

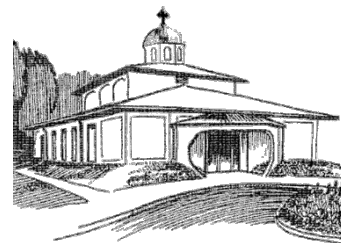


St Nicholas Orthodox Church

*A Parish of the Diocese of the Midwest
of the Orthodox Church in America*

9650 Johnnycake Ridge Road, Mentor, OH 44060

<https://saintnicholas-oca.org/>



Parish Rector: Fr Mark Therrien + (252) 813-6993 + fr.mark.therrien@gmail.com



SERVICES FOR HOLY AND GREAT WEEK

- Sunday, April 28** *The Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)*
8:45a Festal Matins (*with Blessing of Palms and Procession*)
9a Church School || ca. 10a Divine Liturgy || Coffee hour
5:30p Matins for Holy & Great Monday (“Bridegroom Matins”)
- Monday, April 29** *Holy & Great Monday*
9a Hours with Gospel Reading || 5-6p Confessions || 6:30p Matins for Holy Tuesday
- Tuesday, April 30** *Holy & Great Tuesday*
9a Hours with Gospel Reading || 5-6p Confessions || 6:30p Matins for Holy Wednesday
- Wednesday, May 1** *Holy & Great Wednesday*
9:30a Presanctified Liturgy || 5-6p Confessions || 6:30p Matins for Holy Thursday
- Thursday, May 2** *Holy & Great Thursday*
9:30a Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St Basil || 6:30p Matins for Holy Friday
- Friday, May 3** *Holy & Great Friday*
4p Vespers (*with placing of the shroud*) || 6:30p Matins for Holy Saturday (*with procession*)
- Saturday, May 4** *Holy & Great Saturday*
9:30a Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St Basil || 11:30p Midnight Office
- Sunday, May 5** *THE HOLY & GREAT PASCHA OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST*
Midnight Procession, Matins, Divine Liturgy || Noon Vespers for Bright Monday



Attendance & Stewardship for April 21, 2024

Attendance: 145; Operating: \$4,153; ZOE: \$170;
Maintenance: \$220; Holy Day: \$100; Diocesan Dues:
\$149; Candles: \$103; Uganda: \$85; Parish Charities:
\$300; Alms: \$660; IOCC: \$40; Seminary: \$10;
Flowers: \$150

“Again we pray for those who bring offerings and do
good works in this holy and all-venerable temple . . .”
(from the final petition of the Augmented Litany)

Thank you for your generosity!

AN EXTENDED CATECHESIS FROM THE RECTOR ON THE BEGINNING OF HOLY & GREAT WEEK

The services of Holy and Great Week begin this Sunday evening. The first service will be Matins of Holy and Great Monday (often called “Bridegroom Matins”), celebrated at 5:30p. Strictly speaking, this service should be celebrated in the very early hours of Monday morning. But in parish practice, we oftentimes serve it on Sunday evening instead by anticipation (i.e., in advance of its properly appointed time). According to our current practice, this is true of most of our services during Holy and Great Week: Most of them are served by anticipation (i.e., in advance of their proper times). This must be kept in mind so that we are

able to take proper account of how the services that we celebrate in church *liturgically* are meant to align with the events of the passion as they unfolded *historically*.

Also, in thinking about this week, it is important to remember that, at the most basic level, the word that we use to describe this week—“**holy**”—means “**set apart**” or “**separate**.” This week, then, should be considered as one “set apart” for particularly intense fasting and prayer. And so, even as we must do other things this week because of our obligations in the world (work, school, family time, etc.) and in our need to prepare for Pascha (cooking and cleaning, etc.), we must be serious about the nature of this week as being “set apart,” and we must strive to participate in as many services of the Church as possible this coming week, either at our parish or at another Orthodox parish.

Keeping to our parish, here are some catechetical notes concerning what we will be doing at St Nicholas:

MONDAY AND TUESDAY

On **Monday and Tuesday morning**, at **9:00a**, we will serve the Third and Sixth Hours. During these, we will read extensive selections from the holy Gospels. Strictly speaking, if we were doing a full order of the divine services, during the Hours of the first three days of Holy Week we would read the entirety of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as the first part of the Gospel of John (up to 13:31). But since we will not be serving all of the Hours on these days, we will read only a selection from the holy Gospels. **This year, we will read the Gospel according to Mark:** we will read chapters 1 to 8 on Monday, and chapters 9 to 16 on Tuesday.

And then, on **Monday and Tuesday evening**, at **6:30p**, we will again serve “Bridegroom Matins” for Holy Tuesday and Holy Wednesday. Like the Matins service celebrated on Sunday evening, the major theme of these services will be the coming judgment of our Lord at the end of time—a judgment that he has already begun within history in going to his passion (hence why we sing so much about on these days). Correlated to this theme will be our need to be watchful and vigilant, lest we get shut out from the bridal chamber of the Lord and perish in outer darkness.

WEDNESDAY

On **Wednesday morning**, at **9:30a**, we will serve the final Presanctified Liturgy for this liturgical year. Many of the hymns for this service will be taken from the Matins service celebrated on the previous evening. Thus, if you are not able to be here on Tuesday evening, I would highly encourage you to be present on Wednesday morning. These hymns put special emphasis on the narrative in the Gospel wherein “the woman who had fallen into many sins” anoints the feet of our Lord Jesus in repentance for her sins. And then, in contrast to that image, the hymns also

start to bring into focus the figure of Judas as the one who sells the Lord for the price of silver.

On **Wednesday evening**, at **6:30p**, we will serve Matins for Holy Thursday. Liturgically speaking, Holy Thursday is an especially significant day since we commemorate four major events on it: the washing of the disciples’ feet by our Lord, his institution of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist at the Mystical Supper, his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and the betrayal of the Lord by Judas. This last theme is especially prominent and is emphasized in many hymns, which draw attention to Judas’ betrayal of the Lord in order to warn us against the danger of becoming addicted to money (i.e., to worldly security and comfort).

THURSDAY

On **Thursday morning**, at **9:30a**, we will pick up many of these themes again when we serve Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great. During this service, in addition to the Lamb that will be prepared and consecrated for the sake of giving communion during the liturgy, an additional Lamb will also be consecrated. After the liturgy, the priest will prepare small particles from this second Lamb for the sake of reserving the holy Gifts to give to the sick and shut-ins throughout the rest of the year.

Picking up especially on the theme of our Lord’s agony and betrayal as the events leading to his trial and crucifixion, on **Thursday evening**, at **6:30p**, we will serve Matins for Holy and Great Friday. This service is oftentimes called the “Passion Gospels.” It is, undoubtedly, one of the most moving services during the year, both because of the content of the Gospels, and also because of the hymns that are paired with these Gospels for the sake of offering liturgical commentary on them. Worthy of special mention here are the beautiful antiphons that are sung in conjunction with the Gospels read during the first half of the service, such as the well-known Fifteenth Antiphon (“Today He Who hung the earth upon the waters is hung on the tree”), as well as the *Exapostilarion* sung after the Canon (“The wise thief You made worthy of paradise in a single moment”). (*Please note: This year, I have asked the choir to sing a more extensive selection of the various Antiphons that accompany the Gospel readings during the first part of this Matins service. Thus, the service booklet will not contain everything that will be sung in church this year. During these hymns, then, as we listen to the singers, we should take that time to mediate upon our Lord’s love as expressed in his willingness to die for us.*)

FRIDAY

Having heard the narration of our Lord’s death on Thursday evening, **Holy and Great Friday** is, traditionally, the strictest day of fasting in the Church’s year: For those who have the strength, no food or drink is consumed.

Those of us unable to keep this discipline should do the most that we can as an act of love for our Lord, and in repentance for the fact that he suffers for our salvation.

In the strict practice, on the morning of Holy Friday we would serve the so-called “Royal Hours”—i.e., a special version of the normal daily hours that contain various hymns and readings that recapitulate the themes from the evening before. This year, however, we will not keep this service. God willing, I hope to offer it in future years.

The first service offered on Holy Friday this year, then, will be **Vespers**, which we will serve at **4:00p**. During this service, the hymns and the Gospel reading commemorate the taking-down of our Lord’s body from the cross after his death. Hence, in some traditions they call this service “the Vespers of the Unnailing of the Lord.” At the end of Vespers, the priest will vest fully in order to transfer the Lord’s burial shroud (i.e., *epitaphios* or *plashchanitsa*) from the holy table to the middle of the temple. Having placed it there, after the service we will venerate it as the singers chant the moving hymn: “Come, let us bless Joseph of eternal memory...” At this time, we will also start to keep watch at the Lord’s tomb by chanting psalms.

Having set forth the shroud in the middle of the temple, at **6:30p** we will gather again to celebrate Matins of Great and Holy Saturday. In popular practice, this service is oftentimes called either “Lamentations” or “Praises,” because during it we will gather in front of the Lord’s tomb to sing many hymns that mourn his death (hence, “Lamentations”), while also re-interpreting that event as our Lord’s victorious destruction of spiritual death (hence, “Praises”). The mood of this service, then, will be a very paradoxical blend of the sadness of Holy Friday and a joy that already looks forward to Pascha. The high point will come at the end of the service, when the priest will again vest fully, and when we will take up the burial shroud and process it around the outside of the temple. Then, having returned into the temple, we will all pass under the shroud as we re-enter as a sign of our baptismal identity as participants in Christ’s death. Thereafter, the anticipated joy of the resurrection will be proclaimed again when we read from the prophecy of Ezekiel about God’s act of reconstituting the people of Israel into one (this is the **dry bones** reading). Once Matins is completed, the vigil before the Lord’s tomb will then re-commence.

SATURDAY

After the great (and paradoxical) joy of the Matins service served on Friday evening, on Saturday morning we will return to the temple to celebrate Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great at **9:30a**. In thinking about this service, it is again very important to note that, for various pastoral and historical reasons, we now celebrate Holy Week services by anticipation (i.e., ahead of their

properly appointed times). This is especially important to note for this service so that we understand its true significance. More specifically: Even though now served on Saturday morning, **this service of Vespers and Divine Liturgy is the first liturgical service of the holy and great Pascha of our Lord Jesus Christ**. Thus, in ancient times, this service began much later in the day (around 4p), and there are actually special rubrics that tell the sacristan (i.e., the person responsible for managing the temple) that he should make sure that the service does not end until at least 7 or 8p (i.e., a time when it would be dark). In ancient times, this service was also the occasion when catechumens who were ready for baptism would be received into the Church. Even in those churches where this practice is no longer maintained, the baptismal nature of this liturgy is still preserved in clear ways (e.g., during it we sing “As many as have been baptized...”) as a way of emphasizing that Pascha is a time to re-commit our lives to our baptismal identities in our Lord in a serious way.

During this service, we will also continue our vigil before the tomb in watchful expectation. As part of this vigil, during Vespers fifteen Old Testament readings will be read, all of which are meant to help us to understand the significance of Lord’s Pascha. And then, we will then proclaim the Lord’s resurrection from the dead for the first time at the Gospel reading. Finally, at the end of this service bread and wine will be blessed so that we might partake of them for strength as we continue preparing for the night services. (*Special note: For those who cannot attend the Midnight Services, I will also bless Paschal foods at this time—but please be aware that we will sing the Troparion for Holy Saturday for this rite, not the Paschal Troparion.*)

Following the service, the vigil before the tomb will again re-commence, except that we will now read from the Acts of the holy Apostles. This vigil will continue until **11:30p**, at which point we will begin the Midnight Office—the last service of Holy Saturday. At the end of it, according to our church’s contemporary practice, the burial shroud will be removed from the tomb and placed upon the holy Table, where it will remain until the leave-taking of Pascha.

SUNDAY: THE HOLY AND GREAT PASCHA OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Having completed the Midnight Office, all lights in the temple will be extinguished, except for one kept upon the holy table. Taking up this candle, the priest will offer this light to the faithful. Once the light has been received by the faithful, we will then form a procession that will exit the temple and make its way around it. Coming back to the main doors of the Church, the procession will come to a halt. Following the instruction found in our service books, at that point all bell ringing and singing will come to a cease so that, at this most solemn moment, we may

collect ourselves as we prepare for the most important proclamation of the Church year. Thereafter, after censuring, the priest will read the account of the resurrection from the holy Gospel according to Mark. Having intoned the opening exclamation of Matins, the priest will then sing the Paschal Troparion for the first time: "Christ is risen from the dead...", which the singers and will repeat.

After singing this Troparion many times (along with the Paschal verses), we will then re-enter the Church. Once all are in place, the Great Litany will be intoned, and then we will sing the Paschal Canon of St John of Damascus with great joy. The service will eventually come to its crown with the singing of the Paschal Stichera, and the reading of the Catechetical Homily of St John Chrysostom. In ancient times, we exchanged the kiss of peace during the stichera (a practice still followed in some places). Even though we will not observe this practice here, still, we should remember that none of this Paschal joy counts for much if we continue to hold onto anger or bitterness towards others. Rather, inasmuch as God has forgiven all—even those, as St John Chrysostom tells us, who came at the very end—we too must forgive others, "even those who hate us."

After Matins, we will continue at once with the Divine Liturgy, at the end of which we will bless the *artos* (the special bread that we will break later in the week). After the service, Paschal foods will be blessed and shared. Of course, this will be a very joyous opportunity for fellowship. **At the same time, we must remember that what breaks the Lenten and Holy Week fast is *not* the foods that we consume on this day. Rather, what breaks the fast is the holy Eucharist—the very body and blood of our God himself.** To quote from the instructions that we find in the *Pentecostarion* (the liturgical book for the season of Pascha to Pentecost): "... the meats and dairy products brought to be blessed are not the Pascha ... For even though these are brought as an offering to God, yet are they solely for those who, after having fasted, are beginning to eat the meat and cheese blessed for consumption by prayers offered up by the priest. For Christ Himself is our Pascha, the Lamb Who taketh away the sins of the world, and Who is offered to God the Father by the priest in the sanctuary, in the unbloody Sacrifice, in the all-pure Mysteries of His precious Body and life-creating Blood; and those who partake thereof worthily eat the true Pascha."

As we return to eating non-Lenten foods in the days that follow Pascha, then, we should in mind what I say so often: Having received such wonderful grace during this period, we should not squander it at the last moment by returning to the habits that we left when we began the Great Fast. Rather, even as we partake of these foods with gratitude, we must also remember to see in them but a mere token of the true joy that we have in knowing that our God has saved us from death and corruption. And so, we should do

everything possible to preserve this Paschal joy within us for the next year, but especially during Bright Week and the glorious Paschal season until the feast of Pentecost.



Parish Prayer List

To make updates to this list, please email Fr Mark.

Perry Capitan, Julian, Sarah Crivella, Joella (LuAnn Dzura's daughter), **Emily Finazzo**, (friend of the Rendas), **David Campbell** (Debbie Clements' brother), **Patrick Leahy** (Dave K.'s brother-in-law), **Rick Wagner** (Merrick and Mia's grandfather), **Bruce** (Kristen Moore's father), **Joseph Chuppa, Ronald** (in baptism, **Thomas**) (Collin Moore's father), **Mary Ann Sheranko, Helen** (Jan Ursiny's mother), **Kevin, Declan, and Teagon** (husband and children of the newly-reposed Kristen), **Christina & John** (Mike Brzozowski's sister and brother), **Andrew Dzura, Rich Cook** (Cindy Renda's brother), **Daniel Conger** (friend of Jim Renda); **the residents of St Herman's House, as well as those who serve them**; our seminarian, **Cole (Paul) Schlafer**, and his family members: **Sarah, Simon, Michael, & Nikolai**; the members of the **Bagley family, especially Joseph, Rosemary, Isaac, Lucia, & Julian**; **Jim Barkas; John & Delphine Kiernan** (parents of Sean Kiernan); **Jennifer** (Katie Horabik's friend); **Dana** (Merrick and Mia Wagner's step-mother); **Stacey and Ian** (friends of Katie Horabik); **Janice** (Laurie Alexander's mother); **Miriam Kuhl** (Sue Hoffacker's sister); **Boris & Maria** (friends of Anna Kozikov); **Michael** (cousin of Anna Kozikov); **the suffering Christians of Ukraine, the Middle East, and Armenia**

Birthdays this week: 4/29: Lilith Pohl; 4/30: Michael Clements; 5/2: Chad Nicoletti

Expecting: Greg & Grace, Weston & Rachel, Jon & Alexandra, Patrick & Katherine, Jake & Allison Szendrey, Subdeacon David (Jeffrey) & Michelle, Brian & Katya

Catechumens: Dalton Moses, Nick & Abrea Monda (*who are soon to be illumined*), **Alex Wittie**

Newly-born: Anysia Theophana (Joseph & Venessa)

Newly departed: Paris Anthony Santone (Debbie Covelli's nephew), **Joseph Demanski, Cathy Ubancic** (friend of the Rendas), **Patricia** (Michael Abernathy's grandmother), **Nun Elizabeth** (of Holy Transfiguration Monastery), **Kristen** (Michelle Hoover's cousin), **Jane Hunt** (great grandmother of Sofia Kiernan), **Patricia Wilcoxson** (Rosemary Bagley's mother); **Joseph Naymik; Jay Emmer-Lovell** (friend of the Russell, Horabik & Lehman families); **Pauline Demanski; Elizabeth** (Denise Busch's aunt); **Theodore Kisha** (father of Ted Kisha); **Daniel** (newly reposed infant son of Fr Peter and Matushka Sophie Ries)