



FROM THE AMBON

ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

512 WINTER ST., OLD FORGE, PA

Phone: 570-457-3703

Web: www.stmichaelof.org Facebook: [stmichaelof1891PA](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelof1891PA)

Priest Michael Shepherd (frmichael@stmichaelof.org)

Chair - Tammy Wytovich (chair@stmichaelof.org)

Vice Chair - Danny Pregmon (vicechair@stmichaelof.org)

Secretary - Vitaliy Rakovskiy (office@stmichaelof.org)

Treasurer - Santo Cerminaro (treasurer@stmichaelof.org)

July 14th, 2024 3rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 2. Fathers of the 1st Six Ecumenical Councils. Apostle Aquila of the Seventy (1st c.). Ven. Stephen, Abbot of Mákhreshche (Vologdá—1406). Martyr Justus at Rome (1st c.). Ven. Ellius (Hellius), of Egypt (4th c.). Ven. Onesimus of Magnesia (4th c.). Repose of Ven. Nikodemos the Hagiorite (1809).

Birthdays & Anniversaries for July

Birthdays: Sharissa Vorozichak (7/9); Tammy Vrabel (7/10); Mia Keklak (7/14); Sandy Pregmon (7/11); David Barsigian (7/16); Silas Hart (7/17); Vitaliy Rakovsky (7/20); Santo Joseph Cerminaro (7/20); Maria Rakovsky (7/26);

Nameday: Patricia Jones (St Paraskeva of Rome 7/26)

Baptism:

Anniversary: Maria & Vitaliy Rakovsky (7/4)

Travelers:

Prospora Schedule: 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.” Thank you Matushka for today’s prospora.*

July 21 Emily Hart

July 28

Counting: HELP! Please sign up to help us count weekly donations! Thank you Emily for helping count today.

July 21

July 28 Tammy

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, July 20th: @ 5:00 PM - Great Vespers

SUN, July 21st: @ 9:10 AM - Hours and Divine Liturgy

4th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 3.

SAT, July 27th: @ 5:00 PM - Great Vespers

SUN, July 28th: @ 9:10 AM - Hours and Divine Liturgy

5th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 4.



Words of Wisdom

From the Saints & Teachers

Today's Readings

Epistles: (88) Romans 5:1-10 Hebrews

(334) Hebrews 13:7-16

Gospels: (18) Matthew 6:22-33

(56) John 17:1-13

EPISTLE

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: Peace be unto all!

Reader: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 2nd Tone, a Psalm of David: The Lord is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation.

Choir: The Lord is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation.

Reader: The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has not given me over to death.

Choir: The Lord is my strength and my song, He has become my salvation.

Reader: 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!

Deacon: Wisdom!

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

Deacon: Let us attend!

Brethren: Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have obtained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man -- though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.

Brethren: Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings; for it is well that the heart be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited their adherents. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own Blood. Therefore let us go forth to Him outside

the camp and bear the abuse He endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come. Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Priest: Peace be unto thee, Reader.

Reader: And to thy spirit.

ALLELUIA

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Alleluia in the 2nd Tone: May the Lord hear thee in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect thee!

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call to Thee!

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: In the 1st Tone: The Lord, the God of gods, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

GOSPELS

The Lord said: The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body shall be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body shall be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.

At that time, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said: Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son that the Son may glorify Thee, since Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. And this is eternal life, that they know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do; and now, Father, glorify Thou Me in Thine own presence with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was made. I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy Word. Now they know that everything that Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from Thee; and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine; all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one. While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name, which Thou hast given Me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

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.

July Income: \$8,018.00

June Expense: \$5,679.13

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

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 after vespers. Or you can make an appt for confession.

Church Work Day: Every Day is Church Maintenance day! I will begin a list of items that we will need to work on. If you are free and would like to work at the church let me know. Just check the list and when you finish the task, initial off that it has been done.

Parish Council Meeting: 4 August 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM - All are invited.

Choir practice: Saturday's @ 4pm prior to vespers. If you would like to sing in the choir please make every effort to be at the practice.

Bulletin Boards: Community and Administration Boards. Please, you can post on the community board as long as the post/event does not contradict our faith.

YOUTH BOWLING!!! Please confirm if your children will be coming. Open to all of our youth!



What: Youth Bowling Party

When: Saturday, July 20th from 1pm - 3pm

Where: Idle Hours North (Dickson City)

Who: Youth of St. Michael's (Ages 5 and up)

Pizza and Drinks Provided!

PROSPHORA BAKING: I would like to hold another prospora baking class this week for all who would like to learn the valuable and God pleasing ministry. Remember the offering of bread is "for the people and by the people."

ICE CREAM SOCIAL: We are in the midst of planning an Ice Cream Social! This is to be like a town council to chit chat about life, the church, where the church is headed in regards to ministries etc.....but to have a lot of ice cream! This will more than likely be the first week of August.

RETAINING WALL: We have several bids to fix the retaining wall on Church Street. The company will donate capstones and replace the paved sidewalk with a cement sidewalk. The company will tear down the

wall, replace/install drainage pipes, and reuse the existing block stones to reduce the cost. **17K** is the best bid and the lowest by almost 30K and will be done by Cerminaro Stone Company. This is our Summer Campaign drive. We would like to get this finished before winter and if you would like to donate to this campaign; please add it to your envelopes or you can donate by paypal on our website: <https://www.stmichaelof.org/donate>

We have started on some of our Heavenly Image projects. My office was painted. YEA! Monday we will set the appointment with J's Painting to begin painting the copulas and the inside. We have been replacing all the bulbs with LED's. We are not sure but some of the light fixtures may be out or it may be the switches.

WISH LIST! I am putting together a church wish list for items needed for our day to day operations and liturgical services. Please consider purchasing from our wish list as this will reduce our cost of expenses and will allow us to increase and focus our giving in other vital areas needed.

<https://www.myregistry.com/giftlist/stmichaelsorthodoxchurcholdforgewishlist>

Parish Prayer List

Newly Departed: *John Pritchuk (6/16); Matushka Paula Soucek (6/23);*

Departed: *Genevieve Barile 7/31/2015; John Sokol 7/7/2016; Justine (Tinchev) Ludwig 7/19/2016; Steve Serniak 7/20/2016; Michael Peregrim Sr. 7/08/2018; William Keslosky 7/15/2019; Tom Krenitsky 7/6/2021; Stella (Minnick) Krenitsky 7/12/2022*

Please remember in your prayers LIVING

Ill-afflicted Archpriests Michael Evans, John Nightingale, & Theodore Orzolek

All those caring for the sick and suffering at this time throughout the world, especially our families and friends: *David Lezinsky, Christine Sevensky, Mike Jadick, Margaret Pregmon, Daniel Jones, Michael Sokol; Michael Krenitsky; Bernie Elko; The children of God Abigail and Nathan.*

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

Seekers - *Christopher, Eugene, Mike, Brayden, Barbara, Amanda, Tommy*

Catechumens - *JoAnne Snopek & Paul Dunay*

An important part of understanding the [teachings of the Orthodox Church](#) stems from history. Throughout the time of the early Church, many [heresies](#) arose that taught incorrect beliefs about the nature of God, specifically of Christ. To fight against these heresies over the years, the Church convened what we call the Seven Ecumenical Councils, during which they clarified what the Church has always believed. In this post, we briefly cover the basics of these Councils and the teachings they protect.

FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (NICEA, 325 A.D.)

Convened under Emperor Constantine I, the First Ecumenical Council mainly battled a heresy called Arianism. Three-hundred eighteen bishops participated in this Council, including St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; St. James, bishop of Nisibis; St. Spyridon of Tremithus; and St. Athanasius, who was a deacon at the time. They came together because an Alexandrian priest named Arius rejected the Divine nature and pre-eternal birth of Jesus Christ. Instead, he taught his followers that the Son of God was the highest creation.

At this Council, the Church established the following:

- The Son of God is true God, begotten of God the Father before all ages.
- Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was not created and is eternal.
- As the Son of God, begotten from God the Father, Jesus Christ is of one essence with the Father.
- The Church should celebrate Pascha on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring/vernal equinox.
- Various rules for bishops, priests, and deacons, their jurisdiction, and their elections/ordinations respectively
- Many other canons regarding excommunication, penance, etc.

The first three bullets we listed are clearly and concisely stated in the Creed, or Symbol of Faith, recited by the Orthodox during almost every liturgical worship service.

SECOND ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (CONSTANTINOPLE, 381 A.D.)

The Second Ecumenical Council convened under Emperor Theodosius I. One-hundred fifty bishops attended this Council, including Gregory the Theologian, who presided over the Council, Gregory of Nyssa, Meletius of Antioch, Amphilocheus of Iconium and Cyril of Jerusalem. This Council condemned the heresy called Pneumatomachianism. This heresy, led by Arian bishop Macedonius of Constantinople, taught that the Holy Spirit was not divine, but a creature. Therefore, the Holy Spirit was, according to this heresy, subservient to God the Father and God the Son, like an angel. In response to this heresy, the Church affirmed the following as dogma:

- The Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father and shares the same essence (and thus equality) with the Father and the Son

Additionally, the Second Ecumenical Council added five articles to the Nicene Creed. In these articles, the Church declared her teachings about the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Mysteries (read Sacraments), the resurrection of the dead, and the life in the world to come. After adding these clarifying articles, the Church referred to the symbol of faith as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, because of the two Councils that contributed to its content.

THIRD ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (EPHESUS, 431 A.D.)

Convened under Emperor Theodosius II, the Third Ecumenical Council condemned the heresy of Nestorianism. Two-hundred bishops participated in this Council. Nestorius, Archbishop of Constantinople, incorrectly taught that the Most-holy Virgin Mary simply gave birth to the man Christ. He believed that God later united with the man Jesus and dwelt in Him as in a temple, similar to the way God dwelt in Moses and other prophets. Therefore, Nestorius called the Lord Jesus Christ *God-bearing*, and not God incarnate. Moreover, he insisted on calling the Virgin Mary *Christotokos* (Christ-bearer) rather than *Theotokos* (God-bearer). In response to this heresy, the Third Ecumenical Council declared the following:

- Jesus Christ was fully God and fully Man
- Because Jesus was true God of true God, the Virgin Mary gave birth to God; thus she should be called *Theotokos*

The Council also affirmed the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and strictly prohibited making any changes or additions to it.

FOURTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (CHALCEDON, 451 A.D.)

The Fourth Ecumenical Council convened under Emperor Marcian. Six-hundred fifty bishops met at this Council to condemn the false teachings of Monophysitism. Taught by an archimandrite named Eutychius, Monophysitism rejected the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, it taught that Christ's Divine nature had completely absorbed His Human nature. Therefore, according to Eutychius, we only need to recognize the Divine nature of Christ, not the Human. In summary, this Council defined the following:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect Man
- As God, Jesus Christ is eternally begotten (born) from God
- As Man, Christ was born of the Virgin Mary and took on our full human nature, but was without sin of His own will

Through Christ's incarnation, He unites Divinity and Humanity within Himself as a single Person. Infused and immutable, refuting Eutychius; indivisible and inseparable, refuting Nestorius.

FIFTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (CONSTANTINOPLE, 553 A.D.)

Convened under Justinian I, the Fifth Ecumenical Council met to quell a controversy between Nestorians and Monophysites. One-hundred sixty-five bishops met at this Council to condemn the well-known works of the Antiochian school of the Syrian church, entitled *The Three Chapters*. The writers of these works – Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa – clearly expressed Nestorian errors. But nothing was said of their works at the Fourth Ecumenical Council. When debating with Monophysites, Nestorians referred to these works. Monophysites found in those works an excuse to reject the Fourth Ecumenical Council and to slander the universal Orthodox Church, charging that it had deviated toward Nestorianism.

The Council condemned all three works and also condemned Theodore of Mopsuestia himself, as not having repented. As for Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa, they themselves received pardon. In other words, the Council limited censure only to their Nestorian works. Theodoret and Ibas renounced their false opinions and died in peace with the Church. Moreover, the Council reiterated its condemnation of the heresies of Nestorius and Eutychius.

SIXTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (CONSTANTINOPLE, 680 A.D.)

The Sixth Ecumenical Council convened under Constantine IV. It consisted of 170 bishops who collectively condemned Monothelitism. (*This is different from Monophysitism, which we covered earlier.*) This heresy taught that while Jesus Christ had two natures, both God and Man, He only had one Divine Will. In other words, this heresy rejected that Christ, as a man, had His own free human will. In response, the Council clarified that in Jesus Christ are *two natures*, Divine and human, and in these two natures there are two wills. However, the human will in Christ is not against, but rather is

submissive	to	His	Divine	will.
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Additionally, this Council pronounced excommunication against a number of other heretics, including the Roman Pope Honorius, who acknowledged these false teachings. A Roman delegation of presbyters and deacons signed the formulation of this Council, thus clearly illustrating that the highest power in Christendom belongs to the Council, not to the Pope.

THE QUINISEXT SYNOD (691 A.D.)

After eleven years, the Council again opened a meeting in the imperial palace to resolve questions about the Church hierarchy. Because it supplemented the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils, it is called the Fifth-Sixth (Quinisext) Synod. This Council established canons to guide the Church. These include:

- 85 Canons of the Holy Apostles
- Canons of the seven Ecumenical and nine Local Councils, which serve as the foundation of Orthodox Church government

Moreover, this synod condemned several innovations of the Roman Church on the grounds that these changes were not in agreement with the spiritual decisions of the Ecumenical Church. The main Roman innovations mentioned at the synod included the requirement that priests and deacons be celibate, a strict fast on Saturdays of the Great Fast, and the depiction of Christ in the form of a lamb, or in any way other than He appeared on the earth.

SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (NICEA, 787 A.D.)

Convened under Empress Irene (widow of Leo IV), the Seventh Ecumenical Council fought against the heresy of Iconoclasm. At the time of the Council, iconoclasm had raged for sixty years under the Greek Emperor Leo III. Leo III wanted to convert Mohammedans (Muslims) to Christianity, and believed it necessary to do away with veneration of icons in order to convert them. This heresy continued under his son, Constantine V Copronymus, and his grandson, Leo IV.

The Council resolved to provide holy icons and place them in churches, together with the likeness of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord. The faithful were to honor and venerate (but not worship) the icons, elevating their souls and hearts to the Lord God, the Theotokos and the Saints, who are represented in them.

However, after this council, persecution of the holy icons continued under Emperors Leo V, Michael II, and Theophilus. Thus, iconoclasm disturbed the Church for another 25 years. The local synod of Constantinople in 843 A.D. finally restored and affirmed veneration of the holy icons under the Empress Theodora.

This Council also established the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday of Great Lent, which we celebrate in thanksgiving to the Lord for granting His Church victory over the heresy of iconoclasm.

CONCLUSION

The Seven Ecumenical Councils clarified the unshakable foundations of the Christian Faith and protected them against the danger of mutation from heresy. Over the centuries, the Church continues to protect her precious dogmas and preserve them. Without them, we could have gone astray and lost the fullness of the Truth revealed to us by Our Lord Jesus Christ. So, the next time you profess the Creed, remember to be thankful you can profess it at all.