



5th Sunday of Matthew

Calendar and Announcements

Calendar:

- The following services will be prayed with clergy, servers, and chanters, with limited availability for parishioners to attend (**up to 20 parishioners**). Please see the Announcements for more information about how to sign up to attend a service:
 - Saturday 7/11 – Vespers, 5pm
 - Sunday 7/12 – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
- The above services will be livestreamed via St. George's [website](#) and [official Facebook page](#). In addition, links to the texts will be included on the home page of the parish website above the livestream video for those who would like to follow along.
- Dn. Joseph is leading Akathist on Tuesday evenings via Skype. To participate, please email Dn. Joseph at dnjosephclark@gmail.com to receive the link.
- Bible study on the Gospel of John: Wednesday 7/8, 6:30pm
 - Join the meeting:
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75171452841?pwd=L29OOTNHafJhRVpvYmVIRDBCvXpndz02>
 - Meeting ID: 751 7145 2841; Password: 0zbpui

Troparion of St. George

○ liberator and deliverer of captives, helper of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender for kings,
○ great among Martyrs, the victory-clad George; intercede with Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

Announcements:

- **If you would like to attend one of the services listed above, please sign up via [Sign Up Genius](#), reserving the number of slots for family members attending so we can ensure we do not exceed capacity for social distancing purposes. (For example, if there are 3 household members attending, reserve 3 slots.) Please remember that those who are elderly, have pre-existing conditions, or currently are not feeling well are asked to remain home. Additionally, those children who are too young to keep a mask on are asked to remain home.**
- Communion will be offered by appointment after each service. To set up a time to receive communion, please sign up via the [Sign Up Genius](#). Please reserve only one slot per household unit. Your time will be confirmed via email from the church office. Prior to arriving at the church for communion, please say the [Morning Prayers](#) and the [Prayers of Preparation before Communion](#).
- Confession is also being scheduled by appointment. To set up an appointment, please email the church office and provide a few dates/times you are available. The office will email you to confirm your appointment time.
- If you would like to have a candle lit at the church, please email the church office at office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org. Candle donations can be made via PayPal.
- Based on Metropolitan JOSEPH'S latest directive (6/8/2020), we will begin to carefully consider which in-person gatherings to resume. For the time being, all non-liturgical events remain online or cancelled as we consider all necessary factors. Please stay tuned for additional information.

If you attend a service, you must wear a mask/face covering out of care for ourselves, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and our neighbors.

- Several members of the ministry team are contacting parishioners to identify any special needs and to ensure our church family is taken care of during this time. If you or someone you know has a particular need during this time, please contact the church office so we can coordinate with the ministry team.

General notes:

- If you are able to still tithe / contribute to the church during this time, please consider giving online [via PayPal on the church's website](#).
- All communication about services and other updates during this time will be sent via parish email from Fr. Joel (or the office) or posted on the [website](#) or [official church Facebook page](#). All questions can be directed to the office (office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org).

Church History

This week we continue a series on the Essentials of Faith. The hope is that we can all learn and be edified, and come to a "knowledge of the Truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), and to witness to the things of faith that were "delivered to the saints" (Jud. 1:3) in the Church, which is the "pillar and ground of Truth". (1 Tim. 3:15) May God bless the labor. These lessons are taken from Fr. Thomas Hopko's series [The Orthodox Faith](#).

Tsar Michael Romanov and Patriarch Philaret (Romanov)

Early in 1613 in Moscow, sixteen-year-old Michael Romanov, a grandnephew of Tsar IV's first wife, Anastasia Romanova, was elected to be the new tsar by the largest and most representative National Assembly ever held in Russia. This marked the beginning of the Romanov Dynasty, which ruled Russia until Tsar Nicholas II abdicated early in 1917. In 1619, Michael Romanov's father, Philaret, who had been Metropolitan of Rostov, was made Patriarch of Moscow. Father and son ruled the tightening alliance of Church and State together.

The Nikonian Reforms

When Tsar Michael Romanov died in 1645, he was succeeded by his son, Alexis (r. 1645–1676), who was 16 when he took the throne. By now a new generation of reform-minded young priests had risen up who believed that spiritual revival would come through liturgical reform—including standardizing the various liturgical books, correcting various copying and translation errors, and celebrating the services whole and entire. In 1652, Tsar Alexis selected one of these energetic priests, the popular and talented—but forceful and rigorous—Nikon, Metropolitan of Novgorod, to be the new patriarch of Russia.

Along with most of the other reforming clergy, Nikon at first was a firm believer in Moscow as the Third Rome—as guardian of the full purity of the Orthodox Faith. But before becoming Metropolitan of Novgorod, Nikon had spent several years as abbot of an illustrious monastery in Moscow. It was in this time that he met several prelates from the Greek Church, especially Patriarch Paisius of Jerusalem, who visited Moscow from time to time seeking support from the Russian Church and State. These Greek churchmen helped him to see that it was very much in the interest of pan-Orthodox unity that the Russians bring their liturgical practices more closely in line with those of the Greek Church. This would also make the Russians more aware of the plight of the Greek Church suffering under the Turkish yoke, and hence more willing to come to their aid. Tsar Alexis strongly supported this program.

At the beginning of Great Lent in 1653, Patriarch Nikon began his reforms of church practices, bringing them into alignment with Greek practices. Among many other things, he issued injunctions that the sign of the cross must be made

Wisdom of the Holy Fathers

Genuine holy courage is always united with the feeling of deep humility.

+ St. Nikon

with three fingers instead of two, and that during Saint Ephraim's Prayer, the sixteen full prostrations that the Russians were used to making must be changed to four full prostrations and twelve bows from the waist.

Archpriest Avvakum, another leader of the reform-minded clergy, along with many others, responded to the liturgical changes mandated by Patriarch Nikon with great consternation, even shock. For one thing, the two-fingered sign of the Cross had been confirmed by the great Stoglav Council of 1551 (the Council of the Hundred Chapters), with anathemas against any other practice. Also, the Russians were convinced that the Greeks were the ones who had departed from the pristine purity of the Faith—through their scandalous willingness to capitulate to Roman Catholicism at the Council of Lyons in 1274 and the Council of Florence in 1439. Besides this, the Russians were generally scandalized at the liturgical laxity demonstrated by the Greek churchmen visiting Moscow, who were not used to the very lengthy Russian services and the meticulous attention to liturgical detail observed reverently by the Russians. This added to the suspicions of Father Avvakum and his group.

In promoting the liturgical reforms, Nikon's brash self-confidence led him to underestimate the opposition that his blunt, bludgeoning injunctions provoked. While the bulk of the people went along grudgingly with his demands, the reforming priests and their lay supporters declared, according to Nicolas Zernov, that "in no circumstances would they give up their belief in the superiority of Moscow tradition over that of other branches of the Eastern Church."

This stubborn resistance to his plans infuriated Patriarch Nikon. He was staggered by this defiant disobedience to the Patriarchate. This provoked him to his second big mistake—trying to stamp out the dissent by force. The leading dissenters, according to Zernov, "were arrested, ill-treated, unfrocked, and sent into exile. All these measures were useless . . . persecution only inflamed their zeal and strengthened their conviction that Nikon was a traitor, a false shepherd, to be opposed to the end by all faithful Christians."

Patriarch Nikon continued to promote his campaign for liturgical reform through the end of 1656. Then in January of 1657, Tsar Alexis returned from battles against the Poles to find Moscow seething with discontent against Patriarch Nikon. The Tsar cooled in his support of Nikon, ordering him to restore to communion one of the most out-spoken and prominent opponents of the reform, Father Ivan Neronov, who had been imprisoned in a monastery in 1653. Nikon obeyed, allowing him to use the old service books, and even saying, "Both are good. It doesn't matter; use whichever books you wish." From this point on, the Patriarch seemed to lose heart in the campaign for reform, turning to building new monasteries and churches.

Then, on July 10, 1658, Nikon uttered public complaints against the Tsar at the end of a divine liturgy, and announced his intention to retire from the Patriarchate, probably expecting the Tsar to rush to him to apologize. However, Tsar Alexis only sent two boyars to assure the patriarch of his continuing friendship.

The petulant Patriarch, unsatisfied with this response by the Tsar, remained true to his threat, and retired to a monastery, but without officially resigning from the Patriarchate. For eight years he played for time, neither resigning nor taking up his duties again.

Many consultations were held, including with various Eastern Patriarchs. Several councils were held, but still Nikon remained aloof, and the Church remained in a kind of limbo. Finally, in the Spring of 1666, Tsar Alexis summoned a major council of all the Russian bishops, which reaffirmed the new service books but did not condemn the old books as heretical. On this basis, many of the clergy who opposed the reforms accepted them. Those who still rejected them, such as Avvakum, were again anathematized. This council went on to address many of the concerns of all the reformers—matters of pastoral care, proper maintenance of the churches, proper records being kept, proper celebration of services (including *yedinoglasno*—only one voice being heard at a time), etc.