The Ark

St. Sophia
Orthodox Church

Volume 10

Youth Quarterly

July – September 2019

St. Sophia

Orthodox Church

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Our parish festal icon, The Image Not Made by Hands:
St. Sophia the Wisdom of God – Jesus Christ, seen outside
at the front of our church.

The Rainbow Song

Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink!

Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink!

It's a rainbow, it's a rainbow,

God's beautiful rainbow in the sky!

It's a rainbow, it's a rainbow,

God's beautiful Promise in the sky!

–Anon

Upcoming Feast Days/Special Parish Youth Events

Friday, July 12 - Feast Day of the **Holy Apostles Peter & Paul**. Liturgy at 10:30am (Also the last day to enter Questions into the Youth Question Box - before Summer Camp)

Sunday, August 11 Early Divine Liturgy 9:30am. Registered **Parish Youth Campers** will receive Father John's Blessing before heading off, until August 13.

August 14 - the two-week **Dormition Fast** begins.

Monday, August 19 - Feast Day of the **Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ**. Liturgy at 10:30am. Bring a basket of your garden's first fruits or local produce to be blessed by Father John after Liturgy. A hike up Moss Rocks and a picnic lunch back at the trapeza.

Wednesday, August 28 - Feast Day of **the Dormition of our Lady the Theotokos** Liturgy at 10:30am

- Sunday, September 1 **- Our Parish Feast Day**, Commemorating the Icon Not Made-by-Hands, *the Holy Wisdom of God, Our Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ*. **Blessing Before Instruction** (For Children/Teachers before school starts)
- Parish Potluck Picnic… *Bring your towels and swim suit!*

A New Church Year begins on September 14/September 1. The cycle of Feast Days starts anew with the **Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos**; Saturday, September 21. Divine Liturgy at 10:30am

The **Feast Day of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross**; Friday, September 27 at 10:30am.

Parish Youth Saints' Days July - September
Congratulations Sergei R, Juliana T, Olga I, Madeleine S, Samuel, Zacharias S, Menodora, Metrodora, Faith, and Esperanza L.

Results from the Lenten Piggy Bank Collection…

Parish Youth Groups within our Synod (the official council of all the Orthodox Churches in North America belonging to ROCOR); were asked to collect small donations into a Youth Piggy Bank during Great Lent, culminating on Palm Sunday. Children, youth, teens, godparents, grandparents and the young-at-heart, took joy in dropping coins into our yellow vortex.

At Youth Choir, children learned about the immense need for housing, care, education and support of Orphans in Russia. This specific collection was to provide a therapeutic recreation and rehabilitation center for those living full-time in care facilities in an area of Belorussia.

The results were astounding, with over $605.00 collected; from our small parish alone.

Some of the residents at the Samaritan Rehabilitation Centre Orphanage and Hospice in Belorussia; June 2019

A Home's "Beautiful Corner," for Family Prayers

Celebrating the Mid-Feast of Pentecost with Very Special Guests

Archbishop Gabriel with the Miraculous Kursk Root Icon

On May 22, we celebrated Mid-Pentecost, which also coincided this year on one of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker's special days. It was on this day his Holy Relics were transferred from Turkey to Bari, Italy, in the year 1087.

In the morning, a group of young girls awaited the Bishop's arrival to Church by holding posies of fresh flowers.

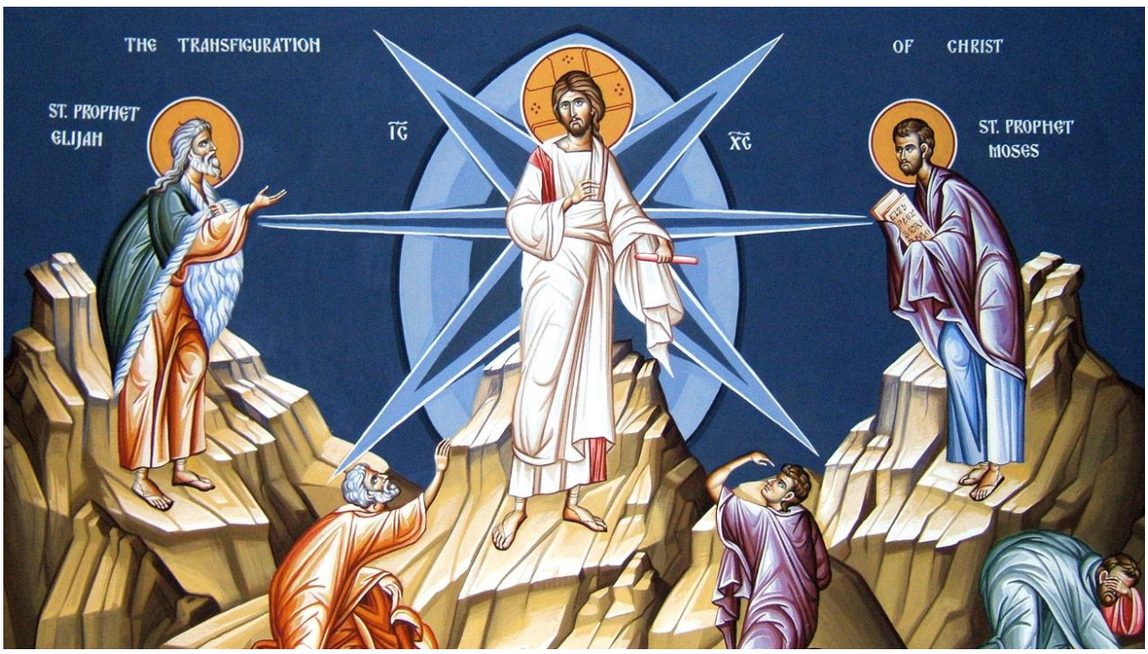
Alec A. held to Slavic tradition of greeting our Archbishop with a fancy loaf of special bread; '*I am the Bread of Life*'

St. John 6:35 and salt; offered as a symbol of hospitality and a gift from those longing for truth and goodness; love, compassion, humility and patience.

Hot Dog! It's Sundae Sunday

On June 23rd parish families and youth teamed up for this 6th annual fundraiser. Fun food and healthy sides rounded out the menu at this 'last chance café' before the Apostles Fast started the next day.

Donations exceeding $500.00 were collected by the Sisterhood and shared with Seeds to Harvest; a mission in Guatemala that helps children have access to food, shelter and education, and this summer's Parish Youth Camp plus ongoing Church activities. Thanks to Sophie S, and her youthful team of servers aged 4-17. This event can't happen without you !



The Transfiguration

In order to strengthen the faith of the apostles and prepare them for the terrible day of His crucifixion, Jesus Christ took the three leaders of the apostles, Peter (on the ground to the left, with the white beard), James (on the far right hiding his eyes)and John (in the middle), up to a high mountain to pray.

The name of this mountain is Mount Tabor. Here, the Lord gave these apostles and us – a wonderful revelation.

Upon the mountain, Christ began to pray. The apostles began to pray also, but soon, they became weary and fell asleep.

Suddenly, a great flash of light awoke the three apostles. They looked up and saw the Lord Jesus Christ surrounded by an unearthly light, such as they had never seen before.

Our Saviour's face was shining like the sun itself, and His clothing had become white as snow. Jesus Christ our God was surrounded by His own glory and transfigured (changed) into an appearance of holy beauty.

The apostles were terrified. They stared in amazement as the two holy prophets, (from the Old Testament), Moses and Elias (Elijah) appeared in glory and stood beside the Lord.

The two prophets began to talk with the Lord Jesus Christ about his crucifixion and death. They discussed exactly those things which were troubling and confusing the apostles.

The apostles felt great joy all the while that the holy prophets were conversing with the Lord, and they kept a reverent silence. Then, all at once, Peter noticed that the two prophets, Moses and Elias, began to vanish, and he cried out: “Lord, It is good for us to be here; if You wish, we will build three chapels here. One for You, one for Moses and one for Elias.”

While Peter was still speaking, a cloud of light appeared overhead. The apostles became terrified. They knew that God often spoke to men from such a cloud of light.

Suddenly, the cloud overshadowed them, and a voice rang out from it, saying: “This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him, for in Him is all My gift to mankind.”

The apostles fell to the ground in complete terror, but the Lord came up to them and said, “Get up, do not be afraid.” When they stood up, the apostles looked around themselves, but saw no-one except the Lord, and He now looked the same as always.

As they were walking back down the mountain, the Lord told them that they should not tell anyone about this great miracle until after He was risen from the dead.

Fruit baskets are brought to church to be blessed on the Feast Day of the Transfiguration.

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Unscramble the words and decode the message to find the source of this Gospel passage

LEVO, ____ ,

CEAPE, ____ ,

JYO, ____ ,

TANICPEE ____

SEGTENLENS ____

SENDOGSO ____

TAFHI ____

LEFS-TONROCL ____ - ____

____ 5 : 2 2

A Dining Room's Icon Corner

You Can Make It!
"Lenten Fruit/Veggie Ice Pops"

Creamy Lime – Strawberry Beet – Mango Orange Carrot

These homemade treats are made with the blender you use for smoothies and a popsicle mold. You could even try layering these flavours, as long as you let each layer freeze completely before adding the next. For each flavour, complete the recipe by: Puree until completely smooth. Pour into molds. Freeze 3-4 hours. Makes 5-6 popsicles.

Creamy Lime: 1 ½ cups pineapple chunks (fresh or frozen); ½ banana; ¾ cup coconut milk; ½ - 1 cup fresh spinach; zest and juice of 1 lime. Press start to puree!

Strawberry Beet: 1½ cups strawberries (fresh or frozen); ½ cup beets (cooked & cooled); ¾ cup apple juice; 1 tsp lemon juice or balsamic vinegar. Zoom it up until completely smooth.

Mango Orange Carrot: 1½ cup diced mango (fresh or frozen); ½ cup orange juice; ½ cup carrot juice. Now make it smooth.

The Dormition of the Mother of God

After the Holy Spirit had come down from heaven upon the apostles, they went out to preach the Gospel and establish the Holy Church in every nation.

The Virgin Mary also travelled to other cities. When the holy Apostle John became bishop of Ephesus, it is said that Mary visited him there.

Most of the time, however, Mary lived in Jerusalem, on Mount Sion. She was greatly loved and revered by all the members of the Holy Church. The Virgin Mary was the holiest person on Earth, because Christ our God had dwelt in her womb. She had been His earthly mother and He had given her many gifts of Grace.

But everyone must die sooner or later, no matter how holy they are. The time came for Mary to die also. But Christ had already conquered death for us. Now, we know that everyone will rise from the grave just as Christ Himself did on Holy Pascha.

For this reason, we no longer say that a believing person ‘dies’, we say that they ‘repose’ or ‘fall asleep’, because we believe (as Christ said) that death is only a sleep, it is only for a while, and everyone will rise again someday. This is

what the word “Dormition” means: to go to sleep for a while.

So, the time came for Mary to repose also, and one day, while she was praying, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that she would repose in three days.

Mary was overjoyed to hear that she would soon repose, for she longed to be with Christ in heaven. She called for all the Christians in Jerusalem to come to her so she could bid them farewell.

To the women who lived in her house as nuns, she gave pieces of her clothing as remembrances. Word was sent to the Apostle James, who was bishop of Jerusalem, and Mary told him where she was to be buried.

All her relatives and the faithful of the Holy Church began to gather. They all wept in sorrow, but Mary comforted them telling them that it would be better for them to rejoice that to weep, for Christ’s followers do not fear death.

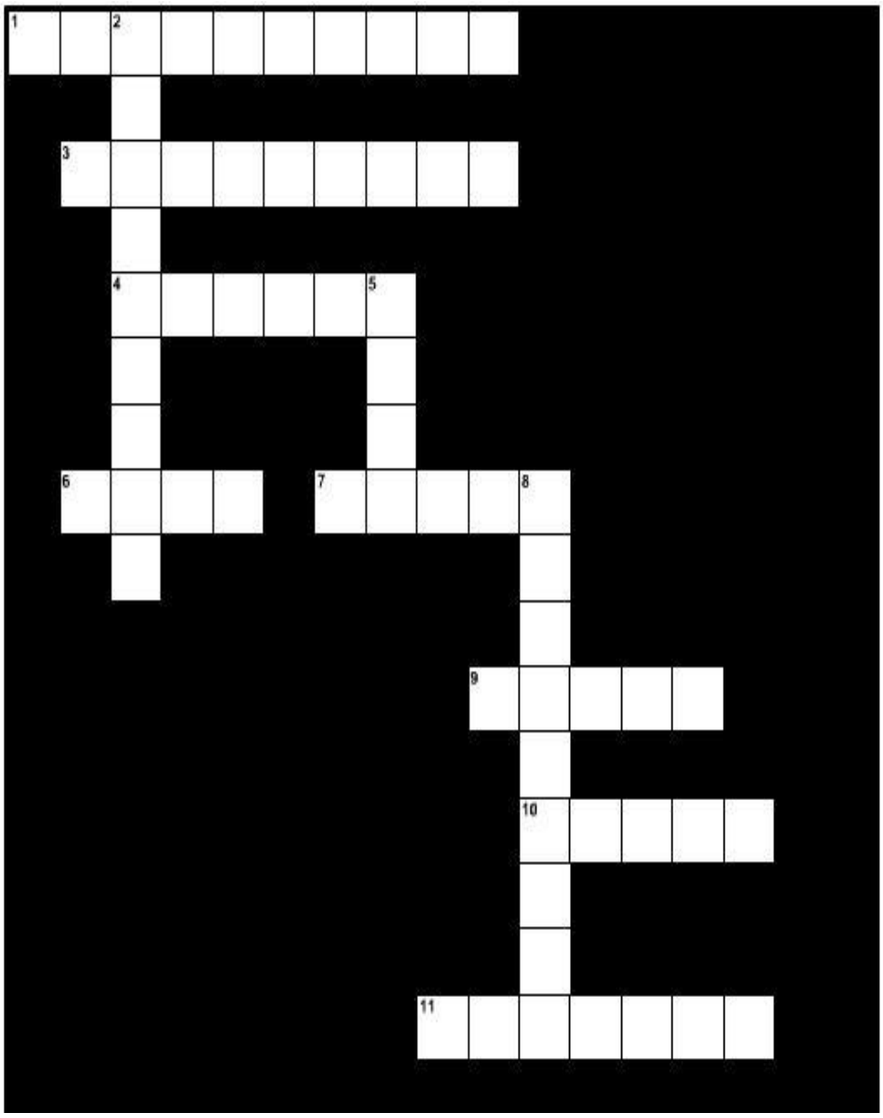
Mary wanted to see the Apostles once more before she reposed, so she prayed to God, and He answered her. By a great miracle, God transported the apostles to Jerusalem, to the bedside of the holy virgin.

Mary peacefully reposed, with joy and hope, at the ninth hour of the day. She was carried with honour to her family’s tomb at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

By God’s will, only Apostle Thomas had not been brought to Mary’s bedside, but he came to Jerusalem as soon as he heard about her repose. God had caused this because He wanted to give the Holy Church a special revelation. Thomas begged the other apostles to open Mary’s tomb so he could see her one last time.

When they opened her grave, it was empty. Christ had taken Mary’s body to heaven also. Thus, we know that she is alive and already raised from the dead and she constantly prays for all, and helps us in times of trouble.

Because of this revelation, the apostles and the first Christians understood that they were to give special honour to the Virgin Mary and call upon her in prayer for help.



The Mother of God Crossword

ACROSS
1. Burial place of Theotokos
3. Home of the Theotokos
4. Late Apostle at burial
6. Chosen to care for Mary
7. Transported Apostles
9. How her cave was found
10. Number of days buried
11. Means All Holy

DOWN
2. Means Mother of God
5. Christ is holding this
8. Name of Feast

A Front Room's Family Icon Corner

The Nativity of Mary the Theotokos

September 21st

For many thousands of years people had been waiting for the Saviour whom God promised to Adam and Eve. Many prophets, like Elijah (seen in our dome), received messages from God about Him.

Now at last, the time was near at hand when the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, was to be born. At this time there lived not far from the great city of Jerusalem an old man and his wife. They were called Joachim and Anna.

They were both very good and very kind and loved each other tenderly. But Joachim and Anna were very unhappy about one thing. They were both growing old and still had no children. They did not grumble or complain as many people would have done. Instead, they prayed very hard that God would give them a child. Anna made a promise that if she had a baby she would bring it up to serve God.

A little baby girl was born to Joachim and Anna. God had answered Anna's prayer, and they were very happy. They called the baby Mary. She seemed to them to be the loveliest baby they had ever seen. As Mary grew, she made her parents happier and happier because she was so lovely and good. Joachim and Anna did not forget their promise to God.

In Wisdom's Lovely, Pleasant Ways

Jesus Christ is God's Holy Wisdom, the Sophia of God. Sophia is the Greek word for Wisdom. Our Church's name is St. Sophia, which means Holy Wisdom… Our Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

Wisdom is not only knowing things, it's knowing what to do with things… such as what is appropriate, and what is inappropriate in our earthly life…

Wisdom is the practical use of knowledge! The Wisdom of God is Jesus Christ. Jesus is God's Love, God's Truth, God's Beauty, God's Power and God's Peace – which passes all understanding!

Jesus is the Wisdom we desire. Jesus is the Wisdom we must have. We should seek that Wisdom who is Jesus. We should want Wisdom to dwell in us. We should want to become wise. We can see God's Wisdom in all that exists.

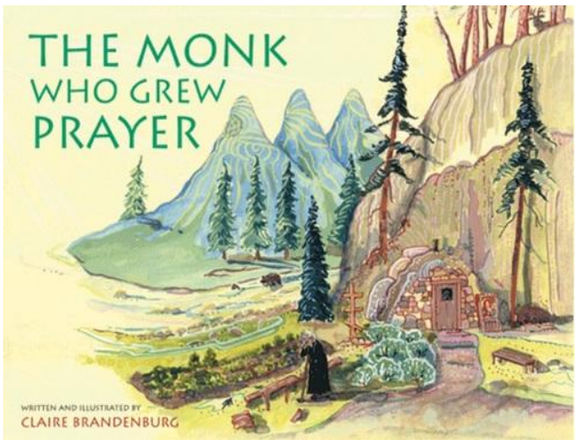
If you think about the stars and the moon and the plants and the animals and the trees, you have a revelation of the very Wisdom of God in all these things… as well as His power, His beauty, His truth, His glory, and His splendor.

Wisdom is a reflection of eternal light. In every generation, Wisdom passes into holy souls and makes them friends of

God. Wisdom is more beautiful than the sun, the moon, or the stars. Against Wisdom, evil can never succeed.

We are called to pursue wisdom, above all things, for Holy Wisdom is more precious than gold, and sweeter than the honeycomb! Holy Wisdom is our Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. – *By the Editor; and the above was narrated in parts by the youth choir at the Pascha 2019 Concert.*

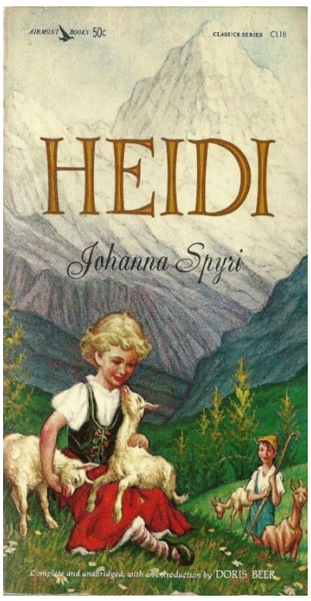
From the Parish Library



The Monk Who Grew Prayer

By Claire Brandenburg

A monk prays deep in the forest. As he works at simple tasks he is growing prayer. The monk prays continually throughout the day and night, and, as the seasons pass, he becomes a holy man. This delightful, beautifully illustrated book teaches children that no matter what they are doing, or what hour of the day it is, they too can pray.



Heidi *By Johanna Spyri*

When Heidi's Aunt brings the orphaned girl to live with her grandfather, no one can imagine the bitter, solitary old man caring for a child. But the two grow to love each other and Heidi blossoms in her new home. Johanna Spyri's charming story, and spirited heroine, have won children's hearts for more than a century.

Where is <u>Your</u> Home's "Beautiful Corner"?

In the *Law of God*, we are reminded that the Christian must pray every day, morning, and evening, before and after eating, before and after every kind of work. This is private prayer, our personal conversation and relationship building with God.

We can pray to God everywhere because God **is** everywhere; at home, at work, on every path. At home, and in Church, we say our prayers before Holy Icons; a representation of Holiness, that has been consecrated with Holy Water and prayer.

It has been said that Icons are 'windows into heaven.' Before prayer, we must collect ourselves, settle down and focus from the inside out. This becomes easier, in the Holy presence of Icons, in a special space, referred to as a Beautiful Corner, Icon corner, Bright corner, home altar/shrine or church room.

It will be as unique and individual as you and your family are. Ideally, centrally located in an area facing towards the East, this gathering place; or little church; will act as a peace corner for your family.

It will become more beautiful as God's grace is bestowed upon your family through ongoing efforts of prayer,

fasting, acts of kindness and charity; struggle and victory over life's difficulty; illness or unexpected circumstances. No family would be complete without some form of suffering. This is God's unique way of preparing and polishing souls!

There are usually three main items that should help define your special space… …An icon of Jesus Christ, an icon of the Theotokos, and an icon of your saint. Your corner should have a form of light. Adults use an olive oil lampada, a votive candle or a tea light. For safety reasons, a handy LED candle is lovely in children's icons corners.

Families will also choose to add other saints who are especially important to them. For example, St. Nicholas, St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. Panteleimon or St. Xenia of St. Petersburg, to name a few.

A child's icon of the Guardian Angel is often placed on a special shelf within a child's bedroom. Ideally this is visible upon waking up and falling asleep, so each day can begin and end in peace; knowing that God is above all.

Your icon corner is a good place to preserve your blessed branches of pussywillows from Palm Sunday. It is God-pleasing to find time to arrange a posy of fresh flowers

near your icons, especially on special days such as Feast Days, Saints days or during times of need or thanksgiving.

Try not to mingle everyday items into your Beautiful Corner. There are other areas within your home for that. Please remember that Icons are Holy and should be treated reverently as such.

We are called to behave as one “in the world, but not of the world”.

“The faces that look out at us from the icons belong to eternity. Gazing upon them, raise up your prayers to them, asking for their intercession. We, the inhabitants of the earthly world must never forget our Creator and Saviour, His eternal call to repentance, His call to constantly perfect ourselves, and his call for the deification of each human soul.” *www.stjohndc.org*

Having a Beautiful Corner helps define your house as a *Christian Home*... a “little church”.

Upon entering someone’s home, it is customary to cross yourself before the home’s main Icon Corner.

Orthodox Summer Word Search

M S J M W A S C N V U Q T G T
O T E C O A P O S T L E S R L
S R R L I U I K S M E J A P U
S K E N P T N R H U I N F Y A
R T T T I I B T A G S G E F P
O S U M E F C A A F N M L R N
C O R X V P W S I I J E P J N
K O Y E I W H G I C N C P K K
D V R R W Y U E Y D F S A N T
B M S A B R P E E L S A D T C
N B L G A V B X M K X X H Y S
T C P T W E M V Y C U B G T G
H Q I M Q V M R Y Q V M Z R U
Q O T N E M A T S E T D L O U
N S J C U M N S X E I V I B L

- The _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ who first shared the Teachings of Christ.
- An elevated land form _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- A harvest reminder of the Transfiguration Fast; baskets of fruit are blessed on this day. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- Reverently, we describe the Theotokos as Falling _ _ _ _ _ _ _ on her Dormition.
- The first followers of Jesus. His _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- On this Feast Day, Jesus appears to Saints Peter, James and John in a new way, Radiant and Full of Glory. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- The Final Feast of Summer. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- The Mother of our Lord. _ _ _ _
- On the Transfiguration, we hike up _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ with Father John!
- In the Icon of the Transfiguration, we see two Prophets from the _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- Revered as an Apostle with Peter. _ _ _ _
- A fisherman who became a Disciple of Jesus. _ _ _ _ _

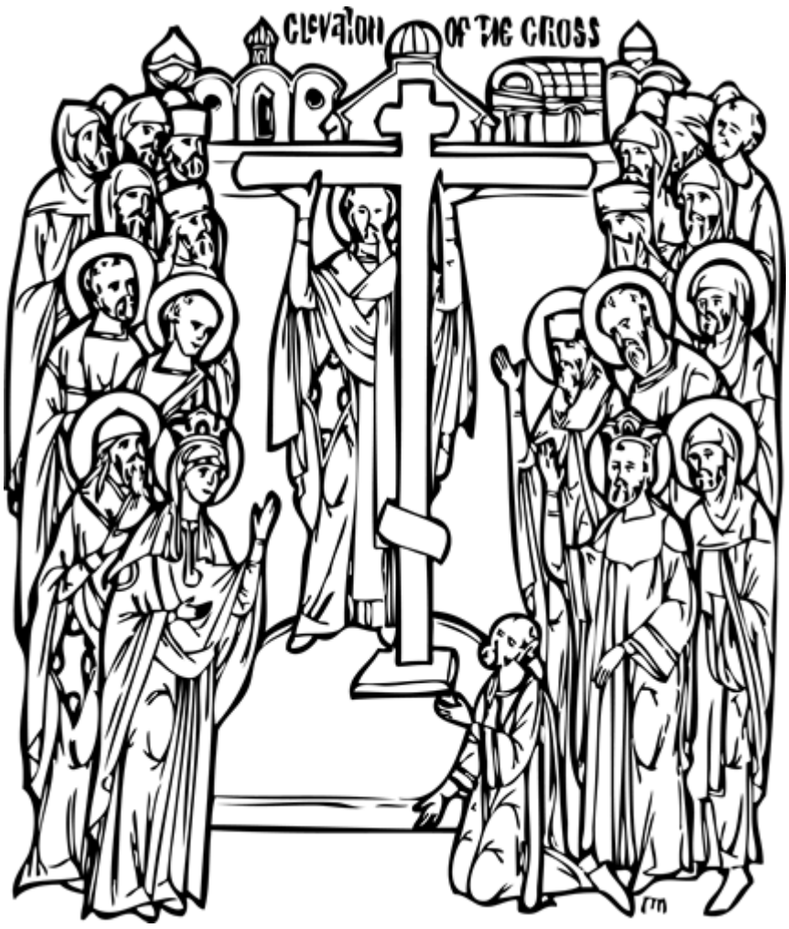
- Among the Cloud of Witnesses. Holy Men and Women who Intercede for us. _ _ _ _ _ _

- On this Feast Day, Jesus appears to Saints Peter, James and John in a new way, Radiant and Full of Glory. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

You Can Make It! **"Lenten Fruit/Veggie Ice Pops"** Creamy Lime – Strawberry Beet – Mango Orange Carrot (Recipe is 11 pages back)

Answer Key to Orthodox Summer Word Search

APOSTLES; MOUNTAIN; APPLEFAST; ASLEEP; DISCIPLES; TRANSFIGURATION; DORMITION; MARY; OLDTESTAMENT; MOSSROCK; PAUL; PETER; SAINTS; TRANSFIGURATION.



The Exaltation of the Holy Cross is one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church, celebrated on **September 27/14th.**

The date of finding the Cross by the Empress St. Helena (the mother of St. Constantine the Great) on Golgotha in 326 AD, the place where Christ was crucified.

On the spot where the Cross was discovered, St. Helen had found an unknown flower of rare beauty and fragrance, which has been named "Vasiliko," or Basil, meaning the flower of royalty. So, the plant Vasiliko, Basil, is tied to the Precious Cross of the King of Glory, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Underneath the Basil, the Cross of Christ was found, but with it were the other two crosses, those used to crucify the two thieves on either side of Christ. The sign with the inscription, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews", also lay among the three crosses.

In order to determine which one was the true cross, a sick woman was told to kiss each of the three crosses. The woman kissed the first cross with no result. She kissed the second cross and again nothing happened. However, when the ailing woman kissed the True Cross, she was immediately made well.

It so happened that a funeral procession was passing that way, and so the body of the dead man was placed on each of the crosses, and when it was placed on the True Cross, the dead man came to life- thus the name the “Life-Giving” Cross, which gives life not only to that man, but to each person who believes in the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and His all-glorious three day Resurrection.

When the true Cross was identified, it was lifted on high for all the people to see, who continually sang Kyrie Eleison (Lord Have Mercy).

Practical Tip: Wear Your Cross!

After the Resurrection of Christ, the Cross received great glory, such as no other object made by the hands of man has ever had.

The Cross became the sign of our salvation, through which we receive the power of God - the grace of God.

The Cross is the first and greatest Christian sacred object, and we are given it to wear at our Holy Baptism! When the priest sanctifies water, he immerses the Cross in it, and the water becomes holy.

When we wear the Cross, our body constantly touches it, and from this touch it, too, is sanctified. The Cross that we wear protects us from all kinds of danger. When we wear our Cross it shows others we are Christians and love God.

Our Cross is not jewelry. It is a part of us. The Cross clothes our soul and reminds and calls us to live according to our faith.

Jesus Christ, Our Salvation Through Holy Baptism

When we arise out of the baptismal waters, we are completely reborn in spirit. God also gives us a guardian angel to stay with us our whole life!

During our earthly life, we will sail through many calm and stormy oceans within the **Ark of the Church**. Many Orthodox churches are built in the shape of an ark.

God spared Noah, his family, and the world's countless pairs of creatures (miraculously sent to him by God) from the great flood, which covered the whole earth.

The rainbow is a covenant which means a promise, or reminder. It is a promise God will never destroy the earth by flood again.

God gave a sign of that love, in the rainbow.

After the flood waters disappeared, Noah stepped onto dry land, built an altar, and immediately made a thanksgiving offering to God.

Like Noah and his family, let us remember to give thanks for salvation, in The Ark of the Church.

Let us also, live our lives as a gift from God!

Noah's Ark

Centuries after Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden; people chose to forget about God and became wicked. Only one man and his family in the whole world remained good! His name was Noah.

One day God said to Noah: "The earth is wicked and I shall wash away all with a flood of waters. Every living thing will perish, except your family and those with you, for you have obeyed My laws." Then God told Noah to build a huge covered boat, called an ark. People laughed at Noah and his sons when they began to build this boat in the middle of dry land, but Noah still did what God told him. God sent

Noah two of every kind of creature that lived on earth. At last all was ready, and food was stored away for many months ahead within the ark.

Noah and his family entered the ark. The Lord shut them in. In seven days the rain began to fall. It rained forty days and forty nights without stopping. Even the mountains were covered with water. Nothing remained alive on the earth.

Seven months after the beginning of the flood, Noah's ark came to rest on a mountain top. Noah opened the window of his ark to let a dove fly. The dove could find no place to rest, so it returned to the ark. Noah waited another seven days and let the dove out again. When it returned, it carried a green olive leaf in its beak. After another week the dove flew away and never came back.

God told Noah to leave the ark and release all the creatures that were with him. Noah and his family thanked God for keeping them safe. Suddenly a beautiful rainbow appeared in the sky.

God said, "This is the sign of My promise that never again shall there be a flood great enough to destroy all living things on the earth."

The rainbow is God's beautiful Promise in the sky!