

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905

Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic

(814) 244-4063

The Second Sunday after Pentecost (06.18.2023)

Matthew 4:18-23

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. *(KJV)*

We gather today in God's Holy Church for the benefit of our soul and to seek the Kingdom of God. The Divine Liturgy is being celebrated for the benefit of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and to glorify God.

The relationship we have with Jesus Christ is reflected in all that we think and do in life. Our relationship with Jesus Christ reveals the way we live out the time of life each day.

At Holy Baptism our total beings were dedicated to Jesus Christ. Our whole body was immersed in the Baptismal water and anointed with the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Church currently is in the period of the Apostles Fast. This is a time for renewal and strengthening of our relationship with Jesus Christ. The present Gospel describes the drawing power and authenticity of Jesus Christ.

Peter, Andrew, James and John immediately perceived and embraced the authenticity of Jesus Christ. They gave up everything to follow Christ. They gave up their work, where they lived and their families to follow Christ.

The Apostles Fast which began this past Monday and continues until the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul on July 12 is a time for personal analysis and reflection on our relationship with Jesus Christ.

This is a time to consider the Apostles' complete commitment to Christ and to measure our degree of commitment to following Christ. Now is the time to ask ourselves the extent our lives reflect a total commitment to Jesus Christ.

Do our personal values, thoughts and actions align with and reflect the values of Christ? Are the Kingdom of God and the salvation of our souls the first and guiding priorities of life?

This fasting period encourages and facilitates searching the heart, mind and soul to expel sinful tendencies and embrace the way of Jesus Christ. Now is this time to fully pursue the joy and peace found in Christ.

The American world is celebrating Father's Day. If we are fathers, it is appropriate to consider if we are fathers-in-Christ. Does our relationship with our sons and daughters reflect the values, teachings and love of Christ?

If we are sons and daughters, do we honor and show appreciation to our parents as Christ would have us to do? The Christian life carries the responsibility of Jesus Christ being lived out in daily life in our relationships.

Being a Christian is life's highest honor and an identity firmly united with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are blessed to have the opportunity to receive the Precious Body and Blood of Christ in the Divine Liturgy.

Being a Christian is to be taken most seriously and is to guide all that we think and do. Our goals, our work and our relationships are to align with Jesus Christ.

When we fail, we need to repent and begin anew in Christ. The Church gives us fasting periods to improve and make corrections and adjustments in the way we follow Christ.

The hunger in the soul is only authentically nourished in Jesus Christ. Peter, Andrew, James and John sensed in Christ what they needed most in life and they left all to follow him.

We are to leave behind those aspects of our lives which prevent us from fully following and honoring Christ. We made a complete commitment to Christ as King and God at Baptism.

Today let us measure whether we are honoring the commitment to Christ as King and as God. Repentance is always timely. Repentance is always beneficial.

Christ is always ready to accept our confessions and willingness to follow Him.

Analysis of our relationship with Jesus Christ is essential throughout life if we are to grow in Christ. The Divine Liturgy facilitates growth and unity with Christ.

The Gospel speaks to and enriches the heart, mind and soul.

God the Father cares for Creation and provides the essentials for the life in Christ. Each believer determines the degree of living in and commitment to following Christ.

Following Christ is completely voluntary and is an act of love. Christ's love for each person is always being revealed and manifested to the attentive. Believers reciprocate their love for Christ in the way they follow Him.

Thank God for the Church. Thank God for the Apostles' Fast. Thank God for the Gospel. Let us learn from the example of Peter, Andrew, James and John and follow Christ with our full beings.

The Second Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Hieromartyr Dorotheus of Tyre. Venerable Peter of Korish. June 5/18, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic

MIRACULOUS HELP FROM ST. LUKE OF CRIMEA: NEW TESTIMONIES

A few days ago, on June 11, the Orthodox Church celebrated the feast of [St. Luke \(Voino-Yasenetsky\)](#), Archbishop of Simferopol and Crimea. The Holy Hierarch departed to the Lord on June 11, 1961, on the feast of All Saints Who Have Shone Forth in the Russian Land. He led an amazing life: thousands of patients whom he operated on, scientific discoveries in the field of regional anesthesia, the Stalin Prize for his *Essays on Purulent Surgery*—he sent the majority of the awarded funds to orphanages, and the rest he distributed to the poor—a multitude of sermons delivered in an atheistic country, as well as exiles, arrests, hunger, cold, the tragic loss of his wife. His extraordinary courage, amazing fortitude, great philanthropy, and deep, unwavering faith are truly amazing. Neither exiles, nor camps, nor the Second World War could stop him from offering medical assistance to people. Even in the most terrible of conditions, lacking any normal food or housing, with the hostility of those around him, St. Luke never interrupted his work, but continued to receive patients, never turning anyone away. Even at the end of his life, the completely blind saint continued to help his patients, though now with prayer. And he still helps now, after his departure to the Lord.

Here are just a few stories about miraculous help from St. Luke.

From Irina S:

In 2018, family business took me to the Nizhny Novgorod Province. I had an accident on June 5: I fell and broke my ankle, with a torn ligament and dislocation. The ambulance took me to the emergency room where they reset the bone and put a cast on it. And that was instead of the operation I should have had to collect the fragments of broken bone first! They told me to come back for surgery in three weeks. The pain during this time was excruciating and didn't let up at all.

I somehow made it down flour flights of stairs (there's no elevator in my building) and got to the local polyclinic where they took an x-ray and told me they had to break everything since the bone was healing incorrectly. They said I needed a surgery. I didn't want to go to the same place they'd taken me the first time, and they referred me to Nizhny Novgorod, to the Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics. I called them and they said there was a two week wait just to have a consultation. Seeing what was happening, I started praying to St. Luke and used my remaining energy to read an akathist to him.

Then they called from the polyclinic: "Can you come in today?" I couldn't go, but I sent a friend with my photo. With traffic, it takes about three hours to get there, but by the prayers of St. Luke,

my friend made it in forty minutes. He hit green lights the whole way and didn't have to sit in traffic once. He drove back just as quickly and brought me a referral with some tests.

And I felt a panic again: How can I go for an analysis if I can't even walk?! Then suddenly my neighbor from across the garden called me. She had heard about my situation and said: "Don't worry, I'll come get all your tests. I'm a nurse." I called the Institute of Traumatology and told them my tests were ready. I had to get in line again, and it was another two weeks, maybe more.

I prayed to St. Luke again. The next day, they called me to come in instead of a patient whose surgery had to be postponed due to high blood sugar. So there I was in a hospital room, and as the doctor was making his rounds, he told me my case wasn't easy, that we weren't going to hurry, that it would be postponed till the end of the week. I continued reading the akathist to St. Luke, and they moved the operation up a couple of days. The surgery went well and everything was fine.

But my misadventures didn't end there, it turns out. After I was discharged, when they were taking the stitches out at home, they found a bone infection. The wound was coming apart and you could see the plate they'd put in. I had to go back to the hospital, this time for a purulent surgery. A fight for my leg began there. I prayed to St. Luke with all my might. When I woke up after the surgery, the doctor told me to ... go to church and light a candle. It turns out the entire plate was covered in pus, even the screws had come out, but the bone itself was fine! It was a miracle that can only be explained by the help of God through the prayers of this amazing saint!

After that, I really wanted to go venerate St. Luke's relics in Crimea!

But then they brought some relics of St. Luke to Nizhny Novgorod not long after that. With what reverence I venerated the relics of my healer! I had had six operations altogether—that's how much the doctors fought for my leg, and by the prayers of St. Luke, everything turned out well!

Then that summer, a friend suddenly suggested that we go to Crimea, and I didn't have to think twice. By the grace of God, I was able to visit the relics of St. Luke and thank him for his extraordinary help!

Another story about help from St. Luke, also involving a bone infection:

My future husband got a bone infection after suffering a leg injury. He was treated in several different hospitals in Tashkent. And the next time it was exacerbated, in 1970, they put him in the purulent department of the hospital where, as we later found out, Valentin Voino-Yasenetsky, later St. Luke, had worked. The situation was very serious but the treatment was successful, and my husband soon forgot about his sore. The Uzbek surgeons have an icon of St. Luke hanging in their office, and before surgery, they ask for his help. And we have a photo of him at our house. My cousin was a nun and she gave us the photo of St. Luke surrounded by Tashkent priests. And

in various circumstances in our life, especially in times of illness, we pray to St. Luke, and he never fails to help us.

Help from St. Luke in the case of a fracture:

My son broke his arm. It was a complex fracture-dislocation. I got a blessing and started reading the akathist to St. Luke. Within a week, the bone was in its proper place! I thank the Lord for sending us such an intercessor and man of prayer!

Another story about how the saint healed a broken bone:

I broke my hip a few years ago. It was a complex fracture. I prayed to St. Luke of Crimea and St. Panteleimon the Healer for help, that they wouldn't schedule me for surgery before I was able to receive Communion. The surgery went well. They put in an artificial joint and now I feel good and I'm able to work, although I'm already seventy.

From Anastasia D.:

An ultrasound showed that my friend had a gallstone. When she got home, she put an icon of St. Luke on the spot and started asking St. Luke for help. When my friend went for an ultrasound again a week later, there was no stone. The doctors were amazed and did another ultrasound, which also showed there was no stone. My friend was also amazed at such speedy and extraordinary help.

And another story of St. Luke's help:

My knee was really hurting. I thought maybe it was from getting too cold. I went to church, went up to the icon of St. Luke, kissed it, and begged him to make it better, because the pain was unbearable. And the pain went away literally immediately. I sat in church for a bit and was simply amazed—my knee was completely healed! Now I know that St. Luke helps very quickly and precisely—you just have to ask with faith!

A story of St. Luke healing a child, from Marina N.:

I wasn't able to buy an icon of St. Luke of Crimea for a long time. And then one day we went to the famous Holy Protection Church on the Nerl River, and there I saw an icon of St. Luke, which we bought. Soon after that, my son got sick. He had a fever of nearly 104 and pills weren't helping. I wanted to call the ambulance, but then I remembered the icon of St. Luke. I started praying for my son to recover. I prayed in my own words as best I could, asking and begging him to save my son. Then I put the icon next to him and, exhausted, I dozed off. I woke up with a jolt.

I saw my son sleeping, breathing evenly. I took his temperature—98.6. I noticed that if you sincerely pray for something from your soul, even in your own words, then they will definitely hear you and help!

When I was nearly done writing this article and I was planning to send it to the editors at *Pravoslavie.ru*, a believer from Moscow who prays for our entire family wrote to me that she wanted to send a piece of a scarf blessed on the relics of St. Luke to me with a friend who was coming to visit us in Tbilisi for a few days. That's how the Holy Hierarch thanked me, by sending such a holy item!

St. Luke, pray to God for us!

Translation by Jesse Dominick

Services this Week

- ❖ **Friday - 06.23.2023. – PARALYSIS - THE OFFICE OF SUPPLICATION TO SAINT NEKTARIOS -05:00 PM – Confession**
- ❖ **Saturday – 06.24,2023. – Holy Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas - 09:30 AM *Divine Liturgy***
- ❖ **3rd Sunday after Pentecost– 06.25.2023. - 09:30 AM *Divine Liturgy***

Donations June 11, 2023

Offering - \$ 508.00 Candles - \$61.00

Building Fund
In Memory of George Moncilovich
Milena Rudman - \$50

Large Candles
In Memory of Linda Palmer from Rick Kondas
In Memory of Connie Bartis from Joe Bartis
In Memory of Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Milica Knepp
In Memory of Pani Patriica Ward from Dorothy Podolak
In Memory of Susan Krenisky from Dan & Dyne Tomask
The Malich Family

Please visit our St. Nicholas Web Page
<https://stnicholasjohnstown.org>
We have now added a "DONATE" button to make it easier for you to
send your donations. Please take a look.

BAND OF BROTHERS
(Shakespeare in Stack House Park)
July 13-15 & 19-22, 2023

PLEASE
see Suzette or Carole McAllister to sign up to work!!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Band of Brothers - July 13-15 & 19-22, 2023



Taste of Serbia - August 12, 2023



Slavic Festival - September 15-16, 2023