





## Parish Information Bulletin

### Program for 12—18 October 2025

<b>SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER</b>	<b>4th SUNDAY OF LUKE, SUNDAY OF THE 7TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Luke 8: 5-15</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7.30am</b> Orthros and Divine Liturgy</li></ul>
<b>2025 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.	
<b>MONDAY 13 OCTOBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>9.00am</b> Service of Holy Unction</li><li>• <b>10.00am</b> Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall</li></ul>
<b>WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>5.00pm</b> Paraklesis to the Theotokos</li></ul>
<b>THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>8.00—9.00pm</b>  <b>TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP</b> <b>ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME</b> Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment. * Downstairs in the building behind the Church   <b>Find St Vasilios Greek Orthodox Parish Brunswick on Facebook and Instagram</b> <b>@stvasiliosgreekorthodoxchurch</b></li></ul>
<b>SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER</b>	<b>GOSPEL READING: Luke 7: 11-16</b> <b>EPISTLE READING: 2 Corinthians 11: 31-33, 12: 1-9</b>

### SUNDAY OF THE 7TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

The Sunday of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in the Orthodox Church is a feast day celebrating the 350 holy Fathers who gathered in Nicaea in 787 AD to repudiate the heresy of iconoclasm, which rejected the use of icons.

An important part of understanding the teachings of the Orthodox Church stems from history. Throughout the time of the early Church, many heresies arose that taught incorrect beliefs about the nature of God, specifically of Christ. To fight against these heresies over the years, the Church convened what we call the Seven Ecumenical Councils, during which they clarified what the Church has always believed.

### SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL (NICEA, 787 A.D.)

Convened under Empress Irene (widow of Leo IV), the Seventh Ecumenical Council fought against the heresy of Iconoclasm. At the time of the Council, iconoclasm had raged for sixty years under the Greek Emperor Leo III. Leo III wanted to convert Mohammedans (Muslims) to Christianity, and believed it necessary to do away with veneration of icons in order to convert them. This heresy continued under his son, Constantine V Copronymus, and his grandson, Leo IV.

The Council resolved to provide holy icons and place them in churches, together with the likeness of the Life-giving Cross of the Lord. The faithful were to honour and venerate (but not worship) the icons, elevating their souls and hearts to the Lord God, the Theotokos and the Saints, who are represented in them.

However, after this council, persecution of the holy icons continued under Emperors Leo V, Michael II, and Theophilus. Thus, iconoclasm disturbed the Church for another 25 years. The local synod of Constantinople in 843 A.D. finally restored and affirmed veneration of the holy icons under the Empress Theodora.

This Council also established the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday of Great Lent, which we celebrate in thanksgiving to the Lord for granting His Church victory over the heresy of iconoclasm.

<https://www.saintjohnchurch.org>

### 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.

## St Luke the Evangelist—18 October

### Kontakion

Let us praise the godly Luke: He is the true preacher of piety, The orator of ineffable mysteries and the star of the Church, For the Word, Who alone knows the hearts of men, chose him, together with wise Paul, to be a teacher of the Gentiles!

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### 4th SUNDAY OF LUKE, Luke 8: 5-15

#### Preparing the Garden of the Heart to Flourish

*The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (8:5-15)*

Today we hear the familiar parable of the sower who went out to sow his seed. As we listen to the whole of this parable we are left with the understanding that the soil is man's heart and the seed in the word of God. It is obvious that there is nothing wrong with the seed, since the seed comes from and belongs to God. However, the question that we must answer for ourselves is "What can I do to prepare my heart to properly receive and keep the word of God?"

In a garden, the soil must be prepared or else it will be difficult to expect much from what is planted. Sometimes this means tilling the soil, removing rocks and debris, and pulling up the weeds. It seems that Our Lord Jesus Christ also views the heart of each human being as a garden that can bear unbelievably abundant fruit under the correct conditions.

So how do we prepare our hearts to receive the word of God and keep it? The great teachers and fathers of the church speak of a number of things that we must do to prepare and soften our hearts. I would like to briefly focus on three methods of preparing and softening the heart: almsgiving, repentance and confession and the reading of Scripture.

Almsgiving means to give to the needs of the poor. What can we give? Whatever we have the ability to give that will be a blessing to another person or group. When we give, our pockets are emptied but our souls are filled. We not only make room in our pockets and wallets and purses, we make room in our hearts for God since our possessions were taking up important space in our hearts.

On Almsgiving St. John Chrysostom writes *"This makes men like God....Though virginity, fasting and sleeping on the ground are more difficult than this, yet nothing is so strong and powerful to extinguish the fire of our sins as almsgiving. It is greater than all other virtues. It places the lovers of it by the side of the King Himself, and justly."*

On repentance and confession, St. Isaac the Syrian writes, "He who acknowledges his sin is higher than he who raises the dead through his prayer; and he who is worthy of seeing his true self, is higher than he who can see Angels."

Repentance and confession begin at home. It is something that we do on a daily basis at the end of the day, when we say our evening prayers and take account of our actions and failings of that day. When we feel genuine remorse for our sins, we then bring this energy of repentance to the spiritual hospital, the Church, in order to bear a little shame and humble ourselves before the priest who has been given the great grace to offer the forgiveness of Christ.

The more ashamed we are of our sins, the more important it becomes to relieve this burden and share this with a priest in confession. As long as we hide it deep in our hearts, our hearts are hardened and the demons use it against us and it creates anxiety, depression and a multitude of other issues for us. In fact, St. Nikolai of Zicha says that if we don't repent, we won't be saved at all. He writes, *"The Lord desires the salvation of each and every person. But not everyone wants to be saved. In a word they all desire it, but in deed they reject it... The ones who perish are the ones who sin but do not repent and only justify their transgressions. That is the worst, most deplorable state."*

Now we come full circle to the reading of Holy Scripture. In the parable we are reminded that the seed is the Word of God. So it makes sense to us that one of the best things we could possibly do to ensure that some of the seed takes hold and bears fruit is to make sure we encounter the seed as often as possible and have as much of the seed as possible. The more seeds that we have in our field, the more likely we will be to have an abundant harvest at the right time. Likewise for us, the more we fill our hearts with the word of God, the more we meditate on the Scriptures, the more we study them and commit them to memory, the more blessings we will obtain. The word of God is a two-edged sword. It changes us. It cleanses us, purifies us, gives us light and hope. It is a deep well with life-giving waters. Are we constantly depressed, anxious, scattered and feeling hopeless? The Holy Scriptures will help us reorient our lives while they also soften our hearts for the Lord.

On the reading of Scripture, Abba Poemen wrote: "By its nature, water is soft while a stone is hard. However, when it runs along a watercourse and drips on a stone, it slowly but surely makes a hole in it. Likewise, the word of God is soft while our hearts are tough. However, if a person frequently listens to the Word of God, his heart softens and becomes capable to accept the fear of God."

Finally, we are reminded that it is not enough to just do these things in an empty and mindless way. It is not the works that save us, but God alone. Regardless of what we do, we rely on the grace of God to bless our efforts and to provide the fruit. St. Symeon the New Theologian writes,

*"Just as the farmer wears himself by merely ploughing, digging and sowing the seed on the ground, but it grows and produces fruit early and late (cf. James. 5:7) by God's gift, so it is in reality, as you will discover, in spiritual matters. It belongs to us to engage in every activity and with much toil and weariness to sow the seeds of virtue, but by God's gift and mercy alone the rain of His loving-kindness and grace falls and causes the unfruitful soil of our hearts to bear fruit. When the grain of the word falls on our souls it receives the moisture of God's goodness; it germinates, grows, and becomes a great tree" (cf. Mt. 13:31-32) (The Discourses; Paulist Press pgs. 219-220)*

May our Lord Jesus give strength to our efforts and soften our hearts and may He pour out His great grace so that our struggles may be fruitful. AMEN. - Fr. James Guirguis <https://orthochristian.com>