



## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 22—28 SEPTEMBER 2024

#### 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.

SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER	1ST SUNDAY OF LUKE, Luke 5: 1-11 Mark 8: 34-38, 9: 1 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
<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 23 SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>9.00am Service of Holy Unction</li><li>10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall</li></ul>
WEDNESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos</li></ul>
<b>★ TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP 2024</b> <b>Please Note:</b> Our Teenage Youth Group Meetings will be taking a holiday break from 19th September and will resume on 10th October 2024.	
THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER <i>Translation of St John the Theologian</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER	GOSPEL READING: Luke 6: 31-36 EPISTLE READING: II Corinthians 1: 21-24; 2: 1-4

#### **Translation of St John the Theologian** **Greater love hath no man. . .**

During one of his rounds of visits to the surrounding churches, in the city of Smyrna, the holy Apostle noticed among his listeners a youth of fair countenance and an evidently lively intelligence. Turning to the local bishop, Saint John said to him: "I am entrusting you with this youth in the presence of the entire church, and I call to witness Jesus Christ." The bishop accepted this charge and promised diligently to look after the youth's welfare.

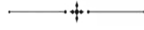
The Apostle returned to Ephesus, and the youth was instructed in the law of God and was baptized. The bishop, thinking that he was thereby relieved of any further concern for the youth, slackened his attention, and soon lost track of the boy. Meanwhile, some corrupt peers drew the youth into their company. He began attending their revelries and taking part in their nocturnal raids. Eventually he became the ring-leader of his own band of thieves.

Some time passed and the affairs of the Church brought Saint John again to Smyrna. When these were settled, the Apostle turned to the bishop: "Return to me the pledge with which Jesus Christ and I entrusted you in the presence of your church." The disconcerted bishop did not straightway understand just what the Apostle meant by this, but then he tearfully confessed that the youth had died to God; he had given himself over to sin, and had become the leader of a band of outlaws, with whom he was hiding in the mountains. On hearing these words, the Apostle rent his garments and groaned. "Indeed, I thought I left the soul of my brother with a good watchman. Give me a horse and a guide." Without losing any time, he headed for the mountains, where he was soon seized by some of the band's lookouts. "Take me to your leader," insisted the Saint. "I have come here purposely to see him." When John was brought into the presence of the ataman, the latter recognized him immediately. He was so taken aback that he turned to run away in shame. The Apostle, disregarding his advanced years, took after him, shouting, "My son! Why are you running away from your father? I am old and unarmed. Have pity on me! My son! Do not be afraid of me. You can still hope in salvation. I would willingly die for you, just as Christ died for us. I would give my soul for you. Believe me. I am sent by Christ!" The young man stopped. He hung his head, threw aside his weapon, and with tears threw himself into the Apostle's embrace, trembling with emotion. He asked his forgiveness, weeping bitterly and trying to find in his tears a second baptism. The Apostle fell with love to the feet of the brigand, kissed his right hand, a hand defiled with many murders and crimes, and promised to plead on his behalf that the Lord would forgive him. Together with the repentant criminal, the holy Apostle prayed and fasted, and he instructed, encouraged and consoled him with citations from Holy Scripture. Together they returned to the city, where Saint John led the brigand chief into the church as a remarkable

example of repentance and of the quickening triumph of his apostolic love.

This apostle was wholly permeated by love for his neighbour. His zeal for the salvation of those who were perishing knew no obstacles. And the meekness, humility, and kindness of this great apostle were so amazing and touching, that he seemed to be not a man but an angel incarnate. His entire life was a life of love. In deep old age, when his physical strength had spent itself so that he could move about only with difficulty, he continued nevertheless, with the assistance of his disciples, to attend the Christian gatherings, teaching and edifying the flock.

At the end of his life, the holy Apostle limited his preaching to the brief exhortation: Children, love one another! When asked why he repeated one and the same thing over and over, the holy Apostle replied, "This is the command of the Lord, and if you fulfil it, it is sufficient."



## 1ST SUNDAY OF LUKE, Luke 5: 1-11

*Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios*

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

*1 While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennes'aret. 2 And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, 7 they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." 9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'edee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.*

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What should be admired first from what the Evangelist Luke told us today? The people of Galilee, who thirsted to hear the words of Jesus? They filled the shore of Lake Gennesaret as soon as they learned that Jesus was there, and they longed to see Him and hear Him. His word sweetened their hearts and gave peace, strength and enlightenment. They had never heard such words before! Even His enemies, the guards of the Hebrew high priests, after being sent to seize Jesus, confessed: "No man ever spoke like this Man" (John 7:46). And instead of arresting Jesus, they were fascinated and listened to him! Let us admire the simplicity of the Lord, who decided to get into Simon (Peter)'s fishing-boat, so His listeners could see Him better, and speak to them.

Or the obedience of Peter to Jesus, who told him to go out fishing around noon time? An experienced fisherman like Peter knew that fish were not caught in the day time! The other fishermen would maybe mock them or laugh when they see them throw their nets out for fishing at that time. After all, last night he could not catch any fish, so he expects a catch now? But Peter willingly obeyed Christ! Let us still admire the multitude of fish caught in such a short time, and at that time of day, so that not only was Peter's boat filled, but the other Zebedee boat as well, to the point where they were in danger of sinking.

Peter's reaction was remarkable when he saw so many fish, as it was something he had never seen before. Instead of expressing his thanks to the Lord for such a great blessing, he says to Him: Please get out of my boat. What kind of strange behaviour is that? Why does Peter do this? It becomes clear in his words: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (verse 8). He felt his sinfulness, and in humility declared that he was not worthy to have on his simple boat the great honour of the Lord's presence. As the Evangelist Luke explains: "For he –Peter - and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken" (verse 9).

All of this is admirable, and among other things, they teach us something very important for our lives. Peter and his associates, when they struggled alone all night, thought they were experienced fishermen, working under the best conditions for fishing and yet had no profit. But when they had Christ with them and obeyed His words, despite all of the unfavourable conditions for fishing, they earned more than they ever had in their lives! Does that say something to us too?

Unfortunately, Christians influenced by the materialist spirit of the time do not respect the spiritual and moral values of the Gospel. They say: You cannot survive in today's world with the Gospel, You have to compete with others using the same means that they do. What are these means? We know it includes lies, fraud, theft, usury, deception, unfulfilled promises, extortion, and so many others that have brought humanity to such a terrible situation! We see the downfall of so many of them! Because of the profiteering, others become prisoners, with broken families and facing the assault of society. They suffer from psychological problems and what is worse, lose their souls. The Apostle Paul writes about them: "Tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil" (Romans 2:9). They may at first appear to be gaining and prospering, but they have a bad end. There is a saying: "The liar and the thief rejoice in their first year only." But those who follow in Christ's example, respect and obey His will: "glory, honour and peace," the Apostle Paul writes in his Letter to the Romans (2:10).

My brothers and sisters, let us always have in front of our eyes the image of Jesus with Peter and the two boats full of fish, and remember this: If we have Christ near us and we will work according to His words, we will enjoy blessings that no one else can give us.

Source: [pemptousia.com](http://pemptousia.com)