

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, October 25, 2020

Twenty-third Sunday After Pentecost
The Holy Apostle & Evangelist Luke

Apostolic Reading: Ephesians 2:4-10

Gospel: Luke 8:26-39

(Jesus Heals the Gadarene Demoniac)

Tone 3 • Matins Gospel 9

➔ For COVID Guidelines, [click here](#)

➔ For Live Streaming Link, [click here](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN NICOLAE has recommended for consideration by the parish **Rev. Fr. Vasile Aileni to be the next parish priest for St. Nicholas**. Fr. Vasile is currently serving a parish in the Toronto area under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Canada. The parish council has met with him several times over the last few weeks, via Zoom. Fr. Vasile has agreed, along with his family, to accept this proposal. We will be setting up an opportunity in the next weeks for him to speak directly with the parish with the possibility of questions and answers. Unfortunately, because of the border restrictions during the pandemic, he will not be able to visit the parish until he and his family receive the proper visa.

Before His Eminence formally appoints Fr. Vasile to the position at St. Nicholas, a number of procedures and approvals will be necessary. The parish council will have to give its assent. Fr. Vasile has been accepted into the Archdiocese, but for appointment to another parish. His Eminence will need to change the appointment, now to St. Nicholas, after consultation with the Archdiocesan Council. In addition, a formal request to the USCIS (Immigration) will have to be filed for an R-1 visa. While the Church process is relatively straight forward, the delays with USCIS can take some time. We will keep all of you regularly updated.

THANKS TO THE MUSTARD SEED VOLUNTEERS, who prepared the meal this month! The Mustard Seed is a Catholic Worker home providing dinner to about 100 people in need each

day. *We'd like to thank Anthi and Sergios Eleftheriou for underwriting the costs of this MONTH'S meal!* Our next Mustard Seed Meal will be December 18th. If you or your family would like to help with the preparation, or **to help sponsor a meal**, please contact **Betty Anderson — by e-mail** (bettya16@verizon.net) or **phone** 508-353-9449.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES are ongoing. There are three classes, according to grade level. Class sizes are no more than 5 students. The standard Covid-19 protocols are followed. If you have questions or to sign your child up to attend class, please contact: for grades **K through 2nd**, Cristina Iusco at cristinaiusco@yahoo.com; for grades **3rd through 6th**, Gina Skaff at ginaskaff@hotmail.com; and for **grades 7th and up**, Fadi Girgis at elfady@yahoo.com. You may download a [Registration Form by clicking here](#).

THE FAITH / CREDINTA MAGAZINE. The **July-September issue** of our Metropolia's quarterly magazine is now available on-line. Please download and read it by [clicking here](#).

EVERYONE WHO IS ABLE IS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN SERVICES. You may attend Liturgy on Sundays at church. **Of course the usual COVID rules apply.** Here are the [Guidelines](#) for attending Church services. Please follow the directions of ushers for everyone's safety.

WE ARE LIVE-STREAMING THE LITURGY. If you can not physically attend church, you may access the live-stream of Divine Services. Go to: www.stnicholaschurch.org and click on **"Live Streaming of Services"**. To view previous Services on our YouTube Channel, [click here](#).

STEWARDSHIP. This is a difficult time for everyone, on so many levels. One is economic. But if you are able, please continue to send what stewardship offering that you feel you can afford. Keep in mind that **the Church is also in the same situation.** There are on-going expenses. You may mail any contributions to the Church address, or you may give on-line, at the parish website by [clicking here](#). God bless you and keep you safe!

WE HAVE A COVID FUND. There are people both in our parish and in the larger community who are in need during this time. **If you need help**, whatever it might be, including financial assistance, please contact Fr. Nick. We'll find a way to assist you. **ALSO**, we are asking the faithful in our parish **WHO ARE ABLE**, to perhaps contribute toward this fund. We've set up a small committee, headed by Fr. Nick, to administer this fund, and distribute what we're able to give as equitably as possible. **May God keep us all!**

COMMUNITY NEWS

IOCC's LATEST PRAYER JOURNAL IS HERE! While families are staying at home together, IOCC's **The Prayer Journal** is a great tool to learn about what the Orthodox Church is doing through IOCC in the US and the world. The Prayer Journal highlights the scripture of Matthew 25, the inspiration for IOCC's mission. It offers a glimpse into the lives of children and families

around the world and shows how your prayers and support are helping them build a brighter future. For more information, and to order a copy or copies, [click here](#).

The ASSEMBLY OF ORTHODOX BISHOPS met virtually on October 6-7, and issued a *Message of Hope* for these difficult days. It expresses “the perennial message of Christian hope and spiritual encouragement to our clergy and faithful, and all persons of good will, in these unprecedented times of the current global health crisis, political division, and social strife.” To read the full message [click here](#).

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Update – October 25, 2020

CALLING ALL DELEGATES FROM THE CHURCHES! Holy Trinity Annual General Assembly meeting will be held on **Tuesday, October 27th at 7:00pm via Zoom**. We **NEED** as many delegates from the churches as possible and as it is via Zoom no one will have to leave their homes to attend. We will be reviewing the 2019 audit information, discussing COVID-19 and how it has affected Holy Trinity and discussing our plans for 2021. The by-laws of the council say that we need the parish Priest, parish council President, and at least 3 additional delegates from each member church. Please inform Fr. Nick if you would like to attend, and sign up and join us!

WE WOULD LIKE TO REMEMBER JAMES A. CHRISTO, who fell asleep in the Lord this past week. Jim was a stalwart of the Eastern Orthodox community in Worcester, but for Holy Trinity he was more: one of the foundational pillars. His tireless efforts made Holy Trinity possible. He will be sorely missed. Our sympathies to his wife Joan and his children James, Stephen and Carolyn, and his many grandchildren. *May our loving Lord rest his soul among the saints, and his memory be eternal!*

COVID-19 UPDATE. We are continuing to conduct bi-weekly testing of 50% of staff per state directive. We continue to have adequate PPE and use it per CDC guidelines.

VISITATIONS. As always Facetime and phone calls are encouraged for all residents. Item drop off is welcome as well. At this time, residents who are fully recovered from a prior positive test and not showing any signs or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 can participate in outside or window visits. For the time being there are no compassionate visits unless an individual is actively dying. Please reach out to the nurse manager for individual questions. For more information click [here](#).

JOB OPENINGS. Please click [here](#) to view the latest job openings. Our newest job opening is for 2 part-time housekeepers. We are always looking for great people to add to our wonderful staff!

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES. Our outside entertainment continues so residents can enjoy music via their windows, weather permitting. We also have a special socially distanced Fall photo booth set for October 26th. Pumpkin decorating is almost complete, and three winners will be chosen on October 28th. We will celebrate National Chocolate Day on October 28th with a surprise chocolate treat. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Wednesdays at 9:30a.m. The main dining room and unit dining rooms are open for meals as well. And, our Hairdresser is back, by appointment.

A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

Preserve us from rashness, Lord God of gentleness, that we may not be taken captive by ignorance, and show us how to nourish gentleness of spirit that we may attain knowledge, for you love the gentle but the rash you banish from your presence. Show us how to flee irascibility so that we may live in gentleness and without fear.

For you are a merciful and loving God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

We Are God's Workmanship

This week we begin reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. Ephesus was a large seaport on the western coast of Asia Minor (in present day Turkey) and the capital of the Roman province of Asia. Paul stayed in Ephesus twice, the second time for over three years. In the earliest manuscripts the title "to the Ephesians" is missing. This, together with the fact that he sends almost no personal greetings as he customarily did (even though he certainly knew scores of people in that community) has led many Biblical commentators to suggest that this may have been a general letter that St. Paul had sent out to be read in the many communities he had established.

In this letter Paul speaks about God's great plan for humanity, hidden up until now, but revealed fully in Jesus Christ. His intention is to create a single messianic people of God, uniting both Jew and Gentile. Social and religious barriers that had previously divided humanity are eliminated by faith in Jesus Christ. This is "Good News" for everyone. We have been redeemed, that is, liberated from bondage to the Evil One, bondage to sin and death.

Today's reading begins at Chapter 2, verse 4 and continues through verse 10. In the first Chapter of Ephesians he speaks of God's plan. Here he presents us with the challenge of responding to God's plan. He reminds us of God's love. "God, who is rich in mercy, out of the

great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses ..." (v. 4-5). One of the most important 'rules' or 'truths' we can ever learn is this: we only know how to love because we ourselves have been loved by others. God is the first one who loves us. He has given us our parents and family who love us. He gives us children so that we can share this love. Even if our earthly relationships have fallen short of this, still our Heavenly Father never fails us.

Listen to the words that St. Paul uses to describe this. He doesn't simply say God is merciful and loving. He tells us He is rich in mercy. God loves us out of His great love. God is abundant in His affection for us. It is this love God has for us that sustains us.

The passage continues, "... even when we were dead through our trespasses [He] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (v. 5-7).

There are three points that I would like to highlight in this passage. The first is that we participate directly in our Lord's rising from the dead. Jesus died the death that awaits us because of our sin. But, in His sinless death we share in His life. Through our faith in Him, we are changed and risen. Our rising happens not only after our physical death, it happens now when we believe in God's love for us in Christ Jesus. Even while we are breathing, we were dead because of our sin. Jesus' sacrificial love changed this.

The second point is: "by grace you have been saved." St. Paul says this three times in the short passage we read today. Our salvation is a gift; we didn't earn it. We can't earn it. We could never earn it. God restores us because He loves us.

The third point is that God has not only restored us, but He allows us to share in the glory of His Son. He "raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." When we say in the Creed that "He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father," we should understand that we have a place at the Father's right hand as well, because of Jesus.

This vision of God enthroned in Heaven is completed by St. Paul when he says: "that in the coming ages [God] might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." One of the common assumptions in the world in which St. Paul lived was that history had a number of ages (seven) and these were cyclical (they kept repeating). In our Liturgy we express the idea of eternity by saying God's glory is "now, forever, and to the ages of ages." St. Paul is expressing something similar when he tells us God's love and grace will be shown toward us in the "coming ages."

After telling us all of this St. Paul reminds us again, "by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God — not because of works, lest any man

should boast” (v. 8-9). Then he adds something else: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (v. 10).

Here is another ‘rule’ or ‘truth’ that we need to remember and keep alive in our hearts. If we are able to be saved by faith it is because we are God’s “workmanship.” We were created in Christ Jesus, that is: the creative Word of God, His Son, shaped and formed us. Why? — for good works.

God in His great love created us good, to do good. We do good not to earn salvation, but to complete God’s work in us. God prepared this path of good works “beforehand, that we should walk in them.” What St. Paul means here is that the good we do one to another, and together for all, leads us back to God. This is how we “work out our own salvation” (Philippians 2:12). Doing good is how we communicate with God. In every good and kind thing we do we show ourselves to be God’s handiwork. By growing in Him, we reveal the full glory that is within us. We do this by faith in Jesus Christ who loves us and saves us.

Fr. Nicholas Apostola

Orthodox Links

[Romanian Orthodox Metropolia](#) of the Americas
[Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America](#) (Assembly of Bishops)
[International Orthodox Christian Charities](#) (IOCC)
[Orthodox Christian Mission Center](#) (OCMC)
[Orthodox Christian Radio Network](#) (OCN)
[Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches of Central Mass.](#) (CEOC)

Dates To Remember

Tuesday, Oct 27 - Holy Trinity General Assembly, 7 PM via Zoom
Saturday, Nov 7 - Food Pantry (9 AM - NOON)
Friday, December 18 - Mustard Seed Meal Prep (1:30 PM - 3:30 PM)

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
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Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am