

St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church

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

Very Reverend Michael Speck – Parish Priest (315) 246-6051 mspeck100@gmail.com

Office Hours 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM Thursday or any time by appointment

Reverend Deacon David Donch Reverend Deacon Michael W. Speck
Reader Nathaniel Donch

Sr. Warden - Greg Michaels Jr. Warden – Reverend Deacon David Donch
Secretary – Jane Kimak Treasurer – Glenn Peters

Sunday, September 15, 2024



Saturday, September 14 – 8:30 AM Divine Liturgy – Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

– Strict Fast Day

5:00 PM – Great Vespers

Sunday, September 15 – 9:30 AM - Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour and a Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 18 – 8:30 AM Divine Liturgy

Saturday, September 21 - 5:00 PM – Great Vespers

Sunday, September 22 – 9:30 AM - Divine Liturgy and Coffee Hour

***There will be a brief Parish Council Meeting Sunday
September 15 following Divine Liturgy***

Donations

***The flowers adorning the Holy Cross have been donated by
by Nancy and Katie Baumes in Memory of John Baumes
\$50 in Memory of Robert LaComb for the General Fund by Jim
and Nancy Perfield***

***Pierogi will be made on Friday-Saturday September 27-28. We
very much encourage some of the younger members of our
church family to join in the charitable work of the Sisterhood.
Without an infusion of new members, the Sisterhood will not
be able to continue its work for many more years. May God
bless you richly for dedicating your time and talent to His
work!***

***Please remember our parish in your charitable giving. We have
many bills coming due at this time of year. God bless you for
your dedication to the ongoing mission of our church to
proclaim the Orthodox Faith in our city!***



Great Martyr Euphemia the All-praised



Commemorated on [September 16](#)

The Holy Great Martyr Euphemia (Euphēmia / Ευφημία) was the daughter of Christian parents, the senator Philophronos and his wife Theodosia. She suffered for Christ in the year 304 in the city of Chalcedon, on the Bosphorus opposite Constantinople, the Queen of Cities.

Priscus, the Proconsul of Chalcedon, issued a decree which required all the inhabitants of Chalcedon and the surrounding area to attend a pagan festival, in order to worship and offer sacrifice to the idol of Ares. He threatened grave torments for anyone who failed to appear. During this impious festival, 49 Christians were hidden in one house, where they worshiped the true God in secret. The young virgin Euphemia was among those who prayed there.

Soon their hiding place was discovered, and they were brought before Priscus to answer the charges against them. For nineteen days the martyrs were subjected to various torments, but none of them wavered in their faith, nor did they consent to offer sacrifice to the idol. The governor, beside himself with rage and not knowing any other way of forcing the Christians to abandon their faith, sent them to Emperor Diocletian for trial. He kept the youngest, the virgin Euphemia, hoping that she would not persevere if she were left all alone. Separated from her fellow-Christians, Saint Euphemia fervently prayed that the Lord Jesus Christ would strengthen her for her impending ordeal. Priscus urged the Saint to offer sacrifice to the idol, promising her many rewards. When she refused, he ordered that she be tortured.

The martyr was tied to a wheel with sharp knives attached to it, which slashed her body. The Saint prayed aloud, and miraculously, the wheel stopped by itself and would not move despite all the efforts of the executioners. An angel of the Lord, came down from Heaven, removed Euphemia from the wheel, and healed her

of her wounds, and the Saint gave thanks to God. Priscus did not notice the miracle which had taken place, so he ordered the soldiers Victor and Sosthenes to take the Saint to a red-hot furnace. But the soldiers, seeing two Angels in the midst of the flames, refused to carry out the Proconsul's order and declared that they believed in the God Whom Euphemia worshipped. Boldly proclaiming that they were Christians, Victor and Sosthenes awaited punishment. They were sentenced to be devoured by wild beasts. In the arena, they begged God to forgive the sins they had committed, asking the Lord to receive them into the Heavenly Kingdom. A Divine voice was heard, and the two soldiers entered into eternal life. The beasts, however, did not harm their bodies.

Saint Euphemia, cast into the fire by other soldiers, did not suffer. With God's help she emerged unscathed after many other torments. Ascribing these things to sorcery, Priscus ordered a pit to be dug. Filling it with knives, he had it covered over with earth and grass, so that the martyr would not notice this trap. Once again, Saint Euphemia remained safe, walking over the pit. Finally, she was sentenced to be devoured by wild beasts in the arena. Before her execution the Saint prayed that the Lord would deem her worthy of martyrdom. But none of the bears or lions attacked her, but only licked her feet. Finally, one she-bear wounded her foot, which bled slightly, and the Holy Great Martyr Euphemia died right away. As her soul departed, there was an earthquake. The city was shaken, the walls fell down, and the pagan temples crumbled. As Saint Euphemia lay dead in the sand, the guards and spectators fled in terror, so that the Saint's parents were able to take her body and bury it near Chalcedon.

Later, a majestic church was built over the grave of the Great Martyr Euphemia. The sessions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council took place there in the year 451. At that time, the Holy Great Martyr Euphemia confirmed the Orthodox confession of faith in a miraculous way, exposing the Monophysite heresy. That miracle is commemorated on July 11. When the Persians captured Chalcedon in the year 617, the relics of the holy Great Martyr Euphemia were transferred to Constantinople (around the year 620). During the Iconoclast heresy, the reliquary containing Saint Euphemia's relics seems to have been thrown into the sea, but pious sailors recovered them. They were brought to the island of Lemnos, and they were returned to Constantinople in 796. The incorrupt body of Saint Euphemia is in the Patriarchal Church of Saint George at the Phanar in Constantinople. Portions of her relics are to be found in Kykkos Monastery on Cyprus, and in the Saint Alexander Nevsky Lavra at Saint Petersburg.

The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross



Commemorated on [September 14](#)

The pagan Roman Emperors tried to obliterate the holy places where our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and rose from the dead, so that they would be forgotten. Emperor Hadrian (117-138) ordered that Golgotha and the Lord's Sepulchre be buried, and that a temple in honor of the pagan "goddess" Venus and a statue of Jupiter be placed there.

Pagans gathered at this place and offered sacrifice to idols. Eventually after 300 years, by Divine Providence, the Christian holy places, the Sepulchre of the Lord, and the Life-giving Cross, were discovered and opened for veneration. This took place under Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) after his victory over Maxentius (in 312), who ruled the Western part of the Roman Empire, and over Licinius, the ruler of its Eastern part. In the year 323 Constantine became the sole ruler of the vast Roman Empire.

In 313 Saint Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, by which Christianity was legalized and persecutions against Christians in the Western half of the Empire were stopped. Although Licinius had signed the Edict of Milan in order to oblige

Constantine, he continued his cruel persecutions against Christians. Only after his conclusive defeat did the Edict of Milan extend also to the Eastern part of the Empire. The Holy Equal of the Apostles Emperor Constantine, triumphing over his enemies in three wars, with God's assistance, had seen the Sign of the Cross in the heavens. Written beneath were the words: "By this you shall conquer."

Ardently desiring to find the Cross upon which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, Saint Constantine sent his mother, the pious Empress Helen (May 21), to Jerusalem, providing her with a letter to Saint Makarios, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Saint Helen journeyed to the holy places connected with the earthly life of the Savior, building more than 80 churches, at Bethlehem the birthplace of Christ, and on the Mount of Olives where the Lord ascended to Heaven, and at Gethsemane where the Savior prayed before His sufferings, and where the Mother of God was buried after her Dormition.

Although the holy Empress Helen was no longer young, she set about completing the task with enthusiasm. In her search for the Life-giving Cross, she questioned both Christians and Jews, but for a long time her search remained unsuccessful. Finally, she was directed to a certain elderly Jew named Jude who stated that the Cross was buried beneath the temple of Venus. They demolished the pagan temple and, after praying, they began to excavate the ground. Soon the Lord's Tomb was uncovered. Not far from it were three crosses, and a board with the inscription ordered by Pilate, and four nails which had pierced the Lord's Body (March 6).

In order to discover on which of the three crosses the Savior had been crucified, Patriarch Makarios alternately touched the crosses to a corpse. When the Cross of the Lord touched the dead man, he was restored to life. After witnessing the raising of the dead man, everyone was convinced that the Life-giving Cross had been found.

Christians came in a huge crowds to venerate the Holy Cross, beseeching Saint Makarios to lift the Cross, so that those far off could see it. Then the Patriarch and other spiritual leaders lifted the Holy Cross, and the people prostrated themselves before the Honorable Wood, saying "Lord have mercy." This solemn event occurred in the year 326.

During the discovery of the Life-giving Cross another miracle took place: a woman who was close to death was healed by the shadow of the Holy Cross. The elderly

Jude (October 28) and other Jews believed in Christ and were baptized. Jude was given the name Kyriakos, and later he was consecrated as the Bishop of Jerusalem. He suffered a martyr's death for Christ during the reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363).

Saint Helen took part of the Life-giving Wood and nails with her to Constantinople. Saint Constantine ordered a majestic and spacious church to be built at Jerusalem in honor of the Resurrection of Christ, also including under its roof the Life-giving Tomb of the Lord and Golgotha. The church was built in ten years. Saint Helen did not survive until the dedication of the church, she reposed in the year 327. The church was consecrated on September 13, 335. On the following day, September 14, the festal celebration of the Exaltation of the Honorable and Life-giving Cross was established.

Another event connected to the Cross of the Lord is remembered also on this day: its return to Jerusalem from Persia after a fourteen year captivity. During the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Phokas (602-610) the Persian king Khosrōēs II attacked Constantinople, defeated the Greek army, plundered Jerusalem, capturing both the Life-giving Cross of the Lord and the Holy Patriarch Zachariah (609-633).

The Cross remained in Persia for fourteen years, and only under Emperor Herakleios (610-641), who defeated Khosrōēs and concluded peace with his successor and son Syroes, was the Lord's Cross returned to the Christians.

With great solemnity the Life-giving Cross was transferred to Jerusalem. Emperor Herakleios, wearing a crown and his royal purple garments carried the Cross of Christ. The Emperor was accompanied by Patriarch Zachariah. At the gates by which they ascended Golgotha, the Emperor stopped suddenly and was unable to proceed. The holy Patriarch explained to the Emperor that an Angel of the Lord was blocking his way. Herakleios was told to remove his royal trappings and to walk barefoot, since He Who bore the Cross for the salvation of the world had made His way to Golgotha in all humility. Then Herakleios donned plain clothes, and without further hindrance, carried the Cross of Christ into the church.

In a sermon on the Exaltation of the Cross, Saint Andrew of Crete (July 4) says: "The Cross is exalted, and everything true is gathered together, the Cross is exalted, and the city makes solemn, and the people celebrate the feast."