

# THE PARISH NEWSLETTER MAY 2018

The Nativity of the Mother of God Russian Orthodox Church  
617 Sand Creek Road, Albany NY (518) 869-3932

**A parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad [www.albanyrocor.org](http://www.albanyrocor.org)**

*Rector: Protopriest Alexis Duncan ; Protopriest Michael Fritz*

*Protodeacon: Fr. Michael Soloviev*

## CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!

### MAY NAMESDAYS

1	Victor Turaev	21	Emilia Welsh
6	Alexandra McClure		Amelia Parella
	Alika Wolkow Taylor		Emilia Scott
	Urij Tabuntschikow		Amelia Fitzpatrick
	George Shehata		John Henry
8	Subdeacon Marcus Hauf		Yaroslav (Russ) Patrician
11	Jason Baker	22	Kristofer Kinnear
14	Jeremiah Henry		Christopher McClure
	Tamara Stanyakova		Christopher O'Keefe
16	Brendan Henry	23	Mat. Constance Fritz
17	Junia Dragon		Taisia Fedorov
18	Irina Krykhtina	26	Reader John (Rick) Schuler
	Irina Jess	31	Alexandra Sinkevich
	Irina Ermolenko		Christina Bushinow
	Irina Andrushkevich		Julie Mazzaferro

MNOGAYA LETA! MANY YEARS to all of our Parishioners celebrating their Namesday in the month of MAY.

PLEASE REMEMBER FR. WSEVOLOD IN YOUR PRAYERS ON MAY 5<sup>th</sup> - his Namesday.

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### IMPORTANT DATES FOR UPCOMING WEEKS

<b>MAY 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN</b> <b>COFFEE HOUR</b> <b>SISTERHOOD MEETING</b>
<b>MAY 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN</b> <b>Mother's Day - NO COFFEE HOUR</b> <b>Church School &amp; Adult Discussion Group</b>
<b>MAY 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Vigil for Feast of Ascension 6:30pm</b>
<b>MAY 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>ASCENSION OF OUR LORD 8:30 am Liturgy</b>
<b>MAY 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>SUNDAY OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL</b> <b>Church School &amp; Adult Discussion Group (LAST CLASS)</b> <b>MENS COFFEE HOUR - LAST COFFEE HOUR</b> <b>COUNCIL MEETING AT THE RECTORY</b>
<b>MAY 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>PENTECOST (Week After Pentecost is FAST FREE)</b>
	<b>EVERY SATURDAY EVENING - VIGIL 5pm</b>
	<b>EVERY SUNDAY - HOURS FOLLOWED BY LITURGY - 9:30am</b>

## SUMMER HOURS

Starting on the Sunday after Memorial; Day - **SUNDAY, JUNE 3<sup>rd</sup>**, Hours and Liturgy will start at 9 am. These hours will be in effect the entire summer until AFTER the celebration of our Parish Feastday in September.

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## FAST FREE WEEK AFTER PENTECOST

The Feast of Pentecost is on MAY 27<sup>th</sup> and we hope that many of our parishioners will go to Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville for the celebration of their Feastday. Also, a reminder, that the week following Pentecost is a FAST-FREE week, with no Lent on Wednesday or Friday (**MAY 28<sup>th</sup> - JUNE 3<sup>rd</sup>**).

This also means that the beginning of the Apostles Fast will be on Monday, June 4<sup>th</sup> and will last until the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul on JULY 12<sup>th</sup>.

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## CHURCH SCHOOL CLASSES

**MAY 13<sup>th</sup> and MAY 20<sup>th</sup> will be our last Church School Classes for this semester. Classes will resume in the Fall.**

Thank you to our teachers for preparing lessons to make the "Church School" experience fun and educational for all our Children. We are blessed with many children and need to ensure that they receive a firm foundation and understanding of their faith.

Thank you to our Parents and Grandparents who ensured the students were in attendance. But most importantly - thank you to all of our children who strived to learn about their faith. May God Bless you all.

We would like to do a "FUN" activity for our children for graduation sometime in June. If any of the parents have any suggestions or ideas please speak to Matushka Anna. Perhaps we could go bowling again or miniature golfing, or any other suggestions???

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## CHURCH PLAYGROUND

We hope that the swingset will be installed within the next week or so. We will then need help to lay landscaping fabric, stones, more landscaping fabric and mulch to complete the project. As soon as definite dates are established an e-mail will be sent to ALL parishioners to enlist their help in finally completing this project. We hope that we will get MANY volunteers on that day so the task will go quickly.

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## **FRIDAY - JUNE 1<sup>st</sup> FUNDRAISING GOLUBTSI and VARENIKI DINNER**

We are having a Fundraising Golubtsi and Vareniki Dinner on Friday, June 1<sup>st</sup> (4pm -8pm) at the Church Hall. This is a fast free Friday so all of our parishioners can come and enjoy the dinner. Please invite all of your friends, family and co-workers to come join the Festivities. A Golubtsi Dinner is \$10.00 and includes Golubtsi, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable, Choice of Soft Drink,. Or 6 Vareniki with sour cream and vegetable, choice of soft drink, Coffee/Tea and Dessert for \$8.00. You will have your choice of a scrumptious dessert at an additional charge.

You can either eat-in or get your meal to go. Please support us in this fundraising endeavor for our "Capital Improvement Fund:". The Church Hall will be needing a new roof soon and the parking lot is need of repair. Flyers will be available within the next few weeks so you can advertise at your place of employment or anywhere else that will allow you to post the flyer. PLEASE support your church in this Fundraising event. Thank You!. For more information please contact Maria Hauf 518-253-9286 or Tasia Fedorov 518 459-1253.

We will also need volunteers as wait staff, dish washers and a clean-up crew. If you are available to work this evening please contact Maria Hauf.

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## **FATHER ALEXIS HAS GRAND JURY DUTY**

For the next 8 weeks, beginning, April 29<sup>th</sup>, Father Alexis will NOT be available on Wednesdays and Fridays. If it is an emergency, please contact Fr. Michael Fritz at 518 753-7550 OR Matushka Anna at 518 928-2472. Thank you!

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## **ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC**

If anyone is interested in organizing and running this year's Annual Picnic - they are asked to contact Fr. Alexis as soon as possible. Since Cook Park was NOT reserved this year, it looks like the picnic will take place on the Church Grounds. Which makes cooking and cleaning much easier since there is no transport of food and supplies involved. Since the Apostles Fast is a long one this year, we are limited to the dates that are available.

### **Some suggested dates:**

JUNE 4<sup>th</sup> - JULY 12<sup>th</sup> - APOSTLES FAST - Not Available

JULY 15<sup>th</sup> - Wedding - NOT AVAILABLE

**JULY 22<sup>nd</sup> - AVAILABLE**

JULY 29<sup>th</sup> & AUGUST 5<sup>th</sup> - NOT AVAILABLE (ST. SERAPHIM'S CAMP)

**AUGUST 12<sup>th</sup> - AVAILABLE**

AUGUST 14<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> - DORMITION FAST NOT AVAILABLE

**SEPTEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup> - THIS IS LABOR DAY WEEKEND**

Hopefully someone will volunteer to chair this years picnic. THANK YOU!

## FR. THEODORE RECEIVED OUR THANK YOU NOTES

**This is the response I received from Fr. Theodore when he received our notes and cards:**

O my gosh, you forced the whole parish to glorify me! I was really overwhelmed by the bag full of love you sent, what a nice way to make me feel guilty for not finishing the Passion icons before I left! Thank you трижды! I love all of you, please pray for me too! May our dear Lord fill your hearts with joy as we celebrate this holy Pascha.

X B

With love in Christ Fr theodore

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## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

The parish council has been talking about establishing some youth events. The idea is to get our kids to interact as a church family, to not only to get to know each other better, but to establish relationships that will last a lifetime. If you notice the “20/30 something” generation of our parish, most of them are in the choir or they return frequently and are still a part of our parish – all of them grew up in the parish – serving, helping, going to picnics, camps and conferences together. We, the parish council, want to continue to make this opportunity available, to feed it, to nourish it, so that the relationships might flourish. The events would have to be age appropriate. Some of the teenagers might want to hike the Adirondacks, maybe go up on a Friday afternoon, maybe spend the night in tents, and then be back for vigil on Saturday evening. I’d be interested in this event. I know the Adirondacks pretty well. Most trails have some challenge associated with them, so being in shape and having the right frame of mind, not being afraid of exertion, etc. would be a prerequisite. We also talked about something as simple as setting up tents at the church on a Saturday afternoon, going to vigil Saturday evening then having a bonfire to roast hot dogs and the fixings, play hide and seek, kick the can, and whatever else we can think of. We tried this last year and it was fun, we just need to have more people participate to make it that much more fun. This would probably be appropriate for everyone, for old like me as well as the very young (...so long as the parents are there to watch over their young ones). This would be an event for each individual family, but when we all come together, it would be a lot of fun for all members of the parish – even those without children. I like the outdoor kind of things, I know Fr Alexis does too and he is itching to get out on the mountain trails, but there might be day time events too – maybe volunteering to go to an assisted living facility to bring a little light to folks that might not have a family or to visit a hospital or the sick. Maybe go fishing...

So, I ask that if you have any interest in helping or participating, please let me know. We can make a list of who is interested and what event they would be able to help get established. We would like to get a few events in place and advertise them to the parish so we get the most participation possible.

My home email is [rgonyea4@nycap.rr.com](mailto:rgonyea4@nycap.rr.com) and my telephone number is (518) 695-6865.

## PROCTORS THEATER IN SCHENCTADY

.Proctors looking for volunteers...it is a commitment..but very worth it for theatre lovers..serious interest ONLY... Thanks...  
If you have any questions e-mail Christina Fedorov-DiLello at [chrisnobie@aol.com](mailto:chrisnobie@aol.com)

If you have friends/relatives/acquaintances who are interested in volunteering, below are the dates for new volunteer orientation. BUT...they MUST fill out the application on line and be invited to attend. They can find the application on line at [proctors.org](http://proctors.org). It's under About and then Opportunities. All new volunteer applications should be submitted by 6/15/18.

New Volunteer Orientation: 7/12/18 at 6 PM and 7/16/18 at 6 PM

Cindy LaRoe, Audience Services Manager,Proctors  
518-382-3884, Ext 183  
[claroe@proctors.org](mailto:claroe@proctors.org)

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### Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

On the seventh Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the holy God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

The Orthodox Church today prayerfully remembers the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, which once met in the city of Nicaea in order to investigate and judge the heresy of Arius. We know that in the first centuries of Christianity, the Church endured severe persecution, first from the Jews and then from the pagan Roman imperial power. But despite the fact that the persecution was bloody, despite the fact that thousands of Christians died under torture for their confession of faith, nonetheless, it was not dangerous for the Church.

The Christian of the first centuries remembered well that the Lord Jesus Christ said: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:28). And in the Apocalypse He said: "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev 2:10). In these bloody persecutions Christians were faithful to death, went to martyric death, and received from the Lord Savior the crown of eternal life earned by them.

When the era of persecution ended, another began. This was much more dangerous for the Church. Then inside the Church appeared heresy, delusion, and distortion of the truth. They appeared immediately, but the first were not much noticed, and did not attract many followers. The heresy of Arius, which appeared when the persecution had ended, agitated the entire Church. Arius was a scholar and an eloquent presbyter, that is, a priest – a pastor in the city of Alexandria. The bishop of Alexandria died. At that time the flock chose its own pastors. The eloquent, educated Arius, who held a prominent position, was certain that he would be chosen, and that he would be the bishop. But the majority of the clergy and people chose another bishop, the presbyter Alexander, who was also well read, educated, and

knowledgeable. He was not as outstanding and talented as Arius, but he was marked by his piety, and was truly of righteous and holy life. For this reason the clergy and flock honored him and elected him.

This piqued Arius' wounded self-love. Unfortunately, this is always the story in the history of heresies. In the beginning there lies an evil motive, an evil impulse of a personal character, which is wrapped in a robe as a kind of fidelity to truth.

Thus Arius, in his self-love, decided to speak out against his own bishop – he could not accept the fact that he was not a bishop. Once Bishop Alexander spoke with his clergy about the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, about the equality of its Persons, that the Holy Trinity is a Trinity of Unity, inasmuch as in three Persons there is One Divine Essence, One Divine Nature. Arius boldly stood up and began to contradict him and began to assert that the Son of God is not equal to God the Father, as Bishop Alexander had said, or not born of Him, but created by Him, as a creature, as creation. True, higher, more perfect, but still creation, a creature. Alexander tried to reason with gentle admonitions to reason with Arius, but he persevered. And since he was eloquent, this heresy arose, and because of him it spread and eventually roused the entire Church.

Alexander, as a bishop, excommunicated him from the Church. He left, but began to spread his doctrine further and further. In the end, the Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine himself commissioned the Elder Hosius of Cordova, well known for his piety and deep wisdom to make out what this was, what this was for a heresy. The elderly Bishop Hosius, pious and wise, arrived in Alexandria. Without any prejudice, absolutely impartial, he investigated this question, and returned and told the Emperor that Arius was preaching a horrible heresy, which subverts all of Christianity. For if the Son of God is not equal to God the Father and is not born of Him, then He is not God, but creation, which means that he was not incarnate as the true God-Man. That means that the deed of our salvation was not accomplished as our Christian faith teaches us.

In the end, an Ecumenical Council assembled. Arius had only a few bishops on his side. The overwhelming majority of bishops (and more than 300 assembled for the Council) stood firmly for the Orthodox faith, condemned the heresy of Arius, and excommunicated him himself from the Church, as a persistent and uncorrected heretic.

This heretic died a horrible death, but his heresy agitated the Church for a long time. Only gradually did it begin to subside. It had to be fought by Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom, who lived after Arius. But, in the end, truth triumphed, but there was a moment when in the East, of all Orthodox bishops, only St Athanasius the Great remained, and in the West only St Hilary of Poitiers; all the other episcopal cathedras, hundreds of cathedras, were taken by bishops who were themselves Arian heretics.

The Church, however, was not lost. It was difficult for St Athanasius to fight with the heretics in the East. Many times he was exiled, but he remained unmoved. When he learned in his solitude that at last he had an ally, a successor, in St Basil the Great, did this great defender of Orthodoxy breathe a sigh of relief. Thus did the Church experience this heresy, that is how it was disturbed by it.

After Arius there were other heretics. They were also condemned by Ecumenical Councils. But today we remember the First Ecumenical Council, which condemned Arius and his heresy. Amen.

*METROPOLITAN PHILARET OF EASTERN AMERICAN AND NEW YORK (+1985)*

## PENTECOST

### The Birthday of the Church

The feast of the Holy Trinity (otherwise, Pentecost) is dedicated to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the fiftieth day after the Resurrection of Christ. This event brought into existence the Church of Christ and gave rise to the Christian faith on earth. On the feast of Pentecost the Church brings its children to the doors of its spiritual life and appeals to them to renew and strengthen in themselves the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to them in Baptism. Spiritual life of an individual is impossible without God's grace, which possesses the mysterious power of rebirth and transforms the whole of the Christian's inward life. However lofty and valuable his desire might be, it will be fulfilled by the Holy Spirit. That is why the feast of Pentecost is always so joyfully celebrated by Orthodox Christians.

Throughout all of history God gradually revealed himself to mankind. During Old Testament times people knew only about God the Father. Since the birth of the Savior they learned of his Only-begotten Son, and on the day of the descent of the Holy Spirit people learned of the existence of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. Thus mankind was instructed to believe and praise God, one in essence and Threefold in Persons, that is, God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity one and indivisible.

In this pamphlet we will describe the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, account for the importance of God's grace in Christian life and recount the service of Pentecost. We will include the canon of the Matins service and give the Orthodox treatment of the contemporary "gift of tongues." The appendix contains selected prayers of the Pentecostal Vespers service.

### The Descent of the Holy Spirit

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost is described by the Evangelist Luke in the initial chapters of his book "Acts of the Holy Apostles." It was God's will to make this event a turning point in the world's history.

Pentecost, celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Jewish Passover, was one of the three major holidays of the Old Testament. Pentecost marked the adoption of Sinai's legislation under the Prophet Moses when the Jewish people were liberated from Egypt and entered into alliance with God nearly fourteen hundred years before Christ's birth. At that time the Jews promised to be obedient to God and He, in turn, promised them His mercy and blessings. Because the feast of Pentecost coincided with the end of the harvest season, it was celebrated with great joy. Many Jews scattered over various parts of the vast Roman empire hurried to Jerusalem to participate in this feast. Having been born and having grown up in different countries, most of them could hardly understand their mother tongue. They made an effort, however, to observe their national and religious traditions and, at least from time to time, to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

The descent of the Holy Spirit was not an unexpected event for the Apostles. As far back as a few centuries before the Savior's birth God began to prepare people for the day of their spiritual rebirth. He promised through his prophets: "It shall come to pass afterward, that I

shall pour out My Spirit on all flesh ... With joy you will draw water from the well of salvation ... For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground ... A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and observe and carry out My judgements" (Joel 2: 28; Is. 12: 3, 44:3; Ezek. 11:19-20).

When preparing to return to His heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus Christ in His farewell talk informed the Apostles about the forthcoming descent of the Holy Spirit. He explained to the disciples that the Comforter, that is, the Holy Spirit, would come soon to them to fulfill the mission of salvation: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, to be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth ... He will teach you everything and remind you of everything that I say unto you ... He, the Spirit of Truth, which proceeds from the Father, will bear witness of Me" (John 14: 16-17, 26; 15: 26).

After the events of outrage, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, which the Apostles took deeply to their hearts, they became quite different people. They grew stronger spiritually and matured to accept the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It was then that God's mercy came to them in its fullness and they were the first to enjoy the spiritual fruits of the salutary feat of the God-Man.

Fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and ten days after His Ascension to Heaven, the disciples of Jesus, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary, some of the pious women and other believers, 120 persons in all, gathered in Jerusalem in a so-called "Zion chamber." They were probably in the same room where the Lord, not long before His sufferings, performed the Last Supper. The Apostles were awaiting the fulfillment of the Savior's will to send them "the Father's Promise" and strengthen them with divine power, although they did not understand yet exactly what that meant.

Then, at nine in the morning, when people usually came to the Temple for sacrifices and prayers, a noise came from heaven like a strong gust of wind. It filled the house, and at the same instant there appeared above the Apostle's heads what appeared to be tongues of flame which began descending on their heads. These tongues possessed a peculiar property to give light and not burn. But still more unusual were the special gifts they imparted. Everyone upon whom they descended became spiritually enriched and felt an ineffable joy and inspiration. They would begin to perceive themselves to be quite different people: pacific, full of life and a strong love for God. These innermost feelings before unknown were expressed by the Apostles through joyful exclamations and glorifications of God. It turned out that now they were not speaking their native Hebrew language but other tongues unknown to them. In that way the Apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire just as it was prophesied by John the Baptist.

Meanwhile, this sound, as if from a mighty wind, drew lots of people to the Apostles' house. Having seen people gathering from everywhere, the Apostles, rendering gratitude and praises to Almighty God in their prayers, appeared on the balcony of the house. On hearing the prayers, all those gathered around the house were amazed by the event, which was utterly incomprehensible to them. Christ's disciples, mostly Galilean in origin, had little education and were not expected to speak tongues other than their own. But now, after the miracle, they were speaking many foreign languages so that, however diverse the crowd of people might be (for they came to Jerusalem from different countries), they all heard their native tongues. There happened to be some cynics among the crowd who laughed at godly preachers and dared to say that the Apostles had become drunk from wine. But in reality the power of the Holy Spirit, besides other inner favorable changes, was being revealed by



the extraordinary gift of tongues so that the Apostles would be able to propagate the Gospel more successfully among different nations without the need to learn foreign languages.

Having seen the people's perplexity the Apostle Peter came forward to deliver his first sermon. He explained to them that in the wonderful event of the descent of the Holy Spirit there came true an ancient prophecy of Joel which spoke on behalf of God: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, said the Lord, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. Even upon My menservants and maidservants of those days, I will pour out my Spirit; and wonders will be seen in heaven above and on the earth below ... " (Joel 2: 28-32). The Apostle Peter explained that through this very event there had been achieved the great feat of the salvation of mankind. It was for their sake that the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, came to them, underwent crucifixion and was resurrected. However short and simple this sermon was, it penetrated into the hearts of the listeners for it was the Holy Spirit who spoke by Peter's mouth.

Most of the people who were listening to Saint Peter were touched deeply in their souls, and they asked him, "What shall we do now?" "Repent," was Peter's answer, "and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit." Many of them came to believe in Christ after the words of Peter, repented publicly their sins and were baptized. So by the evening of the same day the Christian Church increased from 120 to 3000 believers. This miraculous event gave rise to the existence of the Christian Church, the blessed community of believers summoned to save their souls. Jesus Christ promised that His Church would be invincible against the gates of Hell until the very end of the existence of the world.

It did not occur by chance that two very important events took place on the same day: the descent of the Holy Spirit and the Jewish Pentecost. The traditional feast of Pentecost marked the alliance of the Jewish people with God. This alliance required the observation of the Ten Commandments and promised the reception of earthly blessings. The descent of the Holy Spirit implemented a completely novel and much deeper alliance, or Testament, between God and the New Israel - the Christian people. It is based on faith in the Savior and its goal is the spiritual renewal and inheritance of eternal life. The descent of the Holy Spirit has become the day on which the old theocracy, which ruled society through a rigorous law, became replaced by grace and sincere love for God. Now the Spirit of Truth became the guide of believers for their journey to Heaven, and the source of their spiritual freedom and inspiration.

by Bishop Alexander (Mileant)

