

ST NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH
CROSS & COTTAGE STREETS, AUBURN
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Fr. Stephen Mack, Pastor
Deacon David Donch

Fr. Michael Speck, Assistant Pastor
Subdeacon Reader Michael Speck

Choir Director Reader Paul Flurschutz

April 9, 2017

Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem

We thank everyone who has made an effort to draw closer to Christ during our Lenten season, and we pray you can join us for our Holy Week & Paschal Services.

Monday & Tuesday, Apr 10 & 11 at 6PM: Bridegroom Matins

Wednesday, Apr 12 at 9AM: Presanctified Liturgy

At 6PM: Holy Unction for Orthodox Christians

Thursday, Apr 13 at 9AM: Vespers & Liturgy of St Basil the Great, Commemoration of the Holy Eucharist

At 6PM: Holy Friday Matins with the Passion Gospels

Friday, Apr 14 at 9AM: Royal Hours (please stay with us afterwards to help with our grave set-up)

At 3PM: Good Friday Vespers, Burial Service of our Lord

At 7PM: Holy Saturday Matins – Lamentations

Saturday, Apr 15 at 1PM: Vespers & Liturgy of St Basil with Agape Meal

Beginning at 11:30PM Saturday: Nocturns, Procession around the church
Paschal Matins

Paschal Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom

Blessing of Paschal Foods in our Church Hall

Sunday, April 16 at 11AM: Paschal Vespers

Monday, Apr 17 at 9AM: Bright Monday, Paschal Divine Liturgy of St John

On our Bulletin Board you'll find two lists. One is for standing watch over the Grave of our Lord, where we traditionally read the Book of Psalms. The other is for the twelve readings of our Holy Saturday service. Please consider signing up.

Additional Important Notes:

We mentioned Ann Tierney's passing a couple of weeks past. There will be a Memorial Service today, 2PM, at the Farrell's Funeral Home with Fr. Matthew Binkewicz performing the service. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Also, Auburn lost, what to me, was a special member of our community this past week: Vincent (Wheels) Piccarillo. Mr. Piccarillo was one of the first individuals outside of our parish to befriend me when I came to Auburn; we would often have talks about religion, politics, sports. I've mentioned before how there was one time when he handed me a \$20 bill, told me he had a good week, and said give it someone who needs it. He'll be missed. MEMORY ETERNAL!

In much better news, congratulations to Joshua & Beth Wild on the birth of their second child, a daughter, Madeline Mae. Congratulations also to grandparents David & Kathy Wild.

On April 30 we will have our annual Paschal Dinner which, in the past few years, has been a dish to past. A sign-up sheet will be placed on the bulletin board. Please plan on joining us.

And, since we'll be having our dinner on the usual date of our monthly Council meeting, our next Parish Council meeting will be April 23.

A PALM SUNDAY SERMON

Today we celebrate together one of the great feasts of the Church calendar — the feast of Palm Sunday. Today we gather together to celebrate Christ's entry into the city of Jerusalem. Today we celebrate Christ as the king who enters our own personal Jerusalem- our hearts. Today's feast day is a momentary feast of joy and celebration, because tonight we begin the final leg of our journey towards Pascha. Our mood changes from one of joy this morning to one of solemnity, almost of sorrow this evening as we lead up to the great sacrifice that Christ performed for us on the cross.

The feast of Palm Sunday has been celebrated in our Church since the earliest days of Christianity. With the expectation of the Messiah, and the events of Christ's ministry on earth, word travelled quickly around Judea that Jesus was the one whom the prophets had spoken about and whom everyone was expecting. Yesterday Christ performed a miracle by raising Lazarus from the dead, the miracle that foreshadowed his glorious resurrection next Sunday. Now everyone is convinced this is the Messiah-king who will save the Israelites. And Christ fulfils the prophecy of Zachariah, entering Jerusalem on a donkey. For Orthodox Christians around the world, we celebrate these events as they happened not only in the past, but as they also happen today. We celebrate Christ as the king who enters our hearts, our own personal Jerusalem. But is Christ able to enter? Is there room in our hearts for Christ to rule as king? Often the doors of our hearts are locked. Often Christ is unable to enter because

there is already another king of the heart - ourselves. And how do we solve this problem of trying to let Christ in? How do we instill within ourselves the one thing that is missing—God?

The answer is to surrender. Surrender to the will of God. Surrender your life to the one who gave you life. We are constantly held captive by the temporal things of this life. We are prisoners of our own selves, of this world, of our careers, of money, of the politicians who rule over us, we are even slaves to our own passions. The only way to find peace, to experience true love is to surrender yourself to God, to make Him your king, to live in total communion with Him. And the way in which we turn our hearts from the kingdom of the self into the kingdom of God is through constant daily prayer, reflection, , frequent Holy Communion, frequent Confession, reading and understanding the Scriptures. So many people complain that they can't find time to come to Church, they can't find time to pray and read the Scriptures, they can't find time to fast. The reason they don't have time is that they are slaves to their own selves, to their own will. But God always has time for us. He is constantly knocking at the door to our hearts, to our lives and asking to come in. Some of the Church Fathers go so far as to liken God to a lover who constantly seeks to be with the one that He loves- us, and who would do absolutely anything to be with the people that He loves.

Today, as we receive our Palm branches at the end of the Divine Liturgy, let us take them to our homes and place them somewhere where we can always see them. Let the Palms remind us that Christ is the king of our families, that Christ is the king of our hearts, that Christ is the only true answer to happiness and meaning in our lives. Let us try and make time for Him in our daily life. Let us be reminded that our careers, our finances, our homes, all of the basic material needs in our lives are only temporary. Let us prioritize and place Christ the king as the primary concern in our lives. It is only when we have done this that we will find true peace and happiness in such a confused and complex world. Amen.

From: Greek Orthodox Church of Saint George, Brisbane QLD