

ST. MARK'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA (OCA.ORG)

DIocese of Eastern Pennsylvania (DOEPA.ORG)

452 DURHAM RD, WRIGHTSTOWN, PA 18940

PHONE: 215-860-9640 • EMAIL: INFO@STMARKSOCA.ORG

WWW.STMARKSOCA.ORG

Follow us on Facebook at St. Mark's Orthodox Church, Wrightstown,
on Twitter @stmarksoca and Instagram @st.marksorthodox



Priest Raymond Martin Browne, Rector

Phone: 570-906-1388

Email: frraymondmartin@hotmail.com

Archpriest Michael Sekela, Attached

Phone: 540 -841-3202

Protodeacon Gregory Moser, Attached

Phone: 215-794-8980

Choir Directors: Sergei Arhipov, Martha Moser, Daria Cortese

Church School Director: Jennifer Sremanak



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2015

25th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 8. Afterfeast of

the Entry Into the Temple. Apostles of the Seventy Philemon and Archippus, Martyr Apphia, wife of Philemon and Equal-to-the-Apostles, and Onesimus, disciple of St. Paul (1st c.).

Martyrdom of St. Michael, Prince of Tver' (1318). Rt. Blv.

Yaropolk, in Baptism Peter, Prince of Vladimir in Volyn' (1086).

Martyrs Cecilia, Valerian, Tiburtius, and Maximus, at Rome (ca.

230). Martyr Procopius the Reader, at Caesarea in Palestine

(303). Martyr Menignus at Parium (250). St. Agabbas of Syria

(5th c.). Righteous Michael the Soldier, of Bulgaria (866). Ven.

Callistus Xanthopoulos (Mt. Athos—1363).

Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-6

Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Confessions: Saturdays Following Vespers
Also by appointment

Great Vespers: Saturdays at 6pm
Vigil Eve of Feasts at 7pm

Divine Liturgy: Sundays at 9:30am
Feast Days at 9:15am

UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS:

Sunday, November 22: Hours and Divine Liturgy – 9:10am; Litya for Pierre Djokic, 2nd Anniversary; Church School, Coffee Hour; Deanery Meeting on Diocesan Financial Resolution and Proposed Diocesan By Laws – 4pm

Wednesday, November 25: Prison Ministry – 7pm

Thursday, November 26: Akathist Glory to God for All Things – 9:15am

Saturday, November 28: Baptism of David Joseph Domzalski – 10:30am; Great Vespers and Confessions – 6pm

Sunday, November 29: Hours and Divine Liturgy – 9:10am, Coffee Hour and Church School

BIRTHDAYS

Patrick Colucci

Andrew Cortese

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

John and Carol Wanko

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Christmas Food Sale: Saturday, December 12th 9am to 2pm. If you are on our mailing list you will receive an order form either electronically or by snail mail. Also order forms are posted on our website and can be downloaded and printed off of it. Orders are due no later than Dec. 5th.

Church Directory: As a means to build up our parish community and as a means to reach out to our communities, we are going to have a pictorial church directory. Participation is encouraged but is voluntary. Every family that participates will get a free directory and copy of the photo. There is no cost for participation. Additionally we will have another book featuring the current ministries of our parish, with pictures and descriptions for our information and as an outreach tool. Photos will be taken Sunday December 6 and Monday December 7. You may sign up at this link <http://bit.ly/1MmDN43> or in person after Divine Liturgy every Sunday until November 29th. We would like as many as possible to participate as a way to get to know one another better.

Nativity Fast: As with all Fasts, it is not only about what we do not eat, but about what we do. As we prepare for the Lord's Nativity we prepare in many ways in the world, from Christmas shopping to cards to parties. But this is our Feast, a Christian Feast and if we are to truly experience it for what it is, then we must prepare for it properly. Fast and the money you save give to the poor. Pray, more. Get a copy of the Christmas Canon and read it each day, read the Prayers of Thanksgiving after Communion Monday to Wednesday and then do the Preparation Prayers Thursday to Saturday. Attend the various services offered during this time. Want further suggestions, ask Father.

Operation Christmas Child: Thank you to all who supported the Church School sponsored Pancake Breakfast. We raised \$248 for this cause.

Scrip Program: Next November 29th. Last week profit \$105.75. YTD \$1466.47. Some vendors have introduced smaller denomination gift cards for the Christmas season, check the updated list of vendors. Questions? Call Mat. Heidi at 570 906-1389.

Thank you: To all those who made halupki on Friday. Over 100 containers were made. One more production day before the Christmas Food Sale, Friday December 11. If interested in helping speak with Martha Moser.

Wrightstown Food Cupboard: Pasta, sauce, tea, coffee, juice are always welcome. **If you would rather make a monetary donation put it in an envelope with "Food Pantry" and drop in the Question Box. These donations will go towards purchasing Thanksgiving turkeys and Christmas hams for the baskets.**

PRAY ALWAYS:

Thus, both the Apostle and the angel confirmed the commandment that all Christians must pray to God without ceasing. Not only without ceasing in church, but also without ceasing in every place and at all times, and especially in your heart. For if God does not for a moment tire of giving us good things, how can we tire of thanking Him for these good things? When He thinks of us without ceasing, why do we not think of Him without ceasing?

St. Nicholai of Zhica. The Prologue, November 16.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

- ✦ The sick and the suffering.
- ✦ Those persecuted for their faith.
- ✦ The lost and the lonely.
- ✦ Those in prison.
- ✦ The hungry, the homeless, the abused and the abandoned.
- ✦ The indifferent to those in need.
- ✦ Those who hate us and those who love us.



VIGIL LIGHTS:

From the Perdikis Family:

For the Health of:

Patricia, Neil, Demosthenes, Angela, George, Rena, Arthur

In Memory of:

Angelo, Arthur, Evangelia, Ekaterini

From Marina:

For the Health of:

Alexandra, Julia, Mikhailyana, Anna, Jon, Ekaterina, Irina, Tatyana, Peter, Sofia, Alina, Vitaly

In Memory of:

Olga, Agrepina, Konon, Ivan, Nadezda, Ekaterina, Boris, Viktor, Sergey, Valeria, Eugenia, Abram

From Alan Lee Litvin:

In Memory of all those who lost their lives in Paris and for the comfort of their family and friends.

From the Swan Family:

For the Health of:

Constance, Michelle, Kathryn, Venus, Michael, Neville, Mary Anne

In Memory of:

Thomas Jr.

REPORT ON PARISH TALENT SURVEY:

It has been a couple of months since we asked everyone to fill out a Talent Survey, indicating area of personal talent such as training and experience in a variety of areas, along with areas of parish ministry in which you were interested in participating.

51 people participated

Every area of talent had at least one person, with many having multiples. Here is the numeric breakdown for each area.

Legal	1
Contracting/Building	4
Financial	9
Woodwork/Carpentry	8
Photography	12
Networking	4
Education	18
Lawn/Landscaping	9
Psychology	3
Fundraising	10
Sewing/Seamstress	5
Graphic Design	3
Engineering	4
Cleaning	10
Cooking/Baking	22
Record Keeping	7
Floral	6
Support Group	6
Computer/Technology	12
Interior Maintenance	7
Singing/Choir	17
Business	11
Crafts	11
Marketing/Advertising	5

Moving forward we will use this information to seek assistance in areas of parish life that can benefit from your talents and skills and your willingness to offer them "on behalf of all and for all."

I am deeply grateful to all who participated and invite those who did not to consider doing so. We share a common life as sons in the Son of God who has given us our talents to be used as a blessing for each other and for the building up of His Kingdom in and through our parish church community.



November 23, 2015

Scriptural Giving, Number 5

Glory to God! As we continue our study of stewardship in the book of Genesis, we will take a look at Jacob, grandson of Abraham. Jacob, being quite a character and scoundrel, I will provide a brief background. Jacob and Esau were twin boys born to Isaac and Rebekah. At the time of their birth Esau was born first, but Jacob was grasping his heel. Jacob's name literally means 'he supplants' or 'he takes by the heel' (Gen. 25:24f). Names were often chosen at the time of a person's birth to represent something of a person's character as displayed by events surrounding his birth. According to Ancient Near Eastern customs, the firstborn male would receive a double portion of the inheritance. In this case, since there were two sons, the assets would be divided into three portions and the oldest, Esau would receive two portions and Jacob would receive one.

In Genesis, we are told that Esau returned from hunting and asked Jacob for some of the stew he had made. Jacob said, 'First sell me your birthright.' Esau despising his birthright swore to Jacob, and gave up his birthright for a bowl of stew (Gen. 25:29f). Later in their life, Isaac their father was getting old and his eyes were dim. As was the custom, he wanted to bestow his blessing upon his eldest son before his death. This story is quite interesting and is found in Genesis 27. Needless to say, Jacob tricked his father into thinking he was Esau and he stole his father's blessing intended for Esau. Esau was furious and planned to kill Jacob upon their father's death.

Jacob fearing his brother was directed by his mother to go to her brother's house approximately 600 miles away until Esau calmed down. As Jacob journeyed he came to a place called Luz. Perhaps, out of despair he did not want to be sociable or arriving after the city gates were shut, Jacob ended up sleeping out in the open and used a stone for a pillow. The theft of his brother's birthright resulted in his fleeing from his own family, fear of fratricide, sleeping in the open with a stone for a pillow. Jacob's way of doing things obviously needed to change, as he lost all that was dear to him.

Let us take a look at how the Lord reveals himself to the runaway:

¹⁰ Jacob left Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. ¹¹ And he came to a certain place, and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. ¹² And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! ¹³ And behold, the Lord stood above it^[a] and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; ¹⁴ and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves.^[b] ¹⁵ Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until

I have done that of which I have spoken to you.”¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it.”¹⁷ And he was afraid, and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

¹⁸ So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone which he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.¹⁹ He called the name of that place Bethel;²⁰ but the name of the city was Luz at the first.²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear,²¹ so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God,²² and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house; and of all that thou givest me I will give the tenth to thee.”

Jacob’s encounter with God resulted in a change of heart and a new way of thinking. Instead of attempting to gain blessings by stealth, he would put his trust in the Lord. Jacob’s craftiness and manipulation were only a source of grief, causing him to lose all that was precious to him. As we read above, Jacob made a simple vow, that ‘if the Lord would provide bread, clothing and bless him to return to his father’s house in peace, he would give a tenth to the Lord’. Even though the Lord had promised to be with him, give him land and a multitude of descendants, Jacob only asked for the necessities of life and promised the Lord would be his God, the place where he slept would be God’s house and he would give a tenth to the Lord.

While there is certainly much more to say about Jacob, we see he was beginning to discern a difference between his needs and his wants. Additionally, rather than making his own way, he would look to the Lord as the source of all his needs. This recurring theme of God being the source of all blessings is written quite large and repeated quite often in Holy Scripture. Jacob was not worthy of God’s blessings. He was a scoundrel in flight from his brother. Yet the Lord is the One who searches out the scoundrels who have made of mess of their lives and transforms them.

As Jacob was unworthy of God’s many blessings, so are we. As we pray each time before receiving the Holy Gifts, “ I believe, O Lord and I confess, that Thou art truly the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” How can we each be chief or first among sinners? Because we each know that His Grace is sufficient to keep us and we continue to nurture our passions, continue to sin even though we sense the presence of the Holy Spirit attempting to restrain us from our sinful behavior. Nevertheless, no matter how many times we fall, He is there to lift us up again and restore us to communion with Him.

The Lord not only provides us with our daily bread and clothing for our backs, but He has given us eternal life together with Him. As we look at Jacob’s vow, he asked the Lord to provide the necessities and allow him to return to his earthly home in peace, promising the Lord, that He would be his God, Luz (Bethel, literally house of God) would be the Lord’s house and he would give the Lord a tenth. Jacob only asked to be able to return to his earthly home in peace, yet we are promised freedom from slavery to Satan, our sins and eternal Life. Let us at least do as much as Jacob did and show our gratitude to the Lord for His many blessings, known and unknown.