

St. Nikolai Orthodox Church, Divine Liturgy, 9:30 / Saturday Vespers, 5 pm.
Book study/Christian Education following Vespers
Parish Council meetings 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm (*open to parishioners*)
9837 State Street, Louisville , Ohio 44641
Right Rev. Bishop Alexander, Bulgarian Diocese, Orthodox Church in America
Very Reverend Father Joseph Cervo, Archpriest (AOCANA-retired)
Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, Mission Administrator (Bulgarian Diocese OCA)
March 20, 2016: First Sunday of Great Lent/Sunday of Orthodoxy
Martyr Eudoxia of Heliopolis
Website: <http://www.stnikolaiorthodoxmission.com>
Facebook page: "<http://www.facebook.com/SaintNikolaiOrthodoxMission> of Alliance

Welcome to Visitors. Thank you for coming and praying with us today. In the Orthodox Church, Holy Communion is reserved only for Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and confession during the Church fasting seasons. We invite you to introduce yourself to Father Joe and Deacon James at the end of the Liturgy and receive a piece of the blessed bread and join us for fellowship and Christian education. We look forward to seeing you again and encourage you to learn more about the Orthodox Faith.

Tone 1 Troparion (Resurrection)

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure ^body,
You rose on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world.
The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life:
“Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ!
Glory to Your ^Kingdom!// Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of mankind!”

Tone 2 Troparion (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One;
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God.
Of Your good will You were pleased to ascend the cross in the flesh
and deliver Your creatures from bondage to the Enemy.
Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to You:
“You have filled all with joy, O our Savior, //for You alone have come to save the world.”

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 8 Kontakion (from the Lenten Triodion)

No one could describe the Word of the Father; but when He took flesh from you, O Theotokos, He accepted to be described, and restored the fallen image to its former state by uniting it to divine beauty.// We confess and proclaim our salvation in words and images.

Tone 4 Prokeimenon (Song of the Fathers)

Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is
Your name forever!

v: For You are just in all that You have done for us!

Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2

Tone 4 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called
on His Name.

v: They called to the Lord and He answered them.

Gospel: John 1:43-51

(Instead of "It is truly meet ...," we sing the following Hymn to the Theotokos)

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace:
the assembly of Angels and the race of men.
O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise,
the glory of virgins,
from whom God was incarnate and became a Child –
our God before the ages.
He made your body into a throne,
and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens.
All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace.//
Glory to you!

Communion Hymns

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Today we commemorate the victory of Orthodoxy over the heresy of iconoclasm. In the eighth century the Church had been torn apart by those who objected to the veneration of icons, and in 787 the Second Council of Nicaea responded by affirming the role of icons in the Church, stating that "Whenever these representations are contemplated, they will cause those who look at them to commemorate and love their prototype." The Council distinguished between the worship that is due to God alone, and the veneration that we give to icons, and stated that when we venerate an icon we are really venerating the reality for which it stands. Even after the Council, iconoclasm persisted until in 844 Empress Theodora established Orthodoxy anew with a solemn procession and veneration of icons on the first Sunday of Lent. This was the beginning today's feast and celebrates the victory of true doctrine over heresy.

The triumph of Orthodoxy that we celebrate today is integrally related to the earlier struggles for the Orthodox faith, for what was at stake was not simply the validity of venerating icons, but the very reality of the Incarnation of Christ that the Church had struggled to profess in earlier centuries. Because God had become fully human in Jesus

Christ, matter itself had been sanctified and had become a suitable medium for portraying His Image. As Saint John of Damascus wrote "If you have understood that the Incorporeal One became man for you, then it is evident that you can portray His human image."

WHY ARE VIGIL LAMPS (candles) LIT BEFORE ICONS?

by St. Nikolai Velimirovic

First - because our faith is light. Christ said "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). The light of the vigil lamp reminds us of that light by which Christ illumines our souls.

Second - in order to remind us of the radiant character of the saint before whose icon we light the vigil lamp, for saints are called "sons of light" (John 12:26, Luke 16:8).

Third - in order to serve as a reproach to us for our dark deeds, for our evil thoughts and desires, and in order to call us to the path of evangelical light; and so that we would more zealously try to fulfill the commandments of the Savior: "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works" (Matthew 5:16).

Fourth - so that the vigil lamp would be our small sacrifice to God, Who gave Himself completely as a sacrifice for us, and as a small sign of our great gratitude and radiant love for Him from Whom we ask in prayer for life, and health, and salvation, and everything that only boundless heavenly love can bestow.

Fifth - so that terror would strike the evil powers that sometimes assail us even at the time of prayer and lead away our thoughts from the Creator. The evil powers love the darkness and tremble at every light, especially at that which belongs to God and those who please Him.

Sixth - so that this light would rouse us to selflessness. Just as the oil and wick burn in the vigil lamp, submissive to our will, so let our souls also burn with the flame of love in all our sufferings, always being submissive to God's will.

Seventh - in order to teach us that just as a vigil lamp cannot be lit without our hand, so too, our heart, our inward vigil lamp, cannot be lit without the holy fire of God's grace, even if it were to be filled with all the virtues. All these virtues of ours, after all, [are only] like combustible material, but the fire which ignites them proceeds from God.

Eighth - in order to remind us that before anything else the Creator of the world created light, and after that everything else in order: "And God said, let there be light; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). And it must be so also at the beginning of our spiritual life, so that before anything else, the light of Christ's truth would shine within us. From this light of Christ's truth subsequently every good deed is created, springs up in us and grows in us.

VESPERS REMINDER: beginning this Saturday, March 19, Vespers will now be at 5 pm (*until November*).

LENTEN SCHEDULE (*dates in bold are services at St. Nikolai Church*)

- > **Saturday, March 19**, St. Theodore-Soul Saturday Divine Liturgy, 9:30 am
- > Sunday, March 20, Pan-Orthodox Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers, 5 pm. St. George Serbian
- > Wednesday, March 23, Pan-Orthodox Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm St Haralambos Canton
- > **Friday, March 25**, Great Feast of Annunciation, Vesperal Liturgy, 6:30 pm
- > Wednesday, March 30, Pan-Orthodox Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm Holy Assumption Canton
- > **Friday, April 1**, Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm
- > Wednesday, April 6, Pan-Orthodox Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm Holy Trinity Canton
- > **Friday, April 8**, Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm
- > Wednesday, April 13, Pan-Orthodox Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm St. George (Serb) N Canton
- > **Friday, April 15**, Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm
- > Wednesday, April 20, Pan-Orthodox Pre-sanctified Liturgy, 6:30 pm St. George (Ant) Canton
- > **Saturday, April 23**, Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy, 9:30 am

There will be a full Holy Week schedule, April 25-29 (every evening at 6:30) as we celebrated last year..

The prayer list revised this week. *If you wish to list someone please advise Father*

PRAYERS requested:

For The Health and Salvation of;

Andrea Bartol & new born Bohdan (Steve & Sandy Bozeka' daughter & grandson)

Letitia Bella (Lynette Baier's mother)

Olympia Tillman (Father David's mother)

Helen (Father David's aunt)

Carl (friend of Father David)

Lisa “

Bruce “

Kitty “

Paul “

Father David and Family

Doreen Wishnok

Stefanie Waseman

The Knoll Family

Roland Augspurger

Leslie and Tim Kocevar

Beth Plocher
Renee Young
Larry Gainer
James Rickard and Family
Mary Lou Suitca
Ken Mabry
Malaik (Allison pre-school child)
Edward (Allison pre-school child)
Arika (missing person)
Gregory Cervo
Ann Cervo
Diane Evangelista (Fr. Joe's niece)
Andrea Rudek (Fr. Joe's niece)
Letitia (Lynette Baier's mother)

For The Repose of the Souls of the newly departed Servants:

+John Horny (Ann Cervo's nephew)
+Edna Stamatoff (Popadija Linda (Fr. Basil) Shaheen's mother)
+Elena Stora (friend of Jenny Codrea)

Many Years!

Josephine White – March 17

Coffee Hour Today: Dan Ralich

March 20-Helen Blebea; March 27-Dan Ralich; April 3-Tom & Lana Baier; April 10-Larry & Deanna Dordea. Sponsors needed for remaining Lenten Sunday's.

Well done!

To all those who donated food, worked and were gracious hosts to our guests following the Presanctified Liturgy for the feast of St. Nikolai.

COFFEE HOUR AND CHURCH CLEANING:

There is a sign-up sheet posted in the fellowship room for coffee hour and church cleaning. If you have any questions please see Father Joe or Deacon James. If we do not have anyone signed up for coffee hour on any week, we will simply have coffee during fellowship.

Donors requested: We are seeking individuals to donate the following items:

3 Wood carved stands to set icons on for veneration, \$200 each.

1 Case of Sacramental Altar Wine, \$150.

Chapel Windows-Sun Block, \$2467.

\$125 is needed for the Mentoring Program that we are supporting through Georgie Washington. The monies are for clothing and supplies as part of the dress for success program.

IOCC: As part of our Lenten regiment, in accord with the Gospel, we are called to help needy and suffering people, in America and around the world. Please put aside money (that we are to save by curbing expenditures of unnecessary purchases, luxuries, entertainment and sumptuous food) and turn it in by Palm Sunday. In turn we will send one check to the International Orthodox Christian Charities, which was organized 25 years ago by the Orthodox Bishops of America. For every dollar we donate, IOCC is able to get an additional seven dollars from the government and foundations. 92% of the money donated goes directly to assisting people in need.

IOCC SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS FOR GREAT LENT

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT: Bishop JOHN, Antiochian Orthodox

Bishop of Worcester and New England, IOCC Frontliner

*"One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all, and through all,
and in you all." (Ephesians 4:5)*

St. Paul calls us to recognize our God-given unity which is in Christ so that we can share in this unity which is in God the Father. To share our lives with God and each other is indeed what it means for us to be complete as persons. We are created by God to share in His image and likeness; indeed we are created by God to share in His life and ministry. To be really human is to be like God because God made humans to be like Himself. This is accomplished in unity with Him. Therefore we can only be happy or content when we are being and doing what God created us to be and do.

St. Paul continues in Ephesians to explain what Jesus accomplished by taking on flesh. Christ descended from heaven so that He could praise the Father and take care of us. He did so in our midst to be an example for us. He then ascended into heaven, sharing His life with us making our way to ascend with Him. As much as we choose to join Christ in His ministry of praising God the Father with Him and taking care of His creation with Him, we share in His life which is the eternal life of the Trinity.

Christ took on flesh to praise God and serve man. IOCC is an opportunity for Orthodox Christians in America to unite, and in our unity with God and each other, to praise God and serve Him as we encounter Him in the suffering men, women and children we find in crises and in need. IOCC needs our support and dedication to accomplish this work and we need IOCC and other efforts like it to share in the life and unity God created us to share in. <http://iocc.org/great-lent2015-home.aspx>

Stewardship: Please pray, contemplate and complete the parish pledge form and return to the Priest or Deacon, as soon as possible. May the Lord direct you and bless you for returning some of your possessions to further the work of His holy Church.

Save Your Stuff. Once again our parish is going to have a rummage sale at the Hartville Flea Market, Memorial Day weekend. Please contact Georgie Washington for details.