

The Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians (5:9–19)

Brethren, walk as children of light (the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: “Awake, you that sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.” See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (18:18–27)

At that time, a certain ruler asked Jesus, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not bear false witness,” “Honor your father and your mother.” And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.” So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” And those who heard it said, “Who then can be saved?” But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

Meriden, Connecticut

website: sspeterpaul.org

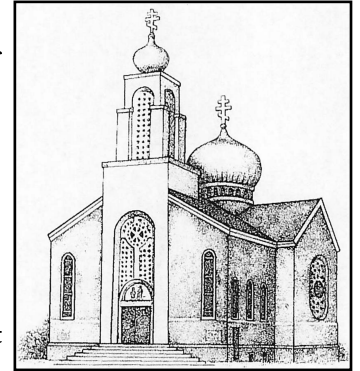
A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America

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26th Sunday after Pentecost—Tone 1

December 3, 2023

Prophet Zephaniah (635–605 B.C.).
Saint Theodulus, Eparch of
Constantinople (ca. 440). Venerable
John the Silent of St. Sabbas’
Monastery (558).

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) for details.

Saturday, Nov. 25	Great Vespers followed by confessions	5 PM
Sunday, Nov. 26	Divine Liturgy	9:30 AM
	Annual Parish Meeting	
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	Matins—St. Herman of Alaska	8:15 AM
	St. Herman was the first saint canonized in America, and we are blessed with his relic in the shrine on the right side of the church.	
Wed., Dec. 13	Parish Council	6:30 PM
Saturday, Dec. 16	Parish Cleaning Day	9 AM
	Join this morning work party to prepare our church for the Lord's Nativity.	
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 will hold our **Annual Parish Meeting** today in the church. Following the Divine Liturgy, everyone is invited downstairs for a short time of fellowship and refreshment, and then we will return at approximately 11:45 for the meeting. Online participants will connect via Zoom—please use microphones for all questions and comments.

Our bookstore has purchased beautiful Nativity Icon cards and wooden Christmas ornaments from the Holy Land available in the Fellowship Room.

The cross is lit for **Peter Fedorov's 80th birthday** by Paul Leonowich. May God grant him many years!

We Ask Your Prayers

For those celebrating name days: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (Dec. 6)

For those celebrating birthdays: Peter Fedorov (Dec. 5), Jennie Padick (Dec. 7).

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

Sarr (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

Jeffrey

Stacia

Cyprian and Dana

Nicole and Naaman

Helen and Helene

For Our Shut-Ins:

Yvonne (Rutcho)

Jennie (Padick)

Margaret (Savchik)

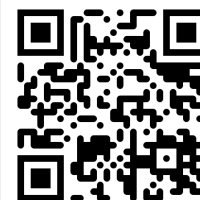
Helen (Olsen)

To share news in the bulletin, or to add someone to our prayer list, please contact Fr. Joshua: priest@sspeterpaul.org 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 →



Notes on Upcoming Translation Changes

As you probably know, all our liturgical texts are translations from Greek and Church Slavonic (a predecessor of modern Slavic languages). Word choice in translation is always a serious challenge, and there is never a perfect solution. Sometimes the Church uses a very literal, precise word, but other times we find a loose rendering of the meaning, and still other times we give up and transliterate a foreign word—“Theotokos” instead of “Mother of God” or “Birth-giver of God” is the most frequent example of this.

That being said, there are times when our liturgical translations are not quite adequate and need to be updated. His Grace, our new Bishop Benedict has directed us to prepare for some of these changes in coming months:

1. “Without corruption” instead of “without defilement”

We frequently sing the hymn of praise to the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary: “More honorable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, *without defilement* you gave birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify you.” This phrase attempts to translate a Greek word, *adiaphthoros*, which has the implication of “without decay, ruin, death, or corruption.”

In the particular context of the Virgin Mary, it clearly means that she gave birth while remaining a virgin—but “defilement” suggests something rather ugly, while lacking any hint of the other, stronger meanings of the original Greek word. This is really important because the word *diaphthoros* is used many times elsewhere in Orthodox worship and theology, when it is frequently translated as “corruption.”

For example, in the Liturgy of St. Basil which we will use at Christmas recalls of the Lord: “He arose on the third day... since it was not possible for the Author of Life to be a victim of corruption.” There are other places where the Virginal Birth “without corruption” is directly tied to the Resurrection “without corruption.”

Therefore, although “without defilement” was the default wording in this hymn to Theotokos for the Orthodox Church in America for many years, it is being replaced in many dioceses and parishes. We will be making this change ourselves at the direction of Bishop Benedict.

2. “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” instead of transgressions/transgressors

In the Lord’s Prayer, we have followed the traditional Church of England wording from before the King James Version of the Bible. It is very familiar

to us, at least if we grew up in the North: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” The problem is that this is simply a bad translation! Here is what the Lord actually taught: “In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven ... And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matt. 6:9, 12). The Greek word *opheiletes* just means “debt,” with no suggestion whatsoever of “trespass.” It connects with the parable of the servant forgiven a massive debt who then demands of a fellow servant, “Pay me what you owe!” Throughout the Gospel, Jesus uses debts and forgiveness to help us understand sins and offenses, whether in relation to God or our brothers and sisters.

Many Christians from the South, including Orthodox Christians, frequently use “debts” and “debtors” already. At Bishop Benedict’s direction, we will eventually make this change ourselves.

3. “But deliver us from the evil one” instead of “from evil”

The conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer is another change that the whole Orthodox Church is making. The wording our parish currently uses relies on the King James Version: “but deliver us from evil.” But the New King James Version, taking into account better understanding of how the word was used by early Christians and Orthodox Christians to this day, renders it “but deliver us from the evil one.” Jesus did not mean that we should pray to be delivered from “evil,” suggesting tribulation, persecution and suffering—quite the contrary: he told us to expect these things! Rather, the Lord taught us to seek our Father’s protection from the evil one, that is, Satan.

For some time, I have been mindful of the consensus of the Holy Synod of Bishops, represented in all new publications, that we need to switch to saying “the evil one.” Knowing that we have considerable “muscle memory” associated with the Lord’s Prayer, I was waiting for the right moment to correct our practice. As with the other two major changes, that moment will be coming soon, some time in the next year.

I know some of you will find these changes awkward and even frustrating, especially when it comes to the Lord’s Prayer. I hope you understand that they are not being made on a whim but with careful consideration, doing only what is absolutely necessary to clarify our comprehension of our Orthodox worship. I welcome your thoughts and questions.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Joshua

Hymns of the Day

Tone 1 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure body,
You rose on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.
The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life:
“Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ!
Glory to Your Kingdom!//
Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of mankind!”

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 2 Troparion (*Prophet Zephaniah*)

We celebrate the memory
of Your prophet Zephaniah, O Lord;
through him we beseech You://
“Save our souls!”

Tone 1 Kontakion (*Resurrection*)

As God, You rose from the tomb in glory,
raising the world with Yourself.
Human nature praises You as God, for death has vanished.
Adam exults, O Master!
Eye rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to You://
“You are the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

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 4 Kontakion (*Prophet Zephaniah*)

You have been revealed by the Spirit of God to be brilliant, O Prophet
Zephaniah,
for you proclaimed the coming of God:
“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!
Proclaim Him, O Jerusalem!//
Behold, your King is coming to save mankind!”
now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion—*Steadfast Protectress*

Prokeimenon in the First Tone (*Resurrection*)

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us /as we have set our hope on You!
(Ps. 32:22)
Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just!
(Ps. 32:1)

Before the Gospel, the Alleluia

Verse: God gives vengeance unto me, and subdues people under me.
(Ps. 17:48)
Verse: He magnifies the salvation of the King and deals mercifully
with David, His anointed, and his seed forever. (Ps. 17:51)

Communion Hymn

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

Notes on the Week

Today, we remember the Prophet Zephaniah, who prophesied rejoicing to the
Daughter of Zion and the people of Israel after the time of affliction: “The Lord
your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with
gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing”
(Zeph. 3: 17). We hear in one of today’s hymns from Vespers the fulfillment of this
promise in the Lord’s Nativity, whose celebration draws near:

Behold, Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled, | for the Virgin gave birth, yet remained a
Virgin! | God was born, and so nature was restored anew. | Do not despise the
entreaties of your servants, O Mother of God! | We offer them to you in your
temple. | Since you carried in your arms the compassionate One,
have compassion on your servants, || and pray that our souls may be saved!