St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844 **November - December 2026**

The Nativity Fast

The Fast of the Nativity is the Church's wise solace and aid to human infirmity. We are a forgetful people, but our forgetfulness is not unknown to God; and our hearts with all their misconceptions and weakened understandings are not unfamiliar to the Holy Spirit who guides and sustains this Church. We who fall far from God through the magnitude of our sin, are called nonetheless to be close to Him. We who run afar off are called to return. Through the fast that precedes the great Feast of the Incarnation -- which itself is the the heart and substance of our calling -- the Church helps draw us into the full mystery of what that call entails.

Like Great Lent, the fast of the Nativity is a journey. 'Come, O ye faithful, and let us behold where Christ is born. Let us join the Magi, kings from the east, and follow the guiding star' (Sessional Hymn of the Nativity Matins). Let us 'join the Magi', let us 'follow' and 'behold'. On the fifteenth of November, the Church joins together in a journey toward that salvation first promised to Adam in God's curse laid upon the serpent (Gen 3.14-15). The One who will crush the head of the serpent, of sin and the devil and all that is counter to the life God offers, is Him to whom the star leads us. The fast of the Nativity is our journey into the new and marvellous life of the Holy Trinity, which is offered by God but which we must approach of our own volition. In this act, we are joined to the story of our fathers. The gift of a new land and great blessings was freely given by God to Abraham, but in order to obtain it, 'Abram went, as the Lord had told him' (Gen 12.4).

A journey is, by its nature, naturally ascetic. Unless my life is already very humble, I cannot take the whole of my possessions on a journey. I cannot transport social and political ties along a journey's path. I can never be too reliant on the plans I have made for my journey: a control lying beyond the self must be admitted and accepted. This is the spirit to which the fast calls us.

A journey is, by its nature, an act of movement, of transportation, of growth. What is old is left behind, newness is perceived and embraced, growth of understanding takes place. And even if the journey comes to a close in the same physical location from which it began, that place is transformed for us by the journey through which we have re-approached it. The aid shelter on a street corner in London is no different after a journey to the Middle East; but after witnessing there first-hand the struggles and torments of poverty, of suffering, of sorrow, the meaning and importance of that small shelter is indeed different for me.

Here the importance of the fast. As the Nativity approaches, that great feast of cosmic significance and eternal, abounding joy for which heaven and earth together rejoice, the fast calls me to consider: do I rejoice? Why do I rejoice? The hymnography of the Church makes it clear that this is a feast for all the world, for all creation; and the fast calls me to take my place in that creation, to realise that, despite all my infinite unworthiness, Christmas is a miracle for my soul too.

Make ready, O Bethlehem: let the manger be prepared, let the cave show its welcome. The truth has come, the shadow has passed away; born of a Virgin, God has appeared to men, formed as we are and making godlike the garment He has put on. Therefore Adam is renewed with Eve, and they call out: 'Thy good pleasure has appeared on earth to save our kind'.

Adam and Eve, all of humankind, are renewed and made alive in the Incarnation of God in Christ, who 'appeared on earth to save our kind'. Fallen flesh, so long bound to death, so long yearning in for growth and maturation into the fullness of life, is sewn into the garment of Christ and at last made fully alive. There is a pleasing old saying, with perhaps more than a touch of truth to it, that humankind drew its first full breath at the infant Christ's first cry.

We are called, then, to approach this great mystery as God's condescension into our own lives, personally and collectively. The Canon of Matins for the Nativity lays it out clearly: 'He establishes a path for us, whereby we may mount up to heaven' (Irmos of Canticle Two, from the Iambic (second) Canon of the Nativity Matins). The Nativity is not only about God's coming down to us, but about our rising up to Him, just as sinful humanity was lifted up into the person of Christ in the Incarnation itself.

St. Xenia of St. Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, under the omophorion of Met. NICHOLAS of Eastern America & New York. The parish newsletter is published bi-monthly under the direction of the Rt. Rev. Michael Crowley, Bishop of Boston. In order to ensure timely delivery to our far-flung parish, please submit all notices by the 15th of the month prior to publication to Bishop Michael at bp.michael@stxenia.org.
Thank you.

Rector:
Bishop Michael (Crowley)
34 Elm Street
North Andover, MA 01845
(978) 204-0428

Confessions on Saturday during Vigil, on Sunday during the Hours, and by appointment.

Parish Council

President: Bishop Michael	(978) 204-0428
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Joseph (Kami) Ajgaonkar	
Choir Director: Laryssa Doohovskoy	(978) 841-5960
Church School Directors:	
Matushka Patricia Klar	
Mary Doohovskoy	

Trapeza Schedule

* = strict fast = fish allowed

The coffee hour will be outside so each week will be **weather dependent**.

Coffee will be made each Sunday morning.

While hospitality is a cherished tradition at St. Xenia's, we each serve according to our own abilities and circumstances. Even on weeks when we are only able to offer a light snack following the Divine Liturgy, that offering is still a meaningful and generous gift to our fellow parishioners.

Important - whoever is on for coffee hour is in charge of cleanup as well.

Please refer to list on refrigerator for all that should be checked.

November

11/01 Pam Reeed, Carolyn Savage, Johanna Victoria Tkaczevski, Judy Engalichev, Vera Sarantakis, Ann Marie Hakim

11/08 Mat. Masha Doohovskoy, Mat. Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne DiMatteo, Sasha Frost, Juliana Rost, Juliana Capitanio

11/15 Ksenia Guryeva, Olena Fedina, Tanya Nikshych, Liliya Afanasyeva, Mary Doohovskoy
Anna Medzhidova

11/22 Nataliya Orbite, Alevtina Khusanova, Liudmilla Diakonova, Svetlana Duka, Diane Mendez, Katia Semyanko

*11/29
Mat. Patricia Klar, Alexandra Gonzalez, Vira Ajgaonkar, Johanna Bevel, Sasha Prokopienko, Barbara Semyanko

December

*12/06
Meghan Nettleton, Brigid Justinien, Elizabeth Victoria Jackson, Maria Bottos, Nicholas Chaplain, Caroline Maria Fox

*12/13
Dorothea Poletti, Kristina Head, Sasha Oxnard, Lisa Andreasen, Olga McLellan, Damascene Cummings

*12/20
Mat. Masha Doohovskoy, Mat. Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne DiMatteo, Sasha Frost, Juliana Rost, Juliana Capitanio

*12/27
Ksenia Guryeva, Olena Fedina, Tanya Nikshych, Liliya Afanasyeva, Mary Doohovskoy
Anna Medzhidova

PARISH NEWS

THANK YOU

~ to all who baked for and supported our semi-annual bake sale. The Sisterhood raised over $1600!

~ to all the volunteers and supporters of the St. Xenia's International Food festival. We raised $4800 towards the construction of our new church hall!

~for supporting the ROCOR Youth Bake Sale to help our youth attend the Autumn Ball.

~and to all who prepared, served, and attended the St Xenia Altar Feast September 23rd/24th. We were blessed to be joined by Bishop Luke from Holy Trinity Monastery for our joyous celebration.

~UPCOMING EVENTS~

~YOLKA Preparation - Russian Dancing Lessons~
In December, there will be three rehearsals on Saturday evenings before Vigil to rehearse the dance for Yolka.

December 5
December 12
January 3

Contact Vira with any questions.
virakami@comcast.net or Text: 978.793.2992

Please Remember in Your Prayers
Fr. Constantine, Fr. Alexander, Fr. John, Nicholas, Peter, Dimitri, Laryssa, Wladislaw, Lidia, and Matushka Alexandra.

Also, please be sure to inform the Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Congratulations
~ To Thomas, Thomas and Henry Liljeblad and the Orbite family. "TJ" and Thomas and Henry were baptized on October 24th.

~To new baby Alexander Robinson, Alexander (Alec) Rose and their families on the baptism of Alexander and Alec, October 31st.

Many Years to All!!!

SISTERHOOD NEWS
~ The Sisterhood's monthly meetings continue on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm. We start each meeting with an Akathist to the Mother of God and then work through the teachings of Fr. Arsenie Papacioc from the book, "Every Sigh Can Be a Prayer."

~The Sisterhood is always eager to have more volunteers. If you would like to be of service, there are many opportunities to help. Please reach out to Meghan Nettleton with any questions at stxeniasisterhood100@gmail.com.

BROTHERHOOD NEWS
The Brotherhood's vision is to create a brotherhood that:

- Supports the spiritual growth of our parish
- Assists with the physical maintenance and beautification of our church
- Creates opportunities for fellowship and mutual support

- Participates in charitable works for our broader community

If you would like to update any information or if you know of other men in our parish who might be interested in joining, please contact Dan Poletti or Marques Bevel at stxeniabrotherhood@gmail.com.

REMINDERS

❖ Now that we have a Bishop serving regularly, there is a slight change to the response after the last petition of the Fervent Supplication.

After the serving clergy states …

…and for all the people here present who await thy great and abundant mercy…..

The congregation now responds with:

And thine episcopacy, holy priesthood and diaconate may the Lord God remember in His Kingdom always now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

❖ During the ***Cherubic Hymn, the Gospel Reading, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and Communion***, all who are able, should remain standing and all should refrain from walking around the Nave unless absolutely necessary.

❖ It is completely acceptable, as well as an act of consideration, to step out of Liturgy if you find your child needs to take a break or be consoled.

❖ If you do leave the Nave during the Liturgy, before returning, pause to listen to what is happening in the service before re-entering. If it is any of the above-mentioned times, wait to re-enter.

❖ As Parishioners wait for Holy Communion, the Clergy are preparing and receiving their Holy Communion. Please refrain from chatting and be prayerfully attentive to the readings and Hymns.

❖ The Vigil on Saturday evenings in not really over until after the 1st Hour is read. It has been normal for families with small children to leave after the reading of the Gospel and the anointing at Matins, but others, particularly those preparing for Holy Communion the next day, should not be leaving at this time.

CHOIR NEWS

~If you have a private service - wedding, baptism, funeral, etc. – and would like to have choir singers, please contact Laryssa at ***stxeniachoir@gmail.com***.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

~ Sunday School began at the end of September. Please see Mary Doohovskoy with any questions.

~ Please note, at least one class will be held in the basement during Trapeza.

~ Keep in mind, there are two Trapeza lines on Sundays. One for the Sunday School Children and another for all others.

CATECHESIS:

EXALTATION OF THE CROSS

As it is customary at hierarchical services for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross and for the first time at St Xenia's, Bishop Michael performed the rite of the Exaltation of the Cross. The distinguished part of this feast occurred, when, at the completion of the Great Doxology, Bishop Michael processed from the altar with a decorated cross, containing a piece of the True Cross, to the center of the church. The rite of the Exaltation of the Cross commenced with the intoning of special petitions, followed by the centuple "Lord, have mercy" by the choir as Bishop Michael elevated the cross that was being washed.

St Andrew of Crete explains, "Had there been no cross, Christ could not have been crucified. Had there been no cross, life itself could not have been nailed to the tree. And if life had not been nailed to it, there would be no streams of immortality pouring from Christ's side, blood and water for the world's cleansing. Christ is the Living Water."

HONORING OUR HOLY ALTAR TABLE

We believe the Holy Altar Table is the Throne of God. Through the sacraments celebrated upon this altar God's saving and sanctifying grace is bestowed upon us. It represents Golgotha where Christ was sacrificed, and Christ's passion is enacted here. It also represents His tomb through which we are granted eternal life.

Turning our back to it would be considered disrespectful or showing dismissiveness.

Please be aware that when clergy cense the interior perimeter of the church, or when they serve from the narthex (entry) of the church, we can we follow along, but without turning our backs to the Holy Altar. The same is true when we step away from receiving Holy Communion, we make our best effort to show respectfulness to this most holy place.

LIVES OF SAINTS

Saint John of Kronstadt *(Commemorated October 19/ November 1)*, one of the most beloved saints of modern Russia, served as a beacon of faith during a turbulent period in Russian history**.** Born Ivan Ilyich Sergiev in 1829 in the village of Sura in northern Russia, he came from a humble family of a village sexton. Despite early academic struggles, his dedication to prayer led to a transformation in his studies, and he graduated from the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy in 1855.

Following his ordination to the priesthood, Father John was assigned to Saint Andrew's Cathedral in Kronstadt, a naval port city near Saint Petersburg. He would serve this single parish for the entirety of his fifty-three-year ministry until his death in 1908. Rather than seeking advancement in the church hierarchy, he devoted himself completely to pastoral work among the poor, the sick, and the marginalized members of his community. His profound compassion led him to give away nearly all of his income to those in need, often returning home without his coat or shoes after encountering someone who needed them more. Father John became renowned throughout Russia for his gifts of healing and clairvoyance, drawing thousands to Kronstadt seeking his prayers and counsel. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy daily with such fervor and devotion that witnesses reported being moved to tears. His practice of hearing confessions communally and his introduction of frequent communion for the laity marked significant pastoral innovations for his time. He also established the House of Labor, a charitable organization that provided shelter, food, and vocational training to the destitute.
His spiritual diary, published as "My Life in Christ," became a theological classic that continues to inspire Orthodox Christians worldwide. The work offers profound reflections on prayer, the sacraments, and the Christian life, drawn from his personal experience of communion with God. Father John also proved to be a prophetic voice, warning of the spiritual dangers facing Russia and calling for repentance and renewal of faith among the Russian people.

Saint John of Kronstadt reposed in the Lord on December 20, 1908, mourned by countless spiritual children throughout Russia and beyond. The Soviet government attempted to suppress his memory, but devotion to him persisted underground throughout the communist era. He was formally glorified as a saint by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia in 1964 and by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1990. His life stands as a testament to the power of humble service, fervent prayer, and unwavering dedication to Christ and His Church.

The Monastic Martyress Anastasia the Roman *(Commemorated October 29/November 11)* in infancy lost her parents, and she was then taken under the care of the head of a women's monastery, named Sophia. The hegumeness raised Anastasia in fervent faith, in the fear of God and obedience. During these times there began the persecution against Christians by the emperor Decius (249-251). The city administrator, Probus, on the orders of the emperor commanded that Anastasia be brought to him. Having been blessed by her eldress-mentor for the deed of suffering for the Name of Christ, the young Martyress Anastasia humbly came out to meet the armed soldiers. Seeing her youth and beauty, Probus at first attempted by false flattery to tempt her and lead her into a renunciation of faith in Christ: "Why waste thine years, deprived of pleasure? What is there to gain in giving thyself over to tortures and death for the Crucified? Worship our gods, get thyself some handsome husband, and live in glory and honour". The saint steadfastly replied: "My Bridegroom, my riches, my life and my happiness -- is my Lord Jesus Christ, and with the threat of torments thou canst not part me from the Lord!" Fiercesome tortures were then begun. The holy martyress bravely endured them, glorifying and praising the Lord. In anger the torturers cut out her tongue. The people, seeing the inhuman and disgusting treatment of the saint, became indignant, and the governor of the city was compelled to bring the torture to a close, by beheading the martyress. The body of Saint Anastasia was thrown out beyond the city for devouring by wild animals, but the Lord did not permit that a mockery should be made with the holy remains. Learning of this through the Lord, the hegumeness Sophia found the torn body of the martyress, and with the help of two Christians she consigned it to earth.

The Holy NobleBorn Prince Alexander Nevsky *(Commemorated November 23/December 6)* was born on 30 May 1220 in the city of Pereslavl'-Zalessk. His fa-

ther Yaroslav, in Baptism Feodor (+1246), "a prince gentle, kindly and genial", was the younger son of Vsevolod III Large-Nest (Bol'shoe Gnezdo) (+ 1212), brother of the Holy NobleBorn Prince Yuri Vsevolodovich (+ 1238, Comm. 4 February). The mother of Saint Alexander, Feodosia Igorevna, a Riazan princess, was the third spouse of Yaroslav. Their older son was the Holy NobleBorn Prince Feodor (+ 1233, Comm. 5 June), having expired to the Lord at age 15. Saint Alexander was their second son.

His childhood was spent at Pereslavl'-Zalessk, where his father was prince. The princely tonsure of the lad Alexander (a ceremony of initiation to be soldier) was done in the Saviour Transfiguration Cathedral of Pereslavl' by Sainted Simon, Bishop of Suzdal' (+ 1226, Comm. 10 May), one of the compilers of the Kievo-Pechersk Paterikon (Lives of the Fathers). From the blessing of the starets/elder hierarch Saint Alexander received his first blessing for military service in the Name of God, for defense of the Russian Church and the Russian Land.

In 1227 Prince Yaroslav, at the request of the people of Novgorod, was sent by his brother the GreatPrince of Vladimir Yuri, to rule as prince in Novgorod the Great. He took with him his sons, Saints Feodor and Alexander. Dissatisfied with the Vladimir princes, the people of Novgorod soon invited Saint Michael of Chernigov (+ 1246, Comm. 20 September), and in February 1229 Yaroslav with his sons departed to Pereslavl'. The matter ended peacefully: in 1230 Yaroslav with his sons returned to Novgorod, and the daughter of Saint Michael, Feodosia, was betrothed with Saint Feodor, the elder brother of Saint Alexander. After the death of the bridegroom in 1233 the young princess went to a monastery and became famous in monastic exploits as the Sainted Nun Evphrosinia of Suzdal' (+ 1250, Comm. 25 September).

From his early years Saint Alexander went along on the campaigns of his father. In 1235 he participated in a battle at the River Emajogi (in present-day Estonia), where the forces of Yaroslav totally routed the Germans. In the following year 1236 Yaroslav went to Kiev, "settling" his son, Saint Alexander, to rule independently as prince at Novgorod. In 1239 Saint Alexander entered into marriage, taking as wife the daughter of the Polotskian prince Briacheslav. Some histories relate, that in the Holy Baptism of the princess it was on the name-day of her saintly-spouse and that she was named Alexandra. His father, Yaroslav, blessed them at betrothal with the holy wonderworking icon of the Theodorovsk Mother of God (in Baptism they had named the father Theodore, or Feodor). This icon was thereafter constantly before Saint Alexander as his praying image; and afterwards in memory of him it was taken from the Gorodetsk Monastery, where he died, by his brother Vasilii Yaroslavich of Kostroma (+ 1276), and transferred to Kostroma.

A very troublesome time had begun in Russian history: from the East there came the Mongol Horde destroying everything in their path; from the West encroached the Teutonic Knights military-force, blasphemously having named itself, with the blessing of the Roman pope, "Cross-bearers", by wearing the Cross of the Lord. In this terrible hour the Providence of God raised up for the salvation of Rus' holy Prince Alexander -- a great warrior man-of-prayer, ascetic and upholder of the Land of Russia. -- "Without the command of God there would not have been his prince". Abetted by the invasion of Batu, by the ruin of Russian cities, by the dismay and grief of the nation, by the destruction of its finest sons and leaders, a horde of crusaders made incursions into the borders of the Fatherland. First were the Swedes. “A king of Roman faith from the Midnight land,” of Sweden, in 1240 gathered up a great armed force and sent them to the Neva on many ships under the command of his son-in-law, Yarl (ie. Prince) Birger. The haughty Swede made a dispatch of his messengers to Novgorod to Saint Alexander: "If thou wishest, resist -- for I am already here and I take captive thy land".

Saint Alexander, then not yet 20 years old, prayed a long while in the church of Saint Sophia, the Wisdom of God. And having recalled the Psalm of David, he said: "Judge, O Lord, those oppressing me and hinder those fighting with me, trample down the weapon and shield, rise up in help for me". Arch-Bishop Spiridon blessed the holy prince and his army for the battle. Leaving from the church, Saint Alexander exhorted his troops with effective words of faith: "Not in power is God, but in truth. Some -- with a weapon, some -- on horses, but we in the Name of the Lord Our God do summon you! They have hesitated and set fire, we however are bravely risen!" With a not-large force, trusting in the Holy Trinity, the prince hastened towards the enemy -- to await help from his father, not knowing about whether would be an attack of the enemy, nor whether it was the time.

But there was a miraculous omen: standing on sea guard the warrior Pelgui, in Holy Baptism Philip, saw at dawn on 15 July a boat, and on it were the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb, in royal-purple attire. And said Boris: "brother Gleb, guide the oar, let us help our kinsman Alexander". When Pelgui reported about the vision to the approaching prince, Saint

Alexander commanded that no one through piety should speak about the miracle, and he emboldened, valiantly urged on the army against the Swedes with a prayer. "And there was a great slaughter with the Latins, and it killed their innumerable multitude, and for their very leader it left a mark upon the face by a sharp spear". An Angel of God invisibly helped the Orthodox army: when morning came, on the opposite bank of the River Izhora, whither the army of Saint Alexander was not able to proceed, were a multitude of the killed enemy. For this victory at the River Neva, won on 15 July 1240, the nation named the saint, Alexander Nevsky.

The Teutonic Knights remained a dangerous enemy. In a lightning-quick campaign in 1241 Saint Alexander recaptured the ancient Russian fortress of Kopor'e, expelling the knights. But in 1242 the Germans succeeded capturing Pskov. The enemy boasted of "subjecting all the Slavic nation". Saint Alexander, having set forth in a winter campaign, liberated Pskov, that ancient Home of the Holy Trinity, and in spring of the year 1242 gave the Teutonic Order a decisive battle. On the ice of Lake Chud both armies clashed on 5 April 1242. Raising his hands towards the heavens, Saint Alexander prayed: "Judge me, O God, and judge my strife with a boastful nation and grant help to me, O God, as to Moses of old against Amalek, and to my great-grandfather Yaroslav the Wise against accursed Svyatopolk". By his prayer, by the help of God and by the military exploit the crusaders were completely destroyed. There was terrible slaughter, such a crashing resounded of striking spears and swords that it seemed, as though the frozen lake were in motion and not visibly ice, since it was covered by blood. Having turned to flee, the enemy was pursued and hewn at by the army of Alexander, -- "as though they speeded through the air, and nowhere was there for the enemy to flee". Afterwards they led a multitude of captives behind the holy prince, marching in disgrace.

Contemporaries clearly understood the universal historical significance of the Great Battle of the Ice: they celebrated the name of Saint Alexander through all of Holy Rus', "through all the lands, from the AEgyptian Sea to Mount Ararat, from both sides of the Varangian Sea to Great Rome".

The western boundaries of the Russian Land were safely secured, and it became time to guard Rus' from the East. In 1242 Saint Alexander Nevsky together with his father, Yaroslav, journeyed to the Horde. Metropolitan Kirill blessed them for this new service of many hardships: it was necessary to change the Tatars from enemies and plunderers into honourable allies, and there was necessary "the meekness of an angel and the wisdom of a snake".

The Lord crowned with success the holy mission of the defenders of the Russian Land, but this required years of hardship and sacrifice. Prince Yaroslav passed from this life. Having made an alliance with Khan Batu, he was required, however, to travel to faraway Mongolia, to the capital of all the nomadic empire. The situation of Batu himself being precarious, he sought out the support of the Russian princes, wishing to separate with his own Golden Horde from faraway Mongolia. And there in turn, they trusted neither Batu nor the Russians. Prince Yaroslav was poisoned. He died in agony, having but by 10 days outlived the Holy Martyr Michael of Chernigov, with whom once he was nearly a relative. Bequeathed by his father an alliance with the Golden Horde -- of necessity then for the averting of a new devastation of Rus' -- Saint Alexander Nevsky continued to hold secure. The son of Batu, Sartak, having accepted Christianity, was in charge of Russian affairs with the Horde, and became his friend and like a brother. Vowing his support, Saint Alexander gave Batu the possibility to enter into a campaign against Mongolia, to become the chief power in all the Great Steppes, and on the throne in Mongolia to raise up the tatar-Christian leader, Khan Munke (the majority of his tatar-Christians confessed Nestorianism).

Not all the Russian princes possessed the perspicacity of Saint Alexander Nevsky. Many in the struggle against the Mongol Yoke hoped for European help. Saint Michael of Chernigov, Prince Daniel of Galich, and Andrei the brother of Saint Alexander, conducted negotiations with the Roman pope. But Saint Alexander well knew the fate of Constantinople, seized and devastated in the year 1204 by crusaders. And his own personal experience taught him not to trust the West. Daniel of Galich for his alliance with the pope, giving him nothing in return, patched together a betrayal to Orthodoxy -- an unia with Rome. Saint Alexander did not wish this to be for his native Church. When ambassadors of the Roman pope appeared in 1248 to seduce him also, he wrote in answer about the faithfulness of Russians to the Church of Christ and to the belief of the Seven OEcumenical Councils: "These we know quite well, and from you we do not accept teaching". Catholicism was unsuitable for the Russian Church, and an unia signified a rejection of Orthodoxy, a rejection of the source of spiritual life, a rejection of the predestined-by-God historical future, and the dooming of itself to spiritual death. In the year 1252 many a Russian city rose up against the Tatar Yoke, supporting Andrei

Yaroslavich. The situation was very risky. Again, there arose a threat to the very existence of Russia. Saint Alexander had to again journey to the Horde, in order to avert from the Russian lands a punitive Tatar incursion. Defeated, Andrei fled to the Swedes to seek the help of those very robbers whom his great brother had crushed with the help of God at the Neva. Saint Alexander became the monarchic Great Prince of All Rus': Vladimir, Kiev and Novgorod. A great responsibility before God and history lay upon his shoulders. In 1253 he repelled a new German incursion against Pskov; in 1254 he made a treaty about peace borders with Norway; in 1256 he went on a campaign to the Finnish land. The chronicler called it "the dark campaign" -- the Russian army went along through the polar night, "going non-passable places, like to see neither day nor night". Into the darkness of paganism Saint Alexander brought the light of Gospel preaching and Orthodox culture. All the coast region was enlightened and opened up by the Russians.

In 1256 Khan Batu died, and soon also was poisoned his son Sartak -- the one like-a-brother to Alexander Nevsky. The holy prince journeyed a third time to Sarai, in order to confirm peaceful relations of Rus' and the Horde with the new Khan, Berke. Although the successor to Batu had accepted Islam, he was in need of the alliance with Orthodox Rus'. In 1261, by the diligent efforts of Saint Alexander and Metropolitan Kirill, there was established a diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church at Sarai, the capital of the Golden Horde.

There ensued an epoch of great Christianisation of the pagan East, and in this was prophetically the speculation by Saint Alexander Nevsky of the historical vocation of Rus'. The holy prince used any possibility for the uplifting of his native land and the easing of its allotted cross. In 1262 by his decree in many of the cities were stopped the tatar collectors of tribute and the conscription of soldiers -- the "baskak"-officials. They waited for a Tatar reprisal. But the great intercessor of the nation again journeyed to the Horde and he wisely directed the event into quite another channel: having been dismissed for the uprising of the Russians, Khan Berke ceased to send tribute to Mongolia and proclaimed the Golden Horde an independent entity, making it a very shield for Russia from the East. In this great uniting of the Russian and Tatar lands and peoples was matured and strengthened the future multi-national Russian State, containing later on within the bounds of the Russian Church almost all the legacy of Ghenghis Khan to the coasts of the Pacific Ocean.

This diplomatic journey of Saint Alexander Nevsky to Sarai was his fourth and last. The future of Rus' was rescued, his duty before God was fulfilled. But his power was wholly devoted, and his life put to the service of the Russian Church. On the return journey from the Horde Saint Alexander fell deathly ill. Not having reached Vladimir, at Gorodets at a monastery the prince-ascetic gave up his spirit to the Lord on 14 November 1263, having finished his much-difficult earthly path with the accepting of the monastic-schema with the name of Alexei.

Metropoltian Kirill, the spiritual father and companion in the service of the holy prince, said in the funeral eulogy: "Know, my child, that already the sun has set for the Suzdal' land. There will not be a greater such prince in the Russian land". They took his holy body to Vladimir, the journey lasted nine days, and the body remained undecayed. On 23 November, before his burial at the Nativity Monastery in Vladimir, there was manifest by God "a wondrous miracle and worthy of memory". When the body of Saint Alexander was placed in the crypt, the steward Sebastian and Metropolitan Kirill wanted to get his hand, in order to put in it the final-journey spiritual gramota/document. The holy prince, as though alive, reached out his hand and took the gramota from the hand of the metropolitan. "And it accounted for their terror, and they barely stumbled from his tomb. Who would not be astonished at this, since he was dead and the body brought from far away in the winter time". Thus did God glorify the Saint -- Soldier-Prince Alexander Nevsky. The universal Church glorification of Saint Alexander Nevsky was performed under Metropolitan Makarii at the Moscow Cathedral in 1547. The canon to the saint was compiled then by the Vladimir monk Michael.

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NOVEMBER 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 (Oct 19) **22nd Sunday after Pentecost Tone 5** **St. John of Kronstadt** **9:00 AM Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy**	**2** (Oct 20)	**3** (Oct 21)	**4** (Oct 22) **Fast: wine & oil**	**5** (Oct 23)	**6** (Oct 24) **8:00 PM Zoom Class** **Fast: wine & oil**	**7** (Oct 25) **St. Demetrius Saturday** **11:00 AM Baptisms** **4:30 General Pannyhida** **5:30 PM All-Night Vigil**
8 (Oct 26) **23rd Sunday after Pentecost Tone 6** **9:00 AM Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy**	**9** (Oct 27)	**10** (Oct 28)	**11** (Oct 29) **8:00 PM Zoom Class** **Fast: wine & oil**	**12** (Oct 30)	**13** (Oct 31) **Fast**	**14** (Nov 1) **5:30 All-Night Vigil**
15 (Nov 2) **24th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 7** **9:00 AM Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy**	**16** (Nov 3)	**17** (Nov 4)	**18** (Nov 5) **8:00 PM Zoom Class** **Fast: wine & oil**	**19** (Nov 6)	**20** (Nov 7) **Fast**	**21** (Nov 8) **Synaxis of the Archangel Michael** **8:00 AM Matins & Divine Liturgy** **5:30 All-Night Vigil**
22 (Nov 9) **25th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 8** **9:00 AM Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy**	**23** (Nov 10)	**24** (Nov 11)	**25** (Nov 12) **5:30 PM Vigil** **Fast**	**26** (Nov 13) **American Thanksgiving** **St. John Chrysostom** **7:40 Hours & Divine Liturgy Thanksgiving Moleben**	**27** (Nov 14) **Fast: wine & oil**	**28** (Nov 15) **5:30 All-Night Vigil** **Fast: fish,wine & oil**
29 (Nov 16) **26th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 1** **Apostle & Evangelist Matthew** **9:00 AM Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy** **Fast: fish,wine & oil**	**30** (Nov 17) **Fast**	**Dec 1** (Nov 18) **Fast: wine & oil**	**Dec 2** (Nov 19) **8:00 PM Zoom Class** **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**Dec 3** (Nov 20) **5:30 PM Vigil Entry of the Theotokos** **Fast: wine & oil**	**Dec 4** (Nov 21) **ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS** **7:40 AM Hours & Divine Liturgy** **Fast: fish, wine, & oil**	**Dec 5** (Nov 22) **5:30 PM All-Night Vigil** **Fast: fish, wine & oil**

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DECEMBER 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov 29 (Nov 16) **26th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 1** **Apostle & Evangelist Matthew** **9:00 AM Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy** **Fast: fish,wine & oil**	**Nov 30** (Nov 17) **Fast**	**1** (Nov 18) **Fast: wine & oil**	**2** (Nov 19) **8:00 PM Zoom Class** **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**3** (Nov 20) **5:30 PM Vigil Entry of the Theotokos** **Fast: wine & oil**	**4** (Nov 21) **ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS** **7:40 AM Hours & Divine Liturgy** **Fast: fish, wine, & oil**	**5** (Nov 22) **5:30 PM All-Night Vigil** **Fast: fish, wine & oil**
6 (Nov 23) **27th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 2** **9:00 AM Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy** **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**7** (Nov 24) **Fast**	**8** (Nov 25) **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**9** (Nov 26) **Fast**	**10** (Nov 27) **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**11** (Nov 28) **Fast**	**12** (Nov 29) **5:30 PM All-Night Vigil** **Fast: fish, wine & oil**
13 (Nov 30) **28th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 3** **Apostle Andrew** **9:00 AM Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy** **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**14** (Dec 1) **Fast**	**15** (Dec 2) **Fast: wine & oil**	**16** (Dec 3) **Fast**	**17** (Dec 4) **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**18** (Dec 5) **5:30 All-Night Vigil St. Nicholas** **Fast: wine & oil**	**19** (Dec 6) **St. Nicholas** **9:00 Meeting of the Bishop, Hours and Divine Liturgy (Liturgy in Enfield, CT)** **Fast: fish, wine, & oil**
20 (Dec 7) **29th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 4** **9:00 AM Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy** **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**21** (Dec 8) **Fast**	**22** (Dec 9) **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**23** (Dec 10) **Fast**	**24** (Dec 11) **Fast: wine & oil**	**25** (Dec 12) **St. Herman of Alaska** **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**26** (Dec 13) **5:30 All-Night Vigil** **Fast: wine & oil**
27 (Dec 14) **30th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 5** **Holy Forefathers** **9:00 AM Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Divine Liturgy** **Fast: fish, wine & oil**	**28** (Dec 15) **Fast**	**29** (Dec 16) **Fast: wine & oil**	**30** (Dec 17) **Fast: wine & oil**	**31** (Dec 18) **Fast**	**Jan 1** (Dec 19) **Fast**	**Jan 2** (Dec 20) **5:30 All-Night Vigil** **Fast: wine & oil**