

**From the Fathers (and others):**

“Thy love draws me to Thee, O Savior, O praise of my life. Thy grace makes it sweet for me to follow Thee with my mind.”

St Ephraim the Syrian

Silence is the cross on which we must crucify our ego.

St. Seraphim of Sarov

“Patient endurance kills the despair that kills the soul.

St. Peter of Damaskos

Our life without repentance is nonsense; our life without forgiveness is nonsense; our life without remembering all the blessings from God is nonsense. Jesus died for us, but have we died for Him or for anyone or have we died to our sins? If we don't die, there is no life.

His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH

In the hearts of the meek the Lord finds rest, but a turbulent soul is a seat for the devil.

St. John Climacus

Remember that the Lord is in every Christian. When your neighbour comes to you, always have great respect for him because the Lord is in him, and often expresses His will through him.

St. John of Kronstadt

Watch out for complaining. It only makes situations worse and increases sorrows.

St. Macarius of Optina

Why does the Lord command us to love our enemies and to pray for them? Not for their sake, but for ours! For as long as we bear grudges, as long as we dwell on how someone offended us, we will have no peace.

Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

# St. John Orthodox Church

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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~ *March 25, 2018* ~

*Annunciation of the Theotokos*



## COMMEMORATIONS

**March 25:** The Annunciation of the Theotokos.

**March 26:** The Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel; Stephen the Confessor.

**March 27:** Martyr Matrona of Thessalonika; Martyrs Philetos and Lydia; Paul, bishop of Corinth; Venerable Euthychios.

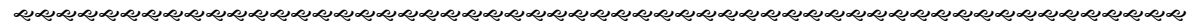
**March 28:** Venerable Hilarion the New; Apostle Herodion of the Seventy; Venerable Stephen of Triglia.

**March 29:** Mark, Bishop of Arethusa; Martyr Cyril the deacon of Heliopolis; Martyrs Jonah and Barachisios; Eustathios the Confessor, bishop of Bithynia.

**March 30:** Venerable John of Sinai, author of 'The Ladder;' New-hieromartyr Zachariah, bishop of Corinth; Sophronios, bishop of Irkutsk.

**March 31:** Hypatios the wonder-worker, bishop of Gangra; Venerable Akakios the Confessor, bishop of Melitene; Prophet Joel; repose of Innocent, metropolitan of Moscow, enlightener of the Aleuts and apostle to America; repose of Jonah, metropolitan of Moscow.

**April 1:** Venerable Mary of Egypt; Martyrs Geontios and Basileidos; Venerable Euthymios, wonder-worker of Suzdal.

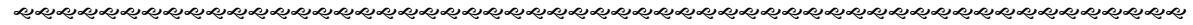


### DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sunday	Hebrews	2:11-14
Monday	Genesis	27:1-41
Tuesday	Genesis	31:3-16
Wednesday	Genesis	43:26-31; 45:1-6
Thursday	Genesis	48:1-7
Friday	Genesis	49:33-50:26
Saturday	Hebrews	12:28-13:8
Sunday	Philippians	4:4-9

### March 25 – April 1

Luke	1:24-38
Proverbs	19:16-25
Proverbs	21:3-21
Proverbs	21:23-22:4
Proverbs	23:15-24:5
Proverbs	31:8-31
John	11:1-45
Mark	12:1-18



**Pray for our catechumens: Memphis** – Kendall Ichniowski, Nelvia Agnew, John Agnew, and Calen and Katherine Verbist.

**Please remember in your prayers** - Mary Clark, Ann Hicks (Dianna Hildebrand's mother), Charles Ingram, Ted Greathouse (Shelley Snowden's father), Allen Sudduth (Paul's father), Janet Berry, Nicholas Hill, Mary Sue Johnson (Jason Guntharpe's grandmother), Chelsea Yadron (pregnant), Heather Hetrick (pregnant), Julie Hight (pregnant), Anne Katherine Vanlandingham (pregnant), Ernestine Pruitt (Nicholas Hill's mother), Brenda Thomas, Doris & Jim (Brenda Thomas' family), Dot Lawson (Pam Bowick's mother & Lawson's grandmother), Lisa Catlett (Fr. Don & Kh. Martha's daughter), Glenda Brooks, Anna Grace (Joyce Grossman's granddaughter), Maria Bellaflores, Sharon (Larry Ichniowski's mother), Chris Hodges, those suffering in the Middle East, most especially the Christians.



## ST. JOHN COMMUNITY



**Confessions for Lent** – As you think about making your confession for Lent **please make every effort** to have your confessions heard before the beginning of Holy Week. Fr. Philip and Fr. Alex are available to hear your confession following each service with the exception of the Divine Liturgy, so there are many opportunities. Additionally, one can make an appointment to make their confession at a time other than after a service by setting up an appointment with a priest.

**St. John Yearbook** – Many memories are made at St. John and we would like to begin commemorating them with an annual yearbook! As 2017 was such a momentous year for our parish, we will begin there. Please share your favorite pictures (2017 - present) with us by emailing them to Buddy Bowick at [WCB4TH@yahoo.com](mailto:WCB4TH@yahoo.com), or you can text them to him at 901-497-0917 (please include your name if texting).

**Online Sign Up** - Links to all of our sign ups can be found on the St. John website under *Parish-Online Assignments and Sign Ups*: **Coffee Hour, Wednesday Meal Pick Up, Volunteers for Lent through Pascha**

**Parish Council Update** – The Parish Council met this past week and went over the upcoming month. There is a lot going on in the liturgical life of the Church as well as the Becoming Truly Human movie and the YES Teen Trip. For the minutes and financials for February, see the folder in the old parish hall.

**Library Announcement from Judy:** Eight of St. John's children have paid tribute to one of our library's most popular authors of children's books, Claire Brandenburg. A new bulletin board downstairs features her books along with book reviews and recommendations by our parish's young literary critics. Our newest book lovers are Brooke, Jacob, and Zachary White; Ruby Ortwein; Owen and Ella White; Gavin van Drimmelen, and Kristina Romero. Visit St. John Library downstairs, read their comments and make your selections from some of our top titles!

### PLEASE SIGN UP downstairs or online....



- **Palm Sunday Potluck** assistance
- **Paschal Vigil** – The sign-up sheet is in the parish hall for those wishing to participate in the vigil.
- **Decorating & Set Up for Paschal Feast** on Holy Saturday
- **Kitchen assistance for feast**
- **Agape Picnic** on Pascha afternoon
- **Post-Pascha Clean Up** – taking down of bier Bright Week, putting decorations away

## Birthdays, Anniversaries, & Namedays

<b>Sunday, 3/25:</b>	<i>Most Holy Theotokos: Reem Mansour</i>
<b>Monday, 3/26:</b>	Anna Finley, Michael Sanderlin <i>Archangel Gabriel: Ben Hodges, Gabe Yadron, Gabby Sneed, Gabriel Flexsenhar</i>
<b>Tuesday, 3/27:</b>	Vladimir Drobashevsky
<b>Wednesday, 3/28:</b>	Chris Boone, Andrew Labonte
<b>Thursday, 3/29:</b>	Sophia Yarbrow, Sarah Parker, Lucy Hight Anniversary: Buddy & Pam Bowick
<b>Friday, 3/30:</b>	Maggie Turner
<b>Saturday, 3/31:</b>	Monica Rustom, Eli White

## PALM SUNDAY, April 1



Next Sunday, April 9, we will celebrate the **Feast of the Triumphant Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, or Palm Sunday**. Weather permitting, we will have an outdoor procession with our candles and palms. Traditionally at St. John, we bring our decorated baptismal/Chrismation candles for the procession, but please feel free to bring any candle you choose.

We will have **Potluck meal** together following liturgy to celebrate the feast. Please bring a dish or dishes to share!

### ***STOCK UP THE FOOD PANTRY FOR GREAT LENT!***

<u>Week 1: Feb. 18-24</u>	<u>Week 2: Feb. 25-Mar. 3</u>	<u>Week 3: Mar. 4-10</u>
*Canned meats: Spam Vienna Sausages Canned chicken Tuna	Peanut Butter ( <i>creamy</i> ) Crackers	*Canned Goods: Soup ( <i>Ready to eat</i> ) Veggies/ beans/fruit Drinks/drink boxes
<u>Week 4: Mar. 11-17</u>	<u>Week 5: Mar. 18-24</u>	<u>Weeks 6: Mar. 25-31</u>
Dry Items: individual cereal boxes oatmeal packets granola bars or cereal bars	Toiletries: Toilet Paper Toothpaste/toothbrush Shampoo	*Canned meals: <b>Chef Boy R Dee</b> <b>Chili</b> <b>Mac n Cheese</b>

### Library Lines

Do you know why the Platytera is in the apse? You will find the answer to this question and most of your others in the St. John Library which devotes a whole category of books to the Most Holy Theotokos. In honor of the Annunciation (3/25), these will all be on display this week. (Hint: Platytera is the icon of the Mother of God, on the wall behind the altar.)

Our thoughts (and questions) often turn to the Church Calendar during Lent and Holy Week. This is a busy time in our parish with several services and feast days which all keep the mystery of *time* on our minds. You may have noticed that the Annunciation, as well the Nativity of the Theotokos (9/8) and the Elevation of the Cross (9/14) and others, have *forefeasts* and *leavetakings*. The feast days assigned for them and their length is determined by the class or ranking of them as set out in *The Festal Menaion* and *The Pentecostarion*. These are books that set the cycle of services in the Church.

Today is Mary of Egypt Sunday (3/25). Do you and your children remember that a lion licked her feet and dug her grave? Look for the story of St. Mary of Egypt and the lion in *A Child's Paradise of Saints* (KDI STS MCL) and in *Animals and Man* (CAT CRE STE). Last week we heard the story of St. Mary of Egypt in the complete canon of St. Andrew of Crete. Ironically, St. Andrew was mute as a young child, not speaking until age seven. The canon was then an unknown liturgical form. He also wrote canons for the Nativity, Palm Sunday and other feast days. His poetical tradition was followed by Sts. John of Damascus, Cosmos of Maium, and Joseph the Melodist. He attended the Sixth Ecumenical Council and died in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century. *First Fruits of Prayer* (SPR PRA MAT) by Frederica Mathewes-Green is a forty-day journey through this beautiful, great hymn of repentance. Each portion of the canon is printed with accompanying Scripture references and commentary. The book begins with a general introduction and historical background of the canon. I highly recommend it for catechumens and "old-timers" alike.

Today we commemorate the Icon of the Mother of God of Mt. Athos, "Sweet Kissing" (3/27). During the ninth century, it belonged to the pious wife of an iconoclast senator. He ordered her to burn it so she threw it into the sea. It stayed standing upright on the waves and appeared near Mt. Athos several years later. The Theotokos appeared to the monks and told them of its arrival. This icon is one of the Eleousa categories (*Virgin of Tenderness*) icons in which the Christ child shows affection to His Mother. It's also commemorated on Bright Monday. Read more about this icon and others of the Theotokos in *Icons of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and Prayers for her Intercessions* (ART ICO KHO).

Matrona of Thessalonica (3/27) was the slave of a woman named Pautila who mocked her for her faith. When Matrona's owner discovered she had been secretly attending church, she beat her and locked her in a closet for a few days. The saint was found unharmed and at prayer when the servants opened the closet. Pautila beat her harder and left her shut up longer, but the same thing happened again. The third time, Pautila flogged her, tearing the skin in strips from her body. The martyr gave her soul to God and her body was thrown off the roof. Other Christians found her body and gave it a proper burial, where a church was later built. St. Matrona was martyred in the 3rd or 4th century.

Friday is the commemoration of an event given greater attention in December. It's the day we remember the meeting of the Theotokos and Saint Elizabeth (3/30). However, sometimes it's a moveable feast. When it falls between Lazarus Saturday and Pascha, it is celebrated on Bright Friday. How fitting it is that our Holy Mother Church remembers events surrounding the Incarnation during Great Lent.

# PASCHAL TRADITIONS AT ST. JOHN

## CANDLES (Palm Sunday & Pascha)

During the services of the Triumphal Entry (Palm Sunday) and Pascha, we have outdoor processions (weather permitting). Traditionally at St. John, we bring our baptismal/chrisamation candle if you have one. For those who do not have one, you are welcome to bring your own white candle decorated with ribbon, flowers, greenery... whatever you feel is festive. Bringing candles is completely voluntary.

## HOLY FRIDAY CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES (following Royal Hours at 9:00 a.m.)

Following Royal Hours on Holy Friday, children, CGS and above, of the parish gather to assist in the preparation for the upcoming service which include decorating the bier.

## DECORATED BASKETS for Paschal Feast (Early hours of April 8)

It has been our tradition at St. John to bring foods that we have been fasting from in a basket decorated with flowers. When you come to the services on Saturday night you will put your basket on the steps of the solea the floor in front. After the liturgy, you pick up your basket and take it to the fellowship hall and place it on one of the food tables. The decorated baskets are a beautiful addition during liturgy and in the fellowship hall where we celebrate the feast.

Additionally, you may bring a decorated basket to take home after the feast is over to share with your family.

## AGAPE PICNIC (following Agape Vespers at 3:30 p.m., April 8)

The parish gathers for our annual BBQ picnic following Agape Vespers on Sunday afternoon. The picnic is catered by Corky's BBQ which is supplemented by desserts provided by the parishioners. This is a **Bring Your Own Beverage & Lawn Chair** event and a wonderful way to spend Pascha in fellowship, fun, and food. The musicians amongst us normally join together for an impromptu concert, so bring your guitar, ukulele, mandolin, etc. if you'd like to join in.

## EGG HUNT (also following Agape Vespers, April 8)

Our annual egg hunt is for children in the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade and under. They should bring a dozen plastic candy-filled eggs *per child* and a basket(s) for hunting the eggs! Please put eggs in the room next to the kitchen before Vespers. **NO HARD-BOILED EGGS**, PLEASE, for they will not be hidden.

## BRIGHT WEEK PIZZA PARTY (following Liturgy on Thursday, April 12)

Each year we enjoy pizza in the parish hall following our Liturgy for the Life Giving Font. Join us!

☞Please feel welcome to participate as much or as little as you would like.☞

# CALENDAR & INFO FOR HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA



## HOLY WEEK



### HOLY SUNDAY, MONDAY and TUESDAY, April 1 - 3

**BRIDEGROOM ORTHROS (1 ¼ hours), 6:00 p.m.** – services are so called from the haunting theme song which begins:

*Behold, the Bridegroom comes at midnight  
And happy is that servant whom he shall find watching,  
But behold, unworthy is that servant whom he shall find heedless...*  
(cf Matt. 25:1 ff, Luke 12:35 ff)

Our Lord is the Bridegroom whom His beloved bride, His people, were not ready to receive. At these services we read the scathing prophesies addressed these three days to the leaders of Israel (Matthew 21:18 - 23:39). Will we be ready when He comes again?

### HOLY WEDNESDAY, April 4

**Holy Unction (1 ¾ hours) 6:00 p.m.** – We bless oil and members are anointed with it for healing, for Our Lord's death and Resurrection are for this as well: "By His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). At this service the choir sings the first part, but the second half is mostly readings.

*Things to know: We prepare for Holy Unction, one of the Holy Mysteries, just as we should for receiving the Eucharist. We need to have fasted and to have kept a confessional practice, which should have included a confession during Great Lent. The Holy Mystery of Unction will be given to those prepared on the night of Holy Wednesday, as is our tradition.*

### HOLY THURSDAY, April 5

**Vespereal Divine Liturgy (2 hrs), 4:00 p.m.** – We serve the Vespereal Liturgy of St. Basil celebrating the Mystical Supper at which Our Lord washed His disciples' feet and instituted the Eucharist.

*A Lenten meal will be served following the liturgy and before Orthros begins.*

**Passion Gospels (2 ¾ hrs), 7:00 p.m.** – Orthros of Holy Friday. During it we read twelve Gospel readings of Our Lord's crucifixion, interspersed with some of the most beautiful hymns of the whole year. In the middle of this service a large Cross is placed in the center of the Church for veneration.

## HOLY FRIDAY, April 5

**Royal Hours of Holy Friday (1 ½ hours), 9:00 a.m.** - We again contemplate the crucifixion, reading sections from the Gospel readings from the previous service.

***Epitaphios Canopy decoration*** – Children, kindergarten and older, stay after the service to decorate the bier flowers in preparation for the Taking Down.

***What you can offer: Donate flowers to be used for the bier.*** These should be brought Thursday night or Friday before Royal Hours and left in the room off of the kitchen. Monetary donations to offset the cost are accepted.

**Taking Down Vespers, 3 p.m.** – Great Vespers of Holy Saturday. The *Epitaphios*, a fabric with an image of the Lord taken down from the cross, representing the burial cloth of the Lord, is carried in procession and laid in the bier, which is covered with flowers. In some traditions, the bier represents His Tomb. In others, it represents the “Unction Stone” on which He was laid and wrapped in the clean linens and spices before He was placed in the tomb.

***Vigil – We will begin reading for the vigil following Taking Down Vespers until Midnight office.***  
***There will be a sheet available for signing up for those interested.***

**Lamentation Orthros (2 ½), 7 p.m.** – Orthros of Holy Saturday - The *Epitaphios* is carried in procession around the Church. The many readings and hymns of the Holy Friday services present us with many the different facets of the awesome and compelling mystery of our Lord's Passion. It is at this service that the *Epitaphios* taken from the bier to the altar, symbolizing Christ's body being placed in the tomb, which will also be the place of Resurrection.

## HOLY SATURDAY, April 7

**Vesperal Divine Liturgy (2 ½ hours), 10 a.m.** – Initiation of new members and Divine Liturgy. This is the 'Blessed Sabbath' on which God rested -- in the Tomb, the real meaning of Genesis 2:2. It is the most appropriate time for Baptism, as those baptized are 'buried' with Christ to share His Resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). Lent has its origin as the last intensive preparation for those who would be baptized this day. Today we read from the 15 Old Testament readings appointed that illuminate Baptism, including the Creation from Genesis, and the Exodus, and we read the first Resurrectional Gospel from Matthew 28.

\*\*What follows is a quote from Fr. Alexander Schmemman's Journal regarding this service:

*I am writing before leaving for my most beloved of all loved services: the Baptismal, Paschal Liturgy of St Basil the Great, when "Life sleeps and Hades shudders..." I write just to say it again. It is the day of my conversion – not of unbelief to belief, not of "out of the Church" to "Church." No; an internal conversion of faith, within the Church, to what constitutes the treasure of the heart – in spite of my sins, laziness, indifference, in spite of a continuous almost conscious falling away from that treasure, in spite of negligence, in the literal sense of the word. I don't know how, I don't know why – truly only by God's mercy – but Holy Saturday remains the center, the light, sign, symbol, and gift of everything. "Christ – the new Pascha..." And to that New Pascha, something in me says with joy and faith: "Amen."*

## ***Volunteer Opportunities Following Vesperal Divine Liturgy:***

- *Nave and Parish hall decoration*

**PASCHAL SERVICE (2 ½ - 3 hours), 11:00 p.m.** – This is **THE** service of the year for Orthodox, and no one wants to miss it. At midnight all lights in the Church are put out. This is the darkness and silence of the Tomb. Finally, the bishop or priest comes out of the altar with a candle. Everyone comes forward and lights a candle from this light. Carrying the candles, we make an outdoor procession to the front door of the Church. There we hear the greeting 'Christ is Risen!' for the first time and reply, 'Indeed He is Risen!' We will greet each other this way for forty days. We go into the Temple, now brightly lighted, and sing the joyous Paschal Orthros and the Divine Liturgy and receive the Body and Blood of the Risen Lord. After this service we go to the Parish Hall and find the tables sagging with every kind of good food, and we celebrate together until quite late.

### ***What to Bring:***

- *If you have children: pillow, blanket*
- *Pascha basket (see Paschal traditions) and/or dish(es) to share for Paschal feast*
- *Candle for procession (see Paschal traditions)*

## PASCHA, April 8

**Sunday Morning**, there is NO MORNING SERVICE (the midnight service was the Sunday Liturgy).

**Agape Vespers, 3:30 p.m.** We gather for the joyous Paschal Agape Vespers (the Gospel is read in many languages) and more feasting.

**Agape Picnic**– Following Agape Vespers the parish gathers for our annual BBQ picnic catered by Corky's BBQ and supplemented with desserts provided by parishioners. This is a Bring Your Own Beverage & Lawn Chair event and a wonderful way to spend Pascha in fellowship, fun, and food. The musicians amongst us provide entertainment by joining together for an impromptu outdoor concert. There is a suggested donation of \$10 adults and \$5 for children to assist in covering the cost of catering.

**Agape Egg Hunt** – We have an annual egg hunt for children 4<sup>th</sup> grade and under.

### ***What to Bring:***

*Lawn Chairs*

*Dessert to share*

*Beverages of your choice (alcoholic and/or non-alcoholic)*

*Instrument if you want to join in*

*If you have children: basket, 1 dozen filled plastic eggs to hide - Hard boiled eggs will not be hidden*

**\*What to Bring and Volunteer Opportunities** are simply suggestions for those that would like to contribute. Please do not feel obligated to do more than you are able or willing to do.