



The Weekly Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

301 Struthers Liberty Rd

Campbell, OH 44405

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest



February Bulletin Sponsor

In memory of my brother Danny's birthday ~ Given by Melanie Yannito

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, February 23

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Choir Rehearsal /
Church School / Pot-luck social organized by
Council (see Nancy T)

Saturday, March 1

6:00 PM: Vespers / Confessions

Sunday, March 2

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy followed by Forgiveness
Vespers / Social

CONFESSIONS

Please make an appointment to come to Confession during the times posted.

Confessions will be heard -

- ◆ before and after Vespers and all Lenten Services (except Pre-Sanctified Liturgy).
- ◆ only be heard before the Pre-sanctified Liturgy.

The last day for confessions will be Lazarus Saturday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy.

SOCIALS FOR MARCH

March 2 'O' Club sponsoring Cheesefare Sunday

March 9 Currently no one has offered to sponsor this Sunday

March 16 Sisterhood sponsoring this Sunday

March 23 Currently no one has offered to sponsor this Sunday

March 30 Council will sponsor this Sunday

NOTE: 'O' Club Kolachi Baking (March 31-April 5)

NOTE: All socials are to be strict fast during the Great Fast.

Easter / Christmas Offering 2024

Pascha offering = \$9,760

Christmas offering = \$3,540

RESOURCES FOR GREAT LENT

Beloved in the Lord,

As we approach Great Lent I wanted to help prepare and encourage you with this email of various resources for your Lenten journey.

The season of Great Lent is the time of preparation for the feast of the Resurrection of Christ. It is the living symbol of man's entire life which is to be fulfilled in his own resurrection from the dead with Christ. It is a time of renewed devotion: of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is a time of repentance, a real renewal of our minds, hearts and deeds in conformity with Christ and his teachings. It is the time, most of all, of our return to the great commandments of loving God and our neighbors.

In the Orthodox Church, Great Lent is not a season of morbidity and gloominess. On the contrary, it is a time of joyfulness and purification. We are called to "anoint our faces" and to "cleanse our bodies as we cleanse our souls." The very first hymns of the very first service of Great Lent set the proper tone of the season:

"Let us begin the lenten time with delight . . . let us fast from passions as we fast from food, taking pleasure in the good words of the Spirit, that we may be granted to see the holy passion of Christ our God and his holy Pascha, spiritually rejoicing."

"Thy grace has arisen upon us, O Lord, the illumination of our souls has shown forth; behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the time of repentance" (Vespers Hymns).

It is our repentance that God desires, not our remorse. We sorrow for our sins, but we do so in the joy of God's mercy. We mortify our flesh, but we do so in the joy of our resurrection into life everlasting. We make ready for the resurrection during Great Lent, both Christ's Resurrection and our own. Volume II - Worship The Church Year

Attending Services during Lent

This is the season of a marked increase in divine services. Please simplify, plan ahead, and prepare yourself for attending as many of the services of the Church as possible. I especially encourage a serious effort for laying that groundwork in the first week of Lent. There is a service to attend every day. Take turns with your spouse in attending services. Turn off Netflix, silence your phone notifications, turn off social media give of your time and treasures, eat less,

Continued next page

Office: 330-755-4931 / Cell: 570-212-8747

<https://www.stjohnthebaptist-campbell.org/>

padrebartek@gmail.com

PLEASE KEEP OUR ELDERS OF THE CHURCH & SHUT-INS IN YOUR PRAYERS

Send a "Thinking of You" card or remember their Birthday with a card. If anyone needs to be added, please

Resources for Lent con't previous pg

and pray more. You will discover that Christ is closer to you than you are to yourself...

Praying during Lent

Seek God in prayer. Read the Psalms. Do your morning and evening prayers. Consult the priest and get a prayer rule. Read the homilies by St. Theophan on prayer. Memorize the prayer of St. Ephraim appointed to be read during the weekdays of Lent. Pray and do prostrations. Use your prayer rope! Seek God in prayer.

Fasting during Lent

"Let us fast with a fast pleasing to the Lord. This is the true fast: the casting off of evil, the bridling of the tongue, the cutting off of anger, the cessation of lusts, evil talking, lies and cursing. The stopping of these is the fast true and acceptable." (Monday Vespers of the First Week).

Fast according to the tradition of the Church. Unless you cannot do so, seek advice as to how to enter into the fast. Refrain from unnecessary and excessive food and drink. The Fathers are clear that our war against the passions starts with fasting.

Almsgiving during Lent

Almsgiving is another invaluable pillar of Lent and of our lives in Christ. One of the

Assumptions of the fast is that the money we save through fasting is owed to the poor. Find a way to give, give in secret, give generously, and give from your heart.

Confessions during Lent

We are given 40 days of the Lenten Season before we enter Holy Week. Please make your confession during these 40 days. I am available for confession by appointment as well as after Vespers on Saturdays. I will not be hearing confessions after the evening service on Holy Wednesday, unless there is a particular need (distance, illness, etc.). If you have any questions please let me know!

"Even if we fall a hundred times a day, it does not matter; we must get up and go on walking toward God without looking back." - Elder Thaddeus, *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*

Read the Lives of the Saints

"In the Lives of the Saints are shown numerous but always certain ways of salvation, enlightenment, sanctification, transfiguration, 'christification,' deification; all the ways are shown by which man conquers sin, every sin; conquers passion, every passion; conquers death; conquers the devil, every devil. There is a remedy there for every sin: from every passion — healing, from every death — resurrection, from every devil — deliverance; from all evils — salvation. There is no passion, no sin for which the Lives of the Saints do not show how the passion or sin in question is conquered, mortified, and uprooted." - St. Justin Popovich, *Orthodox Faith & Life in Christ*, "Introduction to the Lives of the Saints"

PRAYER LIST– Updated 2-14

PARISHIONERS: Achilles Arvan / Audrey Chengelis / Helen Colaluca / Joan Cross / Ann Cvercko / Pauline Fesz / Mary Fredericks / George Horodnic / Gianna Hryb / Sue Kennedy / Heidi Kuzemchak / Matushka Helen Psinka / Dorothy Shirilla / Julia Simko / Melanie Yannitto / Marion Zwinski

HIERARCHS & CLERGY: AB Alexander from Dallas / AP James Gleason (Fr.) / AP Michael Rustic / AP Emil Hutyan / Fr. Deacon James Hryb / Fr. Matthew Nyumu & his family & parish

FAMILY & FRIENDS: Mary Ann Bozichovich (Kennedy) / Patty Bozichovich (Vansuch) / Diane Caban (Sirilla) / George Caban (Sirilla) / Donna Chiarelli / Karen Debiec / Paul Demkosky (Fr.) / Trudy Ellmore / Basil Glovinsky (Fr.) / Bruce Harris (Sabol) / Paula Kennedy / Joe Kollar (Fr.) / Andrew LaChard (Jesko) / James Malchisky (Fr.) / Mea Mahan / Mary Mahan / Pauline Meath (Fr.) / Matushka Raisa (Nicoloff) / Teri Petroff (Fr.) / Chris Quotap (Fr.) / Diane Ruff / Julia Shirilla / Bob Smrek (Sirilla) / Emilia Yanitto / Catherine Zile (Fr.) / Brian (Shirilla) / David (Willison) / Drew (Willison) / Eleanor Marie (Vansuch) / Ellen (Clark) / Ellen (Kessler) / Johanna (Tusinac) / Joseph (Vansuch) / Karen (Vansuch) / Katherine (Steffaro) / Kathy (Kolesar) / Katie (Garrity) / Paul (Kolesar) / Paula (Voytilla) / Malakai (Kolesar) / Richard (Tusinac)

MILITARY FAMILY & FRIENDS: Cory Deaton (Fr.) / Alena Grabavoy (Fr.) / Liam Garrity (Zelinsky)

MISCELLANEOUS: Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo) & Archbishop John (Archdiocese of Aleppo) still being held captive & Metropolitan Arseny imprisoned / The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers around the world / Those suffering persecution in Syria, Iraq, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and around the world.

ATTENDANCE: A Comparison - <i>February</i>	2024	2025
1st Week		
Feast Vespers for 3 Hierarchs	No record	6 14
Feast Liturgy for 3 Hierarchs		
Feast for Meeting Vespers	6	7
Liturgy for Meeting	10	50 / 34
2nd Week		
Vespers	9	No Vespers
Liturgy	60 / 46	40 / 28
3rd Week		
Vespers	8	5
Liturgy	54 / 34	38 / 22
Vespers	7	
Liturgy	70 / 47	
5th week		

FEBRUARY Celebrations

Birthday

- 2 Dorothy Shirilla
- 3 Sonia Tsvetkoff / David Dionisio
- 4 Nathaniel Bremer
- 5 Zoland Zile
- 6 Alex Zarynow / Karen Simko
- 10 Mat. Pauline Gemmel / Fr. Eli Bremer
- 11 Lidija Arvan / Marcy Kubancsek / Cindy Ferrick
- 12 Marion Zwinski / AP James Gleason
- 13 Dr. James Hryb
- 14 Matushka Ann Lardas
- 15 Martha Centofanti
- 1 Carol Ruff / Jo Ann Kalantzis / Deena Vansuch
- 17 Nadine Sabo
- 19 Shelly Nicoloff / Vitaly Muzyka
- 20 Julianna Kusinski
- 22 Joey Clark
- 24 Marc Elash
- 25 Sandra Bufalini / Robert Willison
- 26 Andy Basile / Pani Bernadette Zarynow / Basil Glovinsky
- 28 George Rusnak

Anniversary

- 1–2020 His Grace Bishop Andrei of Cleveland
- 9-1969 AP John Steffaro (Priestly ordination)
- 13 John & Maureen Koval
- 14-2004 The Most Blessed Tikhon—Consecration as Bishop
- 28 Michael & Natalia Simko

Names Day

- | | | |
|--------------------|----|---------------|
| 6 Dorothy Shirilla | 10 | Cindy Ferrick |
| 8 Cindy Ferrick | 28 | Maureen Koval |

MARCH Candle & Bulletin Sponsors

NOTE: If anything is missing from the Sponsorships please contact Fr. Andrew ASAP

Bulletin: OPEN

Wine: OPEN

Incense: OPEN

Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light: In memory of George Kolesar– Given by Joann Sirilla & Stacy & Vince Donofrio

Altar Candles: In memory of Andrew Cvercko on the occasion of his birthday- Given by Ann Cvercko

Tetrapod Candles: Open

St. Herman Candles: Commemorating all who participate in the maintenance of the church, the teachers, singers and those who participate in social events. Praying for everyone to love one another.

St. Panteleimon Icon Candles: OPEN

Protection Icon Candles: OPEN

St. John the Baptist Candles: OPEN

Flowers: In memory of sub-deacon John Zelina– OPEN

<u>\$50 per month</u>	<u>\$30 per month</u>	<u>\$25 per month</u>
*Wine	*St. Herman candles	Incense
*Bulletin	*St. Panteleimon Icon candles	
*Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light	*Protection Icon candles	Flowers - \$50 for 2 weeks at a time– <i>Updated</i>
*Altar Candles	*St. John the Baptist candles	
*Tetrapod Candles		

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon Presides at the Consecration of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Colorado Springs, CO

On the weekend of February 8-9, 2025, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon traveled to Colorado Springs, CO, to preside at the consecration of the newly built St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church. Accompanying His Beatitude were Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino, Acting Chancellor and Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, and Protodeacon Peter Ilchuk.

Upon arrival at the Colorado Springs airport, His Beatitude was greeted by His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West; Archpriest Kirill Sokolov, Chancellor of the Diocese of the West; Archpriest Andreas Blom, local Dean and Rector of Holy Theophany Orthodox Church; and Priest Anthony Machnee, Rector of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church.

On Saturday evening, February 8, Great Vespers was served by Fr. Andreas at Holy Theophany Orthodox Church, where over 200 faithful gathered. The responses were sung by the choir of more than 40 singers. At the conclusion of the service, His Beatitude addressed the assembled faithful, reflecting on the spiritual growth of the community and honoring the memory of the founding pastor, Archpriest Anthony Karbo of blessed memory.

Following Great Vespers, the community gathered in the parish hall for a presentation by Hieromonk Vasily (Permiakov), Assistant Professor of Liturgical Theology at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary.

Fr. Vasily spoke on the rite of consecration of churches, the subject of his doctoral dissertation, offering insight into the liturgical significance of the event that would take place the next morning.

On Sunday morning, February 9, His Beatitude presided at the rite of consecration at St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church. The service began at 8:30 AM with the preparation of the Holy Table. Concelebrating with His Beatitude were His Eminence, Fr. Alessandro, Fr. Kirill, Fr. Andreas, Fr. Anthony, and numerous visiting clergy from across the Diocese of the West. The consecration was followed by the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Over 400 faithful from throughout Colorado and neighboring states filled the newly consecrated temple. At the conclusion of the service, His Beatitude congratulated the community on this blessed milestone in the life of Orthodox Christianity in Colorado Springs.

FEBRUARY CHARITY
Wild fires in CA to Greek Cathedral
in Los Angeles

MONTHLY CHARITY FOR 2025
January: **OCMC:** \$900 + \$300 from the church
Total \$1,200
February: **CA Fire Relief:**

FEBRUARY Reposed List

- 1- Jane Sablak (2004) ©
- 1- John Jay Truhan (2004) ©
- 1- Helen Gozur (2006) ©
- 1- Thomas Livosky (1951) ©
- 3- Ann Sature (2012)
- 3- Nicholas Tsaknis (1952) ©
- 3- Mary Lisko (1953) ©
- 3- Mike Alesafis (1960) ©
- 4- Michael Livosky (2003) ©
- 5- Mike Alesafis (1960) ©
- 6- Bessie Poullos (1961) ©
- 7- Rossetas Kallis (1958) ©
- 8- Joseph Durshaw (1972) ©
- 8- Andrew Libertin (1985) ©
- 8- Anna Graban (1937) ©
- 8- Steve Hamanzi (1946) ©
- 8- Maxim Berezoussky (1964) ©
- 9- George Cross (2020) ©
- 10- George Bobosh (1984) ©
- 10- Steve Elash (1998) ©
- 10- T. Rago (1924) © (no name)
- 10- Helen Holubanich (1924) ©
- 10- Steve Stavridis (1935) ©
- 12- V. Rev. Nicholas Vansuch (1987) ©
- 12- John Holibonich (2004) ©
- 12- Theodore Kalos (1932) ©
- 13- Bishop Varlaam (2020)
- 13- Vera Kristian (1980) ©
- 14- Emmanuel Balale (1956) ©
- 14- Bertha Ginnis (1961) ©
- 14- John Macala (1963) ©
- 14- Nicholas Angelides (1963) ©
- 15- Justina Popodich (grandmother)
- 15- George Billik (1998) ©
- 15- John Timkovich (2004) ©
- 15- Thelmia Psaras (1930) ©
- 15- Alfteria Jaetanis (1930) ©
- 15- Anna Sirilla (1955) ©
- 15- Mary Shirilla (1962) ©
- 16- Albert Bartek (1952)
- 16- Paul Cole (1997) ©
- 16- John Stamatinas (1946) ©
- 16- Infant Klimis (1 hr old) (1956) ©
- 16- Ann Leschinsky (1956) ©
- 17- Metropolitan Orestes (1977)
- 17- Myron Bilchik (1982) ©
- 17- Emmanuel Balale (1956) ©
- 17- Robert Fischer (1995) ©
- 18- Virginia Nosik (2004) ©
- 18- George Caleris (1957) ©
- 18- Paul Petruschak (2024)
- 19- Elizabeth Antas (1921) ©
- 19- George Berezovsky (1922) ©
- 19- Michael Voyis (1949) ©
- 19- Ann Allshouse (1984) ©
- 20- Daniel Shirilla (1992) ©
- 21- Fr. Michael Shuster (2020)
- 22- Fr. Andrew Hutnyan (2004)
- 22- Manuel Smyrmios (1944) ©
- 22- Carol Ann Feltovich (2016) ©
- 22- Sub-deacon Wylie Meath (2024)
- 23- Rose Dobrovolski (1995) ©
- 24- Nicholas Andrew Shirilla (2012) ©
- 24- Still born Volchko (1924) ©
- 24- Eva Wolfe (1925) ©
- 24- Elizabeth Cvercko (1929) ©
- 25- Vasil Heib (1920) ©
- 25- John Kotuka (1960) ©
- 25- Veronica Shirilla (1995) ©
- 25- Charlette Zenko (2024)
- 27- Steve Basala (1985)
- 27- Mike Kazonis (1950) ©
- 28- Mike Babiak (1922) ©
- 29- Milan Miller Batalo (1920) ©

Matthew 25:31-46 (Gospel)

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

2025 COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Nancy Tusinac, President
(Sub-committee Chairman for all social events)
Phone- 724-456-7366
- Cindy Ferrick, Treasurer
(Sub-committee Chairman of the Sunshine Club)
Phone 330-531-1119
- Joann Sirilla, Financial Secretary
(Sub-committee Chairman on all fundraisers)
Phone 330-881-6775
- Sub-deacon Dr. Donald Tamulouis, Vice President
(Sub-committee Chairman on all Maintenance issues). He will be working with Michael Simko
Phone 330-774-8860
- Sherrie Fredericks, Secretary
(Sub-committee Chairman on sending articles & pictures of events to the Diocese)
Phone: 330-881-5087
- Natalia Simko, Council Member
(Sub-committee Chairman on all Cemetery issues)
Phone- 330-980-3033
- David Konik, Council Member
(Sub-committee Chairman on Welcoming Cmte)
Phone: 330-717-6714
- David Dionisio, Council Member
(Sub-committee Chairman on all organizational issues in the church (including safety issues)
Phone: 425-241-7825

Maintenance Issues:

Michael Simko - 330-565-0084
Michael Centofanti - 330-544-3518

NEW COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEES

You will note, each Council member is in charge of keeping order in their respective areas. If there are any issues in their particular area, please contact that responsible Council member.

They are responsible to find a solution to the reported issue. That may include seeking your or another person's help. This will allow more organized responses and avoid one person being burdened with responsibility for everything.

Sunshine Club – This new club is responsible for sending out birthday, anniversary and get well cards.

FEBRUARY FINANCIALS

Expenses	\$17,534.88
Income	\$21,950.44
TOTAL	\$4,415.56

(IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

- ◆ *Due to the Kolachi income, we are in the black .*
- ◆ *Without that income, we would be in the red by \$2,084.44*
- ◆ *We were in the red for over \$10,000 in January. This fundraising income is a blessing.)*

Weekly Tithe	\$8,507.70
Weekly Candles	\$168.00
Tetrapod Candles	\$30.00
Unneeded Gifts	\$10.00
Christmas Card	\$20.00
Cemetery Reimbursement	\$563.74
Kolachi	\$6,500.00

Monthly Charity Collection: CA Fire Relief	\$350
Additional Monthly Charity from January	\$380

Total for January - \$900 + \$300 from church for a total of \$1,200.

Thank You!

1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 (Epistle)

But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Volume II - Worship The Church Year- Lenten Fasting

A special word must be said about fasting during lent. Generally speaking, fasting is an essential element of the Christian life. Christ fasted and taught men to fast. Blessed fasting is done in secret, without ostentation or accusation of others (Mt 6.16; Rom 14). It has as its goal the purification of our lives, the liberation of our souls and bodies from sin, the strengthening of our human powers of love for God and man, the enlightening of our entire being for communion with the Blessed Trinity.

The Orthodox rules for lenten fasting are the monastic rules. No meat is allowed after Meatfare Sunday, and no eggs or dairy products after Cheesefare Sunday. These rules exist not as a Pharisaic “burden too hard to bear” (Lk 11.46), but as an ideal to be striven for; not as an end in themselves, but as a means to spiritual perfection crowned in love. The lenten services themselves continually remind us of this.

Let us fast with a fast pleasing to the Lord. This is the true fast: the casting off of evil, the bridling of the tongue, the cutting off of anger, the cessation of lusts, evil talking, lies and cursing. The stopping of these is the fast true and acceptable (Monday Vespers of the First Week).

The lenten services also make the undeniable point that we should not pride ourselves with external fasting since the devil also never eats!

The ascetic fast of Great Lent continues from Meatfare Sunday to Easter Sunday, and is broken only after the Paschal Divine Liturgy. Knowing the great effort to which they are called, Christians should make every effort to fast as well as they can, in secret, so that God would see and bless them openly with a holy life. Each person must do his best in the light of the given ideal.

In addition to the ascetic fasting of the lenten season, the Orthodox alone among Christians also practice what is known as eucharistic or liturgical fasting. This fasting does not refer to the normal abstinence in preparation for receiving the holy eucharist; it means fasting from the holy eucharist itself.

During the week days of Great Lent the regular eucharistic Divine Liturgy is not celebrated in Orthodox churches since the Divine Liturgy is always a paschal celebration of communion with the Risen Lord. Because the lenten season is one of preparation for the Lord’s Resurrection through the remembrance of sin and separation from God, the liturgical order of the Church eliminates the eucharistic service on the weekdays of lent. Instead the non-eucharistic services are extended with additional scripture readings and hymnology of a lenten character. In order that the faithful would not be entirely deprived of Holy Communion on the lenten days, however, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated

on Wednesday and Friday evenings.

Even during Great Lent, Saturday (the Sabbath Day) and Sunday (the Lord’s Day) remain eucharistic days, and the Divine Liturgy is celebrated. On Saturdays it is the normal Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, usually with prayers for the dead. On Sundays it is the longer Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great.

The well-known teaching that Saturdays and Sundays are never days of fasting in the Orthodox Church, an issue emphasized centuries ago when controversy arose with the Latin Church, refers only to this eucharistic-liturgical fast. During Great Lent, even though the eucharistic fast is broken on Saturdays and Sundays, the ascetical fast continues through the weekends since this fasting is an extended effort made from Meatfare Sunday right to Easter itself.

Volume II - Worship The Church Year Lenten Services

The weekday services of Great Lent are characterized by special lenten melodies of a penitential character. The royal gates to the altar area remain closed to signify man’s separation through sin from the Kingdom of God. The church vesting is of a somber color, usually purple. The daily troparia are also of an intercessory character, entreating God through his saints to have mercy on us sinners.

At the Matins the long Alleluia replaces the psalm: God is the Lord . . . the Psalmody is increased. The hymnology refers to the lenten effort. Scripture readings from Genesis and Proverbs are added to Vespers, and the Prophecy of Isaiah to the Sixth Hour. Each of these books is read nearly in its entirety during the lenten period. Epistle and gospel readings are absent because there are no Divine Liturgies.

At all of the lenten services the Prayer of Saint Ephraim of Syria is read. It supplicates God for those virtues especially necessary to the Christian life.

O Lord and Master of my life: take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, lust of power and idle talk.

But grant rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant.

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Vespers service which begins the lenten season is called the Vespers of Forgiveness. It is customary at this service for the faithful to ask forgiveness and to forgive each other. At the Compline services of the first week of lent the Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete is read. This is a long series of penitential verses based on Biblical themes, to each of which the people respond: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. **Con’t next Pg**

Lenten Services con't from previous pg

This canon is repeated at Matins on Thursday of the fifth week.

On Friday evening of this same fifth week, the Akathistos Hymn to the Mother of God is sung; and the Saturday Divine Liturgy also honors the Theotokos.

The first Saturday of Great Lent is dedicated to the memory of Saint Theodore of Tyre. The second, third, and fourth Saturdays are called Memorial Saturdays since they are dedicated to the remembrance of the dead.

On Memorial Saturdays the liturgical hymns pray universally for all of the departed, and the Matins for the dead, popularly called the parastasis or panikhida, is served with specific mention of the deceased by name. Litanies and prayers are also added to the Divine Liturgy at which the scripture readings refer to the dead and their salvation by Christ.

Saturday, even during the non-lenten season, is the Church's day for remembering the dead. This is so because Saturday, the Sabbath Day, stands as the day which God blessed for life in this world. Because of sin, however, this day now symbolizes all of earthly life as naturally fulfilled in death. Even Christ the Lord lay dead on the Sabbath Day, "resting from all of his works" and "trampling down death by death." Thus, in the New Testament Church of Christ, Saturday becomes the proper day for remembering the dead and for offering prayers for their eternal salvation.

Volume II - Worship The Church Year / Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

As we already have seen, the eucharistic Divine Liturgy is not celebrated in the Orthodox Church on lenten weekdays. In order for the faithful to sustain their lenten effort by participation in Holy Communion, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served. The service is an ancient one in the Orthodox Church. We officially hear about it in the canons of the seventh century, which obviously indicates its development at a much earlier date.

On all days of the holy fast of Lent, except on the Sabbath, the Lord's Day, and the holy day of the Annunciation, the Liturgy of the Presanctified is to be served (Canon 52, Quinisext, 692).

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service. It is the solemn lenten Vespers with the administration of Holy Communion added to it. There is no consecration of the eucharistic gifts at the presanctified liturgy. Holy Communion is given from the eucharistic gifts sanctified on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, unless, of course, the feast of the Annunciation should intervene; hence its name of "presanctified."

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served on Wednesday and Friday evenings, although some churches may celebrate it only on one of these days. It comes in the evening after a day of spiritual preparation and total abstinence. The faithful who are unable to make the effort of total fasting because of weakness or work, however, normally eat a light lenten meal in the early morning.

During the psalms of Vespers, the presanctified gifts are prepared for communion. They are transferred from the altar table where they have been reserved since the Divine Liturgy, and are placed on the table of oblation. After the evening hymn, the Old Testament scriptures of Genesis and Proverbs are read, between which the celebrant blesses the kneeling congregation with a lighted candle and the words: "The Light of Christ illumines all," indicating that all wisdom is given by Christ in the Church through the scriptures and sacraments. This blessing was originally directed primarily to the catechumens—those preparing to be baptized on Easter—who attended the service only to the time of the communion of the faithful.

After the readings, the evening Psalm 141 is solemnly sung once again with the offering of incense. Then, after the litanies of intercession and those at which the catechumens were dismissed in former days, the presanctified eucharistic gifts are brought to the altar in a solemn, silent procession. The song of the entrance calls the faithful to communion.

Now the heavenly powers [i.e., the angels] do minister invisibly with us. For behold the King of Glory enters. Behold the mystical sacrifice, all fulfilled, is ushered in.

Let us with faith and love draw near that we may be partakers of everlasting life. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

After the litany and prayers, the Our Father is sung and the faithful receive Holy Communion to the chanting of the verse from Psalm 34: "O taste and see how good is the Lord. Alleluia." The post-communion hymns are sung and the faithful depart with a prayer to God who "has brought us to these all-holy days for the cleansing of carnal passions," that he will bless us "to fight the good fight, to accomplish the course of the fast, and to attain unto and to adore the holy resurrection" of Christ.

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is traditionally considered to be the work of the sixth-century pope, Saint Gregory of Rome. The present service, however, is obviously the inspired liturgical creation of Christian Byzantium

40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

March 2– His Beatitude AB Anastasios of Albania
March 9 – Aleksandra & Olivia Ter & all those who lost their lives in the Washington, DC & Philadelphia plane crashes
March 23– George Kolesar

Volume II - Worship The Church Year Sundays of Lent

Each of the Sundays of Great Lent has its own special theme. The first Sunday is called the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. It is a historical feast commemorating the return of the icons to the churches in the year 843 after the heresy of iconoclasm was overcome. The spiritual theme of the day is first of all the victory of the True Faith. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (1 Jn 5.4). Secondly, the icons of the saints bear witness that man, "created in the image and likeness of God" (Gen 1.26), becomes holy and godlike through the purification of himself as God's living image.

The Second Sunday of Lent is the commemoration of Saint Gregory Palamas. It was Saint Gregory (d.1359) who bore living witness that men can become divine through the grace of God in the Holy Spirit; and that even in this life, by prayer and fasting, human beings can become participants of the uncreated light of God's divine glory.

The Third Sunday of Lent is that of the Veneration of the Cross. The cross stands in the midst of the church in the middle of the lenten season not merely to remind men of Christ's redemption and to keep before them the goal of their efforts, but also to be venerated as that reality by which man must live to be saved. "He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10.38). For in the Cross of Christ Crucified lies both "the power of God and the wisdom of God" for those being saved (1 Cor 1.24).

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to Saint John of the Ladder (Climacus), the author of the work, The Ladder of Divine Ascent. The abbot of Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (6th century) stands as a witness to the violent effort needed for entrance into God's Kingdom (Mt 10: 12). The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is a real one, "not against flesh and blood, but against . . . the rulers of the present darkness . . . the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places . . ." (Eph 6.12). St John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, according to the Lord, only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt 24.13).

The Fifth Sunday recalls the memory of Saint Mary of Egypt, the repentant harlot. Mary tells us, first of all, that no amount of sin and wickedness can keep a person from God if he truly repents. Christ himself has come "to call sinners to repentance" and to save them from their sins (Lk 5.32). In addition, Saint Mary tells us that it is never too late in life—or in Lent—to repent. Christ will gladly receive all who come to him even at the eleventh hour of their lives. But their coming must be in serious and sincere repentance.

Sunday of Meatfare of the Last Judgment Commemorated on February 23

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.

February / March 2025 Reader Schedule

February 23: Natalia Simko (Meatfare Sunday)
March 2– Reader Matthew Van Such
March 9– Sub-deacon Donald Tamulonis
March 16– Reader Nick Van Such
March 23– Robert Willison
March 30– George Horodnic Jr.

Beginning of Great Lent Commemorated on March 3

In the Orthodox Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent—the day on which, at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated—is called Forgiveness Sunday. On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ:

“If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses...” (Mark 6:14-15).

Then 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 melodies, with the prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations—we ask forgiveness from each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the church with the anticipation of Paschal joy.

What is the meaning of this rite? Why is it that the Church wants us to begin the Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? These questions are in order because for too many people Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet, the compliance with ecclesiastical regulations concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a “good deed” required by God and carrying in itself its merit and its reward. But the Church spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means, one among many, towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against a hypocritical and pharisaic fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations. As a Lenten hymn says:

“In vain do you rejoice in not eating, O soul! For you abstain from food, But from passions you are not purified. If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast!”

Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, whom He sends to us so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for, the Lenten season.

One may ask, however: Why should I perform this rite

when I have no “enemies?” Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know? To ask these questions is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life, though if we experience them, it may be easier for us to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine commandments. But the Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real concern for them—in short, that wall which we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being “polite” and “friendly” we fulfill God’s commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize—be it only for one minute—that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, of one person created by God with another, makes us feel that mutual “recognition” which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

On that unique evening, listening to the joyful Paschal hymns we are called to make a spiritual discovery: to taste of another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood. As I advance towards the other, as the other comes to me—we begin to realize that it is Christ who brings us together by His love for both of us.

And because we make this discovery—and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of Peace and Love, of reconciliation with God and, in Him, with all that exists—we hear the hymns of that Feast, which once a year “opens to us the doors of Paradise.” We know why we shall fast and pray, what we shall seek during the long Lenten pilgrimage.

Forgiveness Sunday: the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting—true fasting; our effort—true effort; our reconciliation with God—true reconciliation.

—Father Alexander Schmemmann

