At the beginning of this new year, I challenged all the members of our Church Family to take more seriously our Christian faith and commit to connecting with God each and every day for at least 30 minutes.

Connecting with God means spending quality time with God — not just a minute here and there, or thinking about God every once in a while, but connecting with Him means spending quality time dwelling in His Presence.

Connecting with God means praying to Him every day. Praying with the beautiful established prayers of our Orthodox Christian tradition, as well as offering spontaneous prayers of whatever is on our mind. Connecting means talking to God.

Connecting with God implies sitting in silence, waiting to hear God speak to us, listening to Him speak to us through Holy Scripture, through silence, through the beauty all around us. Thus, connecting with God means taking the time to read the Bible every day, meditating on the holy wisdom and stories of faith that can teach us, guide us, inspire us, and nourish us.

I set a goal for our Church Family members to read through the entire New Testament in 2018. I realize that even some of our most dedicated Church members have never read the entire New Testament. I’m even sure that the vast majority of our Church members have never read the entire New Testament. Therefore, please take up this spiritual challenge. Make a decision that you will try to read the entire New Testament this year. And a helpful way to do this is to get my daily email I send out, which will include one chapter a day of the Bible. If you read my daily email, you will read through the entire New Testament this year. (You can sign up for my daily email on our church website www.schwebster.org, where there is a link on the left column to sign up.)

Connecting with God means sitting in silence before an icon looking at God, and being seen by Him. Or it is sitting in silence for five minutes praying the Jesus Prayer - Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy on Me a Sinner, or more simply Lord Jesus Christ Have Mercy On Me. Get a prayer rope at our
Sts. Constantine and Helen
Greek Orthodox Church
37 Lake Parkway, PO Box 713
Webster, MA 01570
Church Telephone: (508) 943-8361 website: www.schwebster.org
Facebook: St Constantine Helens (Church)
Church Office Hours: Monday, Fridays 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

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
Telephone: (508) 949-7623 (h) (774) 230-6985 (cell)
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<th>2018 PARISH COUNCIL</th>
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<td>Vice President: Michael Chito</td>
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PHILOPTOCHOS

President: Evelyn Pappas
Vice President: Sara Darligiannis
Secretary: Marie McNally
Treasurer: Sandi Kunkel
Church Secretary: Mary Seferi;
Church Social Media Facilitator: Kristina Mironidis
CONNECTING WITH GOD DURING LENT

Church bookstore, or ask me for one, and I’ll be glad to give you one. Use this powerful spiritual tool to help make the Jesus Prayer a part of your daily life.

Connecting with God is the goal of our Christian life! God wants to connect with us each and every day, and at every moment of each day. Yet, He will never impose Himself on us. We have free will, and it is up to us to turn to Him, open up to Him, and go to Him. Let’s do this each and every day!!!

And even if you haven’t starting do this yet, don’t think its too late. Begin today!

Of course, to help motivate us even more, the Church offers us the season of Great Lent. The Church Fathers understood so well our weak human nature, and the need to be constantly reminded to stay on the straight and narrow path that leads into the Kingdom of God. This is why we have our Liturgical calendar with daily reminders (to prayer at least morning and night, as well as throughout the day), weekly reminders (coming to Church at least every Sunday, but also on other feast-days and holy days), and then our annual reminders (the four various seasons of Lent, of which the holiest time of year is now with the beginning of Great Lent and then Pascha).

Great Lent is a time to readjust our busy lives, and to consciously set into our daily and weekly calendar more events that will keep our focus on God. During Lent we try to fast, so that by changing our diet, we are constantly remembering God whenever we want to eat meat or food with dairy. We try to come to church more often than just on Sundays - our Church will offer the Great Compline on Monday evenings, the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy with a pot-luck Lenten dinner on Wednesday evenings, the Salutations Service to the Virgin Mary every Friday evening, and then our Saturday Great Vespers Service. That means we have Church services five times a week during Lent. Make it a Lenten discipline to come to Church every Sunday, as well as at least one other time during the week. I know it’s hard with our busy schedules, but that is exactly what the Lenten journey is all about - it is making the difficult decision to consciously make God a priority in our lives, if even for only 40 days! But hopefully these 40 days will create a discipline in each of us to continue for the rest of the year!

Another challenging, yet beautiful discipline to try, especially if you have never tried it before, is to participate in our 24-Hour Prayer Chain during the first week of Lent. During this powerful way to kick off the Lenten season, we will have at least 24 people who each take one hour a day, and they stay committed to praying at that particular hour for seven days. So it is beautiful to think how our Church Family will be praying 24 hours a day for seven days in a row. Please let me know if you want to participate in this, and I will give you a packet of prayers to help you pray for one hour.

And then, of course, there is the discipline of consciously doing more Deeds of Love, charitable deeds. Make an effort to do something you don’t typically do, like come volunteer for our monthly Living Bread Luncheon.

Take the time to read through this month’s issue of the Light, because there are other meaningful articles that will inspire, educate, and enlighten you as we all prepare for our Lenten journey.

The ultimate goal, though, isn’t simply to fast for 40 days, or to journey through Lent. Our ultimate goal is to connect on a deep level with our Creator, and to stay connected with Him each and every day. He is our Source of Life, our Well-Spring of Life, the Light that will guide us in our lives. Let us invite Him into our lives every day, and be filled with His Presence!

With love and hope that we all will have a most blessed Lenten journey,

+Luke
Few things are as difficult in the modern world as fasting. It is not simply the action of changing our eating habits that we find problematic—it’s the whole concept of fasting and what it truly entails. It comes from another world.

We understand dieting—changing how we eat in order to improve how we look or how we feel. But changing how we eat in order to know God or to rightly keep a feast of the Church—this is foreign. Our first question is often, “How does that work?” For we live in a culture of utility—we want to know the use of things. Underneath the question of utility is the demand that something make sense to me, and that I be able to ultimately take charge of it, use it as I see fit and shape it according to my own desires. Perhaps the fast could be improved?

Our modern self-understanding sees people primarily as individual centers of choice and decision. A person is seen as the product of their choices and decisions—our lives are self-authenticated. As such, we are managers.

Of course there are many problems with this world-view from the perspective of Classical Christianity. Though we are free to make choices and decisions, our freedom is not unlimited. The largest part of our lives is not self-determined. Much of the rhetoric of modernity is aimed towards those with wealth and power. It privileges their stories and mocks the weakness of those without power with promises that are rarely, if ever, fulfilled. Our lives are a gift from God and not of our own making. The Classical Christian spiritual life is not marked by choice and self-determination: it is characterized by self-emptying and the way of the Cross.

When a modern Christian confronts the season of Lent—the question often becomes: “What do I want to give up for Lent?” The intention is good, but the question is wrong. Lent quickly becomes yet another life-choice, a consumer’s fast.

The practice of the traditional fast has been greatly diminished over the past few centuries. The Catholic Church has modified its requirements and streamlined Lenten fasting (today it includes only abstaining from meat on the Fridays of Lent). The Protestant Churches that observe the season of Lent offer no formal guidelines for Lenten practice. The individual is left on their own. Orthodoxy continues to have in place the full traditional fast, which is frequently modified in its application. It is essentially a vegan diet (no meat, fish, wine, dairy). Some limit the number of meals and their manner of cooking. Of course, having the fast in place and “keeping the fast” are two very different things.

Does any of this matter? Why should Christians in the modern world concern themselves with a traditional practice?

What is at stake in the modern world is our humanity. The notion that we are self-authenticating individuals is simply false. We obviously do not bring ourselves in existence—it is a gift. And the larger part of what constitutes our lives is simply a given—a gift. It is not always a gift that someone is happy with—they would like themselves to be other than they are. But the myth of the modern world is that we, in fact, do create ourselves and our lives—our identities are imagined to be of our own making. We are only who we choose to be. It is a myth that is extremely well-suited for undergirding a culture built on consumption. Identity can be had at a price. The wealthy have a far greater range of identities available to them—the poor are largely stuck with being who they really are.

But the only truly authentic human life is the one we receive as a gift from God. The spirituality of choice and consumption under the guise of freedom is an emptiness. The identity we create is an ephemera, a product of imagination and the market. The habits of the marketplace serve to enslave us—Lent is a call to freedom.

A MODERN LENT

Thus, a beginning for a modern Lent is to repent from the modern world itself. By this, I mean renouncing the notion that you are a self-generated, self-authenticating individual. You are not defined by your choices and decisions,
much less by your career and your shopping. You begin by acknowledging that God alone is Lord (and you are not). Your life has meaning and purpose only in relation to God. The most fundamental practice of such God-centered living is the giving of thanks.

Renounce trying to improve yourself and become something. You are not a work in progress. If you are a work – then you are God’s work. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in” (Eph 2:10).

Do not plan to have a “good Lent” or imagine what a “good Lent” would be. Give up judging – especially judging yourself. Get out of the center of your world. Lent is not about you. It is about Christ and His Pascha. Fast according to the Tradition instead of according to your own ideas and designs. Don’t be too strict or too lenient, and if possible keep the fast in a manner that is mutually agreed rather than privately designed. Be accountable but not guilty.

Pray. Fasting without praying is called “the Fast of Demons,” because demons never eat, but they never pray. We fast as a means of drawing closer to God. Your fasting and your prayer should be balanced as much as possible. If you fast in a strict manner, then you should pray for extended periods. If you fast lightly, then your prayers may be lighter as well. The point is to be single – for prayer and fasting to be a single thing.

To our prayer and fasting should be added mercy (giving stuff away, especially money). You cannot be too generous. Your mercy should be as invisible as possible to others, except in your kindness to all. Spend less, give away more.

Eating, drinking, praying and generosity are very natural activities. Look at your life. How natural is your eating? Is your diet driven by manufactured, processed foods? These can be very inhuman ways of eating. Eating should take time. It is not a waste of time to spend as much as six hours in twenty-four preparing, sharing, eating and cleaning up. Even animals take time to eat.

Go to Church a lot more (if your Church has additional Lenten services, go to them). This can be problematic for Protestants, in that most Protestant worship is quite modern, i.e. focused on the individual rather than directed to God, well-meant but antithetical to worship. If your Church isn’t boring, it’s probably modern. This is not to say that Classical Christianity is inherently boring – it’s just experienced as such by people trained to be consumers. Classical Christianity worships according to Tradition and focuses its attention on God. It is not there for you to “get something out of it.”

Entertain yourself less. In traditional Orthodox lands, amusements are often given up during the Lenten period. This can be very difficult for modern people in that we live to consume and are thus caught in a cycle of pain and pleasure. Normal pleasures such as exercise or walking are not what I have in mind – although it strikes me as altogether modern that there should be businesses dedicated to helping us do something normal (like walking or exercising), such that even our normal activities become a commodity to consume.

Fast from watching/reading the news and having/expressing opinions. The news is not presented in order to keep you informed. It is often inaccurate and serves the primary purpose of political propaganda and consumer frenzy. Neither are good for the soul. Opinions are deeply destructive to the soul’s health. Opinions are not properly considered, necessary beliefs. They are passions that pass themselves off as thoughts or beliefs. The need to express them reveals their passionate nature.

I could well imagine that a modern person, reading through such a list, might feel overwhelmed and wonder what is left. What is left is being human. That so much in our lives is not particularly human but an ephemeral distraction goes far to explain much of our exhaustion and anxiety. There is no food for us in what is not human.

And so the words of Isaiah come to mind: Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in fatness (Isa 55:1-2).

“Let your soul delight itself in fatness…” the irony of Lent.
TOOLS TO USE FOR GREAT LENT
OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS PASCHA

Great Lent is a time for self-examination and self-denial – a time for taking control of our lives and our bodies. The purpose of the Fast is to give us a greater awareness of our dependence on God. It is a time to improve ourselves and our relationship with God.

Lent is a time for greater works of mercy and charity for those less fortunate than us. It is a time for visitation of the sick and assistance to the poor, and generally a more joyful relationship with those who are close to us – our family and friends.

Most of all, Lent is a time of JOY and NEW BEGINNINGS. We cleanse ourselves – mind, body and soul – through the physical and spiritual fast, keeping a Christian attitude in all that we do. All this is done to prepare us for the Great Feast of Pascha – the Resurrection of Christ.

It is important for all Orthodox Christians to understand the “TOOLS” that we use to help us on this blessed spiritual journey. Some spiritual tools include 1) Fasting, 2) Prayer, 3) Good Deeds & Charity, 4) Repentance & Confession, 5) Bible reading and 6) Worship and regular Holy Communion.

REPENTANCE & CONFESSION

Repentance has its roots in the times of the apostles. In the Book of Acts the Apostle Peter says, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:37-38) When we fall away from God, we have removed ourselves from His communion – with Him and with other Christians. We have excommunicated ourselves. To re-enter communion with God is the on-going activity of all Christians. We fall away daily in some way or another. No one is exempt.

Often, when children play in competitive games, one will call out “that’s a do over!” Haven’t we all wished for that chance to undo the past and start over? Repentance offers us this new beginning.

We are telling God that we have changed our mind about our past direction and want to be back in communion with him. The Greek work for repentance, metanoia, implies a very deep change in the way we see ourselves, our world, and our relationship to God.

To change the direction of our lives, and to change our mind in repentance, is the starting point in our Lenten journey. We leave behind regret as we move toward hope. Repentance is not a single action but a new attitude, a frame of mind, and an ongoing action!

Think back over your life of things which you regret having said or done – hurtful, incon siderate, selfish, deceitful. Think also of those things which you have done which may not have directly affected others, but which you know to be wrong according to the teachings of the Church. Bring them to mind as if they were occurring right now. Think of how it would have been if you had acted differently. Take this regret and turn it into repentance. Acknowledge that you have offended another person or the Church, and in doing so you have offended God.

For God to forgive us, He asks us to also forgive one another. For many of us, this is the most difficult aspect of repentance and confession. Yet we say it each time we pray the Lord’s prayer, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”
Just as God’s love for us is personal, so must ours be for Him. As the Christian grows from child to adult, his or her personal response to God becomes crucial. This personal response is the act of confession.

One other aspect of repentance and confession may include preparing and participating in the SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION. This requires you to reflect upon your life, prepare yourself, and then go to your priest and have a confession. It is expected for an Orthodox Christian to go to the Sacrament of Confession during this holy time of the year. **If you have never gone to Confession, or have not gone in a long time, make an appointment with your priest and decide to go to Confession this Lenten Season!**

**FASTING**

“The purpose of Lent is not to force on us a few formal obligations,” Fr. Alexander Schmemman notes, “But to soften our heart so that we may experience the hidden ‘thirst and hunger’ for communion with God.”

Thus, we can say that a **primary aim and purpose of fasting is first to make us conscious of God.**

True fasting involves real hunger. It means denying ourselves food during times of hunger. The fathers of the Church recommended that we should always rise from the table feeling that we could have eaten more. During these times of sacrifice and struggle, we are called to turn our minds toward God and remind ourselves of our utter dependence on Him. All the blessings of life -- food, drink, and health -- come from Him. He is our provider, our sustainer, and our source of life. Fasting make us abundantly aware of our utter dependence on God.

Another purpose of fasting is to help us develop self-discipline in our lives. The mentality of the world is to satisfy your desires whenever you can. However, the Christian life presents a radical reversal of such thinking. The Church calls us to discipline our minds, bodies and spirits. 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.

A third purpose of fasting is to act as a source and time of illumination in our lives.

If fasting is combined with increased prayer and acts of mercy, then Great Lent becomes a period of revelation and discovery. Throughout history, God has spoken to those people who have fasted and focused their whole being on Him. In the life of Jesus, as well as in the life of many Biblical characters and saints of the Church, we see that periods of fasting were times when they encountered God.

Finally, fasting helps us free ourselves from the dictatorship of flesh over spirit.

Don’t look at fasting as a personal punishment or as something negative, but as something positive. **If guided by the Holy Spirit, fasting should produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which involves most notably the gift of JOY!**

This is what the hymns at the beginning of Lent remind us, “**With joy let us enter the beginning of the Fast, let us not be of sad countenance… There are 40 days in the Fast and let us keep them all with joy.”**

**GUIDELINES FOR FASTING**

Each of us should try to struggle with our fast. It’s not supposed to be easy. Yet each of us should fast in a manner appropriate to our own spiritual maturity. A Strict Fast is to avoid all meat, milk or dairy products, and even foods cooked with oil. According to one’s health and situation, maybe an adjustment to the fast is appropriate - possibly not eating meat for 40 days, but only abstaining from milk and dairy products on Wednesdays and Fridays. Or maybe your situation might require a greater adjustment. Talk with your priest or spiritual father about this.
TOOLS FOR GREAT LENT

In our day and age, fasting should also include abstinence from noise and meaningless chatter. This can include fasting from TV, Music, internet, Facebook, texting, excessive cellphone usage, video games, etc. Maybe you can abstain from some of these during the first week of Lent and during Holy Week. If you can, try for 40 days!

The whole “spirit” of fasting is related to changing our lifestyles for a period of time, as a means to help us focus more on our pursuit for the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, along with giving some things up, why don’t we try to add more spiritually edifying activities.

1. Be disciplined in saying your prayers every morning and evening.
2. Come to Church every Sunday, and even attend one of the extra Lenten services throughout the week.
3. Read the Bible every day.
4. Pray the Jesus Prayer daily, and sit in silence and meditation for 10 minutes each day.
5. Free up your schedule so you are not so busy. Make time to think about what is truly essential in life.
6. Talk less, gossip less, control your speech, don’t participate in inappropriate talk or joking, and instead, fill your mind with what is meaningful and positive.

PRAYER

One key to a more fulfilling Lent is prayer. For Orthodox Christians, the aim of prayer is to enter into conversation with God. Prayer is sometimes referred to as dialogue with God. Often it is a waiting on God in silence. In the church it is defined as the lifting of the mind and heart to God, and also as walking in the presence of God. We turn our mind and thoughts toward Him. We mentally gaze at Him and speak with Him in reverence, fear, and hope. At times we speak to Him with words and at other times we stand in reverent silence, saying nothing, but being aware of His presence. In this dialogue with God we praise Him and thank Him. We ask Him for what we need. Our minds and our hearts are opened to Him. Prayer is not only repeating words, it is trusting in God that He hears and directs us in His Way involving spiritual growth and development.

One of the most beautiful prayers that we recite daily throughout Lent is the Prayer of St. Ephraim. (This prayer is on the back page of the bulletin.) Try to reflect upon this prayer, and say it each morning and night throughout Lent:

READING THE BIBLE

Reading Holy Scriptures brings inspiration, guidance and strength. What better witness for the truth of the Christian faith than a solid Christian life nourished by Holy Scripture and radiating true Christian love at home, at Church and at work? The Christian's own life becomes a kind of gospel, a living Bible, in which other people observe, read and experience the truths of God in action.

Set aside a regular time for daily reading. Don't read too much or too fast. One chapter a day is sufficient. Let what you read sink in slowly. Start with one of the Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Read with the faith and the expectation
that God will really and truly speak to you through what you read. Don’t worry about the passages you do not understand. Concentrate on what you do understand. The more you read, the more you will understand.

Lent is also a good time to join one of our Church’s Bible Study group, either on Wednesday at 10:30am or Saturday at 6:30am.

**CHARITY & GOOD DEEDS**

Our Prayer, Fasting, Repentance, Confession, and Bible Reading should all naturally lead us to the final essential element of Great Lent - that of Charity and Good Deeds. **Our entire spiritual struggle should cultivate within us a great love for God, which naturally should lead to a greater love for our neighbor, for the other, especially for those in need.**

Lent is a season when we make the time for good deeds. Be careful not to say we are too busy, because Lent is precisely when we rearrange our hectic schedules and create the time for God and for others!!! This discipline will take as much, if not more effort, than all our other spiritual disciplines.

Two Sundays before Lent, we listen to the Gospel of the Last Judgment, when Jesus so clearly says, “I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and imprisoned and you visited me... Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me.”

Let us act upon this lesson and visit someone who is sick or alone, make a special donation to a needy charity, volunteer at a homeless shelter, comfort someone in mourning, and bring God’s love to another in a concrete way.

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**PARISH COUNCIL President’s Message**

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

It is with humility that I accept being the Parish Council President for 2018. I thank you in advance for your support as we work together to make our parish grow in our worship, our outreach, and our numbers. I have very large shoes to fill as I take the reigns from the wonderful and dedicated Lisa Healy who did a superb job of leading our parish for many years and continues to contribute this year on our Parish Council.

In my first address to you in this space, I would simply offer three New Year Wishes as they pertain to our church family. The first wish is that we sincerely and soberly consider and embrace the challenges that Fr. Luke has placed in front of us in the past few Sundays regarding our personal growth as Orthodox Christians. While our participation in all of our church activities is very important, we cannot lose focus on the most important reason we all attend church and practice our faith, and that is for our own personal salvation.

The second wish is for health, happiness and fullness of life to each of you and your family, and as each of you may encounter challenges in the coming year, please be aware that your extended church Family of Sts. Constantine and Helen are here for you support.

The third wish is simply that Sts. Constantine and Helen continues to move forward and grow in the coming year. Hopefully this will be realized with more children participating in our excellent youth programs, with ever increasing attendance in our Living Bread luncheons (and hopefully a second meal per month), strong participation in our various outreach programs, strong and growing attendance and participation at church every Sunday, and timely and strong financial support of the church (I guess you had to expect that last one).

I sincerely wish you all a wonderful 2018.

Neal Neslusan
OUR LIVING BREAD LUNCHEON

Thank God that our monthly Living Bread Luncheon has gone so well. Since October, we have served five meals and have been getting around 60-70 guests, as well as delivering another 10-15 meals to elderly from our parish and some other elderly in their homes. Each month we get between 30-40 volunteers willing to help prepare the food, cook, set up the hall, welcome the guests acting as hosts and hostesses, and then cleaning up the meal. We have also had generous donors who have sponsored each meal by giving $400 per meal. Some donors are anonymous, others are parishioners, and we have even had the teachers from Webster Elementary School who have sponsored a meal in loving memory of Cynthia Johnson. At each meal, we also have some guests who come for the meal, who will also offer a donation. Of course, the meal is free, but some guests feel more comfortable offering a donation. We are considering increasing the meal to twice a month.

A typical meal will be served at 12:30 on the first Saturday of the month, but we have guests who literally come from 11:00, sitting in our beautiful and comfortable hall, and sometimes going into the Church sanctuary to sit in the peace of our Church. When I’ve told them that we won’t be starting to serve the delicious lunch until 12:30, some have simply replied:

“That is alright. We just love being here because the people here make us feel so welcome. We love to come early and just wait for our friends to come.”

Last month, I sat with two ladies, talking with them and getting to know them. One of the ladies said to me,

“This meal is the highlight of my month. I love coming here because we feel so welcomed and your people make us feel so good. The food is always delicious. I just love coming here.”

Another lady shared the following:

“During this past year (2017), I lost four members of my family, including my mother. I was not looking forward to the holidays. But when your church offered to have a meal on Thanksgiving Day, I came and it was the highlight of the holiday season for me! I had somewhere to go for the holiday, and it was so delightful to sit with your church members and have a meal. Thank you so much for starting this beautiful tradition of having a meal on Thanksgiving!”
OUR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN LEGACY
What Will We Leave Behind for God’s Church and Family?

Do you have a will? Seventy percent of Americans don’t. Although you may not want to consider preparing a will, it will save your heirs significant time and money and even heartache.

With a will you ensure that your family, charitable and financial wishes are carried out. There is no more personal gift than one given through estate planning. Personal and family concerns, matters of life and death, and other profound issues must all be considered.

Most people who prepare a will also have planning directives. These documents, know as powers of attorney, letters of instruction, and living wills provide guidance about one’s wishes for
- Medical Care consistent with your own desires and according to your Orthodox teachings
- Tax-advantaged and charitable financial planning
- Distribution of personal property

For most people, the greatest financial gift we are able to give is what we leave behind when we fall asleep in the Lord. How can we make such a gift? Through arranging for a donation of
- Cash or securities
- Life Insurance
- Gift Annuities
- Bequests/Wills
- Real Estate or Other Investments

Americans give generously to charitable organizations in this manner. In 2016, more than $390 billion was given by individuals through their estates. The two greatest recipients were
- Religious Organizations ($122 billion)
- Education Institutions ($59 billion)

Planned giving can be very rewarding, allowing you to see your gift at work while receiving tax benefits now.

Giving to the Church is an opportunity to examine your priorities and values. It is an opportunity to express your gratitude, to give of yourselves and to grow in grace.

Think and pray about your future, and about your desire to leave a lasting legacy. You have an opportunity to give something that will touch and bless future generations.

70% of Americans DO NOT have a will…
Yet annually, we give $390 billion in 2016 to charitable organizations. Think about leaving a legacy to your Church!
The Blessing of Saint Basil

Those who received the Vasilopita Coin and the Blessing of Saint Basil were Efkapia Sidopoulos, Debby Raymond, and Panayiota Veronis during the Vasilopita Luncheon. During our Sunday School, Efrem Dunning and Sophia Quill received the coin! Congratulations.

Thanks also to Eleni Xanthopoulos for baking all the Vasilopita Breads!
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

GREAT LENTEN RETREAT

9:30-12:30
SATURDAY, MARCH 17TH

“REFLECTIONS ON LIFE”
AND
“SIX PRINCIPLES
BY WHICH TO LIVE LIFE”

GUEST SPEAKERS:

NICHOLAS A. VERONIS
Lawyer, Author of “Musings of a Preacher’s Son”
(Author of poems that are published in the Light)

&

GEORGE VERONIS
Motivational Speaker, Businessman

Both speakers are the brothers of Fr. Luke, faithful Orthodox Christians, and charismatic speakers. Come and be inspired by their words!
24 HOUR LENTEN PRAYER CHAIN

During the first week of Lent (Feb 19-25) we will have our “24-Hour a Day Prayer Chain.” We are looking for 24 parishioners who will each commit to pray in their homes for one hour a day during this period. Each parishioner will commit to praying at a different hour of the day and night. This means that at every moment during the first week of Lent someone from our Church Family will be lifting up their voice in prayer.

The purpose of our Prayer Chain is twofold: to help the participants enter into the spiritual life of Lent, and to get our Church Family to pray for one another and all those who have special needs. If you know someone who needs extra prayers, please give their names to Fr. Luke.

If you are interested in participating in this Prayer Chain, please contact Fr. Luke as soon as possible and he will provide you with the prayers and the structure of how to pray for one hour a day.

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Every Saturday 6:00pm Great Vespers
Feb 1 – 6:00pm Vesperal Divine Liturgy for the Presentation of the Lord
Feb 17 - 9:30am 2nd Saturday of Souls
Feb 18 - 6:30pm Forgiveness Vespers
Feb 19 - 6:30pm Great Compline
Feb 21 - 6:00pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
Feb 23 – 6:30pm 1st Salutations Service
Feb 24 - 9:30am 3rd Saturday of Souls
Feb 26 - 6:30pm Great Compline
Feb 28 - 6:00pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
March 2 - 2nd Salutation Service
THANK YOU TO THE 2017 STEWARDS

To all the faithful 147 Church Family members who have given a financial donation towards their 2017 Stewardship Offering.

In 2017, 147 Individuals and/or Families have given an average $802 offering towards their Stewardship to support our beloved Church.

We surpassing our budgeted goal of $115,000 by collecting $118,185
### MAKE A SPECIAL DONATION DURING LENT IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE

Please see Fr. Luke or our Church Treasurers to dedicate your offering to someone.

- Holy Wednesday Unction Supplies - $50
- Holy Thur Flower Crown - $100
- Holy Thursday Candles - $40
- Holy Fri Epitaphio Candles - $40
- Holy Fri Epitaphio Flowers - $850
- Holy Saturday Rose Pedals - $75
- Holy Altar Flowers - $200
- Resurrection Candle - $50
- Resurrection Icon Flowers - $50
- Circular Resurrection Icon Flowers - $75
- Easter Pew Flowers - $130
- 16 Easter Lilies - $40/each

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lenten Altar Flowers</td>
<td>$40/week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri Salutations Flowers</td>
<td>$30/week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross Sunday Flowers</td>
<td>$75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incense (for a year)</td>
<td>$200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charcoal (for a year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Altar Candles (for a year)</td>
<td>$100</td>
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<td>Garlands at Entry of Church</td>
<td>$40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palms &amp; Trees - Palm Sunday</td>
<td>$200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridegroom Icon Flowers</td>
<td>$40</td>
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### WANT TO LEARN MODERN GREEK?

We are starting up a Modern Greek class for beginners - children, youth, and adults.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED**

please email or speak with Fr. Luke.

Our new parishioner from Greece, Maria Zagouras will be teaching.

### SAVE DATES FOR SUMMER

**Vacation Church Camp**

TBD

**Metropolis of Boston Summer Camp**

Week 4 - July 30 - Aug 5
EARLY RISERS
SATURDAY MORNING
BIBLE STUDY
7:00am-8:00am
Feb 3, 17, 24
EVERYONE WELCOME!
“How sweet are Your words to
my taste, sweeter than honey to
my mouth! Your word is a lamp
to my feet, a light to my path.”
Psalm 119:103,105

WEDNESDAY
MORNING
BIBLE STUDY
10:00am-11:15am
Feb 7, 14, 21, 28
EVERYONE WELCOME!
Come and enjoy delightful fellow-
ship, while learning your faith and
growing in your relationship with God!!!

The Pre-Sanctified
Liturgy &
& Pot-Luck Dinner
Wednesday Feb 21 and 28

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY
(6:00pm - 7:00pm), is an opportunity to re-
ceive the life-giving and spiritually nour-
ishing Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus
Christ in the middle of the week. We will
also hear a reflection to educate and inspire
us in our Lenten journey.

Following the Liturgy enjoy a delicious
LENTEN POT-LUCK DINNER AND
FELLOWSHIP (7:00-8:00), which all
who have participated before have thor-
oughly enjoyed, along with a talk.

These Wednesday evenings of WORSHIP,
EDUCATION and FELLOWSHIP will
enhance our spiritual journeys during Lent.

SIGN UP FOR
PROJECT MEXICO
2018
Our Church reserved 25 SPOTS
for next summer’s trip!

July 18-24, 2018
For anyone with questions, or if you are interested in participat-
ing in building a home for Pro-
ject Mexico next summer,
contact Fr. Luke
Dear Beloved Parishioners

Our Church will once again sponsor a MISSION TEAM TO MEXICO to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church in a cross-cultural setting. This will be the SEVENTH TIME our Church will send such a group. **We are hoping to send a team of 25 participants. (Last year we had our largest team ever with 28 people.)** 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 28-24, 2018.

**Our primary goal will be to help construct a home for a needy family in Rosarito.** Over the entire summer, Project Mexico will be building 30+ homes. We will also spend time with the teenage orphans at the St. Innocent home, as well as spend time with the local people we meet.

In order for our group to participate in this mission trip, **WE ARE RAISING $25,000**, 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 make 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](http://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

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**PROJECT MEXICO INTERNS**

Two of our Church Family’s young adults, Olivia Neslusan and Theodora Veronis, will be serving as interns for Project Mexico. They will spend six months in Mexico as a part of their GAP year of service following high school. They will join 15 other young adults to serve for the first three months as summer interns leading the 600 volunteers who will building 25 homes. Then when all the summer interns leave, they will spend the following three months staying on and helping at the Saint Innocent Orphanage until December.

Please keep Olivia and Theodora in your prayers. If you would like to become partners in their mission and support them financially, you can send in a check to the church and mark their names. This will help them to pay for their travel and living expenses in Mexico.

We are proud of these two young women who are making a more serious commitment to serving those less fortunate through Project Mexico!
USHERS & GREETERS
SCHEDULE

Feb 4 Marie McNally, Matt Benoit, Lisa Healy, Nick Seferi, Mary Papageorge, Ron Sanderson
Feb 11 Neal Neslusan, Jimmy Karapanos, Bill Thompson, Tasi Vriga, Tatyana Zhuk, Mike Chito
Feb 18 Nicoleta Cojocaru, Arthur Darligiannis, Zach Gianaris, Jared Quill
Feb 25 Arthur Bilis, Chris Geoti, Thomai Gatsogiannis, Trish Lareau

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP
SERVING GROUPS

Feb 4 Donna Cooney, Leah Didonato, Rena Klebart, Betty Tonna, Therese Totolos
Feb 11 Marie McNally, Christa Benoit, Sandi Kunkel, Mary Seferi, Carolyn Niemeck,
Feb 18 Kathy Bilis, Sara Darligiannis, Marie Monroe, Charlotte Neslusan, Stephanie Quill
Feb 25 Thomai Gatsogiannis, Trish Lareau, Deb Raymon, Vange Wilson, Alexandra Kou lax

Coffee Fellowship Supply
Pastries/Donuts Groups

These groups will bake or bring in pastries/donuts and/or fruit and veggies for our coffee fellowship. We are looking for more volunteers to help!!!

Feb 4 – Sandi Kunkel, Evelyn Pappas, Gulapka Kostovski, Betty Tonna, Alexandra Kou lax
Feb 11 – Kathy Bilis, Marie Monroe, Eleni Sgouritsas, Tina Collelo
Feb 18 – Leah Didonato, Mary Seferi, Olga Poulokhine, Vasiliki Zahariadis
Feb 25 – Sara Darligiannis, Sissy Darligiannis, Therese Totolos, Helen Constantine
Mar 4 – Lisa Healy, Marie McNally, Despina Condos, Trish Lareau
Mar 11 – Charlotte Neslusan, Evis Jordanoglou, Dolly Sosnowski, Annalisa Dunning
Mar 18 – Lynn Purcell, Rayne Purcell, Sophia Foisy, Kelly Vosnakis
Mar 25 – Titi Chito, Rina Sgouritsas, Lorna McWilliam, Pres. Faith Veronis

YOUTH EPISTLE
READERS

Feb 4 - Panayiota Veronis
Feb 11 - Theodora Veronis
Feb 18 - Maia Beaudry
Feb 25 – Zach Beaudry
March 4 - Kiera MacKenzie
March 11 - Lily Mueller
March 18 - Olivia Neslusan
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 during this month.

**BIRTHDAYS:**

Feb 1  Michael Chito  
Feb 2  Fr Luke Veronis  
Feb 2  Teddy Benoit  
Feb 3  Vasiliki Zahariadis  
Feb 3  Katia Kladas  
Feb 4  Grace Darlagiannis  
Feb 10  Athena Bilis  
Feb 11  Lily Mueller  
Feb 12  Bozena Khozami  
Feb 13  Arthur Darligiannis  
Feb 13  Athanasia Darligiannis  
Feb 13  Norman Desrosiers  
Feb 13  Michael Angelo  
Feb 15  Richard Bethune  
Feb 23  Eleanor Teguis  
Feb 25  Nike Avlas  
Feb 26  Angelina Papageorge  
Feb 28  John Sgouritsas

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:**

Feb 11  George/Mary Papageorge

**NAMEDAYS:**

Feb 6  St. Katia  
        Katia Zhuk

Feb 10  St Haralambos  
        Harry Jordanoglou  
        Harrison Jordanoglou

Feb 11  St. Theodora  
        Theodora Veronis  
        Theodora Stathis

Feb 17  St. Theodore  
        Ted Tonna  
        Teddy Benoit  
        Ted Theodores

Feb 26  St. Fotini  
        Faith Fotini Veronis

**A DAILY LENTEN PRAYER**

Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, idle curiosity, lust for power and vain talk.

Give to me instead a spirit of humility, chastity, patience and love.

Yes Lord and King, help me to see my own faults, and keep me from judging what others do.

For you are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.
SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

The Sacrament of Confession has always been a central part of an Orthodox Christian’s journey in Great Lent and the preparation for Pascha. Anyone interested in participating in this Sacrament of Confession and Reconciliation can plan on doing it after any Lenten Service, or make set a time with Fr. Luke.

HOLY SCRIPTURE

“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... Assur- edly, 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

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

SAVE THE DATE AND START PLANNING

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land
February 15-24, 2019
Estimated cost $3500
Start saving up for this once in a lifetime trip!!!
More Info coming in March issue of The Light

Learn your Orthodox Faith from Orthodox podcasts, music, teachings at

www.myocn.net
www.AncientFaith.com
Thank You to those who sponsor our monthly bulletin!
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Three Hierarchs 8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10:00 Bible Study</td>
<td>Feb 1</td>
<td>2 Presentation of our Lord</td>
<td>7am Bible Study 12:30 Living Bread Luncheon</td>
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<td>4 8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10 1st Sat of Souls NO Bible Study and NO Liturgy</td>
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<tr>
<td>11  Meat Fare Sunday 8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
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<tr>
<td>18  Cheesefare Sunday/ Forgiveness Sunday 8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy 6pm Forgiveness Vespers</td>
<td>19  LENT BEGINS</td>
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<td>25  Sunday of Orthodoxy 8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy w procession of icons</td>
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<td>March 1</td>
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<td>Clean Monday 6:30 Great Compline</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>7am Bible Study 6:00 Vespers</td>
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<td>6:30pm Pre Sanctified Liturgy and Pot Luck Dinner</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24 3rd Sat of Souls</td>
<td>7am Bible Study 8:30 Matins 9:15 Liturgy 6:00 Vespers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10am Bible Study</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25  6:30 2nd Salutations Service to Virgin Mary</td>
<td>6:00 Vespers</td>
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<td>6:00pm Pre Sanctified Liturgy and Pot Luck Dinner</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>7am Bible Study 6:00 Vespers</td>
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GREAT LENT

A time to put our earthly cares behind
And devote time to a more sacred find
To reflect on prayer and divine inspiration
Become less selfish and overcome consternation

A time to share our riches with those who have less
To be less self-absorbed and consumed with the press
We ask for forgiveness from arrogance and conceit
To live a life of balance and become more complete

To deprive our human nature of gluttony and wine
Through discipline and moderation we reverse our decline
We seek to put God first and give tithes to his church
Fasting in his honor to attain a higher perch

As humans we fail far more than we succeed
But a merciful Lord enables us to proceed
For remember the Easter sermon of a bishop from our Lord
The one who comes in the final hour is welcomed and restored

Nicholas A. Veronis

(Nicholas will be coming to our Church for a Lenten Retreat March 17.
Mark your calendar and plan on coming to hear Niko speak)