

SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America

P.O. Box 334 | 54 Park Avenue

Meriden, CT 06450

(203) 237-4539

frimosher@sspeterpaul.org

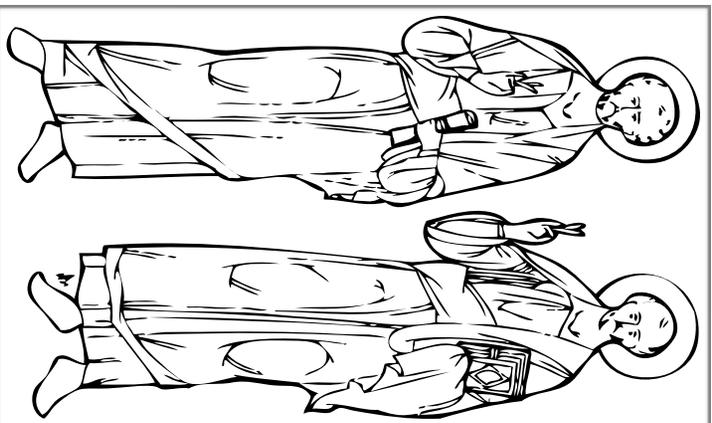
www.sspeterpaul.org

Make ready, O Bethlehem. Let the manger be prepared.... God is born of a virgin and revealed to men. He is clothed in our flesh and makes it divine.

— *Hymn from the Royal Hours of Christmas Eve*

December, 2018

*Saints Peter
and 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!*



Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church
 54 Park Avenue, Meriden, CT 06450
 (phone) 203-237-4539



DECEMBER 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| Nov 25 Leavetaking of the Entry into the Temple 9:30 Divine Liturgy | Nov 26 6:00 Vespers | Nov 27 6:00 Vespers | Nov 28 6:00 Vespers | Nov 29 6:00 Vespers | Nov 30 6:00 Vespers | 1 5:00 Great Vespers |
| Children's Sessions 3 & 4 <i>Fast: wine & oil</i> | <i>Fast</i> | <i>Fast</i> | <i>Fast</i> | <i>Fast</i> | <i>Fast</i> | <i>Fast: wine & oil</i> |
| 2 27th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Divine Liturgy Annual Parish Meeting Children's Sessions 1 & 2 <i>Fast: wine & oil</i> | 3 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast</i> | 4 <i>No Vespers — Deanery Meeting</i> <i>Fast</i> | 5 6:00 Akathist Service to St. Nicholas <i>Fast</i> | 6 St. Nicholas 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast: fish, wine, & oil</i> | 7 6:00 Vespers 6:30 Game Night <i>Fast</i> | 8 5:00 Great Vespers <i>Fast: wine & oil</i> |
| 9 Conception of the Most-Holy Theotokos 9:30 Divine Liturgy | 10 6:00 Vespers 6:45 Bylaws Meeting <i>Fast</i> | 11 6:00 Vespers 6:45 Parish Council <i>Fast</i> | 12 6:00 Vespers & Liturgy <i>Fast</i> | 13 Repose of St. Herman of Alaska 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast</i> | 14 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast</i> | 15 5:00 Great Vespers <i>Fast: wine & oil</i> |
| 16 Sunday of the Forefathers 9:30 Divine Liturgy | 17 6:00 Vespers | 18 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast</i> | 19 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast</i> | 20 Forefeast of the Nativity begins 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast</i> | 21 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast</i> | 22 5:00 Great Vespers <i>Fast: wine & oil</i> |
| 23 Sunday before the Nativity 9:30 Divine Liturgy Children's Sessions 1 & 2 6:00 Vespers from the Eve of the Nativity <i>Fast: wine & oil</i> | 24 4:00 Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord <i>Fast</i> | 25 NATIVITY OF THE LORD 9:30 Divine Liturgy | 26 <i>Fast free</i> | 27 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast free</i> | 28 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast free</i> | 29 5:00 Great Vespers <i>Fast free</i> |
| 30 Sunday after the Nativity 9:30 Divine Liturgy | 31 Leavetaking of the Nativity 6:00 Vespers & Liturgy <i>Fast free</i> | Jan 1 Circumcision of the Lord <i>Fast free</i> | Jan 2 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast free</i> | Jan 3 6:00 Vespers <i>Fast free</i> | Jan 4 6:00 Vespers 6:30 Game Night <i>Fast free</i> | Jan 5 Eve of Theophany 5:00 Great Vespers, Great Blessing of Water <i>Fast: wine & oil</i> |

Please consult the weekly bulletin for changes to the monthly calendar.

For the beloved American saint, our **Venerable Father Herman of Alaska**, we will celebrate Vespers and Liturgy on Wednesday, Dec. 12, at 6 PM.

Information for the **Christmas Flower Fundraiser** has been mailed out. Please contribute to the beautification of our church, in remembrance of your loved ones.

Looking ahead to our celebration of the **Nativity of the Lord**: we celebrate the Christmas Vigil on Christmas Eve at 4 PM, and the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day at 9:30 AM. On Sunday, Dec. 23, at 6 PM, we will also celebrate Vespers from the Eve of the Nativity, when we hear the prophecies that foretold Christ's birth.

New Year's Day is also a feast celebrated in our church: **The Circumcision of the Lord, and the feast of St. Basil the Great**. This day commemorates the eighth day from the Nativity of the Lord, when he was actually given the name "Jesus." The Church still has prayers for the Eighth Day of a child's birth, to name that child before God. Come celebrate the feast and pray for the new year, with Vespers & Liturgy at 6:00, Monday, Dec. 31.

Please remember that, if severe weather conditions force **church service or event cancellations**, announcements will be posted on WFSB (channel 3) and WNBC/WVIT (channel 30), as well as on our own parish website:

<www.sspeterpaul.org>.

Rector's Letter, December, 2018

Dear brothers and sisters:

For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His
shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
(Isaiah 9:6)

In the Nativity Fast, we remind ourselves of the fulfillment of this prophecy. The Mighty God has been given to us, born as a Child. He has come to be our Prince of Peace, to give us the peace we need.

All too often, we do not know peace in this season before Christmas. We are stressed in our work, in our family life, in our shopping, in our parties. We are so busy cleaning, decorating, baking, buying, and all the rest that we do not have time for peace. Yet this is why our Lord is coming to us: to give us His own peace, the peace that passes understanding.

Without His peace, we are lost. When in our day do we accomplish that most important of errands: to be silent in the presence of the Living God? We make sure to fill our bodies with food and our cars with gasoline so that they will not

run out when we need them most. When do we fill our selves with strength that comes only through prayer?

Do we also seek to make peace with God? The Eternal Father gave His Son to us to bring peace to His people, who have turned from Him and followed self-destructive paths. We may call ourselves Christians, but if we ignore Christ's commands to us, we are continuing on the path that leads to death, not life. The Evangelist John the Theologian writes: "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have communion with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" (1 John 1:5-6). Do we examine our consciences each day, and seek to make peace with God through regular Confession?

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." This is our hope of eternal life. It is also our judgment. We have been offered the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven. We have received an invitation to the greatest Christmas party ever: where the voice of those who feast is unceasing, and the gladness of those who behold the countenance of God is unending. Are we willing to accept this invitation, to be called "sons of God" — heirs of the kingdom? Then let us dedicate our lives to making peace.

Yours in Christ,



Around the Parish

Many years to **Christopher and Jennifer Sullivan**, who were received into the Orthodox Church last month.

Our **annual parish meeting** takes place on Sunday, Dec. 2.

We are in the midst of **the Nativity Fast**. This season prepares us for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. As the shop displays and catalogs already warn us, Christmas is approaching fast. For the world around us, this means a frenzy of shopping, decorating, and partying. If we would enter into the blessings God has set before us, we need to begin a different sort of labor: being mindful of God for the gift of his Son and showing gratitude in every aspect of life. We observe the Nativity Fast by refraining from meat and rich foods, by prayer and confession, and giving to the needy. May we be blessed with peace!

For the feast day of **St. Nicholas**, we will celebrate an akathist service on Wednesday, Dec. 5, at 6 PM. The service is a poetic celebration of the whole life and character of St. Nicholas. It is not long and quite simple. Come and rejoice!

All children are invited to participate in our annual **St. Nicholas Celebration** after the Liturgy on Sunday, Dec. 9. We will have the story of St. Nicholas' life, fun activities and crafts, special treats and a mysterious festal visitor!