



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 1—7 SEPTEMBER 2024

#### Telephone Contact Numbers

St Vasilios Church  
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Fr Ephraim  
0490 378 215

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[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.

SUNDAY 1 SEPTEMBER	BEGINNING OF THE INDICTUS (Ecclesiastical New Year) Luke 4: 16-22 • 7.30am
<b>2024 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES</b> (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) <b>Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal.</b> 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 2 SEPTEMBER	• 9.00am Service of Holy Unction • 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
WEDNESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER	• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
THURSDAY 5 SEPTEMBER	• 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 building, behind the Church
SUNDAY 8 SEPTEMBER	GOSPEL READING: John 3: 13-17 EPISTLE READING: Galatians 6: 11-18

### Holy 40 Virgin-Martyrs and their Teacher the Hieromartyr Ammon the Deacon at Heraclea - September 1

The Holy Forty Virgin Martyrs with their teacher, Deacon Ammoun were captured by Baudos the governor, and were tortured because they would not offer sacrifice to idols. The holy martyrs endured many cruel torments, which were intended to force them to renounce Christ and worship idols. Later, they were sent to Heraclea in Thrace to appear before the tyrant Licinius. The valiant martyrs remained unshakeable, however. Saint Ammoun and eight of the virgins were beheaded, ten virgins were burned, six of them died after heated metal balls were put into their mouths, six were stabbed with knives, and the rest were struck in the mouth and stabbed in the heart with swords.

Holy 40 virgin-martyrs and their teacher the Hieromartyr Ammon the Deacon at Heraclea in Thrace: Adamantine, Athena, Akrive, Antigone, Arivea, Aspasia, Aphrodite, Dione, Dodone, Elpinike, Erasmia, Erato, Ermeneia, Evterpe, Thaleia, Theanoe, Theano, Theonymphe, Theophane, Kalliroe, Kalliste, Kleio, Kleonike, Kleopatra, Koralia, Lambro, Margarita, Marianthe, Melpomene, Moscho, Ourania, Pandora, Penelope, Polymnia, Polynike, Sapfo, Terpsichore, Troada, Haido, and Harikleia.



### September 1: Ecclesiastical New Year (Beginning of the Indiction)

The First Ecumenical Council (Nicaea, 325) decreed that the Church year should begin on September 1. The month of September was, for the Hebrews, the beginning of the civil year (Exodus 23:16), the month of gathering the harvest and of the offering of thanks to God. It was on this feast that the Lord Jesus entered the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21), opened the book of the Prophet Isaiah and read the words: *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn* (Isaiah 61:1-2).

The month of September is also important in the history of Christianity, because Emperor Constantine the Great was victorious over Maxentius, the enemy of the Christian Faith, in September. Following this victory, Constantine granted freedom of confession to the Christian Faith throughout the Roman Empire. For a long time, the civil year in the

Christian world followed the Church year, with its beginning on September 1. The civil year was later changed, and its beginning transferred to January 1. This occurred first in Western Europe, and later in Russia, under Peter the Great.

Source: St. Nikolai Velimirovic, The Prologue of Ohrid – Volume 2

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## THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD

New Year's Day, according to the Orthodox Church, does not fall on the first of January, but rather on the first of September. The Church has her own calendar that contains the seasons, feasts and celebrations along with the rites, prayers and fasts connected with them. The purpose of this calendar is to help people to reach holiness by reminding them daily of the importance of spiritual struggle in order to arrive at "life in the continuous presence of God".

On this occasion, the Church chooses to read a text from the Gospel of Saint Luke, where Christ says at the beginning of His ministry, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

These verses contain the "agenda" that Christ came into the world to realize. After Jesus revealed His identity, that He is "the Lord's Christ", anointed with the Holy Spirit who rests within Him, he announced that love and free service are the path to salvation. Jesus did not call for ignoring the world and its tragedies for the sake of an individual spiritual life based on worship alone. Rather, He called for commitment to the concerns of the tormented, outcasts, the persecuted, the oppressed, the poor and the destitute...

Christianity, then, is not like some people mistakenly think, a mere "spiritual" message that does not concern the affairs of people and the world. It is a call to make our present world into a better world, a world governed by divine values, first among them love, mercy, peace and justice. On the other hand, it does not ignore the importance of spiritual struggle for the sake of this better world.

How will our coming year be a year acceptable to the Lord? How will the days and nights that we amass be acceptable? Christianity says that God, the Creator of time and space, became fully man in order to make man into a god by grace, not substance. On the other hand, those humans who desire to heed this divine call should strive to sanctify their life by consecrating their time to anticipating God's good things to come and living them in their present moment. Holiness is not complete without uniting the spiritual life with the active life incarnate in daily reality.

Christianity does not believe in luck, fate or chance. It is people who make their own luck, not psychics, prognosticators or fortune-tellers... It is in people's own hands and their own power to make their year acceptable to the Lord, since no one determines their fate besides God. Those whose fate is God will not be ashamed and will not be disappointed. God will not be people's fate if they do not do God's work. And the start of the road is repentance.

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16). Yes, the days are evil and we must be vigilant lest we be led along by their logic, the logic of this world. Saint Irenaeus of Lyons (d. 202) says that the time falling between Christ's becoming man and His second coming at the end is the time in which God causes the fruits of history-- that is, the saints-- to ripen. How can we turn our coming evil days into a year acceptable to the Lord? This is our hope.

- Fr. Georges Massouh <https://orthochristian.com>

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## On the living presence of Christ

*'I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. 28:20).*

Here is consolation above all consolations! Here is consolation for those broken by tempest. Let them only remember that Christ is there among them, and let them not be afraid. He is the Helmsman.

Here is consolation for those in pain. Let them know that Christ is there by their bed, and let them not despair. He is the Healer.

Here is consolation for the old. Let them not lose sight of the fact that Christ goes with them through the years right to eternity and eternal youth, and let them be at peace.

Here is consolation for those who are tormented by men. Let them not think that they are left alone, for Christ is with them in all their pain, and at their judgement, and in prison; and let them rejoice. He is the Judge.

Here is consolation for those tormented by evil spirits. Let them remember that Christ, the Conqueror of evil spirits, is on their side, and let them be strengthened. He is the Victor.

Here is consolation for those who seek the light of righteousness and truth. Let them believe that Christ is closer to their souls than to their eyes, and let them follow His leading. He is the Light.

Oh, my brethren, Christ is truly always with us, as a light that is ever present to the eyes of those who look. But, to our loss, if the eyes of our soul are closed, then the light seeks in vain to encounter the pupil of our eye! Oh, what sorrow and grief is ours when we are not with Christ!

He comes to meet us - do we go to meet Him? He desires to be with us - do we desire to be with Him? If we desire consolation, we must be with Him every day to the end of our lives.

O Lord, our only Consoler, do not leave us! To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

Source: St. Nikolai Velimirovic, The Prologue of Ohrid