

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, *attached*
(570) 876-0411



February 25, 2024

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

Vladimir Kitchura, *Council President*
(570) 903-3475

Church Basement Phone
(570) 876-4710

Today is the first of four **Pre-Lenten Sundays**, on which the Church opens the "Lenten Triodion", the book of liturgical texts and hymns used throughout all of Great Lent up until the night of Pascha.

We would not think of beginning a long road trip without first tuning up our car and checking all its vital systems. We are given these next three weeks to check all the vitals of our souls, taking an honest self-inventory of ourselves: What are my spiritual strengths and weaknesses? What needs re-aligned? What kinds of things in my everyday life trigger my vices? What makes me easily fall into despair? We ask for God's help to become more aware of these things, little by little, so that our journey through the great fast may bring spiritual growth.

Schedule of Services

Saturday, Feb 24, 4:00 p.m. – Great Vespers & Confessions.
Sunday, Feb 25, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship. *Special Parish Council Meeting.*
(Fast-Free week: No Fasting on Wednesday or Friday this week)

Saturday, March 2 – *Women's Retreat, Stroudsburg*
Saturday, March 2, 4:00 p.m. – Great Vespers & Confessions.
Sunday, March 3, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy. **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING.**

Saturday, March 9, 4:00 p.m. – Great Vespers & Confessions.
Sunday, March 10, 9:30 a.m. – (SPRING AHEAD + 1hr) Divine Liturgy & Fellowship

Announcements

Our **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held **NEXT WEEK, Sunday March 3**. This is the **third and final notice** of this date. The Annual Meeting is a *sacred task*, and the duty of everyone who calls St Michael's their home.

THIS SATURDAY, March 2, is the **Women's Retreat** at Holy Trinity in Stroudsburg. If you want to attend, please let me or Mat. Alexandra know immediately.

Coffee Hour is offered by:

Feb 25: Vickie Kravitsky & Charette Radionoff March 10: Susan Schlasta & Millie Telep
March 3: ANNUAL MEETING. Informal Potluck. March 17: Millie Telep & Mat. Alexandra

Today's Scripture

Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15

My son Timothy, You have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra – what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Gospel: Luke 18:10-14

The Lord spoke this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself,

'God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'

And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying,

'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Hymns of the Day

Sunday Troparion (Tone 5)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, / co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, / born for our salvation from the Virgin; / for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, / to endure death, / and to raise the dead // by His glorious Resurrection.

St Michael the Archangel (Tone 4)

O Commander of the heavenly hosts, / we who are unworthy beseech you ceaselessly / that you would encompass us with the shelter of your prayers, / and cover us beneath the wings of your immaterial glory. / We fall down before you, crying out: / "Protect us all from harm, // O Michael, Prince of the powers on high!"

St Michael the Archangel (Tone 2)

Commanders of God's armies / and ministers of the divine glory, / princes of the bodiless angels / and guides of mankind, / ask for what is good for us, and for great mercy, // supreme commanders of the Bodiless Hosts.

Pre-Lenten: Publican & Pharisee (Tone 4)

Let us flee from the pride of the Pharisee! / Let us learn humility from the Publican's tears! / Let us cry to our savior: / "Have mercy on us, // O only mer-ci-ful one!"

In your prayers...

The Newly-Departed: Archpriest Ivan Moody (Jan 18).

We offer prayers for:

- Archbishop Nathaniel, of the Romanian Episcopate of the OCA, who had emergency heart surgery.
- The Troutman family (Doreen & Harry, along with John Meholic) who lost their home to fire.
- Fr Gregory White, of Holy Resurrection in Wilkes-Barre, recovering from a heart attack.

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

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
Adam & Mary Ann Serafini, 509 Jefferson Ave, Jermyn, PA 18433

Donations & Memorials

- Our parish collected a total of \$224 for International Orthodox Christian Charities' *SOUPer Bowl of Caring* food drive, in addition to *many* bags of food donations. *THANK YOU!*
- \$350 was offered to St Michael's in thanksgiving by Gerald & Marilyn Soroka.
- \$150 was offered in loving memory of Irene Gurka by the Pash family: \$100 by John & Patsy, and 50 by Molly, Karlee, Ryan, and Jenna. *May Irene's memory be eternal!*

Sacraments

The Church may be defined as **the new life in Christ**. It is man's life lived by the Holy Spirit in union with God. All aspects of the new life of the Church participate in the mystery of salvation. In Christ and the Holy Spirit everything which is sinful and dead becomes holy and alive by the power of God the Father. And so in Christ and the Holy Spirit **everything in the Church becomes a sacrament**, an element of the mystery of the Kingdom of God as it is already being experienced in the life of this world.

Viewing the Church as the **new and eternal life** of the Kingdom of God given to man by God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, we understand first of all that **for life to exist there must be birth**. The birth into the eternal life of God is the mystery of **baptism**. But birth is not enough for living; there must be the **ongoing possibility of life**: its power, energy and force. Thus, the mystery of **chrismation** is the gift of the power **to live the life of Christ** which is born in man by baptism. It is the gift of the "all-holy and good and life-creating **Spirit**" to man.

Life also must be **sustained**. This is normally done by eating and drinking. Food is the nourishment which keeps us alive. It is man's communion with creation which keeps him existing. But, naturally speaking, our normal eating and drinking does not keep us alive

forever. Our natural communion with the world is a communion to death. We need eating and drinking of a special food which nourishes us for eternal life. This food is the "**mystical supper of the Son of God**," the body and blood of Christ, the mystery of the **holy eucharist**—the communion to Life Itself.

For life to be truly perfect, holy and good, there must also be a particular mystery about **marriage** and the bearing of children. In this world all who are born are born to die, and even the most perfect of human love stands under the condemnation: "... until death do you part." The mystery of Christian marriage **transforms** human love, childbearing, and family communities into realities of **eternal** proportion and significance. In marriage we are blessed by God for unending friendship and love. We are blessed so that the fruit of our love, the begetting of our children and the life of our families will be not "unto death" but **unto life everlasting**.

Until the final establishment of the Kingdom of God, our life remains under the attack of its demonic enemies: sin, sickness, suffering, sorrow and death. The mystery of **penance** is the **remedy for spiritual sickness**. It allows us to **turn again** to God, to be **taken back**, to be forgiven and to be received once more into the life of God from which our sins have separated us. And the mystery of **holy unction** is the remedy for our physical sickness which is the power of sin over our bodies, our inevitable union with suffering and death. Holy unction allows us to be healed; to suffer, not "unto death" but, once more, unto life everlasting. It is the **incorporation of our wounds** into the life-creating cross of Christ.

The mystery, finally, which allows the perfection of divine life to be ours in all of its fullness and power in this world is **the mystery of the Church itself**. And most specifically within the Church, we have the mystery of **holy orders**: the sacrament of priesthood, ministry, teaching and pastoral care. The clergy of the church—bishops, priests, and deacons—exist for **no other purpose** than to make manifest, present and powerful in the Church the divine life of the Kingdom of God to all men while still living in this world.

Thus, from birth to death, in good times and bad, in every aspect of worldly existence, **real life**—life as God has created and saved and sanctified it to be—is given to us **in the Church**. This is Christ's express purpose and wish, **the very object of his coming to the world**: "*I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*" (*Jn 10.10*).

The Church as the gift of life eternal is by its very nature, in its fullness and entirety, a mystical and sacramental reality. It is the life of the Kingdom of God **given already** to those who believe. And thus, within the Church, everything we do—our prayers, blessings, good works, thoughts, actions—everything participates in the life which has no end. In this sense everything which is in the Church and of the Church is a sacrament of the Kingdom of God.

– Fr Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith*, vol. 2: Worship (Yonkers, NY: Orthodox Church in America & St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2016), 30-32.