

THE LADDER

of
Divine
Ascent



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The Newsletter of St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church

June 2011

'We celebrate the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost...'

The Christian feast of Pentecost corresponds to the Hebrew feast which bears the same name, and in which the first fruits of Israel's new crops were offered to God.

The Christian feast commemorates the first fruits of the preaching of the Apostles, which followed the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them on the day of Pentecost, and on account of which the first Christian Church was born and established with three thousand souls. Ever since Pentecost, the Spirit abides in the Church and regulates the Church's life and growth. The Spirit brings the entire constitution of the Church together as the Body of Christ. As the Comforter (Parakletos), He is the pledge of Christ's return and final victory with the entire body of the Church.

The celebration of this feast goes back to apostolic times. According to ancient custom, catechumens were baptized on this occasion and therefore, even today, no Trisagion is sung during the Liturgy. Instead, the hymn "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ," is sung. The vespers of this day, following immediately after the Divine Liturgy, is especially notable because of the long kneeling supplications which is offered after the Entrance. This supplication is the first of several which follow after the feast, having been previously suspended during the Pentecostal Period.

Pentecost is celebrated throughout the week and is returned on the following Saturday. The Monday of the post-festal period is distinguished from the other post-festal days because it is dedicated to the Holy Spirit (Deftera tou Agiou Pneumatos). The services of the day follow the pattern of the preceding Pentecostal Sunday. Fasting is not observed during the week after Pentecost.

The Doxastikon hymn of the day is the well known prayer with which most Church services begin and which is used by many Orthodox Christians as a first Prayer of each day: "O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, come and abide in us; and cleanse us from every impurity and save our souls Good One."

The following is from *Celebration of Faith - The Church Year* by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

...Christians from time immemorial celebrated and continue to celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit in a feast known by its church name as Pentecost, or more popularly as "Trinity," the day of the Trinity.

For centuries, to prepare for this feast, churches were cleaned and adorned with greenery and branches and grass was strewn on the floor... On the day of the Feast, as solemn vespers, the faithful stood in the church holding flowers in their hands. This custom explains how the feast of Pentecost entered Russian popular consciousness and literature as a kind of sun filled, bright celebration, the feast of flowering, a kind of joyful encounter between human beings and God's world in all its beauty and grace....

...the Jewish feast of Pentecost is a feast of nature and the cosmos, a feast of history as the revelation of God's will for the world and human beings, a feast of future triumph, of God's victory over evil and the coming of the great and "last day of the Lord."

For Christians the Feast of Pentecost is the completion of all that Christ has accomplished. Christ taught about the Kingdom of God, and here it is, now opened. Christ promised that the Spirit of God would reveal the truth, and now this is fulfilled. The world, history, life, time are all illumined with the final transcendent light- are filled with ultimate meaning. The last and great day of the Lord has begun.

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2011 Financial Update

	Income	Expenses
YTD (thru April)	\$48,661	\$49,683
April	\$13,776	\$11,427
Charity YTD	\$5,550	\$5,355

Restricted Income

April (for building, icon, vestment funds, etc): \$5,605
New Property Balance: \$230,044.35

St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church
 ~~~ **Schedule of Services** ~~~  
**June 2011**

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Monday                                                                                                                                                         | Tuesday                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Wednesday                                                                                                                                                           | Thursday                                                                                                                                         | Friday                                                                                                                                        | Saturday                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Saints Peter and Paul ('Apostles') Fast</b><br/>           The Apostles Fast, one of the four specific fasts of the calendar year, varies in length depending on the date of Pascha. The rule for the Apostles' Fast is similar to that for the Nativity Fast (less strict than the rule for Lent and for the Dormition Fast in August), though the basic fasting 'norms' still apply: no meat or dairy, but fish on Sat &amp; Sun.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p><b>01</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br/> <b>Leavetaking of Pascha</b><br/> <b>Forefeast of Ascension</b><br/><br/> <b>Vigil</b><br/> <b>6:00 pm</b></p>              | <p><b>02</b><br/><br/> <b>Ascension of the Lord</b><br/><br/> <b>Divine Liturgy</b><br/> <b>7:00 am</b></p>                                      | <p><b>03</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br/><br/> <b>End of School Youth Lock-In</b><br/> <b>5:00 pm</b><br/> <i>(until 9 am Sat)</i></p>          | <p><b>04</b><br/><br/> <b>Confessions</b><br/> <b>Great Vespers</b><br/> <b>6:00 pm</b></p>                                                                                         |
| <p><b>05</b> <i>7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha</i><br/> <b>Sunday of the Fathers of the 1<sup>st</sup> EC</b><br/> <b>Divine Liturgy</b><br/> <b>9:30 am</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p><b>06</b></p>                                                                                                                                               | <p><b>07</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p><b>08</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br/> <b>Adult Class 'Scripture in Tradition'</b><br/> <b>7:00 pm</b><br/> <b>Daily Vespers</b><br/> <b>6:00 pm</b></p>           | <p><b>09</b><br/><br/> <b>St Cyril of Alexandria</b></p>                                                                                         | <p><b>10</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br/><br/> <b>Leavetaking of the Ascension</b></p>                                                          | <p><b>11</b><br/> <b>Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas</b><br/> <b>Confessions</b><br/> <b>Vigil of Pentecost</b><br/> <b>6:00 pm</b></p>                                           |
| <p><b>12</b> <i>Feast of the Holy Trinity</i><br/> <b>Pentecost Sunday</b><br/> <b>Divine Liturgy</b><br/> <b>9:30 am</b><br/> <b>Kneeling Vespers</b><br/> <b>12:30 pm</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p><b>13</b> <i>Feast of the Holy Spirit</i><br/> <b>Adult Class &amp; Women's Group</b><br/> <b>7:00 pm</b><br/> <b>Daily Vespers</b><br/> <b>6:00 pm</b></p> | <p><b>14</b> <i>3<sup>rd</sup> Day of the Holy Trinity</i><br/> <br/> <b>Prophet Elisha</b><br/> <b>Divine Liturgy</b><br/> <b>7:00 am</b></p> | <p><b>15</b> <i>fast-free</i><br/><br/> <b>No Daily Vespers</b></p>                                                                                                 | <p><b>16</b></p>                                                                                                                                 | <p><b>17</b> <i>fast-free</i></p>                                                                                                             | <p><b>18</b><br/><br/> <b>Baptism</b><br/> <b>Samuel Werner</b><br/> <b>3:00 pm</b><br/> <b>Confessions</b><br/> <b>Great Vespers</b><br/> <b>6:00 pm</b></p>                       |
| <p><b>19</b> <i>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</i><br/> <b>Sunday of All Saints</b><br/> <b>Apostle Jude</b><br/> <b>Fathers' Day</b><br/> <b>Divine Liturgy</b><br/> <b>9:30 am</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p><b>20</b> <i>fast</i><br/><br/> <b>Beginning of Ss Peter and Paul Fast</b></p>                                                                              | <p><b>21</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><b>22</b> <i>fast</i><br/><br/> <b>St Alban Protomartyr of Britain</b><br/><br/> <b>No Daily Vespers</b></p>                                                     | <p><b>23</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br/><br/> <b>Parish Council Meeting</b><br/> <b>7:00 pm</b><br/> <b>Great Vespers</b><br/> <b>6:00 pm</b></p> | <p><b>24</b> <i>fish, wine, &amp; oil</i><br/> <b>Nativity of St John the Baptist</b><br/><br/> <b>Divine Liturgy</b><br/> <b>7:00 am</b></p> | <p><b>25</b> <i>Youth 'Hunger Strike' 8 am</i><br/> <b>Panikhida</b><br/> <b>Verna Backovski (Margie W's Mother) 5:00 pm</b><br/><br/> <b>Great Vespers</b><br/> <b>6:00 pm</b></p> |
| <p><b>26</b> <i>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</i><br/> <b>Sunday of All Saints of NA</b><br/> <b>'Ask the Priest'</b><br/><br/> <b>Divine Liturgy</b><br/> <b>9:30 am</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p><b>27</b> <i>fast</i></p>                                                                                                                                   | <p><b>28</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br/><br/> <b>Adult Class 'Scripture in Tradition'</b><br/> <b>7:00 pm</b><br/> <b>Great Vespers</b><br/> <b>6:00 pm</b></p>                                                                  | <p><b>29</b> <i>fish, wine &amp; oil</i><br/> <b>Holy Apostles Peter &amp; Paul</b><br/> <b>Divine Liturgy</b><br/> <b>7:00 am</b><br/> <b>No Daily Vespers</b></p> | <p><b>30</b><br/><br/> <b>Synaxis of the Holy Apostles</b></p>                                                                                   |                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                     |

Fellowship and Coffee Hour: Sundays immediately following Divine Liturgy  
 Church School resumes September 11<sup>th</sup>; A three-session class on 'Scripture in Tradition' will begin June 8<sup>th</sup>.  
 Confessions: Saturday Evenings following Vespers (as noted)

**June Is the OCA's Appeal Month: Church Planting Grant and Seminary Appeals**

The OCA's annual Church Planting Grant and Seminary Appeals provide financial assistance to those who have accepted the call to proclaim the Gospel across North America -- and beyond. Give generously to support new mission starts and our seminaries! Please put offerings in the 'Special Collection' basket in the vestibule.

"St. John of the Ladder told the story of a monk who visited an unkempt cell of a brother monk, and he said to himself, 'My brother prays and fasts so much, he has no time to tidy his cell.'  
 Then the same monk visited the spotless cell of another brother monk, and he said to himself, 'Just as my brother's soul is clean inside, so is his cell.'  
 You see, in neither situation did the monk judge his brother."

## Babylon and the Trees of Pentecost

By Father Stephen Freeman from his blog 'Glory to God for All Things'

### From the Feast of Pentecost

*The arrogance of building the tower in the days of old  
led to the confusion of tongues.*

*Now the glory of the knowledge of God brings them wisdom.*

*There God condemned the impious for their transgression.*

*Here Christ has enlightened the fishermen by the Spirit.*

*There disharmony was brought about for punishment.*

*Now harmony is renewed for the salvation of our souls.*

The first time I saw trees in an Orthodox Church was at St. Tikhon's Monastery in Pennsylvania, just after Pentecost Sunday. I was completely caught off guard. Though I had been in a number of different Churches over the years, I had never been in a parish of Russian background for the feast of Pentecost. Thus I had missed the Slavic practice of bringing trees into Church for the feast of Pentecost. It was wonderful - like going into Church only to find a forest.

My Western background left me completely unprepared for this Eastern take on the feast of the gift of the Spirit to the Church. In Western Churches, Pentecost particularly focuses on the "fire" of the Holy Spirit lighting on the disciples in the upper room and the "empowerment" of the Church for mission. Traditionally in the West, the color of the feast is red (for the fire). In the East, the color of the feast is green - which is also the color worn for the feast days of monastic saints. In the West, green is the "ordinary" color worn in the "in between" Sundays and weekdays of the Calendar. For the Orthodox, gold serves this function.

But I found myself in the midst of trees on a major feast that was "green." I was simply baffled. In Russian practice the feast is normally referred to as the feast of the Trinity (Troitsa) rather than Pentecost, or "Pentecost" is listed as an afterthought (Pentecost). It is obvious that something quite different is at work in the understanding of the feast day.

Both East and West keep the feast as the day upon which the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles. Orthodoxy does not ignore the various tongues with which the Apostles began to speak as they announced the gospel to those assembled in Jerusalem. However, as noted in the verse quoted at the beginning of this article - those tongues are seen as a spiritual counterpart to the confusion of the tower of Babel, when men in their hubris sought to build a tower into heaven. The tongues which came upon them only proclaimed darkness and confusion and brought to an end the last great ecumenical effort of humanity.

The Church is God's vision of united mankind - a union achieved through the gift of God and not by human effort. It is a union which maintains a diversity of sorts (the languages do not become one "super" language - so much for the "unity" of Latin) but a diversity whose unity is found in true union with the one, living and true God. The gospel proclaimed by the apostles on the day of Pentecost, though preached in many languages, was one and the same gospel.

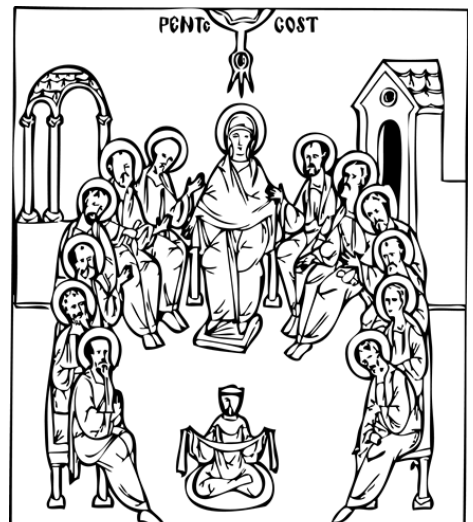
One may still wonder why the feast becomes a feast of the Trinity. Like the feast of Theophany (the Baptism of Christ), Pentecost is a feast in which the revelation of the Holy Trinity is made manifest. The Spirit is the gift of the Father - given through the Son. There were many centuries that passed before a parish was named for the Trinity...

This article is continued [here](#).

### Youth Events! Please mark your calendars!

1. On Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, we will be hosting the first **End of School Lock-In** at St John of the Ladder. Parents can begin dropping their youth off at 5:00 PM. We will be serving pizza that night with other snacks while we watch movies and play games. Parents must have their youth picked up by 9:00 AM on the 4<sup>th</sup>.
2. On Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, we will begin **OCMC's Hunger Strike Program** at 8 AM at St John of the Ladder. The event will conclude after Liturgy on Sunday morning. The youth will begin collecting donations from friends, family, and others who are sponsoring them on this 30 hour fast.
3. On Saturday July 2<sup>nd</sup>, we will have a mini-campout at St John of the Ladder for the youth. We will be joined by the youth of **St. Justin Martyr in Jacksonville** for a night of food, fun with a talk on prayer as both groups anticipate the beginning of Camp St Thekla and the Camp at the Diakonia Center.

If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Thaddaeus at 864-201-4772 or [fr.thad.werner@gmail.com](mailto:fr.thad.werner@gmail.com).



**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

■ **ALMS SUNDAY**

Our Charity Father's Day Brunch and alms collection will be June 19<sup>th</sup>. In addition to our on-going commitments, money raised and food and items donated this month will go to support United Ministries and the OCA's Planting Grant and Seminary appeals.

■ **STOTL WOMEN'S GROUP**

Join us for the next St John Women's Group as they host (at the church) the discussion of 'Scripture and Tradition' on Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 pm.

■ **'ASK THE PRIEST' DISCUSSIONS OF ORTHODOXY**

Note the date for the after-liturgy Q & A is June 27<sup>th</sup>. This is an opportunity to get answers to those difficult question you have been struggling with! No question is too ridiculous or sublime! Questions may be put in the box on the 'Bookshelf' or asked during the session. Everyone is invited.

■ **SUMMER LITURGICAL SCHEDULE**

Please note that from Pentecost (June 12) through the Feast of Dormition (August 15), we will depart from our usual Wednesday Daily Vespers schedule. If there is some other feast or 'major' saint's day during the week, we will celebrate vespers on the eve and liturgy on the morning of the feast in place of the usual Wednesday evening service; otherwise, Wednesday evening as usual. Saturday and Sunday services remain unchanged!

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**A Reminder...and a Hearty 'Thank You'!**

**June Fellowship and Goffee Hour**

- June 5<sup>th</sup> Team 3
- June 12<sup>th</sup> Team 4
- June 19<sup>th</sup> Father's Day Brunch (Team 4)
- June 26<sup>th</sup> Team 5

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**Celebrating Anniversaries and Birthdays in June**

Jeff Helvey (1<sup>st</sup>), Nick Evangelista, (1<sup>st</sup>), Theodore Davis and Mary Facchini (7<sup>th</sup>), Leighann O'Shaughnessy & Ron Faccini (8<sup>th</sup>) George Kaminsky (9<sup>th</sup>), Tanya Evanina (10<sup>th</sup>), Ioanna Ivan (12<sup>th</sup>), Adi Wamboldt (12<sup>th</sup>), Helen Kaminsky (13<sup>th</sup>), Steve & June Kerestan (14<sup>th</sup>), Bob Simon (15<sup>th</sup>), Bill & Suzanne Gubser (20<sup>th</sup>), Riley Eich (21<sup>st</sup>), Claire Bateman (23<sup>rd</sup>), Philip Miletkov (24<sup>th</sup>), Fr Marcus & Barbara (22<sup>nd</sup>), Abigail Little (27<sup>th</sup>), Jack Ghandler (29<sup>th</sup>)

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**The Feast of Pentecost**

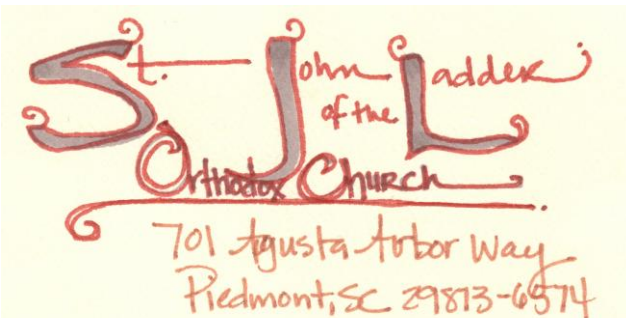
*We celebrate the coming of the Spirit on Pentecost: the promised day and the fulfillment of our hope.*

*The mystery which is as great as it is precious.*

*Therefore we cry unto Thee:*

*'O Maker of all and Lord, glory to Thee!'*

~~~ 'Lord I Call' of the Feast



PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE

VRev Fr Marcus G Burch, Pastor
Rev Fr Thaddeus Werner, Assistant

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Schedule of Services

Daily Services ---See Calendar for Schedule
Great Vespers, Saturday, 6:00 pm
Divine Liturgy, Sunday, 9:30 am

'Love is the complete repudiation of any unkind thought about one's neighbor, since "Love thinks no evil" (1 Corinthians 13:5).'

St John of the Ladder, The Ladder of Divine Ascent

JUNE 2011