



FROM THE AMBON

ST MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

512 WINTER ST., OLD FORGE, PA

Phone: 570-457-3703

Web: www.stmichaelof.org Facebook: [stmichaelof1891PA](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelof1891PA)

Priest Michael Shepherd (frmichael@stmichaelof.org)

Chair - Tammy Wytovich (chair@stmichaelof.org)

Vice Chair - Danny Pregmon (vicechair@stmichaelof.org)

Secretary - Vitaliy Rakovsky (office@stmichaelof.org)

Treasurer - Joseph Hart (treasurer@stmichaelof.org)

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).

Birthdays & Anniversaries for March

Birthdays: Maura Elko (3/2); Matushka Emilia Shepherd (3/3); Tammy Wytovich (3/4); Marie Pasternak (3/7); Elizabeth Kane (3/31); George McCandless (3/31)

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.

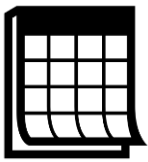
Mar 9

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.

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

WED, MAR 12th: 5:00 PM Presanctified Liturgy

SAT, Mar 15th: 4:50 PM Great Vespers

SUN, Mar 16th: @ 9:10 AM - Hours and Divine Liturgy

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 5. St. Gregory Palamas.

SUN, Mar 9th: @ 4:00 PM - Sunday of the Cross - Holy Annunciation, Berwick



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.

MAR Income: \$2,505.00

MAR Expenses: \$3,994.48

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 Ezbiansky, Jason Vo & Maura Elko, Mary Krevko, Elisabeth & Jacob Hallford and their unborn child, Tammy Derek, Justin, Niko, and Katya Williams*

Seekers: *Eugene, Mike, & Alyssa*

Catechumens: *Christopher & Neva Yeisley, Gabriel Mears, Maxim Granville*



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.

Defending the Synodikon - Fr Lawrence Farley

Recently, on the First Sunday of Great Lent, we read the *Synodikon* in church—well, actually just a tiny snippet of it dealing with the legitimacy of icons and that this faith had established the world, while offering a heartfelt “Memory

Eternal” for those who had died defending it. We did not read the entire *Synodikon*, because it is quite long and lists a lot of heresies unrelated to the icons we were holding in procession at the time, and it contained a lot of very unfamiliar names of people who were being anathematized. Reading the names would have felt to my flock rather like reading pages out of the phone book, and since both those being commended with “Memory Eternal!” as well as those being reproached with “Anathema!” were utter strangers to them, I just read the bit about the icons. Those wanting to peruse the entire text may find it here.

Though I did not read the entire *Synodikon* liturgically last Sunday, I am still glad that it exists and that we acknowledge its worth by at least reading *some* of it. The point of the *Synodikon* is to draw very thick lines in the doctrinal sand and say that if anybody in the Church crosses those lines and strays into heresy, he or she must either recant or get out, and it is precisely this approach to truth that is necessary and saving. It is also tremendously unpopular. I remember recently reading a modern scholar who was quoting a line from one of the Fathers who was denouncing heretics. The scholar put the word *heretics* in quotation marks—i.e. “heretics”—to stress that the term was the Father’s, and not hers. She didn’t quite add the term “(sic)” after it to indicate how foolish she thought the term was, but she might as well have. It was abundantly clear that she thought the term and the concept it represented to be archaic, harmful, and more than a little narrow-minded. It certainly flew in the face of current canons of political correctness.

Those canons are based on a form of pluralism that says I’m theologically okay and you’re theologically okay, regardless of what you assert. It says that there is not just a legitimate diversity of opinion (which of course there is), but also that the legitimate diversity is so broad that pretty much anything goes, at least in the towers of Academia in which our author was writing. The idea of saying to anyone, either in those towers or out on the street, “Your opinion is heretical,” strikes the average person as not only absurd, but in supremely bad taste. They want to know if you’re in favor of reviving the Inquisition and burning witches. You can’t use the h-word in civilized company any more than you could use other abusive labels.

Undergirding this attitude is the notion that heresy is just a simple mistake, akin to someone adding up a long column of figures and getting the sum wrong, or missing a question from the game “Jeopardy.” Those enforcing the new canons of political correctness view the work of theologians with their precise definitions (such as we find in abundance in the *Synodikon*) as the work of people with altogether too much time on their hands who have produced formulas that have nothing to do with actual life. Dogma, and the Church’s insistence upon correct dogma, they say, are irrelevant to Christian living. It is not so.

Here I remember the observations of Dorothy Sayers, famous as the creator of the detective Lord Peter Wimsey. In her address *Creed or Chaos?* she presents the case of John and Jane Doe who are considering junking Christ’s ethical teaching as impossible and impractical “because,” says John, “if He was God all the time, He must have known that His suffering and death and so on wouldn’t last, and He could have stopped them by a miracle if He had liked, so His pretending to be an ordinary man was nothing but playacting.” Adds Jane Doe: “It was easy enough for Him to be good, but it’s not at all the same thing for me. How about all that temptation stuff? Playacting again. It doesn’t help me to live what you call a Christian life.” Sayers points out that John and Jane have swallowed the heresy of Apollinarianism, which states that Christ had no soul like ours, but that the divine Logos took the place of a human soul in Him. As it turns out, heresy has practical effects on living the Christian life. That is why the theologians went to such lengths to refute it and declare it out of court for Christians. It was not just a mania for unnecessary exactitude, but pastoral care for souls like John and Jane Doe.

So it is that we Orthodox need to retain the category of “heresy,” whether or not we read large chunks of the *Synodikon*. The spirit that produced it is rare these pluralistic days in which every person does what is right in his or her own eyes. All the more reason to cling to that spirit when we find it.

Sunday of Orthodoxy

THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY ICONS

Procession Order: A single altar server bearing a candle / lantern - processional cross - banners of Christ & Theotokos - all other altar servers with candles - the deacon with his censer - the bishop, priests, and other clergy bearing icons - the choir - all the other faithful bearing icons.

The procession will go around the entire church, stopping at each of the four sides. The choir sings the Troparion of the Sunday of Orthodoxy leading up to each stop. The clergy then offer a litany.

TROPARION - SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One;
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God.
Of Thine own will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in
the flesh
and deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the Enemy.
Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee:
“Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior,//
by coming to save the world.”

THE LITANY (AT THE FIRST STOP)

Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great mercy, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.
Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)
Priest: Again we pray for all pious and Orthodox Christians.
Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)
Priest: Again we pray for our His Beatitude, Our Metropolitan N., and His Eminence, our Archbishop N.
Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)
Priest: Thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.
Choir: Amen.

The Procession continues while singing the Troparion.

THE LITANY (AT THE SECOND STOP)

Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great mercy, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.
Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)
Priest: Again we pray for our brethren: the priests, deacons, and all other clergy and for our brotherhood in Christ.
Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)
Priest: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation and pardon and remission of sins for all Orthodox Christians of true worship, who live and dwell in this community.
Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)
Priest: For Thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.
Choir: Amen.

The Procession continues while singing the Troparion.

TROPARION - SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One;

and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God.
Of Thine own will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in
the flesh
and deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the Enemy.
Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee:
“Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior,//
by coming to save the world.”

THE LITANY (AT THE THIRD STOP)

Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great mercy, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)

Priest: Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy church and for all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us, who here and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)

Priest: Again we pray for those who bear fruit and do good works in this holy and all- venerable temple, those who serve and those who sing, and for all the people here present, who await Thy great and rich mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)

Priest: For Thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

The Procession continues while singing the Troparion.

THE LITANY (AT THE FOURTH STOP)

Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great mercy, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)

Priest: Again we pray for the ever-memorable Orthodox patriarchs, kings and rulers, and all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us, who here and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord.

Choir: Memory eternal. (*Thrice*)

Priest: For Thou art the Resurrection, and the Life, and the Repose of Thy departed servants, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thy Father, Who is from everlasting, and Thine All-Holy, and good, and life-giving Spirit: now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

The Procession returns inside the Church and to the solea as the choir sings the Troparion for the final time. Once the Procession and the choir have concluded, the presiding hierarch (if none present, the senior priest) reads the excerpt from the Synodicon.

THE SYNODICON: THE AFFIRMATION OF THE ORTHODOX FAITH

As the Prophets beheld, as the Apostles have taught, as the Church has received, as the Teachers have dogmatized, as the universe has agreed, as Grace has shown forth, as Truth has revealed, as falsehood has been dissolved, as Wisdom has presented, as Christ has awarded: thus we declare, thus we assert, thus we preach Christ our true God, and honor His Saints in words, in writings, in thoughts, in sacrifices, in churches, in Holy Icons; on the one hand worshiping and reverencing Christ as God and Lord; and on the other hand honoring as true servants of the same Lord of all, and accordingly offering them veneration. This is the Faith of the Apostles; this is the Faith of the Fathers; this is the Faith of the Orthodox; this is the Faith which has established the universe!