



THE FORERUNNER

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist

Orthodox Church o.c.a.

420 Laura Street

Philipsburg, PA 16866

(814) 342-2011

<http://nativityofstjohn-oca.org>

Very Rev. John Horosky - Priest

John Conkey - Council President

April 2015

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Service Schedule

April 4 Lazarus Saturday

Confession @ 9:00 AM

Hours @ 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

April 5 Palm Sunday

Hours @ 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00

Coffee Hour following Liturgy

April 8 Great & Holy Wednesday

Holy Unction @ 6:00 PM

April 9 Great & Holy Thursday

12 Gospels @ 6:00 PM

April 10 Great & Holy Friday

Vespers/Compline @ 4:00 PM

Tomb Watch

April 11 Great & Holy Saturday

Vespertal Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Compline @ 6:00 PM

April 12 Pascha

Hours @ 9:50 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Blessing of Baskets

April 19 St. Thomas Sunday

Hours @ 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Coffee Hour following Liturgy

Blessing of Graves

April 26 St. Myrrh-Bearing Women

Hours @ 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Pot Luck following Liturgy

Reader's Schedule

Hours

4/4 Doug Donovan

4/5 Tom Demchak

4/11 none

4/12 Choir

4/19 Doug Donovan

4/26 Tom Demchak

Epistle

Doug Donovan

Tom Demchak

John Conkey

George Sura

Doug Donovan

Mark Ammerman

Feasts & Saints

4/4 Lazarus Saturday

4/5 Palm Sunday

4/8 Great & Holy Wednesday

4/9 Great & Holy Thursday

4/10 Great & Holy Friday

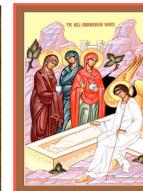
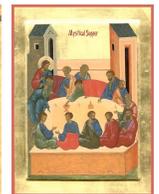
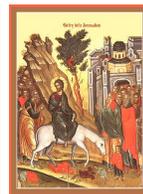
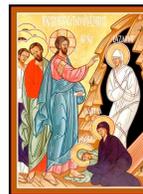
4/11 Great & Holy Saturday

4/12 Pascha

4/19 St. Thomas

4/23 St. George

4/26 Myrrh Bearing Women



Reminder: Chicken BBQ May 16th

Birthdays

Jack Foster	04/02
V. Rev. John Horosky	04/17
Elaine Cardinal	04/24
Ivan Switala	04/24

Anniversaries

none

Remember in your prayers: Archbishop MELCHISEDEK, Father John, Father Adam, Father Ted, Father Paul, Father Michael, Father Andrew, Father John, Matushka Judy Horosky, Matushka Ksenia Batchko, Larry Ammerman, Mary Ann Ammerman, Jen Ammerman and Victor, Karen Blackburn, Matthew Boroughf, Chris Conkey, John Conkey, James Crites, Helen Czar, Eugene Demchak, Joe Demchak, Mike Demchak, Steve Demchak, Kari Donovan, Matthew Donovan, Michael Evans, Bonnie Fetcenko, Randy Fetcenko, Rose Marie Fetcenko, Olga Finlayson, Kenneth Finlayson, Jack Foster, Mary Foster, Harry Horosky, Alexandra Mamrak, Eugene Minarich, Evan Morgan, Richard Nakles, Gloria Rice, Mary Sura Saupp, Harry Socie, Alexandra Stine, Karen Stine, Eleanor Sura, Andrew Tocimak, Irene Tocimak, Louise Tocimak, Walter Varagea, Delores Varagea, Patricia Wood

“O Master, the all-sustainer, and Holy King, Who punishes, but reduces not to death, Who strengthens the failing and raises the outcast, Who remedies the bodily sorrows of men, we pray unto Thee, O Our Lord, visit Thine infirm servants with Thy mercy; forgive them every transgression, voluntary and involuntary. Verily O Lord, send down from Heaven Thy healing power, touch the body, extinguish the fever, lessen the suffering and every infirmity of Thy servants, raise them decumbent, from sickness, and from the bed of evilness, make them whole and all-restored, return them to Thy Church well-pleasing and fulfilling Thy will. For it is of Thine own, to be merciful and to save us, O Lord, and unto Thee we send glory, to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen

From the Desk of Father John:

Highlights For Pascha

Lazarus Saturday: Jesus raises His Friend from the dead.

Mary and Martha plead with the Lord to come quickly to heal their brother Lazarus. Jesus delays his return until Lazarus is dead four days. Martha confesses her belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus says; *“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live...”* Jesus has the power to raise the dead, and raises Lazarus. Jesus is the Resurrection and Life of all people.

Palm Sunday: Jesus Enters Jerusalem as a King!

Jesus enters Jerusalem and is honored as a King. The children greet Jesus waving palms and branches, crying out *"Hosanna!"* The people shout their praises to Him; *"Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"* In our celebration of the feast, the palms we hold are a sign of our allegiance to Christ.

Holy Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday: Parables of the Bridegroom, Last Judgment and the "End"

God has made us stewards of His world, to serve and care for it. He calls us to bear fruit by using the talents He has given us. Christ will come to judge the world, and He will come at Midnight, at an hour when we least expect Him. He will come as a Bridegroom, to take us, the Church, as His Bride. God call us to be prepared, for only those who are ready will enter His Kingdom. *From The Bridegroom Matins.*

Holy Thursday: The Supper, Anointing, and Betrayal of Christ

A woman anoints Christ's feet with oil, as a sign of love, as well as a preparation for His burial. Jesus' enemies seek to kill Him and Judas agrees to betray his Master. Jesus shows the disciples how they must serve others, by washing the feet of His own disciples, and shares a Passover meal with them. He blesses bread and a cup of wine, saying, *"Do this in remembrance of Me."* Jesus teaches the disciples about love, and promises to send them a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, after He is gone. *The Mystical Supper.*

Holy Friday: The Trial and Crucifixion of Christ.

Jesus takes the disciples to a place to pray and tells them that one of them shall betray Him and the others will deny Him and run away. Jesus is arrested and brought before the chief priests and scribes who sentenced Him to death for equating Himself with God. He is brought before Pilate, the Roman governor, and then to Herod, to be sentenced to death and killed. Jesus is put to death on a Cross, along with two thieves. Mary, Jesus' mother, and the women followers who served Him, stand by the Cross until the end. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take Jesus' body down from the Cross, prepare it for burial and lay Him in a new tomb. *The Death & Burial of Christ.*

Holy Saturday and Pascha: Descent into Hades and Resurrection

Jesus died in order to give us new life! Through His death on the Cross, Jesus defeated the power of death. Having died as a man, Jesus descended to Hades, the place of death, to destroy death and bring life to those in the tombs. Jesus' Life was more powerful than death. At the moment of His death, the earth shook, the tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints were raised. By His Resurrection from the dead, Jesus, who is the Christ-God, gives new life to all who believe in Him and do His will. Although we will die, we know that "*death can no longer hold men captive,*" for when Christ comes again, all those in the tombs will be raised from the dead. Christ the Lord of all will come to judge the living and the dead, and grant life eternal in the world to come, to all who believe in Him as King and as God.

"Christ is Risen!"

CHRIST IS RISEN!

INDEED HE IS RISEN!

As John and Mark recall, it was Mary of Magdala who began the spreading of the good news. Since the news was spread to all the disciples in addition to the eleven, this did not happen all at once. The women had to go from house to house -- not only the two Marys, but the other myrrh-bearers as well. The testimony of Mary relates to the words of the third gospel and the gospel of John that Peter and John ran to the tomb. Peter entered the tomb and saw the linen winding strips.

Thus, the four gospels are in perfect agreement on this succession of events:

- 1) Some of the women purchased spices and ointment on Friday before the end of the day (Luke), while others, including Mary Magdalene, did so at the end of the Sabbath - after the sixth hour on Saturday (Mark).
- 2) Mary Magdalene left the others and went to the tomb at night before the morning of Sunday. There, she does not find the body of Christ (John).
- 3) She runs to tell Peter and John (Luke, John), and then stands alone outside the tomb weeping, when an angel appears to her, and then Jesus, whom she does not recognise. She rushes to Him, but is not allowed to touch Him.
- 4) Obeying His command, she goes to announce the news to the apostles (John, Mark) and the other disciples (Luke).
- 5) Not knowing about all this, the other myrrh-bearers come to the tomb and encounter the angels (Mark, Luke) and return too tearful to speak at first (Mark), but later also proclaim the news to everyone (Luke).
- 6) Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, already aware of the resurrection, go to look at the tomb and the Lord's burial bandages, which Peter and John had seen (Luke, John), but which Mary herself had not seen for herself. Coming to the tomb, this time both Mary's enter it, as the angel advises them to (Matthew).
- 7) The angel now instructs them to confirm the news of the resurrection to the disciples and announce the coming of Christ's ascension.
- 8) Now fully comprehending the events, both Mary's hasten to find the apostles again, but meet the Saviour along the way, and this time, they are allowed to touch Him, embracing His feet (Matthew).
- 9) By the end of the day, not only the whole company of the disciples, but even the Pharisees and scribes have heard the news. These latter begin to attempt to cover up the facts.

It is clear that the two Marys went to the tomb together after Mary Magdalene had already been there alone, and that both already knew of the resurrection. (2) <http://www.orthodox.net/pascha/3visits.html>

Thank you to Svetlana & John Blake and Shirley & Doug Donovan for putting the new tile floor in the Rectory kitchen and painting the Laundry area and first floor Bathroom. Also thank you to those helping with the nut roll baking and sale, and preparation for the Missions Service at St. John's.

Thought for the Day:

"Live in gratitude, and you will never be disappointed. See that your afflictions are not there to punish you, but to purify you and cleanse you of the delusions of this world. You all are being prepared each day for great things. Be wise, and prepare for the future, but do not be worried about it. Be prudent, but not obsessed. The man who constantly worries achieves nothing but stress and anxiety. Instead, pray and draw close to God. Believe that He will help you, and suddenly, you will see how He has already."

-- *His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH (Antiochian Diocese)* <http://www.antiochian.org>

The Hanging Vigil above the Royal Doors of the iconostasis is supported by Irene Pollock in loving memory of her sister and brother-in-law Margaret and Robert Stefanko.

The Vigils on the Tetrapod are supported by Irene Pollock in loving memory of her parents, sisters, brothers, husband, nephew and stepfather.

The votives in front of the iconostasis, on the candle stands and in front of the icons in the nave are supported by Andrew & Louise Tocimak in loving memory of the Tocimak family.

The Great And Holy Feast Of Pascha



On the Great and Holy Feast of Pascha, Orthodox Christians celebrate the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This feast of feasts is the most significant day in the life of the Church. It is a celebration of the defeat of death, as neither death itself nor the power of the grave could hold our Savior captive. In this victory that came through the Cross, Christ broke the bondage of sin, and through faith offers us restoration, transformation, and eternal life
Icon of the Anastasis provided by Theologic and used with permission.

Holy Week comes to an end at sunset of Great and Holy Saturday, as the Church prepares to celebrate her most ancient and preeminent festival, Pascha, the feast of feasts. The time of preparation will give way to a time of fulfillment. The glorious and resplendent light emanating from the empty Tomb will dispel the darkness. Christ, risen from the dead, cracks the fortress of death and takes "captivity captive" (Psalm 67:19). All the limitations of our createdness are torn asunder. Death is swallowed up in victory and life is liberated. "For as by a man came death, by a man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:21-22). Pascha is the dawn of the new and unending day. The Resurrection constitutes the most radical and decisive deliverance of humankind.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fundamental truth and absolute fact of the Christian faith. It is the central experience and essential kerygma of the Church. It confirms the authenticity of Christ's remarkable earthly life and vindicates the truth of His teaching. It seals all His redemptive work: His life, the model of a holy life; His compelling and unique teaching; His extraordinary works; and His awesome, life-creating death. Christ's Resurrection is the guarantee of our salvation. Together with His Ascension it brings to perfection God's union with us for all eternity.

The Resurrection made possible the miracle of the Church, which in every age and generation proclaims and affirms "God's plan for the universe, the ultimate divinization of man and the created order." The profound experience of and the unshakable belief in the risen Lord enabled the Apostles to evangelize the world and empowered the Church to overcome paganism. The Resurrection discloses the indestructible power and inscrutable wisdom of God. It disposes of the illusory myths and belief systems by which people, bereft of divine knowledge, strain to affirm the meaning and purpose of their existence. Christ, risen and glorified, releases humanity from the delusions of idolatry. In Him grave-bound humanity discovers and is filled with incomparable hope. The Resurrection bestows illumination, energizes souls, brings forgiveness, transfigures lives, creates saints, and gives joy.



Icon of the Resurrection provided by Theologic and used with permission.

The Resurrection has not yet abolished the reality of death. But it has revealed its powerlessness (Hebrews 2:14-15). We continue to die as a result of the Fall. Our bodies decay and fall away. "God allows death to exist but turns it against corruption and its cause, sin, and sets a boundary both to corruption and sin." Thus, physical death does not destroy our life of communion with God. Rather, we move from death to life - from this fallen world to God's reign.

In the background stands the host of the departed, so numerous they cannot be depicted. Among them in the front of the multitude are some of the righteous dead, though now invigorated by the Resurrection. King David and his son Solomon are seen on the left wearing crowns. Near the center is Saint John the Baptist. On the other side is Abel, the son of Adam and the first man to ever die. He wears a shepherd's robe and has a cane. Many Icons of this subject depict large crowds with a few other recognizable prophets.



Standing amongst the departed are Saint John the Baptist (right) and King David (left).



Abel, the son of Adam (left) and the first man to die, is present and depicted wearing a shepherd's robe.



Christ pulls Adam and Eve from their tombs.



Christ is depicted trampling on the gates of Hades.

Before midnight on Saturday evening, the Odes of Lamentation of the previous day are repeated. The Orthros of the Resurrection begins in complete darkness. The priest takes light from the vigil light and gives it to the faithful, who are holding candles. The priest sings: "Come ye and receive light from the unwaning light, and glorify Christ, who arose from the dead", and all the people join him in singing this hymn again and again. From this moment, every Christian holds the Easter candle as a symbol of his vivid, deep faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as Savior. In many churches the priest leads the people outside the church, where he reads the Gospel, which refers to the Angels statement: "*He is Risen; He is not here,*" (Mark 16:1-8).

Then comes the breathless moment as the people wait for the priest to start the hymn of Resurrection, which they join him in singing, repeatedly: "Christ has Risen from the dead, by death trampling upon Death, and has bestowed life upon those in the tombs". From this moment the entire service takes on a joyous Easter atmosphere. The hymns of the Odes and Praises of Resurrection, which follow are of superb meaning and expression. The people confess, "It is the Day of Resurrection, let us be glorious, let us embrace one another and speak to those that hate us; let us forgive all things and so let us cry, Christ has arisen from the dead". By this hymn they admit that love of one's fellowman is the solid foundation of the faith in the Resurrection of Christ.

The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is then officiated. At the end of the Liturgy, a part of the marvelous festival sermon of Saint Chrysostom is read, which calls upon the people to "Take part in this fair and radiant festival. Let no one be fearful of death, for the death of the Savior has set us free . . . O Death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is Thy victory? Christ is Risen and Thou art overthrown. To Him be glory and power from all ages to all ages."

The Scripture readings for the Divine Liturgy are: Acts 1:1-8 and John 1:1-17.

On Easter Sunday afternoon the faithful gather once more for prayer with lighted candles. All sing the hymn, "Christ is Risen from the Dead". The people greet one another joyously, saying: "Christ is Risen", the Easter salutation which is answered, "Truly He is Risen". They sing, "the dark shadows of the Law has passed away by the coming of grace", and standing in exaltation they exclaim, "Who is so great a God as our God?"

The Gospel according to John (20:19-25) is read in various languages, proclaiming the Good News of Resurrection all over

the universe without discrimination. The fruit of faith in the Resurrection of the Lord is love in His Name; therefore, this day is called "Sunday of Agape" (love feast), a day dedicated to Christian principles, especially to forgiveness and charity. At this time, Christians seek to end misunderstanding and arguments among those whom they may be at odds. Apostle Paul firmly interprets the Resurrection of Christ, saying: "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). The Church also states in its Creed, "*The Third day He rose again.*"
http://lent.goarch.org/holy_pascha/learn/

IT IS PASCHA NOT EASTER! by Fr. Michael Harper

I hear occasionally from someone who sometimes accuses the Orthodox Church of being "foreign", and so unsuitable for the British. A few days ago he sent me a card saying "the word in English is Easter". My reply was "the word in Greek (and, therefore, English), is Pascha".

This is a much more important subject than a mere dispute about words. If the word in English is Easter, then one is bound to ask "what word?" Was there some word which, when translated into English, became "Easter"? The plain answer is "no".

There is one simple reason for this, Jesus Christ in the days of his flesh never visited these shores, and his words were not written in English. He spoke Aramaic, and his sayings were recorded in Greek, as were the words of the other NT writers like Paul and Peter. An example of the desire to replace the word "Pascha" with "Easter" is the King James version translation of Acts 12:4 which describes the arrest of Peter by Herod and his intention "after *Easter* to bring him forth to the people". The Greek word here is *pascha*, and all modern translations rightly now translate the word "passover"

We need to realize also that there is no equivalent word for "Easter" in the Greek language, for one simple but important reason, *the word is an Anglo-Saxon word for a pagan festival*. The word in its original use is entirely pagan. According to the English Church historian Bede, it derives from a pagan spring festival in honor of *Eastra* or *Ostara* a Teutonic goddess. It has no associations whatsoever with Christ, His death and Resurrection, or indeed anything Christian. Is it not, therefore, unsuitable to be used to describe the greatest day in the life of the Church? The French, Italians and Spanish do not make the same mistake. Their words come from the proper source — Passover, which in Greek is the word "Pascha".

Pascha is derived from the Jewish word *Pesah*, which means "Passover". And here there is a direct link with the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 5:7 we read, "for our *paschal* lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed". According to St John, Christ was crucified at the very time that the paschal lambs were being killed. There is another link with the Old Testament because of the importance to the Jews of the Feast of the Passover. The verbal form means to protect and to have compassion as well as "passover". The experience of the Israelites was literally a "passover", but it was also an experience of both God's compassion for his people, and a great act of protection, as for example, the passage through the Red Sea. The crucifixion and later Resurrection of Christ took place during the Passover Feast. So for Christians, Christ was clearly the *Paschal Lamb*, the fulfillment of all that the Passover had foreshadowed since the first Passover, which celebrated the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Let us remember that because the word "Pascha" is in its origin a Hebrew word, by using it we are a witness to the Jewish community, for whom the Passover is still one of the most important words in their religious faith.

Orthodox believers living in the West have always been under pressure in all directions to conform to western ways, ideas and practices. There is nothing new in this. The Crusades were the worst and most blatant attempt by the West to bring the East to heel. But the pressures continue, albeit in more subtle ways. And one example of this is our constant temptation to drop the word "Pascha" and for clarity (and sometimes charity) use the western word "Easter". But perhaps the time has come for us to make a stand against this. In our increasingly secular and pagan society the use of a pagan word, of which no one knows the meaning, is hardly suitable to describe the greatest day in the Christian year. When most people knew the Christian meaning of the word "Easter" one could perhaps make out a case for using the word. But not today!

To be practical

There are still some for whom the word "Easter" has all the right resonances. Let us not want for a moment to deprive them of that blessing. Easter for them does not mean hats, chocolate eggs, parades or watching football; it means the Cross of Christ and his glorious Resurrection.

But let the Orthodox stick to the right word, which is "Pascha". Let us use it in our own circles, and discard the pagan word "Easter". We should do this — not to be different, but to be truthful.

However, when we are in mixed company, for the sake of clarity (and charity) let us use both words, if possible with a simple and humbly presented explanation. For example — "We shall soon be celebrating Pascha — or as you call it 'Easter'". Or, "we shall soon be celebrating Easter, or as we call it 'Pascha'".

We should encourage the West to unite with us in using the right word, which is Pascha.

And finally, let us not get dragged down with a dispute about mere words. St Paul warned believers in his day "to avoid wrangling about words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening" (2 Timothy 2:14). The important matter here is not what the Festival is called, but the reality of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. *Yes, Christ is Risen!*

If we can agree there, then what we call it, important though that is, can be seen in its proper perspective.

http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/fasts_feasts/harper_pascha_easter.htm