

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

January 28, 2023: 34th Sunday after Pentecost

St Ephraim the Syrian; New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia

This past week, the Troutman family (Doreen & Harry, along with John Meholic) suffered a devastating fire that consumed their home and most of their possessions. We will take a special collection for them today. The Artisan Fire Company is collecting clothing, supplies, and gift certificates. You can also donate online at GoFundMe (the link is on our website and Facebook page).

Through the prayers of the Holy Youths, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, may the Lord God continue to protect and preserve their family unharmed.

Schedule of Services

Saturday, Jan 27, 4:00 p.m. – No Vespers

Sunday, Jan 28, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy. 40th Day Panikhida for Irene Gurka.

Tuesday, Jan 30 – Three Hierarchs (Ss. Basil, Gregory, & John Chrysostom)

February 2 is the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple.

Thursday, Feb 1, 6:30 p.m. – **Small Festal Vigil**

Friday, Feb 2, 9:30 a.m. – **Festal Divine Liturgy**

Saturday, Feb 3, 4:00 p.m. – Great Vespers & Confessions.

Sunday, Feb 4, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy.

Coffee Hour is offered by:

Jan 28: Millie Telep & Mat. Alexandra

Feb 4: Mat. Dolores & Marilyn Petorak

Feb 11: **SOUPer Bowl of Caring**. Crockpot

Potluck. All donations for IOCC. We will also

collect nonperishables for a local food bank.

Feb 18: Ruthie Lasichak & Roxanne Neutts

Feb 25: Vickie Kravitsky & Charette Radionoff

March 3: Maryann Dubee & Susan Schlasta

Today's Scripture

Epistle: Colossians 3:4-11

Brethren, When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Gospel: Matthew 22:35-46

At that time, a lawyer asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying:

*'The LORD said to my Lord,
sit at My right hand,
till I make Your enemies Your footstool?'*

If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Donations & Memorials

- \$100 offered in loving memory of Rebecca Hanchak, by Peter & Sarah Jubinski. *May Rebecca's memory be eternal!*

Announcements

On **Saturday, March 2**, the Diocese will host a **Women's Retreat** at Holy Trinity in Stroudsburg: "*Compassion: From God to us; from us to others*". The guest speaker will be Presbytera **Kerry Pappas**, a licensed marriage & family therapist and a counselor to many Orthodox lay, clergy, and seminarian families. *This is an opportunity for the women (of all ages!) of our parishes to come together for fellowship and a bit of spiritual rest from the world.* Mat. Alexandra will be going and can drive 5 or 6 additional people. Please RSVP to **Sara Rusk** at rusksara21@gmail.com by February 24, or let me or Mat. Alexandra know.

Hymns of the Day

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!"

St Ephraim the Syrian (Tone 8)

By a flood of tears thou didst make the desert fertile, / and thy longing for God brought forth fruits in abundance. / By the radiance of miracles thou didst illumine the whole universe. // Our holy Father Ephraim, pray to Christ our God to save our souls!

New Martyrs & Confessors of Russia (Tone 4)

Today the Church of Russia forms a chorus in joy, / praising her new martyrs and confessors; / hierarchs and priests, royal passion-bearers, right-believing princes and princesses, / venerable men and women, and all Orthodox Christians. / Having laid down their life for faith in Christ during the days of godless persecution, / they preserved the truth by the shedding of blood. // By their protection, O long-suffering Lord, preserve our land in Orthodoxy till the end of the age.

In your prayers...

The Newly-Departed: **Archpriest Moses Berry** (Jan 12), **Archpriest Ivan Moody** (Jan 18), **Irene Gurka** (Dec 16), **Rebecca Hanchak** (Dec 17).

Please keep in your prayers our brother in Christ, Fr Gregory White, the priest at Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Wilkes-Barre, who is recovering at home from a heart attack earlier this month. *May the divine Physician grant him recovery, and comfort his family and the faithful of Holy Resurrection.*

Those who are ill or recovering from illness or injury: **Fr Michael Evans**, **Fr Joseph Chupek**, **Fr Peter Telencio**, **Pdn. Gabriel Petorak**, **Edward & Karen Hojnicky**, **Gregory Hansen**, **Olga Krutz**, **Maryanne Krisa**, **Michael Krisa**, **Barbara Mosley**.

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!"

Glory ...

St Ephraim (Tone 2)

Ever anticipating the hour of Judgment, / thou didst lament bitterly, venerable Ephraim. / Through thy deeds thou wast a teacher by example; // Therefore, universal Father, thou dost rouse the slothful to repentance.

Now & ever ...

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!

Those who are alone or confined:

- **Eileen Dance**, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation #202, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
- **John Drutarosky**, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation #307, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
- **Theresa Krenitsky**, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation #307, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, 18407
- **Nicholas Mattise**, Personal Care at Allied Terrace, #218, 100 Terrace Lane, **Scranton, PA 18508**
- **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**, Glenmaura Senior Living, 11 Glenmaura National Blvd, Moosic, PA 18507
- **Paul Kostiak**, along with **Dolores Brophy**, 631 Jefferson Ave, Jermyn, PA 18433
- **Paul & Barbara Mosley**, 623 Cemetery St, Mayfield, PA 18433
- **Bill Hummer**, c/o Oakwood Terrace, 400 Gleason Dr, Moosic, PA 18507

As we surrender our bodies to the effects of time; physical vitality slowly wears away, confidence in willfulness wains; our minds lose their sharpness and our eyesight grows fuzzy. Joints ache. A subtle, gentle, inner place is revealed more clearly through all this than in youthful exuberances. The heart grows acutely aware of how very, very precious is this life that lives itself through us by the Grace and love of God. Like the Skin Horse and the Velveteen Rabbit in Marjorie Williams' beloved and profoundly theological children's story, the toys in the boy's room become real when the child loves them enough. It isn't an easy process and it takes time. When the Velveteen Rabbit asks the wise old Skin Horse, one of the oldest toys in the playroom, who has one eye hanging out by threads and his hair is rubbed off in places, "Does it hurt?" to become real, he has no reservations. They willingly suffer hurts, because they have begun to realize how forgiveness and love from others is the path to becoming real. Well-worn and loved people have more and more forgiveness and mercy toward others when things go wrong. We don't discover this alone, but in relationship with Christ in and through all Whom Christ makes real in this same way.

We can feel sure that God is always bringing the very best out of what seems the very worst and frequently in hidden ways. It helps clarify our journey when we recognize what St. Maximos the Confessor observed, that our very lives are on loan to us. Life is only "ours" to begin with because God suffers to make it so. We cannot hold on to it by anything we do, think, feel, say or will by ourselves. This Grace given us from beyond transforms our created nature by inviting us into a personal mode of responding to God as personal "Other" in a living anaphora, offering back "in all and for all" what is His very own, transformed by our freely offered consent and received as our gift in response. This strange and wondrous circle of Eucharistic reciprocity is an eternal doxology of "becoming-in-Communion, glorifying God wherever two or more encounter one another in and through the consubstantial Logos.

– Muse, Stephen. *Parenting in Repentance: Growing Together in Love, Gratefulness and Joy*. Alhambra, CA: Sebastian Press, 2021.



Presented by The Diocese of Eastern PA and the Women's Group of Holy Trinity

THE GIFT OF COMPASSION:

From God to Us —Through Us, to Others

~Extending and Receiving Compassion ~Compassion vs. Empathy
~Compassion in Scripture ~The Many "Faces" of Compassion

Saturday, March 2nd - 10am-3pm

Holy Trinity Church, 1501 Trinity Ct, Stroudsburg, PA

Our featured speaker:
Presbytera Kerry Pappas

Kerry is a priest wife and licensed marriage and family therapist. She works extensively with seminarian and clergy families, primarily through the Center for Family Care Team of the GOA. Kerry's work of over 40 years takes her around the country leading women and couples in interactive exercises and dialogue.



This event is open to all women of our diocese and beyond.
There is no charge and lunch and snacks will be provided.

Please bring a friend and enjoy a day of reflection and fellowship.

Please RSVP to Sara Rusk at rusksara21@gmail.com by February 24.

*For the next couple of weeks, please consider the following excerpts from the book, **Money & Salvation**, by Andrew Geleris. We are not reading these excerpts because someone or something "needs money". Rather, it is an opportunity to re-examine the nature of our **relationship** with our Church, and what it means to be not a "member" of an "organization", but rather **a portion of the Body of Christ**.*

The Good Way

Jesus ... felt free to discuss financial issues frequently and powerfully. Pastorally, he completely shared the deep concern ... for the financial burdens of poor people. But rather than causing him to shy away from financial discussions, it appears that this concern emboldened his advocacy in their behalf. When he talked to rich people about helping the poor, he even had the temerity to teach them that fulfilling this responsibility had eternal consequences. For example, he said this to the wealthy spiritual elite of his day: *"When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just"* (Lk 14.12-14). But Jesus went far beyond mere financial solicitude in behalf of the poor. He often publicly honored the depth of their daily spiritual struggles in a way that he never did for the rich: *"Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God"* (Lk 6.20).

Jesus ... boldly told a parable about a very successful farmer whose material wealth was growing at an astonishing rate but who neglected to pay appropriate attention to spiritual matters. The parable concluded with an unambiguously straightforward soul-centric warning: *"Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God"* (Lk 12.20-21).

Paul emphatically admonished Timothy to imitate Jesus' soul-centric approach: *"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but **in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy**. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life"* (1 Tim 6.17-19). Paul himself utilized this same soul-centric approach in his own ministry. When he did fundraising among the Corinthians in behalf of the poor in Jerusalem, he framed his entire "ask" in terms of why giving would be spiritually, and perhaps even financially, profitable for the donors and **how it would glorify God**. *"God is able to bless you abundantly. . your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God"* (2 Cor 9. 8, 11). Likewise, when Paul thanked the Philippians for their generous financial support of him, he said that what pleased him the most was **not the gift itself**, but the benefit they received **from giving it**: *"Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account"* (Phil 4.17).

– Andrew Geleris, *Money & Salvation: An Invitation to the Good Way* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2022); 11-13, 17-18.

St Ephraim the Syrian (ca. 306–373) (commemorated Jan 28)

Our Righteous Father Ephraim the Syrian, often called “teacher of repentance”, was a prolific Syriac language hymnographer and theologian of the 4th century. He is venerated by Christians throughout the world, but especially among Syriac Christians. He composed many hymns, poems, commentaries, and homilies throughout his life.

St Ephraim was born early in the 4th century to Christian parents in Nisibis. His parents raised their son in piety, but from his childhood he was known for his quick temper and impetuous character. He often had fights, acted thoughtlessly, and even doubted God’s Providence. He finally recovered his senses by the grace of God, and embarked on the path of repentance and salvation.

The 4th century was a time of great religious and political tension; the savage persecution and martyrdom of Christians under Diocletian left a mark on his upbringing. His bishop, St James of Nisibis, who was present at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, mentored him and appointed him a teacher. He began to compose hymns and write biblical commentaries as part of his educational office.

In 363, Ephraim fled to Edessa when the city was surrendered to Persia. There he taught the scriptures to the city’s many nonbelievers. By this time, his poetry and hymns had become an essential part of the church life and were chanted in the services throughout the territory of Syria. Many of these hymns were instrumental in defending against a number of heresies that were spreading during that time. The most well-known of these poetic prayers and hymns attributed to him is the *Prayer of Saint Ephrem* that is a staple of most Lenten services in Orthodox Christianity:

*O Lord and Master of my life, give me not the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk.
But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to thy servant.
Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother,
for blessed art thou unto ages of ages. Amen.*

After a ten-year residency in Edessa, in his sixties, Ephrem reposed in peace, according to some in the year 373, according to others, 379. Though St. Ephrem was probably not formally a monk, he was known to have practiced a severe ascetical life, ever increasing in holiness. In Ephrem’s day, monasticism was in its infancy in the Egypt. He seems to have been a part of a close-knit, urban community of Christians that had "covenanted" themselves to service and a life of sobriety.

“If the Son of God is within you, then His Kingdom is also within you. Thus, the Kingdom of God is within you, a sinner. Enter into yourself, search diligently and without toil you shall find it. Outside of you is death, and the door to it is sin. Enter into yourself, dwell within your heart, for God is there.”

– St. Ephraim the Syrian