



FROM THE AMBON

ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Priest Michael Shepherd (frmichael@stmichaelof.org)

Chair - Tammy Wytovich (chair@stmichaelof.org)

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

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Treasurer - Santo Cerminaro (treasurer@stmichaelof.org)

July 27th, 2024 4th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 4. Holy Apostles of the Seventy and Deacons: Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, and Parmenas (1st c.). St. Pitirim, Bishop of Tambov (1698). Ven. Moses, Wonderworker of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th-14th c.). Martyr Julian of Dalmatia (2nd c.). Martyr Eustathius (Eustace—ca. 321), of Apamea. Ven. Paul of Xeropotamou, founder of the Monastery of St. Paul on Mt. Athos (10th c.). The Smolensk “Hodēgētria” (“THE GUIDE”) Icon of the Mother of God (brought from Constantinople in 1046). Seraphim-Diveyevo Tenderness Icon of the Mother of God (1885).

Birthdays & Anniversaries for July

Birthdays: Sharissa Voroziichak (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: PLEASE HELP! We have now signed up for prospora and 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.”

Aug 4

Aug 11

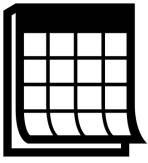
Counting: HELP! Please sign up to help us count weekly donations! Thank you Tammy for helping count today.

Aug 4

Aug 11 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, Aug 3rd: @ 5:00 PM - Great Vespers
SUN, Aug 4th: @ 9:10 AM - Hours and Divine Liturgy
6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 5.

Mon, Aug 5th: 5:00 PM - Great Vespers w/Litya
Tues, July Aug 6th: @ 8:40 AM - Hours & Divine Liturgy
The Holy Transfiguration of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ



Words of Wisdom

From the Saints & Teachers

Today's Readings

Epistle: (103) Romans 10:1-10

Gospel: (28) Matthew 8:28-9:1

EPISTLE

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: Peace be unto all!

Reader: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 4th Tone, a Psalm of David: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Choir: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, Thou art very great.

Choir: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Reader: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works,

Choir: In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Deacon: Wisdom!

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

Deacon: Let us attend!

[(103) Romans 10:1-10] Brethren: My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified. Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it. But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in thy heart, "Who shall ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "Who shall descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near thee, on thy lips and in thy heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if thou shalt confess with thy lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

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: Go forth, prosper and reign, for the sake of truth, meekness, and righteousness.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: For Thou lovest righteousness and dost hate iniquity.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

GOSPEL

[(28) Matthew 8:28-9:1] At that time, when Jesus came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs met Him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What hast Thou to do with us, O Son of God? Hast Thou come here to torment us before the time?" Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged Him, "If Thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their neighborhood. And getting into a boat He crossed over and came to His own city.

10:1 *Praying That the Jews Will Be Saved*

NO HATRED FOR JUDAISM. AMBROSIASTER: Since Paul wants to liberate the Jews from the law, which is a veil over their faces, but does not want to appear to desire this out of any hatred for Judaism, he shows his love for them and says many good things about the law. But he teaches that the time for obeying the law has come to an end and by doing this bears witness that he is concerned for them, if only they will listen to him and not assume that he is their enemy. COMMENTARY ON PAUL'S EPISTLES. Bray, G., ed. (1998). *Romans (Revised)* (p. 261). InterVarsity Press.

8:28–29 *TWO DEMONIACS COME FROM THE TOMBS*

THE DEMONS CRIED OUT. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: The divine nature of the only begotten Son was already scorching the demons in unspeakable flames. Christ was shutting up the fiercest demons in blocked roads. He was undoing the devil's tyranny. "You have come before the time," they cried out. For they knew from the Scriptures that Christ was going to come and would judge them. Treating the incarnation as if it had happened at the wrong time, they pled that he had come in an untimely way. This misrepresentation is not surprising. In their deceptiveness, they did not hesitate to say even this. Yet, although they know that vengeance is to fall upon them, they still say haughtily, "What have you to do with us?" They know that the final Judge in fact has a score to settle with them, inasmuch as they had broken his commandments. FRAGMENT 101. Simonetti, M., ed. (2001). *Matthew 1–13* (p. 171). InterVarsity Press.



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.

July Income: \$13,202.00

July Expense: \$9,866.76

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.

Sunday Parking: With the increase in parish attendance on Sundays we are asking that the parking row across the street be reserved for elderly, those with difficulty walking, handicap, and parish visitors. If you do not fall into one of those categories, please use the parking lot kitty-corner to us with the stairs so we can keep plenty of parking free for those who need to be closer. Thanks so much!

Parish Council Meeting: 4 August 3:00 PM - 4:30 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.

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>

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>

St. Michael's Greeters Ministry "*I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.*" Matthew 25:35 Our objective is to welcome visitors to the Parish, help them "feel at home" during the worship service, provide them with information about Orthodoxy and the Parish, invite them to Parish activities, introduce them to people of like interests, invite them back, follow-up to thank them for visiting us, and identifying whether we can help them in the future. Most people leave a church once they enter because no one greeted them. Please sign up to greet people.

Parish Prayer List

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

Departed: Genevieve Barile 7/31/2015; John Sokol 7/7/2016; Justine (Tinchey) 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 Pritchky, 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*

Will Everyone Eventually Be Saved?

<https://www.oca.org/reflections/fr.-lawrence-farley/will-everyone-eventually-be-saved>

When they are in fashion, fads are never recognized as fads. Those under their influence and promoting them feel that they have come across “An Important New Truth,” or (if Orthodox) “An Important But Neglected Part of Our Tradition.” Recognizing them as fads would only serve to dismiss them from serious consideration. Thus fads never ’fess up.

I suggest that the recent interest in Universalism—the belief that everyone will eventually be saved - is the latest fad. Evidence of this may be found in the fact that the view is being promoted by a number of different people who have little contact with one another and with little else in common, such as by scholar David Bentley Hart (in his essay *God, Creation, and Evil*), and also by Rob Bell (in his best-seller *Love Wins*). Admittedly the conviction that everyone will eventually be saved, including Satan and the demons, has been expressed from time to time throughout Christian history, but the majority of Christians have decided to pass on it. For people like the Orthodox who believe that God guides His Church and that therefore consensus matters, the solid fact of Christian consensus about the eternity of hell is surely significant.

I suspect that one reason that a belief in universalism is becoming popular is that our western culture has lost its sense of sin. In ancient times, all people, be they Jew, pagan, or Christian, believed that they stood guilty before the divine judgment seat. Thus when Christ said in passing that men were evil [Greek *poneros*; Matthew 7:11], no one batted an eye, for everyone knew it was true. We no longer believe that, and so (in C.S. Lewis’ famous phrase) we have put God in the dock, with

ourselves as His judges. In this frame of mind the very existence of hell is a stumbling block, and something which cries out for justification, if not revision. Thus many even in the Church are happy to revise this part of our Tradition, using whatever justification can be found. The somewhat lonely patristic witness of Saint Gregory of Nyssa is being called upon, as well as that of Isaac the Syrian. Some even are suggesting rehabilitating Origen, even in the face of his conciliar condemnation by name in Canon 11 of the Fifth Ecumenical Council and Canon 1 of the “Quinisext” Council.

Much of the debate centers around the teaching of Saint Paul, who is presented as an apostolic witness for universalism. After all, Paul did teach that “as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22), and that at the end “God shall be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28). The problem of course is that Saint Paul also taught that “the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9), and that at the end the disobedient “shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord” (2 Thessalonians 1:9), and no less an exegete than Saint John Chrysostom commented on this latter text that this penalty is “not temporary,” for “how then is that temporary which is eternal?” (from his third homily on 2 Thessalonians). So it would seem that Paul’s witness is ambiguous.

What is not ambiguous at all is the teaching of Christ, and He said repeatedly and emphatically that all would not eventually be saved, but that the punishments of hell were unending. He referred to the unrighteous being bound hand and foot and cast into the outer darkness (Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30), with no suggestion that this punishment will be temporary. In His parable about Lazarus and the rich man, He explicitly said that there was a great gulf fixed between paradise and the place of punishment, so that none may cross over from the place to punishment into paradise (Luke 16:26), and this is an odd thing to say if in fact everyone in the place of punishment will indeed eventually cross over into paradise. Finally He referred to the fire of Gehenna as “the eternal fire.” And in His parable on the Last Judgment, He ended by saying that “these [unrighteous] will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matthew 25:46). The same word—“eternal” (Greek *aionion*)—is used to describe both the punishment of the wicked and the life of the saved, so if the life of the saved is unending, so must be the punishment of the wicked. One may debate the meaning of Saint Paul’s letters, but the words of Christ admit of no debate. The fire of Gehenna is real and eternal.

What does this mean for us? It is not a merely theoretical debate among theologians who seem to have too much time on their hands. It also has moral dimension, and an urgent one. We are, all of us, divided persons, fallen human beings, with temptation to sin ever close at hand and the devil also close to confirm our decisions to rebel against God’s Kingdom and His righteousness. That is perhaps why even Origen, who believed that all would be saved, counseled that this truth not be publicly proclaimed, but shared quietly among the spiritually mature. Most of us need all the help we can get in our struggle against sin, and cannot afford the luxury of the thought, even if it were true, that our sins, rebellion, and rejection of God ultimately will not matter because all will be saved. Doubtless that is why Origen thought the teaching should not be generally promoted. I suggest that the real truth is that all will not eventually be saved, and that the conviction that they will contains subjective spiritual dangers for some as well as being objective error. God calls us to hate sin and to war against it, not because it impedes our eventual arrival in the Kingdom, but because it could prevent it altogether. All will not be saved. The gate to life is small and the way is narrow that leads to it and few are those who find it (Matthew 7:14). All the more reason for us to repent and walk in truth and righteousness and enter by that small and narrow gate.