

THE FORERUNNER
The Nativity of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church
 420 Laura Street, Philipsburg, PA 16866
 V. Rev. Fr. C. Michael Simerick, Acting Rector
 Contact Fr. Michael directly at 814-375-1343



George Sura-President; Tom Demchak-Vice-President; Judy Everly-Secretary;
Members: Sonya Brennish, Ivan Switala

NOVEMBER 2019

Service & Activity Schedule

Sat., November 2 – Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

Daylight Savings Time Ends: Turn clocks back 1 hour

Sun., November 3
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.
 Fellowship Hour – Simerick & Demchak

Fri., November 8 – Feast of Archangel Michael
 Vespers Liturgy – 6:00 p.m.

Sat., November 9 – Vespers – 5:00 p.m.
 Sun., November 10
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.
 Fellowship Hour – Fetcenko & Stine

Fri., November 15 – Beginning of Advent Fast

Sat., November 16
 Vespers – 5:00 p.m.
 Sun., November 17
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.
 Fellowship Hour – Everly & Thompson

Thu., November 21 – Feast of Entrance of
 Theotokos into Temple- Vespers Liturgy – 6:00 p.m.

Sat. November 23 – Vespers – 5:00 p.m.
 Sun., November 24
 Hours @ 9:35 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 a.m.
 Fellowship Hour – Ammerman & Brennish

Sat., November 30 – Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

Please contact Judy Everly (814-237-7615) if there are changes with the Fellowship Hour. Cash donations go towards the purchase of coffee, cream, sugar and necessary supplies.

Reader (Rdr.) s:

Rdr. Mark Ammerman

Rdr. Tom Demchak

Rdr. George Sura, Rdr. Andrew Tocimak

Altar Servers:

Acolyte John Blake

Ivan Switala

Reader's Schedule

	<i>Hours</i>	<i>Epistle</i>
11/3	Reader Tom	Reader Tom
11/10	Reader Mark	Reader Mark
11/17	Reader Tom	Reader Tom
11/24	Reader Mark	Reader Mark

Notable Feasts in November

11/8	Synaxis of Archangel Michael & All Bodiless Powers
11/13	St. John Chrysostom, Abp. of Constantinople
11/16	Holy Apostle & Evangelist Matthew
11/21	Entrance of Theotokos into Temple

Birthdays

Svetlana Blake	November 4
Bonnie Fetcenko	November 30

From the Desk of Father Michael

SEMI-ANNUAL PARISH MEETING. On Sunday, September 29, immediately following the Divine Liturgy, our semi-annual parish meeting was held in the church, presided over by our Dean, Father Mark Meholick. After determining that a quorum of 9 members needed was reached, Father Mark delivered his opening statement in which he reminded those present of what the parish had related to him and to Father Michael regarding their most important concerns once acquiring a permanent priest. The following are the three most important considerations: First, a full complement of liturgical and sacramental services would be conducted; second, educational classes for the parish membership would be held; and third, an appropriate and energetic evangelization program would be established in the parish.

Father Mark asked for a vote by those in attendance that the above priority concerns still remain. A vote was taken with 11 voting yes and 4 abstentions.

Father Michael related that in order for the three prioritized concerns to be accomplished, the following programs must also be approved:

1. The implementation of a parish tithing program as described by the national Church of ten percent of one's net income be contributed to the parish. Tom Demchak presented a most comprehensive overview of the tithing program. The program would encompass a 3-year implementation time period. The first year, the tithe submitted by all members would be 3% of their net income. The second year that would increase by another 3%, and the third year the increase would be 4%, bringing the total tithe to ten percent, as is the scriptural mandate and the directive of the Orthodox Church in America for all its parishes.

Upon conclusion of Tom Demchak's presentation, Father Mark sought a vote of the acceptance of the tithing program. The program was accepted by 14 yes votes and one abstention.

2. To establish appropriate and frequent liturgical/sacramental services is simply not sufficient. Judy Everly presented an overview of the importance of "being the church of God" by being present when worship and sacramental services are conducted. She went on to describe the great benefit provided by God via the Holy Spirit for our spiritual edification and transformation. Father Mark called for a vote on the proposal that all parish members will to the best of their ability participate in all liturgical/sacramental services. The motion passed with 14 yes votes and one abstention.
3. Educational classes. Father Michael agreed to continue education classes for all parish members. Days and times for said classes will be determined. Again, education classes can only be successful if we have full parish participation.
4. Evangelization. In order for an evangelization program to succeed, there must be willing volunteers to participate in the following ministries which encompass bringing potentially new members into the parish community.
 - A. Greeters Ministry. Volunteers are needed to act as greeters to visitors attending our church worship services. There are a series of responsibilities that the volunteers must know in order that their ministry be effective. Volunteers will need to be trained and then assume their greeter responsibilities when appropriate.
 - B. Inquirers Ministry. Volunteers are needed to conduct inquirer classes for potentially new members attending services regularly, who would like to learn more about the Orthodox faith. Inquirer volunteers will need to be trained and then assume inquirer responsibilities.
 - C. Catechetical information for those who want to receive preparation to become Orthodox Christians will be provided by Father Michael.

Father Mark asked for a vote of the members present that parish members be willing to participate in the greeter and inquirer ministries. The vote was taken with 14 voting yes and 1 abstention.

In conclusion, Father Michael and members of the Parish Council will look to develop advertising opportunities regarding our parish liturgical/sacramental services and programs. The public relations efforts will encompass printed media and radio advertisement.

Motion was made to adjourn the semi-annual meeting by Cynthia Posmoga, seconded by Karen Stine with all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

<p style="text-align: center;">SYNAXIS OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL & THE OTHER BODILESS POWERS – November 8</p>

On Friday, November 8, the Orthodox Church will celebrate the Feast of the Synaxis of the Archangel Michael and the Other Bodiless Powers. The bodiless powers of heaven, for the most part, are a mystery. But it is clear that they interact with us and the material world in accordance with God's plan. Each one of us is given a guardian angel to guide and protect us in our earthly pilgrimage. The angels in general fight for us against Lucifer and his demons that we might be saved.

The following explanation regarding the bodiless hosts is taken from the Prologue from Ochrid by Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic:

“The angels of God have been commemorated by men from the earliest times, but this commemoration often degenerates into the divinization of angels (IV Kings 23:5; A.V. II Kings). Heretics always wove fantasies round the angels. Some of them saw the angels as gods and others, if they did not so regard them, took them to be the creators of the whole visible world. The local Council in Laodicea, that was held in the fourth century, rejected in its 35th Canon the worship of angels as gods, and established the proper veneration of them.

In the time of Pope Sylvester of Rome and the Alexandrian Patriarch Alexander, in the fourth century, this Feast of the Archangel Michael and the other heavenly powers was instituted, to be celebrated in November. Why in November? Because November is the ninth month after March, and it is thought that the world was created in the month of March. The ninth month after March was chosen because of the nine orders of angels that were the first created beings.

St. Dionysius the Areopagite, a disciple of the Apostle Paul (that Apostle who was caught up to the third heaven), writes of these nine orders in his book: ‘Celestial Hierarchies’. These orders are as follows: six-winged Seraphim, many-eyed Cherubim, godly Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels. The leader of the whole angelic army is the Archangel Michael. When Satan, Lucifer, fell away from God, and carried half the angels with him to destruction, then Michael arose and cried to the unfallen angels: ‘Let us give heed! Let us stand aright; let us stand with fear!’, and the whole angelic army sang aloud: ‘Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!’ (See on the Archangel Michael: Joshua 5:13-15 and Jude v.9).

Among the angels there rules a perfect unity of mind, of soul and of love; of total obedience of the lesser powers to the greater and of all to the holy will of God. Each nation has its guardian angel, as does each individual Christian. We must keep in mind that, whatever we do, openly or in secret, we do in the presence of our guardian angel and that, on the Day of Judgement, a great multitude of the holy angels of heaven will be gathered around the throne of Christ, and the thoughts, words and deeds of every man will be laid bare before them. May God have mercy on us and save us at the prayers of the holy Archangel Michael and all the bodiless powers of heaven. Amen.”

May God continue to enlighten and assist us in our struggles against Satan through our continued life-saving relationship with the bodiless powers of Heaven. May Archangel Michael lead the angelic hosts in our defense.

ADVENT, A TIME OF PREPARATION – Begins November 15

Advent is taken from a Latin word “adventus” meaning “coming” (the coming of Christ). Advent will begin on Friday, November 15, and will end on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Christmas, December 25. This six-week period, which precedes the Feast of the Nativity, is a time of preparation. In order for this major feast to transform our lives through our liturgical and sacramental commemorations, we must be made receptive to its deep spiritual dimensions. Fasting, vigils, prayers, and almsgiving are the prescriptions of the Church for spiritual edification.

It is nearly impossible to understand the birth of Christ and explain it to others if we and they are simply preoccupied and immersed in the material things of this world. It is for this reason Jesus teaches us by His example and instruction the need for fasting to be an integral part of our earthly life. This fact is why Satan has so cleverly persuaded us to shift our focus from the spiritual mystery of Christ’s birth to a material preoccupation with decorations, feasting, presents, and perpetual parties. The distortion of St. Nicholas from a humble bishop dedicated to the care and nurture of his flock, attempting to mimic his Savior Christ, to a fictitious figure who lives in the North Pole and brings presents on Christmas Eve is yet another example of Satan’s deception regarding this holy season.

Commemorating the birth of Christ is a church celebration. It was initiated, developed, and is commemorated each year by the Church that faithful Christians might enter into the eternal mystery of the salvation plan of God. Therefore, the whole essence of the feast must be understood through proper preparation and celebration as prescribed by the Holy Church. I’m certain that the sporting and commercial institutions of our country would not look favorably upon the Super Bowl extravaganza that takes place each year to be taken over by the Church. The Church has no business in planning and executing this type of activity. Likewise, the secular institutions of our nation cannot and must not dictate the method in which the feast of our Lord’s birth is prepared for and celebrated. If this is not apparent to the secularists, this must be obvious to all who call themselves Orthodox Christians.

We must restore the Feast of the Nativity by its appropriate preparation and celebration. Let us begin this restoration effort by taking the Advent season seriously. Our Church teaches that proper preparation for major feasts leads to the proper edifying celebration of these eternal events.

ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE NOVEMBER 21

On Thursday, November 21, our holy Church will commemorate the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos. The following explanation of the Feast of the Entry is taken from the Prologue from Ochrid by Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic:

“When the most holy Virgin Mary had reached the age of three, her parents, holy Joachim and Anna, took her from Nazareth to Jerusalem, to give her to the service of God in fulfillment of their promise. It was three days’ journey to Jerusalem, but, going as they were on God’s work, they did not find the journey difficult. Many of Joachim and Anna’s kinsmen gathered to take part in this celebration, in which the invisible angels of God also took part. Maidens went ahead with lighted candles in their hands, followed by the most holy Virgin, led on either side by her father and mother. The Virgin was clad in royal and beautiful garments, like those of the ‘king’s daughter’, the Bride of God (Ps. 44:9, 10). Behind them walked many of their kinsfolk and friends, all bearing lighted candles.

There were fifteen steps leading to the Temple. Her parents stood the Virgin on the first step, and she ran quickly to the top on her own, where the High Priest, Zacharias, the father of St John the Forerunner, met her and, taking her by the hand, led her not only into the Temple but into the Holy of Holies, the holiest place of all, into which none could enter except the High Priest, and that once a year. St. Theophylact of Ochrid says that Zacharias was ‘out of himself, and moved by God’ when he led the Virgin into the chief place in the Temple, beyond the second curtain--otherwise there could be no explanation of

his action. Her parents then offered sacrifices to God, according to the Law, received the priest's blessing and returned home, leaving the most holy Virgin in the Temple.

Mary dwelt in the Temple for nine whole years. While her parents were alive, they visited her often. When they departed this life, the holy Virgin was left an orphan, and longed to remain in the Temple for the rest of her days, without entering into marriage. This being contrary both to the Law and Israelite custom, she was confided at the age of twelve to St Joseph, a kinsman of hers in Nazareth, so that she might, under the protection of betrothal, live in virginity and thus fulfill both her desire and the demands of the Law, for it was unknown in Israel at that time for a girl to vow perpetual virginity. The holy Virgin Mary was the first to do this, and was later followed by thousands upon thousands of virgin men and women in the Church of Christ."

THANKSGIVING DAY– NOVEMBER 28

Thanksgiving Day is a day set aside by our nation each year for giving thanks to God for blessings received. On this day, people give thanks with feasting and prayer. The holiday is celebrated in the United States and Canada.

The following is a proclamation by Abraham Lincoln in 1863 regarding the celebration of Thanksgiving:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S 1863 THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION

"It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the LORD.

We know that by His divine law, nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world. May we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people?

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand that preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all those blessings were produced by some superior wisdom of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and with one voice by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens."

Note: In 1939, President Roosevelt set the date for Thanksgiving one week earlier. Congress ruled that after 1941 the fourth Thursday of November would be observed as Thanksgiving Day and would be a legal federal holiday.

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL ORTHODOX CHURCH, IRVONA announces the celebration of its 100th anniversary. Date of the celebration is Sunday, November 10, with a festal Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am presided by His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek. A banquet will be held in the church hall immediately following the Divine Liturgy. There is no charge for the meal but free-will donations will be accepted to help offset anniversary expenses. RSVP is requested by notifying Jacob Mandell, Parish Treasurer, 201 Weaver Street, Clearfield, PA 16830.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES: The adult education classes begun in October will continue in November. These classes will encompass instruction on the sacraments and other pertinent subjects during the latter part of the agape fellowship on some Sundays in the church hall.

Prayers for the Infirm—Please pray for the following infirm:

Lawrence Ammerman, Joseph Demchak, Louise Demchak, RoseMarie Fetcenko, Mary Foster, Bertrand Olechnowicz, Dean and Eileen Simpson, Karen Steponick, Fr. Deacon Joseph Brousseau and Family.

Every person is in need of intercessory prayers before God so that they might receive grace and spiritual healing and fortification that they might live their daily lives in full communion with God and with others. Please include the following members in your prayers. May God hear and respond to our prayers of intercession.

Ammerman	Blazosky Julie Brennish Sonya	Everly Tom & Judy Fetcenko Mildred	Thompson Holly Dustin, Alexa & Asa Mae
Lawrence & MaryAnn Larry	Cardinal Elaine	Fetcenko RoseMarie Bonnie	Tocimak Andrew
Mark & Jennifer	Conkey John & MaryAnn	Foster Mary	Tocimak Mitch
Lilian	Andrew & Colleen	Nolder Linda & Tom	Whitehead Joanne
Vincent	Michael	Posmoga Cynthia	
Victor	Christopher, Gabrielle, Holden		
Blackburn Karen	Czar Helen	Simerick Fr. Michael & Mat. Linda	
Blake John & Svetlana	Demchak Joseph	Stine Karen Gloria, Alexandra, Michael	
Anastasia	Demchak Tom & Rhonda	Sura George	
Elizabeth	Donovan Doug & Shirley	Switala Ivan	

