

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/>

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April 28, 2024: PALM SUNDAY. The Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem.

Schedule of Services

Friday, April 26, 6:30 p.m. – Small Vigil for **Lazarus Saturday**. *Confessions after the service.*

Saturday, April 27, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy for **Lazarus Saturday**

Saturday, April 27, 6:30 p.m. – Festal Vespers (with Litya) for **Palm Sunday**. *Blessing of Palms. Confessions after.*

Sunday, April 28, 9:30 a.m. – Festal Divine Liturgy for **Palm Sunday**

HOLY WEEK & PASCHA SCHEDULE

Please try to seek Confession by Wednesday if possible.

Sunday, April 28, 6:30 p.m. – “Bridegroom” Matins (of Holy Monday). *Confessions after.*

Monday, April 29, 9:30 **a.m.** – Presanctified Divine Liturgy here at St Michael's. We are hosting area parishes.

Monday, April 29, 6:30 p.m. – “Bridegroom” Matins (of Holy Tuesday). *Confessions after.*

Tuesday, April 30, 9:30 a.m. – Presanctified Divine Liturgy at All Saints Olyphant (hosting area parishes)

Tuesday, April 30, 6:30 p.m. – “Bridegroom” Matins (of Holy Wednesday). *Confessions after.*

Wednesday, May 1, 9:30 a.m. – Presanctified Divine Liturgy at St Michael's Old Forge (hosting area parishes)

Wednesday, May 1, **6:00 p.m.** – HOLY UNCTION at ST NICHOLAS OLYPHANT. ***This is the Unction for our parish. Please attend if you can. All baptized, chrismated Orthodox Christians who have confessed recently are invited to receive this important sacrament. (The area parishes are celebrating together so that we can use the full Unction rite, which calls for multiple priests. We will rotate the location each year.)***

Thursday, May 2, 9:30 a.m. – Vespereal Divine Liturgy of Holy Thursday. *The Institution of the Eucharist.*

Thursday, May 2, 6:30 p.m. – MATINS OF THE PASSION (Matins of Good Friday) with the Twelve Passion Gospels.

Friday, May 3: Great and Holy Friday

1:30 p.m. – Royal Hours

2:30 p.m. – Burial Vespers with the taking-down of the Body

7:30 p.m. – Matins with Lamentations and Procession with the winding-sheet

Sat, May 4: Great and Holy Saturday

9:30 a.m. – Vespereal Divine Liturgy of Holy Saturday

(*** This is at the usual time of 9:30 – the previous calendar has a misprint.)

GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA:

SATURDAY MAY 4, 9:00 p.m. – PASCHAL VIGIL *Nocturnes, Procession, and Paschal Matins.*

SUNDAY MAY 5, 9:30 a.m. – PASCHAL DIVINE LITURGY. *Blessing of foods and baskets.*

Monday, May 6 – Bright Monday Liturgy at All Saints Olyphant. **ALL ARE INVITED!**

Saturday, May 11 – Bright Saturday Liturgy at St Nicholas Olyphant. **ALL ARE INVITED!**

Coffee Hour is offered by:

April 28: (*Palm Sunday*) Mat. Dolores & Marilyn Petorak

May 5: *Pascha*

May 12: Ruthie Lasichak & Roxanne Neutts

May 19: Vickie Kravitsky & Charette Radionoff

Today's Scripture

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9

Brethren: Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Gospel: John 12:1-18

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!" Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt."

His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him. Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

In your prayers...

The Newly-Departed: Apr. Anthony Karbo (March 19). Andrew Homish (March 26). James Detro (April 2). Edward Hojnicky (April 4). William Hummer (April 6). Steven Susko (April 10). The child Daniel Ries (April 25).

Please especially pray for: 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. Dn. Gregory LoBalbo, of St Nicholas in Bethlehem.

The ill and the afflicted: Archbishop Nathaniel, Fr Michael Evans, Fr Joseph Chupek, Fr Peter Telencio, Fr Michael Shepherd, Pdn. Gabriel Petorak, Gregory Hansen, Olga Krutz, Maryanne Krisa, Michael Krisa, Barbara Mosley, Mary Ann Serafini, Alexis Meholic, Tom Shaw.

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

Those who grieve: For Andrew: David, Marlene, Cathy, & Debbie. For Edward: Karen, Stephanie, Fr. Timothy, Ana, Leah. For William: Mat. Alexandra, Fr. John, Harold. For Steven: John, Sonya, Stephanie. For Daniel: Fr Peter & Mat. Sophia.

Hymns of Palm Sunday

Troparion, Tone 1

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, / Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God. / Like the children with the palms of victory, / we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death: / “Hosanna in the highest! // Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.”

Glory ...

2nd Troparion, Tone 4

When we were buried with Thee in baptism, O Christ God, / we were made worthy of eternal life by Thy Resurrection. / Now we praise Thee and sing: / “Hosanna in the highest! // Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!”

Now & ever ...

Kontakion, Tone 6

Sitting on Thy throne in Heaven, / carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God, / accept the praise of angels and the songs of children, who sing: // “Blessed is He Who comes to recall Adam!”

Hymn to the Theotokos

God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us! / Celebrate the feast and come with gladness! / Let us magnify Christ with palms and branches, / singing: “Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!”

Donations

Please consider offering Easter Flowers or Candles, in memory of or for the health of family members. Suggested donations are \$15 (small) or \$20 (large), and \$10 for candles; but any amount is appreciated. Thank you!

- \$25 for Paschal Flowers and \$25 for Candles, in loving memory of Robert Telep, and Nikita & Mary Hrichuk, by Millie Telep. *May their memory be eternal!*

Baskets, Apologies, and a choice

Last week, I asked the parish to refrain from bringing Pascha baskets for blessing *after the evening Paschal Matins* (the night *before* Liturgy). While I believe very much in the principles behind this request, I now understand there may be some of you who have a custom of *gathering as family* and breaking the Paschal fast at that time. I know I have been distracted by the events in our family the last few weeks, so a sudden announcement about the baskets—with only two weeks remaining—may have felt unexpected. For this, please forgive me.

Some of you have also inquired, “is Matins not Pascha already? If Matins is the *beginning of Pascha*, then why is the fast not broken yet?” This is a very good question. The answer may seem complicated – but it is complicated *because we split our service between evening and morning*. (If we did not do that, this entire matter would be simple and we would all have our fast broken together after the Liturgy which would follow immediately – which is actually the ancient Orthodox tradition. Maybe, in the coming years, we can reach a point where we are comfortable talking about that.)

The short answer is, Yes, in a way, the “general” Lenten fast IS broken by the Resurrectional Matins. Congratulations, Christ is risen! But now the *Eucharistic Fast* – the fast before receiving Communion – has begun. This is the problem. The Paschal Matins is the *beginning* of the Day Of Pascha, a day on which we will *receive the Eucharist*. In other words, the “Day of the Liturgy” has begun! Once we celebrate that Matins, we enter into a time where we *anticipate the coming Communion*, and I must begin to respect that eucharistic fast. (If I go home after Paschal Matins and have a feast, then come to Liturgy in the morning; it is just like I went home between an 8am Matins and a 9:30 Liturgy, had a huge breakfast in between, and then still came to Communion. I am sure none of you would ever think of doing that.)

So here, even though there are about 10 hours in between Matins and Liturgy, the same principle holds. *Feasting after the Day of the Liturgy has begun would make me ineligible to receive communion*. The first Food that should touch my lips as I enter Pascha should be the Eucharist, not ham. Now of course, some of us must have small snacks or even a bit of breakfast before Communion because of our age or medical conditions, etc. That is understandable. But indulging in “feasting foods” from the Paschal basket is entirely different.

So ... You are responsible adults 😊 and you have a choice. There is no shame or judgment here; each of you knows your own situation best.

1. You can wait until Sunday Paschal Liturgy to bring your basket to be blessed, refrain from eating from it until then, receive communion, and break the fast afterwards.
2. If you need to have a festive meal out of your basket the night before (for example, if family is coming and you have already planned a Paschal Dinner on the eve of Pascha), then I will gladly bless your basket after Matins. But then, please do not come to communion on Pascha morning, because your Eucharistic fast is broken. You may instead come to communion the day before, Holy Saturday morning, if you like. Or any other time it is offered

(Bright Monday at All Saints Olyphant, next week on Thomas Sunday here, etc). This may be a good solution for you if you feel stuck and have already planned a meal.

3. If you do not plan to attend Paschal Liturgy at all, anywhere—if you just want the experience of Matins and do not wish to receive communion and just want your basket blessed, I suppose that is allowable. However I hope there is a good reason for not coming to Liturgy, and beg you to reconsider. If I do not partake of the Eucharist on Pascha, then it is not really Pascha for me at all. St John Chrysostom's famous Paschal Homily says, "*The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fattened; let no one go hungry away.*" St John is not talking about kielbasa and egg salad. He is talking about the Body and Blood of Christ, the Eucharist.

Whichever you choose, I hope you come and worship the Risen Lord with us, and enjoy the time with your St Michael's family. Our family will be **staying after Liturgy** on Pascha to dine from and share our basket in the church basement, and we welcome anyone to do the same! We will take care of setting that up. I am thankful for every one of you and wish all of you a joyous Pascha!

Confession and Communion

If you have not sought confession in many months, please do so – and soon. The best time to come is in the *first half* of Holy Week. The 2nd half gets very busy! If everyone waits until the last 1 or 2 days, there may not be time to hear everyone. Of course, even if you do come at the last moment, I will not turn you away – but **please be considerate** of everyone else's time, since too many people on those last days will cause services to start late.

Over the last year, I have learned that many of us here come from different customs of **how** and **when** to confess – not only different from me, but even different from each other. That is OK! Not everyone's confession will sound the same. Not everyone's spiritual life has the same shape or intensity. But there are a few principles that I believe apply to all:

"When should I come to confession?" You can come to confession *any time* during the year. It does not have to be *only* when Christmas or Pascha approaches. Our spiritual health is the best when we are seeking confession at least 4 times a year, or even every 1-2 months. When we confess that frequently, it's actually easier! It's hard trying to think about an entire year of our life all at once.

"No really, just tell me when to come to confession." OK. If you come anytime during Holy Week, you are good through the entire Pascha weekend and even a month or two that follow. Try coming to a Bridegroom Matins on Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday night and stay after for confession.

"Do I have to confess before every communion?" *It depends.*

- If you **stay away** from Communion most of the time, and only come to communion once or twice a year, then **Yes**, you should restore your relationship with Christ through confession before you return to Communion each time. *This is a special rule for those who commune INFrequently.*
- If you commune **frequently**, then it is not a one-to-one requirement. But you should confess *regularly*, perhaps four times a year, or even better, once every 1-2 months.

Confession was never meant to be a mere "admission ticket" to communion. It is an important Mystery of our Faith where the grace of God is imparted to us – regardless of how soon our next communion is. It is a **sacrament of healing** – we truly believe a portion of our sinfulness is restored to better health through confession. We are never sinless of course, but a *regular rhythm* of confession helps us to keep getting back up when we fall and remain pointed in the right direction. It is a sacrament *for everyone* in the Church, not only for those we assume are the "most sinful". Every single one of us needs this for our spiritual health (myself included! Clergy have to go to confession too.)

"Do I have to fast AFTER confession?" I have heard this question a few times, both here in Jermyn and elsewhere. This may be a misunderstanding. Really, we must fast *before Communion*. It doesn't have anything to do with the exact time of the confession. Don't worry, if you come to confession on a Wednesday, you don't have to go hungry for 4 days.

"I have to take medication every morning." That's fine. This does not disqualify you from communion. Fasting is just as much about *intent* as it is about *substance*. Doing what your doctor ordered you to do does not break the fast; you are simply being obedient. **"My health does not allow me to fast before communion"** or **"I have to have water or food with my medication or because of my condition."** This also does not, by itself, disqualify you from communion. If you must eat something because of your condition, please do so. But eat only what is necessary, and choose something *simple*. Sustain yourself when needed, but still "look forward" to the Eucharist, the perfect food.

Everything here is meant to *encourage*, not *discourage*, all of us. These sacraments are our very life! Please use this season (and every season) as an opportunity to renew our life in the Holy Mysteries of the Church.

Excerpts from “Our Journey through Holy Week”, by Dr. Constance Tarasar

Great and Holy Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

The services of these first three days are called the “**Bridegroom Services,**” for the theme of the hymns that are repeated each evening refer to **Christ, the Bridegroom, Who comes at midnight.**

Behold! The Bridegroom comes at midnight, and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching; and again, unworthy is the servant whom He shall find heedless. Beware, therefore, O my soul, do not be weighed down with sleep, lest you be given up to death, and lest you be shut out of the Kingdom. But rouse yourself, crying: “Holy! Holy! Holy! art Thou, O our God, through the Theotokos, have mercy on us!”

The other major theme of the Gospel readings is **the “End,”** the time of Judgment. The Bridegroom comes at midnight, in the darkness, to judge all people by the light of His truth. The verses call us to **be prepared and watch,** for we know not the day nor the hour when the Lord will come [John 12:31-36; Matthew 25:13].

The Gospels for the first three days of Holy Week further develop these themes.

- [On Sunday night], we hear about **the fig tree that bore no fruit**—a symbol of the world that was created to bear spiritual fruits but failed in its response to God. At the Presanctified Liturgy, we hear of the signs and announcement of the End: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
- [On Monday night], our Lord condemns **the blind and hypocritical religion of the Pharisees,** who see themselves as leaders and the light of the world, but who instead “shut up the Kingdom of heaven to men.” Two parables—that of **the Wise and Foolish Virgins** and the **Last Judgment** [Matthew 24:36-26:2] are read at the Presanctified Liturgy. The first reveals the need to be ready and prepared for the coming of the Bridegroom, while the second reminds us that we will be called to account for how we have loved and served others.
- [On Tuesday night], Jesus says: “Now is the judgment of the world.” He came as light into the world, but those who prefer the darkness and do not believe Him, or the Father Who sent Him, will face judgment by His Word. During the Presanctified Liturgy, we remember **the woman who poured the precious oil** on Jesus as the image of love and repentance. She is contrasted with **Judas, who betrayed Christ out of his love for money.**

Great and Holy Thursday

The main theme of **Great and Holy Thursday** commemorates the Lord’s Supper:

Come, O faithful. Let us enjoy the Master’s hospitality: the Banquet of Immortality! In the upper chamber with uplifted minds, let us receive the exalted words of the Word, Whom we magnify!

The **Lord’s Supper** is commemorated during the **Vespereal Divine Liturgy on Thursday morning.** [It is also at this Thursday Liturgy that the priest in each church must set aside the reserved particles of the Eucharist to commune the sick for the rest of the year.]

Good Friday Matins (Thursday night)

Matins of Good Friday, served Thursday night, consists of **12 readings from the Gospels** that recall the final instructions of Jesus to His disciples during the supper. They include the accounts of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and His trials before the High Priest and Pilate, the governor. The gospels continue with the readings about His crucifixion, death and burial. In between the readings are hymns giving the meaning of these events for our life.

The **Cross** is placed in the **center of the Church** during Matins. In some churches, it is carried out in procession during the singing of a beautiful hymn for the 15th Antiphon, between the fifth and sixth Gospel readings.

Today He Who hung the earth upon the waters is hung on the tree. / The King of the angels is decked with a crown of thorns. / He who wraps the heavens in clouds is wrapped in the purple of mockery. / He who freed Adam in the Jordan is slapped on the face. / The Bridegroom of the Church is affixed to the Cross with nails. / The Son of the Virgin is pierced by a spear. / We worship Thy passion, O Christ. / We worship Thy passion, O Christ. / We worship Thy passion, O Christ. / Show us also Thy glorious resurrection.

The *Exaposteilarion* [Hymn of Light] tells us that it is never too late to repent and to ask for God’s forgiveness, for Christ forgave **the thief on the Cross** who said: “Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom.” Jesus answered, saying, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

The wise thief didst Thou make worthy of Paradise in a single moment, O Lord.
By the wood of Thy Cross, illumine me as well, and save me.

Good Friday Vespers (Friday afternoon)

During **Vespers**, we remember the **death and burial of the Lord**. Towards the end of the service, with the singing of “The Noble Joseph,” the clergy bring the shroud with the image of Christ’s Body from the altar and **place it on a tomb** in the center of the church.

The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the tree, wrapped it in fine linen, and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb. / The angel came to the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb and said, “Myrrh is meet for the dead, but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption.

Great and Holy Saturday Matins (Friday night)

The resurrection of Christ and the granting of new life to those in Hades begins ... **in the depths of Hades**, where Christ goes to defeat the very power of death. In Saturday’s Matins, celebrated on Friday evening, we hear these words in a long series of hymns chanted between the verses of Psalm 118. They give us a picture of **Christ coming to earth to find His friend Adam**. But Adam and his descendants **have died**; after their expulsion from the Garden, they could no longer live forever with God. So Christ comes to save us by dying for us. He **descends to the place of death itself to find Adam** and to raise the dead by destroying the very power of death, as we hear in these hymns.

Great and Holy Saturday Vesperal Divine Liturgy

The **Vesperal Liturgy** of Saint Basil the Great, celebrated on **Holy Saturday**, has several important elements.

- The verses sung at the beginning of Vespers announce the **battle in Hades between Christ and the power of death** and Christ’s victory over death. “*Today Hell cries out groaning: ‘I should not have accepted the man born of Mary! He came and destroyed my power!’ ...*”
- The **Readings from the Old Testament** that follow speak of God creating life “in the beginning.” They include the **crossing of the Red Sea**, **Jonah** and the people of Nineveh, **Elijah** and **Elisha** who each brought a boy back to life, God sparing **Abraham’s son**, Jeremiah’s prophecy of the new covenant God makes with His people, and the **Three Young Men in the Furnace**.

The climax of Holy Saturday comes when the Prokeimenon announces: “**Arise, O God, judge the earth**, for to Thee belong all the nations.” At this point, **all the vestments** of the clergy and servers **and the cloths** on the Altar and analogia are **changed from dark to white**, for the resurrection has already begun in Hades and will soon be announced to us. Immediately we hear the Gospel reading from Matthew 28:1-20, in which the news of Christ’s resurrection is given to the Myrrhbearing Women at the tomb. As the Liturgy continues, we are reminded that the tomb is still present in the center of the church. Christ’s work in Hades has begun, yet **we must wait** to hear the Good News. The Great Entrance with the Holy Gifts is done in silence:

Let all mortal flesh keep silent, and in fear and trembling stand, pondering nothing earthly minded. For the King of kings and the Lord of lords comes to be slain, to give Himself as food to the faithful....

We have several hours until the late evening to wait for the joyful news. In the meantime, the church will be dark. [At the Nocturnes that begins the Vigil], the light from candles begins to illumine the church. Outside in procession, the light of our candles also illumines the darkness, as we anticipate the resurrection by singing, “*Thy resurrection, O Christ our Savior; the angels in heaven sing. Enable us on earth to glorify Thee in purity of heart.*” Then, after circling the church, we hear these joyful words: “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life! Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!” The joyful hymns of the Paschal Kanon are sung as the clergy cense the church over and over again.

Finally, as the Paschal Matins service ends, the Paschal Verses are sung:

This is the day of resurrection, let us be illumined by the feast. Let us embrace each other. Let us call “brothers” even those that hate us, and forgive all by the resurrection, and so, let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Saint John Chrysostom’s Paschal Homily is read, in which we hear that essential question, “O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen and you are overthrown! Christ is risen and the demons are fallen! Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice! Christ is risen and life reigns! Christ is risen and not one dead remains in the grave! For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.”