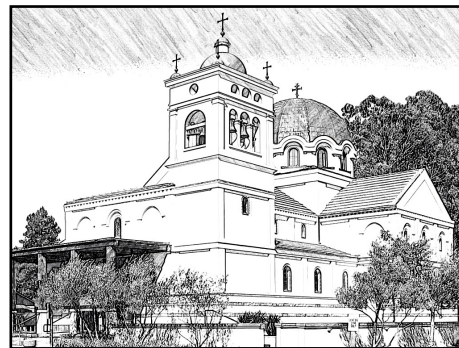


ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY, June 7, 2020

Feast of Pentecost



- TROPARION OF PENTECOST, Tone Eight:

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net; O Lover of man, glory be to Thee.

- KONTAKION, Tone Eight:

When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, He divided the nations; but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity; therefore with one voice we glorify the All-holy Spirit.

Epistle: The Acts of the Apostles 2: 1–11 **Gospel:** John 7:37–52; 8:12

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, June 6:
 - 9:30 AM, Memorial Divine Liturgy
 - 5 PM, Great Vespers for the Feast
 - 5:45 PM, Exorcisms in preparation for Baptism, reception of Randy Pelfrey as catechumen
- Sunday, June 7:
 - 9 AM, Baptisms (David, Timothy, Travis Andrew)
 - 10 AM, Divine Liturgy
 - 3 PM, *Kneeling Vespers*
- Monday, June 8:
 - 9 AM, Divine Liturgy, Day of the Holy Spirit (in Protection Church)
 - 7 PM, Men's Online Fellowship
- Wednesday, June 10:
 - 4 PM, Redwood Empire Food Bank
 - 5 PM, Daily Vespers
 - 7 PM, Study of Acts, online

- PENTECOSTAL GRACE—Abbot George of Mount Athos:

At every Divine Liturgy of our Church we have Pentecost. How does the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ? Don't they become through the descent of the Holy Spirit? There is Pentecost! Every Holy Altar of the Orthodox Church is the Upper Room of Pentecost. At every Baptism we have Pentecost. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, a person becomes a Christian and becomes one with the Body of Christ. Every ordination of a Deacon, Priest and, of course, a Bishop, is a new Pentecost. The Holy Spirit descends and makes a person a co-worker with God. Every Confession of a Christian is again Pentecost. The moment the Christian kneels to his Confessor and with humility tells him his sins with repentance and the Confessor reads him the blessing of forgiveness, he is forgiven by the grace of the Holy Spirit. At every gathering and at every Mystery of the Church it is a continuation of Pentecost, because they are performed in the presence of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, all activities, prayers and the Mysteries of the Church begin with a prayer: "O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the

Spirit of truth...come and abide in us..." We ask the Comforter to come, the *Paraclete*, the Holy Spirit. And He comes. Wherever the Orthodox Church—the true Church of Christ—meets, there also is the grace of the Holy Spirit. Every Saint of our Church is a Spirit-bearing man or woman, full of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a person of Pentecost.

- NEW CATECHUMENS AND BAPTISMS:

On Saturday evening at 5:30 PM or so, we will have the great joy of receiving Randy Pelfrey as a Catechumen. Most of you will not yet have had the pleasure of meeting Randy (husband of Kathie Sophia [Dadjou]). The Lord continues to work, even if we are not there at the Church! People are inquiring weekly, thanks to live-streaming. As we receive Randy, we will also read the Exorcisms for David, Travis Andrew and Timothy, preparing for Holy Illumination on Pentecost. We congratulate those Baptized/Chrismated year's past on Pentecost: Dana Ames, Jeannie Carl, Brian Justin Rademacher, Karla Philonella van Meter and Savannah Clawson (James's daughter), Keri Elizabeth DeMaar, Norm Peter Vashon. Many Blessed Years!

- WELCOME BACK:

Speaking of the catechumen-to-be-Randy, as of Pentecost we welcome Kathie Sophia back to the embrace and communion of the Holy Orthodox Church. May the Lord grant her many blessings.

- REFURBISHED BAPTISMAL FONT:

Many thanks to those who contributed for the renovation of our baptismal font. All the original tile was removed, and then the structure was plastered with a unique type of material and shaped to look like stone. It is sealed and waterproofed. We are grateful to the very accomplished craftsmen who did the work. Many Years to them.

- PENTECOST VESPERS TO FOLLOW LITURGY:

This year, rather than serve the *Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost Day* immediately after the Divine Liturgy, with no break in between (our usual practice), we will have the service at 3 PM. This particular Vespers is unique, having three prayers, called *Kneeling Prayers* as this will be the first time since Holy Week that we kneel during prayer. These supplications are rich in meaning and inspiration, and are lengthy. Ask the Lord to give us all strength, understanding and gratitude as we offer these three prayers.

- SAYINGS OF ST SILOUAN OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN:

Filled with love, the holy Apostles went into the world, preaching salvation to mankind and fearing nothing, for the Spirit of God was their strength. When St. Andrew was threatened with death upon the cross if he did not stay his preaching, he answered: "If I feared the cross I should not be preaching the Cross." In this manner all the other Apostles, and after them the martyrs and holy men who wrestled against evil, went forward with joy to meet pain and suffering. For the Holy Spirit, sweet and gracious, draws the soul to love the Lord, and in the sweetness of the Holy Spirit the soul loses her fear of suffering.

I ask you to try something. If someone grieves you, or dishonors you, or takes something of yours, then pray like this: "Lord, we are all Thy creatures. Pity Thy servants, and turn them to repentance," and then you will perceptibly bear grace in your soul. Induce your heart to love your enemies, and the Lord, seeing your good will, shall help you in all things, and will Himself show you experience. But whoever thinks evil of his enemies does not have love for God and has not known God.

Whoever will not love his enemies cannot know the Lord and the sweetness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit teaches us to love our enemies in such way that we pity their souls as if they were our own children. Christ prayed for those that crucified Him: "Father, count not this sin against them; they know not what they do." Archdeacon Stephen prayed for those who stoned him so that the Lord would not judge this sin against them. And so we, if we wish to retain grace, must pray for our enemies. If you do not find pity on a sinner who will suffer in flames, then you do not carry the grace of the Holy Spirit, but rather an evil spirit; and while you yet live, you must free yourself from his clutches through repentance.

PARTIALLY AND TENTATIVE OPENING OF THE PARISH

Some of our parishioners are anxious to be in Church during the Divine Liturgy; some prefer to stay home and not risk exposure; some may prefer to stand outside during the Liturgy, and come in to receive Communion. Let's respect all these different approaches. The County announced Wednesday morning that restaurants, barber shops, salons, and churches are free to open (well, thank you very much). However, our Parish Council made the decision a week ago to continue with what we are doing for the next two weeks.

Our Archbishop instructed me this week to return to the Traditional and time-honored use of one spoon to distribute Holy Communion. Yes, this is safe. Here is some reference for that practice, should you be interested.

<https://www.oca.org/reflections/fr-john-breck/disease-and-holy-communion>

<https://afkimel.wordpress.com/2020/02/29/germs-viruses-and-the-common-cup-is-intinction-safer/>

For those that are concerned about pathogens and a common spoon, I respect that and it's OK, but please remember this: if we did believe that pathogens are passed on in the Cup, it is your priest who is exposed to those pathogens upon consuming what is left in the Chalice. For the past six Sundays we have used multiple spoons (60+ each week). I cleaned them all in the Chalice with water and wine and drank that. That's over 360 chances for me to catch a sickness over the last six weeks. I haven't even had a cold, stomach ache, or sore throat. We are dealing with the miracle of the Eucharist, and the deifying, sanctifying, *cleansing Presence of Jesus Christ Himself*, the Life-giver and Physician of souls AND bodies. *May Thy holy Body be for me the Bread of life eternal, O Compassionate Lord, and may Thy precious Blood also the healing for my many forms of illness.* Such descriptions, as those found in the Pre-Communion Prayers, in the Holy Fathers, in the Liturgy, are not just pious sounding religious sentiments but the reality of God with us. We take these words quite seriously. —Fr. Lawrence

REGARDING FACE MASKS

When our parish does partially open, after we have made all the necessary arrangements, there will be no pressure or expectation on my part that anyone come. All are free to choose what they see as the most appropriate response regarding health and well-being. His Eminence has indicated to all his clergy that face masks are required for adults (with exceptions for those with health conditions).

I understand that some feel that the mask presents a problem: for some it is a sign of giving in to oppression and manipulation; others feel it is simply not useful; some feel it is stupid considering this or that statistic; and some just can't wear one and breathe (exceptions are made for those folks). I really do understand.

However, is not up to me regarding masks, so I ask you not to email me with links about this topic. The bishops are not budging on this issue. Maybe they will, but not yet. Maybe this is a spiritual test we are facing: We read all the spiritual books about obedience and cutting off the will, but in the end we only obey those things with which we agree...which is

no obedience at all! I expect this is the hallmark of "American Orthodoxy." We hold as supremely eminent our opinions, rights, feelings, and conveniences above all else, God and Church inclusive (doctrines and morality too).

Who of us can really say this is "too much" that is being asked of us? It is not heresy that we are being asked to adopt, and it is not any moral or ethical violation we are being asked to commit. "It is through many tribulations that we enter the Kingdom of Heaven." And yet this is hardly a "tribulation," but rather a mere inconvenience for a time. Bear with it, it will pass. I wish I knew when, but I expect it will largely depend on whether or not infection "spikes" in the coming weeks. The truth in all this will bear itself out, and become evident. God will see to it, as He always has. One needs to deal with the hurt and anger—not the masks. Our country is experiencing tribulation and strife. This is no time to argue about masks. With love in Christ, with prayers for your health, salvation and peace of heart, your servant in Christ. —Fr. Lawrence

- CONGRATULATIONS:

Many Years and best wishes to Father John, who was awarded the Jeweled Cross by Archbishop Benjamin and the Holy Synod of the OCA. We also congratulate Father Nicholas on being awarded the “shield” which is the rectangular piece of the vestment that is worn on the hip. Clergy are given such awards not as a reward, or as having earned something, but in recognition for faithful, steady, Godly and sacrificial service to the Flock of the Lord, the Church, and to adorn their vestments at the Divine Liturgy. Fr Nicholas will begin to wear the shield this Saturday (it comes as a piece of the vestment ensemble). As for the jeweled cross, a priest does not necessarily purchase one, but one is passed down from a senior priest. In this case, one of Fr Michael’s crosses was given to Fr. John to wear in his memory and as a reminder to emulate those righteous ones that have gone before us.

A PRAYER FOR OUR SORROWFUL DAYS

O Lord God, our Savior: With broken hearts we fall down before Thee and we confess our sins and iniquities wherewith we have provoked Thy deep compassion and have shut out Thy tender mercies. For we have departed from Thee, O Master; and we have not kept Thy commandments nor done that which Thou hast commanded us...Do Thou calm the agitation and discord in our land, banish from us slander and conflict, murder and drunkenness, bitter disputes and scandals, and burn out of our hearts every impurity, conflict and evil, that again we all may love one another and abide, as one, in Thee, O Lord, our God, as Thou hast commanded and directed us. Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, for we have been filled with humiliation and none of us are worthy to lift up our eyes to Heaven. Remember the mercies which Thou hast shown unto our fathers, change Thy wrath into loving-kindness, and grant unto us help in afflictions. Thy Church prays Thee, through the mediation of Thy Friends who are standing before Thee—our Holy Hierarchs Tikhon, Innocent, Nicholai and John, the Martyrs Juvenaly and Peter, John and Alexander, our Venerable Father Herman, the Righteous Alexis and Jacob, Moses the Ethiopian and, most important, of the Most-holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. May they help and protect us. Raise up for us leaders of strength and understanding and virtue and grant unto all of us a spirit of wisdom and the fear of God, a spirit of strength and piety. ...O Lord, we make haste unto Thee; do Thou teach us to do Thy will, for Thou art our God; for with Thee is the Fountain of Life; in Thy light shall we see light. Let Thy mercy be upon them that know Thee unto the ages of ages. Amen. —*From the Book of Needs*

- TREES AT PENTECOST—THE OAK TREE:

“The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day.” (*Genesis 18:1*) Salvation is the work of the Holy Trinity— prefigured by the three angels at the “hospitality of Abraham” and portrayed in Rublev’s famous icon—the mystery of the Trinity is fully revealed at Pentecost.

“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.” (*Isaiah 61:1-3*)

