine (6th c.).

Birthdays & Anniversaries for December

Birthdays:

Nameday: Barbara Sevensky (12/4); Daniel Jones (12/17);

Baptism:

Anniversary:

Travelers:

Prospora Schedule: PLEASE HELP! We need families to start baking prospora at home. Please sign up. *The Church has a prospora kit if you would like to borrow it!* Thank you all for your offering “for the people by the people”.

Dec 22nd

Dec 29th

Counting: HELP! Please sign up to help us count weekly donations! We need help counting today.

Dec 22nd

Dec 29th

Visitors: PLEASE JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS for an Agape Meal. Thank you to everyone who donated! Please donate what you would spend for lunch at the agape meal to replenish our supplies.

PLEASE SING ALONG! Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies throughout the services is encouraged!

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive themselves by prayer, fasting, and a recent (monthly) confession. If you have questions please ask Fr Michael! Visitors, if you did not introduce yourself to Fr Michael at Vespers, please refrain from Holy Communion.



Service Schedule

SAT, Dec 21st @ 5:00 PM Great Vespers
SUN, Dec 22nd: Hours @ 9:10 AM Hours, 26th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 1. Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ. Sunday before the Nativity.

NATIVITY SCHEDULE

TUES, Dec 24th: @ 9:00 AM Nativity Royal Hours @ 5:00 PM Compline and Matins w/Litya
WED, Dec 25th: Divine Liturgy @ 9:00 AM - Nativity of Christ



Treasury

“... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. Jesus Christ

How Much is my tithe

Weekly	2%	4%	5%	10%
\$200	\$4	\$8	\$10	\$20
\$500	\$10	\$20	\$25	\$50
\$750	\$15	\$30	\$37	\$75
\$1000	\$20	\$40	\$50	\$100
\$1500	\$30	\$60	\$75	\$150

WEEKLY GIVING UPDATE: We thank you for your continued giving in gratitude for all that our loving God does for each of us, for His Holy Church, and all the blessings we receive through her.

Dec Donations: \$5,384.61

Dec Expense: \$2,407.85

Average Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$3,740.85

Average Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$14,963.58



Announcements - Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events

Silent Prayers and Confession: Every Wednesday 11:00AM - 1:30PM or before/after Vespers. Or you can make an appt for confession.

Monthly Panikhida: Dec 28th, 4PM prior to Vespers. We have new Panikhida books!

Catechumen Classes: Every Sunday after Liturgy. All are welcome to sit in the classes. Today's class will be on vespers.

Church Work Day: Every Day is Church Maintenance day! A lot of cleaning can be done! If you have a day you would like to work in the church or even just a couple of hours please get with Fr Michael for what can be done. Sweeping, vacuuming, polishing.....

Parish Council Meeting to next Saturday: Dec 14th, 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM - All are invited. January we will start preparing for the Annual Parish Meeting February 9th and the Diocesan Meeting 23rd & 24th of January (Diocesan Delegates - Primary: Maura Elko - Alternate Tammy Wytovich) any motions to change the Parish By-laws must be submitted to Parish Council for discussion by mid January in order for His Eminence to bless off on the change prior to the Annual meeting. Reminder, in order to submit changes or to be a voting member, a parishioner will submit a signed "Statement of Intent" along with donation of Time, Talent, and Treasure.

We will soon have new service books for the pews. They are due by spring. Extremely backordered.

St. Michael's Greeters Ministry please sign up! Thank you Maura!

ChurchTrac Registration Please register and/or sign in to ChurchTrac and update your information. I am in the process of putting a church directory and this program will allow us to do so very easily. Please add your photo so when we use this directory for proskomide there will be a picture alongside your name.

<https://stmichaeloldforgepa.churchtrac.com/sign-in>

Angel Tree: Thank you to everyone who volunteered and took a tag! This is a parish effort to provide gifts to a needful family for Nativity. Simply take a tag from the tree and purchase the items listed on the back of the tag. Return the gift(s) wrapped with the tag secured to the gift(s) by Dec 21st.

Heavenly Image: Painting is complete. Tile is in! Try to get the tile guys in soon to get the altar complete. Copulas will be painted in the spring.

Parish Prayer List

NEWLY DEPARTED: *Archpriest Michael Evans* (11/14);

DEPARTED: *Michael Toczko* (12/1); *Peter Mizgala* (12/2); *Helen Sorok* (12/9); *Dorothy Polanchik* (12/11); *Walter Buranich* (12/19); *Robert Sorok* (12/23);

Please remember in your prayers LIVING:

Ill-afflicted *Archpriest(s) John Nightingale, & Theodore Orzolek*

All those caring for the sick and suffering at this time throughout the world, especially our families and friends: *Christine Sevensky, Margaret Pregmon, Daniel Jones, Michael Sokol; Michael Krenitsky; Bernie Elko; Nadia Macheska; The child of God Abigail. Judith*

Servants of God: *Mark Bezhuly, David Barsigian, Patricia Jones, Anne Buday, Emily Krenitsky, Gregory Krenitsky, Barbara Sevensky, Beverly Elko, Sandra Condon, Marie Pasternak, Nicole Earl, Anna Tyrpak, Sandy & Danny Pregmon, Walter Pritchky, Michael & Euphemia Keklak, Justin & Elisabeth Kane, Maria & Vitaliy Rakovsky, Ekaterina & Anna, Joe & Kelly Cigna, George, Natasha, Rosa, & Lucia Coyoy, Mat. Emilia, Reader Blaise, Maximus, Rodion, Savina Shepherd, Joseph, Emilia, Judah, Nadezda, & Silas Hart, Eli & Paula Stavisky, Helen Wytovich, Tammy Wytovich, Paulette Ezbiansky, Jason Vo & Maura Elko, Mary Krevko, Elisabeth & Jacob Hallford*

Seekers: *Eugene, Gabriel, & Mike,*

Catechumens: *Paul Dunay, George McCandless, Christopher & Neva Yeisley*

The Great Entrance: With the Great Entrance, Christ enters the Holy Altar to offer Himself for us.

In singing the Cherubic Hymn, we are asked to lay “aside all earthly care that we may receive the King of all” (Matt 24:44). We are asked to leave this temporary world so that we may make the “great entrance” with Christ into His Kingdom. For this reason, during the Cherubic Hymn, the priest and the people pray for each with: “You and all Orthodox Christians, may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom, always now and ever and unto ages of ages.”

And the people respond with “And to thy Holy Priesthood, may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom always now and ever unto ages of ages.” This dialogue is expressing a prayer that God will acknowledge and reward the both the priest and the people for their service in God’s vineyard towards the kingdom of heaven, Essentially saying that God will remember them favorably in heaven due to their dedication.

The Holy Gifts are placed at the Altar and covered with a cloth. This represents the covering of Christ’s body by Joseph of Arimathea after he took Christ’s body down from the cross.

Now that Christ has made the “Great Entrance” into Jerusalem, we “complete our prayer” to Him. In a set of prayers, we are asked to focus completely on essential matters of our life. The simple response is:

“Grant this O Lord”.

The priest offers peace to all of us. Peace is the provider of all good things and opens the door to love. Only with love and peace can we honestly confess “Father, Son and Holy Spirit”.



Words of Wisdom
From the Saints & Teachers

Today's Readings

Epistle: (257) Colossians 3:4-11

Gospel: (76) Luke 14:16-24

EPISTLE

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: Peace be unto all!

Reader: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 4th Tone, the Song of the Fathers: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

Choir: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

Reader: For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us!

Choir: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

Reader: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers

Choir: And praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Colossians.

Deacon: Let us attend!

[(257) Colossians 3:4-11] Brethren: When Christ Who is our life appears, then you also shall appear with Him in glory.

* Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. * On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. * In these you once walked, when you lived in them. * But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. * Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices * and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. * Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

Priest: Peace be unto thee, Reader.

Reader: And to thy spirit.

ALLELUIA

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: In the 4th Tone: AL-LE-LU-IA!

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His name.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: They called to the Lord and He answered them.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

GOSPEL

[(76) Luke 14:16-24] The Lord said 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 they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray thee, have me excused.' * And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray thee, 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 thou hast 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.

3:5a Put to Death What is Earthly in You

POSTBAPTISMAL SIN. CHRYSOSTOM: Does Paul write as though these things were in us? There is no contradiction. It is similar to one who has scoured a statue that was filthy, recast it, and displayed it new and bright, explaining that the rust was eaten off and destroyed. Yet he recommends diligence in clearing away the future rust. He does not contradict himself, for it is not that rust which he scoured off that he recommends should be cleared away but that which grew afterwards. So it is not that former putting to death he speaks of here, nor those fornications, but those which afterward grow. HOMILIES ON COLOSSIANS 8.

THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE. St ATHANASIUS: But the saints, and they who truly practice virtue, “mortify their members” and as the result of this, are pure and without spot, confiding in the promise of our Savior, who said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” These, having become dead to the world, who have renounced the merchandise of the world, gain an honorable death. FESTAL LETTERS 7.3.

SINFUL DESIRE STILL PRESENT IN THE BAPTIZED. St AUGUSTINE: Thus, in movements according to the spirit, the soul sometimes opposes other movements of itself according to the flesh. Conversely, in movements according to the flesh, it opposes others which it has according to the spirit, and this is why we say the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit lusts against the flesh. But this is also why “it is being renewed day by day,” for the soul does not fail to make progress in virtue as it gradually diminishes the carnal desires to which it does not consent. It is to those already baptized that the apostle says, “Mortify your members, which are on the earth.” AGAINST JULIAN 6.14.41.

Gorday, P., ed. (2000). *Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (p. 47). InterVarsity Press.

Luke 14:15–24 *The Banquet Beatitude and Story*

WHY JESUS TOLD THE PARABLE. St CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: One of those who were sitting at the table with them said, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” Probably this man was not yet spiritual but earthly, and not able to understand correctly what Christ spoke. He was not one of those who believed, nor had he been baptized. He supposed that the rewards of the saints for their mutual labors of love would be in things pertaining to the body. Since they were too dull in heart to comprehend a precise idea, Christ outlines for them a parable that explains the nature of the era about to be instituted for their sakes. COMMENTARY ON LUKE, HOMILY 104.

THE HEAVENLY FOOD OF JESUS’ WORD. St CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The holy *agape* is the sublime and saving creation of the Lord....

An *agape* is in reality heavenly food, a banquet of the Word. The *agape*, or love, “bears all things, endures all things, hopes all things. Love never fails.” “Blessed is he who eats bread in the kingdom of God.” The most unlikely of all downfalls is charity that does not fail to be thrown down from heaven to earth among all these dainty seasonings. Do you still imagine that I refer to a meal that will be destroyed? “If I distribute my goods to the poor and do not have love,” Scripture says, “I am nothing.” The whole law and the word depend on this love. If you love the Lord your God and your neighbor, there will be a heavenly feast in heaven. The earthly feast, as we have proved from Scripture, is called a supper. It is permeated with love yet is not identified with it but is an expression of mutual and generous good will. CHRIST THE EDUCATOR 2.1.

Just, A. A., ed. (2005). *Luke* (p. 237). InterVarsity Press.