

**St. Michael's Orthodox Church
308 Walnut St.
Jermyn, Pennsylvania 18433**

Very Rev. John Kowalczyk (Rector)
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Church Website: stmichaeljermyn.org
& 360 virtual tour and 4 part welcome

Gospel: Matt. 9:27-35

**July 26, 2020
Hieromartyr Hermolaus, St. Jacob
Netsvetov of Alaska.**

Epistle: Rom.15:1-7

Schedule of Services

Sunday, July 26, Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m. (3rd Anniversary of Zinaida O'Dowd,) offered lovingly by her husband Ken and family. Parastas **(9th Day) for Andrew Petrilak** offered lovingly by Roxanne Neutts, Parastas **(9th Day) for Elizabeth Chup,** offered lovingly by daughters Stephanie Bewick and Sharon Chup.

Sunday, August 2, Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

Special Church Committee Meeting dealing with the work needed to be done in the Kitchen at St. Michael's Center **has been moved to Monday, August 3rd at 5:45 p.m.**

The Dormition Fast of the Most-Holy Theotokos will begin this Saturday, August 1 and will end on Saturday, August 15. **The blessing of flowers and fresh herbs will take place on Sunday, August 16, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.**

Please Note: The Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ and Blessing of Grapes and Fresh Fruit will take place on Sunday, August 9, following the Divine Liturgy.

Artisan Annual Fish Dinner will be held this Saturday, August 1st, 2020. For advanced tickets please call the Artesian Fire Hall at 570-876-2220. **Please show your support!**

A Special Thank You to: Seminarian Brad Given in directing our church choir this morning. Seminarian Brad will be entering his second year of studies this fall at St. Tikhon's Seminary.

A Special Donation of \$500.00 was offered lovingly by Richard Atkinson, from Vero Beach, Florida in loving memory of Andrew Petrilak. May his memory be eternal!

A Special Donation of \$500.00 was offered lovingly by Roxanne Neutts in memory of her Father; Andrew Petrilak. May his memory be eternal!

A Special Thank You to all who continue to send in their weekly envelopes. We are very grateful for your continued generosity and support of our Church.

St. Michael's Center (Ethnic Food Sales have also been cancelled) due to the Pandemic Crisis. Once we are able to resume going to Church, Protodeacon Gabriel stated; **"we will be having a huge Ethnic Food Sale"**

Fr. John will continue with his homily, during the Pandemic Crisis on certain special Sundays. **Please tune in at our parish website; stmichalejermyn.org and listen to his message.**

Please remember in your prayers: Peter Senio who is a guest at; The Gardens of Green Ridge, 2751 Boulevard Ave, Scranton, Pa.,

The Dormition Fast: Commitment vs. Convenience

Saturday – August 1 – is the beginning of the relatively short Dormition Fast that culminates with the celebration of the Great Feast of the Dormition on August 15. Every fast presents us with a *challenge* and a *choice*. In this instance, I would say that our choice is between “convenience” and “commitment.”

My observation is that we combine the “convenient” with our “commitment” within our contemporary social and cultural life to some degree. We often don't allow the Church to “get in the way” of our plans and goals, and that may be hard to avoid in the circumstances and conditions of our present “way of life.” It is hard to prevail in the never-ending “battle of the calendars.” The surrounding social and cultural *milieu* no longer supports our commitment to Christ and the Church. In fact, it is usually quite indifferent and it may even be hostile toward such a commitment. Though we may hesitate to admit it, we find it very challenging not to conform to the world around us. But it is never *impossible* to choose our commitment to our Orthodox Christian way of life over what is merely convenient – or simply desired.

That may just be one of those “daily crosses” that the Lord spoke of – though it may be a stretch to call that a “cross.” This also entails choices, and we have to assess these choices with honesty as we look at all the factors that make up our lives. In short, it is very difficult – but profoundly rewarding – to practice our Orthodox Christian Faith today!

I remain confident, however, that the heart of a sincere Orthodox Christian desires to choose the hard path of commitment over the easy (and rather boring?) path of convenience. We now have the God-given opportunity to escape the summer doldrums that drain our spiritual energy. With prayer, almsgiving and fasting, we can renew our tired bodies and souls. We can lift up our “drooping hands” in an attitude of prayer and thanksgiving. The Dormition of the Theotokos has often been called “pascha in the summer.” It celebrates the victory of life over death—or of death as a translation into the Kingdom of Heaven. The Dormition Fast is our spiritually vigilant preparation leading up to that glorious celebration. “Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation!” (2 Corinthians 6:2).