

Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures

"How I have loved thy law, O Lord! The whole day it is my meditation." (Ps 118:97)

Deuteronomy 23:4

"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord forever." (OSB)

In our individualistic and "sensitive" age, we might either overlook or even be scandalized by the consistent concern in the Scriptures for the clear boundaries of God's people. Who is "inside" and who is "outside"? This question is of paramount importance in Scripture because Israel's God is a covenantal God who identifies with and makes promises to a *particular people*. Salvation and true worship are found by participating in this true people of God, not as isolated individuals, and certainly not for God's enemies (cf. Ammon & Moab's role in the Balaam incident in Num 22-24).

And yet this need for "us/them" boundaries must itself be significantly qualified because of the sinful tendency of God's covenant people to presume upon God's grace, to assume that God is somehow confined to or constrained by His own covenant and is not also the God of *all the nations*.

Answering to this sinful tendency, the Psalmist asks, "O Lord, who shall dwell in Your tabernacle? Who shall live in Your holy mountain? He who walks blamelessly, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart ..." (Ps 14:1-2). Merely being an "insider" to God's people does not thereby qualify one to enter into God's presence; being an "insider" assumes that one has taken on the particular pattern of life that makes one worthy of their identity and calling. Indeed, at many crucial junctures in Scripture, the "outsiders" seem to have a better understanding of God than do the "insiders" (e.g., Jonah & the Ninevites).

Likewise, from beginning to end, the Scriptures present God's relationship with Israel as being in the service of a *cosmic, universal restoration* in which the nations will participate:

For in the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be glorious, and the house of God shall be on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall come to it. And many nations shall go and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will tell us his way, and we will walk in it: for out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. (Isa 2:2-3)

Israel's calling as a royal priesthood (Exod 19:6) is to mediate the knowledge and worship of the true God to the nations, not to horde it.

This tension comes to clear focus in our Lord. If we trace the genealogies in Scripture, we find that our Lord, according to the flesh, was born of *Moabite stock*. Righteous Ruth, the Moabite, becomes the foremother of Righteous David and thus of our Lord Himself (Ruth 4:18-22), such that "in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal 3:14). In Christ, and in His assumption of all humanity, He brings us in Himself to heaven to offer us to the Father, thus destroying the "barrier" between Jew and Gentile. The only question that matters as a result is, *Are we "inside" or "outside" of Christ and His Body, the Church, who is the new and true Humanity?*



ST. PHILIP ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the
Antiochian Archdiocese

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH



His Grace Bishop THOMAS



Father Noah Bushelli, Pastor

215-954-9286



Father James Thayer

215-692-0890

December 8, 2019

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

COMMEMORATIONS:

FOREFEAST OF THE CONCEPTION OF THE THEOTOKOS
VENERABLE PATAPIOS OF THEBES
SOPHRONIOS, BISHOP OF CYPRUS
APOSTLES SOSTHENES, APOLLOS, CRISPOS, CAESAR &
EPAPHRODITOS OF THE SEVENTY

Tone 8 - Eothinon 3

Orthros Gospel: St. Mark 16:9-20

Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-7

Liturgy Gospel: St. Luke 13:10-17

RESURRECTION TROPARION - Tone 8 - From the heights Thou didst descend, O Compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion. Thou art our Life and our Resurrection, O Lord. Glory to Thee!

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY - Tone 3 - The Virgin cometh today to the Cave to give birth, ineffably to bring forth the Word eternal. Therefore, rejoice O earth, at the message, with the angels and shepherds give glory to Him, Who shall appear by His own will, as a young Child, He Who is from eternity God.

TODAY: Orthros 8:45 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am
Coffee Hour, Catechism, SS, Teens after Liturgy
Confession (SS Grades 4-5), 12 pm
Choir Practice, 12:30 pm
Advent Paraklesis, 2 pm

1970 Clearview Road, Souderton, PA 18964

www.st-philip.net (215) 721-4947

Emails: office@st-philip.net nbushelli@gmail.com frjamesthayer@gmail.com

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 10:00 - 3:00

Fr Noah & Fr James are available for hospital visits. If you or anyone you know is in the hospital or homebound and would like a visit, please call the church office.

Weekly Ministries & Stewards:

This Week:

Next Week (Dec 15):

PROSPHORA BREAD: Carolyn Kaminsky
EPISTLE READER: Rdr. Nathan Jekel
USHERS: Steve K. & Gabriel Q.
ALTAR CANDLES: ----
ALTAR BOYS: "Archangel Gabriel"
GREETERS: Michael & Helen Heveran
CLEANING TEAM: Teens; Nathan & Rebecca
COFFEE HOUR: ----

Gabi & Catalin T.
 Raja Kyriakos
 Dan M & Sdn. John N.
 Ken Hedrick
In Memory of his mother (Dec 17-51 yrs)
 "Archangel Michael"
 Angie Drăghici
 Serge & Alex Kaminsky

EVERYONE is invited to stay for refreshments after the Divine Liturgy. Your assistance in cleanup is appreciated.

YOUR FLOWER OFFERINGS support the beautification of our church during this holy season. Flower offering envelopes are available on the literature rack. Thank you!
YOUR CHRISTMAS CARD OFFERINGS benefit Ministries, Monasteries, & Mission Situations.

Mark Your Calendar:

Holy Unction
 Wednesday, December 18, 4 pm
 Fast in preparation

Feast of the Nativity of Christ
 Tuesday, December 24

Royal Hours, 9 am
 Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil, 10 am
 Festal Orthros, 9:30 pm
 Divine Liturgy, 11 pm

Wednesday, December 25

Vespers for the Synaxis of the Theotokos, 12 pm

Thursday, December 26

Orthros 9 am; Liturgy 10 am for the Synaxis of the Theotokos

Circumcision & St. Basil - New Year's

Tuesday, December 31

Vespers & Artoklasia 6 pm
 Talent Show 7 pm

New Year's Prayers 9 pm

Wednesday, January 1

Divine Liturgy 10 am,
 New Year's Prayers 11:30 am

Pray For:

Living	Departed
Archimandrite David	Steven
Lasha B	Kh. Anastasia
Otari B	
Daniel H	
John	Catechumens
John	Zachary, Evan,
Doris	Tina, Robert,
Zerfenesh	Michael, Todd,
	Kendra, Liesel,
Thomas, Elizabeth & all Missionaries	Todd, John
	Moses, Virginia,
	Conor
New & Expectant Mothers & children	St. Nina's List
	Michael
	Andrea
	Faith
	Sloane

OUTREACH COLLECTION:

Turkeys

EVANGELISM CHALLENGE:

"Serve in a soup kitchen or shelter"

This Week:

NATIVITY FAST CONTINUES ...

Mon, Dec 9: SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.
 Advent Paraklesis, 7 p.m.

Tues, Dec 10: SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.
 Matushka Olga Sewing Club, 11 a.m.
 Conshohocken Fellowship, 6:30 p.m.

Wed, Dec 11: SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.
 Compline & Patristic Reading 7 p.m.

Thur, Dec 12: SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.
 Twelve Baskets Full, 6:30 p.m.

Fri, Dec 13: SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.
 Advent Paraklesis & Taylor *Kardiotissa* Icon Visit, 7 pm

Sat, Dec 14: Catechism Seminar, 4:30 p.m.
 VESPERS 6 p.m., Confession 7 p.m.

Sun, Dec 15: ORTHROS 8:45 a.m., Divine LITURGY 10 a.m.
 Coffee Hour, Catechism, Sunday School, & Teens, 11:45 a.m.
 Sunday School Confessions (Grades 6-8), 12 p.m.
 Choir Practice, 12:30 p.m.
 Parish Council, 12:45 p.m.
 Advent Paraklesis, 2 p.m.

Please check the table in the Great Room for items marked with your name or free to take!



Ministry Highlights

"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)

UPDATING THE Photo Directory

to encourage unity, fellowship, and ministry at St. Philip

Please submit your updated family photo, address, emails, and telephone numbers to:

stphilipphotos20@gmail.com.

You may also submit a printed photo for the directory. We will have a section for Stewards, and another for Friends. Have questions? Contact Dale Yeager [daleyeager@live.com], Colin Miller [Colinmil@comcast.net] or Subdeacon David Hyatt [dhyatt@st-philip.net].

ATTENDANCE: At Vespers Nov 30: 44 Divine Services on Dec 1: NA
OFFERINGS: Candles, \$211. Collections, \$1,045. Youth, \$7. Book Shelf Ministry, \$5. Camping Fund, \$250. Choir Fund, \$25. Honorarium Fund, \$2,500. Needy Fund, \$400. Pastoral Discretion, \$3,350. Stewardship, \$3,905. Total received: \$11,698.

GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY!