

**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**

**SEPTEMBER 2018**

**Service Schedule**

Sat. September 1 – Beginning of the Church Year  
 Vespers @ 5:00 pm followed by General Confession

Sun. September 2  
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.  
 Fellowship Hour – Simerick & Everly

Fri. September 7 – Vespers w. litya – Forefeast of the Nativity of Theotokos – 5:00 pm

Sat. September 8 – Feast of Nativity of Theotokos  
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.  
 Vespers @ 5:00 p.m.

Sun. September 9  
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.  
 Fellowship Hour – Foster & Conkey  
 Semi-annual parish meeting

Thu. September 13 – Vespers w. litya - Forefeast of the Elevation of the Cross - 5:00 p.m.

Fri. September 14 – Feast of the Elevation of Cross  
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.

Sat. September 15  
 Vespers @ 5:00 p.m.

Sun. September 16  
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.  
 Fellowship Hour – Blake & McGraw

Sat. September 22  
 Vespers @ 5:00 p.m.

Sun. September 23  
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.  
 Fellowship Hour – Brennish & Thompson

Sat. September 29  
 Vespers @ 5:00 p.m.

Sun. September 30  
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.  
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.  
 Fellowship Hour – Fetcenko & Stine

**Readers:**

Mark Ammerman, John Conkey,  
 Mike Conkey, Tom Demchak,  
 Doug Donovan, George Sura,  
 Andrew Tocimak

**Altar Servers:**

John Blake  
 Ivan Switala

<b>Reader's Schedule</b>		
	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Epistle</i>
9/2	Mark Ammerman	Mark Ammerman
9/9	John Conkey	John Conkey
9/16	Tom Demchak	Tom Demchak
9/23	Mike Conkey	Mike Conkey
9/30	Doug Donovan	Doug Donovan

<b>Notable Feasts in September</b>	
9/1	Church New Year
9/8	Nativity of the Theotokos
9/14	Elevation of the Cross

<b>Birthdays</b>	
Mark Ammerman	September 23

<b>Anniversaries</b>	
Doug & Shirley Donovan	September 1, 1973
Fr. Michael & Mat. Linda	September 3, 1966
Tom and Linda Nolder	September 10, 1983

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.

*From the Desk of Father Michael*

## **THE NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS**

**September 8**

All of the feasts pertaining to the Mother of God are most radiant and joyous. The holy Mother of God is understood by our Church to be the flower of creation. The Lord solicits our cooperation and participation in His salvation plan. Mary was found worthy to bear in her womb the uncontainable incarnate Son of God. Her purity, humility, love, and dedication to God made possible the great miracle of the Incarnation, thus preparing the way for our salvation. She is truly to be blessed by all generations.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann in his book *“Celebration of Faith, Sermons Vol. 3, The Virgin Mary”* states the following:

“The Church’s veneration of Mary has always been rooted in her obedience to God, her willing choice to accept a humanly impossible calling. The Orthodox Church has always emphasized Mary’s connection to humanity and delighted in her as the best, purest, most sublime fruition of human history and of man’s quest for God, for ultimate meaning, for the ultimate content of human life. If in Western Christianity veneration of Mary was centered upon her perpetual virginity, the heart of the Orthodox Christian East’s devotion, contemplation, and joyful delight in Mary has always been her Motherhood, her flesh and blood connection to Jesus Christ. The East rejoices that the human role in the divine plan is pivotal. The Son of God comes to earth, God appears in order to redeem the world, He becomes human to incorporate man into His Divine vocation, but humanity takes part in this.

If it is understood that Christ’s “co-nature” with us is Christianity’s greatest joy and depth, that He is a genuine human being and not some phantom or bodiless apparition, that He is one of us and forever united to us through his humanity, then devotion to Mary also becomes understandable, for she is the one who gave Him His human nature, His flesh and blood. She is the one through whom Christ can always call Himself “The Son of Man.”

This feast therefore is first a general celebration of Man’s birth, and we no longer remember the anguish, as the Gospel says, “for joy that a human being is born into the world” (Jn 16:21). Secondly, we now know whose particular birth, whose coming we celebrate: Mary’s. We know the uniqueness, the beauty, the grace of precisely this child, her destiny, her meaning for us and for the whole world. And thirdly, we celebrate all who prepared the way for Mary, who contributed to her inheritance of grace and beauty. Today, many people speak of heredity, but only in a negative, enslaving and deterministic sense. The Church believes also in a positive spiritual heredity. How much faith, how much goodness, how many generations of people striving to live by what is high and holy were needed before the tree of human history could bring forth such an exquisite and fragrant flower--the most pure Virgin and All Holy Mother! And therefore the feast of her Nativity is also a celebration of human history, a celebration of faith in man, a celebration of man. In and through this new-born girl, Christ--our gift from God, our meeting and encounter with Him--comes to embrace the world. Thus, in celebrating Mary’s birth we find ourselves already on the road to Bethlehem, moving toward to the joyful mystery of Mary as the Mother to God.”

## **THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS**

**“Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen”**

A beautiful spiritual born out of the plight of the black slaves in this country is the hymn “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen.” This hymn attempts to relate the suffering and demoralization endured by the men, women, and children sold or born into slavery. There are many kinds of slavery. A person inflicted with a debilitating physical infirmity experiences being possessed, abused and used by their illness. There are

psychological and spiritual illnesses that inflict much pain and appear to render the victims helpless. It is simply self-evident that there is much suffering in the world, and all of us at one time or another have felt powerless and alone in the wake of the pain and anguish we had to endure. In such suffering experiences, we have felt like the slaves reflected in the hymn “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen.” Perhaps the second line of the hymn proves just as meaningful to all of us--“Nobody knows my sorrow.”

We will celebrate on September 14 the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross. By contemplating the holy cross, we come to know that no one understands pain/suffering and the consequences of slavery more than our God, the one who created us and has come to liberate us. In celebrating the Feast of the Cross, we realize that God does not come to know or understand suffering and pain as a spectator from a distance but up close and personal through the suffering of His Son and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It is clear from the scriptures that God did not create us to be enslaved and to suffer. Our enslavement to sin and the consequences of pain and suffering were a result of our free will and disobedience to the loving God who made us. His love for us is made even more evident when we come to know what He has accomplished, due to our disobedience and fall from grace, in order to save us.

Our Lord condescended and became one of us. He chose to begin, live, and end His earthly life truly as one of us, apart from sin. He provided for Himself no unfair advantage inasmuch as He was both God and man. He was born as a helpless babe, was obedient to His earthly parents and performed no miracles for His own comfort and benefit, but always attempted to intervene to alleviate the pain and suffering of others. In fact, the fathers of our Church teach that His pain and suffering was far greater than ours, for frequently we suffer as a result of our sinfulness. Jesus was sinless, yet took on Himself the sin of all mankind to experience and endure the weight of suffering for all humanity that He might break the bonds of sin that hold us captive. The message, therefore, of this feast for those of us enslaved by sin and who are enduring suffering, but believe in Jesus Christ, is that somebody does know the troubles we have seen and will see—somebody does know our sorrow. The somebody is God Himself, through His suffering servant and Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus has come to blaze a trail for us in this life of pain and suffering through the cross, which He has made a sign of victory. He has freed us from sinful enslavement so that we who follow Him and believe and endure our suffering might inherit eternal life in the new kingdom He has prepared for us at the end of this age. Let us thank the Lord Jesus for coming and revealing the power of His precious and life-giving cross—the symbol of His victory in this world in preparation for the life He has prepared for us in the world to come.



### ***Prayers For The Infirm***

Larry Ammerman, Helen Czar, Elaine Chutko, Louise Demchak, Joseph Demchak, Jack Foster, Rosemarie Fetcenko, Sub-Deacon Christopher Meholic, Alexa Thompson

### ***Prayers for the Deceased***

The following have fallen asleep in the Lord: Louise Tocimak on August 20; Betty Royer on August 21; and Michael Demchak on August 26. May God grant their Memories be Eternal!

### **In Memoriam:**

#### **Prospora Bread Bowl/Post Communion Wine Cups and Saucers (Zion Set).**

The brass prospora bread bowl in memory of Matushka Judy Horosky has been received and blessed for use in our liturgical services. Yet to be received are the zion post communion wine cups and saucers. Donations are still being taken for the items listed above in memory of Matushka Judy. For those wishing to contribute, please submit your donations at the candle stand at the back of the church.

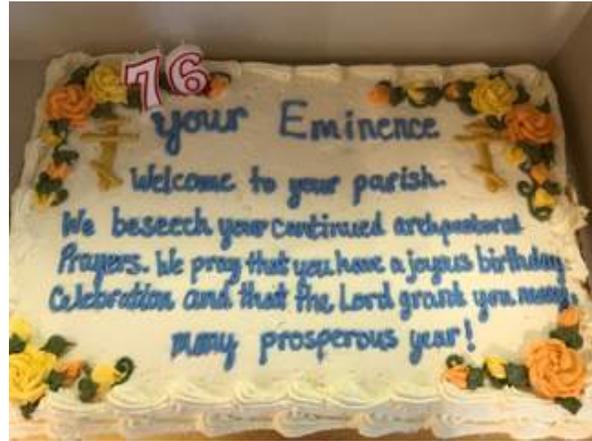
**Altar Candleholders & Candles** donated by Father Michael and Matushka Linda in memory of Matushka's parents, William and Marie Johnson, and Father Michael's parents, Charles and Kathryn Simerick, have been received, blessed, and placed on the altar table.

**Visit of Archbishop Melchisedek**

His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek, visited our parish on Sunday, August 19, to install Father Michael Simerick as our priest and to elevate to minor orders John Blake as Acolyte and Thomas Demchak as tonsured Reader. In addition, Father Michael was presented from the Holy Synod of Bishops a pectoral cross awarded to all retired Navy chaplains for 20 or more years of service in the United States Navy. The pictures below represent the solemnities that took place on Sunday, August 1



Following the Divine Liturgy we enjoyed a roast beef dinner in the church rectory. We surprised and honored His Eminence with a birthday cake for his 76<sup>th</sup> birthday. God grant him Many Years!



Head table - left to right: Father Michael Simerick, Archbishop Melchisedek, John Conkey

Side table - Left: Father John Steffaro  
Right: Fr. Deacon Peter Ilchuk