

St Michael's Orthodox Church

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

305 Walnut Street, Jermyn, Pennsylvania 18433

<https://stmichaeljermyn.org/>

Rev. John Black, Acting Rector

(570) 876-1241 ***

johnmblack@gmail.com

Protodeacon Gabriel Petorak

(570) 876-0411

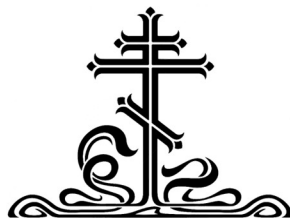
Vladimir Kitchura, Council President

(570) 903-3475

Vasili Dubee, Reader & Cantor

Church Basement Phone

(570) 876-4710



***** The local rectory phone number can now be used for all calls to Fr. John.**

The phone system has been reconfigured, so that this number (570-876-1241)

will now ring Fr John's home and cell phones simultaneously.

Voicemails will also be forwarded and easier to retrieve.

December 3, 2023: 26th Sunday After Pentecost (11th Sunday of Luke)

The Prophet Zephaniah

We welcome ALL of you to St Michael's. Every one of you is precious to us. *Especially all children.*

After Liturgy, please come downstairs for coffee, refreshments, and fellowship.

Services and Events

Saturday, Dec 2, 9:00 a.m. – Deanery Retreat (Liturgy, brunch, & presentation) at All Saints, Olyphant

Saturday, Dec 2, 4:00 p.m. – Great Vespers and Confessions

Sunday, Dec 3, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy and Fellowship. *Memorial Service for Mary Jubinski (offered by Joseph Jubinski), along with Martha Myshak and our departed names from November.*

December 6 is the Feast of St Nicholas!

Please join us at St Nicholas Church in Olyphant (600 East Lackawanna Street) to honor their parish feast day!

Tuesday, Dec 5, 5:00 p.m. – Festal Vespers with Litya

Wednesday, Dec 6, 9:30 a.m. – Festal Divine Liturgy

Saturday, Dec 9 – COOKIE WALK

Saturday, Dec 9, 4:00 p.m. – Great Vespers and Confessions

Sunday, Dec 10, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy and Fellowship

Coffee Hour is offered by:

Dec 3: Ruthie Lasichak & Roxanne Neutts

Dec 10: Vickie Kravitsky & Charette Radionoff

Dec 17: TBD

Memorials & Prayers

- \$20 in memory of Mary Jubinski (rep. 12/1/2002), offered by Joseph Jubinski. May Mary's memory be eternal!

- \$25 for Christmas Candles and \$25 for Christmas Flowers, in memory of Elizabeth & Alex Hockin, by their children.

- \$100 for the health of John Hockin, by John Hockin, Jr.

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!*

Announcements

The Nativity Fast has begun.

This is our opportunity to “re-calibrate” our spiritual compass. Please make a renewed effort this year to fast not only from meat, dairy, and luxurious foods; but also from anger, greed, indulgence, laziness, and talkativeness; so that we may approach the Nativity of Our Lord with a pure heart.

We also use this time to examine ourselves to see where our spiritual stumblings are; to take an **honest self-inventory** and seek repentance and guidance with the aid of a priest in the Sacrament of Confession.

In the Orthodox Church in America, our minimum standard is to seek confession four times a year.

Please do not wait until a few days before the Nativity to come. There may not be enough time for everyone. The easiest time to come to Confession is following a Vespers.

OUR FIRST-EVER “COOKIE WALK” IS THIS SATURDAY DECEMBER 9! Please ask anyone on the **Events Team** for assistance if you want to participate. Even if you cannot bake, there are many ways to help, including organizing everything the night before or staffing the sale early on Saturday morning.

*If you know of anyone who is **sick, injured, or struggling** with anything in their life; please contact us so they can be added to our prayers. (Or, if you wish, names can be added to the private prayer list in the altar and not mentioned in the bulletin.) Please also (always!) let the priest know whenever someone is **pregnant, recently had a baby, is engaged, or is planning a wedding**, so we can add them to our prayers as well.*

EVERY GREAT FEAST of the Orthodox Church is preceded by a period of **preparation**. One of the longest and richest periods is Advent. But **what does it mean to prepare?** For many, the preparation for Christmas is hectic—shopping for presents, making decorations, mailing cards, attending Christmas parties, and so forth. But in the midst of this mad rush, where is our spiritual preparation?

The Church invites us to prepare for Christmas through prayer and worship and the hymns of the season. But these hymns are **not just songs of praise**; they are rich with profound—if, at times, obscure—**biblical references**. This is especially true of the hymns that dominate the entire season of Advent: the *Katavasia* (*Canon*) of Christmas. Through them the Church invites us to study the Old Testament, for one theme that unmistakably permeates Advent is **how the Nativity of Jesus fulfills the Old Testament prophecies** about the Birth of the Messiah....

But there is yet more to Advent than this. Our preparation for Christmas with the Old Testament is not an intellectual exercise, not a mere study of Scripture by which we affirm biblical truth. Rather, it is a spiritual preparation that challenges us to **change our lives as a result** of this divine revelation, to “be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (*James 1:22*). We are invited to be changed by our worship and our hearing of the word of God.

The Church’s exhortation to get ready for Christmas is conveyed in poetic language. Our hymns command Bethlehem to **prepare and make ready** for the Nativity of our Lord:

*Behold, the time of our salvation has drawn near. **O Cave, make ready!** The Virgin is drawing near to give birth. O Bethlehem, land of Judah, be glad and rejoice, for from you our Lord has dawned. Listen, mountains and hills, and lands around Judea, for Christ is coming to save man whom He fashioned, since He loves mankind. (Vespers of the Forefeast, December 20, first hymn of the Aposticha)*

The Church’s command to Bethlehem to prepare and be glad **extends also to us**. We are invited to go back in time to Judea.... “Bethlehem” becomes a synonym for “the Church”. **Christ is to be born within us**: in our mystical celebration **we shall become Bethlehem**, the humble place of His Nativity, and so **we must prepare ourselves in order that our Lord may make His dwelling within us**.

– Fr Vassilios Papavassiliou, *Meditations for Advent* (Ancient Faith Publishing, Chesterton, 2013), 19-24.

In your prayers...

Please remember in your prayers those who are ill or recovering from illness or injury:

Fr Michael Evans, Fr Joseph Chupek, Fr Peter Telencio, Edward & Karen Hojnicky, Gregory Hansen, Olga Krutz, Maryanne Krisa, Michael Krisa, William Hummer, Barbara Mosley.

Please also remember those who are alone or confined. Send a card, or stop by and visit.

- Eileen Dance, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation Center #202, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
(please note the change of room number)
- 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
- Paul & Barbara Mosley, 623 Cemetery St, Mayfield, PA 18433

Remembering the Departed: November

Abp. David (Mahaffey) (11/27/2020)	Samuel Zielinski (11/11/2014)	Anna Kerilla (11/23/2006)
Apr. Nicholas Fedorchak (11/22/1998)	Philip Demora (11/12/1992)	Dennis Buberniak (11/23/2008)
Apr. Joseph Martin (11/9/2018)	Nina Jubinski (11/13/2014)	John Demora, Jr. (11/24/1984)
Anna Urda (11/1/2002)	Anna Kosar (11/14/1981)	Barbara Franchak (11/25/2011)
John Pash, Sr. (11/2/1978)	Eva Franchak (11/15/1992)	Carol Konkal (11/25/2021)
Ralph Orson Sloat (11/4/1993)	Antoinette Kitchura (11/15/1987)	Olga Petorak (11/25/2013)
Ronald Serniak (11/5/2021)	Nena Franchak (11/16/2014)	Olga Hockin Sviatko (11/25/2016)
Emily Stawisky (11/7/1995)	Sandra Franchak Evans (11/17/2011)	Helen Wahal (Vahal) (11/25/2005)
Nicholas Urda (11/8/1981)	Mary Urda (11/18/1969)	Alice Mosley (11/26/1997)
Amelia Chup (11/9/2015)	Joseph Zrowka (11/18/2005)	Olga Nayduch Jaye (11/26/2008)
John Franchak (11/10/1996)	Antoinette Kutchmanich (11/21/1981)	William Urda (11/26/1971)
Mary Franchak (11/10/2011)	Ann Pusey (11/21/2016)	Marie Blackman (11/27/1994)
Andrew (Bill) Kutch (11/10/1982)	Elizabeth Day (11/22/1992)	Stephen Pelack (11/27/1969)
Mary Gurka Petorak (11/10/1971)	Nicholas Gurka (11/22/2006)	Anna Petorak (11/27/2001)
William Joseph Raban (11/10/1999)	Nicholas Wargo (11/22/1975)	Mary Petorak (11/29/1968)
Walter Fedorchak (11/11/1979)	Paul Urda (11/22/1973)	Anna Chup Lasichak (11/30/1962)
Steve Franchak (11/11/2021)	Michael Kosar (11/23/1985)	

The Faith We Hold

The Apostle Peter refers to the sacrificial nature of the Liturgy: "Be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ." This is realized in the most central part of the *Liturgy of the Faithful*, the Eucharist proper. There, in the *Anaphora*, or *prayers of offering* through words spoken by the priest, the congregation as a spiritual priesthood makes a bloodless spiritual offering, giving thanks to God for all that He has done for mankind.

Our first thanks are for His having brought us from *nonexistence into being*. We go on to thank Him because when we had fallen away He *raised us up again*... Thanksgiving is addressed to the Holy Trinity for all things ... that God has done for us. *Especially we offer thanks for this Liturgy which He has deigned to accept at our hands, though there stand by Him thousands of archangels... singing the triumphant hymn, shouting, proclaiming and saying: Holy! Holy! Holy!... The whole congregation joins in the prayer, singing: Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord of Sabaoth! ...*

Thus the people of God, bringing forth or offering the bread and wine, chosen out of the foods which sustain earthly life, receives a heavenly repast, the holy Body and Blood of Christ, for the sustenance of its spiritual life. The Orthodox Church does not attempt to explain the invisible yet real change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, for it is a mystery and is meant to be received with faith.

– Abp Paul of Finland, *The Faith We Hold* (SVS Press, 1980), 50-51.

Today's Scripture

Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-6

Brethren, walk as children of light, (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Gospel: Luke 13:10-17

At that time, a certain ruler asked Jesus, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?" But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

Today's Hymns

Sunday Troparion (Tone 1)

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, / while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, / Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, / granting life to the world. / The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: / "Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! / Glory to Thy Kingdom! // Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!"

Prophet Zephaniah (Tone 2)

We celebrate the memory / of Your prophet Zephaniah, O Lord; / through him we entreat You, // save our souls.

Sunday Kontakion (Tone 1)

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, / raising the world with Thyself. / Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. / Adam exults, O Master! / Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to Thee: // "Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!"

Prophet Zephaniah (Tone 4)

You have been revealed by the Spirit of God to be brilliant, Prophet Zephaniah, / for you proclaimed the coming of God: / "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! / Proclaim Him, O Jerusalem! / Behold, your King is coming to save mankind!"

For the Mother of God (Tone 6)

Steadfast protectress of Christians, / constant advocate before the Creator; / despise not the entreating cries of us sinners, / but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. / Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, // for you always protect those who honor you!

Prophet Zephaniah

The Prophet Zephaniah (Sophonias) was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Prophetess Oldama. He was from the tribe of Simeon, and was the ninth of the Twelve Minor Prophets of the Old Testament. The prophet lived at the royal court, where he preached repentance and helped King Josiah eliminate idol-worship. He prophesied about the calamities that were to come for the people of Judea and the surrounding regions: Gaza, Ascalon, Crete, and against the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Ninevites.