

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.



ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

OCA – Diocese of New York & New Jersey

The Most Reverend Michael, Archbishop of NY & the Diocese of NY/NJ

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Temporary Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson Sub-Deacon Vlashi

Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Parish Council Vice President: Sub-Deacon Edward

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Troparion in Tone 1

Let us praise in hymns the six-fold choir of Apostles: Herodion and Agabus, Rufus, Asyncritus, Phlegon and holy Hermes. They ever entreat the Trinity for our souls!

Troparion in Tone 3

Holy Apostles entreat the merciful God to grant our souls forgiveness of transgressions.

Kontakion in Tone 4

With the light of the Holy Spirit, you illumine the way of the faithful like stars, O Holy Apostles. As you gaze on God the Word you repel the darkness of error.

Kontakion in Tone 2

You became the disciples of Christ and all-holy Apostles, O glorious Herodion, Agabus and Rufus, Asyncritus, Phlegon and Hermes. Ever entreat the Lord to grant forgiveness of transgressions to us who sing your praises.

Prayer Requests

In Memory of:

Mitred Archbishop John Nehrebecki, who fell asleep in the Lord on the morning of Saturday, April 17th, offered by Archbishop Michael & the Diocese of NY/NJ.

SAINTS AND FEASTS OF THE DAY

APRIL 8, 2018

HOLY PASCHA: THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD [BEGINNING OF THE PENTECOSTARION]



HOLY PASCHA: The Resurrection of Our Lord

PASCHA (EASTER)

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith; receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness.

(Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom, read at Paschal Matins)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the center of the Christian faith. Saint Paul says that if Christ is not raised from the dead, then our preaching and faith are in vain (I Cor. 15:14). Indeed, without the resurrection there would be no Christian preaching or faith. The disciples of Christ would have remained the broken and hopeless band which the

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Gospel of John describes as being in hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They went nowhere and preached nothing until they met the risen Christ, the doors being shut (John 20: 19). Then they touched the wounds of the nails and the spear; they ate and drank with Him. The resurrection became the basis of everything they said and did (Acts 2-4): “. . . for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39).

The resurrection reveals Jesus of Nazareth as not only the expected Messiah of Israel, but as the King and Lord of a new Jerusalem: a new heaven and a new earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . the holy city, new Jerusalem. And I heard a great voice from the throne saying “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. . . He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:1-4).

In His death and resurrection, Christ defeats the last enemy, death, and thereby fulfills the mandate of His Father to subject all things under His feet (I Cor. 15:24-26).

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing (Rev. 5: 12)

THE FEAST OF FEASTS

The Christian faith is celebrated in the liturgy of the Church. True celebration is always a living participation. It is not a mere attendance at services. It is communion in the power of the event being celebrated. It is God’s free gift of joy given to spiritual men as a reward for their self-denial. It is the fulfillment of spiritual and physical effort and preparation. The resurrection of Christ, being the center of the Christian faith, is the basis of the Church’s liturgical life and the true model for all celebration. This is the chosen and holy day, first of sabbaths, king and lord of days, the feast of feasts, holy day of holy days. On this day we bless Christ forevermore (Irmos 8, Paschal Canon).

PREPARATION

Twelve weeks of preparation precede the “feast of feasts.” A long journey which includes five pre-lenten Sundays, six weeks of Great Lent and finally Holy Week is made. The journey moves from the self-willed exile of the prodigal son to the grace-filled entrance into the new Jerusalem, coming down as a bride beautifully adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2) Repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and study are the means by which this long journey is made.

Focusing on the veneration of the Cross at its midpoint, the lenten voyage itself reveals that the joy of the resurrection is achieved only through the Cross. “Through the cross joy has come into all the world,” we sing in one paschal hymn. And in the paschal troparion, we repeat again and again that Christ has trampled down death—by death! Saint Paul writes that the name of Jesus is exalted above every name because He first emptied Himself, taking on the lowly form of a servant and being obedient even to death on the Cross (Phil. 2:5-11). The road to the celebration of the resurrection is the self-emptying crucifixion of Lent. Pascha is the passover from death to life.

Yesterday I was buried with Thee, O Christ.

Today I arise with Thee in Thy resurrection.

Yesterday I was crucified with Thee:

Glorify me with Thee, O Savior, in Thy kingdom (Ode 3, Paschal Canon).

THE PROCESSION

The divine services of the night of Pascha commence near midnight of Holy Saturday. At the Ninth Ode of the Canon of Nocturn, the priest, already vested in his brightest robes, removes the Holy Shroud from the tomb and carries it to the altar table, where it remains until the leave-taking of Pascha. The faithful stand in darkness. Then, one by one, they light their candles from the candle held by the priest and form a great procession out of the church. Choir, servers, priest and people, led by the bearers of the cross, banners, icons and Gospel book, circle the church. The bells are rung incessantly and the angelic hymn of the resurrection is chanted.

The procession comes to a stop before the principal doors of the church. Before the closed doors the priest and the people sing the troparion of Pascha, “Christ is risen from the dead...”, many times. Even before entering the church the priest and people exchange the paschal greeting: “Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!” This segment of the paschal services is extremely important. It preserves in the experience of the Church the primitive accounts of the resurrection of Christ as recorded in the Gospels. The angel rolled away the stone from the tomb not to let a biologically revived but physically entrapped Christ walk out, but to reveal that “He is not here; for He has risen, as He said” (Matt. 28:6).

In the paschal canon we sing:

Thou didst arise, O Christ, and yet the tomb remained sealed, as at Thy birth the Virgin’s womb remained unharmed; and Thou has opened for us the gates of paradise (Ode 6).

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Finally, the procession of light and song in the darkness of night, and the thunderous proclamation that, indeed, Christ is risen, fulfill the words of the Evangelist John: "The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

The doors are opened and the faithful re-enter. The church is bathed in light and adorned with flowers. It is the heavenly bride and the symbol of the empty tomb:

Bearing life and more fruitful than paradise

Brighter than any royal chamber,

Thy tomb, O Christ, is the fountain of our resurrection (Paschal Hours).

MATINS

Matins commences immediately. The risen Christ is glorified in the singing of the beautiful canon of Saint John of Damascus. The paschal greeting is repeatedly exchanged. Near the end of Matins the paschal verses are sung. They relate the entire narrative of the Lord's resurrection. They conclude with the words calling us to actualize among each other the forgiveness freely given to all by God:

This is the day of resurrection.

Let us be illumined by the feast.

Let us embrace each other.

Let us call "brothers" even those who hate us,

And forgive all by the resurrection. . .

The sermon of Saint John Chrysostom is then read by the celebrant. The sermon was originally composed as a baptismal instruction. It is retained by the Church in the paschal services because everything about the night of Pascha recalls the Sacrament of Baptism: the language and general terminology of the liturgical texts, the specific hymns, the vestment color, the use of candles and the great procession itself. Now the sermon invites us to a great reaffirmation of our baptism: to union with Christ in the receiving of Holy Communion.

If any man is devout and loves God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. . . the table is fully laden; feast you all sumptuously. . . the calf is fatted, let no one go hungry away. . .

THE DIVINE LITURGY

The sermon announces the imminent beginning of the Divine Liturgy. The altar table is fully laden with the divine food: the Body and Blood of the risen and glorified Christ. No one is to go away hungry. The service books are very specific in saying that only he who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ eats the true Pascha. The Divine Liturgy, therefore, normally follows immediately after paschal Matins. Foods from which the faithful have been asked to abstain during the lenten journey are blessed and eaten only after the Divine Liturgy.

THE DAY WITHOUT EVENING

Pascha is the inauguration of a new age. It reveals the mystery of the eighth day. It is our taste, in this age, of the new and unending day of the Kingdom of God. Something of this new and unending day is conveyed to us in the length of the paschal services, in the repetition of the paschal order for all the services of Bright Week, and in the special paschal features retained in the services for the forty days until Ascension. Forty days are, as it were, treated as one day. Together they comprise the symbol of the new time in which the Church lives and toward which she ever draws the faithful, from one degree of glory to another.

O Christ, great and most holy Pascha.

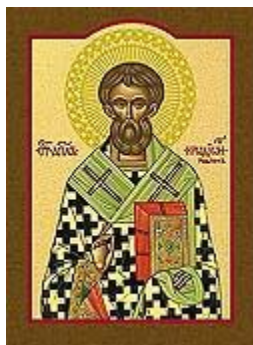
O Wisdom, Word and Power of God,

grant that we may more perfectly partake of Thee in the never-ending day of Thy kingdom

(Ninth Ode, Paschal Canon).

The V. Rev. Paul Lazor

New York, 1977



Apostle Herodion of the Seventy, and those with Him

Saints Herodion (Rodion), Agabus, Asyncritus, Rufus, Phlegon and Hermes are among the Seventy Apostles, chosen by Christ and sent out by Him to preach (Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles: January 4).

The holy Apostle Herodion was a relative of Saint Paul, and his companion on many journeys. When Christianity had spread to the Balkan Peninsula, the Apostles Peter and Paul established Saint Herodion as Bishop of Patara. Saint Herodion zealously preached the Word of God and converted many of the Greek pagans and Jews to Christianity.

Enraged by the preaching of the disciple, the idol-worshippers and Jews with one accord fell upon Saint Herodion, and they began to beat him with sticks and pelt him with

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stones. One of the mob struck him with a knife, and the saint fell down. But when the murderers were gone, the Lord restored him to health unharmed.

After this, Saint Herodion continued to accompany the Apostle Paul for years afterward. When the holy Apostle Peter was crucified (+ c. 67), Saint Herodion and Saint Olympos were beheaded by the sword at the same time.

The holy Apostle Agabus was endowed with the gift of prophecy. He predicted (Acts 11:27-28) the famine during the reign of the emperor Claudius (41-52), and foretold the suffering of the Apostle Paul at Jerusalem (Acts 21:11). Saint Agabus preached in many lands, and converted many pagans to Christ.

Saint Rufus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 16:11-15), was bishop of the Greek city of Thebes. Saint Asyncritus (Rom. 16:14) was bishop in Hyrcania (Asia Minor). Saint Phlegon was bishop in the city of Marathon (Thrace). Saint Hermes was bishop in Dalmatia (there is another Apostle of the Seventy by the name of Hermas, who was bishop in the Thracian city of Philippopolis).

All these disciples for their intrepid service to Christ underwent fierce sufferings and were found worthy of a martyr's crown.



Apostle Agabus and those with him

Saint Agabus was one of the Seventy Apostles chosen by Christ and sent out by Him to preach (Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles: January 4).

The holy Apostle Agabus was endowed with the gift of prophecy. He predicted (Acts 11:27-28) the famine during the reign of the emperor Claudius (41-52), and foretold the suffering of the Apostle Paul at Jerusalem (Acts 21:11). Saint Agabus preached in many lands, and converted many pagans to Christ.



Apostle Asyncritus, of the Seventy and those with him

Saint Asyncritus was one of the Seventy Apostles chosen by Christ and sent out by Him to preach (Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles: January 4).

St Asyncritus (Rom. 16:14) was bishop in Hyrcania (Asia Minor).



Apostle Rufus of the Seventy and those with him

Saint Rufus was one of the Seventy Apostles chosen by Christ and sent out by Him to preach.

St Rufus, whom the holy Apostle Paul mentions in the Epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:11-15), was bishop of the Greek city of Thebes.

St Rufus is also commemorated on January 4 (The Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles).



Apostle Phlegon of the Seventy and those with him

Saint Phlegon was one of the Seventy Apostles, chosen by Christ and sent out by Him to preach (Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles: January 4). Saint Phlegon was bishop in the city of Marathon (Thrace).



Apostle Hermes of the Seventy, and those with him

Saint Hermes was one of the Seventy Apostles chosen by Christ and sent out by Him to preach (Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles: January 4).

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St Hermes was bishop in Dalmatia (there is another Apostle of the Seventy by the name of Hermas, who was bishop in the Thracian city of Philippopolis).

All these disciples for their intrepid service to Christ underwent fierce sufferings and were found worthy of a martyr's crown.



St. Niphon the Bishop of Novgorod

Saint Niphon was a monk of the Kiev Caves Monastery, where he struggled in asceticism. In imitation of the Holy Fathers, he uprooted the passions through fasting, vigil, and prayer, and adorned himself with every virtue. He was chosen as Bishop of Novgorod when Bishop John retired to a monastery after twenty-five years of episcopal service. Saint Niphon was consecrated bishop in Kiev by Metropolitan Michael and other hierarchs.

Saint Niphon embraced his archpastoral duties with great zeal, strengthening his flock in the Orthodox Faith, and striving to prevent them from becoming separated from the Church, which is the same as being separated from Christ Himself.

The saint was also zealous in building and repairing churches. He built a new stone church in the center of Novgorod, dedicating it to the Most Holy Theotokos. He repaired the roof of the church of Holy Wisdom (Christ, the Wisdom of God), and adorned the interior with icons.

When war broke out between Novgorod and Kiev, Saint Niphon showed himself to be a peacemaker. Meeting with the leaders of both sides, he was able to pacify them and avert the war. In the same way, he always tried to settle arguments and to reconcile those who were at enmity.

He instructed his flock in the law of God, preaching to them, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting them patiently and with sound doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2) so that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory (2 Timothy 2:10).

When the people of Novgorod drove away their prince, Vsevolod, they invited Prince Svyatslav to govern them. The new prince wanted to enter into a marriage which was against the Church canons. Not only did Saint Niphon refuse to perform the ceremony, he also told his clergy to regard this betrothal as unlawful. Prince Svyatoslav brought priests in from elsewhere to perform the wedding, and the holy hierarch was not afraid to denounce his behavior.

After the death of Metropolitan Michael of Kiev, the Great Prince Isaiaslav wished to have the schemamonk Clement succeed him. However, he wanted to have Clement consecrated without the blessing of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

At a council of bishops, Saint Niphon declared that he would not approve the consecration without the permission of the Patriarch of Constantinople. He reminded the other bishops that this was contrary to the tradition of the Russian Church, for Russia had received the Orthodox Faith from Constantinople. Starting in 1448, however, the Russian Church began to elect its own primate without seeking confirmation from Constantinople.

The uncanonical consecration took place despite the objections of Saint Niphon. Metropolitan Clement tried to force the saint to serve the Divine Liturgy with him, but he refused. He called Clement a wolf rather than a shepherd, for he had unjustly assumed an office which he did not deserve. Saint Niphon refused to serve with Clement, or to commemorate him during the services.

In his fury, Clement would not permit Saint Niphon to return to Novgorod. Instead, he had the saint held under house arrest at the Kiev Caves Monastery. When Isaiaslav was defeated by Prince George, Saint Niphon returned to Novgorod, where the people welcomed him with great joy.

The Patriarch of Constantinople sent a letter praising Saint Niphon for his steadfast defense of church teachings. He also sent Metropolitan Constantine to Rus in order to depose Metropolitan Clement, and to assume the see of Kiev himself. Saint Niphon prepared to journey to Kiev to meet Metropolitan Clement.

Saint Niphon again took up residence in the Kiev Caves Monastery, where he became ill. Thirteen days before his death, he revealed to the brethren that he had had a wondrous dream. Saint Theodosius (May 3) appeared to him and announced his imminent departure from this world.

Saint Niphon reposed in peace on April 8, 1156. Now he stands before the throne of God, interceding for us before the All-Holy Trinity, to Whom be all glory, honor, and worship forever.

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Venerable Rufus the Obedient of the Kiev Far Caves

Saint Rufus the Obedient, Hermit of the Caves, lived at the Kiev Caves monastery during the fourteenth century. He was distinguished for his obedience and glorified as a lover of labor and fasting. He was buried in the Far Caves. He is celebrated a second time on August 28, the Synaxis of the Fathers of the Far Caves.



Martyr Pausilippus of Heraclea in Thrace

The Holy Martyr Pausilippus suffered under the emperor Hadrian (117-138). Denounced by the pagans, he was brought to trial before the emperor and staunchly declared himself a Christian.

They beat him with iron rods and handed over to the governor named Precius, who for a long time attempted to make the martyr offer sacrifice to idols. The martyr remained steadfast, and finally the governor gave orders to fetter him and execute him.

Along the way, Saint Pausilippus prayed fervently that the Lord would spare him from the hand of the executioner and grant him a quick death. The Lord heard him. The martyr, beaten up and weak, was suddenly filled with such strength that he shattered the iron fetters and freed himself. Tossing them aside, Saint Pausilippus thought to escape, but he died as he fled. Christians buried the body of the martyr with reverence.



St. Celestine the Pope of Rome

Saint Celestine, Pope of Rome (422-432), a zealous champion of Orthodoxy, lived during the reign of the holy Emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450). He received an excellent education, and he knew philosophy well, but most of all he studied the Holy Scripture and pondered over theological questions.

The virtuous life of the saint and his authority as a theologian won him the general esteem and love of the clergy and people. After the death of Saint Boniface (418-422), Saint Celestine was chosen to be the Bishop of Rome.

During this time, the heresy of Nestorius emerged. At a local Council in Rome in 430, Saint Celestine denounced this heresy and condemned Nestorius as a heretic. After the Council, Saint Celestine wrote a letter to Saint Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria (January 18), stating that if Nestorius did not renounce his false teachings after ten days, then he should be deposed and excommunicated.

Saint Celestine also sent a series of letters to other churches, Constantinople and Antioch, in which he unmasked and denounced the Nestorian heresy.

For two years after the Council, Saint Celestine proclaimed the true teaching about Christ the God-Man, and he died in peace on April 6, 432.

Icon of the Mother of God "Spanish"

The Spanish Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, which is one of the Panachranta type, depicts the Mother of God seated upon a throne.

GOSPEL AND EPISTLE READINGS

Prokeimenon, Tone 8:

This is the day which the Lord has made! / Let us rejoice and be glad in it. (*Psalm 117:24*)
vs. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever! (*Psalm 117:1*)

Epistle Reading

The reading from the Acts 1:1-8 of the Holy Apostles

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the

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kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" He said to them, "it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

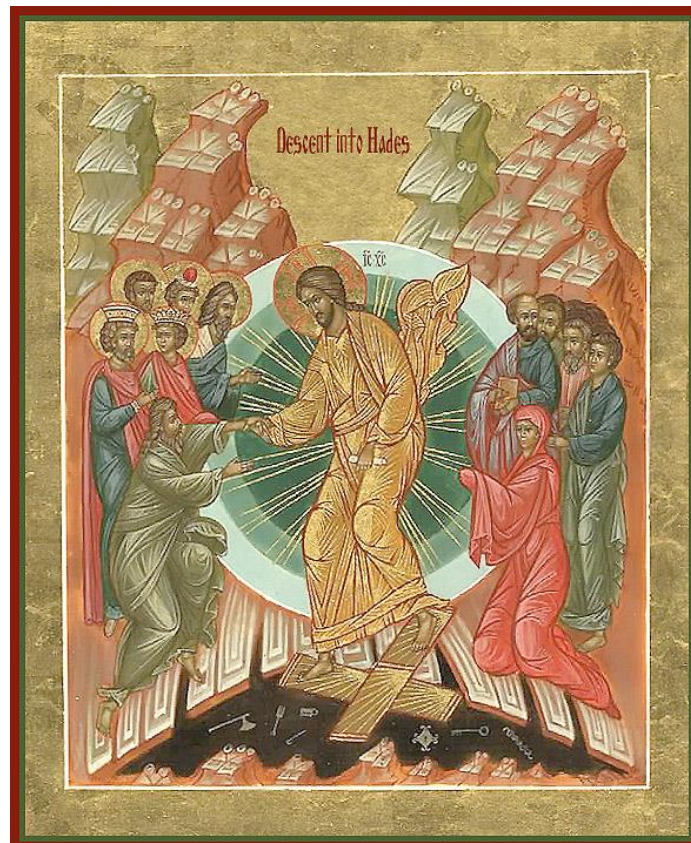
Alleluia, Tone 4:

Thou didst arise, O Lord, and have mercy on Zion. (*Psalm 101:14*)
vs. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the earth. (*Psalm 101:20*)

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from John 1:1-17

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light. The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John bore witness to him, and cried, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.'") And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.



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PARISH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, there is the Blessing of the Baskets.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday, April 7th

11:30 pm: Holy Pascha Vigil (Nocturns, Matins, Divine liturgy)

Saturday, April 14th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, April 15th

9:30 am: Sunday School

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

After Communion: Sunday School pre-K - Grade 3

Saturday, April 21st

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, April 22nd

9:30 am: Sunday School

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

After Communion: Sunday School pre-K - Grade 3

Saturday, April 28th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, April 29th

9:30 am: Sunday School

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

After Communion: Sunday School pre-K - Grade

Request & Bulletin Sponsor: Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Memorial Candles: Candles can be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one.

Private Confessions: **Can be heard a half hour before any service.** See Father Matthew for other times.

General Confession: Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

Receiving Holy Communion: Holy Communion is offered to those baptized Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves for the reception of the Sacrament by prayer and fasting. Blessed Bread is available for all our visitors at the very end of the Divine Liturgy.

Pannikhida Service: The third Sunday of each month there will be a Pannikhida after Divine Liturgy. If you would like your loved ones to be remembered please give a list of names to Father Matthew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month.

Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail: OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com

The Living Clean Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.

The Grey Book Step Meeting Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Tuesday from 7-8:00 pm downstairs in the community room.