

December 2nd; First Sunday of Advent

Opening Censing, “Blessed is the Kingdom”, Great Litany, First Antiphon, Little Litany, Second Antiphon, Little Litany, Beatitudes and Little Entrance.

Tone 2 Tropar (Resurrection)

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal, / Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead. / And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, / all the powers of heaven cried out: // “O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”

Tone 2 Kondak (for the Pokrova/Temple)

The Choirs of Saints and the Virgin / stand in church praying to God for us. / Angels and hierarchs bow in adoration, / Apostles and Prophets all rejoice / in thee, O Mother of God, // who for us prays to God Eternal.

Tone 2 Kondak (Resurrection)

Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior, / seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb! / The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee, // and the world, my Savior, praises Thee forever.

Tone 4 Tropar (for the Pokrova/Temple)

O Mother of God, sheltered by thy coming / we faithful people today keep feast in joy, / and looking at thy most pure image, / moved to the depths of our hearts, we say: / “Protect us with thy precious veil / and deliver us from every ill, / by entreating Christ, thy Son and our God, // to save our souls.

Prokimen Tone 2 (Resurrection; Psalm 117:4,18)

v. The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation.

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

Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-17. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. (Resurrection; Psalm 19: 1,9)

v: May the Lord hear thee in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect thee!

v: Save the King, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call!

Gospel: St. Luke 12:16-21. And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Litany of Fervent Supplication. Litany for the Catachumens. First and Second Litanies of the Faithful.

Cherubic Hymn and the Great Entrance.

Litany of the Offering. Kiss of Peace. The Creed (“I believe”).

The Anaphora (Prayers of Changing the Bread and Wine).

Litany of the Lord's Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (“Our Father”).

Holy Communion. Final Litany. Prayer at the Amvon. Dismissal.

*** Please join us in the hall for coffee and fellowship after the service. ***

St. Cyril of Alexandria on today's Gospel: What does the rich man do, surrounded by a great supply of many blessings beyond all numbering? In distress and anxiety, he speaks the words of poverty. He says, “What should I do?” ... He does not look to the future [the grain was perishable]. He does not raise his eyes to God. He does not count it worth his while to gain for the soul those treasures that are above in heaven. He does not cherish love for the poor or desire the esteem it gains. He does not sympathize with suffering. It gives him no pain nor awakens his pity.

St. Augustine of Hippo on today's Gospel: The rich man was planning to fill himself with excessive and unnecessary feasting and was proudly disregarding all those empty bellies of the poor. He did not realize that the bellies of the poor were much safer storerooms than his barns. What he was stowing away in those barns was perhaps even then being stolen away by thieves. But if he stowed it away in the bellies of the poor, it would of course be digested on earth, but in heaven it would be kept all the more safely. The redemption of a man's soul is his riches.

Announcements

Congratulations on our Holiday Sale! Our teams of volunteers spent so many days and hours working to get things ready, and we are all so blessed by their love and sacrifice!

This afternoon our Jr. UOL is going to “Escape the Room” for their monthly field trip.

On 12/16 our children will be presenting our St. Nicholas program after Liturgy!

On 12/30 after Divine Liturgy we will be “**Greening the Church**”, putting up our wreaths and the like. Please see Vera if you would like to help.

Dear Parishioners: **the Jr UOL is having a food drive from now to February 3, 2018** which is also the date of the Super Bowl of Caring. Please contribute to these great events with your donations of non perishable food items and Contribution of your favorite soup to support this great cause.

Our **St Mary's Seniors:** Next meeting – 12/3. (No Hoagies this month). Join us!

The last meetings of the **Fall Bible Study** will be on 12/6, & 12/13 (7PM in the chapel). We are working our way through the Old Testament. Come and join us!

We are offering **special one-time “Surviving the Holiday” sessions** to help people who are dealing with the loss of loved ones deal with the special grief that comes during the holidays: 12/17 at 10AM, 12/18 at 6:30PM, & 12/31 at 10AM.

We have two regular Grief Share groups: Mondays at 10AM and Tuesday at 6:30PM. Both meet in the Library. See Joe Truchan for details.

For more information on the “**Cloud of Witnesses” Pan-Orthodox Young Adult Group**, see the group's Facebook page (Cloud of Witnesses (Lehigh Valley)), e-mail ambermetz92@gmail.com, or talk to Stephanie or Roman Milan!

Reader Schedule: 12/2 Dennis Ritter, 12/9 Joseph Truchan, 12/16 Nik Fartuch.

Greeter Schedule: 12/2 Perkins family, 12/9 Eleanor Fox, 12/16 Judy Miller & Vera Muzychka.

| | 11/24/18 | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|------------------|
| Items needed | cost | \$ raised | \$ needed |
| Furnace Fund | \$18,000.00 | \$5,841.00 | 12,159.00 |
| Chapel A/C | \$6,833.00 | \$3,193.00 | 3,640.00 |
| SS room water damage | \$1,940.00 | \$140.00 | 1,800.00 |
| Fellowship Hall new roof | \$40,174.00 | | 40,174.00 |
| TOTAL NEEDED | | | 57,773.00 |

St. Philip's (Advent) Fast

Question: I was wondering why we fast before Nativity. The Lenten fast seems more obvious. Also, from what foods do we normally fast from during the Nativity fast?

Answer (from oca.org): We fast before the Great Feast of the Nativity in order to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Our Lord’s birth. As in the case of Great Lent, the Nativity Fast is one of preparation, during which we focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

By fasting, we “shift our focus” from ourselves to others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. We learn through fasting that we can gain control over things which we sometimes allow to control us—and for many people, food is a controlling factor.

[We live in the only society in which an entire TV network is devoted to food!] While fasting from food, however, we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us.

Just as we would refrain from eating a lot before going to an expensive restaurant for dinner—if we “ruin our appetite” we will enjoy the restaurant less—so too we fast before the Nativity in order to more fully feast and celebrate on the Nativity itself.

During the Nativity Fast, we are called upon to refrain from meat, dairy, fish, wine, and olive oil. At the same time, we are challenged, within this framework, to fast to the best of our ability, and to do so consistently.

If we must modify the extent to which we fast within this framework, it is of course possible, but in every instance our fasting should be consistent and regular, for Christ does not see fasting as an option, but as a “must.”

In Matthew Christ says, “WHEN you fast, do not be like the hypocrites,” not “IF you fast” or “IF YOU CHOOSE to fast.” Notice that He isn't giving us a rule, but describing how to do something that is (or He expects to be) part of our normal life. It is the same for the Church. The Church isn't judging us based on what we eat; but giving us a prescription that supplements the other Christian medicine like praying and loving our neighbor.

Finally, it seems quite odd that in our society—a society in which people gladly and freely spend huge sums of money for diets, many of which recommend that one refrain from red meats and dairy products—fasting is not more widely embraced. How odd that a Jenny Craig consultant or diet guru or physician will tell us to refrain from eating meat or cheese or butter and we will gladly embrace—and pay large sums of money for—his or her advice, while when the Church offers the same advice [at “no cost”] we tend to balk, as if we were being asked to do the impossible.

A Plea for Liturgical Literacy (Excerpt)
by **Richard Barrett**

Alexei Krindatch's report, "Orthodox Christian Churches in 21st Century America: a Parish Life Study," released in January of this year by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops [reports that] attendance at Sunday services declined overall between 2010-2015 [and that] regularly participating members have become less engaged in the lives of their parishes. Issues of language, comprehension, and participation are oft-cited barriers to engagement; the services in some parishes are in a language that the people do not understand and following an order with multiple moving parts that the people cannot follow along with, giving them nothing to do. As a result they do not see that they have a reason to be there.

This perceived state of affairs is in marked contrast to the Orthodox idea that the primary act of the Christian is to worship God. We are a liturgical church, so it is said; our faith is formed by our worship—"Lex orandi, lex credendi" [we believe as we worship] —and we express our identity as Orthodox Christians in the context of our worship. The story we tell of the Tsar's emissaries to Constantinople and the conversion of Rus' sets a high standard: our worship of God should be so beautiful and inspiring as to convert world leaders and their people, while also continuously shaping the faithful into the mold of Christ. More concretely, perhaps liturgical health is reflected by services that are beautiful, edifying, and instructive, such that people want to be there.

So what are the barriers to liturgical literacy and parish health? Simply put, it is too easy for us to see our services as burdens of which we must be relieved. Are our services a burden on the faithful that ought to be reduced as much as possible? If so, then that is one thing. If, however, Orthodox liturgy is intended to convert nations and produce disciples, then that is something else, and we need to ask ourselves how to best accomplish that objective. Rather than ask how we can cut services down, for example, we might ask how we can build them up and serve them in a way that makes them sufficiently beautiful, edifying, and instructive that people will make a point to be there.

(Advent, Nativity, and Theophany Schedule (also see our website))

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|------------------|-------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Saturday | 12/1 | 4PM | Great Vespers; Service of Repentance |
| Sunday | 12/2 | 9AM | Divine Liturgy (extra Ukrainian) |
| Tuesday | 12/4 | 10AM | Divine Liturgy –Entrance of the Theotokos |
| Thursday | 12/6 | 6:30PM | Akathist of the Nativity |
| Saturday | 12/8 | 4PM | Great Vespers w/Litya |
| Sunday | 12/9 | 9AM | Divine Liturgy & Spiritually Speaking |
| Thursday | 12/13 | 10AM | Divine Liturgy – St. Andrew |
| | | 6:30PM | Akathist of the Nativity |
| Saturday | 12/15 | 4PM | Great Vespers w/Litya |
| Sunday | 12/16 | 9AM | Divine Liturgy |
| Wednesday | 12/19 | 10AM | Divine Liturgy – St. Nicholas! |
| Saturday | 12/22 | 4PM | Great Vespers w/Litya |
| Sunday | 12/23 | 9AM | Divine Liturgy |
| Sunday | 12/30 | 9AM | Divine Liturgy (Fr. Jim Cairns serving) Greening the Church!!! |
| Saturday | 1/5 | 10AM | Royal Hours of the Nativity |
| | | 4PM | Vespers of Christmas Eve |
| Sunday | 1/6 | 9AM | Divine Liturgy (Christmas Eve!) |
| | | 5PM | Holy Supper (in Hall) |
| | | 7PM | Grand Compline of the Nativity |
| Monday | 1/7 | 10AM | Festal Divine Liturgy of the Nativity |
| Sunday | 1/13 | 9AM | Deacon's Typika (Dn. Michael Abrahamson) |
| Saturday | 1/19 | 10AM | Theophany: Divine Liturgy & Blessing of Waters |
| | | 4PM | Great Vespers w/ Litya |
| Sunday | 1/20 | 9AM | Divine Liturgy |

Note: Fr. Anthony will be traveling to Georgia for Western Christmas (on vacation to visit family) and to Romania between our Nativity and Theophany (to represent our seminary and present a paper at a theological conference). This has necessitated a change from the normal Holiday schedule (see above). Thank you for your support!

Welcome to the God-loving and God-protected Orthodox Christian parish of *Pokrova* (“St. Mary Protection of the Holy Theotokos” or “St. Mary’s”)!

It is a blessing to have you with us today and we encourage you to come back as often as you are able. Like us, you may find that you have found your spiritual home here (and a wonderful home, it is)!

We are a parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA under the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and our doors and hearts are open to you, your family, and your friends!

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