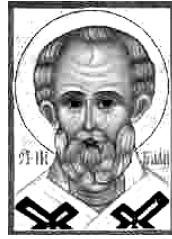


December 6, 2009
St Nicholas of Myra

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

320 Munson Avenue
McKees Rocks, PA 15136
412-331-1053

<http://www.stnicholas-oca.org>
info@stnicholas-oca.org



Rev. Thomas Soroka, *Rector*
(412) 299-3942
Rev. Dn. Joseph Mell, *Attached*
Ms. Doris Wasilko, *Choir Director*

Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Christ is in our midst! He is and always shall be!

Schedule of Services and Activities

Saturday, December 12th – 1:00 PM – 5:30 PM Church School
Saturday, December 12th – 5:00 PM Great Vespers
Sunday, December 13th – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

We would like to extend our warmest welcome to His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek, for his first official archpastoral visit to his parish in McKees Rocks. We are especially glad that Vladyka Melchisedek is able to visit us on our patronal feast day and the 95th anniversary of our parish. *Eis polla eti, Dhespota!* Many years to you, Master!

Note to parents: The Church School children will sing hymns during the time when the clergy are taking communion (before the communion of the laity). Please send them forward to the large icon of St Nicholas on the right side of Church when the choir sings “One is Holy, One is Lord...” The music sheets will be given to them at that time. **Children will be placed in line first to receive communion.** Then immediately after, **ALL children are encouraged to place their shoes NEATLY in the vestibule** for a special treat. They can pick them up after they venerate the cross at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Thank you to Melissa Westling, Michelle Bittner, Marsha Wasilko, and all the members of the Sisterhood who made today’s dinner possible. May God richly bless you for your love of our parish community.

Our Annual Yolka will be held on Sunday December 20th. Please support our Church School students!

Church School will be held this Saturday, December 12th – the children will practice their parts for the Yolka on that day. They will also practice the morning of Sunday, December 20th at 9:15 AM. Please be in attendance!

Thank you to Marsha Wasilko for organizing the Parish Christmas Card again this year. Over \$800 was raised for the Church!

Our grateful thanks to parishioner Steve Meno for beautifully decorating the church (trees, garland, roses) for our celebration of St Nicholas day and the upcoming Nativity feast. May God richly bless him for his love of the beauty of God’s house! Please support his outstanding business: **Della Robbia Flowers and Gifts** 842 Gill Hall Road, Clairton, PA 15025-3236 (412) 650-4200

Today is our deadline for collecting gifts for underprivileged children ages 10-18 in the McKees Rocks area and distributing them through the auspices of the Holy Family Institute. Additionally this year, these pre-teens and teens are in need of pillows, blankets, and comforters. All gifts (including the bedding) must be UNWRAPPED and NEW. You may place your gifts under the icon of St Nicholas. Please see Donya Yewisiak with any questions. Thank you for your generosity!

Today is the deadline to support our Christmas Stocking Project to benefit orphans by purchasing a chance to win one of two beautiful baskets prepared and donated by Helen Billak and Sasha Henry. All the proceeds will be sent directly to the orphanage. Please see Helen or Sasha for tickets!

St. Nick's Corner News: We have a new supply of Christmas cards in various designs available at St. Nick's showcase in the hall. Get your cards while supplies last!

Holy Virgin Church in Carnegie will hold their Russian Christmas Food Festival on Saturday, December 12th, from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM. 214 Mansfield Blvd in Carnegie.

St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral will hold a Christmas Cookie Walk on Saturday, December 12th from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. 1600 Guyton Rd Allison Park, PA

The 3rd Annual Pan Orthodox Choral Celebration “The Nativity of Our Lord” will be held on Sunday, December 13, 2009 at 5:00pm at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, 123 Gilkeson Road, Mt. Lebanon, PA 15228. Don’t miss out on this special night of performances by local Orthodox church choirs featuring beautiful hymns of the Nativity and ethnic Christmas carols expressed in their unique traditions! Free will donations from this event will benefit the Three Hierarchs Eastern Orthodox School. This concert sponsored by the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh.

Our next Bible Study will be held on Wednesday, December 16th. We’ll be discussing John 3.

Looking ahead: Services commemorating the Nativity of Christ

Wednesday, December 23 rd – 10:00 AM	Royal Hours
Thursday, December 24 th – 9:30 AM	Vesperal Divine Liturgy
Thursday, December 24 th – 8:00 PM	Vigil (Compline and Matins)
Friday, December 25 th – 10:00 AM	Festal Divine Liturgy
Saturday, December 26 th – 10:00 AM	Divine Liturgy
<i>also</i>	
Friday, January 1 st – 10:00 AM	Divine Liturgy (St Basil and Civil New Year)

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A parish of the Orthodox Church in America

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December 6, 2009

Twenty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Tone 1 **Troparion of the Resurrection**

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body,
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.

The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life:
Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ!
Glory to Thy Kingdom!
Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind!

Tone 4 **Troparion of St Nicholas**

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith,
an image of humility, and a teacher of abstinence.
Because of your lowliness heaven was opened to you!
Because of your poverty riches were granted to you!
O holy Bishop Nicholas,
pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

Tone 1 **Kontakion of the Resurrection**

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory,
raising the world with Thyself.
Human nature praises Thee as God for death has vanished,
Adam exults, O Master!
Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage, and cries to Thee:
Thou art the giver of resurrection to all, O Christ!

Tone 3 **Kontakion of St Nicholas**

O Saint you revealed yourself in Myra as a priest,
for you fulfilled the Gospel of Christ
by giving up your soul for your people,
and saving the innocent from death.
Therefore you are blessed as one well learned in the grace of God.

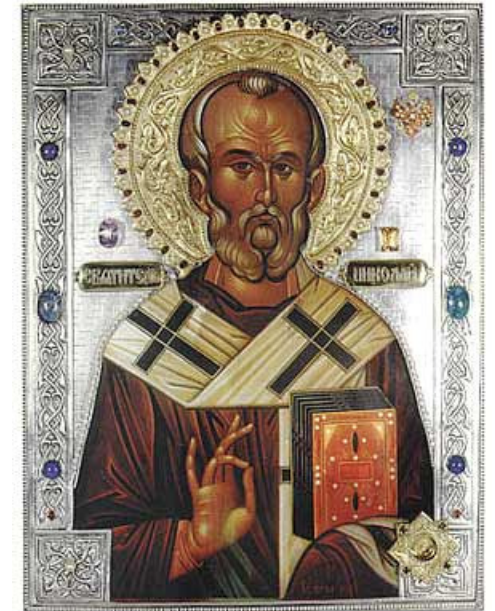
Vigil Light Donations (*Please remember the following people in your prayers*) **From Helen Cobb** for the departed servants, George, Ray Cobb, Fr. Vladimir & Mat. Olga, Darius Walat; for the health of Ruth, Vic, Todd, Aleisha, Dick, Jared, Helen March Shancey, Stephanie Kowal, the Tichy, Fuller, Kasnot, Speth, Wasilko, Barsom, Soroka and Mell families. **From Helen March Shancey** for the departed servants, her husband, Richard Shancey, Norma Jean Evans, Joyce Duster, Ray Cobb, Ann Hruch, Mat. Olga, Melissa Torok and all deceased members of the Halajcio & Shancey families; for the health of Dr. Chris Baxter & family, Halajcio & Shancey families, Dale Halajcio, Danny Parsons, Linda Halajcio, Larry Halajcio, Dick Hassenmiller & family, Jim & Leslie Wokutch, Helen Cobb, Olga Novak & son, Marsha Namisnak & family, the Bittner, Hruch, Wasilko, Kasnot, Barsom, Kovacs, Kowalcheck and Robes families, Peter & Garnette, Reader Michael Soroka, Fr. Thomas, Rev. Dn. Joseph Mell and their families and all parishioners. God bless our service men and women. Congratulations to the Naminsak family on the birth of their baby girl. **From Tatiana Sechler** for the departed servants, Polina, Valentina, Maxsim, Bruce, Victor, Maria, Maria, Tamara and Marina; for the health of Dasha, Slava, Galina, Tatyana, Alex, Roma and Svetlana. **From Peter & Garnette Kerchum** for the departed servants, Mat. Olga and Very Rev. Fr. Vladimir Soroka; for the health of grandson, Michael Lopez Jr., Reader Michael Soroka, Peter Kerchum and George Shaytar. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family. **From David Namisnak** for the departed servant, Melissa; for the health of Aaron, Michele, Ella, Rihn, Marsha and Helen Shancey. **From John A. Tirpak** for the health of Alexandria & John Tirpak and family. **From Tom & Georgiann Robes** for the departed servant, George Porvaznik; for the health of Tom & Georgiann and Anna Robes on her 1st birthday! **From John & Nancy Pravlochak** for the health of Tanya Stark, Pravlochak family and St. Nicholas Church. **From Alexandria Tirpak** for the departed servants from the Hanich, Velgos and Tempalski families~Memory Eternal; for the health of Amelia, Andrea, Richard & their families, Charles and the community of St. Nicholas Parish; special intentions. **From Carol Kowalcheck** for special intention. **From John & Carol Kowalcheck** for the health and salvation of our family. **From John Kowalcheck** for the health of Carol Ann Kowalcheck. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of sisters, Doris & Marsha. **From Marina Petrov** for the departed servants, Vladimir and Dmitri; for the health of family. **From Geroge & Nancy Shaytar** for the health of George Shaytar, Tony Bertram and Peter Kerchum.

*You that love the feasts,
let us gather and sing the praises of the fair ornament of bishops,
the glory of the Fathers, the fount of wonders and the great protector of the faithful.
Let us say: "Rejoice, guardian of the people of Myra,
their chief and honored counselor and the pillar that cannot be moved!
Rejoice, light filled with brightness!
You make the ends of the world shine with wonders.
Rejoice, divine delight of the afflicted,
the fervent advocate of those who suffer from injustice!
And now, all-blessed Nicholas, never cease praying to Christ our God
for those who honor the high feast of your memorial with faith and love!"*

The Life of St Nicholas of Myra

Saint Nicholas, the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia is famed as a great saint pleasing unto God. He was born in the city of Patara in the region of Lycia (on the south coast of the Asia Minor peninsula), and was the only son of pious parents Theophanes and Nonna, who had vowed to dedicate him to God.

As the fruit of the prayer of his childless parents, the infant Nicholas from the very day of his birth revealed to people the light of his future glory as a wonderworker. His mother, Nonna, after giving birth was immediately healed from illness. The newborn infant, while still in the baptismal font, stood on his feet three hours, without support from anyone, thereby honoring the Most Holy Trinity. St Nicholas from his infancy began a life of fasting, and on Wednesdays and Fridays he would not accept milk from his mother until after his parents had finished their evening prayers.



From his childhood Nicholas thrived on the study of Divine Scripture; by day he would not leave church, and by night he prayed and read books, making himself a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Bishop Nicholas of Patara rejoiced at the spiritual success and deep piety of his nephew. He ordained him a reader, and then elevated Nicholas to the priesthood, making him his assistant and entrusting him to instruct the flock.

In serving the Lord the youth was fervent of spirit, and in his proficiency with questions of faith he was like an Elder, who aroused the wonder and deep respect of believers. Constantly at work and vivacious, in unceasing prayer, the priest Nicholas displayed great kind-heartedness towards the flock, and towards the afflicted who came to him for help, and he distributed all his inheritance to the poor.

There was a certain formerly rich inhabitant of Patara, whom St Nicholas saved from great sin. The man had three grown daughters, and in desparation he planned to sell their bodies so they would have money for food. The saint, learning of the man's poverty and of his wicked intention, secretly visited him one night and threw a sack of gold through the window. With the money the man arranged an honorable marriage for his daughter. St Nicholas also provided gold for the other daughters, thereby saving the family from falling into spiritual destruction. In bestowing charity, St Nicholas always strove to do this secretly and to conceal his good deeds.

The Bishop of Patara decided to go on pilgrimage to the holy places at Jerusalem, and entrusted the guidance of his flock to St Nicholas, who fulfilled this obedience carefully and with love. When the bishop returned, Nicholas asked his blessing for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Along the way the saint predicted a storm would arise and threaten the ship. St Nicholas saw the devil get on the ship, intending to sink it and kill all the passengers. At the entreaty of the despairing pilgrims, he calmed the waves of the sea by his prayers. Through his prayer a certain sailor of the ship, who had fallen from the mast and was mortally injured was also restored to health.

When he reached the ancient city of Jerusalem and came to Golgotha, St Nicholas gave thanks to the Savior. He went to all the holy places, worshiping at each one. One night on Mount Sion, the closed doors of the church opened by themselves for the great pilgrim. Going round the holy places connected with the earthly service of the Son of God, St Nicholas decided to withdraw into the desert, but he was stopped by a divine voice urging him to return to his native country. He returned to Lycia, and yearning for a life of quietude, the saint entered into the brotherhood of a monastery named Holy Sion, which had been founded by his uncle. But the Lord again indicated another path for him, "Nicholas, this is not the vineyard where you shall bear fruit for Me. Return to the world, and glorify My Name there." So he left Patara and went to Myra in Lycia.

Upon the death of Archbishop John, Nicholas was chosen as Bishop of Myra after one of the bishops of the Council said that a new archbishop should be revealed by God, not chosen by men. One of the elder bishops had a vision of a radiant Man, Who told him that the one who came to the church that night and was first to enter should be made archbishop. He would be named Nicholas. The bishop went to the church at night to await Nicholas. The saint, always the first to arrive at church, was stopped by the bishop. "What is your name, child?" he asked. God's chosen one replied, "My name is Nicholas, Master, and I am your servant."

After his consecration as archbishop, St Nicholas remained a great ascetic, appearing to his flock as an image of gentleness, kindness and love for people. This was particularly precious for the Lycian Church during the persecution of Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Bishop Nicholas, locked up in prison together with other Christians for refusing to worship idols, sustained them and exhorted them to endure the fetters, punishment and torture. The Lord preserved him unharmed. Upon the accession of St Constantine (May 21) as emperor, St Nicholas was restored to his flock, which joyfully received their guide and intercessor.

Despite his great gentleness of spirit and purity of heart, St Nicholas was a zealous and ardent warrior of the Church of Christ. Fighting evil spirits, the saint made the rounds of the pagan temples and shrines in the city of Myra and its surroundings, shattering the idols and turning the temples to dust.

In the year 325 St Nicholas was a participant in the First Ecumenical Council. This Council proclaimed the Nicene Symbol of Faith, and he stood up against the heretic Arius with the likes of Sts Sylvester the Bishop of Rome (January 2), Alexander of Alexandria (May 29), Spyridon of Trimythontos

(December 12) and other Fathers of the Council.

St Nicholas, fired with zeal for the Lord, assailed the heretic Arius with his words, and also struck him upon the face. For this reason, he was deprived of the emblems of his episcopal rank and placed under guard. But several of the holy Fathers had the same vision, seeing the Lord Himself and the Mother of God returning to him the Gospel and omophorion. The Fathers of the Council agreed that the audacity of the saint was pleasing to God, and restored the saint to the office of bishop.

Having returned to his own diocese, the saint brought it peace and blessings, sowing the word of Truth, uprooting heresy, nourishing his flock with sound doctrine, and also providing food for their bodies.

Even during his life the saint worked many miracles. One of the greatest was the deliverance from death of three men unjustly condemned by the Governor, who had been bribed. The saint boldly went up to the executioner and took his sword, already suspended over the heads of the condemned. The Governor, denounced by St Nicholas for his wrong doing, repented and begged for forgiveness.

Witnessing this remarkable event were three military officers, who were sent to Phrygia by the emperor Constantine to put down a rebellion. They did not suspect that soon they would also be compelled to seek the intercession of St Nicholas. Evil men slandered them before the emperor, and the officers were sentenced to death. Appearing to St Constantine in a dream, St Nicholas called on him to overturn the unjust sentence of the military officers.

He worked many other miracles, and struggled many long years at his labor. Through the prayers of the saint, the city of Myra was rescued from a terrible famine. He appeared to a certain Italian merchant and left him three gold pieces as a pledge of payment. He requested him to sail to Myra and deliver grain there. More than once, the saint saved those drowning in the sea, and provided release from captivity and imprisonment.

Having reached old age, St Nicholas peacefully fell asleep in the Lord. His venerable relics were preserved incorrupt in the local cathedral church and flowed with curative myrrh, from which many received healing. In the year 1087, his relics were transferred to the Italian city of Bari, where they rest even now (See May 9).

The name of the great saint of God, the hierarch and wonderworker Nicholas, a speedy helper and suppliant for all hastening to him, is famed in every corner of the earth, in many lands and among many peoples. In Russia there are a multitude of cathedrals, monasteries and churches consecrated in his name. There is, perhaps, not a single city without a church dedicated to him.

The first Russian Christian prince Askold (+ 882) was baptized in 866 by Patriarch Photius (February 6) with the name Nicholas. Over the grave of Askold, St Olga (July 11) built the first temple of St

Nicholas in the Russian Church at Kiev. Primary cathedrals were dedicated to St Nicholas at Izborsk, Ostrov, Mozhaïsk, and Zaraïsk. At Novgorod the Great, one of the main churches of the city, the Nikolo-Dvorischensk church, later became a cathedral.

Famed and venerable churches and monasteries dedicated to St Nicholas are found at Kiev, Smolensk, Pskov, Toropetsa, Galich, Archangelsk, Great Ustiug, Tobolsk. Moscow had dozens of churches named for the saint, and also three monasteries in the Moscow diocese: the Nikolo-Greek (Staryi) in the Chinese-quarter, the Nikolo-Perervinsk and the Nikolo-Ugreshsk. One of the chief towers of the Kremlin was named the Nikolsk.

Many of the churches devoted to the saint were those established at market squares by Russian merchants, sea-farers and those who traveled by land, venerating the wonderworker Nicholas as a protector of all those journeying on dry land and sea. They sometimes received the name among the people of "Nicholas soaked."

Many village churches in Russia were dedicated to the wonderworker Nicholas, venerated by peasants as a merciful intercessor before the Lord for all the people in their work. And in the Russian land St Nicholas did not cease his intercession. Ancient Kiev preserves the memory about the miraculous rescue of a drowning infant by the saint. The great wonderworker, hearing the grief-filled prayers of the parents for the loss of their only child, took the infant from the waters, revived him and placed him in the choir-loft of the church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) before his wonderworking icon. In the morning the infant was found safe by his thrilled parents, praising St Nicholas the Wonderworker.

Many wonderworking icons of St Nicholas appeared in Russia and came also from other lands. There is the ancient Byzantine embordered image of the saint, brought to Moscow from Novgorod, and the large icon painted in the thirteenth century by a Novgorod master.

Two depictions of the wonderworker are especially numerous in the Russian Church: St Nicholas of Zaraïsk, portrayed in full-length, with his right hand raised in blessing and with a Gospel (this image was brought to Ryazan in 1225 by the Byzantine Princess Eupraxia, the future wife of Prince Theodore. She perished in 1237 with her husband and infant son during the incursion of Batu); and St Nicholas of Mozhaïsk, also in full stature, with a sword in his right hand and a city in his left. This recalls the miraculous rescue of the city of Mozhaïsk from an invasion of enemies, through the prayers of the saint. It is impossible to list all the grace-filled icons of St Nicholas, or to enumerate all his miracles.

St Nicholas is the patron of travelers, and we pray to him for deliverance from floods, poverty, or any misfortunes. He has promised to help those who remember his parents, Theophanes and Nonna.

(from OCA.org)