

St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church

28 Cross Street - Auburn, New York 13021 (www.stnicholasauburn.com)

Very Reverend Michael Speck – Pastor

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Fr. Michael's Office Hours Monday and Thursday 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM in the Church Hall Office or by Appointment

Reverend Deacon David Donch Sr. Warden Greg Michaels Jr. Warden Rocco Lupo
Subdeacon Michael W. Speck Reader Nathaniel Donch Reader Peter A. Speck

Sunday, March 3, 2019 – Meatfare – Last Judgment

Sunday, March 3 -Ninth Day Panikhida for John Baumes following Liturgy
Wednesday, March 6 -9:00 AM – No Divine Liturgy
Saturday, March 9 -4:30 PM – Confessions
 -4:45 PM – Ninth Hour
 -5:00 PM – Vespers followed by Family Activity Night
Sunday, March 10 -9:00 AM – No Adult Education
 -9:40 AM - 3rd and 6th Hours
 -10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy followed by Forgiveness Vespers

Please remember that Daylight Saving Time begins next Sunday, March 10.

Memorial Donations

For the Renovation Fund in memory of John Baumes \$100 by Michele Pavlyak;
\$50 by St. Marion's Sisterhood; \$50 by the St. Phillips and Germain Families;
\$25 by Dan & Sandy Sopchak; \$25 by Mary Clancy; \$20 by Mary Ann Pysnack

For the General Fund in memory of John Baumes;
\$100 by Phil & Patricia Stanley

Not an hour should pass without taking time to examine our heart, for the hour of judgment can come at any time, and we must be ready to give account to God for our life. According to Saint Theophan the Recluse, when we examine our lives we find many instances when God shows His unmistakable mercy on us. Those moments we experienced trouble brewing, God delivered us. We must acknowledge these moments, and give thanks to God for His love. When we practice examination of the heart, we do so with the knowledge that there is no spiritual improvement if we do not seek to please God with holiness of life. If we find good in our deeds, we must attribute it to Christ. If we find we've neglected our spiritual struggle, and acted with foolish abandon, we must turn to God in repentance. Each moment of each hour must find us resolved to turn ourselves around, knowing that with God's help, we will defeat the enemy of our souls. Holiness comes only to those who struggle, but with God we have the grace needed to battle the enemy. (Abbot Tryphon)

40 Holy Martyrs of Sebaste (March 9)

In the year 313 Saint Constantine the Great issued an edict granting Christians religious freedom, and officially recognizing Christianity as equal with paganism under the law. But his co-ruler Licinius was a pagan, and he decided to stamp out Christianity in his part of the Empire. As Licinius prepared his army to fight Constantine, he decided to remove Christians from his army, fearing mutiny. One of the military commanders of that time in the Armenian city of Sebaste was Agricola, a zealous champion of idolatry. Under his command was a company of forty Cappadocians, brave soldiers who had distinguished themselves in many battles. When these Christian soldiers refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, Agricola locked them up in prison. The soldiers occupied themselves with prayer and psalmody, and during the night they heard a voice saying, "Persevere until the end, then you shall be saved."

Seven days later, the renowned judge Licius arrived at Sebaste and put the soldiers on trial. The saints steadfastly answered, "Take not only our military insignia, but also our lives, since nothing is more precious to us than Christ God." Licius then ordered his servants to stone the holy martyrs. But the stones missed the saints and returned to strike those who had thrown them. One stone thrown by Licius hit Agricola in the face, smashing his teeth. The torturers realized that the saints were guarded by some invisible power. In prison, the soldiers spent the night in prayer and again they heard the voice of the Lord comforting them: "He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live (John 11:25). Be brave and fear not, for you shall obtain imperishable crowns."

On the following day the judge repeated the interrogation in front of the torturer, but the soldiers remained unyielding. It was winter, and there was a severe frost. They lined up the holy soldiers, threw them into a lake near the city, and set a guard to prevent them from coming out of the water. In order to break the will of the martyrs, a warm bath-house was set up on the shore. During the first hour of the night, when the cold had become unbearable, one of the soldiers made a dash for the bath-house, but no sooner had he stepped over the threshold, than he fell down dead.

During the third hour of the night, the Lord sent consolation to the martyrs. Suddenly there was light, the ice melted away, and the water in the lake became warm. All the guards were asleep, except for Aglaius, who was keeping watch. Looking at the lake he saw that a radiant crown had appeared over the head of each martyr. Aglaius counted thirty-nine crowns and realized that the soldier who fled had lost his crown. Aggias then woke up the other guards, took off his uniform and said to them, "I too am a Christian," and he joined the martyrs. Standing in the water he prayed, "Lord God, I believe in You, in Whom these soldiers believe. Add me to their number, and make me worthy to suffer with Your servants." Then a fortieth crown appeared over his head. In the morning, the torturers saw with surprise that the martyrs were still alive, and their guard Aggias was glorifying Christ together with them. They led the soldiers out of the water and broke their legs. During this horrible execution the mother of the youngest of the soldiers, Meliton, pleaded with her son to persevere until death.

They put the bodies of the martyrs on a cart and committed them to fire. Young Meliton was still breathing, and they left him on the ground. His mother then picked up her son, and on her own shoulders she carried him behind the cart. When Meliton drew his last breath, his mother put him on the cart with the bodies of his fellow sufferers. The bodies of the saints were tossed in the fire, and their charred bones were thrown into the water, so that Christians would not gather them up. Three days later the martyrs appeared in a dream to Saint Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, and commanded him to bury their remains. The bishop together with several clergy gathered up the relics of the glorious martyrs by night and buried them with honor.

There is a pious custom of baking "skylarks" (pastries shaped like skylarks) on this day, because people believed that birds sing at this time to announce the arrival of spring. Forty "skylarks" are prepared in honor of the Forty Martyrs.