

## Assumption of the Holy Virgin Orthodox Church

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Philadelphia, PA 19145 \* Church Phone: (215) 468-3535  
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*\* Serving the Orthodox Community in South Philadelphia for 110 years! \**

### Sunday, December 17, 2023 | 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

Tone 3 – Sunday of the Forefathers

Holy Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths (ca. 600 B.C.)

Venerable Daniel the Confessor of Spain and Egypt (10<sup>th</sup> c.)

#### V. Rev. Mark W Koczak, Rector

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*Deacon – Michael McCartney*

*Choir Director – Nina Patterson*

*Subdeacon – Daniel (Ken) Kavalkovich*

*Reader – Mark Klus*

*Reader – David Pellack*

*Parish President - Matthew Andrews [Phone: 856.217.8075]*

### Weekly Schedule

Today: Saint Nicholas Parish Fair after Divine Liturgy

Saturday: December 23 – Great Vespers at **4:00PM**

Sunday: December 24 – Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ

Reading of Hours – 9:30am

Divine Liturgy – **10:00am**

Fellowship Coffee Hour to follow the Readers Service

Sunday: December 24 – Eve of the Nativity of Christ!

Great Complines and Matins (Condensed Version)

Time: **12:30pm!**

Sunday: December 24 – FINAL DAY of Saint Nicholas Fair

Monday: December 25 – Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Reading of Hours – 9:30am

Divine Liturgy – 10:00am

## Texts for the Liturgical Service

### **Troparion (Tone 3)**

Let the heavens rejoice! / Let the earth be glad! / For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. / He has trampled down death by death. / He has become the first born of the dead. / He has delivered us from the depths of hell, / and has granted to the world // great mercy.

### **Troparion (Tone 2 – Forefathers)**

Through faith Thou didst justify the Forefathers, / betrothing through them the Church of the gentiles. / These saints exult in glory, / for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit: / she who bore Thee without seed. // So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us!

### **Troparion (Tone 2 – Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths)**

Great are the accomplishments of faith, / for the three Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain of flames as though in the waters of rest; / and the Prophet Daniel appeared / a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. // So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

### **Kontakion (Tone 3 – Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths)**

When thy pure heart was purged by the Spirit, / thou becamest a vessel of clear prophecy; / thou didst see things far away as though they were near at hand. / When cast into their den, thou didst tame the lions. // Therefore, we honor thee, blessed prophet, glorious Daniel.

### **Kontakion (Tone 6 – Forefathers)**

Ye did not worship the graven image, / O thrice-blessed ones, / but armed with the immaterial Essence of God, / ye were glorified in a trial by fire. / From the midst of unbearable flames ye called on God, crying: / “Hasten, O compassionate One! / Speedily come to our aid, // for Thou art merciful and able to do as Thou dost will!”

### **Prokeimenon (Tone 4– Songs of our Fathers)**

Blessed are Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers, / and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!  
v. For Thou are just in all that Thou has done for us!

### **Epistle Reading: 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.

Alleluia (3x's) (Tone 4)



- v. Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His Name. Alleluia (3x's)
- v. They called to the Lord and He answered them. Alleluia (3x's)

**Gospel Reading: 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.' "

**Communion Hymn:**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!  
Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous! Praise befits the upright! Alleluia (3x's)

**Thank You - Children's Saint Nicholas Icon coloring Contest**

A Thank You to all who participated in this year's Children's Saint Nicholas Icon coloring contest. It was a clean sweep by the Stafford Brothers who took all three places. There were even some detail explanations as to the coloring concepts and its reason for the specific color in the kid's icons.

**Announcements**

**A Warm Welcome to all of our visitors & guests** who worshiped with us today and who have joined us in celebrating the Divine Liturgy. Please join us in the church basement for our Fellowship and Coffee Hour.

## Announcements

### **Righteous Priest Aaron (December 17<sup>th</sup>)**

The Righteous Aaron was the son of Amram and Jochebed, and the elder brother of the Prophet Moses the God-seer, and also of Miriam. He was a direct descendent of Levi by both parents. God called him “the Levite” in Exodus 4:14, when He appointed Aaron to be the spokesman for Moses, who was “slow of speech,” before the people. Later, he would also speak on behalf of Moses before Pharaoh in Egypt (Ex. 4:30; 7:2). Aaron was married to Elisheba, the daughter of the Prince of Judah (Ex. 6:23), who bore him four sons.

Moses was eighty years old and Aaron was eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh and asked that the Hebrews be released from their slavery. The Lord told Moses that Pharaoh would ask them for a miracle, and that Aaron should throw down his rod before him, and it would become a serpent (Ex. 7:9). When Pharaoh would not allow the Hebrews to leave Egypt, God told Moses to have Aaron stretch forth his rod over the Nile River, and it would turn to blood.

Following a succession of plagues, Pharaoh relented and let the people go, then Moses led them on their long journey to the Promised Land. In Chapter 17 of Exodus, the Hebrews fought Amalek in a battle at Rephidim. Moses stood atop a hill with the rod of God in his hand. As long as he raised his hand, the Hebrews prevailed, but when he became tired and lowered it, Amalek prevailed. Aaron and Hur sat Moses on a rock and held up his hands, one on each side. This was a prefiguration of the suffering of Christ, because the arms of Moses formed a cross. In the Greek Septuagint, the names Aaron and Hur begin with the letters Alpha and Omega, another reference to Christ (Revelation 1:8).

Aaron and his sons were anointed and sanctified to serve God as priests (Exodus chapter 29). In chapter 32, Aaron fell into temptation when Moses went up on Mount Sinai to receive the Commandments. Since Moses was taking a long time, the people grew restless and asked Aaron to make them a golden idol in the form of a calf so that they could offer sacrifices. He gave into them, and Moses was angry when he returned and saw them dancing and singing before the calf. He threw down the tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments, and then he burned the golden calf and ground it to powder. He scattered the powder on the water, and he made the people drink it. When Moses asked those who were on the Lord’s side to gather around him, the Levites came to him. He ordered them to take their swords and slay their sons, companions, and neighbors. About three thousand people were killed that day.

Later, Aaron and Miriam criticized Moses for marrying a Cushite woman (Num. 12:1). God was angry with them, so He punished Miriam with leprosy. She was healed by God seven days after Moses interceded for her.

In chapter 17 of Numbers, the people murmured against Moses and Aaron, so God commanded that the leaders of the twelve tribes should have their names inscribed on their rods and placed in the tent of testimony. One would be chosen to make the people cease their grumbling against Moses and his brother. Aaron’s rod bloomed miraculously in the tent of the testimony, to show that he had been chosen for this purpose.

Aaron reposed atop Mount Hor when he was one hundred and twenty-three years old. One of his descendants was St. Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist (Luke 1:5).



**Announcements** (cont.)

**Candles and Prayers for the Faithful and Departed**

**Health for the Living:**

Parishioners offered by Reader David Pellack  
Parishioners offered by Nina Patterson  
Emily, Edward, David, Debra offered by Debbie Kavalkovich  
Catherine, Patricia, Family and Friends offered by Debbie Kavalkovich

**May God Grant Them Many Blessed Years!**

**Memory for the Departed:**

**May Their Memories Be Eternal!**

**Vigil Cross Candles – 12/10/23**

One Large Vigil Cross – Health of All Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church Parishioners. Thank You for your prayers, friendship and emotional support!  
Offered by Emily Gerasimoff

One Large Vigil Cross – Memory of John and Margaret Pellack offered by the Reader David Pellack

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**Please remember in your prayers:**

Remember all the victims and the 1,000's more injured in the senseless atrocity against humanity in both Ukraine and Israel. May we pray for an end to the killings in these regions and that peace may prevail.

Norman Andrews; Emily Gerasimoff; Jane Kelly; Anne (Homa) Killoran; Sheba Patton; Peter Witiak; and all those who are serving in our Armed Forces!

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## Announcements (cont.)

**Please ensure that your Mobile Phone is set to Silent (or at least set on vibrate) during the Divine Liturgy! Thank You!!!**

**\*\*\*\*\*Special weekly collections taken after Gospel or Sermon\*\*\*\*\***

In addition to our general collection, the parish takes a special collection each week to fund certain parish projects. By the action taken at the Fall General Parish Meeting held back on Sunday, October 10, 2021, the parish body approved that the special collection for the first three Sundays of the month be earmarked towards the repairing/fixing/replacing of the roofs of both houses that the parish owns (now known as the Row House Fund).

The fourth Sunday (and fifth, when it occurs) the special collection will be earmarked towards Charity.

This new collection schedule began back on Sunday, October 17, 2021.  
Please be generous with your offering. Every little bit counts. Thank You!

### **Cash Flow Activity (December)**

<u>Week of Sun Dec 3 to Sat Dec 9</u>	<u>December Month to Date</u>	
Attendance:	39	39 (average)
Funds In:	\$ 1,963.00	\$ 1,963.00
Funds Out:	\$ 1,732.03	\$ 3,273.70
Net Surplus/(Deficit):	\$ 230.97	(\$ 1,310.70)

Thank you all for your continuous offerings to maintain the parish!

**Shop Rite Gift Cards:** If you need to purchase Shop Rite Gift Cards, please see either David Pellack or Ken Kavalkovich to secure them. Your purchase of a Shop Rite Gift Card is an additional fundraising project that helps support the church at no additional expense to the purchaser.



# Calendar of Events

## 2023 Monthly/Quarterly Schedule

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month** – Monthly Panikhida immediately after Divine Liturgy.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month** – Bible Study at 6:30pm on ZOOM media platform.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month** – Book Club at 6:30pm on ZOOM media platform.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each quarter** – Quarterly Parish Council Meeting after Liturgy.

### Readers Schedule:

	<u>Today (Dec 17)</u>	<u>Next Week (Dec 24)</u>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Hour:	Matthew Andrews	Reader David Pellack
6 <sup>th</sup> Hour:	Subdeacon Daniel Kavalkovich	Daniel Herbert
Epistle:	Matthew Andrews	Reader David Pellack

### Fellowship Coffee Hour & Cleaning Teams:

If you have volunteered to host coffee hour, please check which Team you are on and when your Team is hosting coffee hour on the calendar printout which is located in the white/clear 3-ring binder located on the display case outside of the office room.

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Please continue to check our parish website, social media pages, and your emails regularly for updated information on the parish regarding parish services & events in December 2023 and January 2024.

Sundays in December – Annual Saint Nicholas Parish Fair will be held between 11:30AM to 2:00PM!

The Schedule for Christmas Eve Services (Great Complines and Matins (modified)) on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> is scheduled for around 12:30pm that afternoon. This is approximately an hour after Divine Liturgy is completed. This should give enough time for parishioners to relax and grab a quick bite (Lenten) during Coffee Fellowship Hour before the Great Complines and Matins begins.

Monday, December 25 – The Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ service! Hours at 9:30AM and Divine Liturgy at 10:00AM

Thursday, January 25 and Friday, January 26, 2024 – The 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Assembly will be held at Christ the Savior Orthodox Church in Harrisburg, PA. If you are interested in attending as a Lay Delegate to represent the parish or attend just as an Assembly observer, please speak with Father Mark or Parish President Matthew Andrews.



## **Sunday of the Forefathers** [December 17<sup>th</sup>]

The Sunday that falls between December 11-17 is known as the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers. These are the ancestors of Christ according to the flesh, who lived before the Law and under the Law, especially the Patriarch Abraham, to whom God said, "In thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3, 22:18).

### **The Three Holy Youths: Ananias, Azarias and Misael (December 17<sup>th</sup>)**

The Holy Youths Ananias ("God is gracious"), Azarias ("whom God helps"), and Misael ("Who is what God is?") were companions of the Holy Prophet Daniel. They were chosen to serve in the king's palace with Daniel (Daniel 1:6) and were all from the tribe of Judah. They gave Ananias the Chaldean name Shadrach ("royal"), Azarias the Chaldean name Abednego ("servant of Nego"), and Misael the Chaldean name Meshach ("guest"). They were thrown into a fiery furnace when they refused to worship the golden idol set up by King Nebuchadnezzar, but the angel of the Lord preserved them (Daniel 3:25).

The Seventh and Eighth Odes of the nine Biblical Odes at the back of the Psalter are taken from The Song of the Three Holy Youths (found in the Septuagint text of the Old Testament used by the Orthodox Church).

The Three Holy Youths and the Prophet Daniel are also commemorated on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers and the Sunday of the Holy Fathers.

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### **The Righteous Benjamin (December 17<sup>th</sup>)**

The youngest son of Jacob, he was called Benoni and then Benjamin (Genesis 35:16-18). Before his death Jacob blessed him in a seemingly backhanded way, saying that "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, devouring his prey in the morning, and dividing the spoil in the evening" (Genesis 49:27). Commentators say this is not a reference to Benjamin himself, but to the warlike nature of the tribe of Benjamin.

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### **The Righteous Isaac (December 17<sup>th</sup>)**

The Righteous Isaac was the second of the Old Testament Patriarchs, and the son of Abraham (Genesis 17:17-22). God tested Abraham to see if he would sacrifice his son (Genesis 22:1-13), and thus Isaac was a type of Christ. He was the husband of Rebecca (Genesis 24:67), and the father of Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:19-26).

The Righteous Jacob is mentioned in the book of Genesis, chapters 25-50. He had a dream of a ladder (Genesis 28:12-17). Angels were ascending and descending the ladder, and the Lord was above the ladder (a type of the Mother of God, who united earth to Heaven when she consented to become the mother of the Messiah). Later, Jacob wrestled with God (Genesis 32:22-30), who appeared as a man, and Jacob prevailed. Then the Lord gave him the name Israel and blessed him. Jacob called that place Peniel (The face of God), and said, "I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved."