

# Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church

1723 E. Fairmount Avenue, Baltimore, MD. 21231

410-276-6171 [www.HolyTrinityOrthodox.com](http://www.HolyTrinityOrthodox.com)



## 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Tone 4

December 14 / 27, 2020

*Sunday of the Holy Forefathers*

Martyrs Thyrsus, Leucius, and Callinicus of Apollonia (250); Martyrs Apollonius, Philemon, Arianus, and Theoctychus of Alexandria (ca. 305); Hieromartyr Nicholas priest (1937).

### Today's Scriptural Readings:

Colossians 3: 4-11 / Luke 14: 16-24

*The incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, He was not far from it before, for no part of creation had ever been without Him Who, while ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are. But now He entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level in His love and Self-revealing to us.*

**St. Athanasius the Great (373)**

### This Week's Liturgical Calendar – All Services in Church

The Nativity Fast (St. Philip's Fast) continues through January 6

Saturday, January 2 <sup>nd</sup>	6:00 PM	Vigil Service
Sunday, January 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10:00 AM	Divine Liturgy <i>General Confession – 9:30 AM</i>

**Divine Services at Holy Trinity are live-streamed at**  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/HolyTrinitySermons>

### **Cemetery Committee – Elections – January 3, 2021**

On Sunday, January 3rd the Cemetery Committee will hold a very brief meeting in the church hall after Divine Liturgy to conduct the annual election of officers for calendar year 2021. To receive the call-in information for the teleconference call Victor Marinich 443-910-3562

### **Online Christmas Bake Sale**

This year we are conducting a Christmas Bake Sale, featuring homemade exquisite cakes, Russian-themed and Holiday-themed cookies, sweet bread and rye bread, as well as gifts from our Parish Kiosk. The sales opened to the public starting December 1st. When you make your purchase, you will select your pickup time from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM for any of these days: Sundays, December 13, 20, 27 and January 3. **Sisterhood members**, please inform [Natallia Makarava](mailto:Natallia.Makarava@parish.org) 443-625-8470 or [Tania Masiuk](mailto:Tania.Masiuk@parish.org) 443-742-7048 on what baked goods you will make for this bake sale.

### **Yolka / Talent Show – January 10, 2021**

This year's Christmas Yolka will be live-streamed online. This live event will feature a short presentation of our previous Yolka shows, a compilation of video-recorded talent show performances from our children and a special appearance by St. Nicholas. Parents, make a short video of your child playing a musical instrument, singing, reciting poetry, dancing, etc. We will compile all the performances into a presentation integrated into the other elements of the Yolka event. Very soon we will announce more details on registering your children and helpful information on how best to participate. Kids, start thinking about how you will participate in this special talent show. This year is certainly a challenge. But, we will all do our best to make sure that the Yolka will be fun for our kids and memorable for our parents.

### **Book Discussion in December**

Starting in early December we will conduct a weekly book discussion via Zoom. We will discuss the book "The Winter Pascha" by Fr. Thomas Hopko. It is a book of meditations on preparing for the feast of the Christ's Nativity. This book is available at the following bookstores: [St. Vladimir Press Bookstore](http://www.stvladimirpress.com), [St. Tikhon's Press Bookstore](http://www.sttikhonpress.com), [Ancient Faith Bookstore](http://www.ancientfaith.com), and Amazon. If you are interested in participating, please send [Fr. John](mailto:Fr.John@parish.org) an email to register.

### **Christmas Appeal – Bethany Orthodox School for Girls**

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) collects donations to help support the Bethany Orthodox School for Girls in Bethany, Palestine. This woman's monastery and girls school depend in large part upon the donations received from pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Because of COVID there are no pilgrimages. The school needs donations to cover their expenses. Please consider making a donation. **All information is located here:**

### **Honey on sale**

We have harvested a lot of fresh honey produced by the beehives in our cemetery. \$10 a jar. Please contact [Albert Blaszak](mailto:Albert.Blaszak@parish.org): 410-799-3226

### **Installation of Parish Council Officers**

**Sunday, January 10<sup>th</sup>** at the end of the Divine Liturgy we will conduct the installation of the Parish Council Officers for the Year 2021. May God bless their work for our parish.

### **Cleaning Group – Group #4 / Join a Group – Help your brothers and sisters**

Group #4 will clean the week of Dec. 28 – Jan. 2: Natalia and Vlad Volkov, Yelena, Vadim and Katie Radchenko and Nadiya Aleksandrovykh. Please join a group. We always need more members. Thank you!

### **Vigil Candles: On the Altar and near St. Barbara**

**December 27 – January 2:** Candles offered by Olga Hansen for the health/salvation of the servants of God: Gennadiy and Tatiana. A \$15 donation will keep all three candles lit for one week. Schedule your candle offering with Elena Loyko 443-537-8978.

### **Birthday / Anniversary Celebrations: December 27 – January 2**

We offer our best wishes and birthday congratulations to Oxana Chumak-Strianese (12/27), Margarita Akinina (12/29), and Albert-Augustine (12/31), and Wedding Anniversary congratulations to Arthur-Stephen & Evelyn-Evanthia Lisowsky (12/28). May God bless them with health, prosperity and many years. To include your birthdays/anniversaries in the bulletin contact Fr. John.

### **Challenge Grant – Matching Donations**

The Lisowsky and Mickel families have pledged to match all donations for the new front doors on a 1:1 ratio. For every dollar you donate, they will match one dollar, up to \$10,000 towards the new front doors. Double the value of your donation: \$20 becomes \$40, \$50 becomes \$100, and \$100 becomes \$200! **Donation forms are attached to this email bulletin.** Send in your donation today!

## **NEW ATTENDANCE RESTRICTIONS – 25%**

We must limit the total attendance at Divine Services to **46 persons, including** clergy, altar servers and choir in the church and **30 persons** in the hall watching Divine Liturgy on the TV, all following social distancing and wearing masks. This is 25% total capacity, based on updated calculations.

### **Submit your 2021 Pledge**

The mission of our parish is to spread the Word of God, to grow, to expand, to improve and not just to preserve our traditions. Our parish shouldn't become stale, but pursue holiness. We strive to fulfill the mission of our parish, through prayer, work and sacrifice. Prayer – because we are called to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17); work – because we are taught to increase the talents given to us (Matt. 25: 14-30); and sacrifice – because “everyone to whom much is given, from him will much be required” (Luke 12:48). Please be generous as the Lord is generous to you. When completing your pledge for the new year, please consider raising your level of giving. Our church cannot operate without your financial contributions. Our parish will grow only through your prayers, work and generous sacrifice.

*When you are generous, you are not bestowing a gift, but repaying a debt. Everything you possess materially comes from God, who created all things. And every spiritual and moral virtue you possess is through divine grace. Thus, you owe everything to God. More than that, God has given you his Son, to show you how to live: how to use your material possessions, and how to grow in moral and spiritual virtue. **St. John Chrysostom***

**Please Remember in Your Prayers...**

**Archpriest George Konyev; Deacon Michael Bishop; Mat. Myra Kovalak; Mat. Klavdiya Burbelo; Kh. Jocelyn Mathewes; Mat. Natalia Kosich; Mat. Catherine Kowalchik; Marie Vass; Charles Snipes; Arthur-Stephen & Evelyn-Evanthia Lisowsky; Yelena Radchenko; Lydia Zorina; Katherine Plaskowitz; Philip Plaskowitz; Bernadine Borawick; Julia Aymold; Lilli Ann Hoffman; Lara Marinich; Ioann and Galina Zernetkin; Monika-Anastasia & Stephanie Handley; Blanche-Julia Stolkovich; Ekaterina Koroleva; Nina and Glen-Gregory Lewis; Lyudmila, Anton & Aleksander Karnup; John Alexander Bylen; Katherine Garrett; Kenneth Pukita; William and Ann Ferkile; Irina Kononova; Petr and Lyudmila Borodkin; Svetlana & Aleksey; Alla; Anna; Alla; Raisa, Zinaida; Pavel, Vladimir, Valentina, and Maria; Maria Pappas; Bonnie Duke; Diana Radchenko; Aleksey & Lidia Potapov; Oleg and Andrei; Vitaliy, Tatiana, Olena & Nicholas Berchuk; Cynthia and Bill (Basil) Popomaronis; Andrei, Marina, Valentina and Vladimir; Valentina Shultieva; Katherina Shultieva; Shanna, Stephen, Trent-Michael, Grant-Alexander, Adalynn, Rosalyn Lisowsky; Julie Smith; Tayisia Solvieva; Leonid and Zoya; Jayne Sudol; Rita and Richard Herber, Mary Orzolek, George Matassov; Nikolai, Janice & John DesLauriers; Nicholas Rodzianko; Alexandra; Armen Nostrant; Vasilii; Elizabeth Wright; Shane-Michael Sierakowski; Samantha-Xenia Tate; Natalia Gerachenko; George Materewicz; Arezoo-Emilia Pavuk; Joanne Pavuk; Daria Artemova; Natalie Masiuk-Gardner; Katherine Masiuk; Yelena, Tatiana, infant Maya and Oxana; Cyril Reshetiloff.**

**Next Council Meeting: Thursday, January 14 – 7:00 PM in the Church Hall  
To receive the call-in information for the teleconference  
call Victor Marinich 443-910-3562**

<b>Fr. John Vass, Rector</b> 443-527-7067	Fr. Deacon Michael Bishop:	410-563-0472
Victor Marinich, <i>Council President:</i> 443-512-0985	Vadim Radchenko, <i>Vice President:</i>	410-465-6172
Andrei Burbelo, <i>Recording Secretary:</i> 732-598-5187	Albert Blaszak, <i>Treasurer:</i>	410-799-3226
Anna-Zumrat Shkurba, <i>Stewardship Chair:</i> 443-857-8541	<i>Member-At-Large:</i>	Vacant
Natalia Makarava <i>Sisterhood President:</i> 443-625-8470	Michael Mickel, <i>Cemetery Manager:</i>	410-666-2870

**The Nativity Fast Continues...** *During this fast period we abstain from meat, eggs and dairy products. This lenten period, for Orthodox Christians is a special time when we prayerfully and with fasting prepare for the feast of the Nativity of Christ – to be cleansed of our sins, to strengthen our spiritual powers by fasting and to open our spiritual eyes wider through increased prayer. All of this we do so that we can partake of the bright joy of the coming of the Messiah.*

**Excerpt from the Diary of the Holy Righteous John of Kronshtadt (+1908)**

The goal of our life is union with God: specifically, in this life, union with God is in faith, hope and love; in the future life it is in all perfect love. Take a look at how the enemy and we ourselves distort this goal. We unite our hearts with various things as determined by our passionate attachments. Sometimes – O, how terrible – our love is directed toward money, food, drink, clothing, home, decorations, in the manner that we should toward people – to the point of forgetting about God. Sometimes we are prideful, resentful, we hate and lie – and then we directly unite ourselves with the devil, who is the personification of evil, falsehood, pride, resentment – and in this is how we offend our Master, Who created us according to His image and likeness, and

subsequently how we distort the God-created image and from God Himself the created likeness. But we think far too little about this, we are too ignorant about this, about what is the most existential task for us – union with God.

**Colossians 3:4-11:** *When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.*

**Luke 14:16-24:** *Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 'For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.'"*

#### ***Thoughts for Each Day of the Year* by St. Theophan the Recluse (+1894)**

Many are called, but few are chosen (Matt. 22:14). All Christians are called; chosen are those Christians who believe and live in a Christian manner. In the first Christian times preaching called to faith; we are called by our birth from Christians and upbringing among Christians. And glory be to God! We pass half the road, that is, entrance into Christianity and the taking root of its principles in our heart from our very childhood, without any labor. It would seem that our faith should be all the stronger, and our life all the more correct throughout all the time that follows. It was this way; but from a certain point in time it has started to be different. Unchristian principles are permitted in our schools which ruin young people, and unchristian customs have entered into society, which corrupt them after leaving school. If according to the word of God there always have been only a few chosen, it is no surprise that in our time there are even fewer of them; such is the spirit of the age—antichristian! What will be next? If our manner of education and social customs are not changed, true Christianity will weaken more and more, and at last will entirely end; only the name of Christian will remain, but the spirit of Christianity will not be there. The spirit of the world will fill everything. What to do? Pray...

**On this Sunday, in preparation of the Nativity of our Lord, we remember the Patriarch Abraham and his lineage, ancestors of Christ.** *"Through the connection of the holy Ancestors and Patriarchs, Our Savior Jesus Christ is Himself also, in a way, the fruit of the faith of Abraham.*

*So, when God makes his voice known to each of us while we are still in the strange land of the passions and worldly vanities, we must like Abraham unhesitatingly leave all that is ours, and follow the divine calling with faith until we reach the Promised Land where, in our turn, we shall be able to give birth spiritually to Christ. For, planted in us by faith and Baptism, He has to grow in us through the virtues so as to shine in the light of contemplation. We descendants of Abraham, 'children of the promise' as Isaac was, having become 'sons of God' through the gift of the Holy Spirit, ought therefore to see Christ form in us... Let us then for our part become forbearers of Christ and continue steadfast in the faith, so that we may keep the feast of His Nativity, saying: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Synaxarion)*

**Commentary by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria**

And they all with one accord began to make excuse, that is, as if at a signal. For all the leaders of the Jews refused to have Jesus as their King, and thus were found unworthy of the supper, one because of his love of wealth, and another because of his love of pleasure. The man who bought a piece of ground and the man who bought the five yoke of oxen signify those who love wealth, while the man who married a wife signifies those who love pleasure. Furthermore, the man who bought a piece of ground signifies the man who cannot accept the mystery of faith because he is governed by the wisdom of this world. The piece of ground represents the world and, in general, nature, and the man who must go and see his piece of ground is he who sees only nature, and cannot accept what is beyond nature. Therefore the Pharisee, for example, "sees his piece of ground," that is, he looks only at the laws of nature and cannot accept that a Virgin gave birth to God, because that is beyond nature. Because they are examining this "piece of ground," that is, nature, none of those who boast in external wisdom have recognized Jesus Who made nature new...

**Archimandrite Kirill (Pavlov)**

***On those who were called to the Wedding Feast***

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Dear brothers and sisters, two weeks before the feast of the Nativity of Christ, our Holy Orthodox Church reminds us that the feast is approaching and prepares us to greet it worthily. On this first preparatory week before the feast, the Church remembers the saints who lived before the Birth of Christ—the Old Testament prophets and all the pious people who with faith awaited the coming of the Savior, which is why this week is called the week of the forefathers. By this remembrance the Church takes us mentally to Old Testament times, to the times that led up to the appearance of the God-promised Redeemer; and in order to encourage us to morally purify ourselves, it sets before us a whole host of great forefathers who shone by their God-pleasing life.

All the forefathers lived by hope in the Redeemer Who would come, and they continually expressed their faith in Him. But while a small number of pious people awaited the coming of Christ the Savior on earth and accepted Him, a large portion of the God-chosen people of Israel did not accept Christ the Savior, rejected God's voice and care for their salvation, and deprived themselves of eternal blessed life, about which we read today in the Holy Gospels.

The Holy Evangelist Luke tells how the Lord Jesus Christ reclined at a feast given by one of the chiefs of the Pharisees, and how one of the others sitting there said, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God* (Lk. 14:15)! The Lord offered to him and to all those present at the meal the following parable in reply:

*A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper (Lk. 14:16–24).*

By the good master of the house in this parable is meant God the Heavenly Father, Who continually calls us to His supper—that is, the supper in the Kingdom of Heaven, which was prepared for us from the creation of the world, inherited through the acceptance of faith in our Redeemer, Christ the Savior, and which will be revealed toward the end of this world. According to the holy fathers' interpretation, the servant in this parable is the Only-Begotten Son of God, Who accepted the form of a servant for the sake of our salvation, and Who always calls us: *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest* (Mt. 11:28).

This parable relates very closely to the Jews and pagans contemporary to our Lord Jesus Christ, who over the course of many centuries had been prepared by the action of Divine Providence to receive the Savior and enter Christ's Church, and who out of their stubborn unbelief, because of the attraction of mundane cares and sinful pleasures, nevertheless did not wish to appear at the wedding feast of the Son of God, and did not enter the bosom of His Holy Church. The Bridegroom Himself of the Church, and His friends, the holy Apostles and Prophets, called them to the path of repentance and salvation in Christ Jesus.

After those called were shown to be unworthy of the wedding feast, God's Servant invites at His Master's behest all the poor, halt, lame, and blind, who respond thankfully to the invitation to enter the feast and become participants in the great supper. By the poor, halt, blind, and lame are meant the people who really do have natural faults, who respond with great eagerness to the divine invitation to follow the Lord and acquire the Heavenly Kingdom, as the Apostle Paul says: *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence* (1 Cor. 1:26–29).

We can understand the poor and wretched people to be those who are imperfect in the moral and spiritual sense; people who are sunk in error and vice, not gifted by nature with virtues, and who nevertheless responded to their Lord's call to repentance, and who will enter first into the Kingdom of God.

Although this parable is, as we have said, very closely related to Jesus Christ's contemporaries, it is also closely related to all of us. If we only listen to the voice of our conscience, each of us will find an image of our own relationship to Christ's Church and to our own eternal salvation. From the parable we see that to the supper are first invited people who are involved in lawful labors and enjoying innocent familial joys—which are not an insult to God's goodness, because the Lord Himself gave the commandment to labor, and to have a wife. Nevertheless, the fate of these people involved in lawful labor and innocent pleasures finishes very regrettably. It all ends for them with the loss of their participation in the eternal royal feast, and they perish. For what? Of course, they are not condemned for laboring and enjoying family life, but because amidst their mundane cares and worries they were haughty about their honored positions. Passionately attached to their labors, trades, and joys, they forgot about their duty of obedience and honor towards their Lord, and disdained the invitation to His feast.

There can be such people among us, dear brothers and sisters, who possess obvious good qualities, merits, and virtues, but spend their time in various labors and occupations, entertain themselves with innocent pleasures and joys; and in their labors and joys they completely forget about God and their obligations to Him. Proudly hoping in their righteousness, they consider themselves to have no need of God's mercy, gifts, and graces; they resolutely refuse works of self-denial and obedience to God, and remain deaf to every call to salvation.

Attachment to earthly things, to delights, riches, and the pleasures of this age, attachment to specific persons of another sex—all deafen a person to the call to the Kingdom of God; and like those called in the Gospel parable, that person answers, *I pray thee have me excused*. Of course, those called ones will not taste the Lord's Supper, they will not delight in the eternal blessedness that they themselves renounced. During their earthly life they will not obtain anything for life in the habitations of the Heavenly Father. *Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance* (Gal. 5:22:23)—those are the qualities that open the heavenly gates to a person and lead him into the heavenly chambers. These qualities, which comprise the fruits of the spirit, are unknown and inaccessible to those who live according to the dictates of the flesh, who live only for the earth, without a thought of Heaven, or of Jesus Christ and His commandments. Therefore, without having apparently heavy sins, without any evil deeds that might trouble the soul, the lover of the world and lover of pleasure gives himself over to his worldly cares and joys, forgetting about God, and is finally given over to eternal death: *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption* (Gal. 6:8).

Now, the people of the second type, called from the roads and byways—that is, people less gifted and capable in life—turn out to be more responsive; and God's call to them is crowned with success sooner than His call to the people who are haughty over their righteousness or their gifts. The poor in spirit, aware of their nothingness, their moral paucity and inability to gain their own salvation through their own efforts, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, with their fervency answer the call to Christ's Kingdom, to Christian life; and from among them come the best guests at the wedding feast of the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world.

All great people who render benefit to the Church through their labors, all great pastors and teachers of the Church, the holy martyrs who by their death sealed their unconquerable love for Christ, the holy ascetical men and women, and all the saints of God came from among those

called—the poor in spirit, the humble of mind; and they now triumph at the wedding feast of the meek Lamb. Entering the hosts of God’s chosen are many people who are poorly endowed with mental and moral gifts—the lame, the blind, and many of those who abused and wasted their God-given gifts on wicked and shameful deeds but then repented with all their hearts, healed their sinful wounds, and put on the bright wedding garments. We are convinced of this by the many saints who after wicked, sinful lives became pure and righteous—for example, St. Mary of Egypt or St. Moses the Black.

Brothers and sisters! We are also called to the Kingdom of Heaven. Let us therefore be attentive to God’s voice, remembering that there is an end to our earthly existence, that the time will come when God’s mercy, which now calls us to repentance and correction, will as if give place to Gods’ righteous judgment and wrath. *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation* (2 Cor. 6:2). Let us cleanse ourselves by repentance and be corrected, in order to greet the feast of the Nativity of Christ with a pure conscience and spiritual joy; and from a fullness of joy and feeling, let us chant to the Divine Child born in Bethlehem: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men* (Lk. 2:14). Amen.  
<http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/50588.htm>