

St. Mary's Orthodox Church
217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218-1602
Phone.....570-645-2772
OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic
Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky
Reader Hours: Mat. Lisa Weremedic

Sunday, May 21, 2023
Choir Director: Wash King
Reader Epistle: Michael Ropitsky

6th SUNDAY OF PASCHA – BLIND MAN

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!
Christos Voskrese! Voistinu Voskrese!
Christos Anesti Alithos Anesti
El Messieh Kahm! Hakken Kahm!
Cristos a Inviat! Adevarat a Inviat!

Services:

Sunday, May 21 8:45 AM – Church School
Sunday, May 21 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Parastas (Sunday of the Blind Man)
 In memory of William Faenza offered by Barbara Faenza & Family
 In memory of Justin King offered by David & Chris King
 In memory of Mary Ann Macenka offered by Paul Macenka & Family
Chinese Auction – Browsing from 1:00-2:30 PM; Auction starts at 2:30 PM
Kitchen will be open – Come and Support this Fundraiser for the Church
Wednesday, May 24 5:00 PM – Great Vespers & Litiya & Confessions
Thursday, May 25 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy – The Ascension of Our Lord, Jesus Christ
Saturday, May 27 5:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sunday, May 28 8:45 AM – Church School
Sunday, May 28 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship (Fathers of 1st Ecu. Council)
Saturday, June 3 2:00 PM – Pentecost Memorial Service – Sky View in Hometown
Saturday, June 3 5:00 PM – Great Vespers & Litiya, & Confessions
Sunday, June 4 8:45 AM – Church School
Sunday, June 4 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship (Holy Pentecost)
Sunday, June 4 1:00 PM – Memorial Service – Parish Cemetery in Summit Hill

Sunday School sessions will end on June 4th and will resume in September.
Have a Safe and Blessed Summer.

Prayer List:

Fr. James Weremedic, Matushka Lisa Weremedic

Andrew Balliet, Michael Birosik, Clark Andrew Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Danielle Bogosh, Elizabeth Brennan, Stephanie Chmel, Ilene Devine, Kimberly Evetushick, Nadine Fegley, Julia Forte, Michael & Julia Harahus, Karen & Rose Harkins, Nancy King, Michael Kulick, Olga Kushnir, Anna Marie Mante, Dorothy & Joseph Macenka, Mildred O'Shura, Anna Pierson, Melissa Schmitt, Althea Shellock, Helen Sheers, Olga Sidoriak, Mary Simone, Jolie Skelton, Martha Stafiniak, Martha Teno, Michael Teno, Elizabeth Warcholak, Russell Wishousky, Russell Yallas, George Yurchak, & Marie Yurchak.

If anyone is in need of a priest, please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772. Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory. Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency.

Candles (May 21)

7-day Vigils-Altar... In memory of **Lillian Yelsh** offered by William Yelsh

Altar Candles... In memory of **Aunt Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak

Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Family Members

Vigil Crosses... In memory **Mother, Mary Lutash** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak

7-day Vigils-Tetrapod... In memory of **Kay & Paul Maliniak** offered by William Yelsh

Decorated Candles/Tetrapod- In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Family Members

Candles (May 25)

Altar Candles... In memory of **Aunt Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak

Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Family Members

Vigil Crosses... In memory **Mother, Mary Lutash** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak

Decorated Candles/Tetrapod- In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Family Members

May Birthdays: 2- Lynn Sharpe, 5- Sal Herbert, 17- Russell King, 17- Julia Forte,
21- Lindsey Ruch, 31- Marie Skripnek

May Anniversary: May 9- Richard & Julie McHugh

Yard Sale – June 10

Financials 5/14/23: *Operating Acct:* Weekly envelopes \$307 Non envelope \$292

Candles \$102

Fellowship Hour Hosts:

May 21 No Coffee Hour, May 28 Russell King, June 4 John Evetushick

If you have any Redner receipts, please call or get them to Helen King
Please use your Boyer's card when shopping at Boyers; if you need one call Helen King

"AND HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN . . ."

Forty days after His Resurrection, Christ, having accomplished His divine work, took His Apostles to the Mount of Olives, and after bidding them farewell, ascended into Heaven. Have you ever wondered why our Lord chose to leave us? He showed His power over death and the forces of evil . . . why didn't He simply remain among His people here on earth? As always, if we search the Scriptures and study the texts of our liturgical services, we find the answers to these questions.

In John 16:7, we hear Jesus telling His followers: ***"It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not, the Comforter will not come to you."*** One of the sticheras at Vespers on the eve of the Feast Day of the Ascension simply proclaims: ***"The Lord ascended into Heaven so that He could send the Holy Spirit into the world."*** Our Divine Saviour saw that His mission on earth was accomplished. He became Incarnate so that He could preach the Gospel to the world, directing mankind along the path of salvation and redemption. Through His Crucifixion and Resurrection, all of this became a reality. Thus, the Lord ascended to His Heavenly Father so that the Holy Spirit could descend upon us, enlightening us and strengthening us in the process.

It can also be said that Christ ascended into Heaven to intercede for us before God's Heavenly Throne. ***"I go to prepare a place for you. And when I go, I will return and take you to Myself, that where I am, you may also be."*** (John 14:2-3) St. Paul expresses similar sentiments in his letter to the Hebrews: ***"Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf."*** (Heb. 9:24) These words should fill us all with hope and assurance.

6th SUNDAY OF PASCHA Tone 5 Blind Man. Holy Equals-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine and his mother, Helen (Elena) (327). St. Constantine (1129) and his children, Ss. Michael and Theodore, Wonderworkers of Múrom. Ven. Cassian the Greek, of Uglich (1504). The Meeting of the VLADIMIR Icon of the Mother of God (in commemoration of the saving of Moscow from the invasion of the Crimean Khan, Mekhmet-Girei in 1521).

Sunday of the Blind Man

Kontakion — Tone 4 - come to You, O Christ, / blind from birth in my spiritual eyes / and I call to You in repentance: / You are the most radiant light of those in darkness!

Equal of the Apostles and Emperor Constantine with his Mother Helen

Troparion — Tone 8 - Having seen the figure of the Cross in the heavens, / and like Paul not having received his call from men, O Lord, / Your apostle among rulers, the Emperor Constantine, / has been set by Your hand as ruler over the Imperial City / that he preserved in peace for many years, / through the prayers of the Theotokos, O only lover of mankind.

Kontakion — Tone 3 - Today Constantine and his mother Helen / reveal the precious Cross, / the weapon of the faithful / against their enemies. / For our sakes, it has been shown to be a great sign, and fearsome in battle.

Acts 16:16-34 (Epistle)

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."

And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour.

But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe."

Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods.

And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.

Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

So, they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.

Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

John 9:1-38 (Gospel)

Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

Therefore, the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." He said, "I am he."

Therefore, they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight."

Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees.

Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

Therefore, some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.

They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight.

And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself."

His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore, his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So, they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner."

He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples.

We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from."

The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes!

Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.

Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."

Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

Equal of the Apostles and Emperor Constantine with his Mother Helen

Troparion — Tone 8 - Having seen the figure of the Cross in the heavens, / and like Paul not having received his call from men, O Lord, / Your apostle among rulers, the Emperor Constantine, / has been set by Your hand as ruler over the Imperial City / that he preserved in peace for many years, / through the prayers of the Theotokos, O only lover of mankind.

Kontakion — Tone 3 - Today Constantine and his mother Helen / reveal the precious Cross, / the weapon of the faithful / against their enemies. / For our sakes, it has been shown to be a great sign, and fearsome in battle.

The Church calls Saint Constantine (306-337) “the Equal of the Apostles,” and historians call him “the Great.” He was the son of the Caesar Constantius Chlorus (305-306), who governed the lands of Gaul and Britain. His mother was Saint Helen, a Christian of humble birth.

At this time the immense Roman Empire was divided into Western and Eastern halves, governed by two independent emperors and their co-rulers called “Caesars.” Constantius Chlorus was Caesar in the Western Roman Empire. Saint Constantine was born in 274, possibly at Nish in Serbia. In 294, Constantius divorced Helen in order to further his political ambition by marrying a woman of noble rank. After he became emperor, Constantine showed his mother great honor and respect, granting her the imperial title “Augusta.”

Constantine, the future ruler of all the whole Roman Empire, was raised to respect Christianity. His father did not persecute Christians in the lands he governed. This was at a time when Christians were persecuted throughout the Roman Empire by the emperors Diocletian (284-305) and his co-rulers Maximian Galerius (305-311) in the East, and the emperor Maximian Hercules (284-305) in the West. After the death of Constantius Chlorus in 306, Constantine was acclaimed by the army at York as emperor of Gaul and Britain. The first act of the new emperor was to grant the freedom to practice Christianity in the lands subject to him. The pagan Maximian Galerius in the East and the fierce tyrant Maxentius in the West hated Constantine and they plotted to overthrow and kill him, but Constantine bested them in a series of battles, defeating his opponents with the help of God. He prayed to God to give him a sign which would inspire his army to fight valiantly, and the Lord showed him a radiant Sign of the Cross in the heavens with the inscription “In this Sign, conquer.”

After Constantine became the sole ruler of the Western Roman Empire, he issued the Edict of Milan in 313 which guaranteed religious tolerance for Christians. Saint Helen, who was a Christian, may have influenced him in this decision. In 323, when he became the sole ruler of the entire Roman Empire, he extended the provisions of the Edict of Milan to the Eastern half of the Empire. After three hundred years of persecution, Christians could finally practice their faith without fear.

Renouncing paganism, the Emperor did not let his capital remain in ancient Rome, the former center of the pagan realm. He transferred his capital to the East, to the city of Byzantium, which was renamed Constantinople, the city of Constantine (May 11). Constantine was deeply convinced that only Christianity could unify the immense Roman Empire with its diverse peoples. He supported the Church in every way. He recalled Christian confessors from banishment, he built churches, and he showed concern for the clergy.

The emperor deeply revered the victory-bearing Sign of the Cross of the Lord, and also wanted to find the actual Cross upon which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. For this purpose he sent his own mother, the holy Empress Helen, to Jerusalem, granting her both power and money. Patriarch Macarius of Jerusalem and Saint Helen began the search, and through the will of God, the Life-Creating Cross was miraculously discovered in 326. (The account of the finding of the Cross of the Lord is found under the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, September 14). The Orthodox Church commemorates the Uncovering of the Precious Cross and the Precious Nails by the Holy Empress Helen on March 6.

While in Palestine, the holy empress did much of benefit for the Church. She ordered that all places connected with the earthly life of the Lord and His All-Pure Mother, should be freed of all traces of paganism, and she commanded that churches should be built at these places.

The emperor Constantine ordered a magnificent church in honor of Christ's Resurrection to be built over His tomb. Saint Helen gave the Life-Creating Cross to the Patriarch for safe-keeping, and took part of the Cross with her for the emperor. After distributing generous alms at Jerusalem and feeding the needy (at times she even served them herself), the holy Empress Helen returned to Constantinople, where she died in the year 327.

Because of her great services to the Church and her efforts in finding the Life-Creating Cross, the empress Helen is called "the Equal of the Apostles."

The peaceful state of the Christian Church was disturbed by quarrels, dissensions and heresies which had appeared within the Church. Already at the beginning of Saint Constantine's reign the heresies of the Donatists and the Novatians had arisen in the West. They demanded a second baptism for those who lapsed during the persecutions against Christians. These heresies, repudiated by two local Church councils, were finally condemned at the Council of Milan in 316.

Particularly ruinous for the Church was the rise of the Arian heresy in the East, which denied the Divine Nature of the Son of God, and taught that Jesus Christ was a mere creature. By order of the emperor, the First Ecumenical Council was convened in the city of Nicea in 325.

318 bishops attended this Council. Among its participants were confessor-bishops from the period of the persecutions and many other luminaries of the Church, among whom was Saint Nicholas of Myra in Lycia. (The account about the Council is found under May 29). The emperor was present at the sessions of the Council. The heresy of Arius was condemned and a Symbol of Faith (Creed) composed, in which was included the term "consubstantial with the Father," at the insistence of the Emperor, confirming the truth of the divinity of Jesus Christ, Who assumed human nature for the redemption of all the human race.

After the Council of Nicea, Saint Constantine continued with his active role in the welfare of the Church. He accepted holy Baptism on his deathbed, having prepared for it all his whole life. Saint Constantine died on the day of Pentecost in the year 337 and was buried in the church of the Holy Apostles, in a crypt he had prepared for himself.