

Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Christian Church

A Parish of the Diocese of New England of the Orthodox Church in America

Fr. John Hopko, Pastor • Protodeacon Paul Nimchek

860.582.3631 • email: terryvilleorthodoxchurch@gmail.com

www.terryvilleorthodoxchurch.org • www.facebook.com/TerryvilleOrthodoxChurch



Sunday, December 13, 2020

27th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 2. Repose of Ven. Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America (1837). Sunday of the Forefathers. Martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius, and Orestes, at Sebaste (4th c.). Virgin Martyr Lucia (Lucy) of Syracuse (304). Ven. Arkády (Arcadius) of Novotorsk (11th c.). Ven. Mardárii (Mardarius), Recluse, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th c.). Ven. Arsenius of Latros (8th-9th c.).

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2020/12/13>

From Fr. Thomas Hopko: An excerpt from Chapter 14 of his book *Winter Pascha*, wherein he meditates on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, two Sundays before the Feast of Christmas

There is a great difference between existing and living. Many people exist. Very few really live. Only those who seek God have life. Only those who delight in His commandments and rejoice in accomplishing His will pass beyond mere existence and actually find life. "Seek God, and your soul shall live" (Ps 69:32, LXX). This is the cry of the psalmist David who is especially hymned on this Sunday and on the Sunday after Christmas. His exhortation is in perfect harmony with the words of God given to Moses in His revelation of the divine Law.

"See I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying His voice, and cleaving to Him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." (Deut 30:15-20)

The holy forefathers and mothers, together with all their descendants, have chosen life. They find it in God's Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is Life itself, God's incarnate Word. The celebration of the Winter Pascha [*Fr. Thomas calls Christmas, "the Winter Pascha"*] is a celebration of Life in God's Word. For "Christ who is our life" has already appeared (Col 3:4). We have "beheld His glory" (Jn 1:14). Now that glory is hidden in the "form of a slave" (Phil 2:7), but it will be revealed at the end of the ages in power for those who "have loved His appearing" and "live in Him" (2 Tim 4:8; Col 2:6).

[This excerpt was sourced at this link: <http://ww1.antiochian.org/node/18630>]

PARISH PRAYER LIST

We pray for all victims of disease, disaster, difficulty, and senseless violence throughout the world, especially in this time of pestilence and civil unrest.

+ THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED THIS LIFE: *Memory Eternal!*

First of all, we pray for all the thousands of victims of COVID-19. Memory Eternal!

Newly Departed

Patriarch IRINEJ of Serbia—head of the Serbian Orthodox Church d. 11/20/2020
His Eminence, Archbishop David of Alaska d. 11/27/2020
Madeline “Maddie” Bell—Terryville H.S. student, tragically killed d. 11/13/2020

Anniversaries of Repose – Memory Eternal!

Alexander Oleshko 12/13/1965
Joseph Kovaleski 12/13/2006
Anna Kyschersky 12/15/1938
Anastasia Kyschersky 12/15/1938
Justina Stashenko 12/15/1964
Fotina Alemoni 12/15/1998
John Tikhansky 12/16/1918
Olga Grischuk 12/16/1927
Mark Mattson 12/17/1993
Anastasia Aleverides 12/18/1941
Johanna Slawnyj 12/19/2009

THOSE IN NEED OF GOD’S MERCY AND HELP

First of all, we pray for all those suffering due to the present pestilence which is COVID-19, and those working to alleviate their suffering.

Persons captive and suffering for the Faith

Metropolitan Paul and Archbishop John—hostages in Syria

Those who are sick and suffering

Archpriest Michael—former pastor of our parish; reoccurrence of illness
Archpriest John—Fr. John H.’s uncle through marriage; cancer
Fyodor (Frank) G.—suffering from Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
Dolores T.—permanent colon malfunction following colon cancer treatment
child Drew—grandson of friends of the Nimcheks; ongoing treatment for eye cancer
Darlyne—facing health challenges; daughter of Bob and Vera Martin
Donna—Ann S.’s niece, Deb W.’s cousin; kidney disease
Dayrl—Ann S.’s niece, Deb W.’s cousin; kidney disease
JoAnn—acquaintance of Jeanne Moore; ovarian cancer
MaryEllen—Louine K.’s daughter-in-law; suffering with Huntington’s Disease
Maria O.—dialysis three times a week; recent injury to hand
Yelena “Lenna” M.—overcoming, by God’s grace, serious health challenges
Katie and Aubrey—a mother and daughter for whom we have been asked to pray
Tanya B.—suffering long-term and lingering effects of brain hemorrhage

Mark—a profound diabetic for whom we have been asked to pray
Richard—a person for whom we have been asked to pray
Walter—an elderly man injured in a fall, for whom we have been asked to pray
Mary Lynn—friend of Donna O.; battling breast cancer
Barbara—friend of Patty N.; unwell and in need of prayerful support
James B.—husband of a Waterbury parishioner; chronically unwell
Dorothy F.—Waterbury parishioner; still recovering from a serious surgery
Vincent—relapse of cancer; relative through marriage of P. Oraschewsky
Rosie D.—ongoing health issues
Michael “Mike” L.—ongoing health issues
child George—9-year-old son of a Kenyan Orthodox priest; quite unwell
Bill M.—has experienced some health issues lately, please keep in prayer
Christopher—friend of Kathy M.; struggling with cancer
Paula—friend of Jim L.; struggling with cancer
Dimitri—brother of Carolyn P.; health issues
child Hattie—injured in freak accident; request of a family in our parish
Maryna B.—dealing with some health issues
Reader Joseph—recent issue with a painful hip joint
Thomas—Patty N.’s nephew; battling cancer
Wayne—Donna O.’s father
Vickie—a woman for whom we have been asked to pray
Sam—Vickie’s husband, struggling with multiple health issues
Richard—a man struggling with cancer, for whom we have been asked to pray
Sue—friend of Macrina H.; quite unwell at this time

Shut-ins and those resident in long-term Care Facilities

Alex—John D.’s brother, suffering permanent effects of stroke
Dolores—Bob M.’s mother, resident in long-term eldercare
Anna—Rdr. John Paul Sz.’s mother; resident in long-term care
Maryellen—an acquaintance of Carolyn P.; in long-term care—very ill, right now

Expectant Mothers

Shelby (Sophia) G. and the child to be born of her

Travelers, Those Soon to be Traveling, and Those Apart from Us

All those who are traveling, soon to be traveling, or apart from us

Those from among us serving on active duty in the Armed Forces

Joel O.—U.S. Navy; hospital corpsman (“medic”)
Joseph B.—a Terryville neighbor; U.S. Marine Corps
Joshua P.—husband of a niece of Fr. John’s; U.S. Army officer and pilot
Alexander—relative of Carolyn P.; 82nd Airborne Division soldier now home from abroad
Derek—relative of Carolyn P.; serving in Afghanistan in the U.S. Army
Ian H.—Fr. David K.’s son-in-law; preparing for overseas deployment, U.S. Army

Anniversaries of Marriage

NONE THIS WEEK

Birthdays

NONE THIS WEEK

A Prayer to Saint Herman

O most wondrous favorite of God, our Blessed Father Herman, as a good laborer you did your great spiritual work in a harsh climate in this land. In the little things you were faithful in your service to God; as the Lord said, “You have been faithful over little, I will set you over much.”

And now, when this word has been fulfilled for you, the Lord has set you over our whole Church in North America as her heavenly protector. We all call on you in fervent prayer: Pray for our Holy Church. May the Lord keep the Church pure in faith. May He reveal the Church as an adornment of our land. May He protect the Church from all dark powers of the enemy. May He drive out all adversaries. May He grant us purity of Faith and beauty of soul. Grant us all the Spirit of peace and love, the Spirit of humility and meekness. Drive out the sin of pride. Save us from self-praise. Be our guard from false teachings. Give healing to the sick; to the sorrowful be a comfort. To those who hunger for spiritual truth, give the Heavenly Food, so that we may attain our true desire, receiving the good reward at the Final Judgment.

With all the saints we will praise with song the Life-Creating Trinity—the ineffable Father, the true and only-begotten Son, the Comforter, Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

News and Notes

The Nativity Fast – Ongoing: The Nativity Fast, sometimes called Advent, began on Sunday, November 15. This fast lasts for the 40 days until the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord (Christmas) on December 25. This is a time of fasting and prayer in preparation for the Feast of Christmas. Right now, of course, we are living through a public health crisis, which impacts our ability to have as full an expression of parish life as we might prefer. However, this does not mean that we cannot or should not keep the Nativity Fast. We should, certainly, be doing everything that we can to mark and keep the fast, and to prepare ourselves, accordingly, for the celebration of Christmas, the Saving Birth of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

Wednesday Morning Matins Services, via “Zoom”, at 8:00 a.m.: Due to the increase in cases of COVID-19 here in our area, we have made the choice to limit in-person activities at the Church. **This means that, for now, we are suspending our in-person Wednesday morning Matins services.** We have replaced that in-person service with an on-line gathering for worship and prayer, Wednesdays at 8:00 a.m. Watch your email inbox for details.

Bible Study – Via “Zoom,” Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.: We have been holding weekly Bible Study sessions, via video teleconference (“Zoom”) on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This Tuesday, we will be continuing (and maybe concluding) our reading and discussion of the Letter to the Galatians. Soon, we will be starting our consideration of the First Letter to the Corinthians.

Bible Study Companion Book: If you are interested in reading a book that will serve as a companion to the efforts we are presently making in Bible Study, this book may be a resource for you: *Words of Fire: The Early Epistles of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians and the Galatians*. This book is written by Fr. Lawrence Farley, who is a priest in British Columbia, Canada, in a parish of the Orthodox Church in America’s Archdiocese of Canada. It is published by Conciliar Press, Chesterton, Indiana (<https://store.ancientfaith.com/biblical-studies/>). Fr. Farley writes in his introduction to this book, “This commentary was written...for the average layman, for the nonprofessional...” Thus, it is a book that is accessible to us, Orthodox Christians who regularly attend Church, and who would like to know more about the Bible.

Support from the Parish: If you require financial support during this vexing and challenging time, contact Fr. John, personally and confidentially, and he will endeavor to help you get the assistance that you need. For 2020, the Diocese of New England has reduced by 16.7% (one-sixth) the annual Fair Share contributions that it usually expects from our Parish. This reduction has been put into place with the specific intention that this money—the money that the Parish will not be sending to the Diocese, but will be retaining locally—will be used for charitable and relief purposes. **Don’t be shy: If you need help, contact Fr. John. All such contacts will be treated with strict confidentiality and great sensitivity.**

Donations to the Parish: Please, continue to support our parish during this challenging time. Donations to the Parish may be submitted via checks made out to and mailed to Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church, 34 Fairview Avenue, Terryville, CT 06786-6329. Also, a PayPal Donation “button” (<https://www.terryvilleorthodoxchurch.org/donatenow>) is located on our parish website to make online donations possible. Our parish is registered as a charity with PayPal, so we have slightly lower fees connected to the use of that means of receiving donations. For us, PayPal’s fees are 2.2%, plus \$0.30 per transaction. (So, for example, a donation of \$100.00 given via PayPal will realize us actual income of \$97.50.)

A Prayer to be Offered in Times of Darkness and Despair

O Lord, Jesus Christ, I am able to walk with You when things go well, and when nothing seems wrong or troubling. However, at this moment, I feel as the Apostle Peter must have felt when he saw You walk towards him on the open sea. Saint Peter then tried to walk to You, but he lost hope, and he began to sink into the stormy waters of the sea. When I am down and low, in a place of darkness and despair, sinking into the stormy seas of life, by which I feel overwhelmed, come to me, loving Lord, as You came to Your Apostle Peter. Help me, even though my faith is weak, and even though I have lost hope, and even though I have given in to darkness and despair and, even, to inappropriate sources of temporary comfort. Come to me, compassionate Lord, for You are our God and our Hope, O Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to You we give glory, together with Your Eternal Father and Your All-Holy Spirit, always, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Confession Appointments, during the Nativity Fast (Advent)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Glory to Jesus Christ!

It is considered a normal part of our journeys through the fasting seasons of the Church that we would participate in the saving sacrament of Holy Confession. Obviously, this is a difficult and vexing time, as we continue to journey through what we might well call "COVID-time." Nevertheless, I would ask that every parishioner, please, contact me to discuss the matter of participation in the sacraments of the Church. We need to determine what is possible in this regard for every member of the Parish. (Perhaps, we will only be able to meet virtually, in cyberspace, or by phone, but we must be in contact.) This is of vital and increasing importance, not in spite of the present public health crisis, but because of it.

We are all making efforts, even in this difficult time, to have our most important needs met. We are accessing our materials needs, such as for groceries and other items. Many of us are, also, accessing medical and dental care at this time. If we are meeting those important needs, we should, also, be making sure to meet our deepest need—the need for continuing connection to Jesus Christ and His Church. The things of this world will pass away, but the eternal things of God are everlasting, and the sacraments of the Church connect us to eternity.

Please, do be in touch with me. Also, please know that I will be reaching out to you.

With love, and hope, and prayers,

In Christ,

Fr. John H.

Scripture Readings for the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, this year December 13

The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Colossians (Col. 3:4-11)

Brethren: When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

The Reading from the Gospel according to St. Luke (Luke 14: 16-24)

The Lord spoke this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

