



St. John's Orthodox Christian School

September 2020 Edition

Upcoming Events

Sept. 14	Elevation of the Cross
Sept. 16	K-2 Field Trip – CANCELLED
Sept. 21-25	Middle School Intensives
Sept. 25	St. Sergius Day – Chapel Hike
Sept. 28	October Lunch Forms due
Oct. 13	Lifetouch Picture Day
Oct. 16	End of the 1 st Quarter, NO SCHOOL
Oct. 21-2	Parent-Teacher Conferences
Oct. 23	NO SCHOOL – In-Service

Hello St. John's Families,

We made it through the first month of school! There was a lot of hard work and attention to detail in keeping our Cohorts running smoothly. Our teachers and staff would like to thank all of our students and their families for taking our Covid protocols so seriously! We look forward to finishing out the 1st quarter in mid-October with the same degree of success. 😊

Please keep reading for the latest news and events that are coming up.

Thank you,

Mrs. Streff

Morning Prayers: Last week, students in K-8 began prayers in the Nave with either Fr. Marc or Fr. Tom. Students are attending by Cohort on different days of the week. The schedule is as follows: Cohort B (K-2) attends prayers on Mondays, Cohort C (3rd/4th) attends prayers on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Cohort D attends prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays. The prayers last about 10 min. and students then return to their classrooms to begin their day. I have attached a copy of the prayers that students say along with this newsletter.

The Elevation of the Cross: In the Orthodox Church the Elevation of the Cross is observed every Sept. 14th. If you are unfamiliar with the importance of this feast day in the Orthodox Church, I have included what Fr. Marc wrote about it.

Saint John Orthodox Christian School

An Introduction to the “Feast Day of the Elevation of the Cross” and Basic Points to Know Fr. Marc Dunaway

- The Cross is the main symbol used by Christians.
- A cross was an instrument of death used by the ancient Romans, but Christians believe that Jesus Christ voluntarily allowed Himself to be arrested and crucified, that is hung on a cross until dead. He was then buried in a tomb. Three days later, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and was seen by His disciples.
- So through the Jesus Christ’s death on the Cross, Christians believe that human death no longer leads to a dark place or to annihilation. Instead for those who believe in Jesus and become one of His followers death is a doorway to eternal life, a life with God. This is the life we were always made for and now can return to.
- The Cross is used as a symbol on Churches. It is decorated as art in many settings and often printed on Bibles. Christians and others often wear Crosses around their neck. Also throughout the centuries the symbol of the Cross has given Christians courage and strength to fight against evil.
- Christians also trace the shape of the Cross on themselves with their hand when they make the “sign of the Cross.”
- This “Feast Day” itself first of all celebrates the Cross as an important symbol of Christian belief in Jesus Christ and that our happiness in this life is not found in earthly power or might but in God and doing His will in this life and in the hope of His Kingdom in the age to come.
- The historical origins of this Feast Day come from a search the Emperor Constantine and his mother Helen made to find the very Cross Jesus was crucified on. Helen believed, and many other Christians of that day believed as well, that she had found Jesus’ Cross in Jerusalem in 330 AD. There are also stories from this event of various miracles that helped show Helen had found the true Cross.
- After this many people gathered in the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem and knelt down while the Bishop of the Church “elevated” a portion of the Cross up high. This is the scene depicted in the Icon for this Feast Day.
- Today, Orthodox and Catholic Churches, still celebrate this Feast Day on September 14. The Orthodox decorate a Cross and place it in the middle of the Church. Then in a special service the priest lifts it up high as people kneel and ask for prayers for the whole world.
- The most basic thing to know about this Feast Day is that the Cross is the main symbol of the Christian Faith. It is a symbol of God’s love for the world since His Son Jesus would was willing to die on a Cross for to save the world and all people from death. It is also a symbol of strength and hope. This is what we celebrate on September 14 and why a Cross is decorated and kept in the middle of the Church for a week.

- People have drawn Crosses in many different ways over the centuries. Here are two websites that explain some of them: <https://orthochristian.com/97480.html> and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_cross_variants.

K-2 Field Trip: Pyrahs U-Pick Farm: Wednesday's Field Trip to Pyrah's U-Pick Farm has been canceled due to mechanical trouble with our school's bus. If we will be able to reschedule, has yet to be determined.

Middle School Intensives: Beginning on Mon., Sept. 21st, our Middle School students will begin their weeklong Mat-Su Intensives. Students will engage in activities both on and off campus with their time culminating in with an overnight stay at the Medland's cabin on Birch Lake.

St. Sergius Day Chapel Hike: On Friday, Sept. 25th students and staff will walk to the St. Sergius Chapel on our adjacent 50 acres. Fr. Marc will lead all of us in a short prayer service as we remember both St. Sergius of Radonezh and our own St. John the Evangelist whose falling asleep in the Lord is observed on Sept. 26th. Please have your students dressed for the possibility of wet, rainy weather and muddy trails. Students should have boots, raincoats and dare I say it, maybe even mittens and hats. We will meet on the church steps at 12:30 and walk to the chapel, social distancing and staying in our cohorts.

When we return from our walk, students will have a snack of hot chocolate and cookies. If anyone would like to make some cookies (for volunteer hours) please let me know by Tuesday morning before we go shopping.

Lunch Forms: October Lunch Forms will be sent home on Thursday, September 24th. Please return them by Monday, October 28th.

Lifetouch Picture Day: Lifetouch will be at our school on Tuesday, Oct. 13th. Order forms will be sent home the week before.

End of the 1st Quarter: The 1st Quarter will end on October 16th. There will be **No School** on this day.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for Wed., Oct 21st and Thurs., Oct. 22nd. On these days, the day usually ends at 1:30 and conferences begin at 2:00. Given our current Covid situation, we are still working to come up with the best plan for communication – either in-person or over the phone conferences. We will make our decision on October 12th using the current trend of Covid cases at that time to assist us.

In-Service Day: Teachers will have an In-Service Day on Friday, Oct. 23rd. **No School** on this day.