

# SS. PETER & PAUL

Lorain, OH | [www.OrthodoxLorain.org](http://www.OrthodoxLorain.org) | (440) 277-6266

Rev. Joseph McCartney, Rector

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**Gospel Reading ~ Luke 14:16-24**  
**Epistle Reading ~ Colossians 3:4-11**  
*Sunday of the Forefathers*

## *This Week at a Glance*

**Sat, Dec. 22nd**

6:00 pm - Great Vespers

**Sun, Dec. 23rd**

9:00 pm - 3rd & 6th Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Annual Christmas Concert

## **Confession**

Is available before and after every scheduled service. Just a reminder that to be considered eligible to vote at the annual parish meeting you must go to confession at least once a year. If you aren't sure if you have for the calendar year 2018, please see Fr. Joseph. Deadline is December 25th.

## **Historical Items**

Our sales counter in the basement has been liquidated and will not be restocked. Instead we will use that area to store historical items from the parish to celebrate our long and rich history. If you have any documents, artifacts or old photos that you would like to have considered for inclusion in the display, please see Fr Joseph.

## **Gospel Meditation**

The Lord often used the image of a great feast for the Kingdom of God and this parable reminds us that many of the Jews were not prepared to accept Him as the Messiah, while many disreputable people—such as tax collectors and others of low standing, even Gentiles—did receive Him. Whether they did so or not judged them in a sense, for it revealed the state of their souls.

Unfortunately, we often act like those who refused to attend the great banquet in the parable because we use the common concerns of life as excuses not to appear with the Lord in glory, not to participate in the healing and blessing that He comes to give to all those created in His image and likeness. Instead, of making everything from our daily work and family relationships to our health or sickness opportunities to find greater healing for our souls, we so often make them false gods in ways that judge us, that make clear the weak state of our spiritual lives. That is how we shut ourselves out of the great banquet and turn away from the glory that is ours in Christ Jesus.

During these weeks of Advent, we may accept the invitation to the great banquet of the Lord by embracing increased spiritual disciplines. As difficult as we probably find them to be and as bad as we are in doing them, they are powerful means of opening our souls to the glory that He has brought to the world through His appearance at Bethlehem. They are how we humble ourselves before Him, fighting our passions, resisting our temptations, and doing what we can to prepare to welcome Him at Christmas for our salvation. They are what Advent is all about.

Christmas will be here soon, and how we respond to the Lord as His birth will make clear the state of our souls. Will we be ready to welcome Christ into our lives at His birth? Will we be ready to accept the invitation to the feast? I certainly hope so, for the good news of Christmas is that in our Lord the fulfillment of all God's promises is extended to people like us, those poor, blind, and lame with sin, who suffer from the pain, weakness, and corruption of life in the world as we know it, and who are nowhere near perfect. The good news is that, in the Babe of Bethlehem, even unlikely people like you and me are invited to take our place with the Holy Forefathers and Foremothers of Christ in the heavenly banquet and to shine with the light of heaven, to appear with Him in glory. That is why our Savior was born.

### Rectory Phone

Please note that the rectory phone line has been disconnected due to lack of use. Please contact Fr Joseph on his cell phone.

### New Parish Council Members Needed

We will have some openings on the parish council this coming year. The positions that will be open are **Secretary, Trustee-at-Large** (2 positions), **Auditor**. If you would like to serve your parish in either capacity please see Fr Joseph to confirm eligibility. At our parish meeting we will not take nominations from the floor, as all candidates need to be approved.

### Annual Christmas Concert

Our Annual Christmas Concert will be held immediately following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 23rd in church. Please see Alex or Kathy for choir practice times.

### Children's Yolka

The Children's Yolka has been cancelled this year due to a large number of families being out of town on that Sunday. We will still have the Annual Christmas Concert after Liturgy, but no children's portion.

### Annual Parish Meeting

We will have our annual Parish Meeting on **Sunday, January 27th** immediately following Divine Liturgy. This annual meeting is open to eligible voting members of our parish only. Visitors and non-members will be asked to exit the church hall prior to the start of the meeting. Please keep in mind that a "voting member" is one who 1.) Has received communion and confession in the last year in our parish. (*Confession in home parish is required unless a blessing is received from the rector to confess to a different local Orthodox priest.*) 2.) One who has fulfilled financial obligation in the past year, which is currently defined by the parish council as a minimum contribution of \$275 in the last year. If you haven't fulfilled these obligations you must do so **before Christmas** to be considered an eligible voting member. Confession is available up to an hour before and after vespers and before Divine Liturgy.

### Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers is the Sunday that falls between December 11-17, the second Sunday before the Nativity. The ancestors of Christ according to the flesh are remembered on this Sunday of the Nativity Fast.

All the great Fathers and Mothers and Prophets of the Old Testament, starting with Adam, Abraham, the Righteous Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, including Holy Prophet Elias and Daniel, and concluding with Holy Prophet Zechariah, Joachim and Anna, Holy Prophet and Forerunner John the Baptist and the Theotokos. They lived before the Law and under the Law, especially the Patriarch Abraham, to whom God said, "In thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3, 22:18).



What connection is there between them and us? In general, the Church brings them to our attention now, right before Christmas, largely because of their faith – their belief in the promise given by God to Adam during his expulsion from the garden of Eden, that in the end a Savior will come into the world and will redeem mankind from original sin. All the forefathers – who lived on earth long before the birth of Christ – lived and burned with this faith, never allowing it to be extinguished. They are a shining example to us, who are living on earth after the incarnation of our Lord. Just like those ancient people we, too, have never actually seen Christ: they only knew that He would come into the world, while we know that He did come into the world. But they firmly believed in His coming and their faith was justified.

We are expected to have even greater faith. We must believe that the Lord was, and is, and will be; that He lived on earth as a man; that through His Church He remains with us constantly; and that He will again return to earth to judge mankind. But for such a faith the Lord Himself promises us eternal bliss.

