



Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

Services This Week

Sunday, January 2

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

Tuesday, January 4

9:00 am Royal Hours of Theophany

10:00 am-12:00 pm Office Hours

Wednesday, January 5

7:00 pm Vigil of Theophany

Thursday, January 6: Feast of Theophany

9:30 am Festal Liturgy with Water Blessing

11:00-12:00 pm Office Hours

Saturday, January 8

5:00 pm Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

Sunday, January 9

10:00 am Divine Liturgy/Church School

To our Visitors: Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to come forward to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) at the conclusion of the service.

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*

Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*

Deacon John Skowron, *Attached*

Sunday Before Theophany

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

January 2, 2022

Announcements

➤ The 2022 calendars and offering envelopes are available at the candle desk.

➤ Please remember that we are asking every household to consider completing the Anticipated Giving form for 2022 so that we can budget accordingly. We appreciate your prayerful planning regarding your offering to our parish. We have many wonderful plans for 2022 but we can only accomplish these things with your faithful support. As Christians, we give the first fruits of our income as a cheerful offering to God in thanksgiving for His blessings to us.

➤ The funeral for Amelia Kuck (daughter of Sandi Tirpak) will be held this Monday at 11:00 am at the church, with viewing at 10:00 am. Burial will be at the military Cemetery of the Alleghenies.

➤ On Thursday we will celebrate the great feast of Theophany, the baptism of Christ and the revelation of the Holy Trinity. On this day we bless water after the Divine Liturgy. Please make every effort to attend if your schedule permits and bring a container suitable for holy water. The holy water will be freely available through Sunday, January 9.

➤ Bible Study will resume on Wednesday, January 12.

➤ Those who wish to have their home blessed after Jan 6 should contact Fr Thomas directly.

Prayers

➤ Ill and infirm: *Known to be hospitalized:* (none) *Home:* George Shaytar. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Michael Soroka, Olga Tryszyn

➤Vigil Lights From Mat. Nancy K. Mell & Gregory Mell for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. From Marsha Wasilko for the departed servants, grandmother, Katherine Dyczko (12-15-68), Marie Baronyak, and newly departed, Fr. Igor Soroka; for the health of the Wasilko family. From Charles A. Wasilko for the departed servant, Fr. Igor Soroka. From Doris Wasilko for the departed servants, Fr. Igor Soroka, and members of the Wasilko & Dyczko families; for the health of the Wasilko family. From Dawna Beckett for the departed servants, Michael Petkash, Donald Petkash and Paul Petkash; for the health and salvation of my family. From George & Nancy Shaytar for the departed servant, Amelia Kuck. From Nancy Shaytar for the health of my husband, George. From John Mahalchak family for the health of friends & family, Cheryl, John, Gregory, Cindy, and Kayla Elizabeth.

Thank You

➤ Please consider being a monthly sponsor for the categories of bulletin, prosphora, altar candles, communion wine, and/or incense. You can find the form at the candle desk. Your name and remembrance will be published in each bulletin for the month.

This Week in Church School

Today's lesson: Miracles of Christ (*Feeding of 5000, Calming of the Storm, Walking on the Water*)

Questions to ask/review:

For Feeding of 5000...

- Why were so many people there? (they were following Jesus; note that 5000 was only counting men)
- What events today gain thousands of people?
- What did the disciples want to do?
- What did Jesus feed them? Where did He get the bread and fish?
- What did Jesus do with it? What does this remind us of? (the Eucharist at liturgy)

For Calming of Storm and Walking on Water...

- Where were the disciples? What was the weather like?
- How did the disciples feel? What are some times we feel like our life is a "storm"?
- What did Jesus do? How does He calm "storms" in our life?
- Who wanted to walk with Jesus? What happened when Peter looked down?
- Are there times we "look down" or "take our eyes off" God?
- What did Jesus say to Peter (and us) about why he "sank"? (we can achieve great things with great faith in God)

Suggested activities at home:

- Prepare for the blessing of your home: Your child can help prepare by making sure his room is tidy and the light is on. Let your child help prepare the bowl, candle, and icon. Role play the sequence the priest will follow in the home.
- Ask the children to reenact one of Christ's miracles in a short skit.
- Read the stories together: Mark 6: 32-46 and Matthew 14:24-33

Prayer: Lord Jesus, for travelers by land, by sea, and by air, let us pray to the Lord God. Lord have mercy.

St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, January 2

Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let the heavens rejoice!
Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.
He has trampled down death by death.
He has become the first born of the dead.
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
and has granted to the world//
great mercy.

Tone 4 Troparion (Forefeast)

Prepare, O Zebulon,
and adorn thyself, O Naphtali!
River Jordan, cease flowing,
and receive with joy the Master coming to be
baptized!
Adam, rejoice with our first Mother,
and do not hide yourselves as you did of old in
Paradise;
for having seen you naked,
He has appeared to clothe you with the first
garment.//
Christ has appeared to renew all creation.

Tone 4 Troparion (St. Seraphim)

Thou didst love Christ from thy youth, O blessed
one,
and, longing to work for Him alone, thou didst
struggle in the wilderness in constant prayer
and labor.
With penitent heart and great love for Christ
thou wast favored by the Mother of God.
Therefore we cry to thee://
“Save us by thy prayers, venerable Seraphim,
our father!”

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

Tone 3 Kontakion (Resurrection)

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O
Merciful One,

leading us from the gates of death.
On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices;
with the Prophets and Patriarchs//
they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of
Thy power.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 4 Kontakion (Forefeast)

Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out
to John:
“Do not be afraid to baptize Me.//
For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed
man.”

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Sunday Before)

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine
inheritance! (*Ps. 27:9a*)

Epistle of the Sunday Before (2 Timothy 4:5-8)

But you be watchful in all things, endure
afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill
your ministry.

For I am already being poured out as a drink
offering, and the time of my departure is at
hand. I have fought the good fight, I have
finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally,
there is laid up for me the crown of
righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous
Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me
only but also to all who have loved His
appearing.

Gospel of the Sunday Before (Mark 1:1-8)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the
Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets:

“Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before You.”
“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;

Make His paths straight.’ ”

John came baptizing in the wilderness and
preaching a baptism of repentance for the
remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and
those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were
all baptized by him in the Jordan River,
confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and
with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate
locusts and wild honey. And he preached,
saying, “There comes One after me who is
mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not
worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed
baptized you with water, but He will baptize you
with the Holy Spirit.”

Communion Hymn of Sunday

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in
the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*) The righteous shall be in
everlasting remembrance. He shall not fear evil
tidings. (*Ps. 111:6*) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

St Seraphim’s Conversation

“How then,” I asked Father Seraphim, “am I to know
that I am in the grace of the Holy Spirit?”

I replied: “Nevertheless I do not understand how I
can be firmly assured that I am in the Spirit of God.
How can I myself recognize His true manifestation?”

Father Seraphim replied: “I have already told you, my
son, that it is very simple and have in detail narrated
to you how men dwell in the Spirit of God and how
one must apprehend His appearance in us. What then
do you need?”

“My need,” said I, “is to understand this well!”

Then Father Seraphim took me very firmly by the
shoulders and said: “We are both together, son, in the
Spirit of God! Why lookest thou not on me?”

I replied: “I cannot look, father, because lightning
flashes from your eyes. Your face is brighter than the
sun and my eyes ache in pain!”

Father Seraphim said: “Fear
not, my son; you too have
become as bright as I. You
too are now in the fullness of
God’s Spirit; otherwise you
would not be able to look on
me as I am.”



Then, bending his head
towards me, he whispered
softly in my ear: “Give
thanks to the Lord God for His ineffable mercy! You
have seen that I did not even cross myself; and only
in my heart I prayed mentally to the Lord God and
said within myself: ‘Lord, vouchsafe to him to see
clearly with bodily eyes that descent of Thy Spirit
which Thou grants to Thy servants, when Thou art
pleased to appear in the light of Thy marvelous glory.’
And see, my son, the Lord has fulfilled in a trice the
humble prayer of poor Seraphim. Surely we must give
thanks to Him for this ineffable gift to us both! Not
always, my son, even to the great hermits, does the
Lord God show His mercy. See, the grace of God has
come to comfort your contrite heart, as a loving
mother, at the intercession of the Mother of God
herself. Come, son, why do you not look me in the
eyes? Just look and fear not! The Lord is with us!”

After these words I looked in his face and there came
over me an even greater reverential awe. Imagine in
the center of the sun, in the dazzling brilliance of his
midday rays, the face of the man who talks with you.
You see the movement of his lips and the changing
expression of his eyes, you hear his voice, you feel
someone grasp your shoulders; yet you do not see the
hands, you do not even see yourself or his figure, but
only a blinding light spreading several yards around
and throwing a sparkling radiance across the snow
blanket on the glade and into the snowflakes which
besprinkled the great elder and me. Can one imagine
the state in which I then found myself?

“How do you feel now?” Father Seraphim asked.
“Unwontedly well!” I said.

“But well in what way? How in particular?”

I answered: “I feel a calmness and peace in my soul that I
cannot express in words!”

(from “Conversation of Saint Seraphim of Sarov with N. A. Motovilov”, published in 1903)