

The Feast of Pentecost follows ten days later, on Sunday, June 12. 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, in the pattern of the Apostles.

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 Peter and Paul on June 29. Let's use the days well!

June 29 is our Parish Feast: the Holy Leaders of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and we will celebrate Divine Liturgy that day at 9:30. We are planning to make the eve of the feast extra beautiful, with an abbreviated vigil service: Tuesday, June 28, at 6 PM. We are also planning a picnic for the following Sunday, July 3.

The All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America is planned for this July 18–22 in Baltimore. Fr. Joshua and Mary Jane Rodgers are our parish delegates, joining many from our Diocese of New England and from across North America. Please pray for wisdom and grace. To can learn more about the upcoming AAC:

<https://www.oca.org/aac/>

Rector's Letter June, 2022

Dear brothers and sisters:

We are coming to the season of summer vacations and travel plans. Did you ever consider how much attention the Church gives to travel? Every service, we pray for "those who travel by land, by sea, and by air." There are special prayers that can be said for anyone about to go on a journey. Much spiritual counsel has been written for those who are traveling. Perhaps this seems a little odd: we're just going for a little "R & R," after all. What's the big deal?

Well, the Scriptures see travel as a really big deal. It's dangerous: think of the man attacked by thieves on the way to Jericho in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It's a time of temptation: think of the Israelites complaining for 40 years in the wilderness, "Are we there yet?" It can also be an opportunity to meet the Lord: think of how many people met Jesus Christ as he was traveling himself, and changed their lives.

The temptation is to leave behind not just our business and chores but our consciences, too: to "take a vacation from God," or even to engage in pursuits we'd be ashamed of at home. And then we're surprised when we come back feeling worse than when we left! A true vacation is one that refreshes the soul — and who better than God himself to ask for that refreshment?

So it is worth preparing spiritually for our vacations, so that they may be a blessing and "lead us not into temptation." Travel still has its hazards today: why not make a point of preparing for communion and asking for the special prayers before going on a journey? We also need to take the time to find the lo-

cal church where we are going, and to let the priest know we are coming.

Pack your prayer book along with your sunscreen, too. It's good to break out of our routines, but it makes it hard to keep the good habits of prayer. We actually need to make *extra* efforts to pray when we travel. Otherwise, we lose our spiritual compass and can find ourselves in distress at a time when we imagined we would be at our best.

On the other hand, if we make the effort to meet the Lord even as we travel, he himself will give us rest and refreshment:

Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day [of the Lord's resurrection] to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know him....

Now it came to pass, as he sat at the table with them, that he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew him; and he vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us on the road, and while he opened the Scriptures to us?"

(Luke 24:13-16, 30-32)

Who might we meet on the road? Perhaps we ourselves might encounter our Savior in a new face, or a new place, if only we keep our eyes and hearts open!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Joshua S. Madhu

Around the Parish

The deadline to vote on the proposed new Parish Bylaws is June 6. Ballots have been distributed to all Voting Members of the parish. Please complete and sign your ballot and return it by mail or in person. Ballots will be opened and counted on June 9 by Fr. Joshua, Parish Council President Donna Leonowich and Chairperson of the Trustees Sarah Massaro. To pass, the proposal requires $\frac{2}{3}$ of all Voting Membership. The result will be announced on Pentecost, June 12.

Fr. Joshua will be on vacation with his family from May 25 through June 7. This means there will be no services in Meriden for the weekends within that period, including the Feast of Ascension. If you need urgent pastoral care, please contact Fr. David Koles (860-573-0013). Here are suggested parishes to visit in this time:

Holy Transfiguration, New Haven
(<https://www.holytransfigurationnh.org/>)

Three Saints, Ansonia
(<https://threesaintschurch.org/>)

Christ the Savior, Southbury
(<http://christsaviorchurch.org>)

After forty days, the Paschal Season concludes with the **Ascension of Our Lord**, on June 2, when our Lord completed the instruction of his disciples and ascended bodily to heaven, promising the gift of the Holy Spirit. This year, please visit one of our neighbor parishes for the feast.