

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

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ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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APRIL 24, 2016

ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM

PARISH CALENDAR

SUN. APR. 24 **PALM (FLOWERY) SUNDAY.**

8:45 – 9:15 AM Confessions
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets
Blessing of Palms & Pussy Willows

Church School meets.

Parish Board meets for a quick meeting.

3:00 PM Bridegroom Matins for Monday at St. George, Taylor. Fr. Dan Vaskalis preaching.

Tue., Apr. 26 **GREAT TUESDAY**

No Confessions today.

6:30 PM Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts - **HIS GRACE BISHOP GREGORY PRESIDING.**

Reception for His Grace in the Hall immediately following the Liturgy.

Wed., Apr. 27 **GREAT WEDNESDAY**

6:00 PM Confessions
6:30 PM Holy Mystery of the Anointing of the Sick

Thu., Apr. 28 **GREAT THURSDAY**

6:00 PM **Last Scheduled Confessions**
6:30 PM Divine Liturgy of the Last Supper.
Setting up the Tomb.

Fri., Apr. 29 **GREAT & HOLY FRIDAY**

10:00 AM Matins of the 12 Gospels
7:00 PM Vespers and the Procession with the Shroud
Vigil at the Tomb

Sat., Apr. 30 **GREAT & HOLY SATURDAY**

4:00 PM Vigil Liturgy of the Resurrection: Vespers & the Liturgy of St. Basil.
8:00 PM Resurrection Matins
Blessing of Baskets

Sun., May 1 **PASCHA: THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Special Sheets
Blessing of Baskets
Easter Egg Hunt for the kiddies.

Mon., May 2 **BRIGHT MONDAY**

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy & Paschal Procession—
Special Sheets

Sun., May 8 **THOMAS SUNDAY Mothers' Day.**

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – special sheets
Panachida for all the deceased mothers of our parish and our parishioners.
Men's Club regular monthly mtg.

Confessions: See *Parish Calendar* for days and times. The *last scheduled Confessions* are on *Great Thursday*. If you cannot make one of the Scheduled times for Confession, contact me to see if we can make an appointment.

FASTING AND FEASTING

LENT IS OVER. We no longer fast in repentance, to prepare ourselves for Pascha. Rather, we eat in a manner that is appropriate for the celebration of that day's theme – fasting on days of waiting or mourning, feasting on days of rejoicing. So, the *traditional rules call for the following:*

- **Today is PALM SUNDAY:** This is a day of rejoicing, so fish is permitted as well as wine and oil, but meat and animal products are not allowed.
- **HOLY WEEK.**
 - *Great Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday* are days of **waiting**. We are not mourning, but we are not rejoicing. So, we don't eat much while we sit in anticipation of the great events to follow. So,
 - On the first three days there is one meal each day, with xerophagy [*Strict Fast*];
 - However, some people have the custom of trying to keep a complete fast [*eating nothing*] on these days, or else they eat only uncooked food, as on the opening days of the first week.
 - *Holy Thursday* is a day of rejoicing, since it is the day that Our Lord inaugurated the Holy Eucharist for our great benefit. However, it is also a mixed bag, since it is the day that Our Lord is arrested and his Passion begins. So, we feast, but not too much. One meal is eaten, with wine and oil (i.e. olive oil), traditionally after the Divine Liturgy.
 - *Great Friday:* is obviously a day of great mourning, as we see Our Lord go through his suffering and death. Those who have the strength follow the practice of the early Church and keep a total fast. Those unable to do this may eat bread, with a little water, tea or fruit-juice, but not until sunset, or at any rate not until after the veneration of the Shroud at Vespers.

- *Holy Saturday:* Our Lord is buried in the tomb, and is conquering Hell, and we wait for Him to return to us. A total fast is kept until after the Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil (prescribed to be celebrated at 4:00 PM). This service is the *original* service of celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord, and the Church and the clergy are now vested in White. This is also the first time we hear the *Gospel of the Resurrection*, showing clearly that this service is the first service of Pascha. However, in common practice today everyone celebrates the next service, *Resurrection Matins*, as the first service of Pascha, and this is by far the more popular service.

So, if, as usually happens now, the people return home after this Liturgy for a meal, they may use wine but not oil for their meal, for on this one Saturday, alone among the Saturdays of the year, olive oil is not permitted [*this is why we do not do mirovanije at the end of Liturgy on Sunday*].

Since this service is not seen by most people as the celebration of the Resurrection, it is no longer normal for people to break the fast after this Liturgy to begin the Paschal celebration. According to the ancient practice, after the end of the Liturgy of St. Basil the faithful remained in the church for the reading of the Acts of the Apostles, and for their sustenance were given a little bread and dried fruit, with a cup of wine.

DIOCESAN RULES require the following for Holy Week: Monday through Thursday, no meat. Great Friday and Holy Saturday, STRICT FAST.

BRIGHT WEEK:

- *Pascha:* the fast is not broken until after the Divine Liturgy. *Note:* In most places Resurrection Matins and the Liturgy are celebrated together, so this rule makes sense. Since most parishes in this diocese split the celebration (Matins on Saturday night and Liturgy on Sunday morning), some people feel that we should be able to break the fast after Matins, since we have already sung, "Christ is risen!" However, there is no allowance in the fasting rules for this different custom.

- *NO FAST* is permitted from Divine Liturgy on Pascha until Thomas Sunday, as we celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord.

COMMUNION FASTING:

For the reception of Holy Eucharist in the morning, we must fast from bed-time until we receive, as usual. To receive Holy Eucharist in the evening – on Great Tuesday, Great Thursday & Great and Holy Saturday, we must fast for *at least 3 hours before the beginning of the service*. ESSENTIALLY, THIS MEANS NOT EATING AFTER LUNCH UNTIL YOU RECEIVE THE EUCHARIST, IF POSSIBLE.

Note: The service on Great Wednesday is *only* the Anointing of the Sick, without the Holy Eucharist. There is no need for a Communion Fast for this service.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH	
April 17, 2016	
\$ 340.18	General Collection
\$ 97.00	7 Day Light
\$1507.00	Pirohi
\$ 5.00	Holy Days
\$ 13.00	Taper Candles
\$ 11.00	Patriarchal Pence
\$1973.18	Total Collection
<i>Renovation Donations to date: \$1000</i>	

PEOPLE STUFF

Please remember in your prayers:

Deceased: Denise Sovitch.

Living: Fr. George Dursa. Fr. Donald Valasek. Stephanie Bonk. Owen Bonn. Gloria Bracey. Bob Chalk. Susan Danchak. Ricky, Rick & Sarah. Michael Danchak. Jada Eiden. Tammy Hall. Heather Harris. Robert Hawley. Madelyn Hodanich. Johnny Huniyack. Lorraine Kacaba. Anna Mae Kuklis. John Lange. Rose Markiewicz. Mary Phillips. John Polanichka. Karen Rolka. JoyAnn Scarnato. Amy Shimo. Faye Snell. Patricia Snell. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigue.

At Home: Michael Andreosky. Elizabeth Basalyga. Anna Senich.

Assisted Living Homes: Julie Roberts. Marion Sosnowski. Kathryn Stocoski. Dolores Naglak. Mary

Kneiss.

Eternal Memory: *Denise Sovitch* fell asleep in the Lord unexpectedly some time this past Friday night. She will be buried from St. George’s in Taylor, since that was her home parish. No other details are known at this time. We will try to get the word out as soon as we know something. Please pray for Larry Czibik and all of Denise’s loved ones as they endure this time. May God grant to his servant Denise a blessed repose and eternal memory! The 40-day memorial will be celebrated here on Sunday, June 5.

PARISH FUND RAISERS

Pirohi for Sale! We have frozen pirohi by the dozen. We have both pre-cooked/pirohi, *and* uncooked pirohi.

Kolači for Sale! Rolls are available in the following flavors: Walnut, Apricot and Raspberry/Coconut.

Please see Nick Polanichka for purchases of the pirohi or the Kolači.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Breadbasket of NEPA: Donation boxes are in the hall.

PARISH STUFF

BISHOP GREGORY IS VISITING OUR PARISH! Bishop Gregory will be with us on *Holy Tuesday, April 26*, to celebrate the *Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts* with us at **6:30 PM**. This is Bishop Gregory’s first visit to our parish, and the first Episcopal Visit that we have had in a long time. Please put this date on your calendar and plan to be a part of this day!

Church School meets today for the last class of the year.

Easter Egg Hunt on Pascha: As in past years, an Easter Egg Hunt will take place for the kids next Sunday, after the Divine Liturgy.

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

Camp Nazareth Raffle Tickets are now available in the Office in the Hall. They go pretty fast, so please see Nick Polanichka for yours!

CAMP NAZARETH CABIN BLESSING AND DEDICATION! All of us are invited to take part in the

dedication of the newly renovated and expanded cabins at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA on Wednesday, May 11, 2016. We are invited to the Service of Dedication which will take place at 10am on that day and then to the brunch which will be served in the Main Lodge following the dedication.

If you are able, plan on attending the festivities. Come to enjoy the festivities and give thanks to God for what He has allowed us and blessed us to accomplish.

See the flyer in the hall with the RSVP. Please note that reservations for the event must be received by May 3, 2016!! Hurry! Space is limited!

The Diocesan 3rd Annual Young Women's Encounter will take place from Sunday June 26th to Wednesday June 29th, 2016. The YWE will be held at Ss. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Windber, Pennsylvania. Young women in our Diocese ages 12 - 18 are strongly encouraged to attend.

Registration details are forthcoming on our Diocesan website acrod.org. Please register as soon as possible – Space is limited! For more information or if you have any questions please contact Pani Eleni Stagon at acrodywe@gmail.com.

Camp Nazareth Family Camp 2016: Our Diocese is pleased to announce its fourth annual Family Camp at Camp Nazareth this year in conjunction with Family Day. The event is exactly what it sounds like. Families “camping” together in the Camp cabins and participating in a weekend of services, games, discussions, activities and challenges that are all designed to help families deepen their relationship with God and with one another.

This year's theme – *“Not letting Orthodoxy be your Family's Secret Identity”*. Our Family's Orthodoxy is both Public and Private...sometimes our family has to be like Superman and sometimes like Clark Kent!!

Family Camp is scheduled for Friday, June 3 – Sunday, June 5, 2016. We had a wonderful time together last year and we are looking forward to being together again this year. A variety of events and activities have been planned that will allow families to learn, have fun and pray together, and simply be together in the peaceful environment of the Camp. With the newly renovated and expanded cabins, together with the new High and Low Ropes Course the Camp has even more to offer our families this year.

Don't miss out on this opportunity for you and your family. Space is limited to the first 10 families, so please send in your registration forms soon. They are due by Friday, May 20, 2016 and can be found at the Camp website -- campnazareth.org

St. Tikhon's Monastery 2016 Annual Pilgrimage

Join us May 27-30th for the 112th Memorial Day Pilgrimage! Archimandrite Sergius and the Brotherhood invite everyone to attend for part or all of this year's event.

The arrival of the Hawaiian Myrrh-Streaming Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God at 3:30pm on Friday will officially mark the start of the 112th Pilgrimage Weekend at St. Tikhon's Monastery.

Highlights of this year's Pilgrimage include

- A PaTRAM Young Singers Conference which will run concurrently during the weekend.
- A historical display of the Alaskan Native Spiritual Legacy from Villanova University will be on display in the monastery's museum.
- See the box for the Schedule.

St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, 205 N. Main St. Pittston IS HAVING A HALUPKI (PIGGIE DINNER) on Sunday, May 15, 2016 from 1-3pm at our Church Hall. Adult tickets are \$10.00 and Children under 12 -\$7.00. We are also selling Lottery Tickets for the month of June. All are welcome to attend!

St. Michael's Byzantine Catholic Church, 205 N. Main St., Pittston is having a **"TRUNK SALE"** on June 4th, 2016 in the Church Parking Lot. Clear your garage and sell your stuff without strangers at your house. Pack up your "junk" and throw it in the trunk and make dollars! We will open from 8am to 3pm; set-up at 7am. Pre-paid spots are only \$10.00 each. Limited Space available. 1st Come - 1st Served. No Refunds. Call today to reserve your spot! 570-905-7387. E-Mail - lindahando@hotmail.com. Rain Date is June 11th. Food will be available.

St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church, 320 Mifflin Ave., Scranton, Pa. 18503 is featuring "ORIENTAL DELIGHTS" at their International Dinner Club on Thursday, May 12, 2016 at the Church Catechetical Center. Seatings are at 5:30 and 6:30pm and reservations may be made by May 9th at

**ST. TIKHON'S MONASTERY ANNUAL MEMORIAL
WEEKEND PILGRIMAGE**

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2016

3:30 pm Official Opening of the 112th Pilgrimage with Molieben to the Iveron Hawaiian Icon of the Mother of God.

4:00 pm Vespers and Matins(Monastery Church)
All pilgrims are invited to dinner after.

SATURDAY, MAY 28, 2016

9:00 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

1:00 pm 74th Annual Academic Commencement of St. Tikhon's Theological Seminary

4:00 pm Resurrection Vigil (Monastery Church)
All pilgrims are invited to dinner after.

SUNDAY, MAY 29, 2016

9:00 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

All pilgrims are invited to dinner after.

4:00 pm Vespers and Matins(Monastery Church)

MONDAY, MAY 30, 2016

7:30 am Divine Liturgy – Monastery Church

10:00 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

12:15 pm Veteran's Pannikhida and Memorial Service, All Saints Bell Tower

1:30 pm Akathist to Saint Alexis Toth in the Monastery Church

2:30 pm Molieben to the Most Holy Theotokos and Anointing of the Sick, Infirm and all Pilgrims at the Monastery Bell Tower

4:00 pm Vespers and Matins(Monastery Church)

570-343-5151. The cost is only \$20.00 per person. The menu will start with Aunt Min's Egg Drop Soup, and the entree will be Uncle Tao's Pork Stir Fry (Pork Tenderloin, Rice Noodles and Vegetable Stir Fry) . The dessert will be Chinese Almond Cookies with Fruit Infused Vanilla Ice Cream. Coffee, Tea, Soda and Water are included and a cash bar is available.

Christian Unity Service: On Ascension Thursday, May 5, 2016, The CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES GATHERING OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA, will gather for a Service of Praise and Prayer at the First Presbyterian Church at 97 S Franklin St, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701.

The prayer service will be at 12 noon. Prime Bishop Anthony Mikovsky of the Polish National Catholic Church will be the homilist. We hope that members and friends of your parish will be able to join

us for our second **Ascension Day Service of Praise and Prayer** to pray for Christian unity. Fellowship will follow the prayer service, so that we can continue our efforts to celebrate and work for Christian unity.

We hope that you will come and that you will invite people you know who are interested in ecumenism and prayer for Christian unity to join us at this our second

Ascension Thursday Service of Praise and Prayer. Hopefully you will share this information in your bulletin, newsletter or pulpit comments.

Please let Jennifer Andres know you are coming by **e m a i l i n g y o u r r e s p o n s e t o :** Jennifer-Andresi@dioceseofscranton.org or by calling her at 570-207-2213. Please respond no later than Tuesday, April 26, the sooner the better, will be appreciated, so that adequate preparation can be made.

In Christ, from the Members of the *Christian Communities Gathering of Northeast Pennsylvania.*

The Easter Basket

I'm pretty sure I printed this in the past, but you might be interested again.

In many Orthodox countries, traditional meals developed around the great Feasts of the Church. This is especially true for the Feast of Feasts, the holy Resurrection of Our Lord. Eating and sharing a special meal for this day has many meanings and reasons.

First, meals are usually the focus of any celebration, making it both solemn and 'official' and also happy and joyous. Think about wedding receptions, birthday parties, even Fourth-of-July backyard barbecues. Certain foods make an occasion something truly special.

Second, the celebration of the Resurrection (Pascha) comes at the end of a long winter, a long and often arduous Fast. It is a time of spring, of new life, both on earth and in heaven. People are ready to be happy, joyful and celebrate with all the foods that they could not eat during the Fast. With our Lord's rising from the dead, we are ready to celebrate with Him our new freedom from the flesh by enjoying the good things He has given us in this life - first He gives us his own heavenly Flesh and Blood in Holy Communion, then we partake of the good things of this earth in the Easter meal.

Third, this connection of the Easter meal with Holy Communion is emphasized by bringing that meal to the Church on Sunday morning to be blessed immediately after we celebrate Divine Liturgy. It is almost like being able to take a little bit of heaven back home with us, so that we can continue the joyful party that we began in Church when we sang for the first time, "CHRIST IS RISEN!"

Last, the meal is all pre-prepared and often eaten cold on Sunday. It is fitting that everyone should celebrate this most joyful day, even the family cook, not being burdened with "the things of hospitality," as Martha was when Jesus came to visit, but rather that *everyone* should be able to "choose the better part" like Mary did, and celebrate with Jesus (see Luke 10:38-42).

Different cultures and locales developed different traditional foods to have blessed and eaten on Easter, but there are a few general 'rules.' All Easter meals consist of the kinds of food that we could not eat during Lent, and also some other foods that were available in early spring before the summer gardens could be harvested. Often times specific meanings are given to different foods, symbolic of our Life in Christ. Below are listed the different categories of food usually put in the Easter Basket, along with descriptions of the foods usually used in the Slavic countries.

One last note: A blessed Easter Basket with a special meal is the most important idea here. If one or more of the traditional foods do not appeal to you, feel free to substitute! What is important is that we celebrate the goodness that God has given us, both in Church and at home, first in the life He gives us on this earth, and then in the Life He gives us forever in his Resurrection - so ENJOY!

BREAD - the "staff of life" and represents the Body of Christ in our midst. Special Easter Breads, often called "Pascha" are usually sweet and rich, as when we sing Psalm 33: "Taste and see how good the Lord is!" In some traditions, a red Easter egg is baked into the middle of the bread, symbol of the Resurrection. The bread is also often decorated with a cross, a braided crown, an X B (Christ is Risen in Slavonic), or other decorations.

MEAT - In Slavic countries, usually smoked meats like ham, bacon and kolbasa are used. Also popular

are spring lamb and veal. Meat represents God's favor, generosity and the richness of life He gives us freely.

CHEESE - The rather bland, sweet taste of cheese represents the *moderation* that all Christians are called to have in all things. Rusyns and Slovaks make a "cheese ball" known as *hrutka* or *sirek*, which is actually made out of eggs. Also popular are *sirnaya pascha*, a sweet cream cheese, and other soft cheese such as farmer's cheese or feta.

EGGS - Eggs are always a symbol of the resurrection - a sign of New Life. As an egg hatches, so Christ broke out of the Tomb to give us eternal life. The eggs are hard-boiled and are often decorated, or at least colored.

BUTTER - often is shaped into a figure of a Lamb or a Cross. It reminds us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.

PRESERVES - In Slavic traditions, usually grated horseradish mixed with some grated beets. Symbolic of the *Passion. sufferings and death* of Our Lord which He willingly went through for our salvation, so that we could celebrate this glorious resurrection. Olives (symbol of the *peace* of Our Lord) and other preserves are also used.

SALT - "You are the salt of the earth," Our Lord tells us. Salt reminds us of our duty toward other Christians and toward the world - to flavor it with the good news of salvation.

All the food (or at least a portion of each, but you have to bring the whole Easter bread) is placed into a large wicker basket, which is itself often decorated. A blessed candle (symbol of the Light of Christ) is also put into the basket and lit at the time of blessing in church. The basket is covered with a white cloth (symbol of the burial linens Our Lord left behind when He rose); this cloth is also often highly decorated.

We encourage everyone to make your own celebration of Easter a little more special by having your Easter meal blessed and made part of the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord!