



# Saints Peter and Paul

## Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641

Archpriest Fr. Daniel Mathewson – *Rector*

V. Rev. David Smoley – *Retired*

**Lord's Day – 12-29-2019**

Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the Web at:

[www.orthodoxcrossingville.org](http://www.orthodoxcrossingville.org)

**28th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 3. Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ. Sunday after Nativity. Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord.** The 14,000 Infants (Holy Innocents) slain by Herod at Bethlehem. Ven. Marcellus, Abbot of the Monastery of the “Unsleeping Ones” (485). Ven. Mark the Grave-digger, Theophilus, and John, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—11th-12th c.). Ven. Theophil of Luga and Omutch (15th c.). Ven. Thaddeus the Confessor, of the Studion (818).

### GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

God became man so that we might become god. –St. Athanasius the Great

Pray with out ceasing...

**PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN**

**YOUR DAILY PRAYERS:** Those in need – Fr. Isaac, Fr. Samuel, Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Fr. Anthony, Mat. Gail, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Melissa, Judy, the newly born Cashal Jack, Debbie, TK, Eliza, Paul, Pearl, William, Joseph, Karen, John, Stavros, Nickolas, Timothy, Autumn, (Sergius), James, Amanda, Damian, Delani, Jeremiah, Mary, Christine, Rick, Samuel, Timothy, Andrew, Kati, Simeon, Debbie, Christopher, Megan, Andrew, Margret-Ann, Lorelly, Thomas, Evan, Valentina The Homebound Ann, Tanya, Richard, Ruth, William, Catechumen- Christian ... Travelers ... Military servers...Greg ...Newly Departed : Claudia Sukel, Theona Sekel, Helen Miller, Anna Anderson, Rodney Senyo, Josephine Olnvik, Marilyn Filipos, Irene Hoovler...Departed Orthodox – Mat. Anastasia, Jeff, Catherine, John B., John S., Nickoli, Ann, Katherine, Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy... Special requests... Gilbert, Phyllis, Anthony, Ian, Paul, James, Sean, Liam, Bill, Wesley, Kim, Jim, Margaret, Loren, Russell, Julia, Shelby, Janet, Mareen, Lynn, Maragret, Helen, Dan, Jonathan, Donna, Anna, Lucas.

#### **Holy Hymns:**

##### **Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)**

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm. He has trampled down death by death. He has become the first born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world// great mercy.

##### **Tone 4 Troparion (for the Feast)**

Your Nativity, O Christ our God,  
has shone to the world the light of wisdom.  
For by it, those who worshipped the stars,  
were taught by a star to adore You,  
the Sun of righteousness,  
and to know You, the Orient from on high.//  
O Lord, glory to You!

##### **Tone 2 Troparion (of the Righteous Ones)**

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph,  
to David, the ancestor of God;  
you saw a Virgin great with child;  
you gave glory with the shepherds;  
you worshipped with the Magi;  
you received the news from the Angel.//  
Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

##### **Tone 3 Kontakion (of the Righteous Ones)**

Today godly David is filled with joy; Joseph and James offer praise. The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ fills them with great joy. They sing praises to the One ineffably born on earth, and they cry out: “O Compassionate One, save those who honor You!”

##### **Tone 3 Kontakion of the Feast**

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One. Angels with shepherds glorify Him;  
the Wise Men journey with the star,//  
since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child!

##### **Tone 3 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)**

Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! (*Ps 46/47:6*)  
*v: Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy! (Ps 46/47:1)*

##### **Tone 4 Prokeimenon**

God is wonderful in His saints, the God of Israel. (*Ps 67/68:35*)

##### **Tone 3**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*v: In You, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be put to shame! (Ps 30/31:1)*

*v: Be a God of protection for me, a house of refuge in order to save me! (Ps 30/31:2)*

##### **Tone 4**

*v: Remember, O Lord, David and all his meekness! (Ps 131/132:1)*

Magnify, O my soul, the most-pure Virgin Theotokos, more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly hosts. I behold a strange, most glorious mystery: heaven—the cave; the cherubic throne—the Virgin; the manger—the place where Christ lay—the uncontainable God, Whom we magnify in song.

##### **Troparion — Tone 4**

First-enthroned of the apostles, teachers of the universe: Entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy!

##### **Kontakion — Tone 2**

O Lord, you have taken up to eternal rest and to the enjoyment of your blessings the two divinely-inspired preachers, the leaders of the Apostles, for you have accepted their labors and deaths as a sweet-smelling sacrifice, for you alone know what lies in the hearts of men.

##### **Holy Scripture:**

##### **Luke 24:36-53 (6th Matins Gospel)**

Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at

Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

### **Galatians 1:11-19 (Epistle, Sunday After)**

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

### **Matthew 2:13-23 (Gospel, Sunday After)**

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."

Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

## **Holy Services and Activities**

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, *not giving up meeting together*, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (St. Paul to the Hebrews 10:23-25)

WINTER SCHEDULE: Please mark your calendars as family time.  
Saturdays – Great Vespers or Vigil – 6:00pm  
Sundays - CGS and Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy following  
-Children's Choir and Adult Choir practice before Coffee Hour  
-Coffee Hour

### **Activities and Services:**

Wed. Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> Molieben of Thanksgiving for the New Year- 12 noon- Lunch to follow in the Hall  
Sat. Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> – Youth and families trip to Ray's MTB indoor Bike Park Cleveland 8am departure return 9pm 50\$

### **HOLY THEOPHANY SERVICES**

Sun. Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> – Vigil for Holy Theophany – with the Blessing of Holy Water – 4:00pm  
Mon. Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> –Divine Liturgy of St. Basil with the blessing of Cussawego Creek – 9:30 am  
Tues. Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>– Choir Party – Terri Jouvers 7pm  
Sat. Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> – Pro-Life Erie Breakfast - 9:00 a.m.  
Blessing of French Creek – Meadville - 12 noon V Brewery following  
Sat. Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> – Blessing of Lake Erie – 12:00n V Brewery following  
Sat. Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> - Vigil 6:00pm  
Sun. Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> - **Entrance of the Lord into the Temple**  
HOLY DAY – No Matins 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour 9:15  
**Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>** - Orthodox Bible Study – VBrewery in Meadville  
Sun. Feb. 23 - Meatfare - Pancake Breakfast  
Sun. Mar. 1<sup>st</sup> – Beginning of Great and Holy Fast-  
– Forgiveness Vespers - Cheesefare  
Mon. –Thurs. - Mar. 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> -Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 6:00pm  
Fri. Mar. 6<sup>th</sup> PreSanctified Liturgy – Fasting Pot luck

**Spring Marriage Retreat- Saturday MARCH 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 10am-5pm -- Sts. Peter and Paul OCA Crossingville**

### **Team Activities:**

**Missions Team** is continuing its call for donations for local mission work and some far away including h The Hope Project, Bethesda House, and Edinboro Food pantry. Used clothing is available for our parish members in the back rooms of the hall. See Anna for more details.  
**--The Missions team is preparing for a trip to Alaska from JUNE 25<sup>th</sup> – JULY 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 (Its official!)–please donate toward their trip as you are able, just mark your donation in the offering as "Alaska Trip" as you give on Sunday. See Anna R. or Fr. Daniel if you would like to attend.**

**Education Team** is continuing the present schedule of Atrium 1 meeting at 9am on Sunday Mornings.

*\*It has been proposed that we have a Once a month Family Day on the First Saturday with Atrium 1, Atrium 2, youth quest, Mom's Group, Men's fellowship... Please let Fr. Daniel know if this is a good idea. It will not be scheduled until Fr. Daniel hears some feed back from parents and families involved. Atrium 1 would still continue to be offered on Sunday mornings as well.*

**Activities-** There will be a number of events for youth and families through out the year, including: Learning Prospora Making which took place yesterday with 7 attending. It was a blessing for all; Next month some of the Older Youth and families will travel to Ray's Bike Park and serve at the St. Herman's soup Kitchen in Cleveland (Sat. Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 -12 and over 50\$pp); Ski Trip (TBA), Lenten event,(TBA), Summer Camp out, etc.

**Hospitality Team** The team is asking everyone to be active in cleaning up following coffee hour. Also, don't forget to sign up for coffee hour and be sure to help out cleaning up after.

**Outreach Team** The goal of the OT is to make people in our community familiar with the Orthodox Faith.

Events: the blessing of French Creek (**Tues. Jan 7<sup>th</sup>**), and the Blessing of Lake Erie with other churches in Erie (**Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> 12 noon** – Lunch at VB -Erie).

**Parish Council** welcomes new elected members. There will be a prayer of blessing and commissioning next **Sun. Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>**

**2020** for all council members. Council is also seeking members of the parish to be on a planning team for the upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary to be held in 2021. Council is also looking for 2 auditors. If you are interested in being on any team of the parish please let parish council Pres. Nathan or Fr. Daniel know.

**Choir** - The Choir is encouraging youth and families to participate in the Matins service, the Wed. Evening prayer services and Sat. Great Vespers, with their voices and serving in the altar. Having more understandable language and more opportunities to serve and pray will encourage our young people to participate more fully. Choir party Jan 6<sup>th</sup> 7pm

**Ladies Altar Society** next meeting will be Jan 16th

**House Blessings** -It is that time of year where we get our homes blessed. Here is the process: 1) Invite the priest to your house. 2) At your kitchen table have set up a candle, Icon, and a small bowl. 3) the house should be clean, and have all the lights on and TVs and tech off. 4) It is customary to give the priest a gift.

**Calendars** - Yearly Calendars are available. They were paid for by a local funeral home. Could you please make a donation for one of these beautiful calendars, all the donations will go toward the Missions Trip to Alaska.

### **HOLY FATHERS: Entering the Mystery of Christmas**

Orthodox Christianity is deeply associated with the word “mystery.” Its theological hymns are replete with paradox, repeatedly affirming two things to be true that are seemingly contradictory. Most of these things are associated with what is called “apophatic” theology, or a theology that is “unspeakable.” This same theological approach is sometimes called the *Via Negativa*. This is easily misunderstood in common conversation. An Orthodox discussion takes place and reaches an impasse. Inevitably, someone will remind us that some things are simply a “mystery,” etc. But this “unknowableness” is actually a misuse of mystery and its place in the Church’s life. For though mystery, paradox, and contradiction frame something as “unknowable,” they do so for the purpose of knowing.

To know is not the equivalent of mastering facts. Knowledge, in the New Testament, is equated with salvation itself (Jn. 17:3). But what kind of knowing is itself salvific? In the simplest terms, it is knowledge as *participation*. Then they said to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.” (Joh 8:19) and

*O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them. (Joh 17:25-26)*

Christ is by no means speaking of knowledge as *information*. Instead, it is knowledge that “dwells” in them. Such knowledge cannot be gained by the simple sharing of information nor by the acquisition of a system of ideas. It is experiential, on the one hand, but in a manner that is itself transformative.

We experience things all the time. It is possible to say that we are changed by experience. But it is another thing to say that the experience itself now dwells in you and communicates a new life to you. At its very heart, this is the nature of *revelation*. And this is key within the life of Orthodoxy. What dwells in us as “knowledge,” is, in fact, Christ Himself as knowledge. Christ Himself is the revealer, the revealing and what is revealed. It would be possible to “master” Orthodoxy as a system of thought. One could know a set of doctrines and teachings, and even be able to enter into discussion and argument. But this in no way actually

constitutes true knowledge of Orthodoxy, much less Orthodoxy as *saving* knowledge.

The Orthodox faith is a making-known-of-the-mystery. And this is utterly essential. However, the Orthodox faith is not static content, but the dynamic reality of the living Christ. It is, properly, a *revealed* faith, and cannot be had in any other manner. And strangely, the *mystery* is as essential as the *knowing*. Only that which is hidden can be revealed. It is a common mistake to treat the New Testament itself as the revelation of God, or the collection of the information newly revealed through Christ. We historicize Christ’s work as a set of teachings, an assemblage of theological information that we may now discuss, dissect and comprehend, rendering into nothing more than religion. However, the New Testament (and the fullness of the Church) have the mystery *within* them, and must be encountered first *as mystery* before they can be acquired as knowledge.

Paradox and contradiction, hiddenness and mystery are all *inherent* means of saving knowledge. Their presence within Scripture and the liturgical tradition are not mere styles of communication. They provide an access into a form a knowledge that cannot be communicated in any other manner. They are not mere screens shielding wonderful knowledge from our view, a knowledge that once revealed can then be shared without reference to the mystery. Because the *kind* of knowledge that is saving knowledge both causes and requires an inner transformation, it cannot be shared in a manner other than that through which it was first acquired. The single most important means of saving knowledge in the Tradition is the liturgical life of the Church. It is there that we *sing* the mystery. The hymns of the Church delight in paradox and contradiction. They urge the heart to enter into this mystical bounty. Those who have no experience of Orthodox liturgical worship can only wonder at this. Those who do, I daresay, understand exactly what I am saying.

We can say that it is not merely the rationalization of Christian teaching that is problematic, but even the efforts to make plain and straightforward and easily accessible what can only be known through mystery, paradox and contradiction. For this reason, it is true that most engagement in theological speech is done by those who don’t know what they are talking about. What passes for “theology” can easily be little more than one swine discussing pearls with another.

True theology is as much a matter of *how* we know as it is *what* we know. Further, everything about our own condition also matters in both what we may know and how we may know it. Saving knowledge cannot be isolated from the whole of who we are and how we are. The experience encountered in paradox and mystery is frequently a necessary condition for knowing the truth. We may very well come away with knowledge, and yet be speechless.

I studied Orthodoxy and the Fathers for over 20 years before I was received into the Church. But there were some things that I only began to know on the day of my reception. More than that, a slow process began in which everything I thought I knew was changed. The manner of knowing the faith *as a communicant* made the content of faith something other than what I thought I knew. Christ is quite clear that purity of heart is essential in the knowledge of God. St. Silouan says that we only know God to the extent that we love our enemies. So it is always right to ask of ourselves, “What is the state of my heart as I approach this mystery?”

We are now in the Feast of Christ’s Nativity, His birth as a child and entrance into the human condition. That event is among the greatest mysteries of the faith, surrounded by paradox and contradiction. It can (as so much else) be reduced to a greeting card or a doctrinal fact. But such a reduction cannot save. “Peace on earth, goodwill among men,” is a greeting of paradox and contradiction. If you would enter into the mystery, then, like Christ Himself, you must become small, weak, poor, misunderstood, and willing to be broken. You cannot know Him if you refuse to be like Him. This is the only path that is truly Christian. Outside the mystery, there is nothing to be known, nothing