

# “THE WEEKLY FORERUNNER” *Our Parish Weekly Bulletin*

*O Holy John, Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptizer of the Lord, pray to God for us!*

## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Father Dave Urban, *Pastor* +++ 2201 Duncan Avenue, Allison Park, Pa 15101

www.OrthodoxPittsburgh.com +++ 412-748-0148 (*Talk or Text*) +++ OrthodoxPittsburgh1932@gmail.com

### A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS! **Glory to Jesus Christ!** (*responded with: Glory forever!*)

Slava Isusu Christu! (*Slava na viki!*) We are happy that you have joined us today! It is our pleasure to have you in our presence this morning and we wish God’s Blessings to all who visit with us today and hope you stop again soon!

Please see Fr. Dave if you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy.

## UPCOMING SERVICES

**SUNDAY, APRIL 28 #PALM(FLOWERY)SUNDAY**  
FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM  
Blessing of Branches (Palms and Willows)  
12:00 pm Bridegroom Matins  
+++

### GREAT AND HOLY PASSION WEEK

**HOLY MONDAY, APRIL 29 #HolyWeek**  
6:30 pm Bridegroom Matins and Confessions

**HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 30 #HolyWeek**  
6:30 pm Bridegroom Matins and Confessions

**HOLY WEDNESDAY, MAY 1 #HolyWeek**  
\* *Final opportunity for Confession until after Pascha*  
**6:00 pm** Mystery of Holy Unction (Anointing)  
with community meal following

**HOLY THURSDAY, MAY 2 #HolyWeek**  
9:30 am Mystical (Last) Supper Vespereal Liturgy  
6:30 pm Matins with the 12 Passion Gospels  
# *then setting of the Lord’s Tomb*

**HOLY & GOOD FRIDAY, MAY 3 #HolyWeek**  
A DAY OF STRICT FASTING  
9:30 am Royal Hours  
# *then decorating the Lord’s Tomb*  
6:30 pm Vespers and outdoor Burial Procession  
with the Holy Shroud (*Plasčanitsa*)

**HOLY SATURDAY, MAY 4 #HolyWeek**  
A DAY OF STRICT FASTING  
9:30 am Vespereal Liturgy of the Resurrection  
# *changing from dark to light colors*  
# *Please let Fr. Dave know if you are able to assist after the Thursday, Friday, or Saturday services*

**SUNDAY, MAY 5 #Pascha**  
THE FEAST OF FEASTS  
**9:00 am** Resurrection Matins with  
outdoor procession  
~9:40 am Paschal Divine Liturgy  
Blessing of Artos Bread (*with children assisting*)  
Blessing of Paschal Baskets (*upstairs in the church*)  
Paschal Potluck Meal  
+++ +++ +++

### BRIGHT WEEK: A FAST FREE WEEK

**MONDAY, MAY 6 #BRIGHTWEEK**  
FEAST OF ST. GEORGE  
9:30 am Paschal Liturgy with outdoor  
Paschal Procession

**THURSDAY, MAY 9 #BRIGHTWEEK**  
6:30 pm Paschal Vespers

**FRIDAY, MAY 10 #BRIGHTWEEK**  
9:30 am Paschal Divine Liturgy  
+++ +++ +++

\***Live-Broadcast** – If you are unable to attend church services, please pray along with our Cathedral online:  
[www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/](http://www.acrod.org/directories/cathedral/live/)  
+++ +++ +++

\* **A Note About The Mystery Of Confession** -  
Confessions will be heard *following every* service or at other times by appointment: please contact Fr. Dave to arrange this. If you have a regular Spiritual Father, or wish to go to another Orthodox priest to have your confession heard, no problem! but please let Fr. Dave know. Do not wait to plan for your confession! They will only be heard *through Holy Wednesday*.  
+++ +++ +++

FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY!

**APRIL 28th**

GREAT WEEK BEGINS



GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

**ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM**

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9

Gospel: John 12:1-18

Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!

GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY

**MAY 3rd**



GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE

Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ’s Death.

FEAST OF FEASTS!

**MAY 5th**

NO FASTING!



BRIGHT WEEK

**HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!)**

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17

Greet everyone with “CHRIST IS RISEN!” & say it before good morning and goodnight!

## SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

*Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9*

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

<sup>5</sup> Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. <sup>6</sup> Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

+++ +++ +++

*Gospel: John 12:1-18*

**Mary Anoints Jesus**

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Laz’arus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Laz’arus was one of those at table with him. <sup>3</sup> Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure spikenard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. <sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup> “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii [a day’s wage] and given to the

poor?” <sup>6</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said, “Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

**The Plot to Kill Lazarus**

<sup>9</sup> When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Laz’arus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So the chief priests planned to put Laz’arus also to death, <sup>11</sup> because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

**Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem**

<sup>12</sup> The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” <sup>14</sup> And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written,

<sup>15</sup> “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass’s colt!”

<sup>16</sup> His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. <sup>17</sup> The crowd that had been with him when he called Laz’arus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. <sup>18</sup> The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.

+++ +++ +++

## BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)*

+++ +++ +++

\*\*\* **Behold The Bridgroom Cometh!** - Bridgroom Matins is a service specific to the first four evenings of Holy Week (*though it is often omitted on Holy Wednesday in favor of the service of Holy Unction*) and commemorates the last days in the earthly life of the Lord. Incorporated into these services is the theme of the first three days of Holy Week; which is the last teachings of Christ to his disciples. As such, these services incorporate readings and hymns inspiring this theme. The mood of the services is to experience sorrow and to feel Christ's voluntary submission to His passions and highlight the purpose behind the evil that is about to take place against the Lord. The atmosphere is one of mourning (for sins) and is symbolic of the shame the Christian should feel for the Fall of Adam and Eve, the depths of hell, the lost Paradise and the absence of God. The vestments of the Priest and the altar clothes are deep purple (or black) to symbolize and enhance the atmosphere of mourning and remembrance of sins. The main emphasis of the Bridgroom Service is metanoia and each service has its own particular theme on repentance and watchfulness. One of its primary features is its tropar:

*Behold, the Bridgroom comes in the middle of the night, and blessed is the servant He shall find vigilant; but unworthy is he whom he shall find neglectful.*

*Beware therefore, O my soul, lest you be weighed down by sleep, lest you be given over to death and be closed out from the kingdom; but rise up crying out: "Holy! Holy! Holy are You our God; through the intercessions of the Theotokos, have mercy on us."*

During the first service, the priest carries the icon of Christ the Bridgroom into the church. The Bridgroom tropar is sung during this procession, and the icon is brought to the front of the church and remains there until Holy Thursday. The icon depicts Christ as the Bridgroom of the Church, bearing the marks of his suffering, yet preparing the way for a marriage feast in his Kingdom. He is dressed in the icon according to the mockery of the Roman guards just prior to his crucifixion.

+++ +++ +++  
\*\*\* **Outdoor Processions** – When possible, a tradition of the processions at vespers on Good Friday, matins on Pascha, and after Liturgy on Bright Monday take everyone (*that is able*) to process around the outside of the church. We will do this this year! (*weather pending*)

+++ +++ +++

\*\* **Pot-Luck Paschal Meal** – Our next community pot-luck meal will be following the services on Pascha. All families are encouraged to bring something to share.

+++ +++ +++

\*\*\* **Blessing of Baskets** – We will bless our baskets upstairs in the Nave of the Church. When you bring your basket Sunday morning, place it on the ground in the center aisle or at the end of the pew near the center aisle. Remember that the “traditional” basket contains the foods that the church guides us to have fasted from. Feel free to include something that you fasted from during the Great Fast. ***What Is Your Favorite Item To Make For The Basket? Please Let Fr. Dave Know***

+++ +++ +++

\*\* **Blessing of Graves** – Our annual grave blessings at the cemeteries will be on **May 19**. We will celebrate a Panachida after Liturgy and then head to the cemeteries after the coffee social. \*\*\* *If your loved ones are not at one of the two cemeteries on the North Side, please schedule a time with Fr. Dave to meet (if possible) before the Feast of Ascension.*

+++ +++ +++

\*\*\* **Website Resources** - To assist the faithful in making the most of this holy season, additional resources have been added to our Diocesan Website at: [www.acrod.org/orthodox-christianity/articles/lent/](http://www.acrod.org/orthodox-christianity/articles/lent/)

+++ +++ +++

\*\*\* **Congratulations!** to Ashley and John Gaydos, III and their families on the birth of **Waylon John Gaydos** born on April 26 (5 lb 3 oz) 7 weeks early. Welcome to our Parish Family!

*“Preserve her and this child which she has borne. Cover her with the shelter of thy wings from this day until her final end, through the prayers of the most Holy Theotokos and of all the saints. Amen”*  
– from *Prayers for a Woman on the First Day after Childbirth*

## OUR STEWARDSHIP GIFTS TO GOD

Stewardship Offerings:	\$ 960
Candle Stewardship:	\$ 135
Envelope Stewardship:	\$ 345
<b>Total Collections:</b>	<b>\$ 1440</b>
<b>Capital Improvement Fund:</b>	<b>\$ 1000</b>

**Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials** were offered last week by the Nelson Family; Lawrence Martin; Tim Martin; Kathy Schrmack; Eleanor Sanger; Rich and Renee Mirilovich; Cindy Pavilonis

+++

The **Eternal Lamp** was offered last week by Cheryl Williams in memory of +Ed and +Shirley Brugos. May Their Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamyat!

+++ +++ +++

\*\* **Panachida Offerings** – Reminder: Panachidas (Memorial Services for the Departed) cannot be served on the Major Feast Days of our Lord including Palm Sunday and Holy Pascha (as well as Lazarus Saturday).

+++ +++ +++

\* **Church Messenger** – Our monthly publication of the *Church Messenger* is sent to all of our Diocesan households. IF you do not receive this, please let Fr. Dave know.

+++ +++ +++

\* **Bookstore Coordinator** – Thank you to Nick Ditmore for offering his time to be our new Bookstore Coordinator. Many Years!

+++ +++ +++

## COFFEE SOCIAL STEWARDS

*Please sign up by the kitchen or by contacting Fr. Dave*

May 5:	Pascha Pot-Luck
May 12:	___?___
May 19:	___?___

+++ +++ +++

\***Calendar** - Future Services are updated online at: [www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar](http://www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar) (*Please see Fr. Dave if you want a printed copy*)

+++ +++ +++

## PRAYER CORNER

**For the Health of...** Waylon, Ashley, Nicholas, Patrick, Thomas, Paul, Mary, Christopher, Robert, Joanne, Jason, Carlene, David, Donna, George, Kelly, Marie, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, and Michael  
*...through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.*

+++ +++ +++

**For the souls of the newly departed...**

+John Ferraz (3/24) ...*May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning. May they be Eternal in God's Memory!*

+++ +++ +++

## THE PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

*(in the Ruthenian tradition as found in St. Peter Mogila's 1639 Liturgikon (Sluzhebnik))*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. + *[Prostration]*

But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. + *[Prostration]*

Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins, and not judge my brother, for blessed are You forever and ever. Amen. + *[Prostration]*

*The following triplet is recited 4 times (making a total of 12 bows):*

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner. + *[bow]*

O God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me. + *[bow]*

O Lord, forgive me, for my sins are many. + *[bow]*

*Then the prayer again with only one prostration:*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins, and not judge my brother, for blessed are You forever and ever. Amen. + *[Prostration]*

### A Prayer Of Repentance (Psalm 50/51)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy; And according to the multitude of Your compassions, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my iniquity, And my sin is continually before me. Against You only have I sinned, And done this evil before You. That You might be justified in Your words, And prevail when You judge. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, And in sins did my mother bear me.

For behold, You have loved truth; The hidden and secret things of Your wisdom You have made clear to me. You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; You shall wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow. You shall make me to hear joy and gladness, The bones which have been humbled shall rejoice. Turn Your face away from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

Create a clean heart in me, O God, And renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, And take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And with Your governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Your ways, And the ungodly shall turn back to You.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, who are the God of my salvation, My tongue shall rejoice in Your righteousness. O Lord, You shall open my lips, And my mouth shall declare Your praise.

For if You had desired sacrifice, I would have given it; With whole burnt offerings You shall not be pleased. A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, A heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Your good pleasure to Zion; And let the walls of Jerusalem be built Then shall You be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole burnt offerings; Then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.

### ONLINE BONUSES

#### VISIT OUR DIOCESE ON-LINE

Diocesan Website: [www.acrod.org](http://www.acrod.org)  
Camp Nazareth: [www.campnazareth.org](http://www.campnazareth.org)  
FB: [www.facebook.com/acroddioecese](https://www.facebook.com/acroddioecese)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/acrodnews](https://twitter.com/acrodnews)  
YouTube: [youtube.com/acroddioecese](https://youtube.com/acroddioecese)

+++ +++ +++

### LIVING ORTHODOXY



#### WALKING WITH CHRIST IN THE SERVICES OF HOLY WEEK:

##### *An Invitation to Journey with Christ in His Church*

It has often been said of the Orthodox Church that Orthodox believers reckon their lives “from Pascha to Pascha.” The 3-day journey of Pascha constitutes the defining moment not just of our church year, but also of our very lives as the Lord’s disciples. The invitation that goes out to each of us in these all-revered days of Holy Week and Pascha is not offered so that we would be *mere spectators*. No, the promise of Holy Week is given to us so that we might be *true participants* at the Lord’s side, with the disciples, and with the godly women at the Tomb.

May this guide help you and your family to maximize what you are able to attend, so that you, too, might be witnesses of Him and His Glorious Resurrection when on May 2<sup>nd</sup> we proclaim: *Christ is risen!*

+++

##### The Feast of the Entrance of our Lord

The Sunday **Divine Liturgy** commemorates the Great Feast of the Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem. The Feast of Palms, paired gloriously with Lazarus Saturday, offers us a triumphal foretaste of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection; yet, also signals the sad

truth that many who at first hail Jesus as Lord turn from His teaching and forsake Him.

+++

##### Holy Monday

\* **Bridegroom Matins:** In this service we are challenged to ponder the coming of the Lord and our lack of preparation to meet Him. The liturgical texts refer chiefly to the parable of the Ten Virgins, which forms the general theme of the first three days of the week.

+++

##### Holy Tuesday

\* **Bridegroom Matins:** The theme shifts dramatically to the person of Judas at the Last Supper, who is sharing the Lord’s Table, and yet is preparing to betray Him. We also commemorate the woman that was a sinner, who anointed Christ’s feet as He sat in the house of Simon. The repentance of the sinful harlot is contrasted with the tragic fall of the chosen disciple.

+++

##### Holy Wednesday

\* **Holy Mystery of the Anointing of the Sick (Unction):** This Mystery (Sacrament) of the Church provides both physical and spiritual healing with holy oil blessed by the Holy Spirit. Holy unction is a mystery of great comfort to the faithful. It provides uplifting and asks for patience to accept the will of God, whatever the physical outcome.

+++

##### Holy Thursday

\* **Vespertal Liturgy of the Mystical Supper:** At this time, we commemorate the Last Supper and enter into the eternal mystery of it, which is the Eucharist. The reserve Sacrament that is kept in the Tabernacle is prepared at this service.

\* **Matins of the Passion (12 Gospels):** We prepare for Holy & Great Friday hearing the Passion Gospels and encountering Christ Crucified. This is one of the most powerful services in all of Orthodox Holy Week.

+++

##### Holy & Good Friday (a day of strict fasting)

\* **Royal Hours:** We revisit the Cross. We hear the hymns of the previous evening and find Jesus hanging on the Cross for our salvation. *(If you cannot be at the Thursday evening service, know that this service of the Royal Hours*

*covers much of the same content.)* Royal Hours offers a powerful meditation on the Cross and its meaning.



\* **Vespers & Procession with the Holy Shroud (Plašnitisa):** During this service we remember the taking down of the Lord’s body from the Cross and His entombment by the Noble Joseph. The burial procession around the inside of the church is done with everyone holding candles. This is a beautiful and moving service for all to participate in!



+++

##### Holy Saturday (a day of strict fasting)

**Vespertal Liturgy:** This ushers in the first message of the joyous feast. This service is the Vespers of Pascha itself and announces what is to come. The vestments are dramatically changed from black to white, and we hear “Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered.” On Holy Saturday we strict fast and make preparations all day for Pascha (including the preparation of sumptuous paschal foods).

+++

##### Holy Pascha!

\* **Resurrection Matins:** Now we gather again to be ready to meet the Risen Lord. But before we make our triumphal Paschal Procession, quietly, the Lord’s body (Holy Shroud) is taken from the “Tomb” and placed in victory on the Holy Altar Table. All lights in the church are put out and we wait patiently for the first strains of the Paschal song, “Thy Resurrection, O Christ our Savior...” The paschal light is lit, the priest begins to chant the hymn and the light is passed from person to person and we exit the church and make our Paschal Procession *(to the Vestibule)*. We now enter completely into the joy of Pascha. Christ bursts the gates of death and the gates of Paradise are opened. Coming back into the church, we celebrate the Resurrection Matins.

\* **Paschal Divine Liturgy:** The morning matins service flows directly into the Divine Liturgy. Certain

hymns are replaced with “Christ is risen” as we celebrate Our Lord’s Resurrection.

**\* The Blessing of Baskets:**

After Liturgy, the priest will bless the Artos Bread and the Paschal baskets of food (up and down the center aisle).

+++

**Bright Monday**

**\* Paschal Liturgy with Gospel Procession:** After the Liturgy is just about complete, another procession takes place where the Gospel Good News is read on the four sides of the church. In the brightness of the Resurrection, there is no fasting this week.

+++ +++ +++

**HOW TO PREPARE DURING HOLY WEEK**

*By Fr. Valerian Krechetov*

Holy Week prepares us for the feast of Pascha, showing us that there is no other path towards resurrection than through the cross and suffering. Therefore, the common people said: “The Lord endured, and bid us do the same.”

The divine services of Holy Week call on one to have compassion and sympathy for the Savior.

On the first three days one is supposed to reread all four Gospels as a reminder that the Lord created us, but that we crucified Him by our sins. And although this appears to be addressed to the Jews of that time, it relates to everyone who has crucified Christ by his sins.

During Holy Week it is desirable, if one has the opportunity, to be in church more often, especially on Holy Thursday and the evening before. On the morning of Great Thursday, the faithful participate in the Mystical Supper and receive Holy Communion, while in the evening the Passion Gospels are read. Then comes Great Friday: The Savior’s crucifixion and burial, with the beginning of the joy of Bright Saturday.

The angels were the first to learn of Christ’s Resurrection, just as they were the first to learn of His Nativity. Therefore, the Church sings: “Thy Resurrection, O Christ Savior, the angels hymn in the heavens; vouchsafe also us on earth with pure hearts to glorify Thee.” Why does it say “with pure hearts”? Because it is reckoned that, in preparation for this radiant day, one has cleansed one’s heart by fasting as much as possible.

+++ +++ +++



**Assembling A Traditional Easter Basket**

One begins with a straw basket filling with foods each holding symbolic significance:

**1. Easter Bread (Pascha)**

A sweet yeast bread rich in eggs and butter, symbolic of Christ “the Living Bread”. Usually a round loaf with a golden crust and decorated with a braid and cross. Pascha comes from the word Pasch, meaning Passover. In English we use it to refer to the Easter season. In Slavonic the word paska is used to refer to Christ “the new lamb”.

**2. Cheese (Rusyn: Hrudka or Sirec)**

A special cheese made from egg and milk shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. It is often decorated with cloves in the form of a cross.

**3. Ham (Šunka)**

The meat popular with the Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolism of the great joy and abundance of Easter. Some may prefer lamb or veal.

**4. Sausage (Kolbasi)**

A spicy pork product flavored with garlic, indicative of God’s favor and generosity.

**5. Butter (Maslo)**

This favorite dairy product is often shaped into a lamb or small cross. Symbolic of Christ the lamb who was offered upon the altar of the Cross for the life of the world.

**6. Bacon (Slanina)**

Uncooked bacon cured with spices. Symbolic of the overabundance of God’s mercy to us.

**7. Salt (Sol)**

Symbolizes the Truth of the message of Christ. Just as salt preserves food, so the teaching of Christ

preserves our eternal life.

**8. Horseradish (Chrin)**

Horseradish mixed with grated red beets. Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bittersweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

**9. Decorated Eggs (Pysankô)**

Hard boiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax. Eggs were always considered as symbols of the resurrection, the emergence of new life.

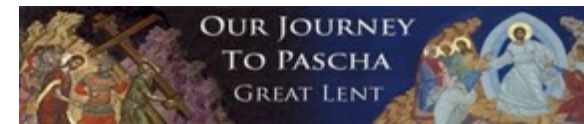
\*\*\* *We are not limited to only having these items in our basket (nor do we have to have all of them). We fast for 40 days and a tradition is to bring what you have fasted from to the church to bless it before having some again (i.e. chocolate, or gum, or pop, or beer, etc.)*



+++ +++ +++



+++ +++ +++



To assist the faithful in making the most of this holy season, additional resources have been added to our Diocesan Website at:

[www.acrod.org/orthodox-christianity/articles/lent/](http://www.acrod.org/orthodox-christianity/articles/lent/)

+++ +++ +++

**A Note About The Mystery Of Confession**

Confessions will be heard in front of the Icon of

Christ. Confessions will be heard *following every* service, from **11am – 1pm** on most Saturdays during Great Lent, and at other times by appointment: please contact Fr. Dave to arrange this. If you have a regular Spiritual Father, or wish to go to another Orthodox priest to have your confession heard, no problem! but please let Fr. Dave know. Do not wait to plan for your confession! Confessions will only be heard *through Holy Wednesday*.

+++ +++ +++

**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR THE GREAT FAST (GREAT LENT):**

We are called to increase our *Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving* during this time...

**PRAYER:**

- ✘ Attend as many of the services as possible and be strengthened in community prayer.
- ✘ Come to the Mystery of Confession (*offered after every service, on most Saturdays during the Great Fast, or by appointment*).
- ✘ Approach the Chalice to receive the Holy Eucharist as often as possible.
- ✘ Also, add additional prayers to your personal *Prayer Rule* at home. (See the attached about reading the Book of Psalms during Great Lent.)

**FASTING:**

- ✘ The Great Fast begins tomorrow, March 8. This is a day of strict fasting (no meat or dairy products). Likewise, strict fast on Great & Holy Friday (4/22) and Great & Holy Saturday (4/23)
- ✘ The tradition of the Orthodox Church is a strict fast (*no meat or dairy products eaten*) by all of the faithful for the entire 40 days of the Great Fast and for all of Holy Week.
- ✘ If you cannot physically do this, adopt a fasting rule and stick to it for the duration of the Great Fast (*see Father for some guidance*). Here are a few examples:
  - a) strict fast on certain days of the week while keeping a meat fast on the others;
  - b) fast only from meat;
  - c) fast from meat for certain weeks (*Clean Week, Cross Week, and Holy Week*); or
  - d) fast from meat on Wednesdays, Fridays, and all of Holy Week (*April 18-23*).

- ✘ The more effort you put forth in your fasting, the more spiritually uplifting your Lenten Season will be!
- ✘ A minimum three (3) hour fast from all food and drink for those receiving Communion at the evening Pre-sanctified Liturgy (*the regular "midnight Fast" is called for the Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom & St. Basil the Great*)
- ✘ The sick and infirm are not bound by the fast at any time.
- ✘ Those requiring medications or certain prescribed diets are to follow their physician's instructions.
- ✘ Lastly, the Great Fast is not a "40 day diet program" or simply a "dietary adjustment" (or "label Lent").

**ALMSGIVING:**

- ✘ Find a way to give more of your time, talent, and treasures.

**A general guideline for the Great Fast is this:  
Try to do more than last year.**

Please reach out if you have questions about this important fasting period that we are blessed with. This is an opportunity, not an obligation. May our journey to Pascha be a spiritually beautiful one!  
– Fr. Dave



Icon of Christ's Extreme Humility

**FASTING SUGGESTIONS:**

*(source unknown)*

FAST from self-concern and  
FEAST on compassion for others.

FAST from discouragement and  
FEAST on hope.

FAST from lethargy and  
FEAST on enthusiasm.

FAST from suspicion and  
FEAST on truth.

FAST from thoughts that weaken and  
FEAST on promises that inspire.

FAST from shadows of sorrow and  
FEAST on the sunlight of serenity.

FAST from idle gossip and  
FEAST on purposeful silence.

FAST from problems that overwhelm you and  
FEAST on prayer that sustains.

FAST from criticism and  
FEAST on praise.

FAST from self-pity and  
FEAST on joy.

FAST from ill-temper and  
FEAST on peace.

FAST from resentment and  
FEAST on contentment.

FAST from jealousy and  
FEAST on love.

FAST from pride and  
FEAST on humility.

FAST from selfishness and  
FEAST on service.



+++ +++ +++

+++ +++ +++

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY**

**OCMC** - This month, through the efforts of our Sr. ACRY, we will be collecting donations for the **Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC)**. This is the organization that puts out the Coin Boxes that we have been using through the Great Fast. Please bring in your coin boxes on Pascha. (There will also be an additional offering requested on our regular last Sunday of the month.) *"Let them do good, that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share" (1 Tim 6:18)*

+++ +++ +++

**LIVES OF THE SAINTS**

**HOLY NOBLEBORN GREATPRINCE  
MSTISLAV VLADIMIROVICH**

Commemorated on April 28/15

Holy Nobleborn GreatPrince Mstislav Vladimirovich (in Holy Baptism Theodore, or Feodor) was born on 1 June 1076. When he was all of 12 years old, his grandfather – the Kiev GreatPrince Vsevolod (1078-1093), sent off his grandson to be prince of Novgorod. The Novgorod people loved the young prince. In 1095 they expelled prince David, who withdrew to Smolensk, and they went specially to Rostov seeking Prince Mstislav.

After the death of his grandfather, Saint Mstislav had occupied his appanage-land, the Rostov throne. At 19 years of age the young prince gained a brilliant victory over his uncle, the Chernigov prince Oleg. Prince Oleg had killed his brother Izyaslav and attacked Rostov and Suzdal', which belonged to Prince Mstislav.

The saint did not want to shed innocent blood. He wanted to make peace with his uncle, and he besought him to be satisfied with the rights to the city of Ryazan'. But Oleg had already gathered forces on a campaign against Novgorod. Prince Mstislav thereupon defeated him in a battle (1096) and Oleg, having lost out at Suzdal' and Rostov, barely managed to hold on at Murom. Saint Mstislav again offered peace and asked only for the return of captives. Oleg agreed under a ruse, and so Prince Mstislav dispersed

his own army. On the feastday of the GreatMartyr Theodore of Tyre, on Saturday of the 1st Week of Great Lent, he was quietly sitting down at Suzdal' to eat, when messengers brought him word, that prince Oleg stood at the Klyaz'ma with an army. In one mere day Prince Mstislav regathered his army, and when his brother arrived 4 days later, he gave new battle. Oleg in fear fled to Ryazan', and Saint Mstislav set free the captives, went through the Murom lands and he then reconciled Oleg with GreatPrince Svyatopolk (1093-1114) and with his own father, Vladimir Monomakh.

Thankful for the mercy of God, the saint in 1099 made a pledge to build a temple in honour of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God at Gorodischa near Novgorod. And especially just for this church was written the reknown Mstislavovo Gospel, the precious adornments of which were wrought at Constantinople. In 1114 the saint pledged at Novgorod a church in the name of Saint Nicholas. This temple was in gratitude to Saint Nicholas for an healing. During the time of a grievous illness the prince had called out for help to Saint Nicholas, whose relics shortly before this had been transferred to Bari in Italy (1087, Comm. 9 May). Saint Nicholas in a vision gave orders to send to Kiev for his icon, indicating its form and measure. The people sent to bring back the icon found themselves detained on the Island of Lipna by a storm raging there on Lake Il'men. But on the 4th day they found in the water there that same circular icon, indicated in the vision. The sick prince gave kiss to the icon and received healing. And afterwards at the place of appearance of the icon, on the Island of Lipna, there was built a monastery with a stone church in the name of Saint Nicholas.

In 1116 the holy prince again campaigned against the Chud people, and after a victory he restored at Novgorod the fortress – "he made guarantee of Novgorod the Great" – and he built out more extensively the lodgings for the Novgorod principality. Then at his orders the posadnik-mayor Pavel situated a fortress at Lake Ladoga, where there was built a stone church in honour of the GreatMartyr George.

In 1117 GreatPrince Vladimir Monomakh (1114-

1125) summoned his son to him as an assistant and transferred him to Belgorod. In 1123 holy Prince Mstislav confronted the Volynian prince Yaroslav, who was attempting to seize the Kiev principality by leading against Rus' a Polish and Hungarian army.

In 1125 GreatPrince Vladimir Monomakh died, and holy Prince Mstislav occupied the Kiev throne. During this time he gained a brilliant victory over the old enemies of Rus' – the Polovetsians, driving them beyond the Volga. Those of the Polovetsian princes, who refused to ally with Mstislav, were dispatched to Greece. In 1127 Saint Mstislav gave an oath to defend the Chernigov prince Yaroslav, banished by a nephew. The clergy and all the people besought him not to spill Christian blood. The holy prince obeyed, but until the end of his life he bewailed, that he had violated his kissing of the cross in this oath.

In 1128 GreatPrince Mstislav set the foundations of a stone church in the name of the GreatMartyr Theodore of Tyre (his patron saint), in memory of a victory gained over the Chernigov prince Oleg. And in 1131, after a successful campaign against Lithuania, Saint Mstislav laid the foundations of a temple in honour of the Pirogoschsk Icon of the Mother of God.

Holy Prince Mstislav died on 14 April 1132 during the Paschal Week, and he was buried in the temple of the GreatMartyr Theodore, built by him.

The holy prince was venerated even during his earthly life. The copyist of the Mstislavovo Gospel called him noble and a lover of Christ. The preparer of the settings of the Mstislavovo Gospel, Naslav, wrote about him: "Much toil and tribulation I experienced. But God did comfort me through the prayer of the good prince... God grant his prayer for all Christians". The vita-life of the holy prince was set under 15 April in the Serbian Divine-service Prologue of the XIII-XIV Centuries. This Prologue was transcribed from the much earlier Bulgarian, the source for which was the Russian original. Likewise under 15 April appears the vita-life of Prince Mstislav in the Bulgarian Synaxarion of the year 1340. (Investigations have shown, that the source of this synaxarion was likewise Russian). In these Prologues the memory of holy Prince Mstislav was placed alongside such reknown Russian commemorations, as

that of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles GreatPrincess Ol'ga (Comm. 11 July), and the holy Passion-Bearer Princes Boris and Gleb (Comm. 24 July). These facts testify to the wide veneration of holy Prince Mstislav in the Slavic lands.

+++ +++ +++

### ADDITIONAL BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

*(Please have submissions to Fr. Dave by Wednesday)*

+++ +++ +++

#### CHURCH BUILDING UPDATE

*Here is a brief update from the past few weeks:*

- ✘ \*\*\* The iconostasis is up!
- ✘ \*\*\* The Sanctuary floor is complete
- ✘ \*\* The reconfiguring of things in our kitchen is nearly complete.
- ✘ \* Quotes for a new **electrical panel** are being received. IF You Have An Electrician You Would Recommend – Please Contact Fr. Dave. *(covered by an anonymous donor)*

#### Glory to God for All Things!

Through your generosity and dedication, all of this is coming together – one thing at a time!

**Thank you!** Many stewards keep coming to the church and working very hard to make improvements. May God grant you many years!

+++ +++ +++

**\*\* Make plans to go to Camp Nazareth Events!**

- ✘ **May 31 - June 2** - Family Camp
- ✘ **June 2** - Family Day
- ✘ **July 28- Aug 3** - Pgh Deanery Camping Week
- ✘ **Aug. 4-10** - Science & Nature Camp (ages 8-18)

**Please, Save the Dates and go to camp!**

*339 Pew Road, Mercer, PA 16137*

+++ +++ +++

**\*\* 2024 Parish Picnic** – Save the date for our Parish Family Picnic at *The Cabin* on **Sunday, September 8**

+++ +++ +++

**\*\*\* Special Intentions** – Did you ever wonder for what reasons would a person's name go under "For the Special Intentions of..." on our Prayer Page? A special intention request is very diversified! It could be when one is under extreme job stress, struggling

with spiritual issues, infertility, dealing with the loss of a loved one... the list goes on. As with the other lists on our page, one does not have to be Orthodox to be added.

+++ +++ +++

**\*\*\* Prayer requests** – During the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, prayers are said for the sick and those celebrating special occasions listed in the bulletin. If silent prayers are requested, they will be offered quietly at the Altar at all services. All those listed in the "Prayer Corner" are prayed for during the Proskomedia (*Preparation of the Bread and Wine for Communion*). Prayer requests will remain for (about) 40 days unless requested otherwise. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (in the case of answered prayers) to our prayer list.

+++ +++ +++

**Speaking With Your Priest** - Please know you can call me anytime if there is something troubling you. It is not a sign of weakness to share something that may be heavy on your heart or mind. As a priest and Father to our parish, I am here for you. Please call if you need someone to listen or to pray with you. Every heart has a cross and you do not need to carry it alone. Please also call if you have an idea for the growth of our parish. I am praying for you and am grateful for your prayers. With love in Christ, Fr. Dave

+++ +++ +++

#### 2023-24 SJB PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS

President: Lawrence Martin

Vice-President: Subdeacon Ryan Ferko

Treasurer: Timothy Martin, Reader

Financial Secretary: Rich Mirilovich

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Radomsky

Chief Auditor: Robert Fall

Auditors: Gina Fall, John Kirish, Mary Jane

Hudak, Kathy Schrmack (*5<sup>th</sup> position open*)

+++ +++ +++

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE GREAT FAST THROUGH BRIGHT WEEK

**FORGIVENESS SUNDAY, MARCH 17**

9:15 am Third Hour  
9:30 am Divine Liturgy  
Youth Sunday  
Rite of Forgiveness  
Church School

**CLEAN MONDAY, MARCH 18** #TheGreatFast

THE GREAT FAST BEGINS  
A DAY OF STRICT FASTING

6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew

**CLEAN TUESDAY, MARCH 19** #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew

**CLEAN WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20** #TheGreatFast

6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts  
with community meal following

**CLEAN THURSDAY, MARCH 21** #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew

**CLEAN FRIDAY, MARCH 22** #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew

**CLEAN SATURDAY, MARCH 23** #TheGreatFast

11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

+++ +++ +++

**Mystery of Confession** – Father is available to hear Confessions after every service or by appointment.

+++

**SUNDAY, MARCH 24** #TheGreatFast

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

9:15 am Third Hour

9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Procession of Icons (*Bring an icon to church*)

4:30 pm Sunday of Orthodoxy at Holy Trinity

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27** #TheGreatFast

7:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at

St. Alexander Nevsky OCA Cathedral

(1600 Guyton Rd., Allison Park)

with community meal following

**FRIDAY, MARCH 29** #TheGreatFast

6:30 pm Paraklis to the Theotokos

**ALL-SOUL'S SATURDAY** (*Zadušna Subota*),

**MARCH 30** #TheGreatFast

9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (*2<sup>nd</sup> of 5*)

11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

+++

**SUNDAY, MARCH 31** #TheGreatFast  
ST. GREGORY PALAMAS  
9:15 am Third Hour  
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in East Pittsburgh

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3** #TheGreatFast  
**6:30 pm** Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at  
Holy Trinity GOA Church  
(985 Providence Blvd., Pittsburgh)  
with community meal following

**FRIDAY, APRIL 5** #TheGreatFast  
9:30 am OR 6:30 pm Akathist Hymn to the Passion  
of our Lord

**ALL-SOUL'S SATURDAY** (*Zadušna Subota*),  
**APRIL 6** #TheGreatFast  
9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (3<sup>rd</sup> of 5)  
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

+++

**SUNDAY, APRIL 7** #TheGreatFast  
FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION  
SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS  
9:15 am Third Hour  
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
Church School

4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Rankin  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10** #TheGreatFast  
**6:00 pm** Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at SJB  
(*hosting the other two parishes*)  
with community meal following

**FRIDAY, APRIL 12** #TheGreatFast  
6:30 pm Moleben to the Holy Cross  
**ALL-SOUL'S SATURDAY** (*Zadušna Subota*),  
**APRIL 13** #TheGreatFast  
9:30 am Divine Liturgy & Panachida (4<sup>th</sup> of 5)  
11 am – 1 pm Confessions Offered

+++

**SUNDAY, APRIL 14** #TheGreatFast  
SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER  
9:15 am Third Hour  
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
Panachida - *Monthly Memorial*  
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Allison Park

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17** #TheGreatFast  
**6:00 pm** Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at SJB  
with community meal following

**FRIDAY, APRIL 19** #TheGreatFast  
9:30 am OR 6:30 pm Akathist Hymn to the  
Theotokos

**SATURDAY, APRIL 20** #TheGreatFast  
10 am to 5 pm Lenten Retreat at St. Nicholas  
(903 Ann Street, **Homestead**, PA 15120)

+++

**SUNDAY, APRIL 21** #TheGreatFast  
SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT  
9:15 am Third Hour  
9:30 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great  
Youth Sunday  
Church School  
4:00 pm Deanery Lenten Mission in Ambridge

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24** #TheGreatFast  
**6:00 pm** Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at SJB  
with community meal following

**FRIDAY, APRIL 26** #TheGreatFast  
6:30 pm Lenten Vespers

**SATURDAY, APRIL 27** #LAZARUSSATURDAY  
9:30 pm Divine Liturgy followed by  
Palm Cross Making and Easter Basket Workshop  
11 am – 1 pm Confessions heard

+++

**SUNDAY, APRIL 28** #PALM(FLOWERY)SUNDAY  
FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM  
9:15 am Third Hour  
9:30 am Divine Liturgy  
Blessing of Branches (Palms and Willows)  
12:00 pm Bridegroom Matins

**GREAT AND HOLY PASSION WEEK**

**HOLY MONDAY, APRIL 29** #HolyWeek  
6:30 pm Bridegroom Matins and Confessions  
**HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 30** #HolyWeek  
6:30 pm Bridegroom Matins and Confessions  
**HOLY WEDNESDAY, MAY 1** #HolyWeek

\* *Final opportunity for Confession until after Pascha*  
**6:00 pm** Mystery of Holy Unction (Anointing)  
with community meal following

**HOLY THURSDAY, MAY 2** #HolyWeek  
9:30 am Mystical (Last) Supper Vespers Liturgy of  
St. Basil (*Institution of the Eucharist*)  
6:30 pm Matins with the 12 Passion Gospels  
*# then setting of the Lord's Tomb*



**HOLY & GOOD FRIDAY, MAY 3** #HolyWeek  
A DAY OF STRICT FASTING  
9:30 am Royal Hours  
*# then decorating the Lord's Tomb*  
6:30 pm Vespers and outdoor Burial Procession  
with the Holy Shroud (*Plašćanitsa*)  
**HOLY SATURDAY, MAY 4** #HolyWeek  
A DAY OF STRICT FASTING  
9:30 am Vespers Liturgy of the Resurrection  
*# changing from dark to light colors*  
*# Please let Fr. Dave know if you are able to assist*  
*after the Thursday, Friday, or Saturday services*

+++

**SUNDAY, MAY 5** #Pascha  
THE FEAST OF FEASTS  
**9:00 am** Resurrection Matins with  
outdoor procession  
~9:40 am Paschal Divine Liturgy  
Blessing of Artos Bread (*with children assisting*)  
Blessing of Paschal Baskets (*upstairs in the church*)  
Paschal Potluck Meal

**BRIGHT WEEK: A FAST FREE WEEK**

**MONDAY, MAY 6** #BRIGHTWEEK  
FEAST OF ST. GEORGE  
9:30 am Paschal Liturgy with outdoor  
Paschal Procession

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 8** #BRIGHTWEEK  
6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting

**THURSDAY, MAY 9** #BRIGHTWEEK  
6:30 pm Paschal Vespers

**FRIDAY, MAY 10** #BRIGHTWEEK  
9:30 am Paschal Divine Liturgy  
+++    +++    +++

**FEAST DAY FEATURES OF THE MONTH**

**The Annunciation Of Our Most Blessed Lady  
Mother Of God And Ever-Virgin Mary**

*Commemorated on April 7 / March 25*

**Introduction**

The Feast of the Annunciation of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on March 25 each year. The Feast commemorates the announcement by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would become incarnate and enter into this world through her womb.

**Biblical Story**

The biblical story of the Feast of the Annunciation is found in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke (1:26-39). The Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, who was living in Nazareth, and said to her, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you." Mary was perplexed and wondered what kind of greeting this was.

The angel told her not to be afraid, for she had found favor with God. He said, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary responded to the angel by asking how this could happen since she had no husband. The angel told her that the Holy Spirit and the power of God would come upon her, and that the child to be born of her would be called holy, the "Son of God."

The angel then proceeded to tell the Virgin Mary that her cousin Elizabeth had conceived a son in her old age (John the Baptist), and affirmed that with God nothing is impossible.

In faith and obedience to the will of God, Mary replied to the angel, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be according to your word." Upon her response, the angel departed.

It is on the Feast of the Annunciation, that Orthodox Christians commemorate both the divine initiative of God, whereby He took on flesh from the Virgin for our salvation, and the human response, whereby Mary

freely accepted the vocation offered to her. He elected to become man, and He desired to do this with the willing agreement of her whom He chose as His mother. Mary could have refused, for she was not a passive instrument, but an active participant with a free and positive part to play in God's plan for our salvation. Thus, when on this and other feasts the Orthodox Church honors the Theotokos, the Mother of God, it is not just because God chose her but also because she herself chose to follow His will.

+++ +++ +++

### **The Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday / Flowery Sunday)**

April 28

#### **Introduction**

On the Sunday before the Feast of Great and Holy Pascha and at the beginning of Holy Week, the Orthodox Church celebrates one of its most joyous feasts of the year. Palm Sunday is the commemoration of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem following His glorious miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. Having anticipated His arrival and having heard of the miracle, the people went out to meet the Lord and welcomed Him with displays of honor and shouts of praise. On this day, we receive and worship Christ in this same manner, acknowledging Him as our King and Lord.

#### **Biblical Story**

The biblical story of Palm Sunday is recorded in all four of the Gospels (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-38; and John 12:12-18). Five days before the Passover, Jesus came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Having sent two of His disciples to bring Him a colt of a donkey, Jesus sat upon it and entered the city.

People had gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover and were looking for Jesus, both because of His great works and teaching and because they had heard of the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. When they heard that Christ was entering the city, they went out to meet Him with palm branches, laying their garments on the ground before Him, and shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel!"

At the outset of His public ministry Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God and announced that the powers of the age to come were already active in the present

age (Luke 7:18-22). His words and mighty works were performed "to produce repentance as the response to His call, a call to an inward change of mind and heart which would result in concrete changes in one's life, a call to follow Him and accept His messianic destiny. The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is a messianic event, through which His divine authority was declared.

Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king: the Word of God made flesh. We are called to behold Him not simply as the One who came to us once riding on a colt, but as the One who is always present in His Church, coming ceaselessly to us in power and glory at every Eucharist, in every prayer and sacrament, and in every act of love, kindness and mercy. He comes to free us from all our fears and insecurities, "to take solemn possession of our soul, and to be enthroned in our heart," as someone has said. He comes not only to deliver us from our deaths by His death and Resurrection, but also to make us capable of attaining the most perfect fellowship or union with Him. He is the King, who liberates us from the darkness of sin and the bondage of death. Palm Sunday summons us to behold our King: the vanquisher of death and the giver of life.

Palm Sunday summons us to accept both the rule and the kingdom of God as the goal and content of our Christian life. We draw our identity from Christ and His kingdom. The kingdom is Christ - His indescribable power, boundless mercy and incomprehensible abundance given freely to man. The kingdom does not lie at some point or place in the distant future. In the words of the Scripture, the kingdom of God is not only at hand (Matthew 3:2; 4:17), it is within us (Luke 17:21). The kingdom is a present reality as well as a future realization (Matthew 6:10). Theophan the Recluse wrote the following words about the inward rule of Christ the King:

"The Kingdom of God is within us when God reigns in us, when the soul in its depths confesses God as its Master, and is obedient to Him in all its powers. Then God acts within it as master 'both to will and to do of his good pleasure' (Philippians 2:13). This reign begins as soon as we resolve to serve God in our Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Then the Christian hands over to God his consciousness and

freedom, which comprises the essential substance of our human life, and God accepts the sacrifice; and in this way the alliance of man with God and God with man is achieved, and the covenant with God, which was severed by the Fall and continues to be severed by our willful sins, is re-established."

The kingdom of God is the life of the Holy Trinity in the world. It is the kingdom of holiness, goodness, truth, beauty, love, peace and joy. These qualities are not works of the human spirit. They proceed from the life of God and reveal God. Christ Himself is the kingdom. He is the God-Man, Who brought God down to earth (John 1:1,14). "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world knew Him not. He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not" (John 1:10-11). He was reviled and hated.

Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king - the Suffering Servant. We cannot understand Jesus' kingship apart from the Passion. Filled with infinite love for the Father and the Holy Spirit, and for creation, in His inexpressible humility Jesus accepted the infinite abasement of the Cross. He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions and made Himself an offering for sin (Isaiah 53). His glorification, which was accomplished by the resurrection and the ascension, was achieved through the Cross.

In the fleeting moments of exuberance that marked Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the world received its King, the king who was on His way to death. His Passion, however, was no morbid desire for martyrdom. Jesus' purpose was to accomplish the mission for which the Father sent Him.

"The Son and Word of the Father, like Him without beginning and eternal, has come today to the city of Jerusalem, seated on a dumb beast, on a foal. From fear the cherubim dare not gaze upon Him; yet the children honor Him with palms and branches, and mystically they sing a hymn of praise: 'Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to the Son of David, who has come to save from error all mankind.'" (A hymn of the Light.)

"With our souls cleansed and in spirit carrying branches, with faith let us sing Christ's praises like the children, crying with a loud voice to the Master:

Blessed art Thou, O Savior, who hast come into the world to save Adam from the ancient curse; and in Thy love for mankind Thou hast been pleased to become spiritually the new Adam. O Word, who hast ordered all things for our good, glory to Thee." (A Sessional hymn of the Orthros)

+++ +++ +++

### **STEWARDSHIP SNIPPET**

#### **TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURES**

+++ +++ +++

**Additional Church Curators Needed** – A synonym for *curator* is *steward*. Please see Larry Martin if you are interested in being a *steward of their time* and be "on-the-door". Our curator list needs expanded!

+++ +++ +++

**On-Line Giving** is available from our parish website to donate to the: General Stewardship Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and/or Relocation Fund. The best option is to come to church and give your offering to God in His Temple (2<sup>nd</sup> best is to mail it in to Tim Martin, 2225 McAleer Rd., Sewickley, PA 15143). If you miss coming to church for a week, online giving allows you another option to "catch up" on your weekly stewardship. You can also set up a recurring donation online. For our parish to continue its ministries, outreach, and general bill paying, your generosity and stewardship is needed.

+++ +++ +++

**Giving at the Church** – The "flow of traffic" is a little different in Allison Park, but the ways to give your stewardship treasures has not changed. One can:

- ✘ hand your offering to the curator who sits at the desk in the vestibule (to the right after you enter),
- ✘ there are multiple baskets around the church for you to drop your offering in, or
- ✘ when saying your prayers and lighting 2 candles, put your donation in the box in the candle stand.

We will continue to not "*pass the basket*" which interrupts our focus on our prayers.

+++ +++ +++



### A Prayer of Stewardship

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the good steward, who redeemed Adam and Eve of their failed stewardship by offering Yourself for the life of the world. You did teach us in the feeding of the multitudes that whatever we give to God is returned to us multiplied. You did praise those good and faithful servants in the parable of the talents who returned to the Master their gifts. So help us to learn the joy of stewardship, remembering that everything we have comes from You and belongs to You. We know, Lord, that we often live in fear of the future and insecurity. Help us to remember the lilies of the field and so to trust in Your providence. Grant to us a cheerful and generous spirit. Enkindle in the hearts of all Your people a zealous love for You. For You are the Good Steward, and to You we give thanks, praise and glory, together with Your Father and Your all holy good and life-giving Spirit now and ever and onto the ages of ages. Amen.

+++ +++ +++

Stewardship of Treasure Guide																
Weekly offering to God through the Sunday Offertory - Will you take a step up?																
Weekly Income	Beyond a Tithe	15%	12%	10%	Tithe	9%	8%	7%	Middle Range Giving	6%	5%	4%	Lower Range Giving	3%	2%	1%
\$200	\$30	\$24	\$20	\$16	\$12	\$11	\$10	\$8	\$6	\$4	\$2	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$1
\$300	\$45	\$36	\$30	\$24	\$18	\$16	\$15	\$12	\$9	\$6	\$4	\$2	\$2	\$2	\$2	\$2
\$400	\$60	\$48	\$40	\$32	\$24	\$21	\$20	\$16	\$12	\$8	\$4	\$2	\$3	\$3	\$3	\$3
\$500	\$75	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$30	\$27	\$25	\$20	\$15	\$10	\$5	\$3	\$4	\$4	\$4	\$4
\$600	\$90	\$72	\$60	\$48	\$36	\$32	\$30	\$24	\$18	\$12	\$6	\$4	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$5
\$700	\$105	\$84	\$70	\$56	\$42	\$36	\$34	\$28	\$21	\$14	\$7	\$5	\$6	\$6	\$6	\$6
\$800	\$120	\$96	\$80	\$64	\$48	\$42	\$40	\$32	\$24	\$16	\$8	\$6	\$7	\$7	\$7	\$7
\$900	\$135	\$108	\$90	\$72	\$54	\$48	\$45	\$36	\$27	\$18	\$9	\$7	\$8	\$8	\$8	\$8
\$1,000	\$150	\$120	\$100	\$80	\$60	\$54	\$50	\$40	\$30	\$20	\$10	\$8	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$9
\$1,100	\$165	\$132	\$110	\$88	\$66	\$59	\$55	\$44	\$33	\$22	\$11	\$9	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10
\$2,000	\$300	\$240	\$200	\$160	\$120	\$108	\$100	\$80	\$60	\$40	\$20	\$15	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20
\$3,000	\$450	\$360	\$300	\$240	\$180	\$162	\$150	\$120	\$90	\$60	\$30	\$20	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30

1. Find where YOU are on the chart (your weekly income/giving).  
2. Move one block to the left to determine what GROW ONE! would be.

+++ +++ +++

### SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Father is available to meet Monday thru Friday from 8:30am to 2:30pm OR by appointment.

**Online Community:** Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email.

**Parish Phone Tree** - Please call Fr. Dave to be added.

**Emergency Sick Calls** – Please notify Fr Dave when you or a family member are going into the hospital or having a procedure. He will pray with you and you will receive the Mystery of Holy Anointing (Unction) to be fully prepared.

**Mystery of Confession** – Opportunities are available after every service, most Saturdays during fasting periods from 11am to 1pm, OR by appointment.

**Holy Communion/Eucharist** – The reception of the Holy Eucharist is encouraged for all Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves, with fasting from midnight on, regular Confession, and forgiveness for all people. Those who are not prepared or not of the Orthodox Faith may receive a blessing from the chalice.

**How to receive** - Please remember the following helpful hints aimed at helping to preserve the solemnity and safety of the Holy Mystery. Anyone wearing lipstick should remove it before receiving. Be sure to offer your baptismal name to the priest before receiving. Please take great care that the red cloth held by the acolytes (servers) is fully under your chin (*you should not hold it*), then use the centuries-old practice of receiving: please fully open your mouth, tilt your head back, receive the Holy Gifts, wait until They are securely in your mouth and so that none of the holy and precious Body and Blood of Christ is accidentally spilled. Thank you for your cooperation, and may God have mercy on us all!

**Lapsed Members** – You are always welcome home and we want you to come back! Generally speaking, sincere and regular participation in the Sunday Divine Liturgy and in the Mysteries of Confession and Communion are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Dave for specific details.

**Parishioners in “good standing”** are those Orthodox Christians who, as members of Saint John’s Orthodox Church, strive to live according to the teachings of the Orthodox Church; participate in the life of the parish

through regular attendance of services, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (*and receive these Mysteries no less than once a year*); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and share their stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures which includes financially supporting the parish.

**Baptisms** – Two God-parents are required, at least one of whom must be Orthodox by faith (and the other a practicing Christian). In the case of infants, the newly-baptized must have one name that is Christian in origin. Parents/grandparents/guardians must also promise to bring the child up in an Orthodox Christian way of life. Please consult Fr. Dave for more details.

**Adult Chrismation** – New parishioners are always welcome! In the case of adults seeking entrance into the Church, a period of prescribed catechism will be established with Fr. Dave before administration of the Mysteries. An Orthodox Christian sponsor is also required.

**Marriages** – are only solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays in the church. They are not performed during fasting periods and certain Feast Days. Please consult Fr. Dave ASAP for more details (*before* arrangements are made for the hall). It is critical that marriages are blessed in the church.

**Church Funerals** – are provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual responsibilities and their stewardship. Otherwise, burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.

+++

*“The cremation of bodies is not a Christian act. It is a custom of modern times. The body of a Christian has been sanctified with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and as such may not be burned. God did not create our bodies for burning.”* - Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

+++ +++ +++

### The Jesus Prayer

(Inhale) O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God,  
(Exhale) have mercy on me, a sinner!

(Repeat until your heart is calm...)

### ONLINE PRAYER CORNER

Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions & other needs\*

+++ +++ +++

**A Prayer For The Sick:** O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly visit Your suffering servant *name(s)*. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver *him/her/them* from sickness and bitter pain. Heal *him/her/them* so that *he/she/they* may sing to You and always praise You for You alone love us. Amen.

+++ +++ +++

**For the Special Intentions of...** His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Gregory, Fr. Stephen B., Fr. Thomas B., Protodeacon Gregory B., Michael L., Laura & family, Carlene, Georgia, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Amee, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin *our diocesan seminarians:* Dcn Peter S, Nicolas W., Seamus M., Samuel L., Timothy P., Nicholas L., Alexander H., *and our Parish Council and Curators:* Lawrence, Subdeacon Ryan, Timothy, Rich, Elizabeth, Robert, Gina, John, Mary Jane, Katherine, Kenneth and for those who labor towards our Community Outreaches *...through the prayers of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; St. John the Baptist; the Archangels Michael & Gabriel; and the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.*

+++ +++ +++

**\*\*\* Nameday, Birthday, and Anniversary Prayer List is being reset** – Our parish prayer list of key dates and special occasions in our lives will be reset going forward (starting 3/1/24). Please see Fr. Dave with any questions!

+++ +++ +++

### April Namedays:

Steven Zerby – St John of the Ladder (4/14)

Bonnie Carlisle – St. Mary of Egypt (4/21)

Pañi’s brother Florin Popescu and Pañi’s mother

Liliana Popescu – Palm (Flowery) Sunday (4/28)

...May God grant them many and blessed years!

+++ +++ +++

### April Birthdays:

Sonia Kretchek (4/1), Tristan Bowser (4/5), Bryce

Blobner (4/10), Rich Mirilovich (4/13), Kris Carlisle,

Reader (4/14), Melanie Paieski (4/14), Father's Uncle Dan Urban (4/15), Father's Father Dave Urban (4/15), John Kirish (4/18), Father's Brother-In-Law Christopher Ditmore (4/19), Dr. Lawrence Martin (4/20), Max Anton (4/22), Donald J. Gavulich (4/23), Fred Anton (4/24), Fr Peter Paproski (4/24), Donna Tongel (4/24), Fr Jonathan Bannon (4/29), Maryhelen Hoffman (4/29)

...*May God allow them to grow in peace and love all the days of their lives and may He grant them many and blessed years!*

+++ +++ +++

**For our Catechumens & Inquirers...** Tyler ...*through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, & St. John Maximovitch.*

+++ +++ +++

**For those preparing for Marriage...** Allison & Michael, Francis & Alexandra...*through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

+++ +++ +++

**April Anniversaries:**

...*through the prayers of St. Nicholas Planas*

+++ +++ +++

**For Pregnant Mothers...**

Carly (*due in June*), Allison (*October*)

...*through the prayers of St. Anna, the mother of the Theotokos, and St. Irene Chrysovalantou.*

+++ +++ +++

**For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities...** Thomas R. Dzadovsky...*through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

+++ +++ +++

\* This is to be used for the special intentions of our brothers and sisters in Christ and can be inserted as a prayer itself into our daily prayers. Please let Fr. Dave know if you wish to make additions or subtractions (*in the case of answered prayers*) to our Parish List. The words of the Gospel are true: **it is good to pray for one another.** Let this be a place where we lay out our concerns and beg the help of our brothers & sisters in Christ. *This prayer list is NOT limited to only Orthodox Christians.*

**A Prayer for our Diocesan Clergy**

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our Bishop (*name*), and our spiritual father (*name*), and all our diocesan clergy, who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God Who loves us and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving- Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

+++ +++ +++



+++ +++ +++

**A Prayer for Peace**

Almighty God and Creator, You are the Father of all people on the earth. Guide, I pray, all the nations and their leaders in the ways of justice and peace. Protect us from the evils of injustice, prejudice, exploitation, conflict and war. Help us to put away mistrust, bitterness and hatred. Teach us to cease the storing and using of implements of war. Lead us to find peace, respect and freedom. Unite us in the making and sharing of tools of peace against ignorance, poverty, disease and oppression. Grant that we may grow in harmony and friendship as brothers and sisters created in Your image, to Your honor and praise. Amen.

+++ +++ +++