



LIFE AT ST. NICHOLAS

THE SUNDAY BULLETIN OF ST. NICHOLAS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

APRIL 20, 2025

(616) 954-2700 ▪ info@stnicholasgr.com ▪ stnicholasgr.com

CHRIST IS RISEN!

PASCHA (EASTER) SUNDAY

Agape Vespers

Today @ 1PM

Come take part in today's Agape service and listen to the Gospel readings being spoken in different languages. It is a beautiful finish to Pascha.

Agape Vespers Easter Egg Hunt

Kids of St. Nicholas are invited to join the annual Easter Egg Hunt immediately following 1PM Agape Vespers. Don't forget to bring your Easter baskets!

PASCHA CELEBRATION

When: Sunday, April 20 (Pascha!)

Time: anytime after 3PM

Where: 422 Gladstone Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

The Lewis Family (Nick, Joanna, Elaine, Colette, and Penelope) is throwing their annual Open House to celebrate Pascha, and they'd love for you to join them. They see this as an evangelistic opportunity to celebrate our faith in the greater Grand Rapids community with friends and family from the parish. As part of the festivities, there will be the traditional whole lamb rotisserie in the front yard, lots of good food, and some tents in case the weather does not cooperate. This Open House is potluck-style, so please bring a dish to pass if you're able. They would love for you to join them in their celebration!

FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE & CHARITABLE OUTREACH

"Love the poor and through them you will find mercy" Mark 6:37

Christ is Risen, Glorify Him! We have collected about \$3,600 so far towards our \$7,500 goal. Please count your coins and write a check for your donation amount, or you may give electronically at stnicholasgr.com/parishioners/contributions. Be sure to note FFHP in the memo line. Remember your gift helps the hungry globally and locally.

Next Sunday, we will wrap up this fund drive with a FFHP&CO Coffee Hour; you may also give at this Coffee Hour. Thank you for your generosity.

"When giving, give magnanimously with a look of kindness on your face, and give more than what is asked of you." St Isaac the Syrian

THIS WEEK

Sunday, April 20

Great and Holy Pascha

1PM—Agape Vespers with Pascha (Easter) Egg Hunt

3PM—Pascha Celebration at Nick & Joanna Lewis's

Tuesday, April 22

6PM—Parish Council Meeting

Saturday, April 26

6PM—Great Vespers followed by Confessions

VERSE OF THE WEEK

But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

Matthew 28: 5-7

BRIGHT WEEK PRAYERS

We replace our normal Morning and Evening Prayers this week with the Paschal Office, inserted into this bulletin. These beautiful, Paschal prayers help us maintain the joy of the Feast of Feasts. Because they are so short, it's a great time to reestablish a regular rule of prayer!

A-MEN PILGRIMAGE

Friday, May 2-Sunday, May 4

Save the date for a Pilgrimage to Dormition Monastery for an event remembering Fr. Roman Braga. Details will be sent to your emails.

PARISHIONER UPDATE

Greg and Marian Lambert
529 Forest Hill Avenue SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546



CREATION CARE MINISTRY Prayer Trail Dedication

Next Sunday, April 27
(following Divine Liturgy)

Join Fr. Michael and fellow parishioners as we process along the new Prayer Trail and place the icons in the shrines along the path. Hear about the unique and diverse natural environment that the trail passes through.

Want to build a birdhouse, a Leopold bench, or an Icon shrine like the ones out on the prayer trail? We have all the measurements and directions for assembling - Ask a Creation Care team member for a copy.

PRAYER TRAIL PLANTING DAY

Saturday, May 3 (9 AM—Noon)

Join us as we plant trees, shrubs, and groundcover in the St. Nicholas woods. Bring gloves, sun and bug protection, shovels and rakes. We will provide water and snacks. Contact Kiara Abuaita if you plan to come or have questions.



DIocese OF TOLEDO

2025 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
JUNE 18-22, 2025

HOLIDAY INN LOUISVILLE EAST

1325 S. HURSTBOURNE PKWY.
LOUISVILLE, KY 40222



FEATURED SPEAKERS

Fr. Joseph Lucas

RECTOR, CHRIST THE SAVIOUR
ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
MIAMI LAKES, FL

Fr. Seraphim Ramos

ASSOC. PASTOR, ST. MICHAEL
LOUISVILLE, KY

Dn. Marek Simon

OCF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jennie Gelles

ICONOGRAPHER

Robert Synder

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MIDWEST
DIOCESE COORDINATOR

Kris Howard

SACRED MUSIC COORDINATOR,
THE DIOCESE OF TOLEDO AND
THE MIDWEST

PLUS

- Antiochian Women & Men Fellowship
- Young Adult Gathering
- Kids Church Camp
- Iconography Lectures
- TEEN SOYO
- Bible Bowl
- Oratorical Contest
- & Much More!



REGISTRATION
NOW OPEN!



www.antiochianevents.com/toledo

COFFEE HOUR SIGN-UP

Coffee Hour sign ups are now exclusively online! If you need assistance signing up online, please contact the office. Coffee Hour dates through the end of July have now been posted. Use the QR code or go to the link: stnicholasgr.com/coffeehour.



PROJECT GR ORTHODOX WORKDAY

Saturday, May 17

Join your Orthodox brothers and sisters as we partner with ICCF to rehab houses in Grand Rapids. This is a richly rewarding experience helping our neighbors. For the full schedule and registration link, visit stnicholasgr.com/mercy/.

Orthodox Workday

Saturday, May 17th

In partnership with ICCF, we'll rehab houses in GR doing minor carpentry, painting, cleaning, & yard work making them ready for those in need of affordable housing.

MEET AT ICCF: 415 MLK JR. ST. SE

- 8:30 AM - Prayer & Assignments
- 9:00 AM - Work Session
- 12:30 PM - Lunch (Bring a sack lunch)
- 1:00 PM - Work Session
- 4:00 PM - Clean-up



VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION

<https://vhub.at/922AA7/>



SPONSORS

Holy Cross
Holy Trinity
St. George
St. Nicholas

**REGISTRATION
DEADLINE:
MAY 11**

PARISH COUNCIL

Please use the following email address when communicating with the Parish Council:

parishcouncil@stnicholasgr.com

STRATEGIC PLANNING

For updated information go to:
stnicholasgr.com/parishioners

OUR MISSION—WHAT WE DO

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church is a worshipping community living and sharing the Faith Christ gave to the Apostles.

WHY WE EXIST

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church exists to seek and share Christ's love so that all will find Eternal Life in Him.

SCHEDULING WITH FR. MICHAEL

To make an appointment, please call the Church Office and arrange. For those who would like to arrange their own appointments, please go to stnicholasgr.com/appointments and do so directly online.

SUBMISSION REMINDERS

Announcements and Holy Oblations are due by noon each Wednesday.

Submit Announcements:

announcements@stnicholasgr.com

Submit Holy Oblations:

stnicholasgr.com/holyoblation/
or by completing an envelope located on the Parishioner's Table in the Narthex.

YOUTH IN ACTION

MAY TEEN NIGHT

Sunday May 4 @ 5-7:30PM

It's election time! Teens, come join us for our May Teen Night. We'll hold elections for our officers, break in the new ping-pong table, discuss summer plans, and share a FAST-FREE meal!

ORATORICAL CONTEST

TEENS, there is still time to prepare and sign up for the 2025 Midwest Diocese Oratorical Contest. This year's theme is, *"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."* - Luke 1:38

Junior Division: 13-15 yrs old

Senior Division: 16-19 yrs old

For more details, go to teensoyo.org/oratorical

YOUTH ACTIVITIES FOR LAZARUS SATURDAY AND PALM SUNDAY

Our Myrrhbearers gathered on Friday afternoon last week to make some delicious Lazarus Sweet Breads (Lazarakia) to share with the parish during our Lazarus Saturday Spring Cleaning Party. Then on Saturday, they made Palm Crosses for the parish for Palm Sunday and rehearsed for Tuesday's singing of the Bridegroom Matins! Thank you to our Youth for your love and service to St. Nicholas!



**Calling all
St. Nicholas Graduates**

Congratulations! You did it!

Submit your form for our
Graduation Booklet by April 27.

stnicholasgr.com/graduates

Don't forget some photos of yourself!

We are honoring your hard work
Sunday, May 18th.

**GRAND RAPIDS PAN-ORTHODOX
VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL**

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!
- Psalm 133:1

**SAVE THE DATE
JUNE 8-12
MON-THURS 6PM-8PM**

Ages: 4 years - 8th Grade
\$10/student (\$30 max) - Scholarships Available
Sunday Kick Off Picnic (Mulick Park)
Remaining Days Hosted at Holy Cross
2628 Richmond St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan SABA



Archbishop of New York
and Metropolitan of
All North America

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

Prot. no.: 155/2025

Great and Holy Pascha - 2025

Beloved in Christ:
The Most Reverend Hierarchs,
The Reverend Priests and Deacons,
And the devout People of God in this blessed Archdiocese,

Christ is risen! I greet you with the most beautiful proclamation on this radiant and divine Pascha. I offer my heartfelt prayers for each of you daily, asking for God's abundant mercy and the joy of victory over death—every kind of death—for all of you.

I will not address the glorious event of the Resurrection from a doctrinal perspective today, but instead, I wish to offer a brief reflection.

In our Church, each feast is a moment where we relive the event itself. At Pascha, as you know, we walk with our Lord Jesus through every step of His salvific journey, culminating in His resurrection from the dead. The Cross precedes the Resurrection; death precedes life. This is why we begin our Paschal celebration on Great and Holy Friday evening. In the middle of the service, immediately after the chanting of the lamentations for the death of the Lord, we begin chanting the Resurrectional verses: *"Blessed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy statutes."*

There is a beautiful tradition in some churches where this funeral service begins with clergy wearing dark purple vestments, the color of the Lenten season. Then, following the lamentations, they change into white vestments. It is worth noting that white, the color of the Resurrection, becomes predominant in the church coverings and clergy vestments following the service.

All of this is an outward expression affirming that the Cross (death) and the Resurrection are one inseparable event. If we walk with Christ in His Passion, it is to prepare for the joy of His Resurrection.

Thus, it is only the repentant—those who recognize their sins and feel the need to be freed from them—who know how to crucify their sins with Christ, bury them in His tomb, and rise with Him in His Resurrection, striving toward the face of the Risen Lord. Then their eyes become fixed on Christ the Risen One, and through His Resurrection and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit,

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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they come to understand that they are called to live not on earth, but in heaven—and thus realize that their Christian calling is to make earth itself a piece of heaven.

After our Christ defeated death, we now understand—by the grace of the Risen Lord—that we are responsible for transforming the world and restoring it to the Kingdom of God, beginning by purifying it from sin. But we have also begun to understand that this great work does not begin with others – it begins with us and within us.

What remains is for us to live a new life: a life free of sin, a life the world does not know, for it is according to God’s will, not our own. I invite you to reflect with me on words written by Metropolitan Georges Khodr on Pascha 2014, when he had reached the age of ninety-one:

“I am a crossing, O Lord, until I meet You. Do not allow me to distract myself: ‘Shine Your face upon Your servant,’ that I may become of Your light. Take me to You, that I may know You. Do not leave me in the wilderness of this world. Do not leave me prey to the beasts. Come, for in Your coming I am formed. If You come to me, I will complete my journey toward Your face, O Lord. If I see You, Your face becomes my world. Nothing benefits me but Your face. That is Pascha. Let no other face distract me from You. Fix my eyes upon it. Each day, I desire Your face, O Master. Let it suffice for me as my life. Train me to see You as my all in this age and the one to come, so that I may understand You are existence itself. Discipline me to forsake all things to see You. If I attain You, You will take care of me. I will become Paschal in You. And if I reach You, my journey ends.” (From **"Who Am I at Pascha," Pascha 2014**)

May the joy of our Risen Lord flood your hearts at all times.

Yours in the Risen Christ,



+SABA

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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THE PASCHAL OFFICE

The following is read or sung during the entire Bright Week in place of the Hours, Compline, Midnight Office and Morning and Evening Prayers.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life. **(Thrice)**

Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless One. Thy Cross do we adore, O Christ, and Thy holy Resurrection we praise and glorify; for Thou art our God, and we know no other beside Thee; we call upon Thy Name. O come all you faithful, let us adore Christ's holy Resurrection. For lo, through the Cross joy has come into all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us sing His Resurrection. In that He endured the Cross He destroyed death by death. **(Thrice)**

HYPAKOE: Before the dawn Mary and the women came and found the stone rolled away from the tomb. They heard the angelic voice: Why do you seek among the dead as a man, the One Who is everlasting light? Behold the clothes in the grave; go and proclaim to the world the Lord is risen; He has slain death; as He is the Son of God, saving the race of man.

KONTAKION: O Christ God, though Thou didst descend into the grave, yet didst Thou overthrow the power of Hades; and rise as an immortal conqueror. Thou didst greet the myrrh-bearing women with joy and to Thine Apostles, thou didst send Thy peace and to the fallen, O Lord, didst bring Resurrection.

TOPARION: In the grave with the body but in hades with the soul as God; in Paradise with the thief, and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit was Thou O Christ filling all things, thyself uncircumscribed.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

As life-bearing, as more splendid than Paradise, and more radiant than any royal chamber, O Christ, is shown forth Thy tomb, the fountain of our resurrection.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Rejoice O thou hallowed, divine abode of the Most High. For through thee, O Theotokos, was joy given unto those who cry aloud unto thee: Blessed art thou among women, O all-undefiled Lady.

Lord, have mercy. (40 times)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; thou who without stain bearest God the Word; and art truly Theotokos, we magnify thee.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life. (Thrice)

(For Evening Prayers, the following is also said): Blessed are You, O Almighty Master, Who enlightened the day with the light of the sun and illumined the night by the rays of fire, Who deemed us worthy to pass through the length of the day and draw nigh to the beginning of the night. Hearken unto Our supplication, and that of all Your people. Forgive all of us our sins, voluntary and involuntary, accept our evening entreaties, and send down the multitude of Your mercy and compassions upon Your inheritance. Encompass us with Your holy Angels; arm us with the armor of Your righteousness; surround us with Your truth; protect us by Your might; deliver us from every grievous circumstance and from every conspiracy of the adversary. And grant unto us that this evening together with the coming night and all the days of our life may be perfect, holy, peaceful, sinless, without stumbling and vain imaginings; by the intercessions of the holy Theotokos and of all the Saints who, from ages past, have been well-pleasing unto You. Amen.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (Thrice)

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.