

News from St. Nick's

Sunday, November 8, 2020

Twenty-fourth Sunday After Pentecost
The Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel
and all the Heavenly Hosts

Apostolic Reading: Ephesians 2:14-22

Gospel: Luke 8:41-56

(Jesus Heals the Woman and Raises Jairus' Daughter)

Tone 5 • Matins Gospel 11

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR HOLY TRINITY RESIDENTS. Each year the Orthodox Community has the blessed opportunity to give Christmas Gifts to the residents of Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation. Our Parish is responsible for providing 15 gifts, such as throws and slippers. Eleanor Sedares and Deb Sedares are coordinating the effort, and have a list of items residents would like to receive. Please contact Eleanor or Deb if you would like to participate. We ask that you purchase and wrap the gift and bring it to the Church no later than Sunday, December 6. Call Eleanor Sedares: 508-753-3106, Deb Sedares: 508-509-6678 or dsedares@pinehills.com.

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish this Saturday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9am to noon. About 4 people are needed. Help is also needed to do the shopping at the Food Bank. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please e-mail [Nicole Apostola](mailto:Nicole.Apostola@gmail.com) at nicole.apostola@gmail.com. Our next date is December 5th.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FALL RETREAT will be held with our children K-12 on Friday, November 27th together with and at St Anargyroi Church in Marlborough. See [this flier](#) for details and contact information.

EVERYONE 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!**

PASTRIES AVAILABLE: Just in time for Thanksgiving, while supplies last, St. Nick's Kitchen has freshly baked **baklava, kouroubia, & koulourakia** available for sale. Pickup is on Sunday from 10am to 12:30 pm. To order, email/call [Betty Anderson](#) at 508-353-9449, or bettya16@verizon.net.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

HOLY TRINITY HAS RECEIVED A 4-STAR RATING from CMS (The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services). This rating reflects our commitment to the safety and health of the residents. Kudos to the staff who deserve our thanks. We are extremely proud of them.

HOLY TRINITY IN THE NEWS! The Worcester T&G featured an opinion piece by our Director of Nursing, AnnMarie LeBoeuf ([read it here](#)) on the challenges faced by Holy Trinity and other long-term care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's an important contribution to the discussion.

ON THE COVID-19 FRONT—Holy Trinity continues biweekly testing of 50% of staff per state directives, and continue to have deficiency free infection control state surveys.

THERE ARE JOB OPENINGS AVAILABLE AT HOLY TRINITY, such as: Director of Advancement; Certified Nurse Assistant; Dietary Aides; and more. [Click here](#) for a full listing

with detailed job descriptions. People familiar with the languages and cultures of our Orthodox communities are encouraged to apply.

FAMILY COUNCIL'S next meeting will be on Saturday, November 14 at 1 pm. Each monthly meeting is hosted by the Administrator and one member of the Management team. Keep an eye out for the invitation by either text or e-mail.

VISITATIONS ARE ALWAYS ENCOURAGED, following the COVID-19 guidelines! These visits must be scheduled, and may be held outside (weather permitting) or in the three designated indoor locations. Compassionate visits may also be scheduled. Facetime and phone calls are encouraged for all residents. Item drop-offs are welcome as well. To schedule a visit, contact the Activities Staff through the main number: 508-852-1000. Please check the ***COVID-19 page*** ([click here](#)) for more information. Protocols are constantly changing.

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES ARE ON-GOING. Weather permitting, outside entertainment continues and residents can enjoy music via their windows. Piano music with Gary Landren (Honky Tonk Piano Man) is scheduled for November 16th 2:00p.m and Guitar music with Paul Bonneaus is on November 18th at 2:30p.m. The main dining room and unit dining rooms are open for meals as well. And, the Hairdresser is back by appointment.

DIVINE LITURGY is celebrated every Wednesday at 9:30am.

A Prayer of Fr. Laurence

Let us pray to the Lord,

O God of all consolations: Sustain us in our trials and troubles, and reinforce the little strength we have as we battle with our demons. Then, lead us out of our own small world to embrace others and help them with their concerns. Prevent us from always focusing on ourselves. Let us never repay evil with evil, but, rather, may we always respond with good, for this is how you yourself deal with us at all times.

For you are one to have mercy on us and save us, O God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Breaking Down Walls That Divide

This is the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost. The Epistle Lesson is taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 2:14-22. In these verses we hear St. Paul explain how the division and tension between Jew and Gentile are healed and reconciled in Christ. Keep in mind, Ephesus, as well as the other early Christian communities, was composed of both Jewish followers of Jesus and pagan converts. Generally, Jews did not associate with Gentiles, if they could possibly avoid it, and certainly not in worship. Here St. Paul describes how the two separate 'peoples' are now become one in and through Christ.

“For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end” (v. 14-16). This first sentence is long and complicated. It contains many important ideas. Let’s address each one in turn.

Christ is the not only the herald of peace; he is peace itself. He carries in his person the means and power to heal and resolve differences and separation. He was a perfect Jew for the Jews, but also reached out and ministered to those who were not Jews.

He “has broken down the dividing wall of hostility.” St. Paul meant for his readers to understand this ‘dividing wall’ in two ways. The first was spiritually; the ways in which Jews and Gentiles were separated one from the other in faith and lifestyle. The other was in a very physical sense, an actual wall.

Josephus, a first century Jewish historian, tells us that there was in the Jerusalem Temple a stone wall of three cubits high (five feet), separating the inner court from the outer. On this wall were signs prohibiting any non-Jew from going any farther, on pain of death. It was like the Berlin wall, an actual wall, but with deeper symbolic meaning. One of the reasons the crowd in Jerusalem wanted to kill Paul (cf. Acts 21:28-31) was that they thought he had brought Trophimus, an Ephesian Gentile, into the Temple to defile it. Like the dividing wall, the hostility it represented was very real. The wall was a symbol for the way in which the Jews understood themselves: as God’s people, a people separate, apart, and dedicated only to Him.

Having this ‘dividing wall of hostility’ as background, we can truly hear the depth of St. Paul’s proclamation that Jesus “came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father” (v. 17-18). The Gentiles were ‘far off’ not just in distance, but more importantly in faith. They worshiped pagan gods and often lived immorally. Perhaps the Jews were ‘nearer,’ but because of their inability to fulfill the Law they were also distanced from God.

In the person of Jesus Christ both Jew and Gentile are united as one people. It is not that the Gentile now becomes a Jew, but rather both are transformed into a new creation. The Holy Spirit who rests on the Son now rests on us as well. Both become sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father through the spirit of adoption. We become heirs with Christ (cf. Romans 8:14-17). We have ‘access’ to the Father the same way any child is able to approach their parents.

We are accustomed to referring to God as our Father, so it might be difficult to fully appreciate how radical these words sounded to St. Paul’s listeners. God was not thought of in familial terms. Gods generally were to be feared and placated. It was our Lord Jesus himself who taught his disciples to address God as “Abba” — “Daddy;” that we could approach God with love and

trust. He allows us to address Him in the most affectionate and loving way. This is Good News! If we understand and trust God's Word, it will transform our lives.

We are "no longer strangers and sojourners, but ... fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (v. 19). We no longer have to feel lost and alone. We no longer have to feel displaced and abandoned. We have a true family, an eternal home, with the saints. We are members of God's household.

Look at the image St. Paul paints for us. We are not only members of the household of God, we are also His Temple. This household and temple are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (v. 20-21). His words echo St. Peter who calls us to be "like living stones," allowing ourselves to "be built into a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5).

The image given is one of a building, and this can help us understand how all of the pieces — the building blocks — need to fit together for the structure to stand. However, it is not a physical building that is being talked about, nor is it stone and brick that are to be the materials. It is we together with all the saints from all eternity that are the pieces for this structure that God is building. We are asked to become part of this project, to be "built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (v. 22). However, the Church, the place where God dwells, is not made of bricks and mortar. It is made of us, brothers and sisters of one Father.

And while these words are intended for us, the members of Christ's Body, for the well-being of the Church, they can also be especially powerfully helpful to us today where many feel divided and estranged from one another. As Christians we can and should offer a balm of healing, the soothing comfort of God's grace. We can and should break down the dividing wall of hostility. May our good and loving Lord give us that strength.

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

Saturday, Nov 7 - Food Pantry (9 AM - NOON)
Friday, Nov 27 - 2020 Fall Sunday School Retreat at Marlboro
Saturday, Dec 5 - Food Pantry (9 AM - NOON)
Saturday, Dec 5 - Great Vespers for St. Nicholas 6 PM
Sunday, Dec 6 - St. Nicholas Feastday
Friday, December 18 - Mustard Seed Meal Prep (1:30 PM - 3:30 PM)

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
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508-845-0088 | fax: 508-845-8850 | email: ParishCouncil@StNicholasChurch.org
www.StNicholasChurch.org
Sunday Services: Matins at 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am