

THE LADDER

of
Divine
Ascent



Volume 10, Issue 10/11 The Newsletter of St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church June/July 2009

PENTECOST: THE FEAST OF THE CHURCH

In the Church's annual liturgical cycle, Pentecost is "the last and great day." It is the celebration by the Church of the coming of the Holy Spirit as the *end* - the achievement and fulfillment - of the entire history of salvation. For the same reason, however, it is also the celebration of the *beginning*: it is the "birthday" of the Church as the presence among us of the Holy Spirit, of the new life in Christ, of grace, knowledge, adoption to God and holiness.

This double meaning and double joy is revealed to us, first of all, in the very name of the feast. Pentecost in Greek means *fifty*, and in the sacred biblical symbolism of numbers, the number fifty symbolizes both the fulness of time and that which is beyond time: the Kingdom of God itself. It symbolizes the fulness of time by its first component: 49, which is the fulness of *seven* (7 x 7): the number of time. And, it symbolizes that which is beyond time by its second component: 49 + 1, this *one* being the *new day*, the "day without evening" of God's eternal Kingdom. With the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples, the time of salvation, the Divine work of redemption has been completed, the fulness revealed, all gifts bestowed; it belongs to us now to "appropriate" these gifts, to *be* that which we have become in Christ: participants and citizens of His Kingdom.

THE VESPERS OF PENTECOST

The liturgical particularity of Pentecost is a very special *Vespers* of the day itself. Usually this service follows immediately the Divine Liturgy, is "added" to it as its own fulfillment. The service begins as a solemn "summing up" of the entire celebration, as its liturgical synthesis. We hold flowers in our hands symbolizing the joy of the eternal spring, inaugurated by the coming of the Holy Spirit. After the festal Entrance, this joy reaches its climax in the singing of the Great Prokimenon: "*Who is so great a God as our God!*"

Then, having reached this climax, we are invited to *kneel*. This is our first *kneeling* since Easter. It signifies that after these fifty days of Paschal joy and fulness, of experiencing the Kingdom of God, the Church now is about to begin her pilgrimage through time and history. It is evening again, and the night approaches, during which temptations and failures await us, when, more than anything else, we need Divine help, that presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who has *already* revealed to us the joyful End, who now will help us in our effort towards fulfillment and salvation.

All this is revealed in the *three prayers* which the celebrant reads now as we all kneel and listen to him. In the first prayer, we bring to God our repentance, our increased appeal for forgiveness of sins, the first condition for entering into the Kingdom of God. In the second prayer, we ask the Holy Spirit to help us, to teach us to pray and to follow the true path in the dark and difficult night of our earthly existence. Finally, in the third prayer, we remember all those who have departed this life before us, who have achieved their earthly journey, but who are united with us in the eternal God of Love. The joy of Easter has been completed and we again have to wait for the dawn of the Eternal Day. Yet, knowing our weakness, humbling ourselves by kneeling, we also know the joy and the power of the Holy Spirit who has come. We know that God is with us, that in Him is our victory.

Thus is completed the feast of Pentecost and we enter "the ordinary time" of the year. Yet, every Sunday now will be called "after Pentecost" - and this means that it is from the power and light of these fifty days that we shall receive our own power, the Divine help in our daily struggle. At Pentecost we decorate our churches with flowers and green branches - for the Church "never grows old, but is always young." It is an evergreen, ever-living Tree of grace and life, of joy and comfort. For the Holy Spirit - "the Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life - comes and abides in us, and cleanses us from all impurity" and fills our life with meaning, love, faith and hope.

~~~ VRev Alexander Schmemmann



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### 2009 Financial Update

|                         | <b>Income</b> | <b>Expenses</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>YTD (thru April)</b> | \$48,540      | \$49,392        |
| <b>April</b>            | \$13,086      | \$13,563        |
| <b>Charity YTD</b>      | \$4,680       | \$5,400         |

*Please remember your tithes and offerings in the summer months! With the comings and goings of June, July, and August, it is often easy to overlook tithing and gifts to the Church. Especially if you will be traveling over weekends, please take a moment to make a reminder for yourself on the calendar and/or simply to mail your offerings to the church.*

**St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church**  
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Schedule of Services
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**June 2008**

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                                                  | Monday                                                     | Tuesday                                                                                                                                                                                   | Wednesday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Thursday                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Friday                                                             | Saturday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>01</b><br><br>St Justin<br>Martyr                       | <b>02</b>                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>03</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br><i>Adult Class</i><br><i>'Orthodoxy and</i><br><i>Postmodernism'</i><br>7:00 pm<br>Daily Vespers<br>6:00 pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>04</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>05</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i><br><br>Leavetaking<br>of Ascension | <b>06</b><br><br>Panikhida for<br>Bryan Flanagan<br>5:15 pm<br>Confessions<br>Vigil of Pentecost<br>6:00 pm                                                                                                                                |
| <b>07</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> Sunday<br>after Pascha<br>Holy Pentecost<br>Feast of the Holy<br>Trinity<br>Divine Liturgy<br>With Reception of<br>Catechumens<br>9:30 am<br>Kneeling Vespers | <b>08</b><br><br>Feast of the<br>Holy Spirit               | <b>09</b><br><br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Day of Holy<br>Trinity<br><br><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Building<br/>Cmte<br/>Meeting<br/>4:30 pm</div> | <b>10</b> <i>fast-free</i><br><br><i>Adult Class</i><br><i>'Are You a Real</i><br><i>Man? CS Lewis</i><br><i>and Becoming</i><br><i>Human'</i><br>7:00 pm<br>Daily Vespers<br>6:00 pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>11</b><br><br><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Visit to the Paracletos<br/>Women's Monastery.<br/>Contact Lily Salloum for details.<br/>lily.salloum@furman.edu</div> | <b>12</b> <i>fast-free</i>                                         | <b>13</b><br><br>College Student<br>and Young Adult<br>Outing<br>9:00 am<br>Choir Rehearsal<br>5:15 pm<br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers<br>6:00 pm                                                                                          |
| <b>14</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday<br>after Pentecost<br>Sunday of<br>All Saints<br><i>'Ask The Priest'</i><br>Divine Liturgy<br>9:30 am<br>Slavonic Molieben<br>12:30 pm                 | <b>15</b><br><br>Beginning of<br>Ss Peter and<br>Paul Fast | <b>16</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i>                                                                                                                                                           | <b>17</b><br><br><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">12 – 14 Year Old Youth Retreat<br/>at Ss Mary and Martha Monastery<br/>Call the monastery at 803 564 6894 for more details.</div><br>Daily Vespers<br>6:00 pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>18</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i>                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>19</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i>                                    | <b>20</b><br><br><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Fr Marcus at St Vladimir's Seminary<br/>Summer Conference<br/>Past and Future of Orthodoxy in America</div><br>Great Vespers<br>6:00 pm           |
| <b>21</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday<br>after Pentecost<br>All Saints<br>of North America<br>All Saints Russia<br>Charity Sunday<br>Father's Day<br>Brunch<br>Divine Liturgy<br>9:30 am     | <b>22</b>                                                  | <b>23</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i>                                                                                                                                                           | <b>24</b> <i>fish, wine</i><br><i>&amp; oil</i><br><br>Nativity of<br>St John the<br>Baptist<br>Daily Vespers<br>6:00 pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>25</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i>                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>26</b>                                                          | <b>27</b><br><br><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">15 – 17 Year Old Youth Retreat<br/>at Ss Mary and Martha Monastery</div><br>Choir Rehearsal<br>5:15 pm<br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers<br>6:00 pm |
| <b>28</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday<br>after Pentecost<br><i>'Ask The Priest'</i><br>(Fr Marcus)<br><br>Divine Liturgy<br>9:30 am                                                          | <b>29</b><br><br>Ss Peter &<br>Paul                        | <b>30</b><br><br>Synaxis of the<br>Holy Apostles                                                                                                                                          | <b>Saints Peter and Paul Fast</b><br>On the Monday following All Saints, we begin the Fast of Saints Peter and Paul in memory of their martyrdom for Christ. One of the four specific fasts of the calendar year, it is often the shortest (it varies in length depending on the date of Pascha). After the feasting of the Paschal season we take some time to re-orient ourselves for the Christian life, in light of the examples of the two great Apostles upon whose preaching and witness the Church is founded. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

Fellowship and Goffee Hour: Sundays immediately following Divine Liturgy  
 Church School: Sundays following Divine Liturgy (resumes September 13<sup>th</sup>)

Choir Rehearsal: June 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>; July 18<sup>th</sup>; Confessions: Saturday Evenings following Vespers (as noted)  
 Adult Glass and Fellowship: Wednesdays following Vespers through June 10<sup>th</sup> (will resume August 19<sup>th</sup>)

**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! There will be a special basket in the vestibule.

**St John of the Ladder Orthodox Church**  
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Schedule of Services
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**July 2009**

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                                                                | Monday                                                     | Tuesday                                                                               | Wednesday                                                                             | Thursday                                                                       | Friday                                                             | Saturday                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                            |                                                                                       | <b>01</b> <i>fast</i><br><br>Daily Vespers<br>6:00 pm                                 | <b>02</b><br><br>St John<br>Maximovitch<br>of Shanghai<br>and San<br>Francisco | <b>03</b> <i>fast</i>                                              | <b>04</b><br><br>US Independence<br>Day<br><br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers<br>6:00 pm            |
| <b>05</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday<br>after Pentecost<br>Relics of Ven<br>Sergius of<br>Radonezh<br><br>Divine Liturgy<br>9:30 am                                                                       | <b>06</b>                                                  | <b>07</b>                                                                             | <b>08</b> <i>fast</i><br><br>Daily Vespers<br>6:00 pm                                 | <b>09</b>                                                                      | <b>10</b> <i>fast</i><br><br>Ven Anthony<br>of the<br>Kievan Caves | <b>11</b><br><br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers<br>6:00 pm                                          |
| <b>12</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday<br>after Pentecost<br>Charity Sunday<br>'Ask The Priest'<br>(Fr Marcus)<br><br>Divine Liturgy<br>9:30 am                                                             | <b>13</b>                                                  | <b>14</b>                                                                             | <b>15</b> <i>fast</i><br><br>Great Prince<br>Vladimir<br><br>Daily Vespers<br>6:00 pm | <b>16</b>                                                                      | <b>17</b> <i>fast</i>                                              | <b>18</b><br><br>Choir Rehearsal<br>5:15 pm<br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers<br>6:00 pm            |
| <b>19</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday<br>after Pentecost<br>Fathers of the 1 <sup>st</sup><br>Six Ecumenical<br>Councils<br>'Ask The Priest'<br>Divine Liturgy<br>9:30 am<br>Slavonic Molieben<br>12:30 pm | <b>20</b><br><br>Prophet<br>Elijah                         | <b>21</b>                                                                             | <b>22</b> <i>fast</i><br><br>Holy<br>Myrrhbearer<br>Mary Magdalene<br>No Vespers      | <b>23</b>                                                                      | <b>24</b> <i>wine &amp; oil</i>                                    | <b>25</b><br><br>Great Vespers<br>6:00 pm                                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                            | Diocese of the South Assembly, Atlanta, GA<br>Jun 21 <sup>st</sup> - 24 <sup>th</sup> |                                                                                       |                                                                                |                                                                    |                                                                                                   |
| <b>26</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday<br>after Pentecost<br>Repose of St Jacob<br>Netsvetov<br><br>Divine Liturgy<br>9:30 am                                                                               | <b>27</b><br><br>Great Martyr<br>and Healer<br>Panteleimon | <b>28</b>                                                                             | <b>29</b><br><br>Daily Vespers<br>6:00 pm                                             | <b>30</b>                                                                      | <b>31</b><br><br>Forefeast Cross                                   | <b>01</b><br><br>Beginning<br>of the<br>Dormition Fast<br>Confessions<br>Great Vespers<br>6:00 pm |

Fr Marcus will be on vacation July 25<sup>th</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup>; Fr Nikolay, July 2<sup>nd</sup> through July 18<sup>th</sup>

**Diocese of the South Assembly, July 21<sup>st</sup> through 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Most of you know that our beloved Archbishop DMITRI has retired and will probably not visit us again. He is simply too frail to make this type of trip. However, the DOS Assembly will be in Atlanta this summer from July 21-23. Archbishop DMITRI will be honored at this assembly for his 30 years of service as the DOS's founding and only ruling bishop, 40 years as a bishop, and 55 years as an ordained clergyman! You can see the schedule of events at [www.dosoca.org](http://www.dosoca.org) along with special hotel rates. For \$65 members of St John of the Ladder could attend the Assembly and Banquet as observers. Since Atlanta is so close, this might be an opportunity for anyone who is interested to attend all or part of the Assembly and get to see the Archbishop and meet Metropolitan Jonah. If any of you would like to attend, contact Father Marcus as soon as possible because all names and registration fees need to be submitted soon.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

■ **ALMS SUNDAY**

Our Charity Brunch community meal and alms collection will be June 21<sup>st</sup> and July 12<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.

■ **ADULT STUDY ON JUNE 3<sup>RD</sup> AND 10<sup>TH</sup>**

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, Dn Andrew Cuneo will lead our adult study following vespers on the topics of 'Orthodoxy and Postmodernism' (June 3<sup>rd</sup>) and CS Lewis's understanding of what it means to be human (June 10<sup>th</sup>). Dn Andrew is a CS Lewis scholar with six years of teaching experience at the university level.

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

Note the dates for the after-liturgy Q & A. 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 SCHEDULE**

We will continue Wednesday evening vespers throughout the summer (except for July 22<sup>nd</sup>). The Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of the South convenes in Atlanta, GA, on July 21<sup>st</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup>. Fr Marcus and Fr Nikolay will be away during the assembly.

**A Reminder & a Heartly 'Thank You'!  
June and July Fellowship and Coffee Hour**

|                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| June 7 <sup>th</sup>  | Team 1                          |
| June 14 <sup>th</sup> | Team 2                          |
| June 21 <sup>st</sup> | Charity Brunch (Team 3 Cleanup) |
| June 28 <sup>th</sup> | Team 3                          |
| July 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Team 4                          |
| July 12 <sup>th</sup> | Team 5                          |
| July 19 <sup>th</sup> | Team 6                          |
| July 26 <sup>th</sup> | Team 7                          |

**Celebrating Anniversaries and Birthdays in June**

Jeff Helvey (1<sup>st</sup>), Nick Evangelista, (1<sup>st</sup>), Leighann O'Shoughnessy & Ron Faccini (8<sup>th</sup>) George Kaminsky (9<sup>th</sup>), Tanya Granina (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 Gich (21<sup>st</sup>), Philip (24<sup>th</sup>), Fr Marcus & Barbara (22<sup>nd</sup>), Jack Ghandler (29<sup>th</sup>)

**Celebrating Anniversaries and Birthdays in July**

Fr Nikolay & Rachael (1<sup>st</sup>), Andy Small (1<sup>st</sup>), Jamie Levitsky (2<sup>nd</sup>), Anna Little & Margie Wamboldt (3<sup>rd</sup>), Stefka & David Giddins (6<sup>th</sup>), Irina Freund (7<sup>th</sup>), Ken & Angie O' Shaughnessy (10<sup>th</sup>), Nancy Freeman (10<sup>th</sup>), Elena Simpson (14<sup>th</sup>), Vinny Anderson (18<sup>th</sup>), Bill Gubser & Barbara Burch (19<sup>th</sup>), Jack & Gathy Ghandler (22<sup>nd</sup>), Brina Flanagan (30<sup>th</sup>)



**Orthodox Church in America**

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**VRev Fr Marcus G Burch, Pastor**  
**Rev Fr Nikolay Miletkov, Assistant**  
**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

**Schedule of Services**

Daily Vespers, Wednesday, 6:00 pm  
Great Vespers, Saturday, 6:00 pm  
Divine Liturgy, Sunday, 9:30 am

**'Pride makes us forget our sins, for the remembrance  
of them leads to humility.'**

**St John of the Ladder, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 23**



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**JUNE/JULY 2009**