'We waited, and at last our expectations were fulfilled', writes the Serbian Bishop Nikolai of Ochrid, describing the Pascha service at Jerusalem. 'When the Patriarch sang "Christ is Risen", a heavy burden fell from our souls. We felt as if we also had been raised from the dead... Coming out from the service at dawn, we began to regard everything in the light of the glory of Christ's Resurrection, and all appeared different from what it had yesterday; everything seemed better, more expressive, more glorious. Only in the light of the Resurrection does life receive meaning.'

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware uses this description of Pascha in Jerusalem as a part of his introduction to a wonderful article entitled The True Nature of Fasting. In this article, he describes not only the joy and meaning that comes with our Lord’s Resurrection, but emphasizes the need to “pass through a time of preparation.”

'We waited,' says Bishop Nikolai, ‘and at last our expectations were fulfilled.’”

We are in the middle of our Lenten Journey. It is a time when the Church asks all faithful believers to change their lifestyles, to re-evaluate the direction of their lives, to reflect upon the values that we cherish and question whether or not these values lead us into the Kingdom of God. The Fast is supposed to break us out of the illusion we live in throughout the year, and call us into the reality of God’s Kingdom which is not a future event, but a present promise.

Our Lord Jesus Christ offered to all His followers the promise of an abundant life. Yet, how many of us truly experience life as one of abundance? Of course, Christ is not referring to an abundance of material possessions. He is describing, though, life lived under God’s reign, life lived according to the principles of
Sts. Constantine and Helen
Greek Orthodox Church
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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

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PREPARATION

His Heavenly Kingdom, life lived with an abundance of God’s love and mercy and grace.

To experience life in this manner, we first must overcome any obstacles that hinder God’s grace from dwelling within our lives. The Church Fathers describe these obstacles as the many passions that assail our souls - passions such as greed, lust, pride, anger, gluttony, laziness, and envy among others. These vices, which tempt all of us, too often control our lives.

Since the Church Fathers understood our fallen human nature so well, they designated different seasons of the year as periods not only to focus on these passions, but more importantly, to use the spiritual tools which help us overcome them. And by overcoming the passions, we then open up our lives and souls to God’s rich healing grace. Through God’s grace and the practice of spiritual disciplines, we discover the path that leads to the kingdom of God within.

As I have discussed in the February issue of The Light, and in sermons, the most essential spiritual tools for this journey are a triad of PRAYER, FASTING, and ALMSGIVING.

During Lent, we should strive to PRAY more frequently, and more fervently. This includes private personal prayer, as well as communal worship. Are you keeping a 30 minutes discipline alone with God each day? Can we accept the discipline of daily Bible reading to open up our hearts to God’s Word? Can we try to come to Church every Sunday, as well as worship at one other weekday Lenten service.

Such a discipline of prayer will open up our hearts to God’s grace in new ways!

How are we doing in our discipline of FASTING? Can we limit our earthly desires, in order to unite our spirits to what is heavenly and eternal? Can we accept to discipline our passion for food as an important first step in disciplining our passion for other sinful desires? The discipline of fasting, done with the correct spirit, will open us our hearts to God’s grace in new ways!

Prayer opens us our hearts to the Divine, and fasting helps us control our desires. Yet the spiritual triad is incomplete without ALMSGIVING. Almsgiving not only means helping the poor and needy, but first of all implies noticing the poor and needy all around us. Do we notice those in need around us - in our homes, in the workplace, in our neighborhoods, and in our cities and towns? And such almsgiving not only implies sharing our treasure, but includes giving of our time and talents as well. In other words, true Christian almsgiving demands us to give of our very selves to the other, to those in need!

May we all strive to use these spiritual tools of the Church during this holy season as a means of opening up our hearts to God’s grace and preparing ourselves to celebrate the greatest event of the year - our Lord’s glorious Resurrection!

With love and hope in our Lord Jesus,

+Luke
Self-Knowledge & Knowledge of God
Fr. Gregory Jensen

St Antony the Great taught that to know God, I must first know myself. For St Antony and the fathers of the Church, self-knowledge is the road to the intimate, experiential knowledge of God. If we think about this for a moment it makes sense. God’s first revelation for Himself to me is, well, me.

Created as we are in the image of God, we are each of us also a revelation of God. This is why self-knowledge is the way to God. God reveals Himself to me. Too frequently, however, I allow a partial or even false self-understanding to influence my behavior. The New Testament Church in Corinth is an example of this.

Many in Corinth embraced the Gospel but they misunderstood what it meant to be free in Christ confusing it with permission to engage in immoral behavior. The New Testament Church in Corinth is an example of this.

Many in Corinth embraced the Gospel but they misunderstood what it meant to be free in Christ confusing it with permission to engage in immorality. While they knew themselves as free they didn’t understand the nature of freedom.

Seen in this light, St Paul telling the Corinthians to “flee sexual immorality” is nothing more or less than asking them to remember who they are. And who are they? They are temples of the Holy Spirit called to “glorify God” not only in words but in their deeds. In effect, the Apostle tells the Church at Corinth become who you are!

The obstacle to this, to become who I am, is there for us to see in the Gospel.

Like many of us, the young man in the parable of the Prodigal Son has a picture in his head of who he is. It’s important to keep in mind that the young son doesn’t say to his father, “Give me my inheritance so I can waste it on prodigal living with harlots and loss living.” No, he acted like many of us would at 18 or 19 years old - he asks for what is his so that he can strike out on his own. It is only when he acts on this self-image that he discovers its wrong.

The son discovers what all of us at one point need to discover, what the Christians in Corinth discovered, that freedom doesn’t mean the absence of responsibility. Rather, Christ makes me free precisely so I can embrace my responsibilities.

Again, it is likely that the young man didn’t want his inheritance to spend it on riotous living. But, and again like many college students, he discovered that his new, independent life, brought with it new burdens for which he simply wasn’t prepared.

He didn’t strike out on his own to live a life of immorality. Instead, he slowly succumbed to ever greater temptations until he discovered that he was not only lost, but he was no longer free. Little by little, his freedom evaporated until he found himself envying the pigs and the garbage they ate.

In that moment, he saw not only the depths to which he sunk but, in coming back to himself as the parable says, he understood that freedom exists so that we can serve others.

Having come back to himself, he rises from his humiliation and returns to his father. But now, rather than being a demanding son, he returns as a servant. Like God the Son in His Incarnation, the boy lay aside what is his by right. Like Jesus, he “empties himself and takes the form of a servant” (see Philippians 2:7).

Finally, the boy sees himself as he is. He comes to understand that it is in service to others, in the practical works of charity, that we find ourselves. In Christ, God has made us free not, as Paul reminds the Corinthians, for immorality but charity. We are made free for sacrifice and it is in and through our sacrifices that we find not only God but our neighbor and ourselves.

What about us? What must we do?

If we would find God and learn to love Him and our neighbor, we must first turn inward. And, looking at ourselves as we must, first of
all, accept ourselves as we are. This doesn’t mean saying that everything we see in ourselves is good - much of it isn’t - but we must begin by not turning a blind eye to what we see.

Without self-acceptance, there can be no repentance, no reform of our lives, and so no growth in love for God or neighbor.

It may sound strange but the key to the kind of self-acceptance that leads to repentance and growth in charity is rooted in gratitude. If I would grow in the knowledge of God and love for my neighbor, I must first thank God for the gift of my life. And not only this. I must also thank Him for the knowledge of my failures as much as for my successes.

When God reveals my sinfulness to me He is also at the same time revealing His love for me, His willingness (with my co-operation) to heal what is broken in me, to restore me to a greater wholeness of being.

Listen again to St Paul’s words: “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” In revealing our sinfulness to us, God shows us the way forward from bondage to sin to the freedom and joy that are the “fruits of the Spirit” (see Galatians 5:22-23).

My brothers and sisters in Christ! God asks us today not only to know ourselves but to do so, so that we can become who He has created us to be. God says to each of us, lay aside your sin, stop listening to the lies that sin tells you about yourself, lay aside the fear that sin brings and find the courage to become who you are!

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

St. John of Kronstadt

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? Whenever 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

“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

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.”

St John Chrysostom

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 ava-rice. 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

WORDS OF WISDOM

Lenten Hymn
GOOD NEWS OF THE ANNUNCIATION

On March 25, we celebrate the feast of the Annunciation, when God Himself descended from the heights of heaven to come and dwell among us. The eternal and almighty Creator of the Universe left His glory and became one of us, to show us how much He loves us. He loves us so much that He willingly came to save us from the fallen world in which we live.

One of the feastal hymns says, “How shall He whose throne is heaven and whose footstool is the earth be held in the womb of a woman? He who cannot be contained is contained... The Creator becomes a creation...God self-emptied himself because of his compassion for humanity.”

What an incomprehensible mystery – the Creator of the universe entering inside the womb of a young virgin, becoming a helpless child, and putting on the humility of humanity. And yet, as strange and incomprehensible as this miracle sounds, we must remember the Archangel Gabriel’s words to the Virgin Mary, “For nothing is impossible with God.” When God so wishes, even the order of nature is overcome.

And through this great condescension, “Our restoration is now made manifest to us: God is ineffably united to humanity and the world is freed from the ancient curse of death.”

This feast of the Annunciation reveals the beginning of our salvation. The salvific work of Christ was a process, which began when God entered into the womb of the Virgin Mary, continued throughout his life of miracles and teachings, and ended with His victory through the Cross, Resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit upon His followers.

Our Lenten journey leads us to Holy Week and the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord. Although these events are the most important and earth-shattering events of history, the process begins at the Annunciation, on the day when Christ enters into the fallen world, takes his place among his creation and begins the restoration of fallen humanity.

This feast of the Annunciation reminds us that we are not alone in this harsh world. God has not forgotten us or abandoned us. We do not need to face the mystery of life, with all its struggles and uncertainties, by ourselves. For God is with us!

As we read the daily newspapers and look around the world, we see so much suffering, pain, sorrow, tragedy. To balance the ‘bad news’ of each day, this feast reminds us of the Good News. The Annunciation announces that God has come in our midst. God has entered into this troubled world to participate and transform our suffering, sorrow, and despair. We do not believe in a God who lives far away in the heavens. But we believe in a God who is near us, ready to help us!

St. Paul explains it this way: “We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:15-16)

What greater message can we proclaim than to know that the Almighty Creator of the universe lived among us, experienced life as we know it, faced the same temptations and dangers, felt abandoned and rejected by the world, and yet
overcame the world! As our Lord Jesus comforted his followers, “In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.” (Jn 16:33)

In others words, God has totally identified with our human nature. Yet in the end, He not only participated in our humanity, but lifted up our human nature and allowed it to participate in His divinity! A life in Christ offers us His ultimate victory over all pain, suffering, despair and evil, even allowing us to unite with Him in his eternal glory.

We all need to remember this Good News again and again. If we wait for good news from political systems or powerful individuals, we’ll only find disappointment. As the Psalmist says so beautifully: “Do not put your trust in princes, in sons of men, in whom there is no help. When their breath departs, they return to the earth, and on that very day their plans perish.” Our only and sure hope is in God Himself!

And that is the message of the Annunciation. God has come. God is with us. God is one of us. And with that knowledge, we can face whatever mysteries life will bring us. Let us take comfort and rejoice in this good news!

OUR LENTEN ABSTINENCE

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware

Our Lenten abstinence does not imply a rejection of God’s creation. As St. Paul insists, ‘Nothing is unclean in itself’ (Rom. 14: 14). All that God has made is ‘very good’ (Gen. I: 31): to fast is not to deny this intrinsic goodness but to reaffirm it. ‘To the pure all things are pure’ (Titus I: I), and so at the Messianic banquet in the Kingdom of heaven there will be no need for fasting and ascetic self-denial.

But, living as we do in a fallen world, and suffering as we do from the consequences of sin, both original and personal, we are not pure; and so we have need of fasting. Evil resides not in created things as such but in our attitude towards them, that is, in our will.

The purpose of fasting, then, is not to repudiate the divine creation but to cleanse our will. During the fast we deny our bodily impulses - for example, our spontaneous appetite for food and drink - not because these impulses are in themselves evil, but because they have been disordered by sin and require to be purified through self-discipline. In this way, asceticism is a fight not against but for the body; the aim of fasting is to purge the body from alien defilement and to render it spiritual.

By rejecting what is sinful in our will, we do not destroy the God-created body but restore it to its true balance and freedom. In Father Sergei Bulgakov’s phrase, we kill the flesh in order to acquire a body.

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

From the Lenten Triodion

O LORD, during this sacred and holy season of fasting, help us to strive to find You anew. Help us Lord, that the prayers of our hearts, the thoughts in our minds, and the words in our mouths may always be pleasing to You. Help us to keep the Fast, Lord, and give us the strength to finish that which we strive to do, that Your name may be glorified.

AMEN.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Following is a Question someone placed in the QUESTION BOX in our Church Narthex.

“If God forgives us for our sins, why do we need the Sacrament of Confession?”

Confession is a Holy Mystery (Sacrament) that helps us in our path of repentance and reconciliation with God. It is a Sacrament by which we receive God’s grace for our healing and reunion with Him.

Of course, God is ready to forgive us every time we turn to Him in sincere repentance and ask for His mercy. In fact, every day we should turn to God, asking for his forgiveness for our countless daily sins. Many times, however, we don’t even know or understand our own sins. We also too easily dismiss our sins without sincerely repenting. This is where the Sacrament of Confession helps.

In Holy Confession, we confess to Christ Himself, represented by an icon of Christ, and with a priest present, who is a witness to our confession. It is often quite difficult to acknowledge the totality of our sins, so the priest is there as a spiritual doctor, helping us see our own true self. In fact, many people are totally blind to their sins and can’t fathom the ugly roots of evil deep within ourselves. Thus, by the grace of God, the priest, helps us see and understand our sins, and then guides us to healing and change, all under the sacramental grace of the Church.

The Sacrament of Confession is a spiritual tool which, when used properly, can lead us into a deeper understanding of ourselves, into a state of sincere repentance, and into a fuller union with God.

Why don’t you try to go to Confession during this season of Great Lent! Make an appoint-

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Hello all Philoptochos members! Happy new year!

We will be starting up again now in March. Our winter vacation is over. Our next meeting will be held on Sunday, March 4th after church. Please attend! Bring any ideas that you may have for fundraisers and/or any ideas for other activities.

We will be discussing making breads for Easter to sell and also for Father Luke to bring to our shut-ins.

Don’t forget to pay your 2018 dues. Please see Sandi about this. Hope to see you next Sunday.

With much love and affection,
Evelyn Pappas

“Love man even in his sin, for this is a love like the love of God, the highest form of love on earth. Love all God’s creation, the whole universe, and every grain of sand. Love every leaflet, every ray of God’s light; love the beasts, love the plants, love every creature. When you love every living thing you will understand the mystery of God in created things… Kiss the earth and love unceasingly, insatiable. Love all, love everything.”

Elder Zosima in Dostoyevsky’s “The Brothers Karamazov”
Dear Fellow Parishioners,

I recently read with great interest two articles about Facebook in the latest copy of “WIRED” magazine, a publication focused on technology trends and new inventions and the capital investments associated with those trends and inventions, and in the February 23rd edition of “The Wall Street Journal”. Before you potentially stop reading my little blurb, I want to assure you that this is not a political column in any way, but rather an observation of how this tool, Facebook, has come to dominate the thoughts, impressions, opinions, and even the lives of so many throughout the world.

It is not without some amount of guilt that I write about this because the industry that I have worked in for the past 30 years has made (and continues to make) the massively parallel network of computers and communications systems that enables tech behemoths like Amazon Web Services, Google, Microsoft, and Facebook. Perhaps my little piece here is a bit of a public confession and apology?

The gist of both of the articles mentioned above (and I highly recommend you read both of them) is that finally the Facebook execs realize and lament what many throughout the world have believed for some time; the Facebook platform is an out-of-control data distribution system that cannot discern between fact and fiction, news and “fake news”, truth and lie, and even good and evil. All information on Facebook is presented to you in a way that suggests it is all true, trustworthy, and real, when in many cases it may be none of those.

And this powerful and very influential tool, Facebook, is used by parties on both sides of each political debate, many sides in the various international geo-political struggles in the world, and even the various competing entities that will influence which laundry detergent you will choose, to influence your thinking and actions. Facebook has been exposed as a tool to influence and control the very hearts and minds of its users, not by Facebook itself, but by the various entities (often anonymous and nefarious) that wield its awesome power.

The clear lesson we should draw from these excellent articles is similar to the message that Fr. Greg Floor’s superb sermon suggested to us a few weeks back while Fr. Luke was traveling; namely that we should put down our phones and interact with one another personally more often. I am as guilty as anyone else in spending too much time gazing at my phone, in my own little world, not interacting with those around me, a slave to an emotionless, soul-less piece of technology. Perhaps during this Lenten period I can change my ways?

Fr. Luke has challenged us this Lenten season to spend more time reading our Bible and I heartily agree with his suggestion. I also suggest that perhaps if you depend on Facebook to get your news, or you draw your opinions from what you find on Facebook, or any other web-based news service; go read those articles in “WIRED” and “The Wall Street Journal” that I’ve mentioned above. They will open your eyes and make you question what you believe to be true.

Or better yet, pick up and read (or reread) a copy of George Orwell’s “1984” or Ray Bradbury’s “Fahrenheit 451”. All you need to do is equate “Big Brother” with the power and capability of Facebook to see the disturbing parallels.

Very Sincerely,

Neal Neslusan
HOLY LANDS PILGRIMAGE
February 15-24, 2019

A SAMPLE SCHEDULE OF OUR PILGRIMAGE

Day 1: Depart for TEL AVIV
This afternoon, we will depart for an unforgettable and fulfilling spiritual odyssey!

Day 2: TEL AVIV / TIBERIAS
Welcome to the Holy Land! We will travel to Tiberias, a drive of approximately two hours. En route to Tiberias, visit the Church and Tomb of St. George in Lydda, the birthplace of St. George. Venerate the tomb and chain of St George. Some believe that the church was built on the very spot where St. George was chained and tortured in an attempt to convince him to renounce his faith. Others believe that the church was built in the place where he was buried after he was martyred in Nicomedia.

Day 3: TIBERIAS / RIVER JORDAN / CAPERNAUM/ TABGHA/ TIBERIAS
Enjoy a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus met Simon, Peter, James and John, his first disciples, and performed many miracles here. He stilled the raging storm on the Sea of Galilee that was about to flood their boat and walked on the stormy sea to His Apostles. In Capernaum, walk in the same village Jesus did. It is here that our Lord and Savior chose and called forth His Apostles, and where He preached and performed miracles such as the healing of the paralytic, the mother-in-law of Apostle Peter, the servant of the centurion and many others. See the remains of the House of Saint Peter, one of the very few exact sites we know Jesus visited. See the ruins of the Synagogue where Our Lord preached. Continue to the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Apostles, the very place Jesus called His first disciples. Enjoy the peaceful setting of this beautiful church with its red domes. We will go to the Mountain of Beatitudes, where Jesus Christ preached the Sermon on the Mount and where the Lord’s Prayer was said for the first time. Then, on to Tabgha (Seven Springs) and the Church of the Multiplication of Fishes and Loaves. It is here that the miracle of the loaves and fish took place. Over 5,000 men, women and children were fed from the miraculous multiplication of the five loaves of bread and two fish. Our last stop will be Yardenit on the River Jordan, the site for Spiritual Baptism and Water Blessing. Experience an affirmation of your baptism in the same river that our Lord was baptized by Saint John the Baptist 2,000 years ago.

Day 4: TIBERIAS / MT. TABOR / CANA / NAZARETH / JERUSALEM
We will visit the Church of the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor. At the top of Mt. Tabor, there, see an utterly commanding view of all of lower Galilee and the valley of the Armageddon. It was here that Jesus revealed the wonderful power of presence in communion with the Lawgiver and prophets of the past (Moses and Elijah). This also became immediate evidence of Communion with His Father. At the foot of Mt. Tabor is the little village of Naim, where Jesus raised the only son of the poor widow from the dead. In Cana our Lord performed his first public miracle turning water into wine at the request of His Blessed Mother the Virgin Mary to spare the bridegroom the embarrassment of running out of wine at his wedding party. A special service for married couples will follow.

In Nazareth, the home of Mary, Joseph and Jesus until the beginning of His ministry. Nazareth is also where Jesus spent some years of His youth after returning to Israel from Egypt and until His public ministry began. Visit the Virgin Mary’s Well where the Angel Gabriel announced the “good news” to Mary that she would give birth to Our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation is built over this site.
The Light - March 2018

Day 5: JERUSALEM / BETHLEHEM / JERUSALEM
In Bethlehem is the birthplace of our Lord and Savior and the cradle of biblical history. Bethlehem is located five and half miles from Jerusalem. Visit the Shepherd’s field and the Church of the Nativity. A Greek Orthodox Church has been built over the birthplace of Our Lord by the Emperor Justinian and is over 1,500 years old. It is the second oldest Orthodox Church in existence. On the way back to Jerusalem, visit the Monastery and Church of the Prophet Elias and the Church and Tomb of St. Symeon, the Just.

Day 6: JERUSALEM
We will walk through old Jerusalem to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and enjoy a private audience with His Beatitude Theophilos III, then continue with a visit to the Church of Saint Anna (birthplace of the Theotokos). Within its grounds are the Pools of Bethesda. These are the pools located near the sheep gate where the Lord cured the paralytic. Archeologists have uncovered all of the pools and the five porticoes, as was reported by St. John in the Gospel. Then, we will walk along the Way of the Cross. Venerate at the same cell the Lord was held prisoner before His crucifixion. It is located deep in a dungeon. There is a slab of stone with two holes through which His legs were passed and ankles shackled together. The cells of Barabas and the two thieves, who were crucified with Him, are here. We will continue with a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the site of our Savior’s death and resurrection. This is the most important church for Christians. We climb the stairs to reach Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion. Over the site, a main altar has been built. Take a moment to reflect in this Holy Place and to feel the spirit engulf you and appreciate all that Our Lord has given you and your loved ones. At the bottom of the stairs, as you leave the Chapel of the Golgotha, is the site where the body of Christ was placed after he was taken down from the cross. Then, we are led to the site of the Tomb, the place of the Lord’s resurrection. A small chapel has been built over the sacred place under the watch of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. In the first small room is the great stone that sealed the tomb. It was here that the Angel of the Lord sat proclaiming the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The next small room contained the slab of stone on which the dead body of the Lord was placed, entombed and resurrected. It is a truly incredible experience to be in this church! It is from this tiny room that the Holy Light of the Resurrection emanates.

Day 7: JERUSALEM
Visit the Monastery of St Mary Magdalene to venerate the relics of St Elizabeth, the 20th century Russian Martyr and St Stephen’s Church. Then we visit the and Chapel of Ascension, the site our Lord ascended from the earth to Heaven. Continue to Gethsemane. Visit the Church of All Nations and the Garden of Agony. It is here our Lord prayed with great passion before He was to endure the selfless sacrifice to come. Continue with a visit to the Tomb of the Virgin Mary. It is from this site that the holy body of the Virgin Mother was taken into Heaven by her Son and God. We will visit the Western Wall (Wailing Wall) on Mount Moriah, where it is said the Patriarch Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son. Here also stands the Dome of the Rock, with its marble and multi-colored mosaics, quotations from the Koran and the Golden Cupola. Continue on to Mt. Zion to visit the Room of the Last Supper, King David’s Tomb and the Church of the Dormition. Return to the hotel for dinner. Those who wish may attend midnight Liturgy at the Holy Sepulcher for a truly unforgettable and spiritually-fulfilling evening.

Day 8: JERUSALEM / JERICHO / JERUSALEM
Visit the Mount of Temptation, where the Lord was tempted by the devil and fasted for forty days and forty nights. There is an altar built over the same slab of stone where Jesus prayed and fasted. The Monastery was built over this site, and there is only one elderly monk who takes care of it. He is truly inspirational. En route to the Dead Sea, stop in Qumran, the area where a Jewish sect thought to be the Essenes wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls. Continue to the Church of St. Elisseos and Zacchaeus’ Tree. This is the tree upon which Zacchaeus climbed in order to see the Lord walk by. From here, drive to the Judean Desert to the Monastery of St. Gerasimos. It is one of the oldest monasteries in the world, built by Abbot Gerasimos in 455 A.D. Continue to Martha and Lazarus Tomb in Bethany where Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus after 4 days in the tomb. The Lord wanted to establish His power over death and waited until Lazarus was confirmed dead before raising him from the dead.

Day 9: JERUSAELM / USA—Return Home

SAVE THE DATES FOR NEXT YEAR AND HAVE A ONCE IN A LIFETIME SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE!!!
Come and Join Us!!!
All Parishioners and Friends are invited to our

**PALM SUNDAY**
Family Fish Luncheon

Palm Sunday, April 1 following the Divine Liturgy in our Church Hall!!!

$12.00 for adult meals; Children under 12 for Free

*Let our Church family come together in fellowship and love as we prepare for Holy Week and Pascha!*

*We THANK John & Eleni Sgouritsas and Lake Pizza for offering the fish meal in memory of his beloved father GEORGE SGOURITSAS.*

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**LIVING BREAD LUNCHEON**

12:30-1:30pm
Saturday, March 3

*During this Lenten Season, come and volunteer.*
*Help Set Up and Cook*  
*Offer Hospitality*  
*Serve Meals*  
*Clean Up*

**TEEN RETREAT**

3:00-9:00
Saturday, March 3
With Excursion to Hellenic College

**JOY LENTEN RETREAT**

10:00 - 2:00
Saturday, March 24
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

GREAT LENTEN RETREAT

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

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

GUEST SPEAKERS:

NICHOLAS A. VERONIS
Lawyer, Author of “Musings of a Preacher’s Son” (Author of poems that are published in the Light), former parish council president & stewardship chair

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!
FALSE GRATITUDE
St John of Kronstadt

“What is false gratitude to God? Gratitude is false when, having received bountiful, underserved spiritual and material gifts from God, people thank God for them with their tongue, and use them only for their own advantage, not sharing them with their neighbors... It is thanking God with the tongue, and at the same time showing extreme ingratitude in deed.”

“God did not spare for our sakes even his only-begotten Son. How then, after this can we grudge anything to our neighbor - food, clothing, drink, or money for his needs? The Lord gives much to some, and little to others in order that we may provide for one another.”

“God gives to me, why then should I not give to the needy?... Had God only bestowed gifts upon you in accordance with your merits, you would have been a beggar yourself. God is bountiful to you, not in accordance with your merits. Why then, having plenty, do you not wish to be generous yourself to others.”

“If you enjoy earthly blessings in full measure, and if you give to the needy, but indulge yourself still more, it means that you do good works without the least self-denial. Your works of charity are not great.”

“Worthless is the charity of the person who bestows it unwillingly, because the matter of charity is not his, but the gift of God. Only the disposition of one’s heart belongs to each person... In bestowing charity, we must be careful that it should be bestowed lovingly, from a sincere heart, willingly, and not with a feeling of annoyance... Charity is first of all a benefit to those who bestow it!”

WEEKDAY SERVICES
DURING LENT

Mondays - 6:30pm Great Compline
Wednesdays - 6:00pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy followed by a Lenten pot-luck dinner
Fridays - 6:30pm Salutations Service to the Virgin Mary
Saturdays - 6:00pm Great Vespers
March 31 - Lazarus Saturday
8:45 Matins
9:30 Divine Liturgy followed by Making of Palm Crosses

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 throughout the new year.

You can sign up to the daily email at the Church’s website www.schwebster.org. On the left column of the main page you will find a place to sign up.
THANK YOU TO THE 2017 STEWARDS

To all the faithful 148 Church Family members who have given a financial donation towards their 2017 Stewardship Offering.

In 2017, 148 Individuals and/or Families gave an average of $810 offering towards their Stewardship to support our beloved Church.

We surpassing our budget-ed goal of $115,000 by collecting $119,880
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 Altar Flowers - $40/week
Fri Salutations Flowers - $30/week
Cross Sunday Flowers - $75
Incense (for a year) - $200
Charcoal (for a year) - $150
Altar Candles (for a year) - $100
Garlands at Entry of Church - $40
Palms & Trees - Palm Sunday - $200
Bridegroom Icon Flowers - $40

Holy Thur Flower Crown - $100
Holy Fri Epitaphio Flowers - $850
Holy Saturday Rose Pedals - $75
Circular Resurrection Icon Flowers - $75
Easter Pew Flowers - $130
16 Easter Lilies - $40/each

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
July 9-13

Metropolis of Boston Summer Camp
Week 4 - July 30 - Aug 5
sign up today because this week fills up quickly

www.mbcamp.org
**EARLY RISERS SATURDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY**

7:00am-8:00am  
March 3, 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  
Every Wednesday in March

EVERYONE WELCOME!

Come and enjoy delightful fellowship, while learning your faith and growing in your relationship with God!!!

**The Pre-Sanctified Liturgy & Pot-Luck Dinner**

Every Wednesday

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY (6:00pm - 7:00pm), is an opportunity to receive the life-giving and spiritually nourishing 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 thoroughly 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**

We have 8 spots still open!!

July 18-24, 2018

For anyone with questions, or if you are interested in participating in building a home for Project Mexico next summer, contact Fr. Luke
SUPPORT OUR
PROJECT MEXICO TRIP

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.

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

In Christ’s love,
+Luke

PROJECT MEXICO INTERNS

Two of our Church Family’s young adults, Olivia Neslusin 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

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

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP SERVING GROUPS

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

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!!!

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
April 1 & 8 - Palm Sunday & Pascha
April 15 – Sandi Kunkel, Evelyn Pappas, Gulapka Kostovski, Betty Tonna, Alexandra Koula
Apr 22– Kathy Bilis, Marie Monroe, Eleni Sgouritsas, Tina Collelo
Apr 29– Leah Didonato, Mary Seferi, Olga Poulokhine, Vasiliki Zahariadi
May 6 – Sara Darligiannis, Sissy Darligiannis, Therese Totolos, Helen Constantine

YOUTH EPISTLE READERS

March 4 - Kiera MacKenzie
March 11 - Lily Mueller
March 18 - Olivia Neslusan
March 25 - Helen Dunning
Apr 1 - Panayiota Veronis
Apr 8 - Theodora Veronis
Apr 15 - Maia Beaudry
Apr 22 - Zach Beaudry
Remembering Our Church Family

*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 8, Lorraine Vesho
- March 8, Tasi Vriga
- March 10, Grady Ross
- March 13, Marie Monroe
- March 13, Nike Raymond
- March 17, Liberty Brassard
- March 18, Dan Healy
- March 21, Betty Tonna
- March 22, Gail Avlas
- March 22, Jessica Awad
- March 24, Jordan Bouthillier
- March 25, Mary Fatsi
- March 25, George Milios
- March 27, Paul Xanthopoulos
- March 28, Hanna Kunkel
- March 28, John Grzyb
- March 28, Lisa Healy
- March 31, Rayne Seraphim Purcell

**NAMEDAYS:**

- March 25, The Annunciation
  - Evangelos Moutoudis
  - Van Thomas
  - Evangeline Wilson
- March 26, Archangel Gabriel
  - Gabriela Ross

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**PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAI**

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

Give me instead a spirit of chastity, humility, 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.

**Congratulations to Nicholas Adamopoulos for opening up his new business Lakeshore Legal, LLC**

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**STEWARDSHIP GIVING**

- **Pacesetters ($1000-$2000)**
  - 22 stewards
- **Torchbearers ($2001-$3999)**
  - 11 stewards
- **Good Shepherds (over $4000)**
  - Five Stewards


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.

OUR LENTEN JOURNEY

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

Let us understand this season as a gift from God and as a time of repentance. May our soul wake up from the sleep of grievous laziness, and with zeal and vigilance follow the ways of the Lord.

Let us not only fast in bodies, but also in spirit. Let us anoint our heads with the oil of almsgiving. Let us draw near the mountain of prayer and fasting that we may see God, like Moses and Elijah during their times of fasting.

Taken from our Lenten Hymns

Look for our safe and convenient online giving 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!!!

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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<td>8:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>Philoptochos Meeting</td>
<td>Clergy Retreat at St Methodios Retreat Center</td>
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<td>No Salutations Service</td>
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<td>7pm AA</td>
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<td>25 Feast of Annunciation</td>
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<td>Lazarus Saturday</td>
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<td>9:30 Divine Liturgy</td>
<td>Greek Dance group at Holy Trinity</td>
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<td>6:00pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy and Pot-Luck Dinner</td>
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SILENCE
(A POEM FOR GREAT LENT)

In the modern world it remains elusive
The mind is blitzed with images most intrusive
Sex, food and toys preoccupy our souls
Talking heads on TV give us no lull

Few take the time to pray or seek true knowledge
Instead we are obsessed with I-phones and college
We proclaim to our friends that we are so busy
Yet our time is consumed by things that make us dizzy

We gossip and talk before we think clearly
Causing conflict and hurting some severely
Few pause to see the real beauty of the world
So caught up in ourselves we become unfurled

We take meds and drink wine to feel inner peace
When simple silence could help us find that release
If only we slowed down to examine our behavior
We would improve our lives and feel the peace of our Savior

Nicholas A. Veronis

(Come and Listen to Nicholas speak at our Lenten Retreat March 17th.)