

St Michael's Orthodox Church

A parish of the Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

305 Walnut Street, Jermyn, Pennsylvania 18433

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March 24, 2024

**1st Sunday of Great Lent – The Triumph of Orthodoxy
Forefeast of the Annunciation**

Services & Events

Saturday, March 23, 6:30 p.m. – Great Vespers, followed by Prayers for Confessions

Sunday, March 24, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great

March 25 is the Feast of the Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos.

Sunday, March 24, **4:00 p.m.** – We are HOSTING the Wilkes-Barre Deanery for Great Vespers of the Feast.

We need volunteers to provide Lenten refreshments following the service.

Monday, March 25, **5:00 p.m.** – **Vesperal Liturgy** for Annunciation

Choir Rehearsal, TBD, either Tuesday or Thursday, at 6:30 pm.

Wednesday, March 27, 6:30 p.m. – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Friday, March 29, 6:30 p.m. – *Akathist* to the Most-holy Theotokos (part 2)

Saturday, March 30, 6:30 p.m. – Great Vespers, followed by Prayers for Confessions

Sunday, March 31, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great. **St Gregory Palamas.**

Wednesday April 3, there will be no Presanctified at St Michael's. Please join our friends at either St Basil's on Lorde Ave in Simpson at 9 am, or St Nicholas in Olyphant at 6 pm.

Friday, April 5, 6:30 p.m. – *Akathist* to the Most-holy Theotokos (part 3)

Saturday, April 6, 9:30 a.m. – Memorial Saturday (“Soul Saturday”) Divine Liturgy

Saturday, April 6, 6:30 p.m. – Great Vespers, followed by Prayers for Confessions

Sunday, April 7, 9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great. **Sunday of the Cross.** Monthly Parish Council.

Sunday, April 7, 4:00 p.m. – Mission Vespers at Holy Trinity, Stroudsburg (Fr John preaching).

Wednesday, April 10, 6:30 p.m. – Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Friday, April 12, 6:30 p.m. – *Akathist* to the Most-holy Theotokos (part 4)

Saturday, April 13, 11:00 a.m. – Baptism of Lennox Kraky. *The entire parish is welcome at the service.*

Coffee Hour is offered by:

March 24: Mat. Dolores & Marilyn Petorak

April 7: Vickie Kravitsky & Charette Radionoff

March 31: Ruthie Lasichak & Roxanne Neutts

April 14: Susan Schlasta & Millie Telep

If from time to time we do not **stir up** the fervor of faith in our heart, eventually faith may become entirely **extinct** in us. The enemy takes pains to attain this end, which is why we see men who are Christians only in name, while their actions are quite heathen.

The means to confirm and strengthen Christian hope are **prayer**, especially frequent and sincere prayer, **Confession** of our sins, frequent reading of the **Word** of God, and, above all, **frequent Communion** of the holy and life-giving sacraments of the Body and Blood of Christ.

– St John of Kronstadt, *Spiritual Counsels*

Today's Scripture

Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2

Brethren, By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward....

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented — of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us....

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Gospel: John 1:43-51

At that time, Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Hymns of the Day

Sunday Troparion (Tone 1)

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death. / To the thief Thou didst open Paradise. / For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping into joy, / and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, / to proclaim that Thou art risen, // granting the world great mercy.

The Triumph of Orthodoxy (Tone 2)

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One; / and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God. / Of Thy good will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh / and deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the Enemy. / Therefore with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee: / "Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior, // for Thou didst come to save the world."

Forefeast of the Annunciation (Tone 4)

Today is the prelude of joy for the universe! / Let us anticipate the feast and celebrate with exultation: / Gabriel is on his way to announce the glad tidings to the Virgin; / he is ready to cry out in fear and wonder: // "Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee!"

Glory ...

The Triumph of Orthodoxy (Tone 8)

No one could describe the Word of the Father; / but when He took flesh from thee, O Theotokos, He accepted to be described, / and restored the fallen image to its former state by uniting it to divine beauty. // We confess and proclaim our salvation in words and images.

Now & ever ...

Forefeast of the Annunciation (Tone 8)

Thou art the beginning of salvation for all of us on earth, Virgin Mother of God. / For the great Archangel Gabriel, God's minister, was sent from heaven to stand before thee to bring thee joy: // Therefore, we all cry to thee: "Rejoice, O unwedded Bride!"

In your prayers...

The Newly-Departed: Archpriest Herman Schick (March 16). Archpriest Anthony Karbo (March 19).

Please especially pray for:

- Archbishop Nathaniel, of the Romanian Episcopate of the OCA, recovering from heart surgery.
- The Troutman family (Doreen & Harry, along with John Meholic) who lost their home to fire.
- Fr Gregory White, of Holy Resurrection in Wilkes-Barre, recovering from a heart attack.
- Dn. Gregory LoBalbo, of St Nicholas in Bethlehem, who had emergency surgery.
- William Hummer, Mat. Alexandra's father, suffering from a head injury.

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

Those who are alone or confined:

Eileen Dance, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation #202, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
John Drutarosky, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation #307, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, PA 18407
Theresa Krenitsky, Carbondale Nursing & Rehabilitation #307, 10 Hart Place, Carbondale, 18407
Nicholas Mattise, Personal Care at Allied Terrace, #218, 100 Terrace Lane, Scranton, PA 18508
Barbara Palubniak, 629 Hill St, Mayfield, PA 19433
Peggy Petrilak, 127 Petrilak Lane, Greenfield Twp, PA 18407
Peter Senio, The Gardens of Green Ridge, 2751 Boulevard Ave, Scranton, PA 18509
Jerry & Marilyn Soroka, Glenmaura Senior Living, 11 Glenmaura National Blvd, Moosic, PA 18507
Paul Kostiak, along with Dolores Brophy, 631 Jefferson Ave, Jermyn, PA 18433
Paul & Barbara Mosley, 623 Cemetery St, Mayfield, PA 18433
Adam & Mary Ann Serafini, 509 Jefferson Ave, Jermyn, PA 18433

The Sunday of Orthodoxy and the Restoration of Icons

The **Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy** is celebrated on the **first Sunday of Great Lent**. It commemorates the victory of the Church over the *iconoclasts* by the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, and the restoration of icons for use in services and private devotional life of Christians.... The theme of the day is **victory of the True Faith**. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (1 John 5:4). Also, the icons of the saints bear witness that man, "created in the image and likeness of God" (Gen 1:26), becomes holy and godlike through the purification of himself as God's living image.

We do not *worship* the Icons, but we honor and glorify all the Saints who are depicted on them. We worship only the Triune God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and no one else, neither a Saint, nor an Angel.

Prior to the time of the 7th Council, the first Sunday of Great Lent originally commemorated **the Prophets** such as Moses, Aaron, and Samuel. The Liturgy's alleluia verses and scripture readings appointed for the Sunday of Orthodoxy reflect this older usage. The Epistle reading is from the Epistle to the Hebrews. The yet-to-be-baptized catechumens of the early church heard this Epistle about the Old Testament men who **lived by their faith in a promise whose fulfillment they did not see**. After the righteous of the Old Testament are mentioned, the Epistle says: *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*

The Gospel lesson is John 1:43-51, and it ends with an explanation of the "something better" of the Epistle: "You will see greater things than these." ... *And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."*

The catechumens of the early church, and the faithful preparing for Pascha today, are told that, **with faith, they will see the inauguration of the new age**, the fulfillment of all promises, and the manifestation of the Kingdom, through the Incarnation, in the Church.

“The Sunday of Orthodoxy”, a homily by Fr Alexander Schmemmann

Do all the triumphs of Orthodoxy, all the victories, belong to the past? Looking at the present today, we sometimes feel that our only consolation is to remember the past. *Then* Orthodoxy was glorious, *then* the Orthodox Church was powerful, *then* it dominated. But what about the present? My dear friends, if the triumph of Orthodoxy belongs to the past only, if there is nothing else for us to do but commemorate, to repeat to ourselves how glorious was the past, then Orthodoxy is dead. Orthodoxy not only is *not* dead, but also ... is once more and forever celebrating its own triumph — the triumph of Orthodoxy. We don't have to fight heresies among ourselves, but we have other things that once more challenge our Orthodox faith.

... We call ourselves Eastern Orthodox, and yet we are here in the West, so far from those glorious cities which were centers of the Orthodox faith for centuries — Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Moscow. How far are those cities. And yet, don't we have the feeling that something of a miracle has happened, that God has sent us here, far into the West, not just in order to settle here, to increase our income, to build up a community. He also has **sent us as apostles of Orthodoxy**, so that this faith, which historically was limited to the East, now is becoming **a faith which is truly and completely universal**.

... We can see how this faith, which for such a long time was an alien faith here, will become truly and completely universal in the sense that we will answer the questions of all men. For if we believe in that word: “Orthodoxy,” “the true faith”; if for one moment we try to understand what it means: the true, the full Christianity, as it has been proclaimed by Christ and His disciples; if our Church has preserved for all ages the message of the apostles and of the fathers and of the saints in its purest form, then, my dear friends, here is the answer to the questions and to the problems and to the sufferings of our world. You know that our world today is so complex. It is changing all the time. And the more it changes, the more people fear, the more they are frightened by the future, the more they are preoccupied by what will happen to them. And this is where Orthodoxy must answer their problem; this is where Orthodoxy must accept the challenge of modern civilization and reveal to men of all nations, to all men in the whole world, that it has remained the force of God left in history for the transformation, for the deification, for the transfiguration of human life.

The past, the present, the future: At the beginning, one lonely man on the cross — the complete defeat. And if at that time we had been there with all our human calculations, we probably would have said: “That's the end. Nothing else will happen.” The twelve left Him. There was no one, no one to hope. The world was in darkness. Everything seemed finished. And you know what happened three days later. Three days later He appeared. He appeared to His disciples, and their hearts were burning within them because they knew that He was the risen Lord. And since then, in every generation, there have been people with burning hearts, people who have felt that this victory of Christ had to be carried again and again into this world, to be proclaimed in order to win new human souls and to be the transforming force in history.

... As we approach the most important moment of the Eucharist, the priest says, *“Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess....”* What is the condition of the real triumph of Orthodoxy? What is the way leading to the real, the final, the ultimate victory of our faith? The answer comes from the Gospel. The answer comes from Christ Himself and from the whole tradition of Orthodoxy. It is *love*. *Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess . . .* confess our faith, our Orthodoxy. Let us, from now on, feel responsible for each other. Let us understand that even if we are divided in small parishes, in small dioceses, we first of all belong to one another. We belong together, to Christ, to His Body, to the Church. Let us feel responsible for each other, and let us love one another. Let us put above everything else the interests of Orthodoxy in this country. Let us understand that each one of us today has to be the apostle of Orthodoxy in a country which is not yet Orthodox, in a society which is asking us: “What do you believe?” “What is your faith?”

Today is the triumph of Orthodoxy, and a hymn sung today states solemnly and simply: “This is the Apostolic faith, this is the Orthodox faith, this is the faith of the Fathers, this is the faith that is the foundation of the world.” My dear brothers and sisters, this is also our own faith. We are chosen. We are elected. We are the happy few that can say of our faith, “apostolic,” “universal,” “the faith of our fathers,” “Orthodoxy,” “the truth.” Having this wonderful treasure, let us preserve it, let us keep it, and let us also use it in such a way that this treasure becomes the victory of Christ in us and in His Church. Amen.