Are any of you making plans yet for your vacation this summer? Maybe you’re planning on seeing different parts of America, or maybe a cruise in the Caribbean, or even a trip overseas to Europe or some other exotic destination? Obviously, for anyone making summer plans, much planning is needed - where to stay, how to travel from one place to another, what to see, and who to visit. When proper preparation and planning is done in advance, such a journey will most likely be an exciting and fulfilling one!

Well, for Orthodox Christians worldwide, February 27th begins the most exciting journey of the year. From Clean Monday and for the following 40 days, we journey along a sometimes difficult, yet thrilling path – a journey where we need to struggle and make many sacrifices, but always with a clear goal in mind! With our fasting, our self-denial, a conscious and deliberate effort of generous almsgiving and charity, along with a serious decision to evaluate our lives, and turn our attention more to God through pray and many Church services, we journey towards the destination of Holy Week and Pascha!

Of course, to begin this long journey properly we need to have the right attitude. We need to understand that this spiritual “40-day journey” should lead us away from our normal, daily, often superficial and shallow routine of life and help us focus on what is most essential and eternal – our living and dynamic relationship with our Creator! Through this 40-day adventure of self-evaluation and sincere seeking of God, we prepare ourselves to experience and enter into the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ in a most incredible new way.

How many of us experience this 40-day fast of Great Lent and the celebration of Pascha in such a manner?

Well, if we want to truly experience Lent in the right way, we need to plan and be prepared for what lies ahead. On the Sunday before Clean Monday, we hear Christ say, “forgive one another, as our heavenly Father also forgives us.” Forgiveness and mercy lies at the center of our Lenten journey. We can’t hope to draw closer to God if we aren’t willing to try and draw closer to one another.
The mission of Sts. Constantine and Helen Church is to proclaim the Good News of Salvation through the Orthodox Christian Faith for the glory of our Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are a community of believers who journey towards our Lord Jesus Christ and one another through our WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP, SPIRITUAL GROWTH, WITNESS, and SERVICE. We invite all people to join us on this journey in the Kingdom of Heaven.

We are under the jurisdiction of
His Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of America
His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios of Boston

Father Luke A. Veronis
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BEGINNING OUR LENTEN JOURNEY

When the Pharisees and religious leaders followed strictly the fasting, tithing, and prayer rules of their day, Jesus still condemned them by saying, “You have neglected the weightier matters of the law, which are justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone.”

Forgiving one another plays such a central role in our Lenten Journey that we even call the Sunday before Lent FORGIVENESS SUNDAY. Do any of us carry hatred, or bitterness, or anger, or resentment, or hurt and pain, that is hindering us from forgiving someone else? If so, this is the day the Church asks us to confess and try to open our hearts for God’s Spirit to heal us and guide us in reconciliation. We cannot even begin, no less travel far, in our Lenten journey, if we don’t at least try to forgive and reconcile with one another! We must forgive others, as God has forgiven us!

A second important aspect of Great Lent has to do with FASTING. We are called to fast in secret, not trying to show off or take pride in this spiritual discipline. Of course, Lent is closely associated with the physical fast, but too many of us don’t even understand WHY we should fast. So many focus on not eating certain foods, or giving up something else, but do we even understand how fasting is but a spiritual tool that helps us reach our ultimate goal – our union with God!

The primary aim of fasting is to make us conscious of God. True fasting involves real hunger and even physical exhaustion. It means denying ourselves food during times of want. The Fathers of the Church recommended that we should always rise from the table feeling that we could have eaten more. When our bodies are weak and tired, we remember our human mortality. During these times of sacrifice and struggle, we turn our minds toward God and remind ourselves of our utter dependence on Him.

Another purpose of fasting is to help us develop self-discipline in our lives. The mentality of the world is to satisfy our desires whenever we can. Too often we have allowed our bad habits, our sinful desires, and our deepest passions to control our lives. The Christian life, however, presents a radical reversal of such thinking. Until we learn to control all our habits, our actions and our thoughts, and place our whole being under the power of Christ, we can never properly grow in the Christian life. Thus, we fast not only from food, but from our anger, hatred, self-righteousness, egocentrism, pride, arrogance, and the like. Christ created us to be free beings, slaves of nobody or nothing, and fasting is a tool in helping us discover our freedom.

A third purpose of fasting is to act as a source of illumination in our lives. If fasting is combined with increased prayer and acts of mercy, then Lent becomes a period of divine revelation and discovery. Throughout history, periods of fasting have been times when faithful people have met God. Saint Augustine wrote, "Do you wish your prayer to fly toward God? Give it two wings - fasting and almsgiving." Fasting, prayer and concrete deeds of charity and love all go hand in hand.

Ultimately, we must look upon fasting as something positive, which should produce the spirit of joy within us, if the Holy Spirit guides our efforts!

It’s interesting, if the doctor tells us we have to change our diet for health reasons, most of us will surely listen. Yet when the Church challenges us to change our diet for spiritual reasons, many of us dismiss this as some outdated religious practice. For all who are serious in their faith, however, it is an important tool we are asked to use during this holy season.

Another lesson for our Lenten journey, along with forgiveness and fasting, is the reminder to sincerely strive to evaluate our own lives, and ask ourselves the essential question: “What is the most sacred treasure I have stored up in my heart?” Our Lord Jesus tells us in the Gospel, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth… but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven… For where your treasure is, your heart will be also.”

Society has assaulted us with so many false advertisements, that we have fallen into a terrible deception – thinking that the superficial things of life are essential
to our happiness. Whether it is our material possessions - like our home, our cars, our fashionable clothing, or other such things – or whether it’s our desire for fame and influence over others, or whatever else, too many of us have set our hearts on empty treasures, treasures which we cannot take with us into heaven!

Lent is a time when we sincerely reflect on the essence of our lives, on the meaning and purpose of life itself, and on what authentic treasures truly are. Christ teaches, “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” Such treasures have little to do with material possessions and powerful influences. Instead, heavenly treasures have to do with the eternal virtues of God – the treasure of love, mercy, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, compassion, faithfulness, truthfulness, acts of charity, hospitality and witnessing God’s love to others. These are the treasures that we will carry with us into heaven, and Lent reminds us to focus on and cultivate these things in our own hearts!

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We all love going on exciting vacations and journeys. Well, Great Lent is a 40-day journey into paradise. Let us begin this journey with love, mercy and forgiveness abiding in our hearts. Let us fast with a purpose and a goal, using it as a tool to reach our destination. And let us make the time to seriously reflect on our lives and evaluate what we consider as truly important, and then ask ourselves, “Am I storing up my treasure in heaven?”

A most blessed and fruitful Lenten journey to us all!!

With love in Christ our Lord,

+Luke

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**A LENTEN PRAYER**

*During this Lenten Fast, let us strive to follow the holy commandments of Christ our God, with the brightness of love and the splendor of prayer.*

*Let us understand this holy season as a gift from God and as a time of repentance.*

*May our soul wake up from the sleep of grievous laziness, and with zeal and vigilance follow the ways of the Lord.*

*Let us not only fast in bodies, but also in spirit.*

*Let us anoint our heads with the oil of almsgiving.*

*Let us draw near the mountain of prayer and fasting that we may see God, like Moses and Elijah during their times of fasting.*

**FASTING SCHEDULE**

Feb 5-11 - Fast Free Week  
Feb 19 - Last Day of Meat  
Feb 26 - Last Day of Dairy  
Feb 27-April 15 - Strict Fast  

We fast 40 Days plus the days of Holy Week, all leading up to PASCHA!

Try this year to use this spiritual tool to prepare for the great feast of our Lord’s Resurrection!
DISCIPLINES FOR LENT

Few people would disagree that life is too busy. We all keep up a hectic pace. Technology has brought many blessings, but has also made our lives run 24/7. Cell phones, texting, twittering, facebook, internet surfing, constant music and TV, along with incessant talking and never ending busyness.

Great Lent is a time when we try to take control over our lives. The Church challenges us to limit the control other things have over us. This means making a conscious decision to change our lifestyles to a slower, less active, quieter pace.

Not only will this give us a chance to rest, but more importantly it places us in a position to hear the voice of God. We cannot hear God in the midst of noise. God speaks to us in a quiet, still voice. Thus, we must create an atmosphere in our lives to allow this voice to be heard.

Here are some concrete ideas for changing your lifestyle during Lent:

1. Devote time every day to pray - 10 minutes, 15 minutes, half hour or even an hour per day. Get an Orthodox Prayer Book and be disciplined in your morning and evening prayers.

2. Read the Bible every day during Lent. We usually read the Old Testament books of Genesis, Proverbs and Isaiah during this period, but if you are not a regular reader of the Bible, begin by reading one of the Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

3. Free up your schedule so that you are not in such a rush. Make time in your daily schedule to think more about what the meaning of life is. Where are you going in life? What are your goals and dreams? If you are at the latter stage of life, how are you preparing to meet Your Creator?

4. Commit to coming to Church every Sunday and receiving Holy Communion. Attend also ONE EXTRA weekly service - the Pre-sanctified Liturgy on Wednesday, or the Salutations on Friday, or Vespers on Saturday.

5. Go to Holy Confession. As hard as this may seem, make a decision to make an evaluation of your own life, go to a priest, and confess your sins in this Holy Sacrament.

6. Make the decision to watch no TV or movies for 40 days. If this seems impossible, try to turn off the TV for the entire first and fourth week of Lent, as well as during Holy Week.

7. Don’t listen to music when you drive. Say the Jesus Prayer and other prayers. Try to create an atmosphere of silence outside, so that you can focus on the silence from within.

Great Lent is the time to make a conscious decision to change our lifestyle for the next 40 days!
THE WINGS OF HUMILITY

“Better is the person who has sinned, if he knows he has sinned and repents, than the person who has not sinned and thinks himself righteous.”

In other words, the Desert Fathers are teaching us that our salvation and our good standing with God does NOT depend on whether we sin or not. In reality, we all sin and fall short of the glory of God. The foundation upon which we begin a serious journey towards God and His Heavenly Kingdom must begin with the knowledge of our own spiritual situation. The philosopher Socrates taught us to “know yourself.” Knowing oneself in the fullest sense implies knowing our shortcomings and sins as well as knowing the divine potential we all possess. Such self-knowledge is essential for any mature Christian who wants to journey towards God.

We fall into one of the great deceptions of life, a lie that hinders any spiritual growth, when we fool ourselves into thinking that our good deeds are worthy of God’s blessing and salvation. This is why the Desert Fathers warned, “Better is the person who has sinned, if he knows he has sinned and repents, than the person who has not sinned and thinks himself righteous.” Paradise cannot be earned by good deeds or gained through our efforts, no matter how worthy they may be. If any of us think of ourselves as righteous, we walk on a very dangerous precipice.

Our Lord Jesus Christ offers the Kingdom of Heaven as a gift to those who turn to Him in humility and love. Of course, sincerely turning to God implies doing many good deeds of unconditional love for people all around us. Good deeds and a life of unconditional love play a central part in our journey towards God. Yet, we must take care not to think any good deeds earn us the Kingdom of Heaven. We must beware that we can spoil our good deed of love with an arrogant or self-righteous spirit. This is why St. Kosmas Aitolos instructs us, “A Christian needs two wings to fly to paradise: humility and love.”

We see this lesson of humility most clearly illustrated in the Gospel story of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector. A Pharisee was a well respected religious leader of the Jews who strove to follow every detail of the Mosaic law. He prayed daily. He gave 10% of his money to the Temple. He fasted twice a week. He tried to stay away from any evil acts and tried to obey God’s law. From an external perspective, the Pharisee was a model Jew during the time of Jesus.

Yet in the story, Christ does not praise the Pharisee. He condemns him! Why? Because the Pharisee spoils all his good deeds through his self-satisfaction and self-righteous pride. The Pharisee thinks highly of himself because of his good actions, and judges and condemns others.

While the Pharisee highlighted his own external behaviors, he unfortunately did not “know himself” well. The Pharisee lauded his own meticulous obedience to the Law, yet God looked within his heart and found the cancer of arrogance and pride eating away his soul.

In the eyes of God, pride is the first and greatest sin, because pride fools us to believe we are truly good in and of ourselves. The Bible teaches that only One is good, and that One is God Himself. All others, no matter how much good we do, still fall short of perfect goodness, because we constantly sin in our thoughts, words, and deeds, as well as in our actions and inactions.

“Better is the person who has sinned, if he knows he has sinned and repents, than the person who has not sinned and thinks himself righteous.”

The Tax-Collector, in comparison to the Pharisee, was truly a miserable sinner. Tax-collectors were dishonest and dishonorable people. During the time of Christ, tax-
collectors were held in such disrepute that the Jews equated them with murderers and adulterers. This tax-collector surely stole from others plenty of times, and lived a sinful life. Yet in this story he comes to the point of “knowing himself.” He enters into the Temple, and unlike the Pharisee who walks to the front praying in a loud voice for all to hear, the tax-collector stays in a back corner, falling on his face in humility, and quietly crying tears of repentance with a simple prayer, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.”

Although the tax-collector sinned in countless ways, he turned back to God with the greatest virtue – humility. **Humility implies knowing oneself – knowing the evil that is within you, as well as the divine potential waiting to burst forth.** Therefore, the tax-collector approached God by hoping solely in His great mercy, and believing that even he, a great sinner, could become once again a child of God!

One danger we must take care to avoid, however, is to misunderstand the true nature of humility and repentance. When some flippantly say that they can do anything they want, because our merciful God will forgive them, such people deceive themselves and show an utter lack of understanding repentance and humility. **Authentic repentance does not imply simply saying “I’m sorry” and then continuing to sin. Sincere repentance entails deep self-reflection, piercing self-understanding, and a radical decision to change the direction of our old way of life, turning once again towards the Lord.**

This contrast of humility vs. arrogance, repentance vs. self-assurance, and contrition vs. self-righteousness leaves us much to reflect upon as we prepare for our upcoming Lenten Journey. Great Lent is several weeks away, and this parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector is our wake-up call to start preparing for Clean Monday on February 27th. We are called to begin preparing for our 40 day journey of fasting and spiritual effort, and an important first step in our preparation is knowing ourselves, looking within, and evaluating our inner attitude. Do we possess the spirit of the Pharisee – proud of our deeds, self-assured in our own efforts, and judgmental towards others? Or are we cultivating the spirit of the tax-collector – aware of our sinfulness, humble before God, and contrite in our repentance?

Jesus warned us, “Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” The Desert Fathers summarized this by saying, “**Better is the one who has sinned, if he knows he has sinned and repents, than the person who has not sinned and thinks himself righteous.**”

**THOUGHTS ON HUMILITY**

“True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.”

C. S. Lewis

To be humble means to consider ourselves deserving, for our sins, of every humiliation, injury, persecution, and even blows; and to be meek means to patiently endure injustice, abuse, and so forth, and to pray for our enemies.

St John of Kronstadt

“As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on thing and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down you cannot see something that is above you.”

C. S. Lewis

There are two kinds of humility. To deem oneself the lowest of all beings, and to ascribe to God all of one’s good actions. The first is the beginning, and the second is the end.

St Gregory of Sinai
I was in district court some time ago and had an opportunity to watch a variety of cases which exemplified struggling, fallen humanity. One drug dealer was caught for the second or third time dealing drugs, and sentenced to prison. Another man violently abused his girlfriend right in front of his children while under the influence of drugs. There was a well dressed man facing a prison sentence because the police caught him several times driving under the influence of alcohol. And then there were many others who faced minor, and sometimes major offenses.

As I listened to each story, I thought about the victims who suffered, about the perpetrators who committed the crimes, about the children and innocent bystanders who witnessed violent acts, about the sometimes innocent people who became the victim of a fallen judicial system, as well as about the family members and friends who filled the courtroom. A room full of broken people, some of whom society wants to cast away into prison and simply forget about.

Our fallen human nature obviously means that people will make all kinds of bad choices, and sometimes act in evil and vicious ways. When such things happen, our world and society too often want to punish such people and simply get rid of them. Some go to jail. Some get probation. Others pay fines. Too often our society views punishment and retribution as the only way to keep law and order in tact.

Yet God acts in a very different way. Whenever he sees someone who is fallen and broken, He is NOT interested in punishment and justice. He is NOT interested in revenge and retribution. He is NOT interested in control through fear of chastisement. Instead, God’s unconditional, radical, unfathomable love IS interested in healing and repentance. He IS interested in offering second chances that can lead to new life. As the Scriptures say, “there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over 99 who have no need of repentance.”

The hope of our Lord always looks for the old to become new. God has an unfathomable love for each and every one of His children, even children who have made bad choices and acted in foolish or even evil ways. God unabashedly loves each and every sinner as His beloved children.

Here lies the central message in the Gospel story of the Prodigal Son – the lost son who rejects his father, runs away from his heavenly home, wastes his life in extravagant, reckless, and self-indulged living only to end up in the depths of hell, eating the food of pigs and identifying with the swine of the world.

The boy made bad choices. The boy acted not only foolishly, but even evilly. The boy was a self-centered scoundrel. And yet, His heavenly father passionately loved him with His unconditional and unending divine love. No matter what that boy did, God still viewed him as His beloved child, created in the image and likeness of God, with an unforgotten potential to become a new creation, a child destined to become one with God.

Where the world sees a hopeless case, where they see a person who they think should be forgotten about and cast away, God sees as a broken child filled with unending potential, a lost son or daughter who can still discover a new life. God gladly and joyously offers His unfathomable, radical, divine love to bless each and every fallen, prodigal sinner.

Look at the imagery in the story. The younger son despises his father, offends his father, rejects his father, forgets about his father and runs off with his father’s inheritance. In Judaic tradition this was an unforgivable offense. And yet, Jesus reveals how the father patiently and lovingly awaits the return of
Whenever God sees someone who is fallen and broken, He is NOT interested in punishment and justice. He is NOT interested in revenge and retribution. Instead, God’s unconditional, radical, unfathomable love IS interested in healing and repentance, in offering second chances that lead to new life!

his son. And once that return occurs, the father holds no grudge, no anger, no rebuke, and no desire for retribution or even justice. Instead, he runs out to his son, lovingly embraces him, showers him with kindness and compassion, and sees only a broken man in need of healing. The father blesses his lost son with full restoration back to his original beauty.

God never desires the death of a sinner, but wishes only for his or her return back to their divine destiny. What unfathomable, unconditional, divine love. That is the love that dominates the heart of God. A love whose only desire is for broken humanity to find healing and wholeness and renewal in Him.

Although Jesus told the parable of the Prodigal Son as a fictional story, Holy Scriptures offers numerous examples of real-life prodigals who encounter the radical, unfathomable, unconditional love of God and discover healing and new life through that meeting.

A thief and murderer who faces death by crucifixion from the Romans hangs dying on the cross, yet in his last moments of life, when he comes face to face with the divine love of Jesus, he opens his heart to receive this love and enters into paradise. Imagine, the first one into paradise is a murderer and thief!

And of course there’s the religious fanatic, the one who despises the followers of Jesus so much that he does all he can to persecute and eliminate them, even approving of the murder of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Yet in a totally unexpected and neverimagined moment, Saul runs into the passionate love that only Jesus offers, and allows that love to turn him from a murderer of Christians, to the greatest defender and proclaimer of Jesus Christ. This prodigal Saul becomes the Apostle Paul.

The unfathomable, unconditional, and radical love of God. It has changed numerous lives in Scriptures, and countless lives throughout history. For those who are open to receive it, it transforms and renews each and every person.

May each of us understand that love, accept it in our own lives, and share it with everyone we meet.
ONE YIAVIA’S LOVE
Leah Didonato

I thought that throughout my life, I experienced just about every kind of love. Nobody, but nobody, could adequately explain the love that I would feel for my grandson. When I announced that I was going to be a grandmother for the first time, friends who had grandchildren would come up and congratulate me. They would tell me how precious their grandchildren were and the special love they felt for them. These grandparents, with great joy in their hearts and huge smiles on their faces would say, "Just wait until you have your own and you will see...you will understand."

Well, that day finally came, and I did understand. It is impossible to explain the special love and bond one has for their children's children. Who else but God could put that kind of love in our hearts for these little ones. He has bestowed upon us the most beautiful of blessings. Scripture says, "God's greatest gift to us is love."

There is no end to how deep love can penetrate our hearts. Sometimes I feel that my heart will just burst with love for my little grandson "Hudson." He completes me. I have come full circle in this earthly life, and there is a great feeling of contentment in that. Soon, I will have the joy of meeting my second grandson, a new love in my life...a new blessing to be experienced.

For all of us that love and receive love, whether it be with family or friend, God has given us His most precious gift. The only thing greater than our love for others is God's love for us.

Thank You God!

PEACE BE WITH YOU

We are all God's children.
Love One another.
Pray, forgive, and embrace the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Find your purpose in God.
Engage in every thing that makes our world a better place.
Sing, be happy, find joy in every situation.
Hold dear that we are promised eternal life if we choose to follow our Lord and live a life following His example.

Smile, always smile.
It not only feels good but brightens the darkness around us.
Pray constantly so we are in tune with our Master.
He listens to our every word.
Trust in God, He will never fail us.
Forgive all who have hurt us and forgive yourself. God knows our hearts.
Share your life with others,
We have much to offer in so many ways. Be grateful for everything!

Mary Knight Seferi
You are INVITED to our 13th Annual
Godparents/Grandparents
Family Sunday Celebration

Sunday, February 12th

9:30am Divine Liturgy
10:45 Children’s Program in Church
11:00 Cinderella Puppet Show
11:30 A Delicious Luncheon

Adults: $10.00    Children Meals (under 12): FREE

Bring Your godchildren, grandchildren, godparents & grandparents to Divine Liturgy and receive Holy Communion together! Then enjoy a delightful Marionette Puppet Show and delicious luncheon! Bring any friends with children as well!

We welcome the Tanglewood Marionettes, a professional puppet theatre who will put on a delightful show "Cinderella"
VASILOPITA DINNER

Congratulations to

THOMAI GATSOGIANNIS
SANDI KUNKEL
NATALIE MEGAS

for Finding the Coins!
May the prayers of St. Basil bless them throughout the New Year!
Mark Your Calendars:

A Lenten Retreat and Lenten Talks

“Spiritual Disciplines”
7:00pm Wednesday, March 1

“What’s the Point of Fasting and Confession”
Dr. Aristotle Papanikolau
9:30am-12:30pm Our Lenten Retreat
Saturday, March 11

“Parenting Toward the Kingdom: Orthodox Christian Principles of Child-Rearing”
Dr. Philip Mamalakis speaking on his newly published book
7:00pm Wednesday, March 15

“How To Live a Spiritual Life in a Secular World”
Fr. Ephraim Peters
7:00pm Wednesday, March 22

“Contemporary Miracles”
Fr. Dimitrios Moraitis
7:00pm Wednesday, March 29
Parenting Toward the Kingdom:  
Orthodox Christian Principles of Child-Rearing

Dr. Philip Mamalakis, PhD, offers a practical and enlightening book to help parents raise their children according to our Orthodox tradition.

The Orthodox Christian tradition is filled with wisdom and guidance about the biblical path of salvation. Yet this guidance remains largely inaccessible to parents and often disconnected from the parenting challenges we face in our homes.

Parenting Toward the Kingdom will help you make the connections between the spiritual life as we understand it in the Orthodox Church and the ongoing challenges of raising children. It takes the best child development research and connects it with the timeless truths of our Christian faith to offer you real strategies for navigating the challenges of daily life.

Dr. Mamalakis will be speaking in our Church about this book on Wednesday, March 15th. Come and hear him!!

You can purchase this book at our Holy Wisdom Church Bookstore.

THE AGAPE FUND

In January, I blessed approximately 150 homes. It was a joy to enter your homes and bring God’s special grace for the New Year. Thank you for welcoming me warmly. If I missed your home, and you want it blessed, please call me to set up a time to come.

When I blessed your home, many of you gave me a monetary gift. Please know that it is my joy to come into your homes and bring the special blessing of our Lord. No monetary gift is ever expected, and if you give a gift, know that I do not keep it for myself. All the money I receive from House Blessings, as well as any money received from Sacraments (Baptisms & Weddings) or Memorials and Funerals goes into my “AGAPE FUND”. I use this AGAPE FUND help a variety of people in need - this may include people within our parish, as well as others outside our Church Family. I also use it to help various Church ministries. I always welcome any donations made out to this special fund.

If anyone tells me of a special need, I will try to respond to it. Of course, any such help is always held in the utmost confidence.

THANK YOU again for supporting this special AGAPE Fund!
Dear Beloved Parishioners

Our Church will once again sponsor a MISSIONS TEAM TO MEXICO to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church in a cross-cultural setting.

This will be the SIXTH TIME our Church will send such a group. We have 20 people participating in this exciting mission (and more on our waiting list):

The Veronis Family, Neal/Olivia/John Nesluslan, Lisa Healy, Nicole Wilson, Steve/Louisa Foisy, Kara Bilis, Tony/Maia Beaudry, Smaranda Cojocaru, Matvey Zhuk, Bill Thompson, Dimitri Gaginas, Please keep our team in your prayers!

As in past years, we will travel to Mexico and work with the PROJECT MEXICO, while staying at the St. Innocent Orphanage. We will go from July 21-27, 2017.

Our primary goal will be to help construct a home for a needy family in Rosarito. The week we are there, we will work with 125 Orthodox Christians from around the country, and will build FIVE SIMPLE HOMES. We will also spend time with the teenage orphans at the St. Innocent home, as well as share our faith and spend time with the local people we meet.

In order for our group to participate in this mission trip, WE ARE RAISING $20,000, which will pay for the supplies and materials needed to build the house, our food and lodging at the orphanage, our flights to San Diego and the van we must rent for Mexico.

Would you prayerfully consider becoming a spiritual and financial partner with us on our mission?

As a financial partner, you can send a tax-deductible donation to Sts. Constantine and Helen Church. Please write Project Mexico in the memo line of the check. You can learn more about Project Mexico on their website www.projectmexico.org.

Thank you for helping our Church fulfill its part in our Lord’s global mission and outreach!!

In Christ’s love,

+Luke
**PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS**

There will be no meeting in February. Our next meeting will be March 6th at 6:00pm. We will discuss our annual Spaghetti Supper, which will be April 29th. We will also prepare for Easter. We’ll discuss other fundraisers for the year, and other fun activities we can do as a society.

I look forward to seeing you all on March 6th. Stay healthy and warm during these winter months.

With love and appreciation,

*Evelyn Pappas*

*Philoptochos President*

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**PROJECT MEXICO MEETING**

5:00pm  
Saturday, Feb 11

Our 20 Members of our 2017 Project Mexico Team, will have a meeting to discuss preparations for our summer mission trip.

Bring your $100 deposit.

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**LEARN TO PAINT YOUR OWN ICON**

12 Three Hour Sessions  
Over 6 Saturdays  
or An Intensive Two Week  
(3 hours/day) Class  
*(will start in mid-March)*

Cost: $100 for all materials

*Limited Space for 5 Students*  
*Contact Fr. Luke ASAP if you are interested*

With Iconographer Olga Poloukhine

Olga is a lifelong Russian Orthodox Christian born in France, who recently joined our Church. She is an iconographer and artist, who has painted icons in churches and for individuals. You can see her work at [http://studio.poloukhine.com/](http://studio.poloukhine.com/)
COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:
Feb 5 - Kathy Bilis, Sara Darligianis, Marie Monroe, Charlotte Neslusan, Carolyn Niemeck, Stephanie Quill,
Feb 12 - Thomai Gatsogiannis, Trish Lareau, Betty Tonna, Deb Raymond, Evangeline Wilson
Feb 19 - Donna Cooney, Athena Cooney, Leah Didonato, Jaime Ross
Feb 26 Marie McNally, Christa Benoit, Sandi Kunkel, Mary Seferi

USHERS & GREETERS SCHEDULE
Feb 5 Arthur Bilis, Del Monroe, Chris Geotis, Thomai Gatsogianis, Trish Lareau
Feb 12 Marie McNally, Eric Beland, Matt Benoit, Lisa Healy, Nick Seferi
Feb 19 Neal Neslusan, Mary Papageorge, Jimmy Karapanos, Cindy Johnson
Feb 26 Nicoleta Cojocaru, Zach Gianaris, Garry Ross, Jared Quill, George Kerbici

EARLY RISERS BIBLE STUDY
7:00 am - 8:00 am
Every Saturday
Come and Join Us.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY
10:00-11:00am
Every Wednesday
All Are Welcome!

YOUTH EPISTLE READERS
Feb 5 - Theodora Veronis
Feb 12 - Panayiota Veronis
Feb 19 - Olivia Neslusan
Feb 26 - Gabriella Ross
March 5 - Zach Beaudry
March 12 - Lily Mueller
March 19 - Maia Beaudry

WEEKDAY SERVICES
DIVINE LITURGIES
Feb 1 - 6:00pm Vesperal Liturgy for the Presentation of Christ in the Temple
Feb 10 - 9:30 Liturgy for St. Harallambos
Feb 18 - 9:30am 1st Saturday of the Souls
Feb 25 - 9:30am 2nd Saturday of the Souls
Feb 27 - 6:30pm Great Compline on Clean Monday
ORTHODOXY 101
Adult Catechism Classes

SUNDAYS
Feb 12 - 12:30-1:30
Feb 19 - 11:45am-1:00
Feb 26 - 11:45am-1:00

Eight Classes for all who want to Learn the Basics of our Orthodox Christian Faith

Everyone Welcome! Lifelong Orthodox as well as Non-Orthodox!!!

Look for our safe and convenient Online Giving at bottom left of Church webpage at www.schwebster.org

Youth WINTER CAMP

Sign Up for MBC Winter Camp at www.mbcamp.org
Feb 17-20

Fundraiser for CYNDIA JOHNSON

Friday, Feb 24th
At Point Breeze
Dinner, DJ, Raffles, $30 tickets - Everyone Welcome!

NEW YOUNG ADULT GATHERING

Everyone ages 18-30 come and join us for an evening of faith and fellowship.

7:30pm Thursday, Feb 23th

Learn more about your Orthodox Faith.
Listen to Orthodox podcasts, music and interesting teachings:

www.myocn.net
www.AncientFaith.com
## Remembering Our Church Family

### Important Dates in FEBRUARY:

Try to make a visit, give a call, or express your congratulations to members of our Church family who celebrate special days this month.

### BIRTHDAYS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1</td>
<td>Michael Chito</td>
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<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Fr Luke Veronis</td>
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<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Teddy Benoit</td>
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<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>Vasiliki Zahariadis</td>
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<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>Katia Sidorchuk</td>
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<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>Grace Darlagiannis</td>
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<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Lily Mueller</td>
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<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Bozena Khozami</td>
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<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>Norman Desrosiers</td>
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<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>Michael Angelo</td>
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<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>Richard Bethune</td>
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<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Eleanor Teghmis</td>
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<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Nike Avlas</td>
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<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>Angelina Papageorge</td>
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<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>John Sgouritsas</td>
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### WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>George/Mary Papageorge</td>
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### NAMEDAYS:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Saint Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 6</td>
<td>St. Katia</td>
<td>Katia Zhuk</td>
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<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>St Haralambos</td>
<td>Harry Jordanoglou, Harrison Jordanoglou</td>
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<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>St Theodora</td>
<td>Theodora Veronis, Theodora Stathis</td>
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<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>St. Theodore</td>
<td>Ted Tonna, Teddy Benoit</td>
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<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>St. Fotini</td>
<td>Faith Fotini Veronis</td>
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### A PRAYER

Dear Lord,

Thank you for being my Savior and Creator.

I more than realize my opportunity to make your glory known to all those around me, and to honor and proclaim your unconditional love for all.

More than ever, I realize my love of Jesus Christ, in Trinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit, must be proclaimed every moment of every day.

Christ lives in me, and directs me, and helps me try to set a good example for my children, family, friends, and everyone I meet. I will try to do this always. With a humble mind and heart, I will love and treat everyone with a sincere and honest attitude and behavior.

I have failed so many times in this area of God’s expectations. Forgive me, forgive me, forgive me! With all my attention, I will strive to be humble in every moment of every day, always loving and caring and helping every life here on earth and in Heaven.

With my deepest love and devotion,

*Mary Knight Seferi*
THE GOOD STEWARD

Some see a hungry man and say he is a bum
Others see the same poor soul and offer him their rum.

Some see a shivering child and close their eyes
While others wrap him in a blanket and hold him to the sky.

People rationalize their thoughts to justify their actions
Is it guilt, selfishness or simple human reaction.

Yet our compassion is known by the God who cares
He recognizes and takes notice of how He fares
When disguised as the least of our brothers.

For remember, what you give to those in need
Will be yours forever when He takes heed.

Do not hide the things and talents which you possess
Share them instead to fill your heavenly chest.

Be a generous steward of His earthly gifts
And He will honor you with an eternal lift.

Nicholas A. Veronis

HOLY SCRIPTURE PREPARING US FOR OUR LENTEN JOURNEY

“Be vigilant. Watch therefore for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming... For the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Matthew 24:42-44

“Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you form 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... Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers or sisters, you did it to Me.

Matthew 25: 34-40

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak

Matthew 26:41
Thank You to those who sponsor our monthly bulletin!
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<td>11:15 Lunch-lion and Puppet Show</td>
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<td>5:00pm Project Mexico Meeting</td>
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<td>7pm AA</td>
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<td>12 Godparents Grandparents Sunday</td>
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<td>10:00 Bible Study</td>
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<td>18 Saturday of Souls</td>
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<td>27 CLEAN MONDAY</td>
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<td>Great Lent Begins</td>
<td>Great Lent Begins</td>
<td>10:00 Bible Study</td>
<td>10:00 Bible Study</td>
<td>6:30 1st Salutations Service to Virgin Mary</td>
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<td>6:30 Great Compline</td>
<td>6:30 Great Compline</td>
<td>6:00 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy</td>
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<td>10:00 Bible Study</td>
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<td>26 Forgiveness Sunday</td>
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<td>7:30am-5pm Parish Council Retreat in NH</td>
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<td>40 Day Churching Coral Bretton</td>
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<td>6:30 1st Salutations Service to Virgin Mary</td>
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GREAT LENT
OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY BEGINS
CLEAN MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27

TRUE FASTING
Let us observe a Fast acceptable and true to the Lord. True Fasting is to put away all evil, to control the tongue, to forbear from anger, to abstain from lust, slander, falsehood, and lying. If we renounce these things, that is our fasting true and acceptable to God.

A JOURNEY OF FORGIVENESS
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 return to it, 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.

A TIME OF REPENTANCE
Behold, now is the time of repentance. Let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light, so that having sailed across the vast sea of the Fast, we may reach the third day Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

GUIDE ME DURING LENT
O Christ, in Your compassion, I entreat You through fasting and repentance to restore my soul, which has been slain by the fruit of disobedience.

Grant that I may ever walk in the straight path of Your holy commandments, so that in the company of all who love You, I may share in Your divine glory and praise Your goodness towards all people, O Jesus.

A Lenten Hymn