



# ST. MARK'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern PA ([www.doepa.org](http://www.doepa.org))

452 Durham Road  
Wrightstown, PA 18940  
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January 31, 2021

## Clergy

V. Rev. Raymond M. Browne,

*Rector*

Cell: 570-906-1388

Email: [fraymondmartin@hotmail.com](mailto:fraymondmartin@hotmail.com)

Protodeacon Gregory Moser, *Attached*

V. Rev. Michael Sekela, *Retired. Attached*

## Readers:

- ❖ G. Peter Bohlender
- ❖ Dustin Joseph Crosby

## Choir Directors:

- ❖ Daria Cortese

## Service Schedule

Great Vespers/Vigil

Saturdays 6pm

Eve of Feast 7pm (6pm on Sundays).

Hours

Sundays and Feast Days 9:10am.

Sundays and Feast Days 9:30 am

❖ Mat. Martha

Moser

❖ Sergei

Arhipov,

Emeritus

## Church School

### Director

❖ Jennifer

Sremanak



**Divine Liturgy:** Sundays and Feast Days

9:30am

## Confessions:

Saturdays after Vespers and by appointment.

## Akathist Service

Wednesdays at 9:15am.

**Memorial Services (Panikhida/Litya):** as

requested



**34th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 1. \* Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries Cyrus and John, and with them Martyrs Athanasia and her daughters: Theoctiste, Theodotia, and Eudoxia, at Canopus in Egypt (311). Martyrs Victorinus, Victor, Nicephorus, Claudius, Diodorus, Serapion, and Papias, of Egypt (251). < Ven. Nikita of the Kiev Caves, Bishop of Novgorod (1108). Martyr Tryphaenes at Cyzicus. St. Arsenios of Pharos (1877).**

**Epistle:** Colossians 3:12-16

**Gospel:** Mt. 25:14-30

**Baptisms:** Children must have Orthodox Godparents who provide a letter from their parish priest. Parents and Godparents are required to attend two preparatory classes. Scheduling arrangements should be made with the Rector by contacting him directly.

**Weddings:** Arrangements should be made **at least** six months prior to the wedding and scheduling is subject to the liturgical calendar of the church.

**Please do not** make arrangements for receptions without speaking with the Rector first.



Weekly Schedule of Services and Events:

**Sunday, January 31:** Hours and Divine Liturgy-9:10am. Annual Parish Meeting 11:45am

**Monday, February 1:** Vigil for Meeting of the Lord - 7pm.

**Tuesday, February 2:** Hours and Divine Liturgy for Meeting of the Lord- 9:10am

**Wednesday, February 3:** Akathist, with Litya for Departed - 9:30am.

**Saturday, February 6:** Vespers and Confessions - 6pm

**Parish Meeting:** Thank you to all who participated in our hybrid meeting today and to those who made it possible, technically among other ways. Pending the archbishop's approval, we will swear in the new Council next Sunday.

**Calendars:** St. Tikhon's calendars are now available. One per household so everyone has the opportunity to get one. If you would like one and cannot come to church, please let Father Martin know.

**House Blessing:** If anyone else is interested at this time, please speak with Fr. Martin. If you wish to wait until later this year, after Pascha, that is fine too.

**Birthdays**  
Raymonde Djokic

**Names Day**  
None this week

**Vigil Lights**

From: Ristvey

For the Health of: Margaret

In Memory of: George, Michael.



**Please remember in your prayers**



**Living:** Captives Hierarchs Paul and John All those caring for the sick and suffering at this time throughout the world, especially our family and friends Charles and Erin, Ann Marie, Joseph, Alexis, Aphrodite, Charla, Sandy. III afflicted Archpriests Daniel, Emilian *Matushki Elena, Laryssa, Lisa, Priscilla, Myra, Suzanne, Anne, Jennifer, Emilia, Servants of God* Peter, Stephanie, Samuel, Sergei, Vera, Anna, Scott, Dennis, David, Garry, Vincent, Stephen, Raymond, Darrell, Andrew, Daniel, Amanda, Michael, Laura, Jason, Katina, Donna, Rebekah, Anthony, Alexander, Grover, Valerie, Raymonde, Anita, Jim, Peter, Jonathan, Gregory, Charles, Kyra. Margaret, Arlene, Vaughn, Helen, Nicholas, Elena, Nicholas, John, Alice, Edward, Sydney, Susan, John,

**Departed:** Newly departed Archimandrite Alexander, Mitred Archpriest Daniel, Archpriests Joseph, Joseph, Eugene, Ernesto, Nina, Jaroslav, Mary. Departed Archpriests Stephen and Vladimir & Mat. Mary, Priest George, Archpriest Paul & Kh. Shirley.



1/28/2021

*“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Matt. 5: 14ff)*

Dear Rev. Frs., Rev. Proto-deacons, Deacons, Matushki and faithful,

Glory be to Jesus Christ! Welcome to our virtual Diocesan Assembly. In the various reports presented, there are numerous references to the difficulties of the past year. Those difficulties were multifaceted and messy to say the least. This crisis did, however present us with an opportunity. Our excuses for not spending time in prayer or reading Holy Scripture were stripped away. We were provided the opportunity to draw closer to the Lord in the midst of the crisis. We had time to reflect on our priorities and choose to develop better habits.

As we ponder the past year and our ongoing situation, rather than ask, *“Why is this happening to me?”* we should ask, *“Lord, what you want me to learn from this.”* Three Scriptural references come to mind as we ponder the past year and our current situation. In Genesis 22, we are told the Lord tested Abraham when He instructed him to offer Isaac up as a whole burnt offering. As we know the Lord does not tempt anyone (James 1: 13), but He does test or allow us to be tested to show our commitment and character. The testing of Abraham’s faith revealed his character and unqualified obedience. The second reference is from the Epistle of James: *“My brothers and sisters, [b] whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; 4 and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing (James 1: 2f).”* The third Scriptural reference is from Psalm 66: *“For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried (Ps. 66: 10).”* The refiner of silver heats the silver and continues to remove the dross as it comes to the surface. He continues doing this until he can see his own image in the silver. We have the opportunity to become bitter or better by the way we respond to adversity.

As in the Scripture verse above, *“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Matt. 5: 14ff),* our faithful comforted one another and provided comfort to their local community. Parish councils and parishioners divided the list of members and made weekly phone calls to maintain contact, provide wellness checks and support allowed laity to become involved in ministry as well as cultivate new relationships. Relationships developed that likely would not have developed otherwise. Attendance of adult education increased through Zoom as parishioners did



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“Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee.” Augustine

not have to travel to attend. In the midst of the storm, people sought consolation in the Church and Catechumens were enrolled and new members received. Thanks be to God our faithful continued to provide meals to the hungry and food for the pantries. In our parish reports parishioners made donations to help those in need. Given the Church was doing what the Church is supposed to do, there were parishes that saw an increase in stewardship. One of our faithful, together with Matushka Emily Shepherd of our Christian Education Department even started hosting Zoom meetings for mothers to show support and share ideas for children's activities. Our department of Youth and Young Adults provided a virtual camp which allowed our youth to maintain relationships and learn about their faith. When we stop focusing on ourselves and reach out to others, we end the isolation we are experiencing and become a presence of ministry to others.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank the clergy and their technically savvy parishioners who ministered through live streaming to their parishes, other parishioners of the Diocese, Orthodox Christians outside the Diocese and the OCA, as well as people all over the world. With little notice our clergy went outside their comfort zone and found ways to maintain contact with the faithful and provide words of consolation and encouragement. Thank you. Our clergy, together with their parish councils worked hard to implement protocols to provide for our parishes to safely reopen. We are grateful to Fr. Michael Shepherd who spearheaded the reopening survey to understand parishioners concerns associated with returning to church.

Parish visits were more limited this year and as in the past my visitation schedule is on line. Though it does not show private meetings with clergy, laity, parish councils or parish assemblies, and meetings with attorneys, etc. We also had more Holy Synod and Diocesan Council meetings this year than in the past. Our new website was launched this past year, but still needs some cleanup.

I want to thank, Carmen Hodson our administrative assistant for the excellent job she is doing, our Diocesan Council for their commitment and labors on behalf of the Church and our Diocese. Finally, I must thank the V. Rev. Fr. Martin Browne, our Chancellor, who is doing an exceptional job and a wise advisor and our Deans, the V. Rev. Frs. Nicholas Solak, Victor Gorodenchuk and Timothy Hojnicky, whose tireless efforts take a heavy load off of my back.

Let us continue to reach out to our fellow parishioners and the surrounding community so that the Lord will be glorified! Let us be mindful of those who are suffering from loneliness, depression, isolation, anxiety and stress. As St. John the Theologian says in his First Epistle, *"Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action."*

Your unworthy father in Christ,

+ Mark

+MARK, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Let us therefore, knowing these things, contribute whatever we have – wealth, diligence or care giving – for our neighbor's advantage. For the talents here are each person's abilities, whether in the way of protection, or in money, or in teaching or in whatever thing you have been given. Let no one say, "I have but one talent and can do nothing with it." You are not poorer than the widow. You are not more uninstructed than Peter and John who were both "unlearned and ignorant men." Nevertheless, since they demonstrated zeal and did all things for the common good, they were received into heaven. For nothing is so pleasing to God as to live for the common advantage.

For this end God gave us speech, and hands, and feet, and strength of body and mind and understanding, that we might use all these things both for our own salvation and for our neighbor's advantage. Our speech not only is useful for hymns and thanksgiving, but it is profitable also for instruction and admonition. And if indeed this end, we imitating our for the the devil.



St. John  
Homily 78.3 On

admonition.  
we used it to  
should be  
Master; but if  
opposite ends,

Chrysostom.  
Matthew