



St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
Weekly Newsletter
Sunday, May 2, 2021

Great and Holy Pascha

Acts 1:1-8

John 1:1-17

Upcoming Meetings

- Choir – Tues 4/27 – no practice
- Parish Council – Sun 5/16, 1:30pm
Office will send Zoom link

Sunday School

There will be no Sunday School 5/2.

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars – we're hosting our annual St. George picnic on Sunday, May 30 after Liturgy at Ridley Creek State Park. Stay tuned for more details!

Catechumen Class

The inquirer/catechumen class is weekly on Saturday at 6:30pm. [Click here for the Google meeting link.](#)

AV Summer Camp Registration

Registration for camp is still open! For more information about changes for this year, visit the [Antiochian Village's website.](#)

- **Holy Week Services** ([Click here to sign up](#)): The following services will be held in the church and streamed on the [website](#):
 - **Monday 4/26** – Bridegroom Orthros, 6:30pm
 - **Tuesday 4/27** – Presanctified 9am and Bridegroom Orthros 6:30pm (no online Akathist)
 - **Wednesday 4/28** – Holy Unction, 6:30pm
 - **Thursday 4/29**
 - Vespertal Liturgy, 9am
 - 12 Gospels, 6:30pm
 - **Friday 4/30**
 - Royal Hours, 9am
 - Decorating the bier, 10:30am
 - Vespers, 3pm
 - Orthros and Lamentations, 6:30pm
 - Overnight Vigil (after Lamentations)
 - **Saturday 5/1**
 - Vespertal Liturgy, 10am
 - Rush, Orthros, and Liturgy, 10:30pm
 - **Sunday 5/2** – Agape Vespers, 12pm

Pascha Agape Meal: At the blessing and direction of our bishops, we will be holding the agape meal after Pascha in person in the fellowship hall. If you plan to attend service and stay for the meal, please bring a dish to share. Please note that we will still need to observe social distancing and wear masks when not sitting at a table and eating or drinking.

On behalf of the Ministry Team, **thank you** to everyone who helped clean the church this past weekend in preparation of Holy Week and Pascha!

At the blessing and direction of our bishops, please note the following:

During Holy Week and Pascha, social distancing is still required among different family groups and **masks must be worn in the church.** If you have a need to remove your mask, please either step outside for a moment or down to the hall, and when you are able, rejoin us in the church. Thank you.

We are always moving towards Pascha

by Janice Bidwell

Great Lent came and went, and I'm still traveling toward Pascha at a steady lumbering pace. My life is a series of peaks and valleys between the seasons, but my route never varies. This rhythm is unchanging, and yet different each year. This is the path I travelled as a child, and now I'm on this same Paschal path of my ancestors with my own children. The century is new, but the ancient pattern is timeless.

As we conclude this Paschal celebration it's time for me to store away the Easter decorations, but I must keep my Paschal spirit right at the center of my heart. The pace and beauty of Holy Week brightens my faith, and keeping this light bright throughout the year is the focus of my journey toward God. The seed of Pascha is now planted in my soul, but I must nourish this seedling throughout the year. The joy of the Christ's Resurrection is the central theme of Christianity, and of our life as a family. Our life extends beyond today; our journey is toward eternal life. .

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“The center, the day, that gives meaning to all days and therefore to all time, is that yearly commemoration of Christ's Resurrection at Easter. This is always the end and the beginning. We are always living after Easter, and we are always going toward Easter” (Alexander Schmemmann, *Easter in the Liturgical Year*, 1963).

Living every day on a journey toward forever Easter is unnatural in the world today. It was unnatural for me as a child, and it's unnatural for my children today. The rays of light which feed this Paschal seed help it grow deeper roots all year long, when it's exposed to this steady light. Life within the Orthodox Church is also life at home, and Pascha does not end as I exit the doors of the church. My children must see the joy of Pascha live on within me and within our Orthodox community. This is the hope of our Faith and our hope as a family on this journey toward Easter. From Sunday to Sunday throughout the year the light of Pascha must shine, and each Sunday is a little Easter as we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ.

A Living Spirit of Pascha

The joy of Pascha is there hiding within the smaller points of everyday living. It's not in the wrapping of the package, but throughout the inside of life. If every moment of my life is a movement toward forever Easter, then I must be conscious of each movement reflecting this joy of Christ's Resurrection. Every minute is a gift (even if some moments I would rather exchange), and seeing this joy is a central theme of life from Pascha to Pascha. Capturing the energy of Pascha within the smaller moments of my life passes this spirit of Orthodox living along through the generations and extends beyond the church on Holy Pascha, to each moment of living in the world.

“The only real thing, especially in the child's world, which the child accepts easily, is precisely joy. We have made our Christianity so adult, so serious, so sad, so solemn that we have almost emptied it of that joy. Yet Christ Himself said, ‘Unless you become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of God,’ To become as a child in Christ's terms means to be capable of that spiritual joy of which an adult is almost completely incapable” (Alexander Schmemmann, *Easter in the Liturgical Year*, 1963).

As I experience the presence of God in the shadows of my life, I nourish this Paschal brightness. The seed of Pascha rests in the soul and continues growing throughout the seasons with this steady light. Sharing and nourishing the Paschal seed is seeing this brightness every day, even on cloudy stormy days. Reflecting this light towards my family guides us along the lumbering path toward Easter, and seeing this brightness in the world reflects my love for others and for God. The reflection of this light of God's love is the spirit of Orthodoxy I learned from the generations of Orthodox Christians in my family, and is also the tradition within the broader community of the Orthodox Church. Love within the heart of one, moves the hearts of others all around. Going toward Easter is going toward a loving God shining in the light of the world.