

Peter and Paul on June 29. This year, the Fast is just one day long: June 28. Use it as a day of sincere prayer.

Our **patronal feast of SS. Peter & Paul** is on Friday, June 29. We will celebrate with Great Vespers on the eve, Monday, June 28, at 6 PM, and Divine Liturgy on Tuesday at 9:30 AM.



2021 Vacation Church School: July 12-16; Three Saints Park, 112 Miller Road, Bethany. Daily 9 AM to 4 PM, with Family Night on Friday starting at 5 PM. Cost: \$40 per child, for a week-long Vacation Church School for ages 5-15. Your child will experience fun, faith, friendship, swimming, bible study, religious education, worship and song. This year's theme will be "The Mother of God." For more information contact Fr. Patrick Burns at 203-734-3988 or pneumaticmotives@gmail.com.

Rector's Letter, June, 2021

Dear brothers and sisters:

We are entering "a season of saints": on Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended and enlightened the apostles to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ; All Saints a week later celebrates the tradition of the martyrs who showed their confidence in that Good News by giving up their lives rather than their faith; All Saints of America is celebrated a week after that; and our parish feast of Saints Peter & Paul is on June 29! We are truly "surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses," who all encourage us to run the same race without losing hope.

The problem is that for us life does not seem much like a holy race, some glorious marathon where the prize is given to every runner who at last crosses the finish line, but more like a marshy thicket that we got lost in. We can lose sight of the path of



life. We start off pleasantly enough, delighting in God's creation, and then we come across the attractive scent of what the saints call "worldly pleasures": anything that pleases ourselves without thought of those around us, anything that makes us forget to care first about God, anything that promises us good things but leaves us as empty as when we started.

We say, "we're not saints — we can't live like them!" And we also think to ourselves, "We don't *want* to be like the saints! Their lives are hard and we wouldn't be free to do what we want." So we allow ourselves to be drawn off the path. We get tangled up in the thorns of our own desires, long after they cease giving us any happiness, and we are trapped. We start out doing what we want and find ourselves enslaved to the demands of those wants.

The truth is, we are meant to be saints, all of us in our many different ways. The Lord made each of us in his image, so that we would be free to love him and live with him. But as soon as we stop acting according to God's image imprinted on our souls, we lose our freedom. We find our-



as a people in the last year and it is right and needful that we ask the Lord's mercy on our suffering world.



The Parish Council agreed to resume our **annual parish picnic** on the Sunday of All Saints, June 27, following the Divine Liturgy that day. Details still to be determined.

Eight days after Pentecost, we begin the **Apostles' Fast**, a time to reflect on what has passed since Pascha, to seek the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and to prepare for the Feast of Saints

Around the Parish

Our services in the temple are streamed via Facebook and Youtube. You can most easily find them on our website: <https://sspeterpaul.org/media>.

We are in need of more **volunteers to run our livestream of church services.** If you have the willingness to learn the necessary technology, please speak with Rick Comshaw or Fr. Joshua.

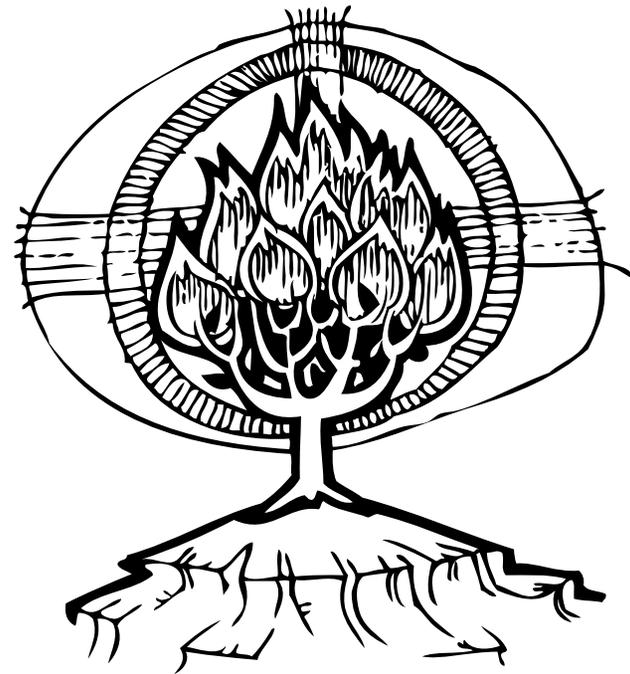
After forty days, the Paschal Season concludes with the **Ascension of Our Lord**, when our Lord finished teaching his disciples and ascended bodily to heaven, promising the gift of the Holy Spirit. We will celebrate on Wednesday, June 9, with Great Vespers at 6 PM, and on Thursday, June 10, with Divine Liturgy at 9:30 AM.

The Feast of Pentecost follows ten days later, on Sunday, June 20. On that day, we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, when the apostles began their public preaching and the Church was revealed to all. Until that day, we honor our Lord's rising from the grave by remaining standing in prayer, but at Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost (immediately after the Divine Liturgy that Sunday), we kneel for the first time. We will pray for the departed and for ourselves, that the Holy Spirit would give us the power to live holy lives, according to the example of the Apostles. With God's strength and love never departing from us, we have undergone many trials

selves addicted to drink, to sugar, to television, to pornography, to prestige or approval — you name it! The saints are the ones who have found the way back to true freedom, and not only that, but true joy as well. Those who pursue happiness for its own sake will never find it. Try God's way instead: ask him what his will is, and find real, lasting joy in the company of the saints.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Joshua S. Modlin



A New Step for Us

Following principles just set out by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, our parish will be making many changes in our approach to COVID safety. As we continue to reopen, please be understanding and patient with the parish and with each other. We ask that you follow all government directives: portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Reopen-CT.

Please sign up to attend services: <https://sspeterpaul.org/signup>. Once you are on our attendance list, we do not need you to sign up again, but we do ask that you check your name off the list as you enter.



For those who are not able to attend our services in person, we are continuing to share all our worship services online. Unless we announce otherwise, each service is streamed on Youtube, and can be found on our [Parish Media](#) page.

We are asking each household to take responsibility for keeping in line with current and future

state directives. For those who need to continue distancing, we have reserved the left-hand side of the church with distancing markings. The right side and the choir area allows for households to stand closer together. People in any area are free to wear masks or not, according to their own circumstance. Again, we ask that households take responsibility for following state directives regarding vaccinations, masking, and distancing. In all cases, we expect everyone to practice Christian charity and forbearance.

Following state directives, you are free to handle items in church according to your own judgment. This includes service books, papers, candles and icons. We still follow COVID measures surrounding the distribution of Holy Communion, but please be prepared: we will revert to the traditional norms of Orthodox practice in coming weeks.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with me by phone (203-237-4539) or email (priest@sspeterpaul.org).

