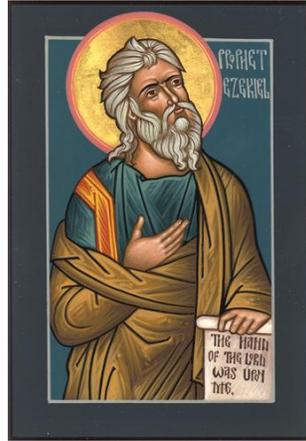


St. Nikolai Orthodox Mission of Alliance, Divine Liturgy, 9:00 am.
Worship site: Rainbow's End Nursery. 10079 State Street, Louisville, Ohio 44641
Very Reverend Father Joseph Cervo, Archpriest (AOCANA-retired)
Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, Mission Administrator (Bulgarian Diocese OCA)
July 21, 2013, 4th Sunday after Pentecost/Prophet Ezekiel



Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.
He has trampled down death by death.
He has become the first born of the dead.
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
and has granted to the world//great mercy.

Tone 2 Troparion (Prophet Ezekiel)

We celebrate the memory of Your Prophet Ezekiel, O Lord;
through him, we beseech You://save our souls!

Tone 4 Troparion St. Nikolai

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence;
your humility exalted you; your poverty enriched you. Hierarch Father Nikolai, entreat Christ our God that our
souls may be saved!

Tone 3 Kontakion (Resurrection)

On this day You rose from the tomb, O Merciful One,
leading us from the gates of death.
On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices;
with the Prophets and Patriarchs//
they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Your power.

Tone 4 Kontakion (Prophet Ezekiel)

You have been revealed as a Prophet of God, wondrous Ezekiel,
proclaiming to all the incarnation of the Lord, the Lamb and Creator,//
the Son of God, Who has ever revealed Himself.

Epistle: Romans 6:18-23

Tone 3 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
v: *Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!*

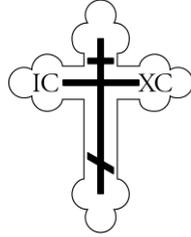
Tone 3 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*v: In You, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be put to shame!
v: Be a God of protection for me, a house of refuge in order to save me!*

Gospel: Matthew 8:5-13

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.



The Holy Prophet Ezekiel lived in the sixth century before the birth of Christ. He was born in the city of Sarir, and descended from the tribe of Levi ; he was a priest and the son of the priest Buzi. Ezekiel was led off to Babylon when he was twenty-five years old together with King Jechoniah II and many other Jews during the second invasion of Jerusalem by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnessar .

The Prophet Ezekiel lived in captivity by the River Chebar. When he was thirty years old, he had a vision of the future of the Hebrew nation and of all mankind. The prophet beheld a shining cloud, with fire flashing continually, and in the midst of the fire, gleaming bronze. He also saw four living creatures in the shape of men, but with four faces (Ez. 1:6). Each had the face of a man in front, the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left, and the face of an eagle at the back (Ez. 1:10). There was a wheel on the earth beside each creature, and the rim of each wheel was full of eyes.

Over the heads of the creatures there seemed to be a firmament, shining like crystal. Above the firmament was the likeness of a throne, like glittering sapphire in appearance. Above this throne was the likeness of a human form, and around Him was a rainbow (Ez. 1:4-28).

According to the explanation of the Fathers of the Church, the human likeness upon the sapphire throne prefigures the Incarnation of the Son of God from the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who is the living Throne of God. The four creatures are symbols of the four Evangelists: a man (St Matthew), a lion (St Mark), an ox (St Luke), and an eagle (St John); the wheel with the many eyes is meant to suggest the sharing of light with all the nations of the earth. During this vision the holy prophet fell down upon the ground out of fear, but the voice of God commanded him to get up. He was told that the Lord was sending him to preach to the nation of Israel. This was the beginning of Ezekiel's prophetic service.

The Prophet Ezekiel announces to the people of Israel, held captive in Baylon, the tribulations it would face for not remaining faithful to God. The prophet also proclaimed a better time for his fellow-countrymen, and he predicted their return from Babylon, and the restoration of the Jerusalem Temple.

There are two significant elements in the vision of the prophet: the vision of the temple of the Lord, full of glory (Ez. 44:1-10); and the bones in the valley, to which the Spirit of God gave new life (Ez. 37:1-14). The vision of the temple was a mysterious prefiguring of the race of man freed from the working of the Enemy and the building up of the Church of Christ through the redemptive act of the Son of God, incarnate of the Most Holy Theotokos. Ezekiel's description of the shut gate of the sanctuary, through which the Lord God would enter (Ez. 44: 2), is a prophecy of the Virgin giving birth to Christ, yet remaining a virgin. The vision of the dry bones prefigured the universal resurrection of the dead, and the new eternal life bestowed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The holy Prophet Ezekiel received from the Lord the gift of wonderworking. He, like the Prophet Moses, divided the waters of the river Chebar, and the Hebrews crossed to the opposite shore, escaping the pursuing Chaldeans. During a time of famine the prophet asked God for an increase of food for the hungry.

Ezekiel was condemned to execution because he denounced a certain Hebrew prince for idolatry. Bound to wild horses, he was torn to pieces. Pious Hebrews gathered up the torn body of the prophet and buried it upon Maur Field, in the tomb of Sim and Arthaxad, forefathers of Abraham, not far from Baghdad. The prophecy of Ezekiel is found in the book named for him, and is included in the Old Testament.

St Demetrius of Rostov (October 28 and September 21) explains to believers the following concepts in the book of the Prophet Ezekiel: if a righteous man turns from righteousness to sin, he shall die for his sin, and his righteousness will not be remembered. If a sinner repents, and keeps God's commandments, he will not die. His former sins will not be held against him, because now he follows the path of righteousness (Ez. 3:20; 18:21-24).

Donation Requests:

Land & Building Project:

There is an old Arab proverb: "Whatever is produced in haste goes unwisely to waste."

In planning a building of any type, a great deal of detail must be pondered. In planning a multi-purpose church building, these details are multiplied. Because of the number of details involved, and the desire not to make any major errors, that could waste money or reduce facility effectiveness, it has been determined that our time frame for starting actual construction requires an adjustment. This decision, by no means, should be perceived as a setback, or a change in direction. We simply want to take as much time as needed to be deliberate and as precise as possible, plus allow plenty of opportunity for any member who wishes to have input into the plans. We will continue to push forward with our planning but expect that a more likely construction date will be in 2014. In the interim, we still ask for everyone's consideration to make a special pledge toward the land purchase and building fund. The timing to pay your pledges can be according to your cash availability as well as being connected to our plan approval and construction schedule. As previously indicated, please convey your pledge decision confidentially to Father Joe or Protodeacon James as soon as possible.

Icon of St. Nikolai of Zica: Our mission is commissioning a handwritten icon of St. Nikolai. The Icon size has increased in conjunction with the scope of its depiction of our mission patron saint with prominent scenes from his life; it will also house his holy "relics." We are humbly accepting donations towards the icon which has now been finalized to cost \$1800. If you would like to make a contribution, please make your check payable to "St. Nikolai Orthodox Mission of Alliance;" make a notation that it is for the Icon of St. Nikolai.

Coffee Hour: We are in need of people willing to host coffee hours. Please see Linda Cervo to sign up and for open dates.

St. Nikolai of Zica Orthodox Mission of Alliance
P.O. Box 193
Maximo, Ohio 44650-0193