

St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church
30 Cross Street - Auburn, New York 13021 (www.stnicholasauburn.com)

Very Reverend Michael Speck – Pastor

(315) 246-6051 (Cell), (315) 255-2998 (Home), mspeck100@gmail.com

Reverend Deacon David Donch Reverend Deacon Michael W. Speck

Sr. Warden Greg Michaels Jr. Warden Rocco Lupo Reader Nathaniel Donch

+“I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy!” (John 16:22)

Sunday, April 5, 2020 – St. Mary of Egypt

We urge each and every one of you to follow the advice of the CDC in helping to limit further spread of the Coronavirus and to protect yourselves and those who are in contact with you

Very sadly, services will remain closed to our faithful as directed by the Holy Synod and Archbishop Michael until at least April 30. This is vital to the future of our church. Nobody is allowed to enter the church building by order of the Holy Synod. Signs on the doors announce this. If this directive is not followed, I will face disciplinary action. We must be leaders in the community in following the recommendations and restrictions that we are subject to.

Our schedule of live-streamed services for this week is:

Saturday, April 4 – 5:00 PM – Vespers

Sunday, April 5 – 10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy – St Mary of Egypt

Wednesday, April 8 – 9:00 AM – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Saturday, April 11 – Divine Liturgy – Lazarus Saturday

Saturday, April 11 – 5:00 PM – Vespers and Litya for Palm Sunday

Palms and Willows will be blessed and distributed at a later date to those who would like them.

Thanks so much to those who continue to send their financial contributions to support the survival of our church. (Please send to 28 Cross Street, Auburn, NY 13021) I don't like to keep stressing this, but we must all be aware of the realities of life. We cannot exist as a church without your generosity. God Bless You For Your Assistance!!!

Our deanery meeting was held this past Thursday morning. There is not a great deal new to report beyond what the Holy Synod directed earlier in the week. (see the OCA website)

Some churches are entirely closed (e.g. Syracuse and Rochester). Others are serving with a skeleton crew (deacon, altar server, a couple choir members if they are related and in close contact routinely). A few are live-streaming as we are.

Our schedule of services for Pascha must be approved by Archbishop Michael and reduced in number for the sake and health of those serving them. (As Archbishop Michael says, “I don’t want to bury any priests because of this”.)

We cannot allow the faithful into the churches because of potential complaints and consequences. Do not misunderstand. The church has powerful active enemies in government, among those who are angry with the church, unhappy neighbors, and militant atheists who will happily report our lack of cooperation to the police. This week, one of our OCA priests in Queens (NYC) was questioned by police who wanted to know how his services were being performed and how many were attending. We must avoid government sanctions as have been promised in New York City and its surrounding counties.

We are not to ring church bells, as that is a sign that services are going on. We will not hold a midnight service on Pascha, as lights in the church at that hour will indicate the same. These changes are not being instituted out of fear by the Holy Synod, but out of Christ-like concern for the continuation of our churches.

See to your Spiritual Health!

I know that we have a lot of our faithful and friends who are glued to the television and the media all day and half the night during these days. Please don’t do this. You are damaging your mind and soul and you will be drawn into a hopeless vortex of darkness, fear and anxiety. You will make yourself sick. Listen to local news once a day for a few minutes so that you will know what is important. Then immerse yourself in prayer. Have you ever read all the Gospels and Epistles? Try it. You will be filled with the peace of Christ’s presence.

Remember as well that while there have been many who have become very ill and some have died from this virus, many who have contracted it have had few symptoms. The vast majority who have contracted it have fully recovered. Nevertheless, **DO NOT BE CARELESS in how you protect yourselves.**

We must optimistically look beyond these days. God Is With Us!!! Jesus Christ is the God of healing, comfort and optimism. Do not fear! We who have the Faith and the Church are blessed beyond our ability to comprehend. Because the “Gracious Comforter”, the Holy Spirit fills us with all good things..

Please remain in prayer and ask God to strengthen us for Holy Week and Pascha. Nothing can take the joy of these weeks away from us, for, “the gates of hell will not prevail against (the church).” (Matthew 16:18)

Please keep in touch with everybody from our church, especially those who do not have internet access. Reach out to friends and neighbors who desperately need to talk to somebody.

Be well, be faithful, and be thankful for everything always!