



The Epistle

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2024

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Father's Message

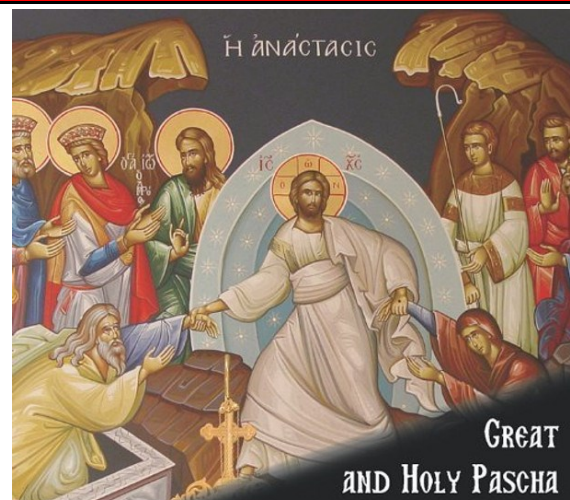
Everything points towards that Holiest of days, Pascha Sunday. But what happened those final days before Christ was crucified, was buried, and rose from the dead? Do the days of Holy Week hold any significance or meaning for us today?

Our Journey will take us through the rest of Great Lent and usher us through Holy Week to that glorious day of our Blessed Lord's Resurrection. As He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace--but now it is hidden from your eyes."

Jesus did not weep for Himself, nor for the Cross that awaited Him. He wept for the people of Jerusalem and for the fate that would come upon that city. I fervently believe He is weeping today for the secular world around us.

A world that is wondering, is searching, questioning, is lost. Perhaps they're waiting to see if there really is a God. They're waiting to see if He really does care. They're waiting to see if the people who worship, and sing His "Lord have Mercy." and cry out to Him, and claim to know Him, to see if we are any different. And yet so many here at the Assumption who were searching have found their home. Glory to God!

Yet there are so many who are wandering, those who are searching, those who don't even know they're searching. We could do no better than to prepare for Pascha Sunday by letting ourself feel what Jesus felt, by letting our heart be broken for those who are hurting, I can't tell you who they are; but God knows, and you probably do, too: Your neighbor, your colleague, a parishioner, maybe a brother or sister, a mother or father, maybe a close friend, maybe a casual acquaintance who has-



n't yet experienced the forgiveness, the deliverance, the peace, and the freedom that comes when you experience new life through faith in Christ. I can tell you what will happen if you let yourself feel what Jesus feels: it will bring a flood of compassion into your heart.

The Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ should permeate every aspect of our lives. This is first evident by the way the Church celebrates this magnificent "feast of feasts". Our entire ecclesiastical calendar revolves around the date of Pascha.

May we, during this Holy and Sacred Season, make the time to fast, to pray, attend the special services and to make Holy Week a part of our life. Those who have children set an example for them that will last a life-time. Today, just like the city of Jerusalem, we find ourselves in the presence of Christ, looking at us. I wonder what He finds when He looks into our faces? When He turns & looks into our lives, I wonder, will He weep once again because of what He sees? Or will we have the joy that passes all understanding as we respond to His outstretched arms and hear Him say, "Well done, good & faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?"

*Blessed Pascha. Καλο Πασχα
+ Father Constantine*

DIVINE SERVICES and VOLUNTEERS MONTH of APRIL & MAY

Sunday April 7th, Holy Cross Sunday
Orthros and Epistle Reader: Karl Thienes
Ushers: Vicky Fullmer, Goldie Homan
Prosporon: Rebecca Tysor
Agape Fellowship: Host Needed

Sunday, April 14th
Orthros and Epistle Reader: John Speck
Ushers: Goldie Homan, Kade Schmalz
Prosporon: Hala Abou Arraj
Agape Fellowship: The Paloukos Family

Sunday April 21st, Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt
GODCHILD-GODPARENT SUNDAY
Orthros & Epistle Reader: John Speck
Ushers: Vicky Fullmer, Tom Hugie
Prosporon (Holy Bread): Sophie McCurry
Agape Fellowship: Goldie, Phil & Wilma Homan in honor of St. Mary of Egypt

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE ON (page 3)

SATURDAY OF LAZARUS, APRIL 27th
Divine Liturgy 10:00am
Goldie Homan, Kade Schmalz
Pancake Breakfast and fashioning Palms.

PALM SUNDAY, SUNDAY APRIL 28TH,
Orthros & Epistle Reader: Gregory Painter
Usher: Tressa Rockwood all available Ushers
Prosporon (Holy Bread): Candice Apostle
Palm Sunday Fellowship- Ladies Philotochos

HOLY FRIDAY, MAY 3rd
9:00am Reading of the Hours
(decorating the Epitaphion (Tomb of Christ)
10:00m)

Friday, May 3rd, 3:30pm Descent from the Cross
Ushers: Goldie Homan, Vicky Fullmer
(taking Our Lord off the Cross and Procession of the Epitaphion Tapestry (the children of the parish are encouraged to participate)

HOLY FRIDAY EVENING SERVICE May 3rd
7:30pm Lamentations/Candlelight Procession with the Kouvouklion (Tomb of Christ) and the Embroidered Epitaphion (Tapestry Icon of Christ).
Participation of the Myrrh-bearers.

HOLY SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 4TH
St Basil Vespers Divine Liturgy 9:00am
Orthros Reader: John Peskey
Epistle Reader: Alex Tarasau
Ushers: Tressa Rockwood, Vicky Fullmer

SATURDAY, MAY 4TH RESURRECTION
EVENING DIVINE LITURGY, 11:00PM
Orthros Reader: Karl Thienes
Epistle Reader: David Sandborgh
Ushers: Vicky Fullmer, Tressa Rockwood
Prosporon: Candice Apostle

AGAPE RESURRECTION FELLOWSHIP in the Social Hall to break the Fast, share our Pascha baskets and to celebrate Our Lord's Resurrection.

PASCHA SUNDAY, MAY 5th, AGAPE VESPERS & EASTER EGG HUNT

LENTEN SERVICES

- ♦ Wednesday, April 3rd, 10th, 17th
PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY - 6:00pm
- ♦ Friday, April 5th, 12th, 19th,
THE AKATHIST HYMN - 6:00pm



PASCHA OFFERING ENVELOPE

During this Holy Pascha Season it is important for us to seek oneness with Our Lord, remembering how through His sacrifice, He opened the gates for us to a heavenly eternal life. Likewise let us express our love and devotion to Him with an offering to His Assumption Church so that we may continue to cultivate the Good News of our faith in South-eastern Idaho and Western Wyoming. Or **Donate through the Church Website, click on On-Line Giving, Pascha Offering.**

2024 SCHEDULE OF SERVICES HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA

SATURDAY OF LAZARUS, APRIL 27th

10:00 am Divine Liturgy followed by Communion Breakfast

Everyone is invited to fashion Palm Crosses and decorate the Nave for Palm Sunday.

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 28th (Procession around the church, weather permitting)

9:00am Orthros

10:00am Divine Liturgy Christ's Triumphant Entrance

7:00pm Service of the Bridegroom/Nymphios "Preparing ourselves for Christ Our Lord"

HOLY MONDAY, APRIL 29th

7:00pm Service of the Bridegroom/Nymphios

HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 30th

7:00pm Service of the Bridegroom - Hymn of Kassiani

HOLY WEDNESDAY, MAY 1st

9:00am Pre-Sanctified Liturgy (Holy Communion)

6:00pm Sacrament of Holy Unction - "The Anointing Service of the Body and the Soul."

HOLY THURSDAY, MAY 2nd Passion and Crucifixion of Christ

9:00am Saint Basil Vespertal Liturgy (Holy Communion)

10:30am Dyeing and preparation of the Red Paschal Eggs (all are welcome to help)

7:00pm Reading of the Twelve Gospels and the Procession of our Crucified Lord

HOLY FRIDAY, MAY 3rd

9:00am Reading of the Hours (decorating of Epitaphion 10am)

3:30pm Descent from the Cross (taking Our Lord off the Cross and Procession of the Epitaphion Tapestry (participation of children)

7:30pm Lamentations/Candlelight Procession with the Kouvouklion (Tomb of Christ with the Embroidered Epitaphion Tapestry Icon of Christ).
Participation of the Myrrh-bearers.

HOLY SATURDAY, MAY 4th

9:00am Saint Basil Morning Vespertal Liturgy (Holy Communion)

11:15pm The Canon

12:00 MIDNIGHT Resurrection Service and Divine Liturgy (Holy Communion)

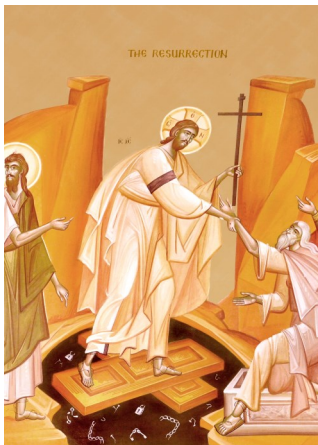
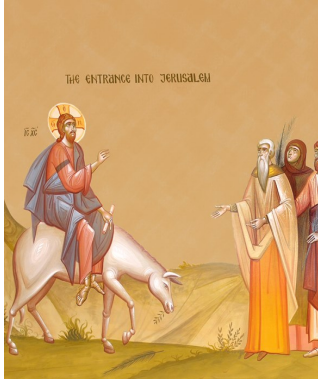
Blessing of Pascha Eggs and Pascha Baskets followed by Agape Fellowship by breaking the Fast in sharing Pascha Baskets in the Social Hall.

HOLY PASCHA – EASTER, MAY 5th

11:00am AGAPE SERVICE – VESPERS OF LOVE/RESURRECTION with the Holy Gospel read in various languages. Easter Egg Hunt for the younger children

HOLY WEEK OFFERING LIST

In order to make Holy Week beautiful and inspiring, special items are needed. We encourage the faithful and friends of Assumption to help defray costs by donating toward these articles (in whole or in part) in memory of loved ones or for their health and well being. Both the living and departed will be commemorated during Holy Week services. Thank you.



Epitaphion Flowers (Christ's Tomb).....\$800.00
ALL DONATIONS TO THIS END WILL BE NEEDED AND APPRECIATED!
The Tomb of our Lord (Epitaphion) will be adorned by hundreds of flowers.

Palm Sunday Palms (For the Sanctuary)donated \$165.00

Olive Oil for Holy Unction (Holy Wednesday)..... donated \$25.00

Seven Candles for Holy Unction Service (Holy Wed).....\$20.00

Three Candles - Cross of Christ (Holy Thursday).....\$60.00

Twelve Votive Candles for Gospel Readings (Holy Thursday).....\$20.00

White Sheet for the Body of Christ (Holy Friday).....\$25.00

Holy Communion Wine (2 Cases).....\$325.00

Four Candles for Epitaphion (Holy Friday)..... donated \$20.00ea.

Rose Petals for Epitaphion (Holy Friday).....\$45.00

Rose Water (Holy Friday).....\$15.00

Seasonal Plants (Pascha).....\$20.00ea.

Please complete Holy Week Request Form
and return to the Church Office with your donation payable to:

Assumption Church

PO BOX 4567

Pocatello, Idaho 83205

(Memo on check: Holy Week)

You may also use On-line Giving through the Parish Website to make
your offering, or directly at:

<http://assumptionpocatello.churchtrac.com/give>

Holy Week Donation Form





HOLY WEEK DONATION FORM

Please accept the enclosed offering toward the successful carrying forth of the activities of Holy Week and the Celebration of Pascha. May the love, joy, and hope of this celebration fill our hearts and guide us to participate more fully in our Lenten journey and Holy Week.

The enclosed gift in the amount of \$ _____ is intended to offer a specific item _____ needed for Holy Week.

(Select the item from page 4)

Please accept my gift as needed in the amount of \$ _____
In MEMORY of His departed servants listed below and commemorate them in prayer during Holy Week (first name only).

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

For the HEALTH and well being of His servants listed below and commemorate them in prayer during Holy Week (first name only).

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Enclose an extra page if needed.

This gift is offered by: (Please list name and address)

NAME: _____

Mail Form and Donation: Or drop the form off on Sunday at the Candle Stand.
Assumption Greek Orthodox Church
PO Box 4567
Pocatello, ID 83205-4567

(OR USE ONLINE-GIVING PORTAL)
(YOU MUST REGISTER FIRST TO USE ON-LINE GIVING)

You will be able to register and create an account which will allow you access to your Church directory information and your giving history. We hope you find this program helpful.

Access our on-line giving portal on the Church website at:
<https://www.assumptionpocatello.net>

Or directly at: <http://assumptionpocatello.churchtrac.com/give>

Or by Scanning the following QR code into your cell phone



**SATURDAY OF LAZARUS, APRIL 27TH
DIVINE LITURGY -10:00AM**

On the **Saturday of Lazarus** following the Divine Liturgy and Holy Communion commemorating the raising of Lazarus from the dead, we invite all the faithful to **join in fashioning Palm Crosses** for Palm Sunday as well as helping decorate the church nave. A **LENTEN PANCAKE BREAKFAST** will be Hosted by **Tim and Maria Swore, Tom & Molly Besiseris, Caroline Peters, and Corri Yanase** in the Social Hall.



**RED PASCHA EGG DYEING ON HOLY THURSDAY,
MAY 2nd, at 10:00AM**

Traditionally the **dyeing of the red Pascha eggs** (κόκκινα αυγά) is permitted on Holy Thursday representing the blood of Christ and rebirth. The Church need **eggs** dyed and wrapped for the Resurrection Service and for Pascha Sunday's Agape Service. We will be dyeing the eggs on **Thursday, May 2nd**, following the morning Liturgy.



**HELP DECORATE the EPITAPHION (Tomb of Christ)
HOLY FRIDAY MORNING, MAY 3rd at 9:30AM**

All those who would like to **assist in decorating the beautiful Epitaphion (Tomb of Our Blessed Lord)** are asked to **arrive at church on Holy Friday morning at 9:30am**. Everyone is invited to assist in this beautiful opportunity to decorate the Tomb of Our Lord.

**PASCHA BASKET BLESSING and PASCHA EGGS at the
SATURDAY EVENING RESURRECTION SERVICE, MAY 4th AT 11:00PM**

In the past few years the parish introduced a wonderful Orthodox tradition: the blessing of Paschal Baskets. In many Orthodox jurisdictions the faithful bring Paschal Baskets to be blessed. This beautiful tradition stems back to the early Christian Church where the faithful would bring their baskets to the midnight service to be blessed. We would like to encourage you to **prepare a Paschal Basket and bring it to the Midnight Pascha Service**. Place an unlit candle in your basket and cover the food with a colorful cover and place near the small sacramental table. The baskets will be blessed at the conclusion of the service with the red Pascha eggs. The basket tradition signifies the breaking of the fast and the sharing with others.



**THE AGAPE PASCHA (EASTER) VESPERS SERVICE,
SUNDAY, MAY 5th AT 11:00AM**



The faithful will gather once more for Great Vespers. With lighted candles we will sing, "Christ is Risen." The people greet one another with the salutation, "Christ is Risen", which is answered, "Truly He is Risen." In the Great Vespers, the **Gospel according to John (20:19-25)** is read in various languages, proclaiming the Good News of Resurrection all over the universe without discrimination. The fruit of faith in the Resurrection of the Lord is love. **We invite those who know a language to participate in the reading of the Gospel of the Resurrection. Please let Father Constantine know ASAP what language you would like to read to avoid duplication. We have translations in various languages for your use.**

We Welcome and Congratulate the Schoenrock, the Harris Families, and Jacob Denton as they embrace Orthodoxy!

IAN AND CHAYLA SCHOENROCK AND THEIR CHILDREN OLIVIA AND PHOEBE WITH GODPARENTS ASHLEY TARASAU, DEVYN SCHMALZ CARRIE AND KARL THIENES →



SETH AND BROOKE HARRIS AND THEIR CHILDREN GWENDOLYN AND TORREN JOINED WITH THEIR GODPARENTS ALEX & ASHLEY TARASAU STEVEN & JACQUE SWANSON ←



JACOB DENTON WITH SPONSOR JONATHAN HARRIS

Sun. April 21st-Godchild-Godparent / Sponsor

There are few things in life more precious than the bond between a Godchild and Godparent/Sponsor. The role of the Godparent in the Orthodox Church is an important one. Along with the parents, the Godparent is charged with the responsibility of assisting in the spiritual development of the child. Whether a blood relative or not, the Godparent is now embraced as part of the “spiritual family” of that child. We are asking that you **invite your Godparents and Godchildren** to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and to reaffirm the commitment that was made at the Baptism/Chrismation. The children are asked to **wear their Cross** and **bring their Baptismal Candle**, that is to be lit as they approach for Holy Communion. If your child does not have their baptismal candle you may offer a donation for a candle at the Candle Stand. In some cases the Godparent may not reside in the area. If this is the case, in order for no one to be excluded, the Church School Parents are encouraged to ask a close family friend, a relative or a parishioner to “stand in” for the Godparent. .

April

APRIL 27TH-SATURDAY OF LAZARUS/ COMMUNION BREAKFAST
 FASHIONING PALMS
 APRIL 28-PALM SUNDAY AND PROCESSION
 HOLY WEEK:
 PALM SUNDAY EVENING APRIL 28th
 PASCHA SUNDAY MAY 5TH

APRIL 7^H-CHILDREN'S PROCESSION of the HOLY CROSS
 APRIL 21-GODCHILD/GODPARENT SUNDAY

2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm		Salutations to the Virgin Mary 6:00pm	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sunday of the Holy Cross Procession Children and Crosses			Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm		Salutations to the Virgin Mary 6:00pm	Carroll Baptisms
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Sunday of St John Climacus			Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm		THE AKATHIST HYMN 6:00pm	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Sunday of Mary of Egypt GODCHILD/GODPARENT SUNDAY						SATURDAY OF LAZARUS Communion Breakfast/Fashioning Palms
28	29	30	May 1	May 2	May 3	May 4
PALM SUNDAY 10am PROCESSION Bridegroom Service 7:00pm	HOLY MONDAY Bridegroom Service 7:00pm	HOLY TUESDAY Bridegroom Service 7:00pm	HOLY WEDNESDAY Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 9am Sacrament of Holy Unction 7pm	HOLY THURSDAY St Basil Liturgy 9am Dyeing of Paschal Eggs 10:30am 12 Gospels Read 7pm	GOOD FRIDAY The Hours 9am Descent from Cross 3:30pm Lamentations 7:30pm	HOLY SATURDAY St Basil Liturgy 9am The Cannon 11:00pm Resurrection Service 12:00 Midnight

POST FOR REFERENCE

A TRADITIONAL Pascha basket

Paska bread

Sweet bread made with eggs and butter. It symbolizes Christ who is our true bread.

Some cultural traditions shape their loaves into a braid, loaf, or in a can! But any shape, paska bread is special & delicious!

Christ is the light of the world

Eggs

BRIGHTLY colored or dyed red they symbolize NEW LIFE and resurrection

Sausage

Spicy, garlicky, & scrumptious, they remind us of God's favor and generosity

Bacon

symbolizes the OVERABUNDANCE of God's MERCY to us

Wine

A SYMBOL OF Love TOWARDS OUR neighbors + THE GOODNESS OF THE faith.

SALT

IT IS NECESSARY FOR FLAVOR AND SHOULD REMIND US OF our duty TO OTHERS.



CHEESE

Some enjoy a custard-like cheese that is sweet & mild, reminding us of the MODERATION we should have towards everything

HORSERADISH with beets

bitter horseradish reminds us of Christ's suffering but sweetened because of the Resurrection

BUTTER

often shaped like a cross or a lamb. REMINDS US OF THE GOODNESS OF CHRIST THAT WE SHOULD HAVE TOWARDS all things.

Ham

symbol of the joy & abundance of Pascha (because it is roasted or cured, the festivities of the day can be enjoyed by all without the burden of cooking)



CHURCH ETIQUETTE

The Church is the Body of Christ on earth, the fellowship of the faithful. It is the Ecclesia, the gathering of the people of God who assemble to worship together the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As a consequence of their belief in Christ, as Son of the living God, they have been Baptized, Chrismated and receive His precious Body and Blood regularly. They have chosen to help and love one another as Christ Himself commanded. They repent for their shortcomings which offend God's law and receive forgiveness. They seek God's help and the help of their fellow Christians to do better.

If our faith needs practical expression, then we also need the Church. A vague belief in God, a few occasional moments of something like devotional feeling, and a good deed once in a while, are hardly a real expression of the Christian Orthodox Faith. To do a good job in anything requires organization. Every good idea and goal must be planned well in order to be successful. The Church, a living organism, is a treasury, a storehouse of centuries of accumulated wisdom in humanity's efforts to relate to God and all people. Truly, what we know of our Faith we have ultimately received from the Church, as well as, the church in the home. Those of us who have received and cherished this heritage have an obligation – a duty – to pass it on to future generations. It takes this organization we call Church to give Christianity to those who will follow. This is why we need to be “active” and “concerned” members of Christ's Body – His Church.

CHURCH CONDUCT

When attending the Divine Services we all have the responsibility of maintaining a proper decorum and atmosphere in the church. The very first thing to keep in mind is that we are to arrive on time. In order to fully participate in our worship we should be in church from the beginning of the Divine Liturgy as well as, all of the Divine Services. Remember! The church is the Temple or House of God. Reverence and good manners are required at all times. No irreverent or irrelevant conversations should take place in the Narthex or in the Nave of the church. In addition, there are certain times during the Divine Services when no one should be moving about, be entering or exiting the church or be seated at a pew. Wherever a person happens to be at these moments, he or she should stop and stand reverently until the proper time to be seated. Always enter the Nave through the side aisles and not the middle door. When there is a need to exit the Nave during the service please exit through the side aisles.

Please remember that Parish Council members, who are ushers, are obligated to maintain church order and etiquette during our worship. Please try to understand us. Cooperate with us. We are here to serve you. Your cooperation in maintaining Church order will help us greatly in offering you assistance for all of your spiritual needs.

LIGHTING CANDLES

When an Orthodox Christian enters the narthex of the church, he/she makes the sign of the Cross, makes an offering for a candle, venerates all the icons, and lights the candle while saying a prayer. Candles are lit as an expression of our belief that Jesus Christ is the “Light of the world.”

A candle may be lit for the health and well-being of someone or in memory of a departed loved one. In particular, the larger votive candles may be lit for the same reasons. These candles are placed in the special stand located near the front of the Nave. Please remember when one should and should not enter during Divine Services.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

We make the sign of the Cross as a public profession of our Christian Orthodox Faith. The first two fingers and thumb of the right hand come together symbolizing the Holy Trinity. The two remaining fingers symbolize the Humanity and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Therefore, in our right hand, we hold the two major doctrines of our Christian Orthodox Church each time we make the sign of the Cross.

We make the sign of the Cross before we eat, sleep, drive, pass by, enter or leave the church, travel or begin any major endeavor, acknowledging our desire to include God in these activities. In church, make the sign of the Cross:

- * When you venerate the icons
- * When you light a candle
- * When you hear “...**Father**, Son and Holy Spirit,” “**Holy God**, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us,” “... and **the Theotokos**,”
- * At the beginning and end of the Gospel reading
- * During the Symbol of Faith when we say Articles 8 and 9: “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of Life...” and “In one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church”
- * Before and after receiving Holy Communion

Continued page 13...

(Please Note: When the Priest blesses or censes it is proper for the faithful to slightly bow and make the sign of the Cross since they are receiving the blessing.

WHEN TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION

Orthodox Christians are encouraged to receive (we do not say “take”) Holy Communion as frequently as possible. When the Priest intones: “With the fear of God, faith, and love, draw near”, an invitation is given to join oneself to the purity and beauty of the life in God. However, this is the greatest of responsibilities. Care must be given to properly prepare to receive Holy Communion.

This includes:

1. Regular daily prayer, and the reading of the pre- and post- Communion prayers. Also, you should refrain from eating from the time you go to sleep on Saturday evening until you receive Holy Communion. If you need to take medication on Sunday morning you may do so.
2. Fasting as prescribed by the Church Calendar and the priest.
3. Almsgiving, practicing proper Stewardship of the gifts given to us from God.

You should not receive Holy Communion unless you have made serious preparation. The most important of these preparations includes repentance or “metanoia.” This preparation should be part of your daily cycle of prayer and should include the regular scheduling of the Holy Sacrament of Confession.

CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’” (Matt. 19:14) Our Christian Orthodox Church Baptizes and Chrismates children at a young age to make them full members of the Body of Christ, the Church.

As members of the Church, parents are to instruct their children to be respectful and quiet during Divine Services. It is never appropriate to allow a child to run down or play in the aisles. In addition, toys that make noise are not permitted in church.

Please be mindful of fellow worshippers. If a child becomes too disruptive we recommend the following suggestions to help the parents of young children when they have a difficult time during Liturgy. These are three suggestions:

1. You can take the child out into the Narthex where they can quietly just walk around and move.
2. You can take your child to one of the Sunday School rooms downstairs in the church office building. We can use them as “Nursery Rooms” during Liturgy. We will Live Stream the Divine Liturgy on the TVs so parents can still be a part of the Divine Liturgy, while the child sits and colors or plays at the tables. The parent would then be able to see when it is time for communion so they can come back over in time to receive Holy Communion.
3. The Fellowship Hall is also a place the child could be loud and play with toys if they need to work out some extra energy.

ENCOURAGE SINGING (excerpts taken from “The Heavenly Banquet-Understanding the Divine Liturgy”

It is our hope that our faithful would actively participate during the Divine Services. Soon we will have available small booklets with the main hymns of the Liturgy so you may join and sing along.

- The “divine and most sacred services” constitutes the highest expression of praise, glorification, love and gratitude to God for His inexpressible love toward us. The people of God gather together in obedience to Christ’s command to offer their “sacrifice of praise” in thanksgiving, to actualize Christ’s saving acts, to commune His Sacred Mysteries, and to rejoice in partaking of His life now, in anticipation of that day when they will partake of Him “more perfectly” in the “unsetting day” of His Kingdom.
- As people of God, clergy and laity come together to celebrate the Holy mysteries, they are all active participants, singing and praising the Lord together. Joyfully singing is a fundamental feature of all the services of our Orthodox Church – especially the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy mirrors what is happening in heaven where singing is unending. The heavenly Jerusalem is filled with the new song of the redeemed.
- From early testimonies we learn that the Church was a singing Church from the beginning. The Jewish historian Philo of Alexandria (+40AD) tells us that the Christians often composed and sang songs and hymns and spent the whole night singing.

Church Etiquette continued...

- It has been observed that, “Our Liturgy is the richest of the liturgical types of other religions and confessions when it comes to the singing element. All of our services are continuous song, or should be. The sacred melodies transport us from earth to heaven. The Divine Liturgy is a continuous celebration. As Orthodox Christians we chant from beginning to end. However the Liturgy was never meant to be a performance or a spectacle. It is chiefly a participatory service. Therefore the faithful are encouraged to participate in the singing as well. St Augustine (+430 AD) wrote: “Truly I see nothing better, more useful or more holy that the people could do than singing.” The liturgy is a shared activity of a people gathered together. No other sign brings out this communal dimension so well as singing.
- The celebration of the Divine Eucharist is action of the entire community of the people of God, a fulfillment of the “royal priesthood” conferred on them by God in baptism. Therefore the priest is not the “representative” of the faithful. Although there are prayers in which he speaks for all the people, all these prayers close with the “Amen” of the faithful. Without the active participation of the people, the dialogue between celebrant and people becomes a nonsensical monologue.
- Bishop Kallistos points out that the “Liturgy means precisely a shared corporate action. Liturgy is something done by many persons in common, something that none of us can do alone. So, if the Eucharist is termed liturgy, that means that, at the service, there are only active participants; there are no passive spectators.”
- The Liturgy is the work of the people - this includes all the faithful. The people must take charge of their parts, their replies, their hymns, and their prayers. Let us not just attend the services; but let us take part in them. Let us join the choir and chanters. Remember that every baptized Christian is a member of the Body of Christ. We are the “royal priesthood.”



PRAYER REQUESTS

Please offer names (first name only) to our clergy of those who are suffering from illnesses or challenges in life so they can be included in our prayers during the divine services. The prayer list will be published in The Epistle Newsletter monthly so that our parishioners can include the names in their personal prayers as well. Contact Father Constantine (805) 570-6525 to submit your names.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Heavenly Father, physician of our souls and bodies, who sent Your only begotten Son and Lord Jesus Christ to heal every sickness and infirmity, visit and heal also your servants **Pam, Christoforos, Hosea, Gus, Richard, Jeanne, Sotirios, Fr. Achilles, Kathy, Mary Frances, Lavada, Wilma, Steven, Alicia, Christopher, Barbara, Georgia, Vlasios, Vivian, Thomas, Sienna, James, Casi, Jim, Scarlett, Zachary, Sara, Martha, Anna, Kieran, Valentin, Valentina, Rose Mary, Patricia, Sotirios, Anthony, Maria, Lucia, Michael, Krista, John, Bobby, Eric, George, Martin, Gayle, Alicia, Dianna, Chelsea, Dell, Gregory, Dimitri, Oleg, Tania, Ocey, Ethel, Carol, Robert, Casi, Jack, Carol, Roger, Anna, Steve, Christopher, Freda, Larry, Maria, Judy, Ignatius, Elaine, George, Barbara, Nicholas, Matthew, Jeff, Jacqueline, Dianna, Alton, Anna, Larry, Paula, Stacey, Orestes, Helen, Catherine, Andrew, Mary, Steve, Nicholas, Scarlett, Marie, Demetrios, George, Melissa, Galina, Sofia, Cheryl, Christ, Carolyn, Paul, Mary, Nick, John, Elaine, Nicholas**, of all physical and spiritual ailments through the grace of Your Christ. Grant them patience in this sickness, strength of body and spirit and recovery of health. Lord You have taught us through Your Word to pray for each other that we may be healed. I pray that You heal these, Your servants, and grant to them the gift of complete health. For You are the source of healing and to You I give glory. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

*A Layman's Perspective: Steven Swanson-parishioner***THERE IS A GOOD REASON TO SHARE OUR ORTHODOX FAITH**

Orthodox Christianity, as we are fully aware, is still relatively unknown in the United States. Our nation was settled by peoples from Western Europe, who had not been exposed to eastern Christianity (Orthodoxy) for almost 1,000 years. Over time, some of the most fundamental truths about God and salvation have become clouded in the west.

Let us briefly touch on a few beautiful truths that have been preserved for us in Orthodoxy, which many of our loved ones, friends, and neighbors may not be aware of:

1. God Loves All Emphatically – Orthodoxy teaches that all three persons of the Trinity have always loved mankind fully and equally. No requirements of justice, honor, or law could remove or override this love. When we read of God's displays of wrath and judgment in the scriptures, it must be understood as His means of protecting the innocent and making them whole again. The wicked (those who are self-absorbed) must be stopped from hurting and taking advantage of the weak and godly. The most ardent sinner is loved the same as the greatest saint, and God desires the best for all of us (see the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32). For this reason, the Son of God came into this world to renew our condition and offer this salvation to all. So, God has done everything that is necessary to bring us back into Paradise. The only thing that keeps us from this is ourselves – a selfish heart that does not want to be united with a loving God and His people. God will honor the decision of those who desire to embrace Him above all else.

2. Adam's Sin is Not My Sin - Orthodoxy teaches that no person is responsible for the sin of another. We are not guilty for the transgressions of Adam and Eve in the garden ("Original Sin") or of our parents (see Ezekiel 18). However, because our first parents fell into sin and became corrupted, their offspring naturally inherit the same mortal and fallen condition. Hence, it is easy for us to be tempted through our fallen flesh, but it does not mean that we no longer have a moral choice – the image of God has not been fully destroyed. This is why people who have never heard the Gospel do amazing things for the people around them.

3. Salvation is a Journey of Struggle – Orthodoxy teaches that salvation is a struggle: "...narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." Matthew 7:14

The Almighty desires to walk this life with us, and carry us when we are weak, but He does not override our ability to make decisions and interfere with our free will. So, our life's mission is Theosis, to become the likeness and image we were created to be. We need to learn how to cooperate (synergize) with Him and work out our salvation with "fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12). The church lifts the holy saints up as examples for us to imitate.

4. It is Essential to Engage the Body – Orthodoxy teaches that we walk this mortal life as people comprised of both body and spirit. As we are fully aware, since the Fall, our bodies tend to drag our soul's gaze from heaven.

"For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members (body/flesh), warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom 7:22-23).

The body is not evil, but it will not be redeemed until the last judgment. To elevate mankind, as both spirit and body, God has chosen to use the things of this world to pour forth His energies. God offers Himself in the Holy Mysteries (sacraments) through water, bread, wine, and oil. Furthermore, God teaches our spirits to master our bodies through prayer, prostrations/bowing, fasting, lighting candles, burning incense, and venerating icons. These practices engage our senses to cooperate with our spirit as it seeks communion with God.

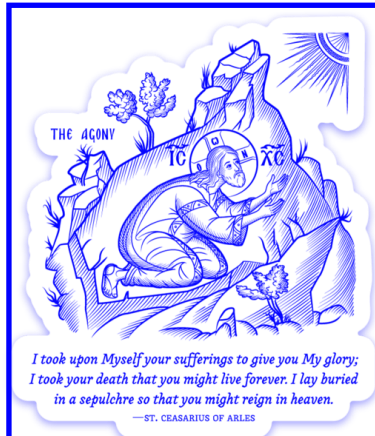
So, when proper opportunities reveal themselves, be encouraged to let others know of the great treasure we have discovered! If we share with patience, love, kindness, and understanding, the Holy Spirit can open a searching heart to the fulness of truth.

Glory to God in the Highest!

(footnotes continued page 16)

Footnotes from the article “There is a good reason to share our Orthodox Faith”

1. For an excellent and thorough introduction to our Christian religious history, see the YouTube 8-lecture series: “Orthodox Christianity 101 – Finding the Church Jesus Built”.
2. For a basic overview of Orthodox Atonement, see YouTube Podcast “Orthodoxy and the Atonement,” from Ancient Faith Radio, presented by Frederica Mathews Green. For a more advanced review, see YouTube Podcast “Salvation & Redemption – The Early Christian Understanding,” from Trisagion Films, presented by Father Panayiotis Papageorgiou, Ph.D.
3. For a more scholarly treatment on God’s wrath, listen to “The Wrath of God” on Ancient Faith Radio, by Father Thomas Hopko.
4. For more information, listen to YouTube Podcast “What is the Orthodox Perspective on Original Sin,” from Trisagion Films, presented by Father Panayiotis Papageorgiou, Ph.D..



LENTEN PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

“O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou unto ages of ages.”

In the Orthodox liturgical tradition, this Lenten Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian is said many times, usually with prostrations and bows, so that the body prays as well as the mind. This repetition is helpful, for in our secular western culture the successful person is the one who impresses, the mover and shaker, the one who confidently puts himself (or herself) forward and is not shy of expressing an opinion, the one who

wins, who dominates, who owns the room. That person is the one who we say “is going places,” and who will certainly end up as CEO or VIP. It is all about self-promotion and self-assertion. Against such a relentless onslaught we need all the help we can get. We can’t say the Lenten Prayer too many times. In Fact it can be recited anytime.

ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH 2024 ANNUAL PLEDGE CARD FORM

Please complete both sides and return this form to the Church Office

Family Name: _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Member	Spouse	Children Age
Name: _____	_____	_____ / _____
Mobile Tel: _____	_____	_____ / _____
E-mail: _____	_____	_____ / _____
Occupation: _____	_____	_____ / _____
Work Tel: _____	_____	_____ / _____

TREASURE:

IN GRATITUDE FOR GOD’S BLESSINGS, I/WE COMMIT TO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH THE FOLLOWING STEWARDSHIP PLEDGED AMOUNT FOR 2024 _____

PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION SUNDAY, APRIL 28th



to the faithful.

Depending on the weather, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy the entire congregation will process outside around the church celebrating Our Lord's entrance to Jerusalem. Upon entering the Nave the blessing of the palms will take place, and palms will be distributed



The palms are to be placed at your home altars. Once they dry out you may burn them and scatter them in your garden area. If the weather is not conducive to go outdoors, the youth will process inside with the Altar Servers.



St Symeon the New Theologian

On Fasting as the Healer of the Soul and the Foundation of all Spiritual Activity

Taken from *The Discourses* 11.2-4 in the series "Classics of Western Spirituality"

St. Symeon encouraged everyone to keep the Lenten fast. He noted that while everyone fasts during the first week of Lent, when the weekend comes (during which typically the fasting was somewhat eased) people slacked off and did not keep the second week as ardently as the first. Here are his words to us to

encourage us to keep the fast and to understand the value of fasting to assist us to acquire virtue.

“Indeed, my fathers and brethren, let us act for our own good by so doing [keeping the fast] and not allow ourselves to lose what we have gathered together in the past but rather let us strive to add to it and increase it. Let us not miserably allow what we have built up in times past to be destroyed. Let each one of us keep in mind the benefits of fasting and what gifts from God he has enjoyed in these few days and so become more eager for the days to come.

My brethren, it is not possible for these things to come about in one day or one week. They will take much time, labor, and pain, in accordance with each man's attitude and willingness, according to the measure of faith... But without fasting, no one was ever able to achieve any of these virtues or any others, for fasting is the beginning and foundation of every spiritual activity. Whatever you build on this foundation cannot collapse or be destroyed, because they are built on solid rock. But if you remove this foundation and substitute for it a full stomach and improper desires, they will be undermined like sand by evil thoughts, and the whole structure of virtues will be destroyed. To prevent this from happening in our case, my brethren, let us gladly stand on the solid foundation of fasting. Let us stand firmly, let us stand willingly! He who is compelled to climb the rock of fasting against his will cannot fail to be dragged down by his desire and thrown headlong into eating in secret... Let us then beware, brethren, not only of eating in secret but also of eating our fill from the dishes set before us on the table.”

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

“With Unity of Thought and one Accord, Let’s Make History”

The Capital Campaign regarding our new ADA Restrooms and New Commercial Kitchen Expansion Project is gaining steam. Please join those who have already made a Committed Gift/Pledge. As of today they include: Ladies Philoptochos Ministry, John N. Christ, Vivian Goodner, Alex & Ashley Tarasau, Goldie Homan, Philip Homan, Sam & Filio Paloukos, Greg & Olenda Painter, Tony & Svitlana Hoskin, Dave & Jeanne Harmer, Tony Matarisie, Pauline Thiros , Karen Solomon, Tressa & Scott Rockwood, Betty & George Katsilometes, Pam & Gary Swan, Seth & Brooke Harris, Scott & Elly MacDonald, George & Pat Dovas, Jim & Argie Vlamis, Dimitri & Paulie Zozos, Angelo Kontgas, John E. Speck, LuAnn & Philip Spain, Botros & Monika Hanna, Bessie & Thomas C Katsilometes, Dean Dinas, Effie & Ray Kaufman, Ted Georges, MD, Chris & Naglaa Bargelski, Ron & Julie Kuhn, Gregory Aposperis, Heidi C. Linehan, Rita Sherburn, Anna & John Workman, Tom & Molly Beseris, Randall & Tammy Lillie, Sophie & Mitch McCurry, Nick & Jennifer Nichols

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

COMMITMENT FORM: Your support matters!

* Indicates required question

First Name (s)* _____ Spouse name (if married) _____

Last Name* _____

Address* _____,

City/State/Zip* _____

Cell Phone (s)* _____, _____

Email (s)* _____, _____

As part of my reverence and responsibility to our Lord's goodness to me, I/we plan to give to the Assumption Capital Campaign over and above our Annual Stewardship.

Total Campaign Commitment* \$ _____

How I/we plan to give* Check one: a Gift in Full _____, a Gift in 2-3 Payments _____.

If you choose an Asset or IRA Gift, please provide a description (refer to the brochure in the mail) _____

If this Gift is in Memory or in Honor of someone, please share their name (s).

In Memory _____

In Honor _____

* _____ *

Signature

Date

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN - BUILDING PROJECT



Construction continues with the new ADA Restrooms and the New Commercial Kitchen. We want to thank Ron Sims and John Speck as our parish Project Managers working with the Contractor. In order to save money a number of our parishioners have volunteered with the demolition work. They include: **Ron Sims, Alex Tarasau, Steven Swanson, Nathan Speck, Jayce Bodily, Jacque Swanson, Becky Swanson, Brian & Ailaine Carroll.** We also want to thank **Shawn Barkdull** for generously offering to install the tile work in the Restroom area of the project. A number of families and individuals who are seeking to embrace the Orthodox Faith have stepped up and made donations to the Project. We hope that others will join and contribute to the Capital Campaign as well.

YOUTH GATHERING WITH FATHER Z



Thirty-two of our youngsters attended a discussion in the Conference Room with Father Constantine and Kade Schmalz. A short video on St Patrick was viewed by all. An icon of the saint was distributed to each child to be placed with their home icons. Also teachers Ashley Tarasau, Devyn Schmalz and Angela Fullmer provided pizza, cupcakes and a craft project about St Patrick to be taken home.

ASSUMPTION

2024 Stewards as of 3/25

If you have given toward Stewardship and your name does not appear on the list please contact +Fr Constantine or Tressa Rockwood, Stewardship Chair

Fr. Constantine Zozos

Betty Angelos

Hala Abou Arraj

Naglaa & Chris Bargelski

Mary Bakakos

Tom & Molly Beseris

Brian & Ailaine Carroll

John N. Christ

JoAnn Contos

Mary Frances Cozakos

Angela Fullmer

Vicky & Rocky Fullmer

Nicholas & Stella Gdontakis

Ted Georges, MD

Vivian Goodner

Frank Grant

Botros & Monika Hanna

Dave & Jeanne Harmer

Dean & Kathy Harris

Seth & Brooke Harris

Goldie Homan

Philip Homan

Wilma Homan

Anthony & Svitlana Hoskin

George & Betty Katsilometes

John D. Katsilometes

James & Cora Ligori

Randall & Tammy Lillie

Heidi Linehan

Scott & Elly MacDonald

Mitch & Sophie McCurry

John & Stephanie Mermigas

Robert & Kaitlin Miklos

Adam Painter

Greg & Olenda Painter

Sam & Filio Paloukos

John & Vickie Peskey

Maria Poulos

Helene Poulos-Edmo

Yolanda Riech

Corrinthia Riedel

Scott and Tressa Rockwood

David Sandborgh

Kade & Devyn Schmalz

Anne Semons

Karen Solomon

Philip & Luann Spain

John E. Speck

Nathan Speck

Rebecca Swanson

Steven & Jacque Swanson

Tim & Maria Swore

Alex & Ashley Tarasau

Karl & Carrie Thienes

Pauline Thiros

Nicholas & Tasia Tsakrios

Vadym Ustianskyi

Jim & Argie Vlamis

Ken & Lynzy Weekes

John & Anna Workman

Nikko Yanase



The Triumph Of Orthodoxy Sunday



Ladies Philoptochos Oath of Office
Goldie Homan: President, Jacque Swanson:
Vice President, Corri Yanase: Secretary,
Tressa Rockwood: Treasure



Gwendolyn Harris receives the
Sacrament of Holy Baptism with her
Godmother Ashley Tarasau



SACRAMENT OF HOLY CHRISMATION , SUNDAY, MARCH 31ST, 2024 Seth Harris-St. Nicodemus the Myrrhbearer, Steven Swanson, Brooke Harris-St. Sophia the Mother of Orphans, Jacque Swanson, Gwendolyn Harris-St. Hermione the Prophetess, Ashley Tarasau, Torren Harris-St. Alexander Patriarch, Alex Tarasau, Ian Schoenrock,-St. John the Baptist, Karl Thienes, Chayla Schoenrock- St. Martha the Myrrhbearer, Carrie Thienes, Olivia Schoenrock-St. Olivia of Palermo, Devyn Schmalz, Phoebe Schoenrock- St. Phoebe the Deaconess, Ashley Tarasau, George Katsilometes- St. George the Great Martyr, Nicklos Gdontakis, Betty Katsilometes-St. Elizabeth Mother of the Baptist, John E. Speck, Jacob Denton-The Holy Righteous Jacob, John Harris pictured with Father Constantine and Father Seraphim





Parish Lenten Retreat with Dr. Eugenia Constantinou at The Purpose Center



THINKING ORTHODOX
UNDERSTANDING AND ACQUIRING THE
ORTHODOX MIND



2024
PARISH LENTEN RETREAT



Those who labor for the vain things in life strive to make those who labor for God's sake stumble, that they might not be confronted with examples that accuse their conscience; but in so doing they only embellish the crowns of conscientious laborers.

St. Ephraim the Syrian

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
3rd Sunday of Lent APRIL 7th	VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHAI</i> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent APRIL 14th	ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent APRIL 21st	ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
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 <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> 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 PASCHAI! (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!

POST TO REFERENCE THROUGHOUT GREAT LENT