

Our parish Charity Fund offers financial aid to help children attend Youth Rally. We strongly believe this is an excellent opportunity to build up our children's faith and especially to enable them to make Orthodox friends across the diocese. If you would like to support participation in Youth Rally, please contribute to our Charity Fund.

Another way to support Youth Rally is to participate in ONE Stewards, which directly funds valuable outreach like Youth Rally. For details, visit the diocesan website: <https://dneoca.org>

On the Sunday of All Saints of North America, June 18, at 4 PM we are invited to an **Akathist Service at All Saints of America Church, Salisbury.**

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Between Pascha & Pentecost

When you broke open the gates of death by your power you made known the ways of life, and opened the gates of immortality to those who cry in faith: Glory to your power, O Lord.

You hold the mid-point of all things and their end, and as you are without beginning you hold their beginning in your grasp. You stood in the midst and cried out: Come, all who think godly thoughts and enjoy his gifts!

As God, O Christ, you have authority over all, as powerful you destroyed the might of death, and you promised to send the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father.

From Matins of Mid-Pentecost

Rector's Letter, May, 2023

Dear brothers and sisters:

“Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!” We are living through this season of the Lord's Pascha, a season of life, of joy, of brightness, of “chocolate eggs and Jesus risen!” as a boy was once heard to say.

The Lord has opened the path from death to life for us, and we may freely and joyfully follow. The only difficulty is that, for us, choosing life looks a lot like dying. This is not some arcane mystical theology. Every real decision requires turning away from — “being dead to” — all the other possibilities.

If we dedicate ourselves to excelling in a sport, that means sacrificing time and energy that we might have used for learning something else (or just goofing off). If we get married, we “die” to any other possible mate. If we



have had a heart attack, to preserve our life we must “be dead” to unhealthy foods.

In just the same way, our Lord calls us to live by dedicating ourselves entirely to God. As with excelling in a sport, this means we must be dead to distractions from what is most important: loving God and following His ways. As with marriage, we must be faithful and dead to anything that we are tempted to love more than God. Like someone confronting a deadly disease, we must be dead to any “guilty pleasures” — sins, to give them a more honest and less attractive name — that would rob us of life.

For the Lord of Life, physically dying was the miracle; rising to life again was “only natural.” For us, dying physically is the the most natural thing in the world. Death is surer even than taxes. For us the miracle is living — really living, without fear, without contention, without resentment, but full of Life.



That sort of life is not natural to us. It means giving up the hold we imagine we have on life and entrusting ourselves totally to the Life of All. It means dying to all those “earthly cares” and sins which so closely entangle us. It means beginning to die to our

Beyond Our Parish

2023 Vacation Church School at Three Saints Park: June 19-23, 2023 (NOTE NEW DATES).

Youth aged 5-15 are invited for a day camp at Three Saints Park, 112 Miller Road, Bethany, CT. VCS meets daily 9 AM to 4 PM, with Family Night on Friday starting at 5 PM. Cost is \$45 per child. Your child will experience fun, faith, friendship, swimming, games, bible study, religious education, worship and song. This year’s theme will be “The Holy Apostles.” Questions? Call Fr. Patrick Burns (203) 734-3988. Children of all faiths are welcome!



Diocesan Youth Rally is set for Aug. 7-12, 2023. Children aged 9-17 are encouraged to attend this high-quality camp run by the Diocese of New England at the St. Methodios Faith & Heritage Center, New Hampshire. Many adults from our parish serve as Rally Staff, and parish youth have been blessed over the years by the experience. Rally volunteers Tim Tassmer, Elias and Ephraim Mosher would be glad to answer questions.

The Feast of Pentecost follows ten days later, on Sunday, June 4. 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.



Some helpful reminders for our prayers during the Paschal season: we are directed to stand (not kneel or make prostrations) to pray, and we do not use the hymn “O Heavenly King,” until the feast of Pentecost. Instead, we begin our prayers with the Paschal hymn:

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life! (*three times*)

During the ten-day season of Ascension, instead we begin our prayer with the Ascension hymn:

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, granting joy to your disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing they were assured that you are the Son of God, the redeemer of the world.

selves so that we can find our true self in Jesus Christ.

That sort of dying is hard. But finding eternal life without letting go of everything else is completely impossible. Let's choose life.

Yours in Christ,

F. John S. Mosher



Around the Parish

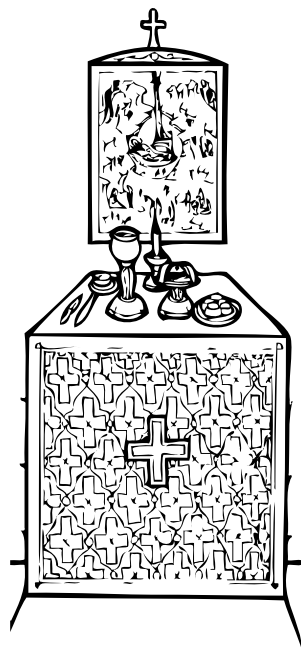
Thank you to all those who worked hard for Holy Week and Pascha: the choir, altar servers, those cleaning and beautifying the church, managing technology and safety, and those who quietly worked behind the scenes. This year was especially beautiful, a blessing on everyone who participated.

We are concluding an online education series, “A Foundation in Orthodox Christianity.” We will meet via Zoom on Tuesday evenings, starting with prayer at 6:00. Each session starts with a presentation aimed at a very introductory level, and will have an opportunity for discussion. All are welcome! Join us via this URL: <https://tinyurl.com/sspp-zoom>

Due to rain, we have had to postpone the **Blessing of Graves at SS. Peter & Paul Cemetery** until Sunday, May 7, at 11:30. If you would like to bless a grave at another cemetery during this Paschal season, please speak with Father Joshua to arrange a time.

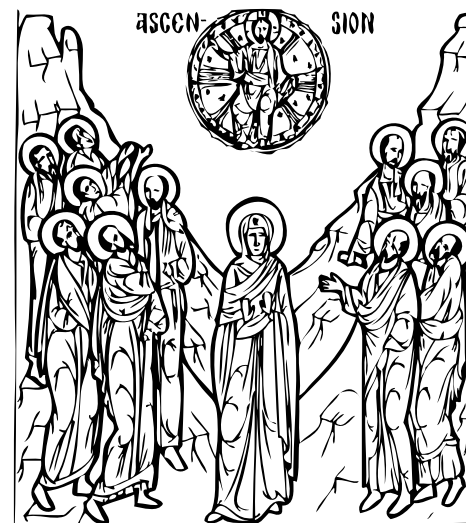
We are resuming **“Saturday Worship, Supper and Fellowship,”** after all the demands of Lent and Holy Week. We are planning our next gathering for Saturday, May 27, beginning at 5 PM. Join us for a simple supper after evening worship. Free for all, but please let Fr. Joshua know who’s coming. Bring a hobby to engage in, or just stay and converse. Invite along a friend!

We are planning a **prosphora baking workshop** in the next few weeks. The prosphora is the bread offered up for communion and all the surrounding prayers of the Divine Litur-



gy. It is a crucial service for the life of our church. If you are interested, please share with Fr. Joshua times that would work best in your schedule. We will announce a final day and time soon.

After forty days, the Paschal Season concludes with the **Leave-taking of Pascha**, which we will observe in a limited fashion with Paschal Matins at 6 PM on Tuesday, May 23. We will rejoice one more time with many of the beautiful hymns of Pascha, before we put them away until next year.



After the Leave-taking of Pascha comes the feast of the **Ascension of Our Lord**, on May 25, when our Lord completed the instruction of his disciples and ascended bodily to heaven, promising the gift of the Holy Spirit. We will celebrate on Wednesday, May 24, with Vigil at 6 PM. On the feast itself, we will celebrate Divine Liturgy at 9:30 AM.