

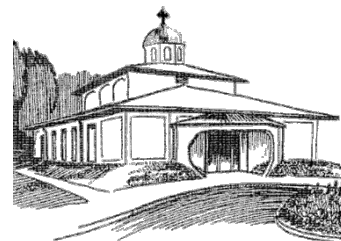


St Nicholas Orthodox Church

*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 + (216) 678-8181 + fr.mark.therrien@gmail.com



Services & Events Beginning Sunday, July 28, 2024

- Sunday, July 28 *Fifth Sunday after Pentecost*
8:50a Third Hour, Baptism of James, & Divine Liturgy
- Tuesday, July 30 6:00p Choir Practice
- Wednesday, July 31 *Forefeast of the Procession of the Holy Cross*
5:30p Vespers, Matins, & Veneration of the Cross
- Thursday, August 1 *The Procession of the Cross & the Beginning of the Dormition Fast*
9a Divine Liturgy & Blessing of Honey
- Saturday, August 3 9a Moleben to the Theotokos (*Paraklesis*) || Confession to follow
5:30p Great Vespers (*Please note: Confession not scheduled for 4:30p today*)
- Sunday, August 4 *Sixth Sunday after Pentecost*
8:50a Third Hour & Divine Liturgy



ATTENDANCE & STEWARDSHIP FOR JULY 21, 2024

Attendance: 123 (75 adults + 48 children); **Operating:** \$3,486; **Capital Maintenance:** \$85; **Diocesan Dues:** \$108; **Candles:** \$75; **Uganda:** \$60; **Parish Charities:** \$45

“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

This Week: The Beginning of the Dormition Fast

By the grace of God, this week we begin the two-week fast in preparation for the feast of the Dormition (‘Falling Asleep’) of our most blessed Lady, the Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary.

The Dormition Fast is a very old tradition in the Church, being at one time observed in both the Christian East and also in the Christian West. For

example, already in the mid-5th century Pope St Leo the Great speaks about this fast, describing it as the Church’s “autumn fast.” According to a later father, St Symeon of Thessaloniki (who reposed in the Lord in the early fifteenth century), we keep this fast in preparation for the feast of the Dormition after the example of the Theotokos: According to the tradition received by St Symeon, during her own lifetime the Theotokos, although being in no need of fasting and asceticism for herself (since she was blameless), fasted for our sake. Thus, as a way of expressing our gratitude to her for her ascetical effort for our benefit, we keep this special two-week fast as we prepare for her great feast-day.

According to current practice of the Orthodox Church, the Dormition Fast is not as strict as the Great Fast, but it is stricter than the other two lesser fasts. By way of speaking of the ‘rules,’ the following practices are prescribed: During the Dormition Fast, weekdays (Monday to Friday) are strict fasting days. Thus, on these days, we are not allowed meat, dairy products, eggs, fish, wine or oil. On weekends, the fast is relaxed: On Saturday and Sunday, we are allowed wine and oil. The

fast is also relaxed for the feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord: On this feast-day, we are allowed not only wine and oil, but also fish. (In our contemporary practice in the OCA, fish is also allowed on several other feast-days that occur during this period; these additional days are marked on the wall calendar.) As always, it should be remembered that the main point of the Church's fast is not just to follow the rules for their own sake. Doing that, in fact, can cause spiritual harm rather than good. Rather, the point of the traditional prescriptions is that we should be eating *simply* during the fasting period, and we should be *avoiding rich foods*, so that we are enabled to enter more deeply into prayer during this time.

In different ways, the Dormition Fast can be one of the easiest fasts to keep, or one of the hardest: It can be one of the easiest because it is very short; it can also be one of the most difficult because it occurs during a time of the year when cook-outs and the like are still very common, and so we might be tempted to ignore it more easily. Furthermore, there is an important spiritual reason as to why this fast can be challenging: If we keep this fast seriously, during this time we will be brought into a closer relationship to the Mother of God—who, as always, will in turn bring us closer to her Son. So, naturally, we should expect some opposition as we attempt to honor the Theotokos in this way.

As we begin the Fast, then, I want to encourage everyone to make the most of these two beautiful weeks. The Dormition Fast is short, but if taken seriously, it can be very spiritually fruitful. At home, then, please observe it as best as you can. Of course, depending on your situation, you may not be able to keep the full rigor of the fast. And if that is the case, God knows the heart, and he will bless whatever you are able to do. But we must make a serious effort since, without our human effort, the grace that God offers to us during this period will not be able to bear fruit. Also, please remember: **To be efficacious in our lives, fasting *must* be accompanied by prayer.** During these two weeks, then, please make a special effort to spend extra time in prayer at home (especially prayer to the Theotokos—you can use any prayers that you have in your prayerbooks). Please also take note of the services that will be offered in the temple during these weeks. (Some of these are outlined below.) **And finally, please also remember: Fasting and prayer are not efficacious without *almsgiving*.** So, during these two weeks, we should all strive to be as proactive with giving alms as we can. (Remember what St Paul tells us: God created us for the purpose of doing good works—see Ephesians 2:10.)

May God be with us all as we prepare for this beautiful period of spiritual renewal.



UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS IN OUR PARISH

Divine Services This Week

This week is, again, a busy week in the Church since it marks the beginning of the Dormition Fast. August 1 will be an especially beautiful day. On this day, we will celebrate the feast of the Procession of the Cross in conjunction with the commemoration of the holy Maccabee martyrs. By way of a bit of background: The feast of the procession of the cross developed sometime around the ninth century. The feast of the Maccabees is significantly older: This feast was already well-established in the fourth century. In any case, to keep this double feast, we will offer divine services twice: On the evening of July 31, at 5:30p, we will serve Vespers, followed immediately by Matins. Since these will be daily services (and not festal), the services will be marked by a beautiful meditative somberness—until the end of Matins. At that point, the service will become more solemn and grand. The high point of the service will come towards the end of the Great Doxology of Matins, at which time the holy Cross will be brought forth in procession and placed in the middle of the Church. After it is brought forth, we will then venerate it while the singers chant the beautiful *stichera* (hymns) appointed for this purpose, just like on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross and on the Third Sunday of the Great Fast. (Since we will serve both Vespers and Matins, I've set the starting time earlier than we oftentimes do weekday services. If you can't be here at 5:30p, please come when you can: It is better to come to the service later so that you can venerate the cross and ask the Lord for its protection, than not to come at all.)

Then, on the morning of August 1, we will serve the Divine Liturgy at 9a. On this feast, the Lesser Blessing of Water is also prescribed because it was on August 1 that the lands of Rus' received the graces of holy baptism—something that directly affects us, of course, since the Orthodox faith came to our land through missionaries from the lands of Rus'. And then, finally, according to Slavic practice, we also bless honey on this day. Ukrainians and Russians thus oftentimes refer to this feast of August 1 as 'the Honey Feast of the Savior' or 'Savior of the Honey.'

Having begun the Dormition Fast in this beautiful way,

we will mark the rest of the Dormition Fast by periodically offering the service of the Moleben to the Theotokos. For those unfamiliar with this service, the Moleben to the Theotokos (also called the *Paraklesis*) is a service of supplication in which we petition the Mother of God to help us in all of the trials that we sometimes face in our desire to remain faithful to our Lord. In some traditions, this service is celebrated almost every day of the Dormition Fast in the evening in conjunction with Vespers. In our parish, I have decided to serve it a few times throughout the Dormition Fast this year. I hope next year to expand upon this in future years (and also eventually to learn the Byzantine melody for this service, which is very beautiful when sung congregationally). The first time that we will have this service will be **Saturday, August 4, at 9a**; other iterations are noted on the calendar (If you want to participate in this service, but if no time here at Nicholas works for you, please consult the calendar of St Innocent Church—Fr Peter Simko will be serving it almost every evening throughout the Dormition Fast.)



August 10: Altar Server & Sacristan Workshop

On Saturday, August 10 at 10a, there will be a workshop for altar servers and sacristans, going to noon or so. All who participate in these ministries, or who would like to do so, are expected to be present. (I will announce a date for a similar event for those who read, or who wish to read, in church, in the coming weeks.)



August 20: Fundraiser for the Uganda Children's Fund

Please remember: A Good Night for a Good Cause in Support of the St Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund will take place on Tuesday, August 20 from 6:30–8:30pm (with bidding ends at 8:00pm). You can participate in a silent auction of over 60 baskets/items, purchase handmade Ugandan Crafts, and listen to a short presentation about the St Nicholas Uganda Children's Fund. The funds raised help to provide what is necessary for the education, health and welfare of Ugandan children, teens, and young adults who are otherwise unable to receive an education. We hope that you can attend this enjoyable evening to support such a wonderful cause! (Light refreshments will be served.)



August 24: Parish Clean-Out

We will do a large-scale clean-out of our temple and hall

on Saturday, August 24. A sign-up sheet to assist with this has now been placed in the foyer. Please sign up to help with this project, which will help contribute to the on-going beautification of our temple.



MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

New Treasurer Needed Soon

With thanks to Jared LeMaster for his services as our treasurer, it is time to start thinking about who next will take on this critical role in our parish ahead of the election of the new parish council. If you are able to perform this vital work, please see Jared, Nick, or me.



Flower Ministry Sign-Up

As announced above, in just a few weeks, we will celebrate the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos—a day on which, according to custom, we bless flowers and herbs. To mark our entrance into the beginning of the Dormition Fast on August 1, we are going to try something new for the weekly beautification of our temple: We are going to start asking for weekly flower donations. If you would like to sign up for a week, you can do so online here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040445A8AD2DA3F58-50363602-flowers#/>

A note for clarification from the announcement made last week: Signing-up does not mean that you have to provide flowers for all of the icons on the iconostas. It means only that you are offering to bring the **two** small bouquets of flowers that are placed on the tetrapod



Prayers after Communion

For the past several months, one of the sacristans has been reading the post-communion prayers while I consume the holy Gifts and purify the holy vessels. As of last week, these prayers are now being read aloud for those who wish to hear them. This takes place after the veneration of the holy cross and after the holy doors have been closed. If you would like to hear the prayers read, please stay in the temple at that time.



Teachings from St John Chrysostom On the Value of Fasting and on How to Fast Truly

“Do you fast? Then feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the sick, do not forget the imprisoned, have

pity on the tortured, comfort those who grieve and who weep, be merciful, humble, kind, calm, patient, sympathetic, forgiving, reverent, truthful and pious, so that God might accept your fasting and might plentifully grant you the fruits of repentance.”

“Fasting of the body is food for the soul.”

“As bodily food fattens the body, so fasting strengthens the soul; imparting it an easy flight, it makes it able to ascend on high, to contemplate lofty things and to put the heavenly higher than the pleasant and pleasurable things of life.”

“It is necessary most of all for one who is fasting to curb anger, to accustom himself to meekness and condescension, to have a contrite heart, to repulse impure thoughts and desires, to examine his conscience, to put his mind to the test and to verify what good has been done by us in this or any other week, and which deficiency we have corrected in ourself in the present week. This is true fasting.”

“Do not say to me that I fasted for so many days, that I did not eat this or that, that I did not drink wine, that I endured want; but show me if thou from an angry man hast become gentle, if thou from a cruel man hast become benevolent. If thou art filled with anger, why oppress thy flesh? If hatred and avarice are within thee, of what benefit is it that thou drinkest water? Do not show forth a useless fast: for fasting alone does not ascend to heaven.”

(The source for this anthology of quotes is found here: <https://www.crkvenikalendar.com/post/post-fathers.php>. There are many more to mediate upon...)



PARISH PRAYER LIST

If you know of someone who is in special need of prayer at the moment, please email me so that I might add the person to the prayer list. Please also email me to make changes to this list (e.g., to remove a name).

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); **Archpriest Jan, Matushka Jana, and the parishioners of St Theodosius Cathedral**; **Theodore Tollefson**; **Yeny Ramos** (mother of newly-reposed John and Isaac); **Bill Gubser**; **Charlie Deeb**; **James Horabik**; **Dolores Kessler** (friend of Suzanne Gubser); **the suffering Christians of Ukraine, the Middle East, and Armenia**

Birthdays this week: 7/28: Chris Schroeder; 8/1: Scott Hoffacker; 8/3: Tim Halligan

Anniversaries this week: 7/31: Jared & Elizabeth LeMaster

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

Catechumens: Dalton Moses, Alex Wittie

Infants Awaiting Holy Illumination: Leo (son of **Weston & Rachel**); **Kennedy Anne** (daughter of **Jon & Alexandra**); **James** (son of **Patrick & Katherine**); **Margaret Lee** (daughter of **Greg & Grace**)

Newly illumined: Nicholas & Mary Monda; Anysia Theophana Pohl

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**

