

# Sophia Newsletter

Issue #142 May 2024



Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven  
pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her  
wine; she hath also furnished her table.  
She hath sent forth her maidens:  
she crieth upon the highest places of the city,  
Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for  
him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,  
Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.  
Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

# Sophia



A DEVOTIONAL NEWSLETTER OF ST. SOPHIA PARISH

St. Sophia Orthodox Church  
195 Joseph St.  
Victoria, BC  
V8S 3H6  
Canada

# Sophia Newsletter

Issue #142 May 2024

## St. Sophia Orthodox Church

*a Parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia*

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Archpriest John Adams  
Priest Philosoph Uhlman  
Protodeacon Gordian Bruce  
Deacon Olexandr Savitskyi

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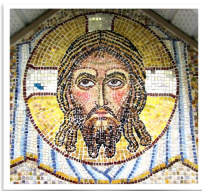
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## Holy Week to Pascha May Services

### April-May 2024

#### The Schedule for Holy Week

<div style="float: left; width: 15%;"><b>April</b></div> <div style="float: right; width: 15%; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <b>April 27</b>                      Lazarus Saturday                       5:00 pm                      Vigil with Blessing of Verbe                 </div>					
<b>28</b> Palm Sunday 10:00 am Divine Liturgy *  6:00 pm Vespers & Matins	<b>29</b> Holy and Great Monday 10:00 am Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified *  6:00 pm Matins	<b>30</b> Holy and Great Tuesday 10:00 am Liturgy for the Pre-Sanctified *  6:00 pm Matins	<b>May 1</b> Holy and Great Wednesday 10:00 am Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified *  6:00 pm Matins	<b>2</b> Holy and Great Thursday 10:00 am Vesperal Liturgy *  6:00 pm Matins Passion Gospels	<b>3</b> Holy and Great Friday 8:00 am <i>New</i> : Royal Hours 3:00 pm Procession of the Winding Sheet  5:30 pm Matins Lamentations
<b>5</b> <b>Pascha</b> 1:00 pm Paschal Vespers followed by Festal Dinner  	<div style="text-align: center;"> <h3>Christ is Risen!</h3> <p>Христос воскрес!</p> <p>Христос васкрсе!</p> <p>Χριστός ἀνέστη!</p> <p>Hristos Vaskrse!</p> <p>Hristos a Inviat!</p> </div> <p>If possible, we would ask each family to bring 6 – 12 dyed hard-boiled eggs to be blessed and distributed to the congregation after Divine Liturgy.</p>				
<p><i>*If you would like to come to Holy Communion during Holy Week, please come to Confession the night before. There is no time during the morning services for Fr. to hear Confessions.</i></p> <p>☩ To partake of Holy Communion on Pascha, you must come to Confession between 3:00 – 5:00</p> <p>☒ The blessing of the Pascha baskets will be after the Paschal Matins.</p>					



## The Rest of May Services

*Bright Sat. May 11 Vigil 5:00 p.m. (Confession following)*

**Thomas Sunday** May 12 Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

**(Radonitsa (Day of Rejoicing) blessing of graves following service)**

*Sat. May 18 Vigil 5:00 p.m. (Confession following)*

**Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women** May 19 Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

*Sat. May 25 Vigil 5:00 p.m. (Confession following)*

**Sunday of the Paralytic** May 26 Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

*Tues. May 28 Vigil 6:00 p.m. (Confession following)*

*Wed. May 29 **Feast of Mid-Pentecost** Liturgy 10:00 a.m.*

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## May Saints' Days

Congratulations to matushka Alexandra, matushka Amelia, Alexandra (Shura), Irena, Iouri, Isidora, Emilia, and Marcus. God grant you many years!

## Why Did Jesus Die on the Cross?

~ [The Ark - Our Parish Youth Quarterly 2018, Volume 5](#)

Because of God's Great Love, He did something so special for each one of us!

It is almost too amazing to even think about it! When we love someone very much, we help them as much as we can- without thinking how hard it might be for ourselves to do this. Through Adam and Eve, the first created man and woman, sin and death entered the world, and now we all sin. There are big sins and little sins, but everyone sins, and any sin separates us from God.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God willingly took all the sins of everyone ever born, you, me, the whole world, and put all these sins upon Himself, because sin separates us from God.

When Jesus died and was buried, all our sins died and were buried too. We also remember this at our baptism.

We are now forgiven because of what Jesus did for us on the Cross! Jesus loves us so much!

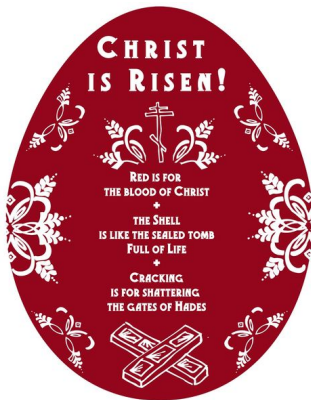
And, even if you were the ONLY person living in the whole world, Jesus still would have done this- just for you! Just for one person, because He knows each one of us and loves us all so much!

And, because He is the Son of God- He arose victorious, from the dead!

This is why we no longer fear death, for death is a new beginning, and Pascha- the Resurrection of Christ is the BIGGEST feast day of all! It is for this Cause that Christ was born. This new beginning!

We see in His icons/and on prosphora, the Greek initials "IC XC NIKA"- which means Jesus Christ, Victor (Conqueror)! The Cross is a symbol of Christ's triumphant victory and power over death!

## Paschal Matins & Liturgy



When we come to Church late on Holy Saturday evening, the Church is very quiet and dark. The only light comes from the flickering lampadas. At midnight we leave the Church and walk around it three times (the procession) singing a beautiful, ancient, hymn. Each person carries a small, lit candle. It's very important to not casually chat during this time. Just sing or pray. If we concentrate on a special prayer very hard, we are very close to heaven this night. Meeting together in front of the Church door we return inside, and the Church

is full of light! Candles glow everywhere. The tomb of Jesus is gone. We sing with great joy *"Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life."* This is the happiest and *most important service of the year!* ~ Anonymous

## Christ's Descent into Hades Icon



This icon is frequently referred to as the Anastasis or Resurrection Icon. It is an icon of Pascha.

The golden bars by Christ's feet are the gates of Hades, which He has broken and torn apart.

At Pascha, a tradition includes the cracking of our blessed Pascha eggs together. This represents how Christ shattered the gates of Hades.

There are keys floating in the abyss below, which symbolizes that he has entered and conquered both death and Hades.

Some icons have a skeletal figure who is chained up: that's Death. He has been bound and killed by Christ (all throughout Pascha-tide until the Ascension, we greet each other and sing "Christ has trampled down death by death"). The two figures whom Christ has grasped and is pulling out of Hades are Adam and Eve, symbolizing that his Victory redeems all mankind, even back to the beginning. This Resurrection scene is taking place in the past, present, and

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future. To his left, we see three Old Testament saints: Kings David and Solomon, two of his ancestors according to his fleshly nature. We also see, closest to him John the Baptist, who was his forerunner in both life and death.

On the right, we have the New Testament, including the apostles who are alive.

The purpose is to show that Christ's redemption transcends time and space. This is an act that happened in the past, is happening right now, and will happen in the future. Christ is always in the state of redeeming and setting us free.

The blue shape around Christ is called the Mandorla (which is Italian for almond, which describes its shape). The Mandorla is the uncreated, eternal light of Christ. In the writings of the Eastern Orthodox mystics, God is often prayerfully experienced as Light. This is not simply a pretty bright light. It is the same Light which filled the apostles with wonder when they witnessed His Transfiguration. It is the Light which Christ Himself described as the power of the Kingdom of God (Mark 9:1, Matt 16:28, Luke 9:27). It is also the Light that is seen when one purifies their heart and mind (Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God). Those who seek God will find that the more they know Him, the less they comprehend Him. To know God, to experience Him, is to walk from the darkness of sin, into His Light, to enter into the mystery of His Presence.



## Radonitsa

(At Royal Oak Burial Park & Ross Bay Cemetery)

***The Tuesday of St. Thomas week is called [Radonitsa](#), and known as the Day of Rejoicing.***

On this day, and with Paschal Joy, we remember all who have reposed in the faith. Orthodox graves are blessed by priests and visited by the faithful. It is hard for most parishes to gather at the graves on weekdays. So, the graves are blessed instead on St. Thomas Sunday, after the Divine Liturgy. When possible, this is followed by a traditional, joyous, communal picnic at the cemetery.

**In any case, it's important, to visit the graves of loved ones *at any time during* the 40 days of Pascha-tide; and to greet them saying or singing [Christ is Risen...](#)**

**[For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.](#)**

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## Mid-Pentecost

25 days after Pascha, we approach *the halfway point* to the [Great Feast of Pentecost](#). *At MidFeast, give Thou my thirsty soul to drink of the waters of piety; for Thou, O Saviour, didst cry out to all: Whosoever is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Wherefore, O Well-spring of Life, Christ our God, glory to Thee.* ~ *Troparion of Mid-Pentecost* Our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, is the Well-spring of our life. He invites all thirsty souls to come to Him and drink from the waters of immortality; never to thirst again! (St. John 7:37)

## Thank You 🎵 Youth Choir 🎵

On Sunday, April 21st, the youth choir chanted and sang the ancient Koinonikon (Communion Hymn) from Psalm 148, for concert at Divine Liturgy. It was beautifully and prayerfully directed under Andrei. Thank you chanters Madelaine, Emilia, Evalyn-Ludmilla, Anastasia and Jacob. We look forward to your Paschal Mini Concert before the lunch!



## The "Soviet" Church

- Last month, Father Philosoph read this sermon St. John Maximovich wrote on September 13, 1963:

If someone began to talk in Metropolitan Anthony's [First Hierarchy of the ROCOR, Khrapovitskii] presence about "wrong actions by the Church," he would stop them, pointing out that the actions of the hierarchy cannot be attributed to the Church, since the hierarchy is not the whole Church, even though it speaks on its behalf. On the See of

Constantinople, [there sat] Paul the Confessor, Makedonios, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Nestorios, Proclus, Flavian, Germanos. Some [of them] shone with holiness and Orthodoxy, others were heresiarchs, yet the Church remained Orthodox. During Iconoclasm, after the expulsion of Severinus, Nikephoros and others, not only their sees, but also the majority of episcopal ones were replaced by Arians. Other Churches did not even have communion with [the Byzantine Church], according to the testimony of St. Paul, who abandoned heresy and the [patriarchal] throne, not wanting to have communion with the iconoclasts, but still the Church of Constantinople remained Orthodox, although part of the people and especially the guardsmen and officials were carried away into iconoclasm. So, it is now understandable when the expression "Soviet Church" is used by ordinary people who are less familiar with church language, but [however] it is not suitable for responsible and theological conversations. When the entire hierarchy of Southwestern Rus' embraced Uniatism [after the Brest union of 1596], the Church continued to exist in the person of the

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faithful Orthodox people, who, after much suffering, restored their hierarchy. Therefore, it is more correct to not speak of a “Soviet Church,” which cannot exist in the correct understanding of the word “Church,” but about the hierarchy that is in the service of the Soviet government. The attitude toward this hierarchy may be the same as toward other representatives of that government. Their rank gives them the opportunity to act with great authority and replace the voice of the suffering Russian Church and misleads those who think to learn from them about the actual position of the Church in Russia. Of course, among them there are also conscious traitors, and those who simply do not find the strength to fight the surrounding environment and went with the flow: this is a matter of their personal responsibility, but in general, it is the apparatus of the theomachist\* Soviet regime. While there is only one hierarchy in the liturgical area, for Grace acts independently of personal dignity, in the socio-political area this hierarchy serves as a cover for Soviet atheistic activities. Therefore, those abroad and those who join its ranks become deliberate accomplices of that power. ~ [St. John Maximovich reflects upon the expression “the Soviet Church.”](#) (Archpriest Peter Perekrestov found the draft of this letter) \*theomachist = one who resists God’s Divine Will.

## Excerpts from [Is Anybody There? Speaking to the Heart](#)

~ by Fr. Stephen Freeman

- Use fewer words – be silent if possible. (Eccles. 3:3)
- Only speak the truth, though it is not necessary to be unkind. (Eph. 4:15)
- Resist the effort to defend yourself. (Matt. 10:19)
- It is not important to be right. (Proverbs 26:21)
- Do not argue. Your effect on someone else’s ego will come to nothing. (Hos. 4:4)
- Tell your anxieties that everything will be ok. (Phil. 4:6)
- Don’t be in a hurry to speak. Let someone else finish their thought. (Proverbs 29:20).
- Breathe.

## Thank You April Church Cleaners & Floral Designers!

Arranging the Church flowers and Church Cleaning is a blessing - a wonderful opportunity to embrace serving God, and ministering to the parish!

It doesn’t take long, and usually only once a week. However, *if* there are more weekly services, we always try to have 2 spaces for helpers. If you’d rather not “do” flowers “hands on” as it were, you are welcome to donate money for them (in memory of someone), and let Sophie our treasurer know, to set flower money aside for this purpose. Please see the vestibule’s wall bulletin board. Questions? Please ask Emmanuelle. Thank you!



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## Memory Eternal, Julia Halliday



Who recently reposed, on April 15th

Julia was an active parishioner and cherished Sister in Christ. She was among the longstanding original members of this parish, even before St. Sophia's was officially incorporated back in 1987... when many now Victoria parishioners, would travel regularly to Vancouver BC for services in the early 1980's; to Holy Trinity Orthodox Church under then, Archpriest Vladimir Chekanovsky, whom our Archpriest John assisted for many years.

Julia was an *amazing* alto singer in our parish choir! Her warm, rich voice was reminiscent of a heavenly bird's. It was a pleasure to sing near her. Whenever there was a church function or fundraising event, Julia was always among the first to gladly help. She was an accomplished, professional artist and art teacher. Her kindness and gentle wisdom will be missed.

Condolences to Julia's husband, Reader Peter; their daughter Lucia Oram and husband, and Julia's new granddaughter Layla. Also sympathies to Julia's godmother Alexandra (Shura) and Julia's goddaughters Helena and Lubov. Memory Eternal Julia!

## Sisterhood Charitable Donations

Father John blessed \$50.00 each to:

- Orthodox Church Osaka, Japan [Icon of the Holy Shroud Restoration Work](#)
- Saint Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery Arizona, USA: [Memory Eternal Julia](#)
- Victoria BC Hospitals Foundation for the [Medical Imaging Campaign](#)

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## Pearls of Wisdom

*Christ's sacrifice is a sacrifice of praise, of sanctification, of restoration, by which He offers the whole of creation to the Father, so that the Father may bring it to life in the Holy Spirit. It is truly a "Pascha", the Passover, the "Passing Over" of Creation into the Kingdom of Life. ~ The Roots of Christian Mysticism, by Olivier Clement*

*Today is the day of salvation for the world...Christ is risen from the dead: arise with him. Christ returns to Himself: you also must return to Him. Christ has come forth from the tomb: free yourselves from the fetters of evil. The gates of hell are open and the power of death destroyed. The old Adam superseded, the new perfected. In Christ a new creation is coming to birth: renew yourselves. ~ Gregory Nazianzen Oration 45, for Easter*

*For our Orthodox Pascha is not just a festival, but the Festival of all festivals, an event for exceeding all the events of this world. Pascha shakes the whole cosmos: the sun, by our faith, dances and becomes iridescent with every colour of the rainbow, and all of creation rejoices. Some observe a magnificent silence, lacking the strength to express the inexpressible feeling of Paschal joy which fills their souls. Others hasten to share their feeling of the Paschal triumph. All people and all things begin to move, the tedious vanities of this world are cast aside, and all are transfigured. Pascha is, first of all, in us ourselves, in our hearts. God's gift of the feeling of love penetrates our whole being, and we love each person and all things. This relates not just to the animal kingdom, but to the whole of creation, extending to the smallest blade of grass and the smallest flower. Nothing escapes our loving attention. May the Lord help us all to keep ourselves like this, for as such did the Lord create us. ~ Excerpt Paschal Epistle from Metropolitan Vitaly, May, 2000; The Two Thousandth Pascha of Christ*

## [Onion Skin Dye for Pascha Eggs](#)



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## YouTube Parish Music from Past Paschas



Voices of Faith Hope and Love: St. Sophia Orthodox Church Virtual Youth Choir sing \*Son Rise\* "a Paschal song, lyrics by an 8 year old student many years ago - newly recorded for Pascha 2021

Parish Youth Choir  
Sing  
Son Rise: [Link](#)



Our Youth and Adult Choir Sing Together Before Paschal Feast

Parish Youth Choir  
& Adults Sing  
Paschal Tropar:  
Christ is Risen: [Link](#)



Mosaic of  
Parish Music  
& Readings:  
[Link](#)

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## Practical Tips

It's customary to hold candles during a [Pannykhida \(Memorial\)](#) and Funeral Service. Near the end of the service, during the final Troparia, all will either put out their candles, or add them to the memorial table in front of the Icon of Christ on the Cross. The candle symbolizes the individual soul, which, as it were, each person holds in their own hand. The extinguishing (or giving up) of the candle at the end of the service symbolizes the fact that each person will have to surrender their own soul at the end of their life. In various parishes people sometimes extinguish their candles after the Lord's Prayer. Both ways are correct, and some take comfort holding the lit candle until to the very end of the service. Some people also take home their extinguished candle to light and re-use during home prayers for the reposed, keeping the extinguished candle in their icon corner.

## Make a Joyful Noise - [A Guide for Parenting in Church](#)

Information and helpful tips in this .pdf are derived from a combination of Matushka Leanne's personal experience ([All Saint's of Alaska Orthodox Church](#), Victoria BC) as well as experiences and suggestions from other clergy wives across North America, regarding children and general church etiquette.

## Reminder

Please don't wear lipstick, chapstick or lip balm in church. It's disrespectful and a sin to defile holy objects with staining and leaving a sticky film upon them (holy icons, reliquaries, Blessing Cross, and Holy Communion Chalice-spoon). Thank you.

## Links & Resources

- [St. Sophia Parish Website](#)
- [Come and Dine St. Sophia Parish fasting recipes](#)
- [The Rudder Streaming Orthodox Christian sacred music 24/7](#)
- [Synodal Website](#)
- [Western America Diocese Official Site](#)
- [Montreal and Canadian Diocese](#)
- [All Saints of Alaska Orthodox Church](#)
- [Abbreviated Prayerbook](#)
- [The Sacramental Life](#)
- [Blisswood](#)

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*“Christ the Power of God,  
and the Wisdom of God”*

*– First Corinthians*

## Troparion in the Second Tone

*We bow down before Thine all pure image, O Good One,  
asking forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God; for  
Thou wast well pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh of  
Thine own will, that Thou mightest save what Thou hadst  
created from slavery to the enemy. Wherefore, we cry out to  
Thee in thanksgiving: Thou hast filled all things with joy, O  
our Saviour, Who hast come to save the world.*

## Kontakion in the Second Tone

*O uncircumscribable Word of the Father, knowing the  
victorious image, unincised and divinely wrought, of Thine  
ineffable and divine dispensation towards man, of Thy true  
incarnation, we honour it with veneration.*

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*“We knew not whether we  
were in heaven or earth...”*

*We only know that God dwells  
there among men, and their  
service is fairer than  
the ceremonies of  
other nations.”*

## The Orthodox Church

**W**ith these words, envoys sent from Russia by Prince Vladimir in the year 987 recorded their impression of Constantinople's awesome Orthodox Cathedral, Hagia Sophia. They had been sent to search for the true religion. Within a year of their report, Prince Vladimir and the Russian people were baptized in Christ by Orthodox missionaries. Today, as in Prince Vladimir's time, the Orthodox Church – fully aware that man is a union of body and soul – uses all the beauty of creation to move her faithful children to prayer and worship: icons, beautiful singing, sweet-smelling incense, and majestic services.

The Greek word 'Orthodoxia' means 'correct praise' or 'correct teaching' and in the Orthodox worship the praise and teaching are closely interwoven.

Jesus Christ founded His Church through the Apostles. By the grace received from God at Pentecost, the Apostles established the Church throughout the world. In Greece, Russia, and elsewhere, the True Apostolic Church continues to flourish, preserving the Faith of Christ pure and unchanged.

