

November 2, 2020

Dear Faithful of Saint John's,

On this cold Monday morning, eight months into a pandemic, no cheerful gatherings or warm vacations in sight, and one day before contentious politics come to head, it is easy to feel discouraged.

However, our Scriptures speak to us often of the need for endurance. For example, the epistle of James says, "*Blessed is the one who remains steadfast under trial...*" As Christians, we remember that we are not alone in our struggles. God is with us and promises to give us His grace in times of need.

Throughout our Christian life we regularly practice keeping our weariness in check and holding fast to what is good. This season of trial requires no less, so I encourage you to remain patient, steadfast and hopeful. On the bright side, I just counted the weeks on the calendar until the days begin to lengthen. Seven. We can do that.



Liturgy Group Schedule Change - Open Wednesdays

There are some other good things to look forward to. As was mentioned in the bulletin last week in the Parish Council Summary, we will continue to schedule Liturgies according to groupings that will allow for about 40 people. But beginning November 15, we will schedule the Groups only on Saturday morning and Sunday morning. Wednesday evening Liturgies will continue at 6:15pm, but will be open to all who want to attend. This will allow some who would like to come to Liturgy more often to do so, and also provide an option for those who cannot make it for some reason on their assigned day. This new schedule will be available this week on the Church website. Please note that we are still limiting all of our Liturgy gatherings to a maximum of 50 people (including clergy and chanters). If this becomes an issue for Wednesday nights, then we will adjust as needed. Also, note that the rows in the Nave are set at least 6 feet apart, but it is up to each household to maintain the needed distance sideways by keeping 6 feet distance from other households, which is equal to about 3 chairs.

Special Lectures by Fr. Michael Oleksa

Also, Fr. Michael Oleksa, who is a friend of our parish and has given a few homilies at our Sunday Liturgies over the past year and a half, will begin a series of nine talks at Saint John's on Wednesday nights. These will be 10-minute talks and will follow the Wednesday evening Liturgy. On that evening, the priest's homily will be just a brief comment and Fr. Michael's special talk will begin immediately after Liturgy. The theme of the talks will be about what it takes to come to belief in God and Christ, especially keeping in mind young people who have walked away from their faith in recent years. And, of course, Fr. Michael will bring in elements of Alaskan Orthodox spirituality. He is very interesting to listen to and is a master storyteller. We are hoping these talks will begin November 11. Of course, as mentioned above we will still keep a limit for the Wednesday Liturgy of 50 people in attendance as part of the Covid restrictions. However, we do plan to video record his talks and make them available on our Cathedral website each week. In this way we can all benefit from his talks throughout the winter.

Need for a Digital Video Camera

Finally, if anyone has a good quality digital video camera we could use to begin this series, please let me know. We would like to begin to practice with the equipment this week and if we could gain a little experience first, it would help us purchase the right equipment down the road. If you can help with this, please let me know as soon as possible.

With prayers for you and your family,

Fr. Marc