

THE FORERUNNER
The Nativity of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church
 420 Laura Street
 Philipsburg, PA 16866
 (814) 342-2011
 V. Rev. Fr. C. Michael Simerick, Acting Rector
<http://nativityofstjohn-oca.org>



John Conkey-Council President; Tom Demchak-Vice-President; Judy Everly-Secretary; Garret McGraw-Treasurer
Members: Mark Ammerman, John Blake, Sonya Brennish, Mike Conkey, George Sura, Ivan Switala

August 2018

Service Schedule

Wed. August 1 – Beginning of Dormition Fast

Sat. August 4

Vespers @ 5:00 p.m.

Followed by General Confession

Sun. August 5

Hours @ 9:35 a.m.

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m. followed by

Feast of Transfiguration Great Vespers

Fellowship Hour – Simerick & Conkey

Mon. August 6 – Feast of Transfiguration

Hours @ 9:35 a.m.

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.

Blessing of fruit

Sat. August 11

Vespers @ 5:00 p.m.

Sun. August 12

Hours @ 9:35 a.m.

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.

Fellowship Hour – Donovan & Everly

Council Meeting following

Tue. August 14

Vespers for Dormition @ 5:00 p.m.

Wed. August 15 – Feast of Dormition

Hours @ 9:35 a.m.

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.

Blessing of plants and flowers

Thu. August 16 - Dormition Fast Ends

Sat. August 18

Vespers @ 5:00 p.m.

Sun. August 19

Hours @ 9:35 a.m.

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.

Fellowship Hour – Fetcenko & Stine

Sat. August 25

Vespers @ 5:00 p.m.

Sun. August 26

Hours @ 9:35 a.m.

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.

Fellowship Hour – Blake & McGraw

Readers:

Mark Ammerman, John Conkey,
 Mike Conkey, Doug Donovan,

Altar Servers:

John Blake
 Ivan Switala

Reader's Schedule

	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Epistle</i>
8/5	Doug Donovan	Doug Donovan
8/12	John Conkey	John Conkey
8/19	Tom Demchak	Tom Demchak
8/26	Garret McGraw	Garret McGraw

Notable Feasts in August

8/1	Procession of the Life-Giving Cross
8/6	Transfiguration of our Lord
8/9	Ven Herman of Alaska
8/13	St. Tikhon, wonderworker of Zadonsk
8/15	Dormition of the Theotokos
8/29	Beheading of St. John the Baptist

Birthdays

John Blake	August 2
Lilia McGraw	August 7
Karen Stine	August 15
Julie Blazosky	August 27

Anniversaries

Judy and Tom Everly	August 26, 1978
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Please contact Shirley Donovan (814-360-3615) or Mary Ann Conkey (814-867-2926) if there are changes with the Fellowship Hour. Cash donations go towards the purchase of coffee, cream, sugar and donuts.

Prayers For The Infirm

Larry Ammerman, Vinnie Ammerman, Helen Czar, Elaine Chutko, Louise Demchak, Joseph Demchak, Michael Demchak, Jack Foster, Sub-Deacon Christopher Meholick, Betty Royer, Louise Tocimak

From the Desk of Father Michael

On **Wednesday, August 1**, we begin the two-week fast in preparation for the Feast of the Dormition (the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God). The prescription for this fast period is as follows: no meat or dairy products or anything that comes from an animal is permitted. Fasting is a spiritual exercise that must be taken seriously by those who consider themselves members of the holy Orthodox faith. **Those suffering infirmities and under doctor's prescription must follow their medical health regimen.**

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION

On August 6 we will celebrate the Feast of the Holy Transfiguration. This feast reveals the Living God to us as He was revealed to the apostles, Peter, James, and John, Moses, and the Prophet Elijah in a most unique way. In the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the divinity of God not revealed to men before is revealed to us. We are called to contemplate this great mystery that we may know the awesome God who made us more personally and to understand that our human nature has been inhabited by Him that we might participate more fully in the divine life.

The following explanation of the Feast of the Holy Transfiguration is taken from the book, *"The Year of Grace of the Lord"* written by a monk of the Eastern Church:

"Jesus' normal appearance is changed. His face shines 'as the sun'. His clothes become 'white as the light'. It is in this that the Transfiguration consists. The Jesus that the disciples knew well and whose looks, in ordinary life, did not differ radically from those of other people, suddenly appears to them in a new and glorious form. In our inner life, a similar experience can happen in three ways. Sometimes our inward image of Jesus becomes (to the eyes of the soul) so luminous, so resplendent, that we seem truly to see the glory of God in his face: somehow the divine beauty of Christ becomes for us an object of our experience. Or, sometimes, we feel with great intensity that the inner light, that light which is given to all men born into the world as a guide to their thought and action, is identified with the person of Jesus Christ: the power of the moral law becomes fused with the person of the Son, and the attraction of sacrifice makes us glimpse the sacrificed Savior, and hear his call. Sometimes, too, we become aware of Jesus's presence in some man or woman whom God has set in our path, especially when it is given to us to bring compassion to their sufferings: then, in the eyes of faith, that man or woman is transfigured into Jesus Christ. From this last example, one could evolve a precise spiritual method, a method of transfiguration which could apply to everyone, everywhere and always.

Next to Jesus appear Moses and Elijah. Moses represents the law. Elijah the prophets. Jesus is the fulfilment of all law and of all prophecy. He is the final completion of the whole of the Old Covenant; He is the fulness of all divine revelation.

Moses and Elijah speak with Jesus of his coming Passion. Usually, not enough attention is paid to this aspect of the Transfiguration. In Jesus' life, the glorious mysteries cannot be separated from the mysteries of suffering. It is when he is preparing to go to his Passion that he is transfigured. In our own life, we shall not enter into the joy of the Transfiguration unless we accept the Cross.

The mystery of the Transfiguration has yet another aspect which the scriptural texts for the feast do not indicate clearly, but which the liturgical chants underline. 'To show the transformation of human nature ... at Thy Second and fearful Coming ... Savior ... Thou didst transfigure Thyself O Thou, who has sanctified the whole universe by Thy Light' These words, which are sung at matins, allude to the cosmic and eschatological nature of the Transfiguration. The whole of nature--which now suffers the consequences of sin, the source of physical ills--will be freed, renewed, when Christ comes in glory at the end of time. This transformation of the world is suggested to our belief, to our hope, and to our expectation.

And finally, the Transfiguration is also a revelation of the Father and the Spirit. It lifts the veil which, in this earthly life, hides from us the intimate life of the three divine Persons. We can join the whole Church in saying, in the ninth canticle for matins, ‘Let us stand in spirit in the city of the living God, and let us gaze with our minds at the spiritual Godhead of the Father and the Spirit, shining forth in the Only-begotten Son’.

The tradition of our Church is to bless fruits on the Feast of the Transfiguration, in particular, grapes. Grapes, when pressed create grape juice, which through fermentation becomes wine. When consecrated, wine becomes the blood of Christ, revealing that the fruit of the grape is transfigured by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Other fruits of the season are also blessed at this time.

FEAST OF THE DORMITION

As mentioned above, on Wed., August 1 we begin the two-week fast period for the Feast of the Dormition. The four major fast periods crown the liturgical year corresponding to the four seasons, and each fast period is in preparation for a significant eternal event commemorated annually. The commemoration of the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God, celebrated on August 15, is one such event. In reflecting on the Holy Mother of God, Mary, and her place in the salvation plan of God, we recognize her as one of us found worthy to be God’s instrument. Her being one of us holds out to us the hope that what she has been able to achieve, i.e., being an instrument of God and the ultimate end of her earthly life, can become our inheritance as well.

In his book *“The Celebration of Faith, Sermons, Vol. 3, The Virgin Mary”* Fr. Alexander Schmemmann writes:

“For centuries the Church has looked upon, reflected on and been inspired by the death of the One who was the mother of Jesus, who gave life to our Savior and Lord, who gave herself totally to Him to the very end and stood by Him at the Cross. And in contemplating her death the Church discovered and experienced death as neither fear, nor horror, nor finality, but radiant and authentic Resurrection joy.

“What spiritual songs shall we now offer you, O most holy? For by your deathless Dormition you have sanctified the whole world...” Here, in one of the first hymns of the feast we immediately find expressed the very essence of its joy: “Deathless Dormition,” deathless death. But what is the meaning of this contradictory, apparently absurd conjunction of words? In the Dormition, the whole joyful mystery of this death is revealed to us and becomes our joy, for Mary the Virgin Mother is one of us.

If death is the horror and grief of separation, of descent into terrible loneliness and darkness, then none of this is present in the death of the Virgin Mary, since her death, like her entire life, is all encounter, all love, all continuous movement toward the unfading, never-setting light of eternity and entrance into it. “Perfect love casts out fear,” says John the Theologian, the apostle of love (I Jn 4:18). And therefore there is no fear in the deathless falling asleep of the Virgin Mary. Here, death is conquered from within, freed from all that fills it with horror and hopelessness. Death itself becomes triumphant life. Death becomes the “bright dawn of the mystical Day.” Thus, the feast has no sadness, no funeral dirges, no grief, but only light and joy. It’s as if in approaching the door of our inevitable death, we should suddenly find it flung open, with light pouring from the approaching victory, from the approaching reign of God’s Kingdom.

On the feast day of the Dormition we bless flowers, flowering plants, and herbs symbolizing the Blessed Virgin being the flower of creation,

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION. Rose Marie Fetcenko celebrated her 90th birthday on Saturday, July 21.

The parish wishes Rose Marie a Happy Birthday and may God grant her Many Years!

