

## The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians (2:14–22)

Brethren: Christ Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

## The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (12:16–21)

The Lord spoke this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’” But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

## Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

Meriden, Connecticut

website: [sspeterpaul.org](http://sspeterpaul.org)

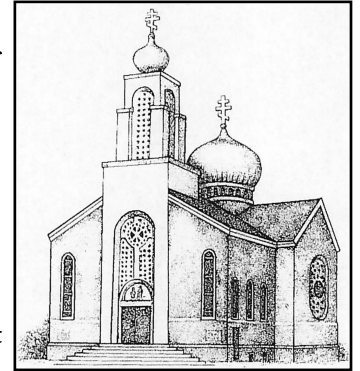
*A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America*

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24th Sunday after Pentecost—Tone 7

November 19, 2023

Prophet Obadiah (9th c. B.C.). Martyr Barlaam of Caesarea in Cappadocia (ca. 304). Martyr Heliodorus in Pamphylia (ca. 273). Martyr Azes of Isauria and 150 soldiers with him (3rd c.).

### Glory to Jesus Christ!

We welcome everyone who has come to this house of the Lord. We especially welcome all guest and newcomers.

Please feel free to follow along with a Divine Liturgy book from the table at the glass doors. For this Sunday and most of the year, we are using the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (at the beginning of the book). The most significant hymns and responses specific for today are printed inside this bulletin.

Holy Communion is a solemn responsibility: Orthodox Christians who have prepared through Confession, prayer, and fasting may participate. At the end of the Liturgy, everyone is welcome to come forward for a blessing and to share in the blessed bread (called “antidoron,” this blessed bread is used in our prayers but is not itself a sacrament).

Afterward, please join us downstairs for fellowship and refreshment. We look forward to greeting you personally, and we are glad that you are here.

## Upcoming Events in Parish Life

We invite anyone to pray along with us. following our services online. Visit our website ([sspeterpaul.org](http://sspeterpaul.org)) for details.

Saturday, Nov. 18	Great Vespers followed by confessions	5 PM
Sunday, Nov. 19	Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM
	Today, after coffee hour, we will be assembling and making our Thanksgiving deliveries to six neighborhood families in need. Please join us!	
Monday, Nov. 20	Vigil—Entrance into the Temple	6 PM
Tuesday, Nov. 21	Divine Liturgy—Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple	9:30 AM
	We join with Joachim and Anna in giving thanks for the Virgin Mary, brought into the Temple with joy. Through their offering, the child Mary was raised up to become a temple and dwelling-place for God the Word—Jesus Christ our Lord.	
Thursday, Nov. 23 Thanksgiving Day	Akathist Service—Glory to God for All Things	10 AM
	This simple yet profound service is not long, but it does give thanks for every aspect of creation. In past years, it has been a well-beloved service. We are glad to be able to celebrate it once again this year. Consider making it part of your own Thanksgiving.	
Saturday, Nov. 25	Great Vespers followed by confessions	5 PM
Sunday, Nov. 26	Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM
Tuesday, Nov. 28	Study of the Gospel of Matthew Online: <a href="http://sspeterpaul.org/study">sspeterpaul.org/study</a>	6:30 PM
Sunday, Dec. 3	Annual Parish Meeting (snow date Dec. 10)	

Congratulations to Ephraim Mosher who was recently appointed **Assistant Youth Director** for the Diocese. And to Dave Zavenak, elected to the Metropolitan Council.

Packets will be distributed today with reports and voting information for our **Annual Parish Meeting**.

## We Ask Your Prayers

The cross is lit by Donna and Paul Leonowich in loving memory of **Nina Bleck**.

**For all those who have as their heavenly patron the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary (Nov. 21), or the Great-martyr Catherine of Alexandria (Nov. 24).**

### For those celebrating birthdays:

David Zavednak on Nov 21. Vera Mankevich on Nov 24.

### For the Sick & Suffering:

Corey (Knap)—nephew of Valentina Knap, recovering from a serious accident  
William (Weidmann)—husband of Adrian, suffering from a chronic immune condition similar to multiple sclerosis

Steven (Cardillo)—local Neighborhood Association organizer

Starr (Sarrazin)—friend of Robin Levesque

Michael (Bongoll)—first-floor tenant of parish apartment house

Joyce—friend of Mary Jane Rodgers

Gregory (Mankevich)

Christopher (Sullivan)

Anita (Propheter)

Rosemary (Delaney)

Douglas (Hodges)

Steven (Rygiel)

Irene

Lorraine

Jacob

Juliana

Katelyn

Crystal

Angela

Innocent

Cyprian and Dana

Nicole and Naaman

Helen and Helene

### For Our Shut-Ins:

Yvonne (Rutcho)

Jennie (Padick)

Margaret (Savchik)

Helen (Olsen)

To share news in the bulletin, or to add someone to our prayer list, please contact Fr. Joshua: [priest@sspeterpaul.org](mailto:priest@sspeterpaul.org) or 203-237-4539.

If you would like to commemorate loved ones by lighting the cross in church, please contact Alexia Tassmer: 203-284-0856.

Give thanks to God, and support the work he is doing through SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church:  
<https://sspeterpaul.org/donate>

Open the donation link with this QR Code →



## Welcome to the Nativity Fast

The Nativity Fast, also known as Advent Fast or St. Philip's Fast (in honor of the Apostle Philip on Nov. 14), runs 40 days from Nov. 15 through Dec. 24, Christmas Eve. Unlike the Great Fast or indeed the other fasting seasons, it actually begins quietly, with no particular liturgical observance. This is mirrored in our society by a complete ignorance toward the idea that this is a season of fasting, repentance, preparation and prayer. The Nativity Fast presents unique challenges to faithful Orthodox Christians, and but we will be profoundly blessed if we do make the effort to observe it.

Here are the basic components to the Nativity Fast:

### Liturgical Season

From Nov. 15 until the two Sundays before Christmas, there are no set observances to the Nativity Fast. There are certain commemorations on certain dates that nonetheless point toward the Birth of Christ: Prophets Nahum, Habbakuk and Zephaniah on Dec. 1–3; St. John of Damascus, who composed innumerable magnificent hymns but especially those for the Christmas Vigil, on Dec. 4; St. Nicholas the Wonderworker on Dec. 6; the Conception of the Theotokos on Dec. 9, the Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths on Dec. 17. All their lives are well worth learning and celebrating as we come to them.

Two Sundays before Christmas, we observe the **Sunday of the Forefathers**, those in the Old Testament who perceived and kept alive in their hearts the promise of the Coming of Christ in the flesh. The immediate Sunday before Christmas (Dec. 24 this year), we remember the **Forebears of the Lord**—Jesus' lineage according to the flesh.

On Dec. 20, we begin the **Forefeast of the Nativity**, which has its own hymns preparing us for the feast to come. The eve of the Nativity is observed quite differently depending on which day Christmas falls each year.

### Fasting Rules

The typical pattern in these fasting periods is that **we fast “strictly” (abstaining from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil) during weekdays, and allow wine and oil (and perhaps fish) on Saturdays and Sundays**, which throughout the year, including fasting periods, are inherently somewhat festive. In general, we are also expected to eat simply and less.

Certain days, notably the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple on Nov. 21, are major feasts which also call for celebration, and wine and oil are reintroduced.

### Limits on Fasting

Many cannot maintain the strict fast, whether for health reasons, family dynamics, or other challenges. If you have concerns, consult with your parish priest—and don't compare notes with fellow parishioners or other churches. There are two monastic sayings very wise in this regard: “Keep your eyes on your own plate,” and “Don't bring your monastery's Rule when you visit another monastery.” What is necessary for one may be harmful for another.

**For our own parish**, understanding that it is a major effort to observe the Nativity Fast at all, we ask hosts at coffee hour **provide food that at least avoids meat and dairy during this season, and please be sure to provide some option for those who are trying to observe more fully.**

### Spiritual Efforts while Fasting

Fasting is not just about food—in fact, the main point is to obsess less about food and the stomach so that we can devote ourselves to more important things: prayer, repentance, reading the Bible and other spiritual food, worship, and loving our neighbor. Put significant effort here.

One particular priority is **Holy Confession**. We are called to examine our consciences rigorously, and participate in the Mystery of Confession so that we may with glad and pure hearts rejoice in Holy Communion at Christmas.

Another, closely related, is **Love and Charity**—sacrificial giving to those in need; visiting the sick, the lonely, those in trouble; making peace with those who have grieved you. The Son of God came among us out of love for mankind: if we wish to receive him, we must learn to practice that love.

### A Final Word

In our society, fasting at all during this coming season is massively counter-cultural. Everyone else celebrates Christmas right up until December 25 and then forgets about it. We just begin feasting when everyone else is bored and hung over! So the general understanding is that we should just try our best with a humble and generous heart. Always when fasting, remember that Jesus commands us not to make a show of it. Be cheerful and normal. Be a humble and thoughtful guest, not demanding special consideration. No one will be prevented from entering heaven because they ate fish on the wrong day, but we may well be shut out for neglecting or injuring our brother.

My last word is to take it slow. As I suggest above, no one fasts “perfectly.” Come up with a simple, boring, inexpensive meal plan and try to keep to it. Use the money you save to give to those in need. Come to church as often as you can. Read and pray. Avoid arguments. Make peace with anyone you need to, and visit the lonely and sick. May the Lord bless your efforts!

## Hymns of the Day

### Tone 7 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

By Your Cross You destroyed death.  
To the thief You opened Paradise.  
For the Myrrhbearers You changed weeping into joy.  
And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God,  
to proclaim that You are risen, //  
granting the world great mercy.

### Tone 4 Troparion (*Apostles Peter & Paul*)

O first-enthroned of the Apostles,  
teachers of the universe:  
entreat the Master of all  
to grant peace to the world, //  
and to our souls great mercy!

### Tone 8 Troparion (*St. Barlaam*)

Armed with youthful fervor,  
you endured martyrdom in old age and glorified Christ.  
You offered Him your right hand as a whole burnt offering  
and your holy soul as a blameless sacrifice. //  
Intercede that all that be granted forgiveness, Great-martyr Barlaam.

### Tone 7 Kontakion (*Resurrection*)

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive,  
for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers.  
Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry:  
“The Savior has come to those in faith; //  
enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!”

### Tone 2 Kontakion (*Apostles Peter & Paul*)

O Lord, You have taken up to eternal rest  
and to the enjoyment of Your blessings  
the two divinely inspired preachers, the leaders of the Apostles,  
for You have accepted their labors and deaths as a sweet-smelling  
sacrifice, //  
for You alone know what lies in the hearts of men.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

### Tone 3 Kontakion (*St. Barlaam*)

Though weak with old age you vanquished the Evil One  
in your mighty contest, O Barlaam.  
You endured the rack like one without a body,  
and steadfastly endured the burning of your hand. //  
Therefore, God the Word has crowned you with a crown of glory.  
now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### Tone 6 Kontakion—*Steadfast Protectress*

#### Prokeimenon in the Seventh Tone (*Resurrection*)

The Lord shall give strength to His people. / The Lord shall bless His  
people with peace. (*Ps. 28:11*)

*Verse:* Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to  
the Lord! (*Ps. 28:1a*)

#### Before the Gospel, the Alleluia

*Verse:* Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the  
Lord! (*Ps. 28:1a*)

*Verse:* To declare Your mercy in the morning, and Your truth by night.  
(*Ps. 91:2a*)

#### Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*)  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!