

# St Michael's Orthodox Church

A parish of the Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania  
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**March 3, 2024: Sunday of the Prodigal Son**

## Schedule of Services

*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.**  
*(Normal Fasting Week, Wednesday & Friday)*

*Thursday, March 7, 6:30 p.m. – Choir Rehearsal*

Saturday, March 9, 9:30 a.m. – Memorial Saturday Divine Liturgy.

Saturday, March 9, 4:00 p.m. – Great Vespers & Confessions. Final 4pm Vespers this year.

**Spring Ahead +1hr!** Sunday, March 10, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy. Meatfare Sunday.  
Memorial Service for Helen Gurka Susko & Mary Gurka Wallace.  
*(Fasting from Meat begins this week)*

*Thursday, March 14, 6:30 p.m. – Choir Rehearsal*

Saturday, March 16, **6:30 p.m.** – Great Vespers & Confessions.

Sunday, March 17, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy followed by Forgiveness Vespers

## **GREAT LENT BEGINS MONDAY MARCH 18**

*There are services every weeknight of the 1<sup>st</sup> week of Great Lent (March 18-22) at 6:30pm:*

- Mon, Tues, & Thurs: Great Canon of St Andrew (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> parts)
- Wed: Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
- Friday: The 1<sup>st</sup> part of the Akathist to the Theotokos

*A full schedule of Lent and Pascha will be forthcoming.*

## Announcements

Today is our **Annual Parish Meeting**, immediately following the Divine Liturgy. In addition to materials given at the meeting, please also take a *contact information form* from the narthex.

*Coffee Hour is offered by:*

March 3: **ANNUAL MEETING.** *Informal Potluck.*

March 17: Millie Telep & Mat. Alexandra

March 10: Susan Schlasta & Millie Telep

March 24 (*Lenten*): Mat. Dolores & Marilyn Petorak

## Today's Scripture

*Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20*

*Brethren:* All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

*Gospel: Luke 15:11-32*

*The Lord said:* The Lord said: “A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’” And he arose and came to his father.

But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’ But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’”

## Hymns of the Day

### *Sunday Troparion (Tone 6)*

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; / the guards became as dead men. / Mary stood by Thy grave, / seeking Thy most pure body. / Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. / Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. / O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, // glory to Thee.

### *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: Prodigal Son (Tone 3)*

I have recklessly forgotten Thy glory, O Father, / and among sinners I have scattered the riches which Thou hadst given me. / Therefore I cry to Thee like the Prodigal: / "I have sinned before Thee, O compassionate Father; // receive me, a penitent, and make me as one of Thy hired servants."

## In your prayers...

- Archbishop Nathaniel, of the Romanian Episcopate of the OCA, recovering from 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 Hojnicki, 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

*"God does not expect a pure and undistracted prayer. Despair not, should inattention come over you! Be of cheerful spirit and constantly compel your mind to return to itself! For the angels alone are not subject to any distraction." - St. John of the Ladder*

The **life of the children** seems to be affected by **what radiates from their parents**. If the parents **insist**, "Come on now, go and make confession, go and receive Communion", and so on, **nothing is achieved**.

But what does your child see **in you**? How do **you** live, and what do **you** radiate? **Does Christ radiate in you**? That is what is transmitted to your child. This is where the secret lies. And if this is done when the child is young, it will not be necessary for it to undergo "great travail" when he or she grows up. Solomon the Wise uses a beautiful image about exactly this subject, underlining the importance of a good start and good foundations: "*He who seeks Wisdom early shall have no great travail; for he shall find her sitting at his doors.*" The person who "seeks her early" is the person who occupies himself with Wisdom from an early age. Wisdom is Christ.

– St. Porphyrios of Athens (20th century)

## *Awakening and the Fear of God*

Spiritual death, expressed as biological death, secretly eats away at our existence. Yet, by the very intensity of the anguish it provokes, **it can set us on the path of awakening**. The fickleness of time and the precariousness of an existence in which everything eludes us is something that is repeatedly emphasized by St Andrew of Crete in his Great Canon ... Feelings of revulsion and yet a melancholic nostalgia take hold of us when we come to realize the hollowness of our preoccupations, the emptiness of the hustle and bustle and the many concerns ... in which we seek refuge so as to forget our finiteness.... *I speak boastfully, with boldness of heart, yet all to no purpose and in vain (4.33)*.... This is **argia**, the "sloth" or "idleness" spoken of in the prayer of St Ephraim: "O Lord and Master of my life, give me not a spirit of sloth..." *Argia*, say the ascetics of old, begets forgetfulness, one of the "giants" of sin: forgetfulness of God and thus of oneself and of the other in his mystery; forgetfulness of the truth about beings and things...

Then, a first  **blessing**  is given: the "remembrance of death." St John Climacus advises us ... to make the constant thought of death our "spouse." In the sobering light of this "remembrance," our conscience begins to awaken, regardless of our conditioning or our instinct for self-preservation. Solzhenitsyn has shown how the experience of the camps—where the remembrance of death was inescapable—can indeed awaken the conscience. *I am convicted by the verdict of my own conscience, which is more compelling than all else in the world (4.14)*. For several of the Fathers—Dorotheus of Gaza, for example—the conscience is like a divine spark. Thus man is judged from within, and with no possibility of appeal, by his own conscience....

There remains a persistent hunger. *I am barren of the virtues of holiness; in my hunger I cry out (1.21)*.... And so, the understanding and the heart begin to undergo change.

– Olivier Clément, *The Song of Tears: An Essay on Repentance Based on the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete* (Yonkers, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2021), 9-11.

*Next week: Trust, Humility, and a traveler on the road of life*