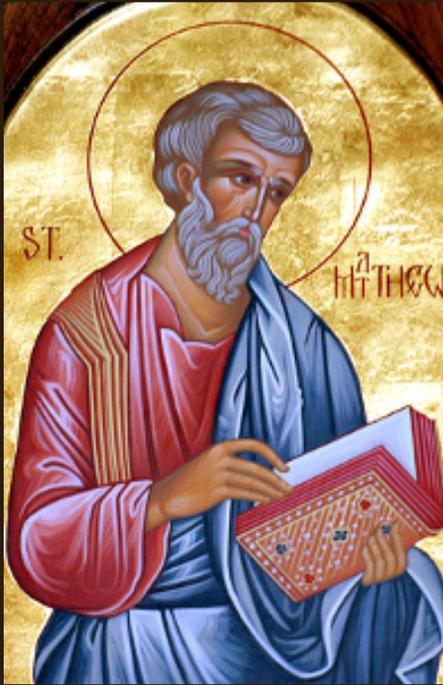


ST. MATTHEW ORTHODOX CHURCH



From the desk of Father Eugene.....

The Feast of the Cross

The first of September begins the Church New Year. In some ways, it is like other new year celebrations which mark the completion of one annual cycle and the beginning of another. Further, there are often certain festivities associated with such times, celebrating the joy of past accomplishments and hope for the future. Our Church new year has some similarities. When we consider this to be a time or season of the year, we encounter, soon after the new year, two Great Feasts, one of them being the Elevation of the Cross. During this feast, we all, as Orthodox Christians, rededicate ourselves totally to Him who died and was

raised from the dead for our salvation. As we hear the hymns and readings for the Cross, we remember that there is no other symbol or cause that is worthy of our allegiance. The reminder of the place of the life-giving Cross in our own lives is vividly conveyed as we bow down before it and sing:

*Before Thy Cross,
we bow down in worship, O Master,
and Thy holy resurrection, we glorify.
(Hymn sung before the Cross).*

Thus, we step into the new year and find ourselves at the foot of the Cross, exactly where we were when we finished the previous year. The strength for enduring the previous year and the hope we have for today and the days that follow come from the Cross, and nowhere else. Standing at the foot of the Cross we are reminded of the necessity to take up our own cross. We can also be reminded of the Hebrew people in the wilderness as they had to look on Moses as he lifted up the serpent so that they could find an elusive and strange remedy when they were afflicted by the bites of the serpents. The remedy is strange or foreign because it is contrary to what conventional wisdom would have us do. Today, it may be that conventional wisdom would have us take down the Cross and restore it with something that is more pleasing to our own thoughts and feelings.

Yet, as Saint Paul tells us, the Cross 'is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God'. The Power of God allows us to vanquish the enemies before us. Not the earthly enemies of our time, but the spiritual enemies that constantly plague us in times good and bad. Like the people in the wilderness, we look to the Cross for relief from our afflictions. Our remedy, however, is not temporary, but one that is everlasting. Our veneration of the Cross is in truth a sign that we do not belong to this world but in fact belong to God's Kingdom. As we approach this Great Feast, with all of the trouble and afflictions of our day, we can take comfort that the bitter waters we drink are sweetened by the Tree of the Cross.

Parish Council President's Perspective.....Paul Novak



I have mentioned that these odd times of ours have brought to focus those things that we always did without thinking. While we are blessed to be able to attend Church services, sometimes we do things automatically in the Church without thinking. One of those items that came to mind was lighting candles.

"What does a person first do upon crossing the threshold of a church? In nine out of ten cases, he goes to the candle stand. Our practice of Christianity, our involvement in its ritual, begins with a little beeswax candle. It is impossible to imagine an Orthodox church in which candles are not lit.

Blessed Simeon of Thessalonica (15th century), commentator on the Liturgy, states that pure wax symbolizes the purity and chastity of those who offer it. It is offered as a sign of our having repented of stubbornness and self-will. The softness and pliability of wax speaks of our readiness to obey God. The burning of the candle represents man's deification, his becoming a new creature through the fire of God's love.

Moreover, the candle is a witness to faith, of man's belonging to the Divine light. It expresses the flame of our love for the Lord, for the Mother of God, for the angels, or for the saints. One must not light a candle with a cold heart, merely as a formality. The external action must be supplemented by prayer, if only the simplest one, using one's own words.

A lighted candle is present at many church services. It is held by the newly baptized and by those being joined together in the Mystery of Matrimony. The funeral rite is performed amidst a multitude of burning candles. Protecting their burning candles from the wind, the faithful walk in Processions of the Cross.

There are no absolute rules as to where or how many lighted candles must be offered. Their purchase is a little sacrifice to God, voluntary and not burdensome. A large and expensive candle is no more grace-giving than is a small one.....



...The burning wax candle is pleasing to God, but He prizes the burning of the heart even more. Our spiritual life, our participation in church services, is not limited to the candle. The candle will not free us from sin, will not unite us with God, and will not give us the power to wage the unseen warfare. The candle is filled with symbolic meaning, but we are saved not by symbols, but by the full reality, Divine grace."

From the book Fundamentals of Orthodoxy, written by Father Thomas Hopko

In Christ, Paul Novak

Choir Notes from Jeff Zdrale

On Sunday, August 23, we were able to do something we haven't done since before the COVID shut-down. We actually had a choir, albeit a small one.

There were four of us—Matt Tomac, Anja Farin, Bonnie Zdrale and me. All four parts were covered. We still have to all face forward with masks and there can be no more than four people singing. But it was a nice first step toward what we are hoping will be singing from the full group soon.

When things do get back to normal, I'd like to invite more people to join the choir. Anyone over 14 years old and who will attend our twice-a-month practices after Sunday services is welcome to sing with us. It would be great to have at least four people on each part.

Another activity I am looking forward to after the shut-down, is working with the Children's Choir. Some of our kids have moved away, but we have some new ones to take their place. So, all children from 4 to 13 years old—we want you to sing with us and we hope that it will be very soon!



Many Years!!!

Happy
Birthday.....

Debra Novak - 9-3

Alexander Brown - 9-8

Pedro Sarsama - 9-11

Madison Heid - 9-16

Evangelia Zarokostas - 9-26



Timothy & Gloriya Grinsteiner - 9-15
Kevin & Oksana Brown - 9-22
Craig & Oksana Schweiner - 9-24
Peter & Kathy Nassios - 9-26

Many Years!!!

Church Cleaners for September and October:

Tom/Cheryl Julian - week of August 31 for Sunday, September 6

Tomac Family - week of September 7 for Sunday, September 13

Katherine Weiland - week of September 14 for Sunday, September 20

Sarsama Family - week of September 21 for Sunday, September 27

Nassios Family - week of September 28 for Sunday, October 4

Mykhaylyuk Family - week of October 5 for Sunday, October 11

Lars/Nana Odman - week of October 12 for Sunday, October 18

Doug/Linda Bisbee - week of October 19 for Sunday, October 25



A Note From the Ministry Team:

SEPTEMBER FOCUS

Our September focus is on benevolence.

Benevolence: an act of kindness / a generous gift.

Your act of kindness to our Benevolence Fund helps those who are in our church family and our community. Please consider giving a generous gift to help out someone in need. Cash or a check made out to St. Matthew with Benevolence fund on the outer envelope will be greatly appreciated.

40 Day Walk for Life : September 23- November 1

Our parish will once again be participating in the 40 Day Walk for Life this fall. Our time slot is on Tuesdays from 8:00 to 9:00 am. Please join us as we peacefully and prayerfully walk and pray for the unborn, for their mothers and families who are considering abortion. We need you! See Mary or Nana for more information.

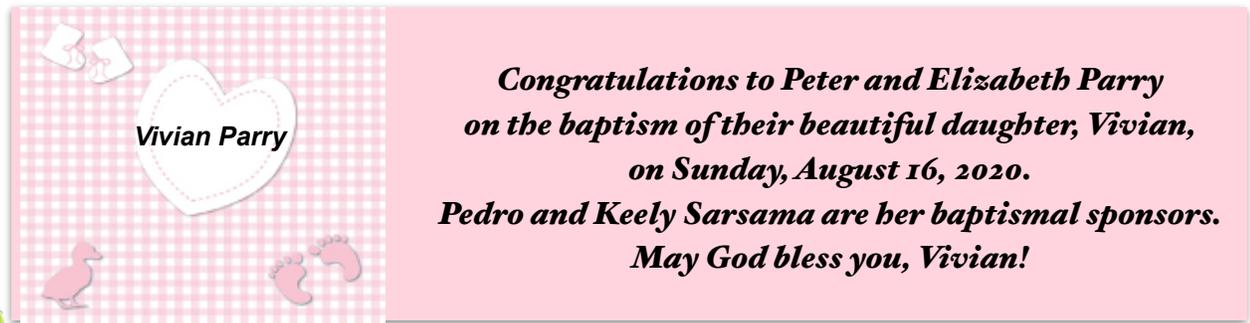
Meet and Greet....one of our newest....a warm welcome.....

Hello,

My name is Evelyn Kizewski. I have been attending St. Matthew's since November. Originally, I came to St. Matthew's as a stop in my journey across various Christian churches to broaden my understanding of different Christian denominations. Instead, I found the True Faith and home.

I am a Computer Support Specialist and Instructional Assistant at Northcentral Technical College in Wausau, WI. Conveniently, this is also where I attend school. Currently, I am enrolled in the IT-Network Specialist and IT-Cybersecurity Specialist Associate programs, and the Professional Communication – Sign Language Interpreting in Education Certificate program. God willing, I will be completely graduated by 2024.

In my downtime, I can usually be found creatively writing or drawing. When I'm not doing that, I'm usually found cleaning to pass the time.



Our featured recipe, compliments of Presbytera Antonia!!!

Melomakarona (Μελομακαρονα) Greek cookie served during the Nativity

Ingredients

For the cookies:

2 cups olive oil
1 cup sugar
½ cup cognac or brandy
½ cup orange juice
Orange zest from 1 orange
1 teaspoon cinnamon
7 ½ cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda

For the syrup:

2 cups honey
2 cups sugar
2 cups water

For the topping:

½ cup finely chopped walnuts
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Instructions

Cookies:

Preheat oven 350 degrees F.

In large bowl, mix olive oil, cognac, orange juice, sugar, cinnamon, orange peel. In another bowl, sift flour and mix with baking powder and baking soda. Gradually add dry ingredients to olive oil mixture while stirring. Knead dough and add more flour if needed. Roll dough in little balls, about the size of a walnut. Use fingers to press one side of ball on grater, flattening dough like a small pancake, then fold over into egg shape. The top will have design of grater for honey to be better absorbed. Place cookies on cookie sheet and bake about 25 minutes. Flip cookies so bottom part is facing up and allow to cool.

Syrup and topping:

Bring to the honey, syrup and water to a boil and boil for 5 minutes. Remove the foam. Once the syrup is boiled, while it is hot, pour over cookies, covering all cookies with syrup. Let cookies sit 2-3 hours with top side facing down to absorb syrup. Mix chopped walnuts with cinnamon and sprinkle over tops of cookies.

Alternatively, make syrup and let it cool, then pour over hot cookies, rather than allowing the cookies to cool first. Or place cookies in pot with syrup for a few minutes and remove with slotted spoon.