

# 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.

Sunday: 9:30am Divine Liturgy

This is the first and 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.

Monday through Friday: 8am Morning Prayer

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

## Announcements

A Parish-wide meeting will be held Sunday, September 27, immediately following the Divine Liturgy. It will be held in the Nave of the Church. We will be discussing the parish's current and upcoming financial state. Everyone is requested to attend.

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### Upcoming Mid-week Church Services

- Monday, September 7 at 6pm: Great Vespers
- Tuesday, September 8 at 9:30am: Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos.
- Monday, September 14 at 9:30am: Exaltation of the Precious Cross

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We have so far gathered **\$3,595** in donations towards our much needed sign! The cost for the sign is \$6,200 plus installation fees. Please consider giving towards the sign so that we can attract newcomers, so that people can find us easier, and so that our neighbors can know we are here and worshipping God!

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The new rug is installed, and the repairs to the brick and the flashing are completed! We also will have a new rug for the kitchen stairs!

*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



September 6, 2020

Miracle of Archangel Michael at Colossae

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Epistle: 1 Corinthians 16:13-24

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-42

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

### **Pastoral Reflection**

*Elements of the Divine Liturgy.* The Great Litany continues its prayer to the Lord: “For the peace from above, and for the salvation of our souls.” What is the peace that is “from above”? In order to answer this it might be helpful to state what the peace from above is *not*. It is *not* a worldly peace, which is to say it is not the peace of a full stomach, the peace of an air-conditioned home in summer, a warm fire in winter, the happiness of one’s children, the blessing of grandchildren, a successful job, good pay, a happy marriage, or good health. None of these things are the peace that is “from above.” The peace from above is the peace with God that comes from God, which is to say right standing with God, and a conscience washed in the blood of Christ. This is the first peace we pray for, as it is the principle peace. Without this peace being established our life is in constant *immortal* danger. This prayer is therefore a deeply Christ-centered prayer. It is a prayer that looks to Christ and to Christ’s finished work on the Cross, accomplished on our behalf. It is His grace which extends peace to us at the price of His lifeblood. We therefore cry out in this prayer for the peace that comes from, through, and in Christ, and as such it is a prayer for the salvation of our souls, a salvation which comes from Christ alone. In this prayer we re-cognize our fundamental need for *divine* peace and salvation, and so it is essential to recall this need as we pray this primary petition, as a Church. Each petition of the Great Litany flows out from this first one, the first for which we directly pray, and establishes the spirit by which the remainder of our petitions are rightly accomplished, and the spirit by which we perform the entire work of the Liturgy. Make this the prayer of your heart.

### **Keep Praying**

*“This inner task, which you must practice in anything you do, is the task of directing your thoughts, feelings, and actions only towards pleasing God.”*  
-St. Theophan the Recluse

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

The Church Fathers are a repository of living wisdom. One such Church Father is St. Peter of Damaskos (8th Century). He taught:

*Men are of three kinds: slaves, hirelings, or sons. Slaves do not love the good, but refrain from evil out of fear of punishment; this... is a good thing, but not fully in accord with God’s will. Hirelings love what is good and hate what is evil, out of hope of reward. But sons, being perfect, refrain from evil, not out of fear of punishment, but because they hate evil violently; and they do what is good, not because they hope for reward, but because they consider it their duty.*

Are you a slave? A hireling? Or are you a son? These questions require considered reflection. The answers shine a clear light on our motives, and our motives reveal our actual faith. And not only are there the three options above, what is tragic is that there are even many who call themselves Christians - we won’t even speak of non-Christians - who stand in a fourth category, the category of those who have neither fear of hell, nor interest in heaven, nor any sense of sonship towards God. In these poor souls there is zero wakefulness towards spiritual reality at all. Speak of hell and they roll their eyes. Speak of heaven and they yawn. Speak of God and they positively bore. This is why it is said that it is *a good thing* if someone at least fear the punishment of hell. For at least there is some kind of turning towards the Lord. Without some turning towards the Lord one effectively rejects Him, rejects heaven, and embraces hell. And yet we typically hate the thought of hell considered as real. The idea that there are consequences for our unrighteousness, for the hardness of our heart, for our vainglorious and self-righteous claims to goodness, for our excuses for why we so often fall short, we chafe at the idea of God judging us. Yes, God is merciful; He is merciful to the repentant. For God’s mercy will meet the unrepentant as a flame of fire which will burn them eternally. It is His very mercy that will judge, and what an awful consideration it is, to meet God’s mercy as its enemy, as one who lived in rejection of it, in rejection of Him! The severity of God’s mercy is not something we typically consider, and rather leave it far out of mind. Thus let us at least somewhat fear hell that we might genuinely aim for heaven.