



FROM THE AMBIVON

ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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March 31st, 2024 - SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 2. St. Gregory Palamas. Synaxis of the Venerable Fathers of the Kiev Caves Lavra. Repose of St. Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow, Enlightener of the Aleuts and Apostle to the Americas (1879).

Birthdays & Anniversaries for March

Birthdays: Maura Elko (3/2); Matushka Emilia Shepherd (3/3); Tammy Wytovich (3/4); Marie Pasternak (3/7);

Nameday: Diane Buranich (3/19)

Anniversary:

Baptism:

Travelers:

Prospora Schedule: HELP! We need families to start baking prospora at home. Please sign up. *The Church has a prospora kit if you would like to borrow it. We will need more prospora during Great Lent for the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesdays.*

Mar 31 Emily Hart

April 7th Fr Michael

April 14th

Counting: HELP! Please sign up and help our Maura Elko count.

Mar 31 Patti Jones

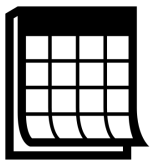
April 7th

April 14th

Visitors: PLEASE JOIN US DOWNSTAIRS for an Agape Meal. Thank you to everyone who donated. Please donate what you would spend for lunch at the agape meal to replenish our supplies

PLEASE SING ALONG! Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies throughout the services is encouraged!

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive themselves by prayer, fasting, and a recent (monthly) confession. If you have questions please ask Fr Michael! Visitors, if you did not introduce yourself to Fr Michael at Vespers, please refrain from Holy Communion.*



Service Schedule

(Please refer to Calendar)

MON, Apr 1st: @ 5:00PM Great Compline

WED, Apr 3rd: @ 5:00PM Presanctified Liturgy

FRI, Apr 5th: @ 5:00PM Little Compline

SAT, Apr 6th: Great Vespers & Matins w/confessions 4:50PM

SUN, Apr 7th: @ 9:10 AM - Hours and Divine Liturgy

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 3. Veneration of the Cross



Words of Wisdom

From the Saints & Teachers

Today Readings

Epistle: Hebrews 7:26-8:2

Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Gospel: John 9:9-16

Mark 2:1-12

The Orthodox Experience of Repentance - Fr Stephen Kostoff

Dear Parish Faithful,

This life has been given you for repentance. Do not waste it on other things. ~ St. Isaac the Syrian

Repentance is a great understanding. ~ The Shepherd of Hermas

The springtime of the Fast has dawned, the flower of repentance has begun to open. ~ Vespers of Cheesefare Week

As we fast approach the beginning of Great Lent, I strongly encourage you to read the passage below from Archbishop Kallistos Ware. It is a medley of excerpts from a great article of his entitled "The Orthodox Experience of Repentance." I believe that it takes us way beyond the common understanding of repentance (often confused with the idea of penitence).

To repent is to look, not downward at my own shortcomings, but upward at God's love; not backward with self-reproach, but forward with trustfulness. It is to see, not what I have failed to be, but what by the grace of Christ I can yet become....Repentance, then, is an illumination, a transition from darkness to light; to repent is to open our eyes to the divine radiance - not to sit dolefully in the twilight but to greet the dawn ...

The connection between repentance and the advent of the great light is particularly significant. Until we have seen the light of Christ, we cannot really see our sins. So long as a room is in darkness, observes St. Theophan the Recluse, we do not notice the dirt; but when we bring a powerful light into the room - when, that is, we stand before the Lord in our heart - we can distinguish every speck of dust. So it is with the room of our soul. The sequence is not to repent first, and then to become aware of Christ; for it is only when the light of Christ has already in some measure entered our life that we begin truly to understand our sinfulness. To repent, says St. John of Kronstadt, is to know that there is a lie in our heart; but how can we detect the presence of a lie unless we have already some sense of the truth? In the words of E. I. Watkin, "Sin ... is the shadow cast by the light of God intercepted by any attachment of the will which prevents it illuminating the soul. Thus knowledge of God gives rise to the sense of sin, not vice versa." As the Desert Fathers observe, "The closer we come to God, the more we see that we are sinners." And they cite Isaiah as an example of this: first he sees the Lord on His throne and hears the seraphim crying "Holy, holy, holy;" and it is only after this vision that he exclaims, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips" (Is. 6:1-5)

Such, then, is the beginning of repentance: a vision of beauty, not of ugliness; an awareness of God's glory, not of my own squalor.

Repentance reaches its culmination in the Sacrament of Confession. As the parish continues to grow, it is becoming something of a challenge to hear everyone's confession during Great Lent! That is why I am requesting that we spread things out a bit, and that in addition to Saturday evening as the time of Confession, you may also look to some other

possibilities: before the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays (Friday of the first week of Lent); the service on Friday evenings; and daytime visits to the church.

Those of you who have not been to Confession since last Great Lent - a year ago, that is - should only approach the Chalice after you have restored your relationship with the Church through the Sacrament of Confession. "Redeem the time," and make this Great Lent a time to overcome any misgivings, spiritual forgetfulness or plain procrastination.

A Guide to the Triodion & Lent

8. Second Sunday of Great Lent - Sunday of St Gregory of Palamas

On the Second Sunday of the Fast, we celebrate the memory of our Father among the Saints, Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica.

The situation in St. Gregory's time was that Orthodoxy was being debased; it was becoming worldly and being changed into either pantheism or agnosticism. Pantheism believed and taught that God in His essence was to be found in all nature, and so when we look at nature we can acquire knowledge of God.

Agnosticism believed and taught that it was utterly impossible for us to know God, just because He is God and man is limited, and therefore man was completely incapable of attaining a real knowledge of God. In the face of this great danger St. Gregory Palamas developed the fundamental teaching of the Church concerning the great mystery of the indivisible distinction between the essence and energy of God.

All spiritual life is a result and fruit of the energy of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the saint taught, we cannot participate in God's essence, but we can know and participate in His uncreated energies. In this way St. Gregory preserves the true teaching of the Church.

The common mind of the Church recognizes St. Gregory Palamas as a great Father of the Church, an Ecumenical teacher, and includes him among the great Theologians of the Church.

Announcements - Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events



Silent Prayers and Confession: Every Wednesday 11:00AM - 1:30PM or after vespers. You can make an appt for confession.

Catechumen/Inquirers/Continuing ED Class: Icon Class 3-4:30

Church Work Day: Every Friday is Church Maintenance day. Come help! Please come and help maintain the Church and its grounds.

Monthly Panikhida: No Panikhida.

Parish Council Meeting: 07April - All are invited.

Lenten Movie Night: 5Apr after Little Compline - **Man of God:** depicts the trials and tribulations of Saint Nektarios of Aegina, as he bears the unjust hatred of his enemies while preaching the Word of God. Drinks and popcorn will be provided.

Change in Schedule to Holy Week:

Monday morning: Pre-Sanctified Liturgy at St. Michael in Jermyn

Tuesday morning: Pre-Sanctified Liturgy at All Saints in Olyphant

Wednesday morning: Pre-Sanctified Liturgy at St. Michael In Old Forge

Wednesday evening: Holy Unction at St. Nicholas in Olyphant

Thursday: 8am Hours and Vespertal Liturgy with Consecration of Holy Chrism

National Orthodox Baby Shower: St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Olyphant is participating in the Orthodox Christians for Life National Orthodox Baby Shower. It is held in conjunction with the Feast of the Annunciation. We will be collecting items through the end of the month, and will be delivered to Providence Pregnancy Resource Center in Scranton in early April. Items will be collected through March 31st. OCLife requires we give new and unused items, and the PRC said that they give needy families baby clothes from size 1 to 4t, with more need in the size 1 category.

Diapers and wipes are always needed. You may bring items and leave them in the Narthex / Vestibule this week or next Sunday, March 31st.

Pascha Flowers: Donations towards adorning the church this Lenten season and Pascha are being accepted so that our parish will be beautifully adorned for all of the feasts. General Donations for Palm Sunday may be given to Maura Elko. Please write "Flowers for Lent" in the memo. If you would like to honor a loved one by making a donation for Holy Pascha flowers "In Memory of" or "For the Health of" a loved one, please sign up in the Church Vestibule/Narthex. Please leave donations at the candle stand, mail them to the Church, OR drop it in the rectory mailbox attention Maura Elko. As always, your loved ones will be remembered in our services in prayer. Envelopes can be picked at the candle stand.

How Much is my tith

Weekly	2%	4%	5%	10%
\$200	\$4	\$8	\$10	\$20
\$500	\$10	\$20	\$25	\$50
\$750	\$15	\$30	\$37	\$75
\$1000	\$20	\$40	\$50	\$100
\$1500	\$30	\$60	\$75	\$150

WEEKLY GIVING UPDATE: We thank you for your continued giving in gratitude for all that our loving God does for each of us, for His Holy Church, **and** all the blessings we receive through her.
March Income: \$15,551.00
March Expenses: \$17,248.85
Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$3,740.85
Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$14,963.58

Parish Prayer List

Newly Departed: *Nicole Serniak Cochrane (2/11); Sabina Maguerite Weiss (2/17)*

Departed: *Stephen Polanchik (3/3); Joseph Kuzmich (3/8); Diane Yacopchak 03/11); Michael Buday (3/18); Michael Brown (3/15)*

Please remember in your prayers LIVING

Ill-afflicted *Archpriests Michael Evans, John Nightingale, & Theodore Orzolek*

All those caring for the sick and suffering at this time throughout the world, especially our families and friends: *David Lezinsky, John Pritchyk, Christine Sevensky, Mike Jadick, Margaret Pregmon, Daniel Jones, Matushka Paula Soucek, Michael Sokol; Michael Krenitsky; The children of God Abigail and Nathan.*

Servants of God *Mark Bezhuly, David Barsigian, Patricia Jones, Anne Buday, Mary Krevko, Gregory Krevko, Emily Krenitsky, Gregory Krenitsky, Barbara Sevensky, Bernie & Beverly Elko, Sandra Condon, Marie Pasternak, Ann Tyrpak, Sandy & Danny Pregmon, Walter Pritchyk, Michael & Euphemia Keklak, Justin & Elisabeth Kane, Maria & Vitaliy Rakovsky, Ekaterina & Anna, Joe & Kelly Cigna, George, Natasha, Rosa, & Lucia Coyoy, Paul & MaryAnn Newmeyer, Mat. Emilia, Blaise, Maximus, Rodion, Savina Shepherd, Joseph, Emilia, Judah, Nadezda, & Silas Hart, Eli & Paula Stavisky, Helen Wytovich, Tammy Wytovich, Charissa & Debra, Nadia Macheska, Paulette Ezbiansky, Maura Elko*

Seekers - *Paul, Christopher, Eugene, Mike, Brayden, Barbara*

Catechumen - *Jason Vo, Santo Joseph Cerminaro, Mikayla Brown, JoAnne Snopek & Paul Dunay*

Please welcome our newest catechumen Paul Dunay and please also welcome home Mark Bezhuly as he was received back into the church by rite of confession. WELCOME HOME!

CONFESSION: It is important that every Orthodox Christian continues to receive the Mystery of Confession on a monthly basis and especially during the Lenten season. In the coming weeks, Fr. Michael will be available for Confession on Wednesdays, after the Liturgy of the Presanctified, after Great Vespers (Sat), or by appointment. If you wish to come before these services, please let him know ahead of time. Please, note that Friday, April 26th (the day before Lazarus Saturday) is the last day when Fr. Michael will hear Confessions before Pascha. When we enter Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, our focus must be exclusively on walking with our Lord through His passion.