

STS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH



CHRIST IS RISEN!
INDEED HE IS RISEN!

CHRISTOS VOSKRESE!
VOISTINU VOSKRESE!

CHRISTOS ANESTI!
ALITHOS ANESTI!



NEW CALENDAR: APRIL 30, 2017
OLD CALENDAR: APRIL 17, 2017

SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH BEARING WOMEN

- ❖ We welcome all of our guests who are with us! Please come and worship with us often.
- ❖ There are many **REVISED** sign-ups in the back of the church for bowling tournament events such as meal packages, bowling times, other events. There are also signups for the commemorative booklet, the golf outing, and desserts for hospitality room on Friday night and to help work that night for cooking. We need your help to show the diocese and the Bishop that we love our church!
- ❖ For the Bowling tournament there will be a cleaning of the church grounds Saturday May 20th starting at 9 am. There also will be some final touchups inside of the church and setting up of the hall after the Liturgy for Ascension on May 25.

Epistle Reading Schedule

5/7 Alexa Fitzgerald
5/14 Lance Michealsen
5/21 Pani Amy George

Sunday Social Hour

5/7 Cliff Back
5/14 Barbara Fitzgerald
5/21 Pani Amy George

“Let us cast away, let us reject all things, let us bid farewell to all things — to all relationships, actions, and intentions that drag us downward, separate us from God and produce such a death.”
~St. Gregory Palamas

Sunday School Schedule:

5/7 : Toddler w/ Christyn,
K-2 w/ Linda,
3-5 w/ Mary Beth
Teens w/ Pani Amy
5/14: Toddler w/ Leigh,
K-2 & 3-5 w/ Pani Amy
Teens w/ Lance

- ❖ Family Camp is scheduled from Friday, June 9 - Sunday June 11. You can register at campnazareth.org. This is for families to learn, have fun, pray, and of course just simply be together in a peaceful environment.
- ❖ Family day is Sunday June 11th at Camp Nazareth. Details are posted downstairs in the hall.
- ❖ Camp Nazareth is hosting an Alumni Day, Saturday, May 20th. This event is free of charge. See bulletin board for more details.
- ❖ Fr. William will be away Friday May 5 - Monday May 8 for the Pani's retreat at Camp Nazareth. Fr. Stephen Krivonak will be substituting for him next Sunday.

American Carpatho-
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WEEKLY SERVICE SCHEDULE

- ❖ Sunday, April 30, Sunday of the Myrrh Bearing Women: Matins @ 8:15am; Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am
- ❖ Saturday, May 6, Great Vespers @ Cancelled
- ❖ Sunday, May 7, Sunday of the Paralytic: Matins @ 8:15 am Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am

Please Note: If you need to speak with a priest during the week please call Fr. William at # 862.432.9174. Rectory # 973.627.1462. If Fr. William is unavailable and it is an emergency please call Fr. John Theodosion his number is 973.584.0388.

Prayer List:

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” — James 5:16 NKJV

For those who need prayers:

Desiree Stanchina, Peter Lyasko, Esther Horchor, Ann Willis, Marilyn/Tony George, Margot, Adam, Debbie, Rosalie Nemerovich, Michael Carmona, Klava Trofimova, Inna Kudryavtseva, Joan King, Eleni Matangos, Evangelia Portelos, Jeannette Webb, Elizabeth T., Mary Elizabeth, George Matangos, Gregory Griff, Lillian, Sandi Mahtook, Sandi Reisbeck, Anna Hollis, Catherine Bowan, William O’Keefe, Ann Smith, Sonia Geiger, Tatyana and Zoe Ellis, Dolores Falk, Joann Talmadge, Estella Vreeland, Barbara Kmech, Roy Michealsen, Florine Nandrajog

Stewardship around the Parish

- Paint trim on Shed
- Paint trim around church windows
- Add a water spigot to the far side of hall
- Repaint Narthex
- Build bookshelves in priest sacristy
- repair/touch-up tomb

READINGS AND SAINTS FOR THE COMING WEEK:

Sun: Sunday of the Myrrh Bearing Women; Acts 6:1-7; Mark 15:43-16:8

Mon: Venerable John of Decapolis; Acts 6:8-7:5, 47-60; John 4:46-64

Tues: Venerable John of the Old Caves; Acts 8:5-17; John 6:27-33

Wed: Venerable Theodore the Hermit; Acts 8:18-25; John 6:35-39

Thurs: Hieromartyr Januarius; Acts 8:26-39; John 6:40-44

Fri: Venerable Theodore the Sykeote; Acts 8:40-9:19; John 6:48-54

Sat: Great Martyr George; Acts 12:1-11; John 15:17-16:2

OUR EXAMPLES OF HOLINESS

St. Tamara is commemorated on the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women in addition to her regular commemoration on May 1. In 1166 a daughter, Tamar, was born to King George III (1155–1184) and Queen Burdukhan of Georgia. The king proclaimed that he would share the throne with his daughter from the day she turned twelve years of age. The royal court unanimously vowed its allegiance and service to Tamar, and father and daughter ruled the country together for five years. After King George's death in 1184, the nobility recognized the young Tamar as the sole ruler of all Georgia. Queen Tamar was enthroned as ruler of all Georgia at the age of eighteen. She is called "King" in the Georgian language because her father had no male heir and so she ruled as a monarch and not as a consort.



At the beginning of her reign, Tamar convened a Church council and addressed the clergy with wisdom and humility: "Judge according to righteousness, affirming good and condemning evil," she advised. "Begin with me—if I sin I should be censured, for the royal crown is sent down from above as a sign of divine service. Allow neither the wealth of the nobles nor the poverty of the masses to hinder your work. You by word and I by deed, you by preaching and I by the law, you by upbringing and I by education will care for those souls whom God has entrusted to us, and together we will abide by the law of God, in order to escape eternal condemnation.... You as priests and I as ruler, you as stewards of good and I as the watchman of that good."

The Church and the royal court chose a suitor for Tamar: Yuri, the son of Prince Andrei Bogoliubsky of Vladimir-Suzdal (in Georgia Yuri was known as "George the Russian"). The handsome George Rusi was a valiant soldier, and under his command the Georgians returned victorious from many battles. His marriage to Tamar, however, exposed many of the coarser sides of his character. He was often drunk and inclined toward immoral deeds. In the end, Tamar's court sent him away from Georgia to Constantinople, armed with a generous recompense. Many Middle Eastern rulers were drawn to Queen Tamar's beauty and desired to marry her, but she rejected them all. Finally at the insistence of her court, she agreed to wed a second time to ensure the preservation of the dynasty. This time, however, she asked her aunt and nurse Rusudan (the sister of King George III) to find her a suitor. The man she chose, Davit-Soslan Bagrationi, was the son of the Ossetian ruler and a descendant of King George I (1014–1027).

In 1195 a joint Muslim military campaign against Georgia was planned under the leadership of Atabeg (a military commander) Abu Bakr of Persian Azerbaijan. At Queen Tamar's command, a call to arms was issued. The faithful were instructed by Metropolitan Anton of Chqondidi to celebrate All-night Vigils and Liturgies and to generously distribute alms so that the poor could rest from their labors in order to pray. In ten days the army was prepared, and Queen Tamar addressed the Georgian soldiers for the last time before the battle began. "My brothers! Do not allow your hearts to tremble before the multitude of enemies, for God is with us.... Trust God alone, turn your hearts to Him in righteousness, and place your every hope in the Cross of Christ and in the Most Holy Theotokos!" she exhorted them.

Having taken off her shoes, Queen Tamar climbed the hill to the Metekhi Church of the Theotokos (in Tbilisi) and knelt before the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. She prayed without ceasing until the good news arrived: the battle near Shamkori had ended in the unquestionable victory of the Orthodox Georgian army.

After this initial victory the Georgian army launched into a series of triumphs over the Turks, and neighboring countries began to regard Georgia as the protector of the entire Transcaucasus. By the beginning the 13th century, Georgia was commanding a political authority recognized by both the

Christian West and the Muslim East.

Georgia's military successes alarmed the Islamic world. Sultan Rukn al-Din was certain that a united Muslim force could definitively decide the issue of power in the region, and he marched on Georgia around the year 1203, commanding an enormous army.

Having encamped near Basiani, Rukn al-Din sent a messenger to Queen Tamar with an audacious demand: to surrender without a fight. In reward for her obedience, the sultan promised to marry her on the condition that she embrace Islam; if Tamar were to cleave to Christianity, he would number her among the other unfortunate concubines in his harem. When the messenger relayed the sultan's demand, a certain nobleman, Zakaria Mkhargrdzelidze, was so outraged that he slapped him on the face, knocking him unconscious.

At Queen Tamar's command, the court generously bestowed gifts upon the ambassador and sent him away with a Georgian envoy and a letter of reply. "Your proposal takes into consideration your wealth and the vastness of your armies, but fails to account for divine judgment," Tamar wrote, "while I place my trust not in any army or worldly thing but in the right hand of the Almighty God and the infinite aid of the Cross, which you curse. The will of God—and not your own—shall be fulfilled, and the judgment of God—and not your judgment—shall reign!"

The Georgian soldiers were summoned without delay. Queen Tamar prayed for victory before the Vardzia Icon of the Theotokos, then, barefoot, led her army to the gates of the city.

Hoping in the Lord and the fervent prayers of Queen Tamar, the Georgian army marched toward Basiani. The enemy was routed. The victory at Basiani was an enormous event not only for Georgia, but for the entire Christian world.

The military victories increased Queen Tamar's faith. In the daytime she shone in all her royal finery and wisely administered the affairs of the government; during the night, on bended knees, she beseeched the Lord tearfully to strengthen the Georgian Church. She busied herself with needlework and distributed her embroidery to the poor.

Once, exhausted from her prayers and needlework, Tamar dozed off and saw a vision. Entering a luxuriously furnished home, she saw a gold throne studded with jewels, and she turned to approach it, but was suddenly stopped by an old man crowned with a halo. "Who is more worthy than I to receive such a glorious throne?" Queen Tamar asked him.

He answered her, saying, "This throne is intended for your maidservant, who sewed vestments for twelve priests with her own hands. You are already the possessor of great treasure in this world." And he pointed her in a different direction.

Having awakened, Holy Queen Tamar immediately took to her work and with her own hands sewed vestments for twelve priests.

History has preserved another poignant episode from Queen Tamar's life: Once she was preparing to attend a festal Liturgy in Gelati, and she fastened precious rubies to the belt around her waist. Soon after she was told that a beggar outside the monastery tower was asking for alms, and she ordered her entourage to wait. Having finished dressing, she went out to the tower but found no one there. Terribly distressed, she reproached herself for having denied the poor and thus denying Christ Himself. Immediately she removed her belt, the cause of her temptation, and presented it as an offering to the Gelati Icon of the Theotokos.

During Queen Tamar's reign a veritable monastic city was carved in the rocks of Vardzia, and the God-fearing Georgian ruler would labor there during the Great Fast. The churches of Pitareti, Kvabtakhevi, Betania, and many others were also built at that time. Holy Queen Tamar generously endowed the churches and monasteries not only on Georgian territory but also outside her borders: in Palestine, Cyprus, Mt. Sinai, the Black Mountains, Greece, Mt. Athos, Petritsoni (Bulgaria), Macedonia, Thrace, Romania, Isauria and Constantinople. The divinely guided Queen Tamar abolished the death penalty and all forms of bodily torture.

A regular, secret observance of a strict ascetic regime—fasting, a stone bed, and litanies chanted in bare feet—finally took its toll on Queen Tamar’s health. For a long time she refrained from speaking to anyone about her condition, but when the pain became unbearable she finally sought help. The best physicians of the time were unable to diagnose her illness, and all of Georgia was seized with fear of disaster. Everyone from the small to the great prayed fervently for Georgia’s ruler and defender. The people were prepared to offer not only their own lives, but even the lives of their children, for the sake of their beloved ruler.

God sent Tamar a sign when He was ready to receive her into His Kingdom. Then the pious ruler bade farewell to her court and turned in prayer to an icon of Christ and the Life-giving Cross: “Lord Jesus Christ! Omnipotent Master of heaven and earth! To Thee I deliver the nation and people that were entrusted to my care and purchased by Thy Precious Blood, the children whom Thou didst bestow upon me, and to Thee I surrender my soul, O Lord!”

The burial place of Queen Tamar has remained a mystery to this day. Some sources claim that her tomb is in Gelati, in a branch of burial vaults belonging to the Bagrationi dynasty, while others argue that her holy relics are preserved in a vault at the Holy Cross Monastery in Jerusalem.

VOLUME II; THE CHURCH BUILDING; CHURCH BUILDING; BY FR THOMAS HOPKO

In the long history of the Orthodox Church a definite style of church architecture has developed. This style is characterized by the attempt to reveal the fundamental experience of Orthodox Christianity: God is with us.

The fact that Christ the Immanuel (which translated means “God with us”) has come, determines the form of the Orthodox church building. God is with man in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The dwelling place of God is with man. “The Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands,” says Saint Stephen quoting the Old Testament prophets. Saint Paul says that men are the temples of God:

“Christ Jesus himself [is] the cornerstone, in Whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in Whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph 2.21–22).

The words of Saint Peter are very much the same.

“Come to him [Christ] to that living stone . . . and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house . . . to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2.4–5).

“We are the temple of the living God . . .” (2 Cor 6.16). And it is exactly this conviction and experience that Orthodox Church architecture wishes to convey.

Orthodox Church architecture reveals that God is with men, dwelling in them and living in them through Christ and the Spirit. It does so by using the dome or the vaulted ceiling to crown the Christian church building, the house of the Church which is the People of God. Unlike the pointed arches which point to God far up in the heavens, the dome or the spacious all-embracing ceiling gives the impression that in the Kingdom of God, and in the Church, Christ “unites all things in himself, things in heaven and things on earth,” (Eph 1.10) and that in Him we are all “filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph 3.19).

The interior of the Orthodox Church building is particularly styled to give the experience of the unity of all things in God. It is not constructed to reproduce the upper room of the Last Supper, nor to be simply a meeting hall for men whose life exists solely within the bounds of this earth. The church building is patterned after the image of God’s Kingdom in the Book of Revelation. Before us is the altar table on which Christ is enthroned, both as the Word of God in the Gospels and as the Lamb of God in the eucharistic sacrifice. Around the table are the angels and saints, the servants of the Word and the Lamb who glorify him—and through him, God the Father—in the perpetual adoration inspired by the Holy Spirit. The faithful Christians on earth who already belong to that holy assembly “. . . fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God . . .” (Eph 2.19) enter into the eternal worship of God’s Kingdom in the Church. Thus, in Orthodox practice the vestibule symbolizes this world. The nave is the place of the Church understood as the assembly and people of God. The altar area, called the sanctuary or the holy place, stands for the Kingdom of God.

ON STEWARDSHIP AND THE ORTHODOX LIFE: PART 89: ABRAM: ONE STEWARD'S RESPONSE:

"So Abram went, as the LORD had told him." (Genesis 12:4 RSV)

The twelfth chapter of Genesis begins with God appearing to a man named Abram. Without so much as an introduction, God tells Abram that He will bless Abram and his family. Further, Abram and his family will become a blessing to all the families of the earth. Abram is to take his family to a place God would show him. Then comes an astonishing, if not unbelievable, three-word response: *"So Abram went."* There is no argument. There was no questioning. There was no negotiation. Abram simply went. Many years later St. Paul would write of Abram's faith (see Romans 4:16 and Hebrews 11:8,17). Abram's response was simple and complete obedience. We live in a world that misunderstands the blessings of God. How often have we heard some sports hero claim that God had blessed him or her to make that winning shot, or stop that game-changing goal in some championship contest? Did God not bless the opposition? Or did He withhold His blessing so that the hero's team could win? Does God bless us to be successful in our businesses or in school or in whatever is our chosen vocation? God was clear to Abram: "I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing ... by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves" (Genesis 12:2-3 RSV). The blessing that Abram receives is to "be a blessing." Christian stewards recognize in God's promise to Abram two small words. God offers to bless Abram *so that* Abram will be a blessing. It was through Abram and his family that God chose to bless the rest of humanity. This is a clear example of the way God works in reality. He does not pick and choose those whom He will bless to win a ball game or pass a test or get a raise. The way God has worked and continues to work is the way He worked in blessing the entire world. Through one Person, God blesses all people. He sent His Son Jesus Christ in order that all would receive the blessing. Surely, God could have chosen another way. What has been revealed to us is that He did not. God uses human agents, like Abram and Jesus to pass on His blessings. Today we might call such human agents "stewards."

Camp Nazareth Family Camp 2017

Our Diocese is pleased to announce its fifth 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 – "Your Family's Sacred Story". Jesus and His family fled to Egypt. Noah and his family entered the ark. Abraham and his family left their home. Lot and his family fled Sodom. Stories of faith and God's mercy are part of every family's Sacred Story. Come learn about families of great faith in the Scriptures and be inspired. Share your own "Sacred Story" and help other families be inspired.

Family Camp is scheduled for Friday, June 9 – Sunday, June 11, 2017.

Each year we have a wonderful time together 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 register soon. Register online at campnazareth.org. Registration closes after Friday, June 2. Visit campnazareth.org for more information.

Life Line Screening

Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church is pleased to offer a preventive health event. Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings, will host their affordable, non-invasive and painless health screenings on 5/31/2017. Five screenings will be offered that scan for potential health problems related to: blocked arteries which is a leading cause of stroke; abdominal aortic aneurysms which can lead to a ruptured aorta; hardening of the arteries in the legs which is a strong predictor of heart disease; atrial fibrillation or irregular heart beat which is closely tied to stroke risk; and a bone density screening, for men and women, used to assess the risk of osteoporosis. Register for a Wellness Package which includes 4 vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. **There are three ways to register for this event and to receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call [1-888-653-6441](tel:1-888-653-6441) or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/communitycircle or text the word circle to 797979**