

Today the Master has despoiled hell and raised the prisoners whom it had held from the ages in harsh captivity (Paschal Matins, 9th Ode)

CHRIST IS RISEN!

INDEED HE IS RISEN!

ST NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

CROSS & COTTAGE STREETS, AUBURN

WWW.STNICHOLASAUBURN.COM

(315) 252 – 3423

Fr. Stephen Mack, Pastor

Deacon David Donch

Fr. Michael Speck, Assistant Pastor

Subdeacon Reader Michael Speck

Choir Director Reader Paul Flurschutz

April 16, 2017

PASCHA – The Resurrection of our Lord and Savior

We thank everyone who has made an effort to draw closer to Christ during our Lenten season, and we pray you enjoy this beautiful Paschal season.

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

The week of Pascha is a fast-free week. Enjoy yourselves, especially if you've fasted during Great Lent – you deserve it.

Saturday, Apr 22 at 6PM: Vespers

Sunday, April 23 at 10AM: Divine Liturgy of St John

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.

Meditations on the Paschal Canon, Ode I

The Paschal Canon by St. John Damascene is an amazing mediation on the Resurrection of our Lord, and is (together with the Paschal Stichera) the heart of the services for Pascha and Bright Week. It also plays an important role in the Vigil Services for each of the Sundays after Pascha.

Ode I

The canon as a textual form is closely linked to the Eight biblical odes — songs of prominent Old Testament figures which are recorded in the Bible and which played a role in the daily worship of the early Church. Over time, hymns in honor of New Testament events and people were composed to be sung with these Odes, and today these hymns (called canons) have nearly completely replaced the odes themselves. But the links to the Old Testament themes is still very evident, especially in the first hymn of each Ode, which is called the Irmos ("link"). Ode I is the song of Moses, sung after the people of Israel escaped from Egypt by crossing the Red Sea. As such, it is essentially a hymn of thanksgiving for the Old Testament Passover. **Christ, the new Passover lamb who was slain to deliver us from the slavery to sin, is the fulfillment of this Old Testament celebration**, as we see in the Irmos of this ode.

It is the Day of Resurrection! Let us be radiant, O people! Pascha! The Lord's Pascha! For from death to life, and from earth to heaven hath Christ God has brought us, as we sing the song of victory!

Here we are called to **radiantly rejoice in song** because we have been *brought over* from death to life, just as the Hebrew people were brought over the Red Sea from slavery to freedom. Just as Moses sang a song of victory after the defeat of Pharaoh's forces, so **we now sing a song in praise of our Lord's victory over sin and death.**

Let us purify our senses and we shall behold Christ, radiant with unapproachable light of the Resurrection, and shall clearly hear Him say, "Rejoice!" As we sing the song of victory!

"Blessed are the pure in heart," says our Lord, "for they shall see God." It is only through the Resurrection that we can attain this purity, and it is only through this purity that we can approach in some measure the unapproachable light of the Resurrection. Our salvation, justification, and glorification is a beautiful synergy between our Lord's action and our cooperation. And so as we rejoice in our Lord's victory, **let us also not cease to purify our souls** from sinful thoughts, deeds and words. We can also see in this troparion a reminder of our Baptism. As St. Paul teaches us, as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death. We died to sin and death and were reborn to freedom and life. The waters of baptism were prefigured by the passage over the Red Sea¹, and these waters are at the same time our grave (to sin) and the womb of our mother (to everlasting life). **And so through baptism we assimilate for ourselves that victory which Christ accomplished for the world in His death and resurrection.**

Let the heavens be glad as is meet, and let the earth rejoice, and let the whole world, both visible and invisible, keep festival. For Christ is risen! O gladness eternal!

The Resurrection brings joy to the entire world, for Christ's Resurrection conquers the power of death. When mankind fell through Adam's voluntary sin, God subjected the whole creation to death and corruption for mankind's sake, that we might be able to repent and be restored to God. Christ's Death and Resurrection destroyed the power of death when His Body rose incorrupt from the grave. This victory is not yet consummated — the whole creation still "groaneth and travaileth" — because God in His mercy is still giving us time to repent and avail ourselves of the proffered salvation, but in the last day death will be no more, and Christ will be all in all!²

The first Ode — and all of the Odes — ends with the threefold singing of the Paschal Troparion:

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Renovation Fund Donations: In memory of George & Michael Pavlyak: Michel Pavlyak \$75 // In memory of Marion Zablotzky, Ann Tierney, Mary Michaels, Irene Stanley, Michael Speck & Nellie Stanley: Jim & Nancy Perfield \$150 // In memory of Nellie Stanley: Mille Smart \$20; Mike & Joan Panek \$200 // In mem of Ann Tierney: Millie Smart \$20; Mike & Joan Panek \$50 // In memory of Ann Tierney & Nellie Stanley: Glenn & Pauline Peters \$30 // For Pashcal Items: In memory of Kondratick family members: Metro & Joan Kondratick \$50 // In memory of Donald Smart & Kosct family members: Millie Smart \$100