



# FROM THE AMBON

## ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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March 2nd, 2025 - SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE — Tone 3. Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia (ca. 320). St. Arsenius, Bishop of Tver (1409). Virgin Martyr Euthalia of Sicily (257). Martyr Troadius of Neo-Cæsarea (3rd c.). Ven. Agathon of Egypt (5th c.). 400 Martyrs slain by the Lombards in Sicily (579).

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### **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 9 - Harts

Mar 16

**Counting: HELP! Please sign up and count our donations.**

Mar 9

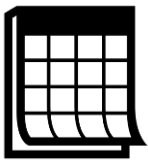
Mar 16 - Tammy

**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!**

***Forgiveness Vespers immediately follows Divine Liturgy Today. Please stay and ask each other for forgiveness to begin Great Lent.***

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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 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)

FIRST WEEK OF GREAT LENT

March 3rd-7th - MON, - THURS: 5:00 PM Great Compline w/Canon of St Andrew

FRI: 5:00 PM Presanctified Liturgy (every Wed after this)

SAT, Mar 8th: 4:50 PM Great Vespers

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

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 1. Sunday of Orthodoxy. 9:30 Divine Liturgy of St Basil - The Procession of the Icons and the reading of the Synodicon will be held at the end of the Divine Liturgy after "Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

SUN, Mar 9th: @ 4:00 PM - Sunday of Orthodoxy: Holy Trinity Wilkes-barre



### *Treasury*

*"... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. Jesus Christ*

### How Much is my tithe

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.

**FEB Income:** \$10,128.00

**FEB Expenses:** \$12,492.42

**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:** *Stephen Krenitsky (2/15); Judith Pasterak (1/28)*

**DEPARTED:** *Stephen Polanchik (3/3); Joseph Kuzmich (3/8); Diane Yacopchak (3/11); Michael Buday (3/18)*

**Please remember in your prayers LIVING:**

Ill-afflicted *Archpriest(s) John Nightingale, & Theodore Orzolek*

**All those caring for the sick and suffering at this time throughout the world, especially our families and friends:** *Christine Sevensky, Margaret Pregmon, Daniel Jones, Michael Sokol; Michael Krenitsky; Bernie Elko; Nadia Macheska; The child of God Abigail.*

**Servants of God:** *Mark Bezhuly, David & Kathy Barsigian, Patricia Jones, Anne Buday, Emily Krenitsky, Gregory Krenitsky, Barbara Sevensky, Beverly Elko, Sandra Condon, Marie Pasternak, Nicole Earl, Anna Tyrpak, Sandy & Danny Pregmon, Walter & Marie Pritchuk, Michael & Euphemia Keklak, Justin & Elisabeth Kane, Maria & Vitaliy Rakovsky, Ekaterina & Anna, Joe & Kelly Cigna, George, Natasha, Rosa, & Lucia Coyoy, Mat. Emilia, Reader Blaise, Maximus, Rodion, Savina Shepherd, Joseph, Emilia, Judah, Nadezda, & Silas Hart, Eli & Paula Stavisky, Helen Wytovich, Tammy Wytovich, Paulette Ezbiensky, Jason Vo & Maura Elko, Mary Krevko, Elisabeth & Jacob Hallford and their unborn child*

**Seekers:** *Eugene, Mike, & Alyssa*

**Catechumens:** *George McCandless,*



Matthew 6:16–23 (ACCS Mt 1-13): 6:16–23 FASTING, TREASURES IN HEAVEN AND THE LIGHT OF THE BODY Overview: Gradually the Sermon on the Mount is leading into more demanding matters. Voluntary poverty could not be adequately dealt with until pride had been treated (Chrysostom). Pride can appear not only in the pomp of worldly wealth but even in the garment of sackcloth, where it is all the more dangerous because it is a deception under the pretense of service to God (Augustine). Some Christians compete with hypocrites in looking dismal while fasting. They do better to fast in secret (Chrysostom). Fix your treasure and your heart on that which will abide forever rather than on something that will pass away (Augustine).

All he has said about prayer and fasting prepares the way for the Lord’s discourse on contempt for riches (Chrysostom). Some treasures corrupt. A thing becomes defiled if it is mixed with a baser substance, even though that other substance is not vile in its own nature. Fix your treasure and your heart on that which will abide forever (Augustine). As in bodily health it is our aim to keep the eye healthy, so also it should be our aim to keep the mind sound in relation to the soul. What the mind is to the soul, that the eye is to the body—its illuminator. As when the eye is blinded, the ability of the other members is diminished, so also when the mind is depraved the soul is vulnerable to countless evils (Chrysostom). The expression “whole body” designates all those works that the Lord reproves and orders us to put to death (Augustine). He calls mammon “a master,” not because of its own nature but on account of the wretchedness of those who bow down before it (Chrysostom).

The love of money wounds the center of your vitality, your soul, your very life, and may overthrow your salvation. In relation to God’s providence, all things about which we are anxious will pass away (Chrysostom). The kingdom of God is the end to be sought above all things. When you perform any good deed, think about its eternal consequence and pay no heed to the temporal (Augustine). The intrinsic value of life is not comparable to any temporal or physical reality. The Lord shows how great is the value set upon personal existence (Chrysostom). There is a difference between a good that ought to be sought as an end and a value that ought to be seen as a means. If one’s intention is pure, then unfailingly all our works are good works, because they are performed in accordance with that intention. Cleanse the intention of your heart from all duplicity. Seek the Lord in simplicity of heart (Augustine).

### **A Guide to the Triodion & Lent**

#### **4. Fourth Sunday of Triodion - Forgiveness Sunday**

On the same day, we commemorate the banishment of Adam, the First-formed man, from the Paradise of delight. Our Holy Fathers appointed this commemoration before the Holy Fast, as if to show in actual fact how beneficial the medicine of fasting is to human nature, and also how great is the shame of gluttony and disobedience. Passing over all the individual sins committed in the world on account of him, as being without number, the Fathers set forth how much evil Adam, the first-formed man, suffered from not fasting even for a brief time, and how much evil he thereby brought upon our race, clearly pointing out also that the virtue of fasting was the first commandment that God gave to mankind.

Not keeping this commandment, but yielding to his belly, or rather, through Eve, to the deceitful serpent, Adam not only did not become God, but also incurred death and transmitted corruption to the whole human race. Because of the self-indulgence of the first Adam, the Lord fasted for forty days and was obedient. For this

reason, the present Holy Fast was designed by the Holy Apostles, in order that we might enjoy incorruption, through fasting, by keeping the commandment which he did not keep, thereby suffering the loss of incorruption. Furthermore, as we said previously, the aim of the Saints is to encompass in brief the works wrought by God from the beginning to the end. Since Adam's transgression and his expulsion from the Paradise of delight were the cause of all our woes, for this reason they now set this transgression before us, so that, remembering it, we might avoid it and not in any way emulate his incontinence.

On this day, after Vespers – after hearing the announcement of Lent in the Great Prokeimenon: "Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted! Hear me speedily! Draw near unto my soul and deliver it!", after making our entrance into Lenten worship, with its special memories, with the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations – we ask forgiveness from each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation.

### **Announcements - Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events**



**Archpastoral Visit:** Please plan on being here on 29/30Mar to welcome His Eminence, Archbishop Mark as he will be visiting us and offering his prayers and love for His Church.

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

**Catechumen/Inquirers/Continuing ED Class:** No Catechumen class today.

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

**Monthly Panikhida:** Every Friday in Lent will be a Panikhida

**Parish Council Meeting:** Vladyka has asked that we not do any parish council meetings during Great Lent. He wants us to focus on our Lenten Journey to be prepared, as much as possible, for Pascha.

**This year we will take a break from any Lenten activity. I would like us to slow down and focus on our spiritual growth.**

#### **Mission Vespers:**

Sunday of Orthodoxy - Holy Trinity, Wilkes-Barre - 4 PM - Fr Michael Shepherd

Sunday of the Cross - Holy Annunciation, Berwick - 4 PM - Fr William Rusk

Sunday of Mary of Egypt - All Saints, Olyphant - 4 PM - Fr Vjekoslav Jovicic

**Remember** that at the Great Entrance when the priest raises the chalice and says "You and all Orthodox Christians, may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom..... the people respond with "And to thy Holy Priesthood, may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom always now and ever unto ages of ages." This is dialogue, a pray if you will, between the concelebrant and the people. Please pray for me!

There will be a women's brunch after Pascha sometime. Please See Tammy about this.

April 20th, Pascha, we have Pavilion #1 reserved and we will have Agape Vespers. There will a pot luck picnic along with activities for the children. Please come out and have fellowship.

I will start a 5 Minute Orthodoxy 101 at coffee hour. This will be done with a question box. People can write down questions and place it in the box and I will answer the question, to the best of my ability at coffee hour.

THE RULES OF FASTING - Excerpts

...Neither in ancient nor in modern times has there ever been exact uniformity, but most Orthodox authorities agree on the following rules:

1. During the week between the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee and that of the Prodigal Son, there is generally a fast free period. Meat and animal products may be eaten even on Wednesday and Friday.
2. In the following week, often termed the 'Meatfare', the usual fast is kept on Wednesday and Friday. Otherwise there is no special fasting.
3. In the Week before Lent, 'Cheesefare', meat is forbidden, but eggs, cheese and other dairy products may be eaten on all days, including Wednesday and Friday.
4. On weekdays (Monday to Friday inclusive) during the seven weeks of Lent, there are restrictions both on the number of meals taken daily and on the types of food permitted; but when a meal is allowed, there is no fixed limitation on the quantity of food to be eaten.

(A) On weekdays in the first week, fasting is particularly severe. According to the strict observance, in the course of the five initial days of Lent, only two meals are eaten, one on Wednesday and the other on Friday, in both cases after the Liturgy of the Presanctified. On the other three days, those who have the strength are encouraged to keep an absolute fast; those for whom this proves impracticable may eat on Tuesday and Thursday (but not, if possible, on Monday), in the evening after Vespers, when they may take bread and water, or perhaps tea or fruit-juice, but not a cooked meal. It should be added at once that in practice today these rules are commonly relaxed. At the meals on Wednesday and Friday xerophagy (a form of fasting that involves eating only dry food, such as bread, salt, water, and vegetable) is prescribed. Literally this means 'dry eating'. Strictly interpreted, it signifies that we may eat only vegetables cooked with water and salt, and also such things as fruit, nuts, bread and honey. In practice, octopus and shell-fish are also allowed on days of xerophagy; likewise vegetable margarine and corn or other vegetable oil, not made from olives. But the following categories of food are definitely excluded:

- (i) meat;
- (ii) animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard, dripping);
- (iii) fish (i.e. fish with backbones)
- (iv) oil (i.e. olive oil) and wine (i.e. all alcoholic drinks).

(B) On weekdays (Monday to Friday inclusive) in the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth weeks, one meal a day is permitted, to be taken in the afternoon following Vespers, and at this one meal xerophagy is to be observed.

(C) Holy Week. On the first three days there is one meal each day, with xerophagy; but some try to keep a complete fast on these days, or else they eat only uncooked food, as on the opening days of the first week.

On Holy Thursday one meal is eaten, with wine and oil (i.e. olive oil).

On Great Friday those who have the strength follow the practice of the early Church and keep a total fast. Those unable to do this may eat bread, with a little water, tea or fruit-juice, but not until sunset, or at any rate not until after the veneration of the Plasztanitzta at Vespers.

On Holy Saturday there is in principle no meal, since according to the ancient practice after the end of the Liturgy of St. Basil the faithful remained in church for the reading of the Acts of the Apostles, and for their sustenance were given a little bread and dried fruit, with a cup of wine. If, as usually happens now, they return

home for a meal, they may use wine but not oil; for on this one Saturday, alone among the Saturdays of the year, olive oil is not permitted.

The rule of xerophagy is relaxed on the following days:

(1) On Saturdays and Sundays in Lent, with the exception of Holy Saturday, two main meals may be taken in the usual way, around mid-day and in the evening, with wine and olive oil; but meat, animal products and fish are not allowed.

(2) On the Feast of the Annunciation (25 March) and Palm Sunday, fish is permitted as well as wine and oil, but meat and animal products are not allowed. If the Feast of the Annunciation falls on the first four days of Holy Week, wine and oil are permitted but not fish. If it falls on Great Friday or Holy Saturday, wine is permitted, but not fish or oil.

(3) Wine and oil are permitted on the following days, if they fall on a weekday in the second, third, fourth, fifth or sixth week:

First and Second Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist (Feb 24)

St. Raphael of Brooklyn (Feb 27)

Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (Mar 09)

St. Nikolai of Zicha (Mar 18)

Forefeast of the Annunciation (Mar 24)

Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel (Mar 26)

St. Innocent of Moscow, Apostle to America (Mar 31)

St. Tikhon of Moscow, the Confessor (Apr 07)

Patronal festival of the Church or Monastery; or perhaps other local Saint

(4) Wine and oil are also allowed on Wednesday and Thursday in the fifth week, because of the vigil for the Great Canon. Wine is allowed - and, according to some authorities, oil as well - on Friday in the same week, because of the vigil for the Akathist Hymn.

It has always been held that these rules of fasting should be relaxed in the case of anyone elderly or in poor health. In present-day practice, even for those in good health, the full strictness of the fast is usually mitigated. Only a few Orthodox today attempt to keep a total fast on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday in the first week, or on the first three days in Holy Week. On weekdays - except, perhaps, during the first week or Holy Week - it is now common to eat two cooked meals daily instead of one. From the second until the sixth week, many Orthodox use wine, and perhaps oil also, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and less commonly on Mondays as well. Permission is often given to eat fish in these weeks. Personal factors need to be taken into account, as for example the situation of an isolated Orthodox living in the same household as non-Orthodox, or obliged to take meals in a factory or school canteen. In cases of uncertainty each should seek the advice of his or her spiritual father. At all times it is essential to bear in mind that “you are not under the law but under grace” (Rom 6, 14), and that “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3, 6). The rules of fasting, while they need to be taken seriously, are not to be interpreted with dour and pedantic legalism; “for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14, 17).