

Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures

“How I have loved thy law, O Lord! The whole day it is my meditation.” (Ps 118:97)

Numbers 1:48-50

“And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘See to it that the tribe of Levi is not numbered, nor take a census of them among the children of Israel, but you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony ...’” (OSB)

The Hebrew title for the Book of Numbers, which comes from the first line of the book, is “In the Wilderness,” for it is in the Wilderness that the—mostly tragic—events recounted in this book will transpire. God will test Israel, and Israel will test God (something we see earlier in Exod 15:25; 16:4; 17:2, 5)—Israel will “wrestle with God,” as Jacob did several generations prior, when his name was changed to “Israel” (i.e., “man who strives with God”). It is not clear that Israel as a nation *wins* this round; quite the opposite, in fact.

Numbers is a peculiar and mysterious book. In it, we find a curious mixture of census numbers, narratives, supplementary regulations for worship, travel itineraries and prophetic oracles (and talking donkeys!). In order to understand how Numbers fits in the Pentateuch, we must return to the Abrahamic promise first given in Genesis 12. There, God promises Abram three things: Land, Descendants, Blessing/Relationship. As we noted in an earlier piece, these three aspects of the promise chart important plot lines across the whole Pentateuch, developing at various stages of the biblical story with particular focus. This development involves some form of endangering of the promise, and then a resolution/restoration.

The promise of descendants (which is endangered by the “sacrifice of Isaac”) is the focus of the Patriarchal stories in Genesis and is largely resolved by the beginning of Exodus. We see that in an even clearer way as we begin Numbers where Israel’s population has swelled to over 600,000 males (not counting women and children). The promise of relationship/blessing (endangered by the “Golden Calf”) is largely developed in Exodus and Leviticus: God reveals, saves, and forgives Israel, bestowing on them the privilege of the divine service of worship as a royal priesthood.

What remains to be fulfilled is the promise of Land, and the Book of Numbers marks the turn to this aspect of the promise. In Numbers, we see the people of Israel organized as a military community, moving toward the Land as God guides them through the leadership of Moses.

The purpose of the census at the beginning of Numbers is to *quantify Israel’s military strength*. There is irony here in that “numbers” are not the source of Israel’s true strength; God is the Warrior, the primary Fighter in the war into which He is leading Israel. Yet, this census is commanded, and so is a good thing, but later Righteous David will use a census as a demonstration of prideful self-reliance, and he will be severely reprimanded for it (2 Sam 24).

One tribe, Levi, is set aside and not reckoned in the count of the people. They in particular are not to be included among the military combatants because of their unique service in the holy things of the divine worship. Nor will they have their own “allotment” of territory in the Promised Land. They will dwell in the “midst” of the people of Israel, around the Tabernacle, in service to the Priests. Perhaps we can see in the Levites an ideal to which we are all called, as those redeemed to be “liturgical ministers” in our own souls, in our homes, in our world. May we attain to and be united with the “Church of the first-born ones” enrolled in heaven (Heb 12:23; Num 3:40-51)!



ST. PHILIP ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the
Antiochian Archdiocese

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH



His Grace Bishop THOMAS



Father Noah Bushelli, Pastor

215-954-9286



Father James Thayer

215-692-0890

September 1, 2019
ECCLESIASTICAL NEW
YEAR

COMMEMORATIONS:

SYMEON THE STYLITE
THE 40 HOLY ASCETIC VIRGIN MARTYRS OF THRACE
AND THEIR TEACHER AMMON THE DEACON
HOLY MARTYRS CALLISTE AND SIBLINGS: EUODUS AND
HERMOGENES
RIGHTEOUS MELETIUS, THE STRUGGLER OF THE
MUIOUPOLIS MOUNTAIN
JESUS (JOSHUA) OF NAVI
NICHOLAS OF KOURTALIOTIS

Tone 2 - Eothinon 11
Orthros Gospel: St. John 21:14-25
Epistle: 1 Timothy 2:1-7
Liturgy Gospel: St. Luke 4:16-22

RESURRECTION TROPARION - Tone 2 - When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Thou who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee!

APOLYTIKION OF THE INDICTION - Tone 2 - O Maker of all creation, Who hast established the times and the seasons in Thine own power: Bless the crown of this year with Thy goodness, O Lord, and keep our rulers and Thy flock in peace, by the intercessions of the Theotokos, and save us.

TODAY: Orthros 8:45 am
Divine Liturgy & New Year Blessing 10 am
Altar Boy & Parents Meeting after Liturgy.
Coffee Hour after Liturgy.

1970 Clearview Road, Souderton, PA 18964
www.st-philip.net (215) 721-4947

Emails: office@st-philip.net nbushelli@gmail.com frjamesthayer@gmail.com

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 10:00 - 3:00

Fr Noah & Fr James are available for hospital visits. If you or anyone you know is in the hospital or homebound and would like a visit, please call the church office.

Weekly Ministries & Stewards:

	This Week:	Next Week (Sept 8):
PROSPHORA BREAD:	Kristi Moore	Carolyn Kaminsky
EPISTLE READER:	Irene Forssen	----
USHERS:	Steve K. & Colin M.	Gabe Q. & Sdn. John
ALTAR CANDLES:	Michael & Marcia Ibrahim	----
	Marcia, Souzan giving thanks for blessings received In Memory of Elias, Aleese, Izaac, Najib, Yvonne	
ALTAR BOYS:	All	"Archangel Michael"
GREETERS:	Todd & Kristi Moore	Don & Maryann Reigle
CLEANING TEAM:	Jordan & Natalie; Zell & Redeat	Lasha & Natalia M., John G.
COFFEE HOUR:	Tinjala & Nicholson	Drăghici

EVERYONE is invited to stay for refreshments after the Divine Liturgy. Your assistance in cleanup is appreciated. **COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS NEEDED!** Many upcoming weeks do not have sponsors - can you take a turn?

Mark Your Calendar:

Elevation of the Holy Cross (Strict Fast)

Friday, Sept 13

Vespers & Artoklasia, 7 pm

Saturday, Sept 14

Orthros & Cross Procession 9 am,
Divine Liturgy 10 am
w/ Fasting Potluck to follow

International Food Festival

September 20-21

Pilgrimage to Holy Protection Monastery

Monday, Sept 30 –

See Sdn. David for details.

Women's Heart Health Presentation

Saturday, Oct 5, 2 pm

Pray For:

Living	Departed
Archimandrite David (Griffeth)	
Sharon-Elizabeth	
Laurence	
Lasha B	
Otari B	
Daniel H	<u>Catechumens</u>
John	Zachary,
Doris	Evan, Tina,
Nancy	Robert,
	Michael,
Thomas,	Todd, Kendra,
Elizabeth & all	Liesel, Todd,
Missionaries	John Moses,
	Virginia
New & Expectant Mothers & children	<u>St. Nina's List</u>
	Michael

OUTREACH COLLECTION:

Cleaning Supplies

EVANGELISM CHALLENGE:

"Deliberately Get to Know & Serve Your Neighbors"

The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:26)

This Week:

Monday, Sept 2: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon

Tuesday, Sept 3: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
Matushka Olga Sewing Club, 11 a.m.

Wed, Sept 4: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
Vespers, 4 p.m.
Byzantine Chant Workshop, 6 p.m.
Compline & Patristic Reading, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Sept 5: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon

Friday, Sept 6: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon

Saturday, Sept 7: Romanian Food Prep-Mici, 8 a.m.
Catechism Seminar, 4:30 p.m.
VESPERS 6 p.m., Confession 7 p.m.
Stewardship Team Meeting, 7 p.m.

Sunday, Sept 8: NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS
ORTHROS 8:45 a.m., Divine LITURGY 10 a.m.
Sunday School begins.
Coffee Hour, SS, Teens after Liturgy.
Women of St. Mariamne, 12 noon

Starting on Sept 7 ...
Vespers
Mini-Homily
Series on
"The Lord's Prayer"

Ministry Highlights

"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)

"Matushka Olga Sewing Club"

The purpose of the Matushka Olga Sewing Club is to offer an opportunity for all who enjoy sewing, or would like to learn to sew, to gather for fellowship. The Club works on projects for charity and various things related to the life and activities of the parish. All are welcome to join. We welcome children to come and learn to sew. The Club meets at St Philip on Tuesdays at 11 a.m. Matushka Olga was a priest's wife in Alaska who was a very caring person. She did a lot of sewing, especially for the needy, and considered every child in the parish her child (see http://orthodoxwiki.org/Olga_Michael). For more information, contact Angie Drăghici (andraghici@mail.com).

ATTENDANCE: At Vespers on Aug 24: 52 Divine Services on Aug 25: 176
OFFERINGS: Candles, \$241. Collections, \$539. Youth, \$3.
Stewardship, \$2,936. Total received: \$3,719. Festival Account: \$1,200.

GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY!