

## The Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians (4:1–6)

Brethren, I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

## The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (13:10–17)

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.” And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, “There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.” The Lord then answered him and said, “Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?” And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

## Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

Meriden, Connecticut

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

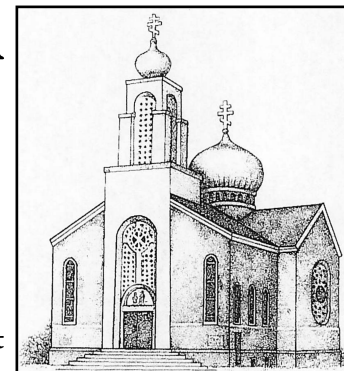
*A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America*

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25th Sunday after Pentecost—Tone 8

November 26, 2023

Ven. Alypius the Stylite of Adrianopolis (7th c.). The Righteous Gideon. Repose of St. Innocent, first Bishop of Irkutsk (1731). Ven. James the Solitary of Syria (457).

### 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. 25	Great Vespers followed by confessions	5 PM
Sunday, Nov. 26	Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM
	Questions after Coffee	Noon
Tuesday, Nov. 28	Study of the Gospel of Matthew Online: <a href="http://sspeterpaul.org/study">sspeterpaul.org/study</a>	6:30 PM
Wed., Nov. 29	Morning Worship	8:15 AM
Friday, Dec. 1	Eve of Consecration Service in Boston	6 PM
Sat., Dec. 2	Hierarchal Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity, Boston, with the Consecration and Enthronement of His Grace, Benedict, as Bishop of New England	
Saturday, Dec. 2	Great Vespers followed by confessions	5 PM
Sunday, Dec. 3	Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM
	Annual Parish Meeting (snow date Dec. 10)	
Dec. 3–6	Fr. Joshua will leave after the Annual Meeting for a national Church meeting out of state. He will be able to respond periodically to messages, but will not return to Connecticut until late Wednesday.	
Saturday, Dec. 9	Vigil followed by confessions	5 PM
Sunday, Dec. 10	Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM
Tuesday, Dec. 12	Great Vespers—St. Herman of Alaska	6 PM
Wed., Dec. 13	Parish Council	6:30 PM
Friday, Dec. 22	Royal Hours of the Eve of Nativity	6 PM
Saturday, Dec. 23	Great Vespers followed by confessions	6 PM
Sunday, Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM
	Vigil of Christmas Eve	5 PM
Monday, Dec. 25	Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day	9:30 AM

## We Ask Your Prayers

The cross is lit for Donna Leonowich's birthday by Paul. Many years!

**For all those who have as their heavenly patron the Apostle Andrew** (Nov. 30).

**For those celebrating birthdays:** Donna Leonowich, Nicholas Alecsandru, and Robin Seraphina Russell (Dec. 1).

### 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:

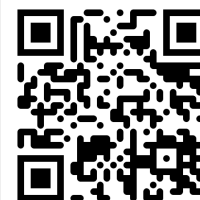
Yvonne (Rutcho)                         Jennie (Padick)

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 8 Troparion** (*Resurrection*)

You descended from on high, O Merciful One!  
You accepted the three day burial to free us from our sufferings! //  
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to You!

### **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. Alypius*)

You were a pillar of patient endurance,  
having imitated the forefathers, O ^Venerable One:  
Job in suffering and Joseph in temptations.  
You lived like the Bodiless Ones while yet in the flesh, Alypius, our  
father. //  
Beseech Christ God that our souls may be saved!

### **Tone 8 Kontakion** (*Resurrection*)

By rising from the tomb, You raised the dead and resurrected Adam.  
Eve exults in Your Resurrection, //  
and the world celebrates Your rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful  
One!

### **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 8 Kontakion** (*St. Alypius*)

The Church glorifies and praises you today, O Alypius,  
as a perfect example of virtue and the boast of ascetics. //  
Through your prayers, grant remission of sins to all who venerate your  
life and your struggles!  
now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### **Tone 6 Kontakion**—*Steadfast Protectress*

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

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! (*Ps. 75:10a*)  
*Verse:* In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel. (*Ps. 75:1*)

#### **Before the Gospel, the Alleluia**

*Verse:* Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to  
God our Savior! (*Ps. 94:1*)  
*Verse:* Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a  
joyful noise to Him with songs of praise! (*Ps. 94:2*)

#### **Communion Hymn**

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

#### **Notes on the Week**

We had a lovely Thanksgiving surprise: Father Benedict joined us for our Akathist service that morning, and shared a Thanksgiving dinner with the Mosher family afterward.

This coming Saturday, Father Benedict will be consecrated and enthroned Bishop of Hartford and New England. According to the canonical rule of the Church, each new bishop is ordained by the laying on of hands by at least three other bishops. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon will preside, with several other hierarchs planning to concelebrate, along with a crowd of clergy and faithful. Our new bishop will also be enthroned at the same time—officially taking his seat of leadership over our diocese. This term goes back to pre-Christian times: those who taught in the synagogues “sat in Moses’ seat.” The word “cathedral” refers to the *cathedra* (in Greek *thronos*, from which “throne” comes), the place of honor and episcopal authority of the bishop. Our own parish has a “throne” or seat reserved for the bishop when he visits our church. Please remember Fr. Benedict in your prayers.