

Holy Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council

On the seventh Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the holy God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

The Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council has been celebrated by the Church of Christ from ancient times. The Lord Jesus Christ left the Church a great promise, "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). Although the Church of Christ on earth will pass through difficult struggles with the Enemy of salvation, it will emerge victorious. The holy martyrs bore witness to the truth of the Savior's words, enduring suffering and death for confessing Christ, but the persecutor's sword is shattered by the Cross of Christ.

Persecution of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself. One of the most pernicious of these heresies was Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In denying the divine nature of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely taught that the Savior is not consubstantial with the Father, but is only a created being.

A local Council, convened with Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria presiding, condemned the false teachings of Arius. However, Arius would not submit to the authority of the Church. He wrote to many bishops, denouncing the decrees of the local Council. He spread his false teaching throughout the East, receiving support from certain Eastern bishops.

Investigating these dissensions, the holy emperor Constantine consulted Bishop Hosius of Cordova, who assured him that the heresy of Arius was directed against the most fundamental dogma of Christ's Church, and so he decided to convene an Ecumenical Council. In the year 325, 318 bishops representing Christian Churches from various lands gathered together at Nicea.

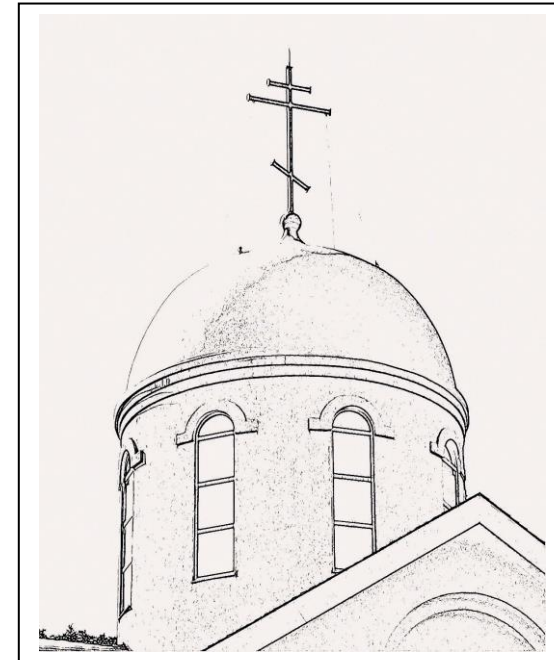
The emperor Constantine presided over the sessions of the Council. In his speech, responding to the welcome by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, he said, "God has helped me cast down the impious might of the persecutors, but more distressful for me than any blood spilled in battle is for a soldier, is the internal strife in the Church of God, for it is more ruinous."

Arius, with seventeen bishops among his supporters, remained arrogant, but his teaching was repudiated and he was excommunicated from the Church. In his speech, the holy deacon Athanasius conclusively refuted the blasphemous opinions of Arius. The heresiarch Arius is depicted in iconography sitting on Satan's knees, or in the mouth of the Beast of the Deep (Rev. 13).

The Fathers of the Council declined to accept a Symbol of Faith (Creed) proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith. Saint Constantine asked the Council to insert into the text of the Symbol of Faith the word "consubstantial," which he had heard in the speeches of the bishops. The Fathers of the Council unanimously accepted this suggestion.

In the Nicene Creed, the holy Fathers set forth and confirmed the Apostolic teachings about Christ's divine nature. The heresy of Arius was exposed and repudiated as an error of haughty reason. After resolving this chief dogmatic question, the Council also issued Twelve Canons on questions of churchly administration and discipline. Also decided was the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha.

WEEKLY



BULLETIN

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you!

Troparion of the Annunciation to the Theotokos

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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Rev. Fr. Alexander Smida, *Attached Priest*

Tara Paxton, *Senior Warden*

Matthew Hascha, *Choir Director*

June 9, 2019
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA
Holy Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council
Afterfeast of the Ascension

Tone 6. St. Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria (444). Ven. Kirill, Abbot of Belozérsk (1427). Ven. Alexander, Abbot of Kushta (Vologdá—1439). Five Nuns beheaded in Persia: Martyrs Thecla, Mariamne, Martha, Mary, and Ennatha (346). St. Columba, Enlightener of Scotland (597).

Today's Readings:

Epistle: Acts 20:16-18, 28-36 **Gospel:** John 17:1-13

Upcoming Service Schedule:

Saturday – **7:00pm Great Vespers**

Sunday – **9:00am Divine Liturgy**

Sunday – **10:30am (approx.) Vespers of Pentecost**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Epistle: Acts 2:1-11 **Gospel:** John 7:37-52, 8:12



*The Ascension of
Our Lord*

Coffee Hour Teams:

Today – TEAM D (Paxton, May, Alpaugh)

Next Sunday – TEAM E (Bass, Petrides)

Keep up on OCA news by visiting www.oca.org, diocesan news by visiting www.nynjoca.org, and parish news by visiting www.occa-brick.org.

We are happy that you have joined us for worship today and hope that you will join us for coffee hour after the service. Please note that **reception of the Holy Eucharist** is only for baptized members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared with prayer, fasting, and periodic confession. You are encouraged to receive the blessed bread that is **offered at the end of the service and which may also be offered to you by one of your neighbors during Communion.**

Special Prayers

We pray for **all** our parish family members, but we pray especially for those who are ill and afflicted. Among them are: **Betty James, Olga Kornafel, Deryl Tczap, Reader John Economou, Paul Hanas, Meni Mari, Tom Collins, Tom Kopec, Alan Diaz, Cathy Diaz, Ann Marie Gahr, Dennis Gahr, Ron Madensky, Dorothy Studier, Helen Ciurczak, Pauline Barnowsky, Elba Cinciarelli, and Catherine Ratushnuk.**

Annunciations

TODAY – An **organizational meeting** for this year's Ethnic Fair and Gift Auction will be held after Coffee Hour in the Parish Hall. The event is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, September 29, 2019. All are invited to participate in the meeting.

TODAY – **Parish Calendars for June** are now available in the church narthex. Please consult the calendar for upcoming parish services and events. As always, check the weekly parish bulletins for changes to the calendar.

Next Sunday is the **Great Feast of Pentecost**. We will be decorating the church with **greenery** on Saturday prior to the Great Vespers service. We will also serve the **kneeling Vespers of Pentecost** immediately following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday.

Many thanks to **Father Alexander Smida** and all those who assisted him in conducting the Divine services and caring for the faithful during Father Gary's absence the past several weeks.

Congratulations to Archpriest Sergius Kuharsky, who was awarded the priestly **Mitre** this past Thursday on the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord in South River. **Axios! Axios! Axios!**

Congratulations to Reader Veljko and Mihaela Pejovic who have announced that they are expecting the birth of a child within the year. May God keep and protect the handmaiden of God, Mihaela, and the child whom she bears.

Matushka Catherine Smida will undergo foot surgery tomorrow. Please keep her in your prayers.

This is the time of year when **extra help is needed** to keep the grounds of the parish in order. Weeds grow along with the grass. If you have time during the week, feel free to come and weed around the church building, the parking lot, and anywhere where the weeds are growing. It is helpful when many hands contribute to the work of **beautifying our parish home.**

MANY YEARS

Birthdays this week:

Monday – Melanie Nilsen

Wednesday – Sylvia Van Ness

Wednesday - Michael Katerinis

Friday – Sarah Berger

Saturday – Reanna Paxton

Wedding Anniversaries this week:

Saturday – Dennis & Ann Marie Gahr (#54)

OUTREACH

- **Food Pantry donations** are *always* accepted. Place non-perishable food items in blue bin in the narthex
- **Clothing donations** are accepted on the last Sunday of each month. Place donations next to the food pantry bin.