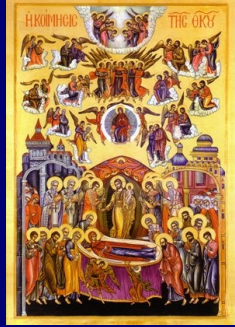


CHURCH STAFF

- Parish Priest: Very Reverend Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos
- Parish Council President: Jim (Demetrios) Katsitis
- Philoptochos President: Eleni Giakoumopoulos
- Sunday School Directors: Susu Saba & Peli Galiti
- Greek School: Ilektra Kolokouri
- Choir Director: George Tzougros

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The Message

APRIL 2022

BEAUTY OF HOLY WEEK

We are quickly approaching one of my favorite weeks on the Orthodox Church calendar. Within it are some of the most beautifully written hymns that the Church has produced. I am sure you all know that I am speaking of the Great and Holy Week. It begins with Palm Sunday and ends with the Agape Vespers, but what happens in between is what is truly glorious.

Palm Sunday is the kick off to Holy Week. It is the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem; He enters it like a king, the same way He will enter the world at the Second Coming. It is viewed as a joyous day, which is why the Church allows us fish, wine and oil. Palm Sunday marks the triumphant entry, but Christ also knew that it was the beginning of His Passion, for in less than a week He would be condemned to death by these same people. We enter into this more somber mood of Holy Week on Sunday evening with the first Bridegroom Service.

The Bridegroom services are unique in that they are chanted in the evening, but they are Orthros services. The Bridegroom services have a two-fold message. The first message is so beautifully illustrated in the hymn, Ἰδοὺ ὁ Νυμφίος or "Behold the Bridegroom Comes." The hymn relates to the parable of the virtuous and foolish Virgins, and we are reminded that we must always be prepared as the wise Virgins were in the parable, for we never know when Christ (the Bridegroom) will return. We are reminded that we need to be vigilant and to always live a virtuous life, in full communion with God through the sacraments of the Church. The second major theme of these services is salvation through God's mercy. The hymnography is very detailed here, reflecting on Christ's upcoming death for our salvation. This theme is nowhere more apparent than in the Great Hymn of Kassiani. In this hymn, we hear a woman's dialogue with God. She realizes that without the Lord, she could not make it through a single night without falling into temptation.

We then come to the midpoint of the week on Holy Wednesday, and on this day we have the Sacrament of Holy Unction. The timing is perfect in that we need this Sacrament to strengthen us, and to help us on our journey through the rest of the week. We are empowered to remain vigilant, and continue in our prayers and fasting.

Continued on Page 14

What wondrous gifts our God has given us!

The Entrance of Our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem Sunday before Pascha

“Hosanna! Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel!”

- + Christ is blessing with His right hand.
- + In His left hand is a scroll, symbolizing that He fulfills the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah Who has come to redeem us from our sins and break the power of death.
- + Just as the bridegroom comes for the wedding not with authority and power, so Christ comes to man, with humility and Great Love.
- + Holy Tradition says that children climbed trees to cut down palm branches.
- + They greet Him, waving the palm branches as a gesture of love.
- + St. Cyril of Alexandria points out that children sang “hosanna” while their fathers shouted “let Him be crucified.” Children threw their garments down for Christ to pass, while their fathers divided Christ’s garments.
- + St. Paul calls us to be childlike, with pure hearts, rejecting evil thoughts.



- + The Jews greet Him crying, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel!”
- + The word “Hosanna” means “Save, I pray” or “Save now.”
- + Chief priests and scribes were especially angry at hearing this praise.



- + Christ is seated upon a donkey’s colt as He enters Jerusalem: a fulfillment of prophecy (Zechariah 9:9).
- + This lowly form of transportation is chosen by Christ with humility. Christ is meek and lowly in heart, as He calls us to be.
- + The colt was considered unclean according to the Law.
- + It symbolizes the inclusion of all peoples of all nations in the New Covenant to come through the death and Resurrection of Christ (Isaiah 6, 2:10-11).



What can we give back?

Developed by the
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Office of Parish Development
www.development.goarch.org
(847)825-1432

The Parish Council Update

April 2022

Officers: Jim Katsihtis, President; Maria Molzahn, Vice President; Bruce Hansen, Secretary; Scott Storck, Treasurer; Niko Papadopoulos, Assistant Treasurer

Members: Christy Chappell-Belkin, Conn Choles, Carol Griskavich, Nick Helser, Mike Smith, John Soloninka

Blessed Great Lent and Kali Anastasi!

May we all grow in faith, hope and love, the “pinnacle of the Ladder, the summit of virtue” this Lenten season.

Palm Sunday Meal

Please join us for a delicious, traditional Palm Sunday fish meal served following the Divine Liturgy on Palm Sunday, April 17th. Tickets are \$15 each, and payment will be collected in the hall before the meal that day. RSVP required by April 9th using the link below to the SignUp Genius so we can plan for the number of meals to prepare.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0545AEAE2CA02-palm>

We hope you can join us for fellowship as we celebrate the triumphal entry of our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem!

Pascha Dinner

Please join us for a delicious lamb dinner following the midnight Resurrection service on Pascha! Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children ages 12 and under. Payment will be collected in the hall before the meal. RSVP required by April 10th to the signup link below so we can plan for the appropriate number of meals.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0545AEAE2CA02-pascha>

We hope you can join us for fellowship as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

GreekFest+ Update

In March, we had two special meetings regarding GreekFest+. We are working on selecting a date in September for GreekFest+. More information will be coming in the weeks ahead on the date and the plan. Please consider volunteering to help.

Visit from His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael

His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael will visit on Sunday April 10th. Please join us for Divine Liturgy and fellowship following.

Spring General Assembly

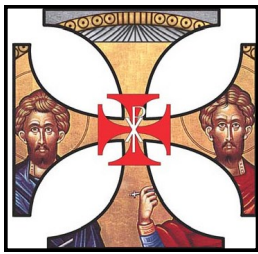
The Spring General Assembly will be on Sunday May 1 following the Divine Liturgy. The agenda and any supporting documents will be sent out in advance of the meeting.

Bucket Brigade/Cleaning Team

Our cleaning team needs help and could use the help of at least two more people. We recently hired an outside cleaning company to help clean twice per month, but we still rely on our parishioners to clean the other weeks as well as to clean the sanctuary. If you can help (just 1 hour per week, 2-3 weeks per month), please see a Council member or Jenny Glatch. Let's help this team who so wondrously kept our church clean and safe throughout the pandemic and all the extra cleaning and sanitization that was necessary. Thank you.

2022 Stewardship

If you haven't already, please return your 2022 Stewardship form and continue to pray for, and generously support, our parish. Your stewardship helps support our worship, ministries, youth programs and facility expenses. Our goal should be to have our operating expenses covered by stewardship and to not have to rely on



FOCUS ON PHILOTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

April 2022

Focus on PHILOPTOCHOS
#PhiloCares

Philoptochos fulfills its mission to "help the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the widowed, those with disabilities and the victims of disasters through its National and Metropolis Boards and its 26,000 members and more than 400 active chapters, nationwide.

Prayers for a blessed Anastasi.

LOOKING AHEAD

- **April collection tray:** We continue to be #PhiloStrong because of the support of this amazing community!! For April we are collecting for: **International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)**.
- **Next Chapter Meeting will be held on April 3:** The April meeting has been changed and will be held on April 3 following the liturgy in person in the church hall.
- **Koulourakia:** We will be making and selling Koulourakia to our parishioners. If you can volunteer to make the dough, assemble and bake at church, contact Margo Schmidt via phone/text at 608-335-6408 or email at margos1255@gmail.com.
- **Tsourekia and Egg Orders:** See the attached order form and submit orders by April 13.
- **Membership 2022:** The deadline for 2022 memberships is approaching. Get yourself in the spirit of giving and show your love by doing the good work of Philoptochos. If you are interested in joining us as a member or renewing, submit the attached membership form April 15.

NOTES FROM MARCH

- **Greek Independence Day Celebration** - We want to thank our AGOC community for the contributions to the **National Philoptochos Ukraine Relief Fund**. Our Philoptochos chapter received **more than \$3,200** from our community for this fundraiser. Thank you to the Greek school students, teachers, parents and volunteers who helped with the raffle and the plaki meal: shopping, preparing, cooking and clean up. Our AGOC community showed us the tremendous generosity that exists and how we all collectively can make a difference.

Metropolis dates to note:

- April 2: Metropolis of Chicago Lenten Retreat, Elgin, IL, 9 am-1:30 pm
- National Clergy Laity Convention and Philoptochos Assembly – July 3-7, 2022, New York, NY (Celebrating 90 years of Philanthropy)
- September 22: Metropolis of Chicago September Luncheon, The Empress Banquets



The Ladies' Philoptochos Society Assumption Greek Orthodox Church 2022 Membership Drive

We invite you to join us and share in our philanthropic mission. Through your stewardships and our various fundraisers, we are able to donate to many worthy causes helping people in need locally, nationally, and internationally. Locally we donate our resources and Philoptochos power to several organizations on a regular basis, and also to special hardship situations as needs are presented to us. Nationally and internationally we support the philanthropic programs of our Metropolis Philoptochos and our National Philoptochos.

We hope that you will join us as a member and also as a volunteer. Whether you attend regular meetings, volunteer to help with our activities, or would like to support our work with your stewardship, you will be a valued Philoptochos member. We look forward to hearing from you.

Please complete the form below and submit it with your 2022 stewardship payment, by **February 28, 2022**. Checks should be made payable to "Philoptochos" and please write *membership* in the memo section. The mailing address is below. Thank you!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

I am interested in helping with the following project(s) and please include me!

Vasilopita Dinner (January) (n/a 2022)		Baklava Plus Sale (Sept. – Nov.)	
Mid – Winter Luncheon (February)		Maintaining the Church Hall/Kitchen	
Greek Independence Day Dinner		Cooking for Grace Episcopal -Porchlight Homeless Shelter	
Koulourakia baking (Holy Week)		Baking Breads for Special Dinners	
Spring/Easter bake sale (drive by pick up)		Coffee Hour Host	
Greek Fest Bake Sale (drive by pick up or onsite)		Prosforon (Holy Bread) baking	
Reception for Assumption Feast Aug 14		Bucket Brigade (church cleaning)	
Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, and/or Memorial Services (if requested)			

My Stewardship payment of \$_____ is enclosed (check #_____ or cash).

Please note: \$15.00 goes to National Philoptochos, \$5.00 to the Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos, and \$2.00 to the Bishop's Fund. We ask for a minimum pledge of \$22.00. Dues paid above the amount will be used for our philanthropic activities and other chapter obligations.

*Please return to Beth Fatsis (1215 E Johnson St, Madison, WI 53703)
or drop it in the Philoptochos mailbox at Church.*

Thank you for your generous time and support!



The Ladies' Philoptochos Society Assumption Greek Orthodox Church 2022 Easter Order Form

Our Ladies Philoptochos Society at AGOC will be selling Greek Easter bread (tsourekia) and red eggs for Easter this year. Ordered items will be picked up during Holy Week from the fellowship hall at church. Look for an email with details for the pick-up. Submit your order:

- Via email to Voula Kodoyianni at voulak@charter.net and send your payment to the mailing address below.
- OR by completing the order form and sending with your payment to the mailing address below.

Order must be placed by April 13, 2022. Thank you for your support!



Your Name: _____

Your Phone Number: _____

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
1 pound tsourekia loaf	\$10 each		
1-dozen red eggs	\$15 each		

My payment of \$_____ is enclosed.

Please send your order with payment by April 13, 2022 to:

Voula Kodoyianni
3049 Oak Leaf Circle
Fitchburg WI 53711

or drop it in the Philoptochos mailbox at Church.

Kali Anastasi!

COMMUNITY NEWS

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: Will be held on Tuesday, April 12th at 7:00 p.m.

METROPOLITAN NATHANAEL JOINING US: His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago will be joining us for the 5th Sunday of Lent on Sunday, April 10th. Normal Service times with Liturgy beginning at 9:45 a.m. Join us in welcoming his Eminence.

PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON: On Sunday, April 17th our Parish Council is hosting our Annual Palm Sunday Luncheon. We will have a traditional Palm Sunday Meal of baked fish with sides, a salad and fresh bread. Dessert will also be provided.

The Cost of the meal is \$15. Please R.S.V.P. after liturgies or by clicking the link

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0545AEAE2CA02-palm>

Please reserve by Wednesday April 13th, 2022

ANASTASI MEAL FOLLOWING RESURRECTION SERVICE: All are invited to join us for an Anastasi Lamb Dinner, Immediately following the Holy Resurrection Divine Liturgy on Pascha. In the Assumption Community Center Downstairs. Cost will be \$20 for Adults & \$10 for Children 12 & Under.

Please R.S.V.P by Sunday, April 17th, by Clicking Link Below

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0545AEAE2CA02-pascha>

I Hope to see many of you joining us on Pascha Night.

CARPET FUNDRAISER: To help offset the cost of the new carpet for the church we have put together an option to help pay for it. The new carpet comes in tiles and each of those tiles will cost \$20. So we are interested in seeing if people would consider donating tiles as many as you like, but we are hoping to get everyone to donate the tiles they are using each services. You can also donate an entire row which is 10 tiles for \$200. Please consider giving if you are able. Thank you for being a part of our community.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS: A.R.E. are continuing in April. We will have in person classes on Wednesday's at 11:00 a.m. here at the church. We will also have a virtual zoom class on Thursday's beginning at 6:30 p.m. The classes are the same and interchangeable. We look forward to continuing our journey together.

FROM THE GREEK SCHOOL: Classes are every Sunday following Sunday School.

WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL MEETING: Women's spiritual zoom meetings will be on Thursday, April 14th at 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in participating and you haven't signed in yet please contact Peli Galiti at pegaliti@gmail.com You will get the zoom link in your email.

All women from Assumption parish, St. Ignatius Parish and other parishes are welcome.

J & M HOME HELPERS: AGOC's handymen, John and Mike, will do minor home repairs and maintenance for \$25/hour, with the money for their work being donated to the church. Call Mike at (608) 516-9188 and John at (608) 575-1014 today!

HOLY CONFESSION IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF LENT: Each of us should go to the priest for Holy Confession during this period of Great Lent. Our very salvation can be threatened when we ignore this most beautiful sacrament of our Church. This year make the effort to call your Father Confessor for an appointment.

RIVER FOOD PANTRY: Thank you for supporting The River Food Pantry in 2021. You made a difference to 11,279 people facing food insecurity, which included adults, seniors, veterans, those experiencing homelessness, and children. Because of you, The River was able to provide our Dane County neighbors with:

- 3.6 million pounds of food and supplies, including more fresh produce than ever before.
- 58,675 freshly prepared to-go meals for entire households to enjoy at home.
- 33,309 mobile lunches in 10 low-income neighborhoods.
- 7,518 grocery deliveries to the homebound.
- 592 online grocery orders to restore client choice.

PASCHA DONATIONS 2022

Flowers for the Icon of the Theotokos Akathist	\$125.00
Jonquils or Daffodils for Sunday of the Holy Cross	\$225.00
Bay Leaves/Daphne & Palms for Palm Sunday	\$500.00
Flowers for the Icon of the Nymphios	\$250.00
Holy Unction (candles, flour, oil)	\$75.00
Stephani and Flowers for Stavromenon Holy Thursday	\$300.00
Items for Decorating the Epitaphios	\$100.00
Epitaphios Burial Shroud (Savano)	\$100.00
Rosewater for Holy Week	\$60.00
Roses for Panagia - Holy Friday	\$100.00
Candle Cup Holders	\$150.00
Flowers for the Epitaphios	\$2,500.00
1 Cases of Communion Wine	\$125.00
Priest Resurrection Candle	\$300.00
Flowers for the Narthex Resurrection Icon	\$200.00
Tulle and Ribbon for Red Pascha Eggs	\$110.00
White Resurrection Flowers for Church (30 needed at \$30.00 each)	\$30.00
Large Resurrection Flower Royal Gates (2 of them)	\$40.00

**CHURCH CALENDAR / ΟΡΟΛΟΙΟΝ ΙΕΡΩΝ ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΩΝ
HOLY WEEK/PASCHA**

**ΜΕΓΑΛΗΣ ΕΒΔΟΜΑΔΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΣΧΑ
2022**

SATURDAY OF LAZARUS/ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΛΑΖΑΡΟΥ

April 16th, 2022

8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy/
Ὁρθρος καὶ Θεία Λειτουργία

PALM SUNDAY/KYPIAKH ΤΣΝ ΒΑΙΩΝ

April 17th, 2022

8:45 a.m. Orthros/Ὁρθρος

10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy/ Θεία Λειτουργία

6:00 p.m. Service of the Bridegroom/ Ακολουθία του Νυμφίου

GREAT AND HOLY MONDAY/ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑ

April 18th, 2022

6:00 p.m. Service of the Bridegroom/ Ακολουθία του Νυμφίου

GREAT AND HOLY TUESDAY/ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΤΡΙΤΗ

April 19th, 2022

6:00 p.m. Service of the Bridegroom/Ακολουθία του Νυμφίου

GREAT AND HOLY WEDNESDAY/ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ

April 20th, 2022

2:00 p.m. Sacrament of Holy Unction/ Ακολουθία του Αγίου Ευχέλαιου

6:00 p.m. Orthros of Holy Thursday and Anointing with Holy Unction/
Ὁρθρος της Μεγάλης Πέμπτης

GREAT AND HOLY THURSDAY/ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΠΕΜΠΤΗ

April 21st, 2022

8:30 a.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy/ Εσπερινή Θεία Λειτουργία
6:00 p.m. The Passion of our Lord and the Reading of the 12 Gospels/
Ακολουθία των Φρικτών Παθίων του Κυρίου

GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY/ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ

April 22nd, 2022

8:00 a.m. Royal Hours/ Ακολουθία τις Μεγάλης Ωρες
2:30 p.m. Apokathelosis/ Αποκαθήλωσης του Κυρίου
6:30 p.m. Lamentations Service/ Ακολουθία Τὰ Ἑγκώμια

GREAT AND HOLY SATURDAY/ΜΕΓΑΛΟ ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟΝ

April 23rd, 2022

8:30 a.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy/ Εσπερινή Θεία Λειτουργία
11:00 p.m. Holy Resurrection Canon/
Τά Προκαταρκτικά Μεσονυκτικού της Αναστάσεως

Followed by Resurrection Service and Divine Liturgy/
Ὁρθρος της Αναστάσεως καὶ Θεία Λειτουργία

HOLY AND GREAT PASCHA/ ΑΙΩΝ ΠΑΣΧΑ

April 24th, 2022

11:00 a.m. Agape Vespers/ Μέγας Εσπερινός της Αγάπης
Monday, April 25th, 2022

Great Martyr George the Trophybearer

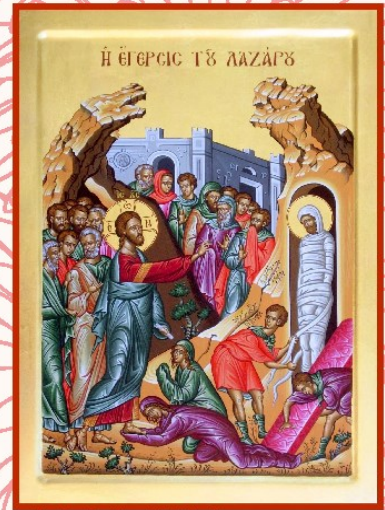
8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy/
Ὁρθρος καὶ Θεία Λειτουργία

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PASCHA/SUNDAY OF THOMAS

Sunday, May 1st, 2022

8:45 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.
Ὁρθρος καὶ Θεία Λειτουργία

ASSUMPTION SUNDAY SCHOOL



Lazarus Saturday Retreat



PLEASE JOIN US FOR FUN FAMILY DAY AFTER
SATURDAY'S LITURGY

April 16th at 11:00AM-1:30PM

**We'll eat brunch together, then learn how to
make palm crosses and bake lazarakia sweets!**

**Students will also participate in the
sacrament of confession with Father.**



PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON



**On Sunday, April 17th our Parish Council is hosting our
Annual Palm Sunday Luncheon**

**We will have a traditional Palm Sunday Meal of baked fish
with sides a salad and fresh bread. Dessert will also be provided.**


The Cost of the meal is \$15

Please R.S.V.P. after liturgies or by clicking the link below

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0545AEAE2CA02-palm>

Please reserve by Wednesday April 13th, 2022

PALM SUNDAY

April Lenten Calendar 							
2022							
3 Sing your favorite hymn from the Divine Liturgy with your family.		4 Help set and clear the table for dinner tonight.		5 Together as a family fast from saying anything negative.		6 If you haven't already, you're running out of time! Attend a Pre-Sanctified Liturgy.	
10 Pack blessing or food bags and deliver them to a homeless shelter.		11 Together as a family fast from complaining all day.		12 Spend five minutes as a family praying on your prayer rope for someone else.		13 Read the story of everyone in your family's patron saint.	
17 Palm Sunday Attend church this morning. Read John 12:12-19 as a family. No electronics all week.		18 Holy Monday Say something nice to at least five people today. Attend the Bridgroom service tonight.		19 Holy Tuesday Draw a picture of our church and bring it back so we can hang in the hallway. Attend the Bridgroom service tonight.		20 Holy Wednesday Attend church today to receive the sacrament of Holy Unction.	
24 PASCHAI! CHRIST IS RISEN!		25 FEAST OF ST. GEORGE		21 Holy Thursday Read Luke 22:7-20. Dye your eggs red today for Easter. Attend service tonight.		22 Holy Friday Attend the Good Friday retreat at church. Come to the afternoon and evening services together as a family.	
				14 Plant something. Either in a small pot for the kitchen windowsill or in your yard. Discuss new life and the Resurrection.		15 Ahead of Saturday of Lazarus: Read John 11:1-44 together as a family.	
						16 Saturday of Lazarus: Attend Church this morning and stay for the retreat to make Lazarakia and palm crosses.	
						1 Read verses Pi through Yiota of Rejoice, Panagia: <u>Offering to Children</u> . <u>The Akathist Hymn</u> . Attend the Salutations service tonight and bring your book.	
						2 Clean your room and organize your books and toys today.	
						8 Read verses Fi through Omega of Rejoice, Panagia: <u>Offering to Children</u> . <u>The Akathist Hymn</u> . Attend the last Salutations service tonight and bring your book.	
						9 Write down at least five ways to say Christ is Risen in different languages. Practice chanting Christos Anesti.	

ALL ARE INVITED TO JOIN US
FOR AN
ANASTASI LAMB DINNER
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE DIVINE
LITURGY WHICH FOLLOWS THE HOLY
RESURRECTION SERVICE
IN THE
ASSUMPTION COMMUNITY CENTER
COST IS
\$20 For Adult \$10 for children 12 & under
Please R.S.V.P by Sunday, April 17th
By Clicking Link Below

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0545AEAE2CA02-pascha>



Then on Thursday morning we have the Liturgy that celebrates the institution of the Eucharist. The Gospel reading this morning is that of the Last Supper. There is one other important aspect to this Liturgy. It is when the priest prepares the Reserve Sacrament for the year. This is the communion which priest will bring with them to hospitals or the one given to the newly Baptized. It is a beautiful service that all Orthodox Christians should see.

The next night we have the Passion service, or as some call it, the Service of the 12 Gospels. For me personally, it is with this service that the week shifts into overdrive. This service is filled with messages of Christ's betrayal and is one of the saddest services of the Church. But even within all the lamenting, there is still hope, a glimmer or foreshadowing of what is to come later in the week. It is in this service that we hear chanted what I consider to be the most powerful hymn in all of Holy Week. "Today is hung upon the tree, He who suspended the earth above the waters." This hymn so poignantly displays the depth of God's mercy for us that, "He who suspended the earth above the waters" should condescend to die for us is beyond human comprehension. The hymn is sung three times as the priest carries the Cross in a procession around the Church after the fifth Gospel. But at the end of the hymn, we hear the words, "Show also unto us your Glorious Resurrection," preparing us for what is going to happen soon.

Holy Friday is a day which we should all spend in prayer, and the Church therefore provides several services. First, there is the Service of the Royal Hours. It is followed in the afternoon by the Apokathelosis service, or "un-nailing" service. It is during this service that we remove the body of Christ from the Cross and place Him in the tomb, or Kouvouklion. Then that evening we have the service of the Lamentations, where even though Christ is in the tomb, and we sing the lamentations, we do not get the same feeling as in the previous services. It does not have a melancholy feel to it, but rather has a feeling of anticipation. We know what is coming; the Resurrection is just around the corner.

Finally, Holy Saturday has arrived, and first thing in the morning, we have what is known as the First Resurrectional service. It is actually one of the oldest services in Holy Week, and was the only Service done for the Resurrection until about the mid 1800's. The Resurrection has taken place when we sing the hymn, "Arise O Lord, and Judge." It is at that point that the priest walks around the church throwing bay leaves (representing victory over death).

Now this finally brings us to Holy Saturday night, and the second Resurrectional service. This service is perhaps the best known and most anticipated of Orthodox everywhere. At the time of the Resurrection, a candle is lit, and the light is spread throughout the Church through the faithful's candles. This is a beautiful representation of how Christ is the light of the world, and how He is spread to all the faithful. However, a disturbing trend has appeared within the Orthodox Church in the last 20 years, and it seems to be getting worse. Many come to this service with the sole purpose of getting the light, and then leaving to bring it home. Although bringing the light of Christ into the home is always an admirable thing to do, leaving Church on Pascha before the end of the Divine Liturgy is a deplorable act. The Light of Christ is not the central theme of Lent or Holy Week. The sacrifice that Christ made for us was not so that we could bring a candle home; He sacrificed Himself for the salvation of mankind. Holy Communion is the single most important aspect of Pascha, and we should all partake of this gift that God has allowed us to receive. And as said towards the end of this service in the wonderful Paschal homily from St. John Chrysostom, it does not matter if you were here from the first hour or only came at the last hour, Christ has Risen! This is for all the true message of the week.

May God grant all of us a blessed conclusion to our Lenten journey.



IMPORTANCE OF HOLY CONFESION

We have all been sick before. There are some times when we can drink enough fluid, have bowl after bowl of yiayia's avgolemeno soup. And then there are those times when we have to go to ... yes, the doctor. We tell our doctor our symptoms, and he or she decides what we have and what will cure us of that sickness.

Everyone is infected with the deadly disease of sin. However, we can all be cured from this disease! What is the remedy? What is the cure? The medicine is the Sacrament of Holy Confession. One is healed the moment one takes it. Yet

we do not reach for this medicine. We try to do it ourselves and maybe our own doings and actions can heal us. This cannot be done!

Repentance is given to each and every one of us at any time. There are earthly diseases and earthly doctors. But there is a Great Heavenly Doctor our Lord Jesus Christ who can heal this terrible sickness of our soul. Jesus can wipe out our sins, but there is one thing, one requirement for us to do ... we must truly repent.

God has given His power of forgiving the sins of men to the Apostles and their successors in the persons of the bishops and priests. Why? To make repentance and therefore the forgiveness of sin even close, more accessible, and more certain. "Receive the Holy Spirit, whosoever sins you forgive, they are forgiven, and whosoever sin you retain, they are retained" (John 20:22-23)

But how does the forgiveness of sins happen? Through the sacrament of confession. An Orthodox Christian burdened with troubles or sins goes to the priest or the bishop, with deep repentance in his/her soul and with a sincere desire to change, and reveals to him the hidden secrets of their heart or conscience.

If we choose to ignore such a great mercy from God, how many more punishments will we deserve, because we have not done for our salvation even that small thing that is given to us to do and which is so easy. We must immerse ourselves in the waves of deep repentance and the Grace of God will cleanse us from every sin.

It was the darkness of sin that brought God's great angel to fall into greed. It was sin that drove Adam and Eve out of Paradise. It was sin that caused the flood of the world. Finally, it is sin that divides us from each other and separates us from God.

There are no new sins that are in the world that God has not seen. Only the faces of the sinners change. But we have a chance for the final outcome. We know what the medicine is. We have the cure waiting for us. The answer... it is up to us to decide not if we are going to go to confession, but when.

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fundraisers for operating expenses. Please help us reach that goal. And please consider joining the Stewardship Committee to provide input and help us grow and engage our stewards more.

Next Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12th at 7:00PM. Parish Council meetings will typically be scheduled on the third Tuesday of the month, but in light of Holy Week the date was changed to April 12th.

On behalf of the Parish Council,

Jim
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