

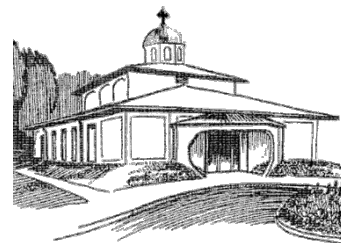


St Nicholas Orthodox Church

*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 & Events Beginning Sunday, June 30, 2024

- Sunday, June 30** *First Sunday after Pentecost: All Saints*
8:45a Third Hour || 9a Divine Liturgy & Blessing of Bread (*followed by Cook-out*)
- Tuesday, July 2** *St John of Shanghai*
9a Moleben to St John & Anointing (*with oil from the lamp that burns before his tomb*)
- Friday, July 5** *The Uncovering of the Relics of St Sergius of Radonezh*
- Saturday, July 6** 4:30p Confessions || 5:30p Great Vespers with Lity
- Sunday, July 7** *Second Sunday after Pentecost: All Saints of North America*
8:45a Third Hour || 9a Churching of Grace and Margaret, Baptism of Anyisia, & Liturgy



ATTENDANCE & STEWARDSHIP FOR JUNE 23, 2024

Attendance: 158; Operating: \$3,584.13; Capital Maintenance: \$160; Holy Day: \$70; Diocesan Dues: \$80; Candles: \$85; Uganda: \$75; Parish Charities: \$260; Seminary: \$10

“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*)



WEEKLY CATECHETICAL REFLECTION

Preparing for Holy Communion: Part I

I've recently received some questions about how we should be preparing for the Divine Liturgy, especially in terms of how we should be engaging in the first part of the Divine Liturgy.

Given how easy it can become to take the liturgical services for granted, I think that it is important always to take stock of what we do in Church, and to think about why we do it. And so, in a future reflection, I want to address this question directly, because I think that it is a very important one.

But before I do that, it occurred to me that it is most appropriate to take one step back and to speak about what we should be doing to prepare for the Divine Liturgy itself.

The first point to make here, then, is quite simple: We should start preparing for the Divine Liturgy and for our reception of Holy Communion *at home, before setting foot in the temple for the Liturgy*. And we should be doing this in at least a few different ways. First, we should do it by striving to live an Orthodox Christian lifestyle in according with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ on a day-to-day basis throughout the week (since, after all, nothing that we do in temple on Sunday will do us any good if we are not trying to live the Gospel on Monday). And we should also do it by keeping the fast days according to the Church's teaching: Unless relaxed for some reason, almost every Wednesday and Friday is a day of strict fasting; if it is a special fasting period, we strive to keep the Church's practices.

And then, second, after participating in the evening service in church (i.e., either Vespers or Vigil), we should do it by making a conscious and deliberate attempt to set apart (i.e., 'make holy') the evening before and the morning of the Divine Liturgy.

To that end, there are a number of practical things that we should do on the evening and in the morning before receiving the Gifts. First of all, going all the way back to the precedent that we find already in the New Testament (see 1 Cor 11:28), we should make an honest self-examination of conscience before receiving the holy Gifts. And if we discover during it that we have committed some major sin, we should plan to confess it before communing. And then, after examining ourselves, we should keep a fixed, regular prayer rule in preparation to receive Holy Communion. It is critical to say here: The point of these exercises is not that, by doing them, we somehow become worthy of receiving the gifts (for, in fact, nothing can ever make us worthy of receiving the Lord's body and blood). The point of them, rather, is that they help us to become more conscious of the gift that we are receiving, so that, having received the Gifts, we might receive the grace of the Eucharist for our salvation, and not for our condemnation (as Paul speaks about in 1 Corinthians).

In terms of what this prayer rule entails, there are a variety of practices found in the different Orthodox traditions. Some Churches are quite strict: They require that a person pray the entirety of the office before receiving Holy Communion, as well as several canons. Our practice in the Orthodox Church in America is not as strict. Still, at a minimum, it is a good general rule that someone communing will say the prayers in preparation for Holy Communion either the evening before communing, or on the morning of communing. For those who might be unfamiliar with these beautiful prayers, they are found in almost all of the standard prayerbooks that are readily available (they are frequently labelled as the 'Prayers before Communion' or as 'the Service in Preparation for Holy Communion' or as 'the Office in Preparation for Holy Communion'). These prayers are also found online at any number of sources (e.g., the Jordanville translation is found here: <https://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/prayerbook/main.htm>). I have also prepared a text that I am happy to provide to anyone who would like a copy.

Beyond making an examination of conscience and saying the prayer rule before communing, there are also a few other things that we should do in preparing for Holy Communion. First of all, of course, we are intentional about keeping the Eucharistic fast: From midnight, we do not consume any food or drink. Without doing this, we should not approach the chalice.

In a similar vein, I also think that there are a few good practices to keep to set apart ('make holy') the evening

and morning before Divine Liturgy. Most importantly, I think, is this: As we prepare to receive, we should strive to keep stillness and peace as much as possible so that we preserve an inner spirit of vigilance. And so, while I realize that what I am going to say is very much opposed to how Saturday evening is observed in typical American practice, it must be said: Given its special importance as being the time to prepare for the Lord's Day, Saturday evening is simply not the proper time to have large get-togethers, or to feast sumptuously, or to engage in events that keep us up later than normal. And then, in turning to the morning of the Liturgy, it is best to refrain from all forms of entertainment, to keep TVs off, and to refrain from going online to watch or to read anything. Instead, it is more fitting and proper to prepare for Divine Liturgy by reading the Scripture readings for the day, or by reading some kind of spiritual work.

What about if we have young children, such that some 'holy noise' in the morning is inevitable? Of course, observing the Lord's Day does not entail that we can shirk our parental duties. We can, however, still find ways to sanctify our morning time with them—e.g., by doing activities related to our observation of Sunday. In this way, we not only help to facilitate our own fruitful reception of the Gifts; we also help our little ones to learn to cultivate the proper disposition towards the things of God at an early age.

In conclusion (for now): In preparing for Holy Communion, we must always keep in mind two fundamental realities, both of which are stressed so much in the prayers that we say before partaking: On the one hand, the mercy that we receive in being given the holy Gifts is immeasurable. But on the other hand, we must always remain conscious of the fact that the Gifts are a Holy Fire. When we plan to partake of them, then, we must do all that we can do prepare ourselves as much as possible so that we receive that Fire for the sake of our purification, instead of being harmed by them.



UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS IN OUR PARISH, DEANERY, AND DIOCESE

TODAY: Cook-Out

Today will be the Church School end of year picnic along with the graduate recognition. Hot dogs and hamburgers and trimmings will be provided. There is a sign-up sheet in the foyer for side dishes. Please use the sign-up sheet so we will have an estimate of the number of people attending. Also, it will help with planning if

you can choose a side dish or paper product to donate that is comfortable for you to make or buy, along with the number of children who will be attending. The picnic is open to the entire parish, and we would love to see everyone there. We will be using the pavilion for the picnic, weather permitting. If you have any questions, please see Debbie Clements.



Tuesday: Moleben to St John of Shanghai

There are a number of important commemorations in the Church this week. Tuesday's is particularly notable: On this day, we celebrate St John of Shanghai.

St John's commemoration is particularly festive this year, because it marks the thirtieth anniversary of his glorification by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. Videos of that memorable service can be found online. Especially in light of how closely St John has touched and still continues to touch many of our lives in North America, I have scheduled a Moleben (prayer service) on the morning of his feast-day (in the anticipation, God willing, of doing more services for his feast-day in future years). During the service, we will set forth the icon that we have of him—a special blessing for us, since it contains a relic of his as well.

At the end of the service, after venerating the holy icon and relics, I will offer an anointing with the oil taken from the lamp that burns before his relics at Holy Virgin Cathedral in San Francisco. Especially in you are facing any special spiritual challenge, I encourage you to attend and to ask for St John's help and protection.



St Herman's Golf Class: July 15

St Herman's will soon have its annual Golf Classic. This event is their ministry's largest fundraiser each year. St Herman's is asking people to consider either playing in the outing, or becoming benefactors, or offering some other sponsorship (for example, if you own a business, you can sponsor a hole). St Herman's will also need several volunteers to help with the outing, which will take place on **July 15th**. If you can support this event in any way, please get in touch with Kirk Ries (216.973.9391 or golfsthermans@focusna.org).



Vacation Church School: July 22–26

Vacation Church School will once again be offered to our parish children this summer during the week of July

22-26. The theme will be “The Twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church.” God willing, this curriculum will be offered for three summers. This year we will be focusing on the four feasts of the Theotokos. The VCS will be held from 9:30a to 12p daily (ages 5–13). A snack will be provided Monday to Thursday. Friday will begin with Divine Liturgy, followed by lunch, water games, and a final wrap-up. An email sign up will be sent to all parents of children within the age group. If you can help in any way or if you have any questions, please contact Debbie Clements or Juliana Kingsbury.



MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

Welcome Back to the Schlafer Family

Today we are joined by the Schlafer family. By the grace of God, Cole has now finished his first year at St Tikhon's Seminary. It is good to have you all here!



Keys for the Church

This past week, the locks of our temple were re-keyed. If you are still in need of a key so that you may fulfill your ministry in our parish, please see me for a copy.



STARTING THIS WEEK: New Phone Number

Starting this week, on **July 1**, I will transition to using a new phone number for parish-related matters: **(216) 678-8181**. Please make note of this new number.



Congratulations to Our Graduates

Today we offer congratulations to the two graduates in our parish. **Ashley Hockenberry** graduated from Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana. And **Naomi Sherman** graduated from Kirtland High School. May God grant you all the best in your future endeavors.



Website Being Updated

As some of you might have noticed, our website is currently going through a fairly major overhaul. I am grateful to an old friend of mine, Nick Kamas, who started this project and encouraged me to take it up. Currently, I am doing most of the work—something that I have no real experience in at all. So, thank you for your patience with this process.

Among other features of the re-done website, there is one that I want to draw everyone's attention to: Starting on **July 1**, I will post the **monthly calendar** on the website. For at least a few months, I will also continue to email them to the parish, but after that, the website will be the main place to access it.

In the next few months (God willing), we will be rolling out some other updates that will help with parish communication and so forth. So, more to come...



Scripture Reading Groups: Any Parish Interest? (...Second Attempt...)

A few weeks ago, our parish was visited by Khouria Kelly Wade from St Mary's Antiochian Orthodox Church in Goshen (the parish that Matushka Olena and I attended while living in Indiana). One of the especially beautiful practices there is that parishioners gather regularly to read Scripture together. E.g., during the Nativity Fast, we would always we Tobit. Or as another example, if the day that we met to read fell near the feast-day of one of the prophets, we would read the book written by that prophet. Or sometimes, we would read one of the holy Gospels. These gatherings would usually take place by local region. Oftentimes, they were accompanied by some other shared fellowship.

I want to see if this practice might be something to take up here at St Nicholas. If you are interested in being part of a group—or, even better, if you would be willing to host a gathering, or if you would be willing to facilitate one in another way—please get in touch with me.



PARISH PRAYER LIST

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, Mary Ann Sheranko, Helen** (Jan Ursinyi's mother), **Kevin, Declan, and Teagon** (husband and children of the newly-reposed Kristen), **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; Delphine**

(mother of Sean Kiernan); **Jennifer, Gani, Stiljan, & Vera** (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); **Katarina** (relative of Natalie Antonoff); **Aleksey Byltsov** (son of Natalie Antonoff); **Willie Gomer** (in baptism: **Alexander**); **Nancy** (Leah Woodruff's mother); **Priest Peter & Matushka Sophie** (as Fr Peter begins his new assignment); **Archpriest Jan, Matushka Jana, and the parishioners of St Theodosius Cathedral**; **Theodore Tollefson**; **Yeny Ramos** (mother of newly-reposed John and Isaac); **Bill Gubser**; the suffering Christians of **Ukraine, the Middle East, and Armenia**

Birthdays this week: 6/30: Dolores Heim; 7/3: Julia Butterfield; 7/4: Elias Kucmanic, Paul Bailey; 7/6: Luke Chongris, Charlie Majer

Anniversaries this week: 6/30: Theodore & Jessica Chongris; 7/1: Juliana & Bobby Kingsbury; 7/2: John & Sarah Sapp; 7/4: Michael & Laura Abernathy; 7/5: Vitaly & Luba Schelkanov

Expecting: Jake & Allison Szendrey, Subdeacon David (Jeffrey) & Michelle, Brian & Katya; Theodore & Jessica

Catechumens: Dalton Moses, Alex Wittie

Newly born: Anysia Theophana (Joseph & Venessa); Leo (Weston & Rachel); Kennedy Anne (Jon & Alexandra); James (Patrick & Katherine); Margaret Lee (Greg & Grace)

Newly crowned: Elizabeth & Patrick

Newly illumined: Patrick (Pax), Nicholas & Mary Monda

Departed: 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** (infant son of Fr Peter and Matushka Sophie Ries); **John** (father of Sean Kiernan), **Ronald** (in baptism, **Thomas**) (Collin Moore's father); **John and Isaac Ramos** (sons of Yeny Ramos, a colleague of Mark Miller); **Priest James Bernstein**

