

# Weekly Schedule of Services

Saturday: 4pm Great Vespers

This ancient prayer service assists in preparing us for the most sacred of services, the Sunday Liturgy.

*Upcoming:* Stay after as we preach through St. Paul's Letter to the Romans.

Sunday: 9:30am Divine Liturgy

This is the central day of the Christian week, where we worship our great God in holy array, and receive the most sacred Body and Blood of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Wednesday: 6:30pm Prayer and Essentials

After praying an Akathist, join us as we explore and discuss the Core Teachings of Christian Faith and Practice through the Scriptures and the Church Fathers.

Monday through Friday: 8am Morning Prayer

Come join us in prayer for our Church family and community as she begins her day.

## Announcements

Regular Wednesday evening Choir Rehearsal is at 7pm

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Please let Fr. Joshua know about any upcoming birthdays or anniversaries, or about those who are sick or travelling and may need prayer.

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Please be in touch with Fr. Joshua for your *regular* practice of Confession.

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Out of respect for the unique wishes of each parishioner, please personally request for pastoral visitation. If unable to make a personal request, the parishioner's directly authorized loved one is encouraged to request for pastoral visitation on their behalf.

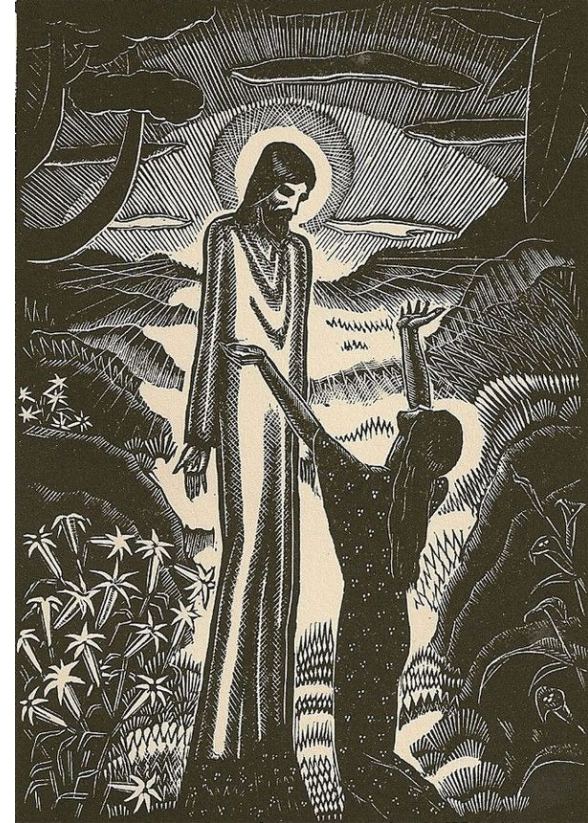
*Find Peace of Soul at*

# All Saints Orthodox Church

211 Willow Avenue, Olyphant, PA 18447

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

Fr. Joshua Schooping - Parish Priest - 570-489-0942



Sunday, December 15, 2019  
Holy Forefathers

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Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Gospel: Luke 14:16-24

Biblical, Sacramental, Patristic, Christ-centered, and Spirit-filled, *All Saints Orthodox Church* is a community of Orthodox Christians seeking to know and live the Gospel by putting on the Mind of Christ and acquiring the Holy Spirit. Discover who you are in Christ with practical teachings to uplift and transform your mind, open and expand your heart, and experience the freeing, awesome, and intimate presence of God in your soul.

### **Pastoral Reflection**

Orthodox Christians ever give glory to God. Our prayers are strewn with glory to God, like so many diamonds of praise. The glory of God is utterly compelling when one begins to get a sight of what it is. We are created by God to enjoy Him eternally. Why? Because God is infinitely and absolutely the most enjoyable, beautiful Person. For example, when we praise something, like the beauty of an infant, we say, "What a beautiful baby!" Our hearts are so filled that we overflow with praise, for praise is the natural response of a heart that overflows. We do not force ourselves to praise a beautiful baby, or a glorious sunrise, or a majestic mountain. We naturally say, "Wow," because we feel "Wow," and that is praise! Praise is the natural response of a heart that recognizes the intrinsic worth and wonder of something, and is accompanied by feelings of joy and fullness. This is what it means to praise God, to see God's worth and wonder, and therein to find so much delight in Him that our hearts overflow with praise. God is the endless and supreme source of the most perfect perfections, and He created us in order to share His perfect joy with us. But too many of us see in God too little to rejoice in, to wonder at, to glory in. We are created to have maximal joy, but only God is maximally enjoyable, and so only in God can we find maximum, endless, boundless, infinite joy. To see and enjoy God for what He is in Himself is to glorify God rightly and truly. But we will not seek for joy in an object we do not recognize as having or being a source of joy, but we will naturally seek joy in something we see as having and producing it. God is the most wonderful Person, and His glory above all things is the source of endlessly enduring delight. Let us seek God as our greatest joy!

### **Keep Praying**

*"Love Christ and put nothing before His love. He is joy, He is life, He is light. Christ is everything. He is the ultimate desire, He is everything. Everything beautiful is in Christ"*  
-St. Porphyrios

### **Wisdom, Let us Attend**

The Church Fathers are a repository of living wisdom. One such Church Father is St. Theophan the Recluse (19th Century):

*There is nothing God loves and desires to see in us more than a sincere consciousness of our nothingness and a firm and deep-felt conviction that any good we may have in our nature and our life comes from Him alone, since He is the source of all good, and that nothing truly good can ever come from ourselves, whether a good thought or a good action.*

Confidence is not an end in itself. Confidence must be grounded in something, and cannot be grounded only in itself. If confidence were grounded only in itself, then it would be really only confidence in one's own ability to keep oneself in a state of confidence. In short, it would be self-confidence. This type of confidence, however, is utterly flimsy and easily shaken at anything that exceeds one's own personal prowess, especially in the face of death. The spectre of death destroys all illusions of self-confidence and self-reliance. Death levels all. This is why God loves when we do not place confidence in ourselves, for He does not want us to be finally with no confidence or hope as the self faces its end. As odd as it may sound, self-confidence only ends in hopelessness. But God wants us to have confident hope, one that is grounded in something more firm and enduring than our personality. He wants us to have hope in Him! He wants us to have confidence in He who overcomes death. The further odd thing, though, is that when we place confidence in ourselves, we end up not placing all our confidence and hope in God. The truth is, however, that we do not give ourselves life; we do not give ourselves the world in which we live in; we do not give ourselves health and longevity. All these things are gifts that will soon disappear. Since we are not their source, how could we place any confidence in ourselves? In this way, when we place our confidence in anything less than God, we deceive ourselves and undermine any real confidence. But in God, who gives all good things, we have an enduring confidence. We are totally dependent on Him for everything good, and since all good comes from Him as from its source, we attribute even the good we see in ourselves to God, especially His salvation. God is the only ground of all true confidence.