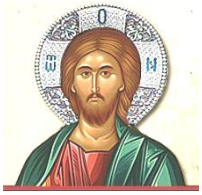
"ORTHODOX IX" PARISHES BULLETIN

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CANADA

Monthly Newsletter for the family of Orthodox Churches including:

St. Mary's (the Nativity of the Holy Virgin) - NISKU

Sts. Peter & Paul - BONNYVILLE
Holy Ascension - CALMAR
Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY
St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE
St. John the Baptist - HOREN
St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)
Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)
Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)



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Volume 90, Issue 10 **November 2026**



The Winter Feast of the Holy Great Martyr George the Victory-Bearer

On November 16 (November 3, Old Style), the Church celebrates the dedication of the Church of the Holy Great Martyr George the Victory-Bearer in the Palestinian city of Lydda, now known as Lod.

Saint George, a Roman military commander, openly confessed his faith in Christ during Emperor Diocletian's persecution. After enduring terrible torments, he suffered martyrdom in 303. In accordance with his wishes, his body was taken to Palestine, his mother's homeland.

According to Church tradition, a beautiful church honouring the great martyr was built in Lydda during the reign of Emperor Constantine, Equal to the Apostles. At its dedication, the saint's relics were placed within it, and numerous healings took place through his intercession.

Over the centuries, the church was repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt. Even among its ruins, Christians continued to pray at the great martyr's tomb.

In the nineteenth century, Patriarch Cyril II of Jerusalem appealed for help in restoring the shrine. With the support of the Russian Emperor Alexander II and donations from the faithful, the church was restored. It was consecrated on November 3, Old Style, in 1872, on the date of the ancient feast.

Today, pilgrims continue to visit Saint George's tomb, bringing their sorrows and hopes, prayers for loved ones, and thanksgiving for his help. Devotion to the great martyr unites Christians across countries and cultures.

The church's crypt houses the venerated tomb of Saint George, while a portion of his relics is preserved in the church itself. This sacred site connects the feast of the church's dedication with the living memory of the great martyr and his witness to Christ.

The history of this holy place bears witness to steadfast faith and the love that unites generations of Christians. As we honour Saint George the Victory-Bearer, let us ask for his prayers, that we too may remain faithful to Christ, face trials courageously, and overcome evil with good.

As the Nativity Fast approaches (November 28 – January 6), the feast of the church's renewal calls us to renew our own souls. Through fasting, repentance, prayer, and works of mercy, we share in the life of the saints, seeking to follow their example and their way.

The Church of the Great Martyr George in Lydda: The History of the Holy Place



On November 16 (November 3, Old Style), the Church celebrates the dedication of the Church of the Holy Great Martyr George the Victory-Bearer in Lydda, now the city of Lod. Built at the saint's burial place, this ancient shrine has witnessed centuries of destruction, restoration, and enduring devotion.

Early Evidence

The earliest known written reference to the church appears in Deacon Theodosius's *On the Location of the Holy Land*, composed around 530. Both Theodosius and the Piacenza Pilgrim, who visited around 570, record numerous miracles associated with Saint George's relics. A large basilica in Lydda also appears on the famous Madaba mosaic map, dating from the second half of the sixth century.

Church tradition places the original dedication during the reign of Emperor Constantine, Equal to the Apostles. Researchers date the surviving remains of the ancient basilica to the fifth–seventh centuries, allowing for an earlier church on the site. A tradition recorded by William of Tyre in the twelfth century attributes its construction to Emperor Justinian I.

Centuries of Destruction and Renewal

The Byzantine basilica had three aisles and measured approximately 47 by 24 metres. Ninth-century pilgrims mention an adjoining monastery and relics associated with the great martyr's sufferings.

In 1010, the church was destroyed by order of Caliph al-Hakim. It was subsequently restored under the Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos, but further earthquakes and wars again caused severe damage.

In the twelfth century, the Crusaders built a Gothic basilica roughly matching the dimensions of its Byzantine predecessor. Greek clergy continued to celebrate services there. Fourteenth-century pilgrims described its frescoes, mosaics, and marble decoration.

The church was destroyed again in 1442 during a persecution of Christians. Orthodox worship resumed in 1517 in the surviving sanctuary and crypt. An earthquake in 1837 brought down the vault and northern apse, leaving the church in ruins for decades.

Restoration in the Nineteenth Century

In 1870, Greek ownership of the shrine was formally recognized. The following year, Patriarch Cyril II of Jerusalem appealed to Russian holders of the Order of Saint George for help with its restoration. By order of Emperor Alexander II, three thousand roubles were allocated from the Order's funds.

Russian government funding enabled a new church to be built, incorporating surviving portions of the medieval church and ancient Byzantine masonry. It was consecrated on November 3, Old Style, in 1872—the date of the Church's commemoration of the ancient dedication.

The Church's Sacred Treasures

At the eastern end of the church is a crypt containing the great martyr's venerated tomb—a marble cenotaph. Two stairways lead down from the central nave. A reliquary containing a portion of Saint George's relics is kept in the sanctuary. Near one of the columns is a chain venerated as the great martyr's fetters.

Preserving traces of successive eras, this holy place bears witness to centuries of devotion to Saint George and to the faithfulness of Christians who repeatedly restored this place of prayer at his tomb.

Adapted from "The Church of the Great Martyr George the Victory-Bearer in Lydda," The Orthodox Encyclopedia.

HOMILY ON THE SYNAXIS OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL



St. Cyril of Alexandria says: If our earth, which serves as a focal point between two worlds, carries upon itself such a countless multitude of people and various other creatures, then how many times greater is the number of denizens inhabiting the immaterial heaven, which is so immense and incomprehensible to the mind?

The angels have a spiritual, immaterial, subtle, and immortal nature, free of all corruptibility, but limited, not like that of the Lord Himself, the Spirit – existing everywhere and unique, without beginning and all-encompassing. He brought forth the angels from nothingness into being, sanctified them with His word, and for their steadfastness against evil confirmed them in the Holy Spirit (i.e. they can no longer fall into sin); their nature is full of wondrous, ever-shining light, holiness, goodness, beauty, wisdom, power, immortality, and an ardent love for their Creator, for each other, and for mankind, over whose salvation they rejoice, and whom they wish to have as their eternal compatriots in the kingdom of eternal light and incorruptibility, peace and joy. St. Dionysius the Areopagite, a disciple of the Apostle Paul who had been raised by the Holy Spirit to the third heaven, heard from him the mysterious teaching on the angelic world, recorded it, and passed it on to the Church.

The angelic world is divided into nine orders, and these are divided into three ranks each. The leading radiant angels (Michael and Gabriel), as the shining dawn of the Most-holy Trinity, stand directly before the fiery throne of God, are illuminated by His light, and pass on the illumination and the knowledge of God's mysteries to the lower ranks, and the lower ranks are ruled by the higher ones. This heavenly citizenry, this universal, holy, radiant, and blessed assembly of celestial denizens is known as the heavenly hierarchy.

Let us contemplate with wonder God's all-benevolent and wise providence, His immeasurable bounty, which has destined us for eternal co-habitation and bliss with the angels in our future homeland, and which established a single Church composed of radiant and incorruptible angels and chosen and worthy humans. What humanly indescribable bliss awaits Christians who are loyal to God, if they remain true to their Christian calling to the very end. In order for us to be worthy of eternal co-existence and blissful life with the angels in heaven, we must honor them, follow their example of holiness, modesty, love, absolute loyalty to God, and loftiness of thought; and we must live in abstinence, prayer, fasting, charity, compassion for one another, and ardent mutual love.

The holy divinely-inspired observers of God's mysteries and angelic visions – the prophets and the evangelists – saw the angels constantly turning to one another and with one accord singing the praises of the Holy Trinity. This teaches us, too, to treat each other with ardent love and to live in concord, earnestly serving our mutual Creator.

Glory to God's immeasurable bounty, which prepared for us an eternal kingdom, a kingdom of radiant light, peace, and immovable bliss, together with the countless hosts of angels!

Let us use the small amount of time that we have here on earth to progress in Christian virtue in order to inherit that boundless rapture, and may the Lord grant it to us by the prayers of the Most-pure Theotokos and the intercession of the honorable celestial bodiless powers, especially the radiant, lightning-like Michael and Gabriel, and our holy guardian angels. Amen.

St. John of Kronstadt

Upcoming Events in November

The traditional Fall Social Puschenia on November the 15th, 2026



We are excited to announce that St. Mary's Parish Fall Social – Puschenia – will once again be held this year on Sunday November 15, at St. Mary's Parish Hall at Nisku after the Liturgy. Dinner will be provided by the church with donations greatly appreciated. Anyone joining is welcome to bring a salad, side dish or dessert.

During the event we encourage you to join in bidding on the silent auction items available. All proceeding from the silent auction, raffle lottery, and dinner donations will be going towards future improvements of the church!

If you are so inclined, please feel free to donate an item or two to the silent auction and raffle. You can do so by messaging the Facebook page to get in contact with the organizer or approaching any board member or just bring them with you.

Let us have a good time before the Christmas Lent, with the joy of fellowship, a good meal and our generous and friendly lottery – and for the benefit of our Church!

Please share this event with friends and family. And we look forward to seeing you there! Good luck!

The Nativity Fast – Christmas Lent – November 28 – January 6

Begins November 28th and ends January 6th with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Nativity of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. This 40-day fast is given to us to prepare for the Great Celebration of the Lord's Birth in the flesh.

During this period, in addition to abstaining from certain types of food, we should also seek to free ourselves from sins by taking part in the Confession/the Sacrament of Repentance, try to more frequently receive the Holy Communion, and do good deeds of mercy.

Gratitude





We give thanks to the people who took the initiative and helped to clean up the Church and cemetery grounds of the fallen trees due to the hurricane (120 km/h) wind on October 16 that brought down several large trees along the fence of the cemetery. Just the other day in response to Darcy Doblanko's call there gathered quite a number of people, who also graciously brought some technical means: chainsaws, and a bobcat Skid-steer and a lorry to pick up and carry away the large trunks and branches. The graves were tidied, and smaller gates, bent by the fallen tree, were also aligned and mended. These are the helpers who gave 'many hands to make this work light': **Darrell & Marianne Lecapoy, their son Mitch and granddaughter Quinn, Stan & Wanda Doblanko, Kevin Wasiluk, Chuck DeJong, Carol Kuhn, David Borys and Tanni & Darcy Doblanko**.

Gratitude

The parishioners of St. Mary's Church express their heartfelt gratitude to the servants of God Cathy Krawchuk and Mary Zhurova for their generous donations of beautiful icons.

Mary Zhurova donated the icons of the Ascension of our Lord and of Sts. Spyridon and Nicholas in memory of her mother, Tatiana Zhurova, of blessed memory, who reposed in the Lord in September 2026.



Our choir director, Cathy Krawchuk, donated an icon of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrios, which she brought back from her pilgrimage to Greece and the Holy Land earlier this year.

May the Lord accept your offerings, bless you with good health and peace from above, and remember our departed loved ones in His Kingdom!

Our website is back up and running!



We thank the servant of God Joachim (Yakim Lopushinsky), Archpriest Igor Kisil, Archpriest Eugene Protsenko, and Alexey Anokhin for their help in restoring the website of the Patriarchal Parishes in Canada following a hacking attack.

We also thank Debbie Kitchen for graciously providing a beautiful photograph of St. Barbara's Cathedral for our website's homepage!

A Priest's Words of Gratitude



I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed over many years toward a new vehicle for the priest serving Orthodox IX – to all the parishes and parishioners, and to the Orthodox IX Council.

My special thanks go to Vice-President Philip Pawlyk, who, despite a limited budget, helped secure an excellent new vehicle: new, comfortable, economical, reliable, and well suited to both short journeys and longer trips, with everything needed for our harsh Canadian winters.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Philip for his ongoing care of the parish vehicle: arranging timely oil changes and necessary repairs, ensuring that good-quality seasonal tires are fitted well ahead of changing weather, coordinating all service appointments, and looking after the priest's comfort and transportation needs while the vehicle is being serviced.

Thank you all for your generosity, kindness, and continuing support!

The parishioners of Orthodox IX Parishes extend our deepest condolences to the relatives of the departed servant of God Harry. May God comfort you, and may God settle His servant, where the light of His countenance shall visit!

Harry Nazarenko

August 3, 1925 - October 10, 2026



It is with great sadness and much love that we say goodbye to Harry Nazarenko, who passed away peacefully on October 10, 2026, at the age of 101.

Harry was born in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan to John (†1977) and Elizabeth (†2005) Nazarenko.

John Nazarenko's grandparents belonged to a large wave of families (often referred to historically as Black Sea or Bessarabian colonists) who left agricultural settlements in the Odessa Governorate of the Russian Empire. Jacob (Yakim) and Jean (Tatiana Pelipchuk) left their homestead in the village of Hrehoriwka, 70 miles east of Odessa in 1900, and went to Unites States (Connecticut, North Dakota), and later they moved to Canada, in Maple Creek, SK.

Life was hard through the Depression, but Harry and his younger sister Pearl (†2023) got to school each day riding the family's only horse.

Harry was a respected and valued member of the Leduc community, serving generations of customers as a barber for over 60 years. He was also a farmer who had a deep love for the land.

Harry will be lovingly remembered and forever cherished by his family for the many special moments they shared with their beloved father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather.

He is survived by his son, John (Karen Olsen) Nazarenko; grandchildren Tammy (Ray) Bradley and Kris (Amanda) Borys; great-grandchildren Keelin Bradley, Reice (Nahuel) Bravo, Lochley and Pyper Borys; and great-great-grandchildren Enzo and Roi Bravo.

Harry was predeceased by his beloved wife, Mary (†2013), and his daughter, Tena (†2021).

We remember Harry’s strong faith and love and care for our St. Mary’s Church, which he attended, taking part in all church events for as long as he was able, generously helping the Church and the priests, always responding to the calls of the parish council, being one of the last helpers of the Ladies Aid when he and other elders would come to the church hall to make cabbage rolls and pirohies, taking on himself a hard job of rolling the dough.

He is also remembered praying seriously with his face transfigured in prayer, and he kept this attitude until his last days. When the priest would visit him at the hospital, he was sincerely glad to receive the Holy Gifts and even when it was difficult for him – he still expressed his inner prayer making the sign of the cross; and to the life-affirming greeting he would respond – Truly He (Christ) is risen.

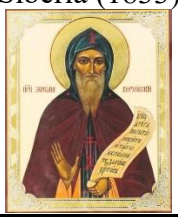
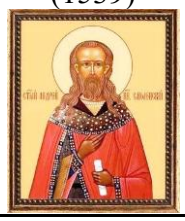
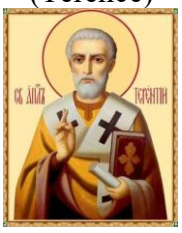
In her verse dedicated to the grandpa – “The Wealthy Barber”, Harry’s granddaughter Tammy Bradley, wrote: “His riches were real, obtainable by all, yet achieved by few. He was the salt of the earth and was loved by many – respected, hardworking, humble, genuine and kind… He enriched our lives one cut at a time, which had nothing to do with dollars and everything to do with sense…”

May God grant him mercy and the Heavenly Kingdom, our elder and 'holy roller'! 🙏

November 21st is the feast of **the Synaxis of the Archangels Michael and the Other Bodiless Powers**. And among thousands of angels and archangels, there is our guardian ***angel***, given to us from birth and baptism, who cares about us and saves us. **Finish coloring this picture of an angel guiding the lost travelers!**



November 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 **10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – NISKU**	2 St. Matrona of Chios (1462) 	3	4 The Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos 	5	6 St. Zosima (Verkhovsky), elder, of Siberia (1833) 	7
8 **10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – St. Barbara Cathedral**	9 St. Andrew, prince of Smolensk (1539) 	10	11 	12 Apostle Tertius (Terence) 	13	14
15 **10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – NISKU** ***Fall Social / Puschenia after the Service in the Parish Hall, with a luncheon and silent auction!***	16 St. Winifred of Holywell, Wales (630) 	17	18 St. Gregory, patriarch of Alexandria (9th c.) 	19	20	21 **Synaxis of the Bodiless Powers** 
22 **10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – NISKU**	23	24 **Myrrh-streaming "Montreal" Iveron Icon** 	25	26 St. John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinop 	27	28 Beginning of the Nativity Fasting 
29 **10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – St. Barbara Cathedral**	30					