

St. Elias Orthodox Church

Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA

A Monthly Newsletter

St. Elias Orthodox Church
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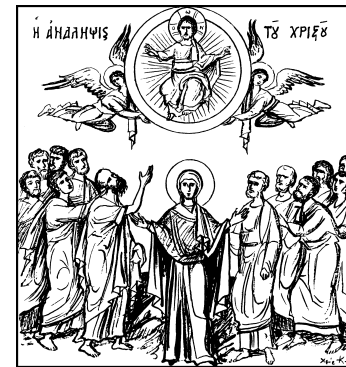
Issue Number 5 - May 2009

3rd & 6th HOURS: 9:40 am
DIVINE LITURGY 10:00 am

CHURCH SCHOOL:
Sundays Following Services
GREAT VESPERS:
Saturdays & Eves of Feasts 6:00 pm

**HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION
(PENANCE):**
Following Great Vespers,
Preceding Divine Liturgy, or
By Appointment

Saint Elias
Eastern Orthodox Church
 5066 "B" Drive South, Battle Creek, MI 49015



LESSON: ASCENSION OF OUR LORD
(commemorated 28 May):

"AND ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN..." V. Rev.
George Florovsky, D.D.

And with Christ, man's nature ascends also.

"We who seemed unworthy of the earth, are
now raised to heaven," says St John

Chrysostom. "We who were unworthy of
earthly dominion have been raised to the
Kingdom on high, have ascended higher than
heaven, have come to occupy the King's
throne, and the same nature from which the
angels guarded Paradise, stopped not until it
ascended to the throne of the Lord." By His
Ascension the Lord not only opened to man
the entrance to heaven, not only appeared
before the face of God on our behalf and for
our sake, but likewise "transferred man" to the
high places. "He honored them He loved by
putting them close to the Father." God
quicken and raised us together with Christ,
as St Paul says, "and made us sit together in
heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephes. 2:6).
Heaven received the inhabitants of the earth.
"The First fruits of them that slept" sits now on
high, and in Him all creation is summed up
and bound together. "The earth rejoices in
mystery, and the heavens are filled with joy."

"The terrible ascent..." Terror-stricken and
trembling stand the angelic hosts,

contemplating the Ascension of Christ. And trembling they ask each other, "What is this vision? One who is man in appearance ascends in His body higher than the heavens, as God."

Thus the Office for the Feast of the Ascension depicts the mystery in a poetical language. As on the day of Christ's Nativity the earth was astonished on beholding God in the flesh, so now the Heavens do tremble and cry out. "The Lord of Hosts, Who reigns over all, Who is Himself the head 'Of all, Who is preeminent in all things, Who has reinstated creation in its former order - He is the King of Glory." And the heavenly doors are opened: "Open, Oh heavenly gates, and receive God in the flesh." It is an open allusion to Psalms 24:7-10, now prophetically interpreted. "Lift up your heads, Oh ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty..." St Chrysostom says, "Now the angels have received that for which they have long waited, the archangels see that for which they have long thirsted. They have seen our nature shining on the King's throne, glistening with glory and eternal beauty.... Therefore they descend in order to see the unusual and marvelous vision: Man appearing in heaven."

The Ascension is the token of Pentecost, the sign of its coming, "The Lord has ascended to heaven and will send the Comforter to the world"

For the Holy Spirit was not yet in the world, until Jesus was glorified. And the Lord Himself told the disciples, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7). The gifts of the Spirit are "gifts of

reconciliation," a seal of an accomplished salvation and of the ultimate reunion of the world with God. And this was accomplished only in the Ascension. "And one saw miracles follow miracles," says St John Chrysostom, "ten days prior to this our nature ascended to the King's throne, while today the Holy Ghost has descended on to our nature." The joy of the Ascension lies in the promise of the Spirit. "Thou didst give joy to Thy disciples by a promise of the Holy Spirit." The victory of Christ is wrought in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"On high is His body, here below with us is His Spirit. And so we have His token on high, that is His body, which He received from us, and here below we have His Spirit with us. Heaven received the Holy Body, and the earth accepted the Holy Spirit. Christ came and sent the Spirit. He ascended, and with Him our body ascended also" (St John Chrysostom). The revelation of the Holy Trinity was completed. Now the Spirit Comforter is poured forth on all flesh. "Hence comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of mysteries, apprehension of what is hidden, distribution of good gifts, the heavenly citizenship, a place in the chorus of angels, joy without end, abiding in God, the being made like to God, and, highest of all, the being made God!" (St Basil, On the Holy Spirit, IX). Beginning with the Apostles, and through communion with them - by an unbroken succession - Grace is spread to all believers. Through renewal and glorification in the Ascended Christ, man's nature became receptive of the spirit. "And unto the world He gives quickening forces through His human body," says Bishop Theophanes. "He holds it completely in Himself and penetrates it with His strength,

REMEMBER WITH PRAYERS, CARDS, VISITS

- ♥ *Archpriest Roman Star*
- ♥ *Protodeacon Sam Beronja*
- ♥ *Matushka Marilyn Beronja*
- ♥ *Zachary Beronja*
- ♥ *Tyler Beronja*
- ♥ *Jeanie Hanchar*
- ♥ *Olympia & Aurelia Pietrariu*
- ♥ *Mary McCarthy*
- ♥ *Michelle Slone*
- ♥ *Judi Yost*
- ♥ *Peggy Hanchar*
- ♥ *George & Mary Nickolaou*
- ♥ *Carina Gunnerson*
- ♥ *Anne Bowden*
- ♥ *Louis Adamov*
- ♥ *Anna Gagye*
- ♥ *George Spriggs*
- ♥ *Shimasse Vivian Miles*
- ♥ *Domnica Mito*

Summary of Operating Fund

-by Paul Meloff, Treasurer, Parish Executive Board

March Summary:

Please see our printed newsletter for the financial update.

May Newsletter Sponsored By:

Paul Meloff & Deacon Samuel/Matushka Marilyn Beronja

Hall Rental:

Parish Members may make Hall Rentals only. For reservations for use of the hall: Call Paul Meloff @ 269.963.4748.

Meijer's Report:

No report



PHONE DIRECTORY

Chris Popovich Parish Executive Board President (269) 963-0358

Paul Meloff Parish Executive Board Treasurer (269) 963-4748

Judi Yost St. Mary's Sisterhood President and Sunshine Girl (269) 962-9680

Peggy Hanchar St. Mary's Sisterhood Publicity Chairman (269) 623-5079



UPCOMING EVENTS

Great Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord:

Area clergy and faithful are invited to attend the "altar" feast of Holy Ascension Church (OCA) on Thursday 28 May. The Most Rev. Job, Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest (www.midwestdiocese.org), will officially be greeted at 9:30AM and will be the principal celebrant for the 10:00AM Hierarchal Divine Liturgy. Our neighboring parish is located at 810 Austin Avenue in Albion, MI. Priest Joshua Frigerio, host pastor. Further information (517) 629 - 6345 or on the Internet: www.OrthodoxChurchAlbion.org

Memorial Day Youth Retreat:

Orthodox youth who are serious about their faith are cordially invited to end the joyous Paschal period together with other like-minded young men and women at a spiritual retreat at Holy Trinity Monastery (Jordanville, NY) 23 - 25 May 2009. Ages: 18 & older. Fee: Suggested \$35 donation for food. Info: (315) 717 - 5771 or (415) 816 - 8254

Internet: <http://retreat.jordanville.org>

Join our Facebook.com group: "Memorial Day Youth Retreat"

Central States Clergy to Gather in Detroit:

The clergy of the Central States Deanery will gather for their Spring session 9 - 10 June at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Redford. Archpriest Timothy Barna, host pastor. Internet: www.stmichaelroc.org

Cereal City's Cereal Fest:

Battle Creek will host the 2009 Cereal Fest' on Saturday 13 June. Breakfast will be served from 7:30AM - 10:30AM. For information: (269) 282 - 8082 or www.worldslongestbreakfasttable.com

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Luba Ilich
- 5 Lou Nickolaou
- 7 Beth St.Andrew
- 10 Fr. Samuel Beronja
Sean Turner
- 11 Bethel Adamov
- 13 Ashley Beronja
- 14 Florin Olarean
- 16 Jim Hanchar
- 17 Matt Busch
- 20 Carolyn Keathley-Smith
Jeff Sampson
- 21 Helen Repair
- 22 Barbara Dinsmore
- 24 Nicholas Federinko
David Gunnerson
- 28 Nathan Beronja
- 30 Mat. Marilyn Beronja

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 George & Nancy Vratsidis
- 6 Chris & Beth Nicolich
- 11 Michelle & Greg Slone
- 13 Lou & Liz Nickolaou
- 15 Robert & Nancy Hanchar
- 17 Visnu & Terri Sookhai
- 21 John & Tricia Schupra
- 23 Louis & Bethel Adamov
- 30 David & Tasha Federinko
Alex & Robin Nicolich
Vyacheslav & Elena Karpov

out of Himself; and He likewise draws the angels to Himself through the spirit of man, giving them space for action and thus making them blessed." All this is done through the Church, which is "the Body of Christ;" that is, His "fullness" (Ephesians 1:23). "The Church is the fulfillment of Christ," continues Bishop Theophanes, "perhaps in the same way as the tree is the fulfillment of the seed. That which is contained in the seed in a contracted form receives its development in the tree."

The very existence of the Church is the fruit of the Ascension. It is in the Church that man's nature is truly ascended to the Divine heights. "And gave Him to be Head over all things" (Ephesians 1:22). St John Chrysostom comments: "Amazing! Look again, whither He has raised the Church. As though He were lifting it up by some engine, He has raised it up to a vast height, and set it on yonder throne; for where the Head is, there is the body also. There is no interval of separation between the Head and the body; for were there a separation, then would the one no longer be a body, nor would the other any longer be a Head." The whole race of men is to follow Christ, even in His ultimate exaltation, "to follow in His train." Within the Church, through an acquisition of the Spirit in the fellowship of Sacraments, the Ascension continues still, and will continue until the measure is full. "Only then shall the Head be filled up, when the body is rendered perfect, when we are knit together and united," concludes St John Chrysostom.

The Ascension is a sign and token of the Second Coming. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into

heaven" (Acts 1:11).

The mystery of God's Providence will be accomplished in the Return of the Risen Lord. In the fulfillment of time, Christ's kingly power will be revealed and spread over the whole of faithful mankind. Christ bequeathes the Kingdom to the whole of the faithful. "And I appoint unto you a Kingdom as My Father has appointed unto me. That ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29-30). Those who followed Him faithfully will sit with Him on their thrones on the day of His coming. "To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). Salvation will be consummated in the Glory. "Conceive to yourself the throne, the royal throne, conceive the immensity of the privilege. This, at least if we chose, might more avail to startle us, yea, even than hell itself" (St John Chrysostom).

We should tremble more at the thought of that abundant Glory which is appointed unto the redeemed, than at the thought of the eternal darkness. "Think near Whom Thy Head is seated...." Or rather, Who is the Head. In very truth, "wondrous and terrible is Thy divine ascension from the mountain, O Giver of Life." A terrible and wondrous height is the King's throne. In face of this height all flesh stands silent, in awe and trembling. "He has Himself descended to the lowest depths of humiliation, and raised up man to the height of exaltation."

What then should we do? "If thou art the body of Christ, bear the Cross, for He bore it" (St John Chrysostom).

"With the power of Thy Cross, Oh Christ, establish my thoughts, so that I may sing and glorify Thy saving Ascension."

Originally published in St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly, Vol. 2 # 3, 1954.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mothers Day Blessings:

Wishing all of our mothers a most blessed Mother's Day celebration.

God's blessings to Father Sam Beronja and our altar servers and choir members and Sisterhood for their faithful dedication during Lent and Holy Pascha! Thank you very, very much!

Post-Paschal Clean-up:

Gratitude is expressed to the following individuals who helped clean-up following Holy Pascha: Chris & Olga Popovich, Rudy & Judi Yost, Al Hanchar. May our Risen Savior reward you for your efforts!

Sisterhood Hosts Brunch:

An abundance of thanks is expressed to Judi Yost, President, and the members of the St. Mary's Sisterhood and many others who helped make the delicious Brunch a huge success on Sunday 3 May! Thanks to all of those dedicated individuals that donated and prepared food along with setting-up, cleaning-up and purchasing meal tickets. A profit of \$344.50 was realized! May God richly bless you!

Crown Them with Glory:

The marriage of Doctor Slava and Doctor Elena Karpov will be blessed Sunday 31 May!

Traditional Blessing of Graves on "Soul"

Saturday:

Graves will be blessed at Oak Hill Cemetery (255 South Ave.) on Saturday 6 June at 9:00AM.

Graves will also be blessed at Memorial Park Association (2435 W. Territorial Rd.) on Saturday 6 June at 10:30AM **Please note:** In case of rain, we will gather at the same times on Monday 8 June ("Spirit" Day). All other cemeteries by appointment.

New Altar Hand Cross & Communion Cloths

Donated:

An abundance of thanks and our Lord's choicest blessings to Eunice Slavoff for generously donating an exquisite altar hand cross from Russia and hand crafted communion cloths in memory of her beloved husband and devoted parishioner +Chris Slavoff. May Chris' memory be eternal, Bog da go prosti!

Baptized into Christ:

Ellery Grace, infant daughter of Nick and Bobbie Rambow, will be Baptized and Chrismated on Saturday 23 May at 11:00AM

Altar Wine:

Many thanks to Mike Lazarov, proprietor of Orchard Park Market for donating a case of sacramental wine in memory of his beloved parents, +Vangel and +Talia, Bog da prosti!

Dear St. Elias Family,

Thank you so much for supporting Jesse in such a generous way! Thanks to you, he has nearly reached his goal for the Orthodox Mission to the Orphanage in

Guatemala. Please keep him in your prayers. We will keep you posted about this endeavor. May God richly bless you as you have blessed him!

With love and gratitude,
Gail and Doug Brandow (and, of course, Jesse)

Elkhart Museum Features Russian Exhibit:

Ruthmere Museum is proud to present an exhibition of more than five dozen Imperial Russian porcelain Easter eggs. These stunning treasures represent over 100 years of Romanov family history, from Nicholas I through Nicholas II and Alexandra. Each egg is unique and the majority are hand-painted. Some feature delicate floral motifs, others show bold ciphers emblazoned on dramatically glazed backgrounds. Some portray intricate religious icons of Christ, the Saints, and the Madonna and Child. Russian porcelain Easter eggs offer insights into Russian Orthodox Easter traditions and the life of the imperial families. The Easter egg symbolizes the resurrection of life that is the central theme of the Christian Easter celebration. The custom of exchanging eggs at Easter was brought from Byzantium to Russia with the introduction of Christianity.

Ruthmere Museum
302 E. Beardsley Ave.
Elkhart, Indiana 46514
Phone: 574-264-0330
Toll Free: 888-287-7696
www.ruthmere.org

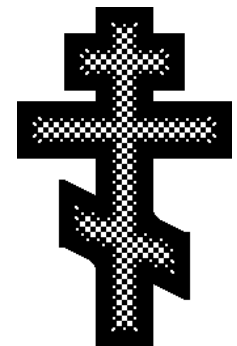
IN MEMORIAM

On behalf of St. Elias Church, I wish to express our sincere condolences to Father Sam and Matushka Marilyn Beronja and their family on

the loss of DeVette D. "Dee" Ryan (Father Sam's sister), age 83. Mrs. Ryan was born 10 November 1925 in Battle Creek and died 19 February 2009. May Christ God give the newly-departed servant of God, +DeVette, a blessed repose in the mansions of the righteous and may her memory be eternal, Bog da ja prosti!

On behalf of St. Elias Church, I wish to also express our deepest sympathy to Rudy and Judi Yost and their family on the loss of Naomi Edra Yost (Rudy's mother), age 93. Mrs. Yost was born 4 April 1916 in Newton Township and died 6 April 2009. May our Lord Jesus grant the newly-departed servant of God, +Naomi, a blessed repose and may her memory be eternal, vecnaja pamjat!

On behalf of St. Elias Church, I wish to express our sincere condolences to Carol Egnatuk and her family on the loss of her beloved husband, Mike Alexander Egnatuk, age 65. Mr. Ignatuk was born 19 September 1943 in Albion and died on Holy Pascha 19 April 2009. May our Risen Savior grant a blessed repose to the newly-departed servant of God, +Mike, and may his memory be eternal, vecnaja pamjat!



May 2009

St. Elias Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Great Vespers 6:00PM
3 Divine Liturgy 10 am Fellowship & School to follow Prospora/Donuts by Milicia Nicolich	4	5	6	7	8	9 Great Vespers 6:00PM
10 Divine Liturgy 10 am Fellowship & School to follow Prospora/Donuts by Tasha Federinko	11 Sts. Cyril & Methodius	12 Council Mtg. 7:00PM	13 Mid-Pentecost	14 Sisterhood Mtg. 6:00PM	15	16 Great Vespers 6:00PM
17 Divine Liturgy 10 am Fellowship & School to follow Prospora/Donuts by Bethel Adamov	18	19	20	21 Sts. Constantine & Helen	22	23 Baptized into Christ: Ellery Grace, infant daughter of Nick and Bobbie Rambow, will be Baptized and Chrismated at 11:00AM
24 Divine Liturgy 10 am Fellowship & School to follow Prospora/Donuts by Becky Johnson Memorial Day Observance at Fort Custer at 2:00PM	25	26	27 Great Vespers 6:00PM	28 Ascension of Our Lord (at Albion Church) 10:00AM	29	30 Great Vespers 6:00PM
31 Divine Liturgy 10 am Fellowship & School to follow Prospora/Donuts by Nada Yosifovski Karpov Marriage Blessing						