

# St Michael's Orthodox Church

*A parish of the Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania*

308 Walnut Street, Jermyn, Pennsylvania 18433

<https://stmichaeljermyn.org/>

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## October 15, 2023: 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

We welcome all visitors! We are grateful that you came to be with us and pray with us today.  
After Liturgy, please come downstairs for coffee and refreshments.

### Schedule of Services

**Saturday, Oct 14, 4:00 p.m.** – Great Vespers and Confessions

**Sunday, Oct 15, 9:30 a.m.** – Divine Liturgy, followed by:

**Prayers for all Stillborns and Miscarriages**

**Small Memorial Service for the 9<sup>th</sup> Day of Repose of Lydia Popoff**

Potluck and Fellowship

**Saturday, Oct 21, 4:00 p.m.** – Great Vespers and Confessions

**Sunday, Oct 22, 9:30 a.m.** – Divine Liturgy

**Saturday, Oct 28, 4:00 p.m.** – Great Vespers and Confessions

**Sunday, Oct 29, 9:30 a.m.** – Divine Liturgy. Small Memorial Service (abbreviated *Panikhida*) for all members of the St Michael's family that have reposed in **Octobers** of years past.

*Coffee Hour stewards:*

- Oct 15: Potluck
- Oct 22: Ruthie Lasichak & Roxanne Neutts
- Oct 29: Vickie Kravitsky & Charette Radionoff

*Thank you to all who have offered food and their efforts to our Sunday fellowship. Anyone can help. Please see Millie Telep to be added to the schedule.*

### Announcements

Please check your spam or junk mail folders to make sure you are receiving the weekly bulletin and other announcements. If you have email but are not receiving these, please let Fr John know so you can be added to the distribution list. In some cases, it may help to add his email (johnmblack@gmail.com) to your contact list.

**Saturday, November 4: St Tikhon's Seminary's Basket Raffle**, in the seminary gymnasium. Doors open 10 am and drawing begins at 1 pm. **Over 150 theme baskets**. All proceeds support the Seminary.

Saturday October 28: St James–St George Episcopal Church (398 Washington Ave) is hosting its *Famously Delicious Roast Beef Dinner* from Noon – 4pm, takeout only. Adults \$15, children under 12 \$5.

## Donations

Donations are accepted for **Vigil Lights, in the Altar and in front of the Relics**. You may donate in memory of the departed, or for your health or the health of family members.

So that our Church can meet our growing financial obligations, we ask all parishioners, when not in Church, to send in your **weekly offering envelopes** to St. Michael's Church, 305 Walnut St., Jermyn, PA 18433. Thank you!

*Remember that we give of ourselves, **whether from our riches or from our poverty**, not for the accomplishment of any particular task or possession. **We give of ourselves for our salvation** – that same salvation which was offered to the rich young ruler to whom Christ said, **“And you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”***

*“We seek to rededicate ourselves to the teachings of the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church. We are here to provide a loving and caring community, by participating in the worship services, so we may reach-out to those who are lost and witness the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”*

*- Vision Statement, adopted October 17, 2022*

*Glory to God for all things!*

## Today's Scripture

### *Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9*

*Brethren:* The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

### *Gospel: Luke 8:5-15*

*The Lord spoke this parable:* “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.”

When He had said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “What does this parable mean?” And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.’

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.”

## In your prayers...

Please remember in your prayers. Send a card, or stop by and visit.

- **Eileen Dance**, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation Center #204, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
- **John Drutarosky**, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation Center #307, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
- **Theresa Krenitsky**, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation Center #307, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
- **Nicholas Mattise**, Personal Care at Allied Terrace, Room 218, 100 Terrace Ln, Clarks Summit, PA 18411
- **Barbara Palubniak**, 629 Hill St, Mayfield, PA 19433
- **Peggy Petrilak**, 127 Petrilak Lane, Greenfield Twp, PA 18407
- **Peter Senio**, The Gardens of Green Ridge, 2751 Boulevard Ave, Scranton, PA 18509
- **Jerry & Marilyn Soroka**, c/o Glenmaura Senior Living, 11 Glenmaura National Blvd, Moosic, PA 18507

## Remembering the Departed

Please include these names in your daily prayers this month. If you know of others who reposed this month in any past year, please contact Fr John so they can be added to our calendar of commemorations.

### **October**

- |                                      |                                |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| - Met. Theodosius (Oct 19, 2020)     | - Eva Marie Vanish (10/9/2008) | - Michael Jubinsky (10/17/2009)    |
| - Pdn. Keith Russin (Oct 26, 2017)   | - Samuel Frenchko (10/10/1975) | - Basil Petorak (10/18/1989)       |
| - Sdn. Gregory Sulich (Oct 24, 2013) | - Martha Pollock (10/10/2005)  | - Kathryn Shust (10/19/2005)       |
| - David Butler (Oct 1, 2019)         | - Andrew Kaahl (10/11/1973)    | - Helen Lahey (10/22/2005)         |
| - Mary Hobora (10/1/1981)            | - Paul Bazink (10/12/2017)     | - Michael Gamalia Jr. (10/22/1980) |
| - Lydia Popoff (10/1/2023)           | - Mary Bowen (10/12/2001)      | - Irene Kiehart (10/23/2019)       |
| - Marian Gamalia Terpak (10/1/77)    | - Anna Whitiak (10/12/1981)    | - Julia Whitiak (10/25/1976)       |
| - Elizabeth Micklick (10/3/1980)     | - Mary Getzie (10/13/1993)     | - Nicholas Myshak (10/26/1976)     |
| - Stephen Kostiak (10/4/1974)        | - John Makara (10/13/1986)     | - Mary Wieth (10/26/1986)          |
| - Mary Meholic (10/4/2013)           | - John Fedorchak (10/13/1983)  | - Basil Hoholick (10/28/2000)      |
| - Theodore Frank Dechko (10/5/86)    | - Ann Narcoonis (10/14/2018)   | - Michael Rusiniak (10/28/1987)    |
| - John Checkowitz (10/6/1984)        | - Anna Onufrak (10/14/1987)    | - John Liptak (10/29/2000)         |
| - Anna Michaelaczyk (10/7/2012)      | - John Nayduch (10/16/2016)    | - Anthony Faliskie Jr (10/30/2005) |
| - Anna Mizok (10/9/2003)             | - Eva Urda (10/16/2003)        | - Helen Senio (10/31/2019)         |

## Q&A about Confession (and Communion)

**In the Orthodox Christian Faith, the *Sacrament of Repentance*, which we commonly call *Confession*, is a vital and regular part of the life and growth of every Orthodox Christian Person.**

The purpose of Confession is, simply put, *to return to Christ*. It is a **continual** re-orienting of ourselves as we go through our life, since we are **continually** being pulled away from Him. It is not always about specific sins (although sometimes, specific sins trouble us, and we should certainly seek help with them).

In other words, *confession is a restoration of the entire person, not just a recitation of a checklist of offenses*. Every one of us falls short of the glory of God, even when we cannot think of anything we have done “wrong” — and therefore, every one of us (clergy included) must make repentance a regular part of our lives. Fr. Daniel Ressetar, who was a beloved priest in our diocese in Harrisburg, often said emphatically, “It is an opportunity for healing!”

### ***“How often should I go to confession?”***

The guidelines given to all OCA priests recommend “monthly confession as the norm”.<sup>1</sup> Of course this varies from person to person. Perhaps the minimum is four times per year, aligned with each major fasting season. But

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, *Guidelines for Clergy*, 2023, p. 17.

this is really a *bare* minimum. Many people say the longer they stay away from confession, the more difficult it becomes. If coming to confession once a month is like a “well-check”, then confessing only 3 or 4 times a year is like having an outpatient procedure. And coming only once a year is like major surgery! Who would want something so difficult every year? Isn’t it easier to have a *regular*, ongoing conversation about our spiritual health?

In a parish this size, with one priest, perhaps it is best to confess once every 1-2 months. **And the best time to do this is following an evening service.** (It is difficult to have a meaningful conversation 10 minutes before Liturgy! It is far easier to take our time after Vespers.)

**“Is it OK to go every week?”** It’s OK if you feel the need to, but *quality is just as important as quantity*. It may be better to confess once a month or so, having a heartfelt conversation each time, than to come to confession over and over again at every Liturgy while saying very little.

**“But I was taught I had to go to Confession before Communion.”**

Both sacraments – Confession and Communion – are important, each by itself. **If we are receiving Communion regularly, then it is not required that we confess every time we receive.** In other words, **Confession is not an “admission ticket” to Communion.** When we think of it as a mere obligation in order to be “allowed” to receive Communion, we are really *de-valuing* Confession, depriving it of its own healing grace.

So, what about that teaching, that many of us grew up with, that says “confession is required before every communion”? That is a teaching which has become misunderstood. That rule exists “*for those who seldom receive Holy Communion*”.<sup>2</sup> In other words, **if I am staying away** from Communion, only coming once or twice a year, **then** I must make a meaningful confession before I approach, precisely *because* I stayed away. (And in fact, one of the things I should confess about, is that I refused communion for so long.) So yes, this is an important rule, but it is meant for people who receive infrequently.

Of course, this is not a license to commune all the time and then *never* come to confession. That would be the other extreme. If I am receiving Communion at every Liturgy, but have not been to confession in many months or even a year, this may be a sign that my spiritual posture has become mis-aligned.

**“What about only receiving Absolution?”**

It has never been the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church to simply receive “absolution” without confessing anything. In fact, strictly speaking, *there is no such thing as a sacrament of absolution*. Rather, there is a **prayer of Absolution**, which comes at the end of a Confession. And in that prayer, it is either implied or stated clearly that the forgiveness which we pray for is for those sins that are actually confessed.

**“Recently, I saw Confessions happening outside the Altar; instead of back in the confessional room. Why is this changing?”**

All parishes and priests in the OCA have been asked to stop using private or secluded areas for confession. This is for the protection of both the people and the priests. To ensure privacy when others are nearby, someone else can read the hours or psalms aloud. (In the coming months, we may look into different ways to rearrange a few things, so that we can make use of the beautiful confession stand somewhere in the main area of the temple.)

**To sum up:** All Orthodox Christians are called to receive Communion frequently, assuming they strive to build up a habit of confession. I understand many find confession difficult or uncomfortable. Please do not worry about this. It is always easier than we think it is! Our Lord loves every one of us dearly, and wants every one of us to be *restored to faith* and to be united to Him. There is no sin so great that He will cease to love us! **We approach these Sacraments not because we are worthy, but because we are unworthy.** They are not a reward for good behavior but a medicine for the healing of our souls and bodies. The Divine Liturgy itself commands us, “Draw near!” Let us be obedient to this.

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<sup>2</sup> *Guidelines*, 17.