



## Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

## Schedule This Week

### Sunday, March 6

**10:00 am** Divine Liturgy/Church School

**7:00 pm** Forgiveness Vespers

### Monday, March 7

7:00 pm Canon of St Andrew of Crete

### Tuesday, March 8

**9:00 am** Lenten Matins (Morning Service)

**9:30 am-12:00 pm** Office Hours/Church Open

**7:00 pm** Canon of St Andrew of Crete

### Wednesday, March 9

**6:00 pm** Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Lenten Fellowship Meal following Liturgy

### Thursday, March 10

**9:00 am** Lenten Matins (Morning Service)

**9:30 am-12:00 pm** Office Hours/Church Open

**7:00 pm** Canon of St Andrew of Crete

### Friday, March 11

**7:00 pm** Akathist to Our Sweetest Lord Jesus

### Saturday, March 12

**12:00 pm** Pan-Orthodox Choir Rehearsal

**5:00 pm** Vespers with Cathedral Vigil

### Sunday, March 13

**10:00 am** Divine Liturgy / Church School after

**4:30 pm** Pan-Orthodox Vespers (All Saints Greek Orthodox Church, Canonsburg PA)

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*

Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*

Deacon John Skowron, *Attached*

## Forgiveness Sunday

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

March 6, 2022

## Announcements

**Tomorrow we enter into the season of Great Lent (Clean Monday).** During Lent we are called to increase our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. We are called to offer to God this tithe (tenth) of the year to once again make right our relationship with God. Remember that our fast (abstinence from meat and dairy, as well as reducing the amount of food and certain periods of not eating) is a communal effort and we should seek to enjoin it to the best of our ability, but not to the point of discouragement. **Begin your Lenten journey with your Church Family tonight at the Great Vespers of Forgiveness at 7:00 pm.** May God strengthen you!

➤ The Pittsburgh Pan-Orthodox Women's Book Group. will be reading the book **Seven Holy Women: Conversations with Saints and Friends.** They will meet on Thursday, April 7th to discuss the book. Please contact Mat Ashely Loboda at ashley.loboda@gmail.com for more info.

➤ **Lenten Prayer Partners:** This Lent, we will begin our second Lenten Prayer Partners program with the youth (3rd grade and above) and adults in our parish **If you are interested in participating, please contact Dn. Luke or Mat. Ashley** (ashley.loboda@gmail.com, #412-715-2163).

➤ **Mark your calendar!** A choir from **St Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary** will be visiting our parish on **Saturday, April 2 at 5:00 pm** to sing the Vigil service. Join us to be inspired by their beautiful and prayerful singing and help us support the theological education of our young seminarians.

## Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm:** *Known to be hospitalized:* (none) *Home:* George Shaytar. *Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:* Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Michael Soroka

➤ **Vigil Lights** From **Mat. Nancy K. Mell & Gregory Mell** for the departed servants, Dn. Joseph Mell and newly departed, Yaroslav Sava; for the health of family. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servant, John Polny; Happy Birthday & Many Years to Rdr. Charles! From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the departed servant, John Polny. From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servant, John Polny; Many Years to Chuck on his birthday! From **Katarina Mertz** for the health of Caleb. From **Donya Yewisiak** for the departed servants, Reader Leonard, and Michelle Bittner; for the health of Charles Wasilko-Birthday Wishes. From **John Mahalchak family** for the health of friends & family, Cheryl, John, Gregory, Kayla Elizabeth, and Cindy. From **Manny Rana** for the health of Bhavik. From **Lindy Hamilton** for the health of Elaine Hamilton and infant, Rowyn Scott. From **Tatyana Sechler** for the departed servants, Polina, Galina, Slava, Diana, Bruce, Marina and Valentina; for the health of Tatyana, Veronika, Sergei, Adrianna, Adick and Kristofer. From **John & Olga** for the health of Galina Vilkova. From **John Kowalcheck** for the health of Olga Cozza..

## Thank You

➤ to our March donors, **Jan and Chuck Widel** (Bulletin \$60) in memory of the departed from the Puskar, Widel, and Morris families; **Donya Yewisiak** (Altar Candles \$25) in memory of brother, Leonard Soroka, and (Incense \$10) in memory of Michelle Bittner.

### ➤ Important upcoming dates:

Monday, Mar 7 - Beginning of Great Lent

Apr 17 - Palm Sunday (Western Easter)

Apr 24 - Pascha: Resurrection of Christ

## This Week in Church School

**Today's lesson:** Forgiveness/The Paralytic

### Questions to ask/review:

- Where was Jesus? Where were the friends with the man?
- How did they get into the house?
- What did Jesus do? How did he heal the man? (healed his soul by forgiving his sins)
- How do you think the man felt? His friends?
- Why do you think his friends brought him to Jesus?
- How can we be like these friends to our own friends and family?
- How did Jesus show Himself to be God in this healing? Who forgives sins? (God alone)

### Suggested activities at home:

- Read the scripture together: Luke 5: 17-26, Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12.
- Prepare for Great Lent with your child. Discuss the fast, what plans your family has to observe it. Prepare them to attend Lenten services as a family.
- Attend Forgiveness Vespers with your child.
- Using dolls or other toy figures, role play the paralytics' friends heroically bringing him into various buildings.

**Prayer** Lord, Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Amen.

➤ Everyone is invited downstairs to enjoy a **Cheesfare Luncheon** sponsored by the St Nicholas Sisterhood. Please give a generous donation so that we can replenish the Sisterhood treasury!

**To our Visitors: Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to come forward to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) at the conclusion of the service.**

# Hymns and Readings for Sunday, March 6

## **Tone 4 Troparion** (*Resurrection*)

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: “Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen,// granting the world great mercy!”

## **Tone 4 Troparion** (*St Nicholas*)

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility, and a teacher of abstinence. Because of your lowliness heaven was opened to you! Because of your poverty riches were granted to you! O holy Bishop Nicholas, pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

## **Tone 6 Kontakion** (*from the Lenten Triodion*)

O Master, Teacher of wisdom, Bestower of virtue, Who teachest the thoughtless and protectest the poor, strengthen and enlighten my heart! O Word of the Father, let me not restrain my mouth from crying to Thee: “Have mercy on me, a transgressor,// O merciful Lord!”

## **Tone 8 Prokeimenon** (*Lenten Triodion*)

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! (*Ps. 75:10a*)

## **Epistle of the Sunday** (*Rom 13:11-14:4*)

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

## **Gospel of the Sunday** (*Mt 6:14-21*)

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves

break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

## **Communion Hymn of Sunday**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*) Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

# Forgiveness Sunday

In the Orthodox Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent – the day on which, at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated – is called Forgiveness Sunday.

On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ: “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses...” (*Mark 6:14-15*).

Then, after Vespers – after hearing the announcement of Lent in the Great Prokeimenon: “Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted! Hear me speedily! Draw near unto my soul and deliver it!” [and] after making our entrance into Lenten worship, with its special memories, with the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations – we ask forgiveness from each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the church with the anticipation of Paschal joy.

What is the meaning of this rite? Why is it that the Church wants us to begin Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? These questions are in order because for too many people, Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet, the compliance with ecclesiastical regulations concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a “good deed” required by God and carrying in itself its merit and its reward. But, the

Church spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means, one among many, towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against a hypocritical and pharisaic fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations. As a Lenten hymn says: “In vain do you rejoice in no eating, O soul! For you abstain from food, but from passions you are not purified. If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast.”

Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, Whom He sends to us, so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a return to it, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for the Lenten season.

One may ask, however: Why should I perform this rite when I have no “enemies”? Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know? To ask these questions is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true, that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life, though if we experience them, it may be easier for us to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine commandments. But, the Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real concern for them—in short, that wall which we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being “polite” and “friendly” we fulfill God’s commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize – be it only for one minute – that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, of one person created by God with another, makes us feel that mutual “recognition” which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

(*Fr Alexander Schmemmann*)