



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 30 June—6 July 2024

SUNDAY 30 JUNE	SYNAXIS OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES, ALL SAINTS Matthew 9: 36, 10: 1-8 • 7.30am
<b>2024 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES</b> (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal. We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to teenage years. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, friendly environment. Please bring your children along to learn of their rich Orthodox faith and come close to God and His Love.	
MONDAY 1 JULY <i>Saints Kosmas and Damian. Unmercenarys</i>	• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy • 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
WEDNESDAY 3 JULY	• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
THURSDAY 4 JULY	• 8.00—9.00pm ➡ <b>TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP 2024</b> <b>ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME</b> Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment. * In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church
SUNDAY 7 JULY	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 4: 18-23 EPISTLE READING: Galatians 3: 23-29; 4: 1-5

### Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church  
9387 7693

Fr Athanasios  
9383 4151

Fr Ephraim  
0490 378 215

Website:  
[stvasiliosbrunswick.com](http://stvasiliosbrunswick.com)

Fr Athanasios and  
Fr Ephraim are available  
at the Church every  
Monday to Friday  
between 4.00 and 6.00pm  
for Holy Confession and  
any spiritual need.

### SYNAXIS OF THE TWELVE HOLY APOSTLES

On 30 June each year, the Church honours the Synaxis (a celebratory gathering) of the Twelve Holy Apostles. The commemoration of a Synaxis is commonly observed on the day following a major feast day. It recognises the participation of a Saint or a group of Saints in the major feast preceding the Synaxis. For example, the Church holds a Synaxis in honour of St John the Baptist on the day after the Theophany. The feast of the Synaxis of the Twelve Holy Apostles follows the feast of the pre-eminent apostles Peter and Paul (29 June). Each of the Twelve is honoured on separate dates of the Church calendar. However the Church, in its wisdom, also established a collective commemoration of the Twelve Holy Apostles. This, because the group of Twelve Apostles, fulfilled the Lord's commission to "Go... make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mat 28:19)

Let us also remember here how these most holy and selfless men in the history of the world died and finished their earthly course:

Peter was crucified upside-down.  
Andrew was crucified.  
James was beheaded.  
John the Theologian died in a wondrous way.  
Philip was crucified.  
Bartholomew was crucified, then flayed and beheaded.  
Thomas was pierced with five spears.  
Matthew was burned by fire.  
James the Son of Alphaeus was crucified.  
Thaddeus was crucified.  
Simon the Zealot was crucified.  
Matthias was stoned, then beheaded with an axe when dead.  
Paul was beheaded.

## HOMILY ON THE SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS

**St. Luke, Archbishop of Crimea**

Numberless and vast as the sands of the great Sahara and Gobi deserts, they are our contemporaries and those who lived before us. Who are they? What were lives like? What do we see in their souls? If we could see what is too vast to see, then we would see that the great majority of mankind consists of those who in Holy Scripture are called “peoples of the earth”. Why are they called by that name? Because the most important goals in their lives, and their main strivings, are directed toward the acquisition of earthly good things, those good things that they can receive from material nature.

They are either not spiritual at all, or their spiritual life is not deep! They either do not believe at all in the spiritual world, or they give it little attention.

Such are the peoples of the earth, such are the people who are emotional, but not spiritual.

These are the main masses of all mankind. But with fear and pain of soul we see on humanity’s left flank people who are incomparably worse and even terrible. We see human beasts, human predators, human monsters and even human devils. But on the right flank of the peoples of the earth we see the light and glory of the human race, those blessed and divinely graced people, whom the great St. John the Theologian calls children of God and friends of Christ.

With reverent awe we see the great hosts of the saints, shining in the darkness of the world like God’s bright stars against a dark sky. We see the hosts of prophets and apostles, great holy hierarchs and pastors who preached and lived the Gospel of Christ.

We see the great hosts of holy martyrs, monastic saints and anchorites, and even people who are like angels of God. What made them saints and completely unlike the peoples of the earth? We can learn this from the very profound words of the apostle Paul—words that no one before him could say.

The awesomeness and boundless glory of the Cross of Christ so shook his soul that he forgot about the whole world and said, *The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world...* and, *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me* (Gal. 6:14; 2:20). These sacred words could be spoken by all the great saints. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and love for Him burned like a bright flame in the hearts of the holy martyrs and gave them the strength to endure horrifying tortures and terrible deaths.

The world lost its attraction for the great monastic saints and anchorites; the world was crucified to them.

They could no longer bear to remain amongst people who are capable of such an immeasurable crime as crucifying the Saviour of the world, the Son of God, on the Cross; and so they departed into uninhabited deserts and impassable forests in order to live there in inseparable prayerful communion with God.

Their prayer was deep as the sea, and poured out ceaselessly day and night.

Our great St. Seraphim of Sarov prayed a thousand days and nights in the forest on a flat stone. St. Arsenius the Great stood from evening till morning with arms upstretched to heaven in the desert, praying for the whole world. And the power of prayer of St. Mary of Egypt exceeded even his.

We could go on much longer about the other great ascetics of whom the world is not worthy.

On this first Sunday after Pentecost, the Holy Church celebrates the memory of all the saints. Why was this feast established? There are many names in the calendar of saints—around 2000<sup>[1]</sup> names; but it can’t be that there are so few saints. Of course there are more, infinitely more.

In the seventh chapter of the Revelations of St. John the Theologian we read, *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands... These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb* (Rev. 7:9, 14).

A vast and countless multitude of saints was shown to St. John the Theologian in this vision, and not just the 2000 saints whose names we read in the calendar.

With God are an enormous multitude of saints, for the sake of whose salvation the Pre-eternal Son of God, the Saviour of the world, came down to earth and was incarnate of the Most Holy Virgin Mary.

Only an insignificant number of saints have been canonized by the Church. But the whole enormous multitude of other saints are known only to God, about Whom we say that He is the only One Who sees our hearts, “the only knower of hearts”. In His all-seeing eyes, ordinary and poor people, who are utterly insignificant to the world and even disdained and persecuted by the world are great and precious, and the world really isn’t worthy of them. The Church dedicates this first Sunday after Pentecost to the memory of all the saints—those who are known to the Church, and those who are known only to God.

Great and holy is this day, and it behoves us to honour it at least through our hymns of prayer, and to pray to all the saints for their intercession before God for us, so that we sinners might also stand, if only in the very last ranks, with those whom the Lord has vouchsafed to call His children; those who have been born again, not *of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man* (Jn. 1:13), but of God Himself and the measureless power of Christ’s Gospel.

May it be so for all of us!

Amen.

[<sup>1</sup>] Of course there are now more names in our calendar than there were at the time of St. Luke of Crimea.