



# Weekly Bulletin

## St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

Witnessing to the Apostolic Faith in Lake County for 49 Years

*Father Andrew Clements*, Pastor

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<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Dec 11</b>	<i>26th Sunday after Pentecost / Tone 1 / The Holy Forefathers</i>
		9:00 am Church School
		10:00 am Divine Liturgy      Coffee Hour
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Dec 14</b>	<i>Martyrs Thyrsus, Leucis &amp; Callinicus</i>
		6:30 pm Prefestal Vespers      Confession / Choir Rehearsal
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Dec 17</b>	<i>Holy Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths</i>
		4:00 pm Confession
		5:30 pm Great Vespers / Catechumen Confessions / Confession
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Dec 18</b>	<i>27th Sunday after Pentecost / Tone 2 / The Ancestors of the Lord</i>
		Readings: Heb 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40      Matt 1:1-25
		9:00 am Church School
		10:00 am Divine Liturgy / Baptism & Chrismations      Coffee Hour

### ATTENDANCE / STEWARDSHIP / Dec 4

Attendance	165
Operating	\$5,480.00
Maintenance	65.00
OCA Assessments	78.00
Icons	10.00
Charities	210.00
Flowers	120.00
Uganda	160.00

### IN OUR PRAYERS

Please keep in your prayers this week the Smith Family: Joelle, Russell, Joshua, and Emmeline. Also Jim Pepera, Maddi Visnick and Grace Walker, as they prepare for Holy Illumination next Sunday.

### CATECHUMEN CLASS

The last Class will be held this Tuesday, Dec 13 at 6:30 pm. The class is open to everyone.

### PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD

Please see Maureen Medakovich to sign up. Cost is \$10.00 and all monies go to Charity.

### CONFESSION NOTE

Confession is in order for everyone during the Advent Season. Please note the additional times scheduled and approach in a timely manner.

### PRAYER CORNER + + + + +

Perry (Capitan), Julian, John Clements, Sarah Crivella,

Joella (LuAnn D's dghtr), Francis James (Anna D's frnd), Paris Santone (Debbie C's nephew), Kristin & Cameron Robinson, Anna Como, Evelyn Kontra (Renda frnds), Nick Covelli, Becky Strunk (Gloria H's frnd), David Campbell (Deb's bro), Karla Bennett (Deb's frnd), and the suffering Christians in Ukraine and the Middle East.

**Birthdays:** Sarah Kleven (12/6), Joe Bagley, Lea Majer (12/17).

**Expecting:** Scott & Alysse, Mitch & Winnie, Brian & Katya, Jairus & Riley.

**Newborns:** Remi (Doug & Allysa), Vasili (Joseph & Venessa).

**Newly Illumined:** Eleanor Hoover.

### The Mystery of Place — By Fr Stephen Freeman

Feeling "out of place" is a strong feature of our modern existence. Comments on my recent post bear this out. The notion and experience of place, though, have a mystery at their very heart. A major aspect of the mystery is that we can never know or experience anything in general – only in particular. We can speak of "human nature," but it does not exist as a thing-in-itself. Human nature is only revealed in the uniqueness of a human person. Modernity's genius (from a manufacturing and marketing perspective) was the creation of "mass

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production.” The cottage industries of England (and they were literally work done in individual cottages) were replaced by mills. What one weaver could do in a day a mechanized loom could do in minutes. Of course, there was a downside. This is aptly captured in William Blake’s poetic description of “dark, Satanic mills” in the poem, “Jerusalem.”

The longing for place is extremely ancient. We have no idea of the complete function of Stonehenge, for example. However, we know that it “knew” its place in relation to the solstice, as did many other prehistoric sites. We have no written words from that prehistoric time, but the monument itself says, “I know where I am.”

Most modern people have never seen the stars apart from a polluted sky (mostly “light” pollution). My first such encounter was in an isolated, desert monastery. The sight was almost frightening – but it was clear that if I lived in such a world – the night sky would mean far more to me than it does now. You could not help but notice it and mark your position.

Many natural aspects of our culture have been obscured by other forms of “pollution,” with the unintended effect of removing us from a sense of place. When Henry Ford developed mass production for his automobiles, the guiding principle was that of efficiency in the service of profit. Many note that he instituted the 8-hour day and paid his workers more than anyone else. Of course, the work was mind-numbing as human beings became part of a mechanized, repetitive production line. How much is the soul of a human being worth?

Modernity has made a devil’s bargain with productivity, efficiency, and wealth. Living in the wealthiest time in human history we remain plagued by seemingly intractable human problems, most of which seem impervious to applications of money. We are asking all the wrong questions and tolerating an endless stream of wrong answers.

A difficulty for all of us is that the questions and answers are culture-wide. We cannot suddenly opt-out of an economic system geared towards de-humanization. Rather, we have to “humanize” in a context we might wish to be different. Christ did not change the world in order to enter it. Neither did He enter the world in order to change it. Christ Himself is the change and His coming is itself the new world.

We are incarnate beings. When we speak of matters of the heart, we are not describing some aspect of a disembodied existence. The heart within us still has place and time, just as it has relationship. The primary means God has established for our spiritual feeding is found in an act of eating and drinking. Nevertheless, though the physical never disappears in importance, it does not necessarily rule the spiritual. Every Liturgy, regardless of where it takes place, is the same Liturgy. Every place in which it occurs becomes Jerusalem, just as Jerusalem, in the death and resurrection of Christ, was every place in the world. Christ died for all and so all were/are in Him.

Much of this points towards “how” we are where we are. People have “moved” for all of our existence. Indeed, moving is not the real problem. It is quite possible to live one’s entire life in a single place and yet have a sense of “not being at

home.” Conversely, I have met some few people who seemed to be “at home” everywhere they were. It is a matter of the heart (particularly in how the heart relates to the world).

In my previous article, following Dionysius, I noted the importance of desire (eros) and love. The hierarchies that give right shape to the universe function primarily in these modes. The “higher” loves the “lower,” that is, it extends itself in love towards the well-being of the other. The “lower” desires the “higher” in that it is drawn towards the goodness and beauty that it sees manifested. These are not coercive structures. Rather, they are hierarchies of true freedom.

What we do not see, I think, is that modernity has its own hierarchies. All of us are certainly victims of eros, of desire, but it is a disordered desire, formed and shamed in the furnace of the passions whose fires are stoked by the masters of deception (the purveyors of mammon). The result is a “bonfire of the vanities,” a world whose structures feed the flames of a global economy, devouring everything in its path.

The Church instructs us in the warfare of resistance – with regard to the passions. At the same time, through the commandments of Christ, we slowly learn the art of living in the true hierarchy of God’s creation. Attending to beauty, to goodness, taking the time to acknowledge them and to allow them to enter the soul, are a form of *theoria*, the contemplation that is essential to the life of prayer.

I was out-of-town recently for a family wedding. It would have been easy to be caught up in the whirlwind of the services, of the receptions, even the “noise” of it all. Coming down the elevator one morning in the hotel, I made a short, pleasant conversation with one of the cleaning staff. She brightened and mentioned her name. Somehow, I managed to pay attention. For the rest of the weekend, when I saw her, I called her by name, and we engaged in conversation. In a small way, it was transformative. Such staff members are easily ignored, as though they were part of the furniture. I was moved by the fact that she gave me her name and took it as an invitation to pay attention. A hotel took on an aspect of home.

We do not have to invent the hierarchies of God’s universe. They abide and are as ever-present as the forces of nature. We do not recognize their presence most of the time, but it is such things that preserve the world in peace and sustain it in the face of our unintentioned madness. We do well to remember that “place” is never a general thing – it is always specific, particular, and immediately at hand. To find our place, we have to ourselves be specific, particularly and immediately at hand. We do the “next good thing,” and love the neighbor – that is – the person who is next to you.

We do not understand that the hierarchies which God has established are hard-wired into our existence. They are quite natural. That said, we must also understand that human beings have to be abused and debased in order to set in place an alternative hierarchy or to establish chaos in its place. That this is true is sufficient comment on the state of our culture.

Save us, help us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.