

Saint Patrick Orthodox Church



This is the tenth in a series of articles about local churches and houses of worship. The purpose is to introduce you to the distinct features of each congregation, their philosophy and atmosphere. We believe that churches, temples, synagogues, etc are some of our best community centers. As you read about them each month we hope you will find one that interests you and your family. This month, we take a look at Saint Patrick Orthodox Church.

In the season of fresh produce and farmer's markets, it is quite invigorating to live in Fauquier County, where so many families work to preserve a simpler, healthier, and increasingly less common way of life. There has been a growing trend in the past decade, both locally and nationally, to reevaluate one's eating habits and to determine at what point between our hunter-gatherer days and the present fast food era we lost our way. Journalists and pundits in a variety of fields, boldly make connections between our poor food choices and virtually every societal problem or failure

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we currently face. Polyculture farming techniques, organic dairy products, and raising one's own meat are considered responsible, forward-thinking and even fashionable by communities across the country. These days you can buy hormone-free pork by hanging weight on Craig's List and New York City apartment-dwellers are converting spare bedrooms into vegetable gardens. Whether to lose weight, increase energy, avoid cancer, save money, protest worker exploitation, or simply chase a fad, the reality is clear: people are attempting to regain the wholesomeness that used to characterize the human diet. We are discovering that truly good food, in every sense of the word, does exist and lies within our reach. We are learning that what we put into our bodies, our very life source, is perhaps one of those essentials that should not have been comprised and ultimately, sacrificed to progress.

So, what of the life source for our souls? What if there were such a thing as original, unaltered truth about God, the Church and the salvation of the world? Orthodoxy is simply a word that describes this truth as the Christian faith that has been handed down to us by the spiritual fathers and mothers of the Church since Christ walked the earth. Orthodoxy is a path that if we follow, we can

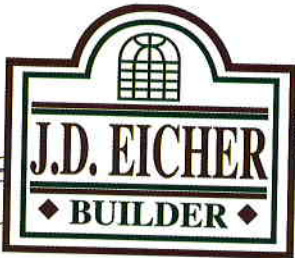
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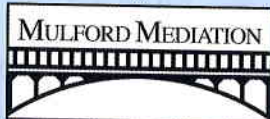
and will gain knowledge of the unadulterated truth, love and power of God in our lives. As Orthodox Christians, we believe that God's desire and power to make Himself known is bigger than our sin. He would not set us up to fail. As the Author of all truth, He has made a vehicle by which we can know Him and truly satisfy the hunger in our soul that we may live. This vehicle is His Church.

Orthodoxy has taught since its earliest days that the Church is a hospital. St. John Chrysostom wrote in the fourth century, "For indeed the school of the Church is an admirable surgery — a surgery, not for bodies, but for souls. For it is spiritual, and sets right, not fleshly wounds, but errors of the mind... This medicine is compounded, not from the herbs growing on the earth, but from the words proceeding from heaven — this...tongues of preachers have dispensed." Many modern Christians may see this imagery as a way for the Church to excuse our sinfulness or relieve ourselves of responsibility for the pain that we cause ourselves and others. It is quite the opposite. Like the recent burst of interest in natural foods, there is a similar spiritual hunger spreading across the country, a hunger for truth, no matter how demanding or convicting.

Orthodox Christians believe that salvation is a process comprised of purification, sanctification and *theosis* (union with God)—in that order. We see sin as an illness that needs healing, more than a debt that must be paid. This



understanding transforms the way that we live and the way we relate to God and others. We are not constantly struggling to bring our "account" with God back into the black. However, we believe that God expects us to make actual progress in our salvation, which changes our attitude and worldview from that of a minimalist or as the Apostle Paul terms, a "slave" (what is the least I can do and still go to heaven) to that of a son (what more can I do to express my love and devotion). Orthodoxy



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is a holistic way of life—we believe in faith and works, the Bible as interpreted by Tradition, a personal and a corporate relationship with God.

It was these ancient, yet revolutionary truths that resonated with the small group of Christians who converted to Orthodoxy in 2007 and formed the mission that became St. Patrick's Orthodox Church here in Warrenton. The new mission was made up of former laity and several clergy from

the Charismatic Episcopal Church (CEC). Their search, as well as a long history of interest in the Antiochian Orthodox Church, led them to visit the clergy conference at the Antiochian Village in the summer of 2006. Bishop Thomas, who oversees the Mid-Atlantic region of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, began to explore with them the possibility of beginning an Orthodox mission and visited them in the fall. Fr. Nicholas Alford of St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church in Washington, DC agreed to hold catechism classes for the group. The congregation began worshipping in a borrowed sanctuary with the kind agreement and generosity of Christ Church in Warrenton. We are now enjoying a beautiful space behind Fox Den Antiques. Saint Patrick's is currently working with the county to convert a building into a church just a few miles south of Warrenton on Route 17.

St. Patrick's is a part of the Western Rite Vicariate of the Antiochian Orthodox Church. Antioch is one of the earliest centers of Christianity after Jerusalem. This is the city where the Apostles Paul and Barnabas were sent out on their missionary journeys, and according to Acts 11:26, Antioch is where the disciples were first called Christians. The Church of Antioch remains till this day with an unbroken line of apostolic Christianity; this is the church into which St. Patrick's was graciously received. The Orthodox Church has approved the restoration of the ancient liturgies that

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originated in the West, and these form the basis of Western Rite worship. The Western Rite provides a home for those who desire to worship in a culturally familiar tradition without compromising the universal truth of the Orthodox faith. The Western Rite has grown by four new missions this past year and the mission in Warrenton is the first of several CEC congregations coming into the Church. As far as we know this is the first Orthodox Church in Warrenton, one of the fastest growing cities in Virginia.

St. Patrick's Orthodox Church is strongly committed to being a vibrant witness of the Orthodox faith to their community. The congregation is made up of seniors, young singles and couples, families and many children. In Orthodoxy, the path of salvation is clear: we confess our sins regularly, we partake in our Lord's Body, we read (and sing) the Scriptures, we feed and clothe the poor, we fast, and we pray that we may be continually more filled with love for God and man. The men and women hold separate group meetings to read and discuss books on different aspects of our faith. We have a dynamic youth group that engages the community with frequent events, such as food drives for the local poor, fundraisers for overseas orphanages, theatrical productions, Bible Bowls, talent shows and workshops on topics like purity and spiritual discipline. On any given Sunday morning, you will first hear the service through the walls of the antique mall—voices, from the very young to the very old, raised to form the melodious strains of a Gregorian chant or western hymn. Mothers ensure that even the infants are present for the reading of the Gospel as the incense wafts up into the rafters. Fr. Patrick offers a homily,

then all join in the confession of faith and prayers to prepare for the Holy Sacrament. All present can feel the power and grace of God in the dynamism of the same liturgy—Scripture, prayers, confession of faith, Eucharist—that has been followed since the days of Christ's Apostles. It is the same as it has always been.


A common mantra among today's champions of farmer's markets, organic food brands, and home herb gardens is, "Stop eating dead food!" The existing definitions vary, but "dead

food" generally refers to food that is processed, stripped of nutrients, then packed with hormones, additives, and preservatives. It is food that has been manipulated to simultaneously meet the ever escalating demands of our schedules, our cravings, and our wallets. Live foods are just that--

when we consume them, we are actually absorbing living cells into our bodies, which then transfer still active nutrients into our blood stream. It takes a good amount of work for the microwave generation to purchase and prepare live foods, yet people are going to great lengths to make the change. The notion is considered profound and revolutionary, yet eating living foods was what we did in the beginning—it is what comes naturally to us.

It is not coincidental that Orthodoxy has been described as "organic." It is quite true that many things within orthodoxy may not be neatly packaged, attractively presented or user-friendly. However, that is to be expected in a living organism--Orthodoxy is the way of the Church of Christ. It is not easy, but it is pure, authentic, dynamic and alive.




Saint Patrick Orthodox Church
 ANTIOCHIAN ARCHDIOCESE WESTERN RITE
"the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" Acts 11:26
SaintPatrickOrthodox.org 540.349.8009

This is our Orthodox life. If your soul hungers for a sustaining, unchanged, yet living truth--please come see us, there is plenty for everyone.

For more information, contact Fr. Patrick Cardine at (703) 819-0093 or visit our web site at www.stpatrickorthodox.org.

Service times: Saturday Vespers at 6:30 p.m. and Sunday services begin at 9:00 a.m.