"O Lord, as we begin this sacred and holy season of Great Lent, and as we strive to discover You anew, help us to make the prayers of our hearts, the thoughts of our minds, the words of our mouths, and our daily actions always pleasing to You. Help us to sincerely struggle to keep this season of the Holy Fast with a serious desire to grow closer to You and to experience the joy and hope of Your Resurrection in a glorious new way.”

As Orthodox Christians, we are preparing to enter the holiest season of the Year - Great Lent. For any serious believer this season is a time when we try to make extra efforts in our spiritual struggle and discipline. Of course, every day we should be praying, reading the Bible, striving to grow spiritually, doing good deeds of love, and offering an overall Christ-like witness to the world around us. The Church, however, understands the cycles of life well, and knows how we all have our ups and downs, our times of spiritual highs and spiritual deserts. That is why the Church offers us specific reminders in the church calendar to help us refocus, to reorient our lives toward the straight and narrow path that lead into the Kingdom of Heaven. That is why the Church year is full of fasts before our feasts, preparation before our celebrations.

CLEAN MONDAY (March 15) marks the beginning of our Lenten journey and for the followed seven weeks the Church challenges all Christians to try and develop their spiritual lives. We are preparing ourselves to celebrate the greatest event in world history. Our Lord Jesus Christ’s Resurrection from the dead marked the beginning of new hope and life for all humanity. Death no longer has the final say in our lives. Through our Christ’s death and resurrection, our own death becomes but a doorway into an eternal union with God. (Read the article on page 2)

Yet to truly celebrate this magnificent feast of Pascha, we
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 Elpidophoros of America His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios of Boston

Father Luke A. Veronis Telephone: (508) 949-7623 (h) (774) 230-6985 (cell) email: frlukeveronis@gmail.com
need to prepare. And how do we prepare? First of all, we need to focus ourselves, towards spiritual things. The secular world in which we live often dominates our time, our attention, and our lives with temporal and material things, with the here and now. This holy season challenges us to pull ourselves away from our “normal” and secular lifestyle, and reminds us to concentrate on what is most important and essential in life, on what should become our new normal!

We begin this reorientation towards God by first creating time in our busy schedules and making room for the Holy Spirit to come and abide within us. This isn’t easy to do. It means we need to change our typical hectic schedules. It means slowing down the tempo of our lives and limiting our usual forms of entertainment. It means putting down our phones, fasting from social media, and evaluating anew all that takes up our time. It means consciously making room in our schedules to attend more Lenten Church services, to read some spiritual and edifying books, to attend a spiritual retreat, and to surround ourselves with positive, holy, and godly influences. Great Lent is a time when our daily and weekly lives should change!!!

During this season of change, we want to try and create ways that we can constantly connect with God. This is where fasting plays a central role. When we fast and are hungry, or when we don’t eat certain foods and we crave them, we can remember why we are fasting and turn our attention toward God. Throughout Church History our saints have always shown us what an extremely important tool fasting can play in making us aware of God. This year, why don’t you try and fast in a more serious way than you have done in the past.

Of course, fasting is only one aspect of our Lenten journey. Fasting has value only if prayer is a companion - both personal prayer, as well as communal prayer through Church worship. And going to the Sacrament of Confession can be a cleansing and essential type of prayer for this season. Can you make a commitment to attend one extra Church service a week throughout the 40 day period of Lent, and also go to Confession before the end of the Fast?

And the Lenten triad is complete with acts of mercy and love. Consciously try to help those in need, through making donations, offering of your time, and serving others in some way. Think of something kind you can do for others. Visit someone in need. Perform some anonymous act of love. Do more than what you typically do.

In this issue of The Light, you will find two powerful articles related to forgiveness. We cannot progress towards God without a forgiving spirit. That is why the Sunday before Lent begins is called Forgiveness Sunday. I realize this is one of the great obstacles for some people and yet forgiving one another and seeking out the forgiveness of God is indispensable for anyone serious in their journey toward our Lord.

I pray that these next two months leading up to Pascha on May 2 will be spiritually edifying for each one of us, and will help all of us draw closer to our Lord Jesus Christ and to one another.

With much love and hope in Christ Jesus,

+Luke
At no matter what age of life we die, we always see death as a distortion of our existence. Death portrays a horrible tragedy because it is the fruit of evil in the world. We were not created to die. When Almighty God created the first man and woman in his own image and likeness, he meant for all humanity to live for eternity with Him. Since God has no end, He desired for His beloved creation to dwell in His infinite love forever. This is why, deep within each of us, we all sense an innate desire for life!

From this perspective, death is fearful, and something we despise. And yet, although we can see death as the greatest evil, St. Paul counsels us “not to mourn as those who do not have hope.” He advises us to never despair over the dead, because “if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” (1 Thess 4:14) Here is the essence of our Christian faith and the Good News we proclaim week after week. “Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by His own death, and granting life to those in the tombs!”

For all of us who believe in Christ and walk with Him in the newness of life here and now, death becomes but a doorway into a fuller union with Him. This is why St. Paul could say, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” (Phil 1:21) The Apostle Paul goes on to say, “If we have been united [through baptism] in the likeness of Christ’s death, we also shall be [united] in the likeness of His resurrection. (Rom 6:4-5)

I want to relate this understanding of death with the Memorial Services we do so often at the end of our Sunday Divine Liturgies as well as on special Saturdays of the Soul we have at different times of the year. We all have loved ones who have passed away, and as a Church we never forget them. At each Divine Liturgy, I remember all the faithful who have died and passed on. Forty days after they have died, six months after they’ve passed on, each year of their anniversary, we remember them.

**Why do we pray for the dead? What is the purpose of our memorial service?** To answer this question, I first want us to understand clearly how we view death itself. Then, I will explain why we remember the dead continuously, and pray for them.

Although death is the culmination of evil in our world, for Christians our faith in Christ transforms death. For one who is united to our Lord here on earth, death is no longer a fearful and tragic conclusion of one’s life. It is but an entranceway into a new beginning!

I remember a story my parents told me about their first travel abroad. My father and mother had only been married for half a year, and my mother was several months pregnant, when both got on a boat heading towards Greece so that my father could study at the University of Athens. Both my parents remember vividly the scene of their farewell, as they leaned on the rail of the ship waving goodbye to tearful family and friends. Many mixed emotions passed through their minds as the ship slowly sailed away, and the figures of their loved ones got smaller and smaller in the horizon. During the long journey which followed, my parents became anxious about their separation from family, their pregnancy, and their new life in Athens. When they arrived at the port of Piraeus many days later, however, their anxieties and concerns were washed away as other relatives and family friends lovingly waited to receive them in their new country.

Death itself may seem like an uncertain, even fearful journey, and yet as Christians we know who awaits us on the other side. Our Lord Jesus Christ is there, lovingly waiting, with His arms outstretched, ready to embrace us in deeper union with Himself, and welcome us into our eternal home.

As Christians, we can face death with hope, knowing that our loving, all merciful and compassionate Lord awaits us! Divine love is greater than death. St. Paul even dares to say, “Death has been swallowed up in victory!” The victory of divine love.

Well, this same love is central to understanding the role of the Memorial Service in the Orthodox Church. We remember and pray for the dead because of God’s divine love for us, and our sacred love for one another. As the famous French writer and Catholic reformer Leon Bloy once wrote, “To say to a person ‘I love you’ is tantamount to saying ‘you shall never die.’”

We express our love to our departed ones through our prayers to reaffirm that those who have died are not
dead to us, nor to God. Our love for one another con-
tinues even after death. Metropolitan Anthony Bloom
so beautifully explains, “A person bereaved must learn
never to speak of the love relationship that existed be-
fore in the past tense. One should never say ‘We loved
one another.’ We should always say ‘We love each
other.’ If we allow our love to become a thing of the
past, we have to recognize that we do not believe in
the continuing life of the person that died.”

St. Paul teaches, “Love never ends.” The Church un-
derstands this precept, and therefore, continues to pray
for the dead always. Since love never ends, our prayers
never end; our communion with the departed never
end; our union with them through Christ never ends.

Our prayers for the dead reveal in a most beautiful
way our understanding of the Church as the Body of
Christ both here on earth and in heaven. We are one
Church, which includes those struggling here on earth,
together with those who now live in union with God in
paradise. Just as we pray for one another on earth, we
also pray for those who have departed. The Body of
Christ is not just the members who we see each week
in Church. The Church is also the saints who we see in
the icons, and the beloved faithful who have died and
live in Christ. That is why before each Divine Liturgy,
I pray in my proskomidi prayers for each person in our
church family as well for the names of all those who
have died in our church family over the past 17 years.
There is no separation in our prayers for the living and
dead. Divine love unites us all as one Church. So we
offer Memorial Services and pray for the dead because
we love and we don’t forget.

Now, I know some people may say, “OK, I understand
we pray for the dead because our love for them never
ends, but do our prayers actually help those who have
died?”

We believe that prayer unites us to God, and when we
pray for others, we believe our prayers can help others
in their own union towards their Creator.

Fr. Thomas Fitzgerald writes, “Death alters but does
not destroy the bond of love and faith which exists
among all the members of the Church. Orthodoxy be-
lieves that through our prayers, those "who have fall-
en asleep in the faith and the hope of the Resurrec-
tion" continue to have opportunity to grow closer to
God. Therefore, the Church prays constantly for her
members who have died in Christ. We place our trust
in the love of God and the power of mutual love and
forgiveness. We pray that God will forgive the sins of
the faithful departed, and that He will receive them
into the company of Saints in the heavenly King-
dom.”

Of course, some who have died have not lived a
righteous life of faith and love in Christ Jesus. Even
for such as these, we still pray with hope. We know that God’s unfathomable mercy and
love is immeasurably greater than any sin or
shortcoming of a person, no matter how evil.
Therefore, by turning to this ocean of love in
prayer, we believe as Christians that our prayers
in some way, and this way may be a part of the
mystery of God, our prayers bring in some way
comfort and benefit to the person we pray for!
Love compels us to pray for one another, with
hope and faith. And death can never stop this!

As a symbol of this hope we have for the dead,
it is traditional for the family to bring a bowl
of boiled wheat to the Church for the Memori-
al Service. This wheat, known as “koliva” in
Greek, reminds us of the words of our Lord Jesus
Christ spoke, “Unless the grain of wheat falls into
the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies,
it produces much fruit.” (Jn 12:24)

Death is not the end, and our Memorial Ser-
vice concretely proclaims this fact! So consider
honoring your beloved departed this year by
taking part in one of the three Saturday of the
Souls that our Church offers during this Len-
ten season.
FORGIVE, FORGET, EMBRACE
Theofanis Rauch

Sandra Walker, her husband Glen, and their two children were driving home from visiting a family member on what seemed to be a typical day. Suddenly, a peaceful family drive turned into a nightmare as their car was struck by a black minivan barreling down the road. Sandra’s car was crushed and flipped upside down, and the minivan was totaled as well. This horrible accident killed Glen, and left Sandra with a traumatic brain injury. Thank God, their two daughters survived the crash unscathed. However, the driver of the minivan, Tamara Williams, lost the life of her son.

Fast forward several months later, and Tamara appeared before a court pleading guilty for causing the accident, taking the lives of Glen and her son, and for injuring Sandra. It was an emotional hearing, and at the end of the hearing, Sandra confronted Tamara. The room fell silent, as those watching waited to see what Sandra would do to the woman who caused her and her family so much pain. Sandra approached Tamara, looked her in the eyes, and then… she hugged her.

Both of the women burst into tears as they embraced each other, and in that moment, they finally felt solace. When asked why she chose to hug Tamara, Sandra replied, “I know she is going through as much pain as I am feeling. I wanted her to know that I forgive her for what she did.”

On the Sunday before Great Lent begins, we celebrate Forgiveness Vespers, at which time we will all ask each other for forgiveness as we enter the threshold of Great Lent. Then, we will begin our journey to Pascha - to the Resurrection of Christ.

It is important to note that as we stand at the gates of Great Lent, the Church - in Her wisdom - provides us with a gatekeeper, to make sure that we enter into Great Lent properly. The gatekeeper to Great Lent is forgiveness. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to forgive and reconcile humanity to Himself after the Fall. And God’s plan for salvation has it’s climax in the death and Resurrection of Christ. So the context of Great Lent itself is forgiveness because it is a preparation for the Resurrection. Also, forgiveness is central to our identity as Christians.

Forgiveness is how God relates to us, and how we are called to relate to others. It is the mark of a Christian to love and forgive everyone - especially those who wrong us.

Because forgiveness is both the context of Great Lent as well as the core of our identity as Christians, it is important that we examine what it truly means to forgive. We commonly hear forgiveness explained as “forgive and forget,” and this is actually a good start in understanding forgiveness. But it is lacking a crucial aspect. This crucial aspect of forgiveness is to make room for the other in our hearts, and to embrace them with love. So rather than just forgive and forget, I encourage us to think about forgiveness in terms of forgive, forget, and embrace.

In order to better understand this idea of forgiveness, as forgive, forget, and embrace, we need to explore each of these three aspects of forgiveness. Let’s begin with “forgive.” Forgiveness is not passive - its an active process. We need to take the first step in forgiveness. This can be either confronting the person we wronged and saying, “Forgive me,” or in accepting forgiveness from another and saying, “I forgive you.” The point is to initiate this process of healing and love by offering and granting forgiveness to others.

Yet, it isn’t enough to offer lip service. Our words need to reflect our spiritual reality. If we say ‘I forgive you,’ but then harbor hatred for that person in our hearts, this isn’t true forgiveness. It is important to forgive and to love others in our hearts. While this can be difficult, if we ask the Lord to help us forgive, He will help.

Second, let’s explore what it means to “forget.” Forgetting, in the context of forgiveness, can be better understood as letting go. We do not actually forget the offense when we forgive someone, but true forgiveness opens our hearts and allows us to let go of the offense so that it holds no consequence in our lives and our relationships with others. We hear this idea of forgiveness in the Lord’s prayer. When we pray the Lord’s prayer,
we say, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” The word ‘trespass’ in this instance, is actually better translated as ‘debt.’ So we would say, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” This paints a vivid picture of forgetting, or letting go in forgiveness. Imagine you owe a great debt, and an IRS agent confronts you at your home. He pulls out the official document listing the debt. Then, the IRS agent says, “You are released from your debt,” and tears up the document and throws it into the wind. The debt is completely erased from both of your lives, and it has no more consequence. You have no more care for the debt. This is what it means to forget and to let go in forgiveness. You will never forget the event but you will forget the consequence.

Now, let’s explore the third aspect of forgiveness—embracing. The idea of forgiveness as embracing the other is found all across our Orthodox Tradition, but one of the best examples of this is found in the meaning of the Greek word for forgive—Συγχωρώ, which ο means made up of two parts. Syn which means with, and Xoros which means room or space. So the word forgiveness in Greek, Συγχωρώ, literally means to “share the same space” with someone. Likewise, when we ask someone to forgive us in Greek, συγχωρέσε με, we are literally asking the other person “to make room for us” in their heart. This means to embrace the other in love.

We see that Christ forgives us in this way. A prime example is when the Lord forgives the thief on the Cross. The thief says, “Lord, remember me in your kingdom.” And Christ replies, “Today, you will be with me in Paradise.” When Christ forgives someone, He does not simply erase that person’s sin and then move on. When Christ forgives someone, He welcomes that person to be with Him in His Kingdom. We hear this said explicitly when the Lord tells His disciples, “In My Father’s house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

With all of this being said, we need to ask ourselves, “How do we make room for others in our hearts? How do we embrace others with love?” Well, we can begin with a physical embrace. A hug, a handshake, a kind word, a smile. Whatever way we can connect with the person we are forgiving and show them love. On a spiritual level, we embrace others in love through prayer. Praying often for the one we are forgiving is a way that we make room for that person in our hearts. St. Porphyrios tells us, “Prayer for others which is made gently and with deep love is selfless and has great spiritual benefit. When you have great love and this love moves you to prayer, then the waves of love are transmitted and affect the person for whom you are praying. When He sees your efforts, God bestows His grace abundantly on both you and on the person you are praying for.”

Forgive, forget, and embrace. These three aspects make up forgiveness. Forgiveness is not an easy path. It is not a singular action either. Forgiveness is a lifelong journey of reaching out to others, letting go of past hurts, offenses, and shortcomings, and making room for others in our hearts. Christ Himself tells us that forgiveness is something that we should be prepared to do not only once or twice or even seven times, but seventy times seven. On our journeys of forgiveness, we can all start with the little things. If someone cuts us off in traffic on our way to work, let us forgive them, and offer a short prayer for them in our hearts. We can also make the sign of the Cross over their car. If our spouse snaps at us or irritates us, let us offer a prayer for them and give them a hug, rather than letting negative feelings sit unresolved. And if a coworker is rude to us, let us let go of the rude gesture and pray for them.

On March 14th we have Forgiveness Sunday and that evening we have Forgiveness Vespers. At the end of the Divine Liturgy in the morning and at the end of the Vespers in the evening, we enter through the gates of Great Lent. As we begin, we are asked to embrace each other and ask for forgiveness. We have the tradition of asking every person in the church for forgiveness. This embrace is not a mere gesture, but is the physical manifestation of the deep spiritual reality of forgiveness, and of an embrace of love. As we begin our journeys through Lent, I pray that the Lord will bless us and help us to cultivate forgiveness in our hearts, so that we can behold the Resurrection of our Merciful Lord with the fullness of joy.

Forgive, Forget, and Embrace.
HE IS FREE BECAUSE HE FORGIVES

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware

The stupid neither forgive nor forget; the naïve forgive and forget; the wise forgive but do not forget.
Thomas Szasz

"He is free because he forgives"

In the book by Kevin Andrews, *The Flight of Ikaros*, there is a story that sums up the essence of forgiveness. Andrews was studying medieval fortresses in Greece. The year was 1949. He was travelling through a land devastated by the German occupation during the Second World War, and cruelly divided by the post-war struggle between Communists and anti-Communists that had only just drawn to a close. Arriving one evening in a village, he was given hospitality by the parish priest Papastavros. The priest's house had been burnt down, and so he received his guest in the shed that was now his home.

Gradually Andrews learnt the priest's story. His two eldest sons had joined the Resistance during the German occupation. But some villagers betrayed their hiding-place; they were captured and never seen again. About the same time, his wife died from starvation. After the Germans had left, Papastavros was living alone with one of his married daughters and her baby son. She was expecting her second child in a few weeks. One day he returned home to find his house in flames, set on fire by Communist partisans. 'I was in time,' he recounted to Andrews, 'to see them drag my daughter out and kill her; they shot all their bullets into her stomach. Then they killed the little boy in front of me.'

Those who did these things were not strangers coming from a distance, but they were local people. Papastavros knew exactly who they were, and he had to meet them daily. 'I wonder how he has not gone mad,' one of the village women remarked to Andrews. But the priest did not in fact lose his sanity. On the contrary, he spoke to the villagers about the need for forgiveness. 'I tell them to forgive, and that there exists no other way,' he said to Andrews. Their response, he added, was to laugh in his face. When, however, Andrews talked with the priest's one surviving son, the latter did not laugh at his father, but spoke of him as a free man: 'He is free because he forgives.'

Two phrases stand out in this account: 'There exists no other way', and 'He is free because he forgives.'

There exists no other way. Certain human situations are so complex and intractable, so fraught with anguish, that there exists only one way out: to forgive. Retaliation makes the problem worse; as Mahatma Gandhi observed, 'An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind.' Solely through forgiveness can we break the chain of mutual reprisal and self-destroying bitterness. Without forgiveness, there can be no hope of a fresh start. So Papastavros found, faced by the tragedies of enemy occupation and civil war. Surely his words apply also to many other situations of conflict, not least in the Holy Land.

He is free because he forgives. In the words of the Russian Orthodox starets St Silouan of Mount Athos (1866-1938), 'Where there is forgiveness … there is freedom.' If only we can bring ourselves to forgive – if we can at least want to forgive – then we shall find ourselves in what the Psalms call a 'spacious place' or 'a place of liberty': 'We went through fire and water, but Thou broughtest us out into a place of liberty' (Psalm 66:12). Forgiveness means release from a prison in which all the doors are locked on the inside. Only through forgiveness can we enter into what St Paul terms 'the freedom of the glory of the children of God' (Rom. 8:21).

Yet how hard, how painfully hard, it is to forgive and to be forgiven! To quote another Russian Orthodox witness, Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (1914-2003), ' Forgiveness is not a little brook on the boundary between slavery and freedom: it has breadth and depth, it is the Red Sea.' 'Do not think that you have acquired virtue,' said the Desert Father Evagrius of Pontus (346-99), 'unless you have struggled for it to the point of shedding your blood.' The same can be said of forgiveness. Sometimes the struggle to forgive is indeed nothing less than an inner martyrdom, to the point of shedding our blood.
Forgiveness Sunday in the Orthodox Church

How shall we set out in our exodus across the 'Red Sea' of forgiveness? Let us consider first the way in which the Orthodox Church offers to its members an annual opportunity to make a fresh start, on what is known as 'The Sunday of Forgiveness'. This will lead us to look more closely at forgiveness in the Psalms and especially in the Lord's Prayer. What, we may ask, is the meaning of the Greek verb used in the Lord’s Prayer for 'forgive', aphiēmi, 'let go'? Does this mean that to forgive is to condone, or at any rate to forget? Next, taking as our guide the early Fathers, we shall see how the phrase 'Forgive us … as we forgive' underlines the fundamental unity of the human race. Finally, we shall try to appreciate what is signified by the word 'as' in the forgiveness clause of the Lord's Prayer: ' … as we forgive'. Why should the scope of God's forgiveness be seemingly restricted by my own willingness to forgive? We shall end with four practical guidelines.

The Sunday of Forgiveness occurs immediately before the seven-week Fast of Lent, the 'Great Fast' in preparation for the 'Feast of Feasts', the Lord's Resurrection at Pascha. The human animal, it has been said, is not only an animal that thinks, an animal that laughs and weeps, but much more profoundly an animal that expresses itself through symbolic actions. With good reason, then, the Orthodox Church affords its members the chance each year to externalize their longing for forgiveness, through a liturgical rite that is both corporate and personal.

On the morning of Forgiveness Sunday, the appointed Gospel reading is Matthew 6: 14-21, beginning with Christ's words: 'If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' Then in the evening, at the end of Vespers, there comes a ceremony of mutual pardon. Usually the priest gives a homily, concluding with an appeal to his flock to forgive him for all his mistakes and shortcomings in the past year. Then he comes down the sanctuary steps to the floor of the nave where the people are standing; for there can be no genuinely mutual forgiveness unless I put myself on the same level as the other. Kneeling before the congregation, he says 'Forgive me, a sinner.' The people likewise kneel before the priest, answering 'May God forgive you. Forgive us.' To this the priest responds 'God will forgive!', or 'May God forgive and bless us all.' After that the people come up one by one to the priest, and each kneels before him, as he in turn kneels before each of them; and they exchange the same words, 'Forgive me …. God will forgive.' Then, having first knelt before the priest, the members of the congregation go round the church kneeling before one another, each asking and granting pardon. All this, for obvious reasons, is easier to carry out if, as in traditional Orthodox practice, the church is not cluttered up with pews.

There is of course a danger that a ceremony such as this may become over-emotional, in which case the results will probably prove ephemeral. Forgiveness, after all, is not a feeling but an action. It involves not primarily our emotions but our will. It is a decision, which then requires to be given practical effect. There is also the opposite danger that some worshippers, growing accustomed to this ceremony year by year, will go through it in a manner that is merely formal and automatic. Ritual can all too easily become ossified.

Nevertheless, when full allowance has been made for the dangers of emotionalism and formalism, it remains true that for very many Orthodox Christians this annual service of mutual pardon is deeply healing. On the basis of my personal experience, after more than forty years of pastoral work in a parish, I can testify that again and again it has a transfiguring effect upon relationships within the local church family. It is an occasion that many of our people approach with the utmost seriousness. Let us not underestimate the power of ritual. Even if there are times when it becomes ossified, on
other occasions it can and does act as a potent catalyst, enabling us to give expression to what would otherwise remain unacknowledged and repressed. Those too hesitant or embarrassed to call at one another's homes and embark on a lengthy verbal explanation can make a new beginning within the framework of shared prayer. The Vespers of Forgiveness serves in this way as a genuine breakthrough, the sudden vision of a fresh landscape.

The burden of unhappy memories means, not surprisingly, that the Vespers of Forgiveness is somewhat subdued and sombre. We cry out in sorrow: 'Turn not away Thy face from Thy servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily: hearken unto my soul and deliver it.' Yet, along with sorrow, there is also a note of glad expectation. 'Let us set out with joy upon the season of the Fast,' we sing in one of the hymns; and a little later we add, 'Thy grace has shone forth and given light to our souls.' As the mutual pardon is being exchanged between priest and people, in many churches the choir sings the Resurrection hymns that will be used seven weeks later at Paschal midnight: to forgive is to rise again from the dead. St John Climacus, abbot of Mount Sinai in the seventh-century – whose book The Ladder of Divine Ascent is specially appointed for reading in Lent – has a phrase that exactly describes the spirit of the Vespers of Forgiveness: charopoion penthos, 'mourning that causes gladness' or 'joy-creating sorrow'.

Sometimes people have told me that they find the phrase commonly used at the service, 'Forgive me … God will forgive', to be problematic and even evasive. Surely, they object, when someone asks for forgiveness, it is not enough for us to assure them that they are forgiven by God, for they already know that; what is required is that we should forgive them. This, however, is to overlook an essential point. Forgiveness is first and foremost a divine act: 'Who can forgive sins but God alone?' (Mark 2:7). If, then, I am to forgive someone else, and the other person is to forgive me, in the last resort this is possible only in so far as we are both of us in God. More specifically, we are able to forgive each other solely because we are both of us already forgiven by God. Our forgiveness is rooted in His, and is impossible without it: 'Apart from Me you can do nothing' (John 15:5).

Since, therefore, forgiveness is not primarily our human action but a divine action in which we humans participate, it is vitally important that in the process of mutual forgiveness we should allow space for God to operate. At the beginning of the Eucharistic service in the Orthodox Church, the Divine Liturgy, the deacon says to the priest, 'It is time for the Lord to act' (see Psalm 119:126), thereby affirming that the true celebrant at the Holy Mysteries is not the priest but Christ Himself. The phrase applies equally to our mutual forgiveness: here, too, it needs to be said, 'It is time for the Lord to act.' Our attempts at reconciliation often fail, precisely because we rely too much upon ourselves, and do not leave proper scope for the action of the Lord. With St. Paul we need to say, 'not I, but Christ in me' (Gal. 2:20). Such, then, is the spirit in which we reply at the Vespers of Forgiveness, 'God will forgive.'

Four words of counsel
As we begin to cross the Red Sea of forgiveness, let us remind ourselves of certain practical guidelines.

(1) Do not delay, but do not be in haste. Do not delay: the time for forgiveness is always now. Maximize the moment. The devil's weapons are nostalgia and procrastination: he tells us 'Too late' or 'Too soon'. But, where the devil says 'Yesterday' or 'Tomorrow', the Holy Spirit says 'Today'.

(2) Forgive the other, but also be willing to accept the forgiveness that the other is offering to us. It is hard to forgive; but often it is even harder to acknowledge that we ourselves need to be forgiven. Let us be humble enough to accept the gift of another's pardon.

(3) Forgive others, but also forgive yourself.

(4) Pray. If we cannot yet find within our heart the possibility of forgiving the other, then let us at least pray for them. By invoking God's help in prayer and by admitting our own helplessness, we are reminded of the all-important truth that forgiveness is a divine prerogative. It is not simply our action, but the action of God in us. To forgive, in a full and genuine sense, we need to be 'in God'.
The Light - March 2021

DISCIPLINES FOR GREAT LENT

Few people would disagree that life is too busy. We all keep up a hectic pace. Technology has brought many blessings, but 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 consciously try to take control over our lives. The Church challenges us to limit the control other things have over us. This means making a very 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. Or read Fr. Luke’s daily email.

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 prepare to receive Holy Communion. **Attend also one extra weekly service** - the Great Compline on Mondays, the Pre-sanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays, the Salutations on Friday, or Vespers on Saturday.

5. **Prepare and 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. Eliminate social media during Lent.** Or drastically cut back. If this seems impossible, try to turn off the TV and internet for the entire first and fourth week of Lent, as well as during Holy Week.

7. **Don’t listen to the Radio 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.

8. **Fill your day with meaningful experiences and positive people.** Do a good deed for another person each day.

9. **Try to control your speech,** limiting meaningless conversations, joking, and a lack of seriousness. Fulfill St. Paul’s advice to bless people with every word that comes out of your mouth.

Great Lent is a Time to Change our Lifestyle and Focus More on God for several weeks.
# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAYS</th>
<th>THEMES / GOSPEL READING</th>
<th>HOW TO PARTICIPATE:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast - Free Week</td>
<td>Publican and the Pharisee</td>
<td>Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Fast Week</td>
<td>The Prodigal Son Returns!</td>
<td>Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, “Today I will be humble.” Use up/freeze meats this week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEBRUARY 28th</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 6:12-20, Luke 15:11-32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farewell</td>
<td>The Last Judgement</td>
<td>Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARCH 7th</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2, Matthew 25:31-46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farewell to Meat</td>
<td>Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!</td>
<td>Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.</td>
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<td>MARCH 14th</td>
<td>Romans 13:11-14:4, Matthew 6:14-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farewell to Cheese</td>
<td>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</td>
<td>Bring an icon to church for a procession.</td>
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<td>MARCH 21st</td>
<td>SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2, John 1:43-51</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Sunday of Lent</td>
<td>ST GREGORY PALAMAS</td>
<td>Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.</td>
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<td>MARCH 28th</td>
<td>Hebrews 1:10-2:3, Mark 2:1-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Sunday of Lent</td>
<td>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</td>
<td>Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!</td>
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<td>APRIL 4th</td>
<td>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hebrews 4:14-5:6, Mark 8:34-9:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th Sunday of Lent</td>
<td>ST JOHN of the LADDER</td>
<td>Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!</td>
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<td>APRIL 11th</td>
<td>Hebrews 6:13-20, Mark 9:17-31</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th Sunday of Lent</td>
<td>ST MARY of EGYPT</td>
<td>Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.</td>
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<td>APRIL 18th</td>
<td>Hebrews 9:11-14, Mark 10:32-45</td>
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<td>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</td>
<td>Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!</td>
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<td>APRIL 25th</td>
<td>ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM</td>
<td>Refrain from TV, Internet &amp; Phones to honor Christ’s Death.</td>
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<td>Philippians 4:4-9, John 12:1-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Great Week</td>
<td>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</td>
<td>Greet everyone with “CHRIST IS RISEN!” &amp; say it before good morning and goodnight!</td>
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<td>APRIL 30th</td>
<td>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</td>
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<td>CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE</td>
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<td>BRIGHT WEEK</td>
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<td>MARCH 2nd</td>
<td>HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Fasting</td>
<td>Acts 1:1-8, Gospel: John 1:1-17</td>
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</table>
Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works. If you see a poor man, take pity on him. If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him. Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies. Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice. Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin. Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful. Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip. Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism. For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers? May He who came to the world to save sinners strengthen us to complete the fast with humility, have mercy on us and save us.

St John Chrysostom

LENTEN REFLECTIONS

Make haste to open to me Your fatherly embrace, for as the Prodigal I have wasted my life away. In the unfailing wealth of Your mercy, O Savior, reject not my heart in its poverty. For with compunction I cry unto You O Lord, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before You. Have mercy on me.”

Lenten Hymn

“Shedding fervent tears, we cry out to You with the words of the Prodigal Son, O Father and God of all. We fall down before you crying, ‘We have sinned, departing from You, and made ourselves the slaves of lust. Accept our repentance.’”

St. John of San Francisco

Accomplish these three things during the Fast:
+ Speak no ill of anyone
+ Hold no one for an enemy
+ Expel from your mouth the evil habit of swearing

St. John Chrysostom

“What rules shall I keep so as to please God? Wherever you go, have God always before your eyes; and in whatever you do or say, have an example from the Holy Scriptures to be your guide.”

St. Anthony the Great

Learn to conquer evil by good, malice by kindness, anger by meekness, and arrogance by humility.

St. John of Kronstadt

24/7 Lenten Prayer Chain

From March 15-22, we will have a “24 Hour a Day Great Lenten Prayer Chain.” We are looking for 24 parishioners who will each commit to pray in their homes for one hour a day during the first seven days of Great Lent. Each parishioner will commit to pray at a different hour of the day and night. This means that at every moment from March 15-22, someone from our Church Family will be lifting up their voice in prayer, supplication, thanksgiving and praise to God.

The purpose of our Prayer Chain is twofold: First, to help the participants get into the spirit of Great Lent - one that helps us prepare us to properly celebrate our Lord’s Resurrection at Pascha. Second, to get our Church Family to pray for one another and all those who have any special needs. If you know someone who needs extra prayers, please give their names to Fr. Luke before March 15.

If you are interested in participating in this Prayer Chain by committing to pray for one hour a day in your home during this first week of Great Lent, please contact Fr. Luke. He will provide you the prayers and the structure of how to pray for one hour.
Preventing for Lent in Time of Pandemic
Hiermonk Gabriel

It has now been a year since the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, changing almost overnight nearly every aspect of our day-to-day lives in the modern world. Some of us have lost loved ones; the Church has bidden farewell to more than a few holy men and women whom the Lord chose this year to call home. The quarantine restrictions that have been in place more or less continuously throughout the world have also parted those of us still among the living from one another, to an extent most of us never even dreamed possible. Many have lost their livelihoods, and face the real possibility that they may never get them back. But by no means the least among the tragedies brought about by this pandemic has been the loss suffered by many people of normal Church life: regular corporate prayer and worship, and regular reception of the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

Yet we know that absolutely nothing in this world happens that is not in accordance with the providence of our loving and all-merciful God. Though God does not send us temptations, as the Apostle says: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God” (James 1:13), nevertheless the temptations which He does allow to befall us are allowed precisely because through them we have the opportunity to find our salvation. And though without question the COVID-19 pandemic has brought immense tragedy, at the same time it has also brought the most precious gift which this vain and fleeting life can possibly offer: the opportunity for repentance.

How many of us took the Church services – and even the Holy Mysteries of Christ – for granted, squandering countless opportunities to come and pray during the Divine Services, to confess our sins, and to receive the Holy Eucharist? How many of us took for granted the people whom God placed in our lives (perhaps preferring to commune instead with the countless screens which are now with us everywhere we go), and whom we now wish we once again had the opportunity to see and speak with, face to face? How many of us were lulled into complacency by the subtle yet ever-present lie that this life will go on forever, that the treasures we gather will never be taken from us, that the world we spend so much time building up will never fade away? But for those with eyes to see, the pandemic has exposed this lie once and for all: everything earthly is fleeting, and every human life leads inexorably to the grave.

But for the true Christian, such a revelation is not at all a cause for despair: on the contrary, it is a great and holy opportunity to turn our eyes instead toward Christ, toward the Kingdom of Heaven, toward the resurrection from the dead, and toward the eternal life and the unending and unspeakable good things which God promises to give to all those who ask. And all these promises are both found and fulfilled in precisely one thing, and one thing only: a holy life, a life offered freely from a heart given entirely unto Christ our God.

It is just such a life that Great Lent summons us. It is just such a life that the current pandemic summons us. We see all around us the futility of putting our hope in earthly happiness, of placing our trust in things fickle and fleeting. Let us instead take the opportunity of this great and holy fast to accept the summons of the Divine Liturgy, to imitate the holy angels and “lay aside all earthly care, that we may receive the King of All.” And just as we penitentially fast from the joy of the Divine Liturgy during the weekdays of Great Lent, let us accept any absence from the Divine Services which circumstances have forced upon us as a penance for our sins, which is to say an opportunity for us to repent more fully and to pray more deeply, so that when God calls us once again to meet Him in the Divine Liturgy we will do so with purer hearts and humbler spirits – and then will our joy truly be made full.

The Holy Fathers tell us that there are many times when we might wish to exercise various virtues, but circumstances prevent us: we might wish to give alms but have no money, or to visit the sick but have no time, and so on. In the midst of this pandemic we
doubtless do not need to think very hard to come up with examples of this from our own lives. But the Holy Fathers say there is one virtuous deed that no circumstance whatsoever has the power to prevent us from accomplishing: and that is prayer. Wherever we are and whatever our life is like, up until the moment of our last breath we always have the opportunity to offer up prayer to the Lord God – both for ourselves and for the sake of others. And as we ourselves draw closer to God through prayer, so too we will mystically draw closer to one another in Christ, according to the witness of the saints. Such union in Christ is the only possible solution to the loneliness and isolation so many of us now feel.

And so during this Great Lent, in a time of so much inconstancy and uncertainty, let us resolve to make prayer the sure and certain foundation of our lives. Let us fast especially from anger and judgment, which have the power to drive away prayer as nothing else can. And let us give what alms we can, including in the form of increased prayer for the souls of those who have departed this life (especially during the past year of this pandemic) and are no longer able to offer up repentance on their own behalf.

In the midst of this season of sickness and death, of suffering and hardships of so many kinds, the world is in more need than ever of the witness of faithful Christians to the hope and joy of the Resurrection of Christ. As Orthodox Christians, we have been given so much: and now, according to the word of the Lord, much is therefore being required. So let us strive with all our hearts to make a new beginning this Great Lent in prayer and repentance, so that our hearts will become vessels of the Holy Spirit and thus able to shine as beacons of grace and truth to all we meet, drawing all men and women to shout alongside us on Pascha night: “Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!”

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.

Lenten Alter Flowers-$40/wk
Friday Salutations Flowers - $30
Cross Sunday Flowers - $75
Incense (for a year) $200
Charcoal for (one Year) $150
Altar Candles (for a Year) - $100
Garland at Entry of Church - $40
Palm & Trees Palm Sunday - $200
Bridegrooms Icon Flowers – $40

Unction Supplies - $50
Holy Thursday Candles - $40
Holy Thursday Flower Crown - $100
Holy Friday Epitaphio Candles - $40
Holy Friday Epitaphio flowers - $800
Holy Saturday Rose Petals $75
Holy Altar Easter Arrangement - $200
Resurrection Candle - $130
Resurrection Icon Flowers – $50
Circular Resurrection Icon Flowers- $75
Easter Pew Flowers - $130
16 White Lilies for Easter - $40 /ea
100TH ANNIVERSARY

SHARING THE LIGHT

Vision and Goals

In honor of our beloved Saints Constantine and Helen Church’s 100th Anniversary (founded in 1919 and celebrating 100 years in 2020/21)

We have set a goal to raise $250,000 to help our Church share the Light of Christ to the local community and the world through certain charitable projects, while also beautifying and upkeeping our Church Building.

Some POSSIBLE Outreach Projects and Church Beautification/Upkeep Projects in honor of this event:

OUTREACH AND CHARITY:
♦ Working with “RIP Medical Debt” to pay off $2 million in medical debt for hundreds of families in Central Massachusetts
♦ Sending St Innocent Orphanage and Project Mexico $15,000 to help them survive this COVID crisis
♦ Sending our Metropolis of Boston Summer Camp Program $10,000 in gratitude for all they do for our youth.
♦ Supporting certain programs helping those with addictions
♦ Supporting children who need help with their medical needs

CHURCH BEAUTIFICATION AND UPKEEP:
♦ New $45,000 HVAC System and Duct Work for Church Sanctuary
♦ New $30,000 Roof for Church Sanctuary
♦ LED Lighting for Chandeliers in Church
♦ Pantocrator Icon on Ceiling of our Church (completed)
♦ Possible Marble Flooring for Church Solea and Altar
♦ Possible Outdoor Pavilion and Landscaping for Backyard of Church
♦ Other Projects???
Please Consider Participating in this once in a Lifetime Celebration

THANK YOU!!!

FUNDRAISING GOAL: $250,000

TOTAL IN CASH AND PLEDGES: $166,300
(as of February 1)

ARCHANGELS ($40,000-$50,000)
♦ An Anonymous Donor Inspired by our Church’s Good and Faithful Steward Challenge

ANGELS ($30,000-$39,000)
♦ Michael and Titi Chito

PRINCIPALITIES: ($20,000– $29,000)
♦ Marion Thomas
♦ Philip and Barbara Thomas

GOOD SHEPHERDS: ($15,000 - $19,000)
♦ Neal and Charlotte Neslusan

TORCHBEARERS: ($10,000 - $14,000)
♦ Joey Gliniecki
♦ Sandi/Gerry Kunkel and Scott/Kathy Kunkel Family

BENEFACTORS ($5000-$9000)
♦ Paulette Steffa in honor of Fr Alexander/Pres. Pearl Veronis

PATRONS: ($2000-$4900)
♦ Jared and Stephanie Quill
♦ Anonymous Donor offering our new Visitation Icon

SUPPORTERS: ($1000-$1900)
♦ Athina Bilis
♦ Leah DiDonato
♦ Mary Fatsi
♦ Bill and Christine Kiritsis
♦ Eleanor Teguis
♦ Ted Theodores
♦ In memory of my wife Hariklia from Jimmy Milios
♦ Tasi Vriga
100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

SAVE THE DATE

100th Anniversary Gala Dinner
at the Mansion at Bald Hill in Woodstock
Saturday, November 13th

We need old pictures to show the history of our Church in a video we are putting together for our 100th Anniversary and we need your help!

Can you recognize this picture from the 1940s? Where is Mary Fatsi, Eleanor Teguis and their sisters? Maria Econome? Libby Brassard? Freda Lambros?

If you have any old pictures of your parents or grandparents at some church event, pictures of the original church on High Street, or some special event at the church from decades ago, please bring them to the Church office so we can make copies of use them for our 100th Anniversary video.
**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.

Fr. Ephraim Peters would also be available to meet with anyone for confession.

**USHERS & GREETERS SCHEDULE**

(Only for Ushers and Greeters who feel comfortable being back in Church)

March 7—Arthur Bilis, Chris Geotis, Thomai Gatsogiannis, Trish Lareau
March 14 - Neal Neslusuan, Mike Chito Jimmy Karapanos, Brenda Romillard
March 21 - Nicoleta Cojocaru, Chris Dillon, Bill Thompson,
March 28—Marie McNally, Matt Benoit, Lisa Healy, Debby Raymond

We need more ushers!!! Please contact Fr. Luke if you could help out once a month and serve as an usher.

**Please Continue Stewardship Support With Online Giving**

During these uncertain times, we want every member in our Church Family to know they are not alone, but we are there for one another. If there is anyone in our Church Family that has a need, please contact Fr. Luke. If you want to donate toward our Church COVID Fund, which Fr Luke will give to those in need, please send a check to the Church office.

Please continue to support our Church through your stewardship and generosity:

1. By sending in your stewardship offering each week or month.
2. Making online donations or buy candles to light up our church at [https://my-site-108326-103062.square.site/](https://my-site-108326-103062.square.site/).
3. Or go to our website on bottom left corner for online giving at [http://schwebster.org/](http://schwebster.org/).

**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.
Remembering Our Church Family

Important Dates in FEBRUARY:

Important Dates in MARCH:

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

**BIRTHDAYS:**
- March 1  Amber Kelly
- March 4  Nicholas Adamopoulos
- March 5  Susan Rivelli
- March 5  Amanda Raymond
- March 8  Tasi Vriga
- March 10 Grady Ross
- March 11 Charlotte Loukia Scafidi
- March 13 Marie Monroe
- March 13 Nike Raymond
- March 17 Liberty Brassard
- March 18 Audrey Neeland
- March 21 Betty Tonna
- March 22 Brenda Romillard
- March 22 Gail Avlas
- March 22 Jessica Awad
- March 24 Jordan Bouthillier
- March 25 Mary Fatsi
- March 25 George Milios
- March 28 Hanna Kunkel
- March 28 John Grzyb
- March 28 Lisa Healy
- March 31 Rayne Seraphim Purcell

**NAMEDAYS:**
- March 25  The Annunciation
  - Evangelos Moutoudis
  - Evangeline Wilson
- March 26  Archangel Gabriel
  - Gabriela Ross

Scenes from the MBC Camp Retreat at our Church
IS OUR CHURCH IN YOUR WILL?

Remember Christ’s Beloved Church in your Estate Planning and Legacy Giving!

What a beautiful way to remember the Church that has blessed you and nourished you throughout your life, or at different stages in your life.

Even after you have gone to be with the Lord and join the Church Triumphant in the company of the saints, you can still help the Church here on earth continue her sacred ministry of love and hope to the world!

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

COMMIT TO 20 MINUTES WITH GOD EACH DAY

Use Fr. Luke’s Daily Email to help you spend 20 minutes every day connecting with God through Meditation and Scripture.

Sign up to the daily email at www.schwebster.org and go to bottom right column of homepage.

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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Point Breeze
Your Restaurant on Webster Lake

114 Point Breeze Road
Webster, MA
# MARCH 2021

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<th>Sun</th>
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<td>10:00 Zoom Bible Study</td>
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<td>1st Saturday of the Souls 8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy and Memorial Service</td>
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<td>5:00 Vespers</td>
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<td>8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>Forgiveness Sunday 8:30 Matins 9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>CLEAN MONDAY—BEGINNING OF LENT 6:30 Forgiveness Vespers</td>
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FASTING AND FEASTING

Lent should be more than a time of fasting. It should also be a joyous season of feasting. Lent is a time to fast from certain things and to feast on others. It is a season in which we should:

Fast from judging others; feast on Christ dwelling in others.
Fast from emphasis on differences; feast on the unity of all life.
Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light.
Fast from thoughts of illness; feast on the healing of God.
Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify.
Fast from discontent; feast on thanksgiving.
Fast from anger; feast on patience.
Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism.
Fast from worry; feast on God’s care over us.
Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.
Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives.

Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer.
Fast from hostility; feast on reconciliation.
Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others.
Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal Truth.
Fast from discouragement; feast on hope.
Fast from facts that depress; feast on verities that uplift.
Fast from lethargy; feast on enthusiasm.
Fast from suspicion; feast on truth.
Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire.
Fast from shadows of sorrow; feast on the light of serenity.
Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence.
Fast from overwhelm problems; feast on prayer that undergirds.

Let us fast during Great Lent, but let us also feast!!!