

BULLETIN FOR FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 4, 2023

∞ SCHEDULE

*SUN 2/19/2023
9:00 AM

MEATFARE—SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT
Divine Liturgy
With Weekly Perpetual Commemorations

Perpetual Commemorations for February 19-25:
HOLLIDAY, +Mike & +Mary
GULA, +Metro, +Paraska, +Peter & +Steve

Church School Class Today!

THURS 2/23/2023
9:00 AM

Saint of the Day: Hieromartyr Polycarp of Smyrna
Divine Liturgy
With Weekly Perpetual Commemorations

*SUN 2/26/2023
9:00 AM

CHEESEFARE—SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS
Divine Liturgy
With Weekly Perpetual Commemorations

Perpetual Commemorations for February 26-March 4:
POLANSKY, +George & +Anna
ANDRAS, +John Sr. & +Helen
SENAJ, +John & +Mary, +Anna & +Kermit, +Michael, +Betty & +Dennis
FREJIK, +Mike & +Ruth; +Mary Hajduk
CHUBA, +Tom

After Liturgy Pre-Lenten Potluck Meal
After Meal Vespers for the Start of Great Lent

MON 2/27/2023
6:00 PM

FIRST DAY OF THE GREAT FAST (STRICT FAST)
Lenten Service: Canon of Repentance of St. Andrew of Crete

WED 3/1/2023
6:00 PM

Lenten Service: Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

(Continued on Next Page...)

THURS 3/2/2023

9:00 AM

Parastas (Memorial Service)

With Weekly Perpetual Commemorations

FRI 3/3/2023

6:00 PM

Lenten Service: Akathist to the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ

***SUN 3/5/2023**

9:00 AM

FIRST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST – THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

Divine Liturgy

With Weekly Perpetual Commemorations

Perpetual Commemorations for February 26-March 4:

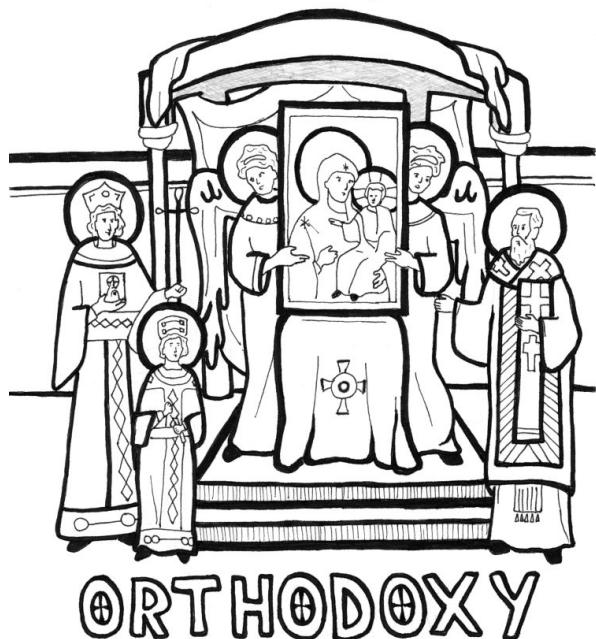
REPASKY, +Stephen, +Mildred, +John & +Helen

HOLMES, +Charles

*Youth Procession with Icons at the Conclusion of the Divine Liturgy
In Honor of the Sunday of Orthodoxy*

The Triumph of

Calling All Kids!
(& Parents)



ALL youth are invited to participate in the **Procession of Icons** at the conclusion of Liturgy on **Sunday, March 5th**—the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Either bring an icon from home, or use one provided by the church.

This procession celebrates the “Triumph of Orthodoxy” and the restoration of icons after iconoclasm in the 9th century, which is always remembered on the first Sunday of Lent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, February 26th: Celebrate Before Lent & Pray to Start Lent With a Pot-Luck Coffee Hour and Vespers

Since it was successful last year, we are doing it again! After Liturgy on Sunday, February 26th, we will gather for a festive **Pot-Luck Meal**. You are invited to bring something to share as we enjoy some fellowship before the start of Lent. Immediately after we eat *and* clean up, we will offer the **Vespers Service** (*approximately 30 minutes in length*) that sets the tone for the beginning of Great Lent. Please plan to attend!

The Great Fast – Lent – begins on February 27th

Much of this bulletin is dedicated to this important part of our Orthodox Christian year. Please take time to look over these materials. May God grant you a good fast!

The Sacrament of Confession

All Orthodox Christians are expected to go to Confession during Lent! Confessions will be heard before evening services, from 5:25 PM to 5:50 PM; before Divine Liturgy on Sunday mornings, from 8:25 to 8:50 AM; and before other weekday services. There is no need to make an appointment for the “walk-in” confession times. Confessions will end 10 minutes prior to the start of services.

If you would like to schedule an appointment for Confession at a time other than those listed above, please call/text/e-mail Fr. David (724-813-3172, father.david@stjohnacroc.org).

Remember: Confessions are heard in the left side room (sacristy). As Fr. David has announced since we moved into the new church (almost 10 years ago), if the door to the “confessional” side room is open and the light is on, please walk right in. You do not need to be “waved in”, especially since Fr. David cannot see you waiting. If the door is open, it means Fr. David is available to hear your confession. However, if the door is closed, please wait in the front pew on the left side of the church. To summarize: if you are sitting in the front pew and the side door is open and you are thinking “I wonder if I should go in” the answer is YES.

Lenten Resource Table

With the Great Fast beginning on February 27th, we again have a resource table set up in the hallway. There are many materials available for free to help with your Lenten journey. *Check it out!*

Read the Entire Book of Psalms This Lent!

Make sure you grab a copy of the Lenten Psalm Reading Guide for 2023. It gives a portion of the Book of Psalms for each weekday of the Great Fast. This is a great (and very manageable way) to incorporate more Scripture in your Lenten efforts.

Reminder About the Eucharistic Fast

Those receiving Communion at an evening Liturgy are to fast for a minimum of 3 hours prior to the service. (*Ideally, we should not eat after lunch.*) Fasting from midnight is still observed before receiving Communion at any morning Liturgy. (Also, only services titled “Liturgy” have the distribution of Holy Communion. Other services offered during Lent—Vespers, Canons, Molebens, Akathists, Paraklis, Parastas—do *not* have Communion.)

Lenten Pot-Luck Dinners

Following our Wednesday evening Presanctified Liturgies on March 15, 22, and 29, we will have a pot-luck/covered dish meal in the Fellowship Hall. You are invited to bring a Lenten dish, baked good, or a beverage to share with those assembled. This is a great opportunity to gather mid-week and cheer one another on as we go through our Lenten journey together!

Willow Watch

Please keep an eye out for pussy willows for Palm Sunday! Cut them as soon as they are ready and bring them to the church. We do have ONE request: do not put them in plastic bags. Please use paper bags.

Deanery Lenten Missions begin on March 19th. A poster is found later in this bulletin. Our Parish Lenten Mission will be on SUNDAY, March 26th. Clergy will be available for Confession beginning at 2:45, and Vespers will be at 4:00 PM. *More information will follow in subsequent bulletins!*

2023 ACRY Annuals are available for \$12. Please see Fr. David if interested.

Lent Begins on February 27th – “What about fasting?”

Fasting is **essential** to Lent. In the Orthodox Church, we call this time of year the “Great Fast” (*in Slavonic, “Velikij Post”*), as it has historically been the most rigorous fast every year. Fasting is a great spiritual tool for us to learn to say “no”: by saying “no” to one appetite, we learn to say “no” to our sins and passions.

The full, traditional fast according to the ancient discipline of the Orthodox Church includes abstaining from meat and dairy every day of Lent and Holy Week, ending after the Pascha Divine Liturgy. In the past, our Diocese has also pastorally offered a reduced fasting regimen, to allow everyone to participate in the Lenten efforts. (Many in our community are familiar with and still observe Lent in this manner.)

All of us are called to share in the Lenten season in some way. On one hand, we are mercifully permitted to lessen the intensity of the Lenten fast. At the same time, we are heartily encouraged to do more, as much we are able. There is no “one size fits all” fast. **Prayerfully consider your personal or family observance of Lent this year and START PLANNING NOW!**

If you have only ever given up meat on Wednesdays and Fridays, consider some possibilities to increase your fast this year:

- *Can I abstain from meat every Monday, Wednesday and Friday?*
- *Can I abstain from meat on all weekdays of Lent?*
- *Can I abstain from meat for the entire season?*
- *Can I “strict fast” on more days (like every Friday, all of Holy Week, or more)?*

Remember: Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God, and without judgment. *Accept the challenge! Don’t ask “What is the least I have to do?” but “What is the most I can do for Christ?”*

For more information about Lent and ideas on how to incorporate fasting into your spiritual life, check out Fr. David’s online video “Making the Most Out of Lent”. This talk is an hour and 10 minutes in length, and goes over the history of Lent, the structure of Lent, and some practical guidance on how you can observe the Great Fast. It can be found at: youtube.com/saintjohnsharon

Mission Sunday: February 26, 2023

*For so the Lord has commanded us ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,
that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’*
— Acts 13:47

To the Reverend Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful
of the Holy Orthodox Churches in the United States:

On Sunday, February 26, just prior to Great Lent, our Orthodox Christian churches throughout our nation will be observing **Mission Sunday**, a time to recall our own mission as the People of God within this world. As we begin our Lenten preparation for Pascha, throughout these days we will affirm “the Light of Christ illuminates all” (at each Presanctified Divine Liturgy), culminating in receiving the Light as we proclaim and glorify the Lord’s Resurrection.

The Orthodox Christian Mission Center is the agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States that coordinates our international missionary service by:

- **Sending Missionaries** – Currently, 24 OCMC missionaries and their families – from diverse professional backgrounds – are serving in Albania, Fiji, Guatemala, Mexico, Romania, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere around the world.
- **Supporting Mission Priests** – Almost 500 local priests, mostly in Africa, receive monthly financial assistance to minister – often to multiple parishes.
- **Training Church Leaders and Clergy** – In Albania, Guatemala, Kenya, Madagascar, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere OCMC sends missionaries and/or funds to help train future clergy and church leaders who share and teach the faith to people in their native language and culture.
- **Funding Missions Initiatives** – In 2022, just over \$1 million was sent to Orthodox missionaries and dioceses around the world so that the church could minister to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of people.

Therefore, on Mission Sunday, on behalf of OCMC and our Assembly of Bishops, I hope that each of us will support the Holy Church’s most central mission by one or more of the following:

1. **Pray** for the missionaries and mission priests around the world who, like the apostles, preach the Gospel of the Lord’s salvation to all peoples.
2. **Give** a financial gift to OCMC in support of its ministries to make more mission work possible.
3. **Engage** your communities and youth in this important work throughout Great Lent by ordering special missions Coin Boxes and Sunday School Lesson Plans to help spread the Light of Christ.

May your Lenten journey be blessed with good strength and may the call to share Christ’s triumphant Resurrection fill our hearts. The world needs the light of Christ. You are needed to take the Light to the ends of the earth!

With Blessings in Christ,
Bishop Demetrios
Episcopal Liaison to OCMC

The proceeds from this year’s Lenten Self-Denial Boxes/Folders will again support the work of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center.
Please take a box home and place your contributions in it throughout Lent!



Office of the Metropolitan

312 Garfield Street

Johnstown, PA 15906

February 13, 2023

Protocol No. 4/2023

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Reverend Fathers and Parish Council Leadership,

A week ago today, a very powerful earthquake (magnitude 7.8 on the Richter scale) erupted in southern Turkey and northern Syria. As of today, the death toll has surpassed 36,000. Tens of thousands more are injured. Tens of thousands of buildings are damaged or totally destroyed. Over a million are now homeless. If you have watched any of the news coverage in the last week and seen the devastation, your heart breaks and tears stream down your face at this great human tragedy. The victims may be Christians or Moslems, but the bottom line is that they are our fellow human beings, children of God.

I am encouraging all of our Parishes to please take up a collection for earthquake relief in the coming days for our brothers and sisters in their time of great need. I encourage you to forward the monies collected to the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), an Agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA. IOCC has their people on the ground and can provide the immediate response to the survivors. It is working with both the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople (present day Istanbul, Turkey) and the Patriarchate of Antioch. Several of our Parishes passed the tray in church yesterday. We thank them for taking the initiative so quickly.

Please send your contributions to:

International Orthodox Christian Charities

110 West Road

Suite 360

Baltimore, MD 21204

Thank you for your consideration in this critical matter.

Working in His Vineyard,

+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

Please use the enclosed envelope for this purpose and return it to the church as soon as possible!



Office of the Metropolitan
312 Garfield Street
Johnstown, PA 15906

GREAT LENT 2023

Protocol N. 2/2023

My beloved Faithful Clergy and Laity of our God-Protected Diocese:

As we begin Holy and Great Lent this year on **February 27th**, I want to share with you a few thoughts so that we may journey through this reflective period and arrive at the Great Feast of Feasts, PASCHA to receive the Resurrected Christ.

We are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we at the same time reconcile with one another. In this holiest period of the ecclesiastical year, we should honestly examine our relationships with our families, our Church families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and the society in general.

After all, a fast without mutual love and forgiveness is “the fast of demons”. Part of our salvation in our daily lives is practicing forgiveness and love. Forgiveness is truly a glimpse of the Heavenly Kingdom in our sinful and fallen world. Only with God’s grace and a repentant heart can we truly return to unity, love, and harmony.

Great Lent involves hard work: on ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, our relationships with those around us. Our Lenten discipline of fasting, prayer, and charity is given to us not as a burden or hardship, but rather as an opportunity for restoring our relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Theotokos, our Guardian Angel, our Patron Saint, our neighbors and even ourselves. The Church invites us to transform our lives and to receive abundantly both peace and joy. Great Lent is an opportunity to renew our souls, minds, and bodies by entering more fully into a Christ-like life.

Therefore as we begin our Lenten journey together, I am asking for your forgiveness for any offenses I may have caused you. Let us pray for each other so that on that day of PASCHA, the Feast of Feasts, we may sing with loud voices the beautiful Hymn of the Resurrection.

I pray that this Great Lenten Season is a spiritually uplifting experience for all of us.

Working in His Vineyard with much love,

+Metropolitan Gregory

+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

Eternal Memory! Fr. David learned this past week that one of our former members, **+BARBARA HOLT**, passed away on June 29, 2022. She was 95 years old. Please remember Barb in your prayers for the departed. May God grant her blessed repose in His heavenly kingdom!

Stewardship By Dan Hromyak

"For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." - Matthew 5:20

The Pharisees lived according to the letter of the law and they used this to elevate themselves above the other people. Jesus is clear - it's the love that you have in your heart, for God and others, that will get you to heaven. Simply following church rules to the letter and not out of love, does not necessarily put you on the path to heaven. Attending Sunday Liturgy and then gossiping about a fellow parishioner on a parking lot is an example of being a modern day Pharisee.

"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..." - Matthew 5:44

Love your enemies, easier said than done. But, remember, the foundation of stewardship is prayer. When we are in close communication with God, it opens our heart and it turns our attention away from 'me' and moves it towards God and others. It changes my heart and actions, allowing a little more empathy for "my enemy." When we pray for others, even our enemies, it may soften their hearts as well.

TRAVELING ICON SCHEDULE

February 19: Debbie & Greg Cross	March 5: David & Irene Beight
February 26: 1st Week of Lent—At Church	March 12: Ed & Francine Fabian



2023 MISSION SERVICES in the YOUNGSTOWN DEANERY

Join the clergy and faithful of our Deanery as we prayerfully journey together towards Pascha!

—Sunday, March 19, 2023—

St. Nicholas Church

2053 North Road NE, Warren, OH

Vespers at 4:00 PM

—Sunday, March 26, 2023—

St. John's Church

3180 Morefield Road, Hermitage, PA

Vespers at 4:00 PM

—Saturday, April 8, 2023—

St. Nicholas Church

1115 East Avenue, Erie, PA

Vespers at 4:00 PM

Priests will be available before each service for Holy Confession.

A homily will be given at each Vespers. Food and fellowship will follow.

*Free-will offerings will be accepted on each occasion
for the work and ministry of the Youngstown Deanery.*

Our “Traveling Icon” Begins Its Second Year!



Last year, on March 13, 2022—the first Sunday of Great Lent, also called the “Sunday of Orthodoxy”—we inaugurated our parish’s “Traveling Icon” ministry. When I started this project, my goal was to have parishioners commit to take the icon for one week, in order to foster prayer and piety at home. Almost every week, the icon was taken to one of the parish households, where prayers were offered every day.

I am very impressed with how self-motivated our members were in this project! I only made a few announcements about this, and you all responded enthusiastically. You filled up the sign-up sheet, brought the icon back to church on time, and even made sure that the next person on the list got the icon. I thought I would have to do more “pestering from the pulpit” but that did not happen!

This year, the icon will be in church for the first week of Great Lent, after which it will begin its “travels” anew. A new sign-up sheet for the rest of 2023 is available. Please sign up to take the icon home for a week and offer prayers for our community. (The prayers are provided.)

May God bless you for your support and participation!

Fr. David

CENTRAL REGION

DIOCESAN LENTEN RETREAT

(Sponsored by the National ACRY)

SATURDAY, April 1, 2023
10:00 AM TO 5:00 PM

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH
903 ANN STREET
HOMESTEAD, PA

Speaker: Fr. David Mastroberte

Topic: From ‘Rejoice, Unwedded Bride’ to ‘The Mother of Sorrows’: A Marian Journey Through Lent and Holy Week

Youth Presenter: Fr. David Urban

Topic: Prosphora—the Bread of Life

SCHEUDLE

10:00 am - Akathist to the Theotokos
10:45 am - Coffee Social
12:00 noon - First Session
1:30 pm - Lunch
2:30 pm - Second Session
4:00 pm – Vespers

Includes a Continental Breakfast & Light Lunch

COST: FREE WILL OFFERING

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MARCH 25, 2023

If you would be interested in going, speak with Fr. David.

SAINT JOHN'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

3180 Morefield Road
Hermitage, PA 16148

Office: 724-981-0571

Rectory: 724-346-4457

E-mail: father.david@stjohnacroc.org

Website: www.stjohnacroc.org

Clergy:

Rev. Father David Mastroberte

Rev. Deacon John Anderson

A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese – Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Sacramental and Membership Information

Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please phone the rectory (724-346-4457) when a family member is admitted to the hospital, or to request a home visit. Hospitals do *not* call to alert the parish when someone is admitted.

Marriages are solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays. Circumstances may require a dispensation from the diocesan bishop. Consult the pastor at least six months in advance and before any plans have been made for the wedding reception. Marriages cannot be celebrated during the fasting seasons of the church, or on Fridays.

Baptisms are usually scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays. Consult the pastor. Two godparents (godfather and godmother) are required, at least one of whom must be a practicing Orthodox Christian in good standing at an Orthodox parish, and the other (at least) a practicing, baptized Christian.

Church Funerals are, under ordinary circumstances, provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual and material obligations to the parish; otherwise, the funeral service is conducted at the funeral home. The Church does *not* permit cremation.

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 church attendance, regular reception of Holy Communion and periodic Holy Confession (and receive these sacraments no less than once a year); if married, having been married in the Orthodox Church; and financially support the parish (especially through an annual “pledge”).

Prospective members and returning members are asked to fill out an application form, copies of which are available in the church office.

Our Church's Website:

stjohnacroc.org

Our YouTube Live Stream:

youtube.com/user/saintjohnsharon

Our Facebook Page:

facebook.com/SaintJohnHermitagePA

Our Diocesan Website:

acrod.org

For Online Giving Options, please visit our website: stjohnacroc.org

❖ SPIRITUAL WISDOM

If our thoughts are kind, peaceful, and quiet, turned only to the good, then we also influence ourselves and radiate peace all around us - in our family, the whole country, everywhere. This is true not only here on earth, but in the cosmos as well. When we labor in the fields of the Lord, we create harmony. Divine harmony, peace, and quiet spread everywhere. (Elder Thaddeus of Vitnovica)

If you cannot be merciful, at least speak as though you are a sinner. If you are not a peacemaker, at least do not be a troublemaker. If you cannot be assiduous, at least in your thought be like a sluggard. If you are not victorious, do not exalt yourself over the vanquished. If you cannot close the mouth of a man who disparages his companion, at least refrain from joining him in this. (St. Isaac the Syrian)

MARCH 2023 Pirohi Schedule

Wednesday, March 8

11:00 AM

Potato Prep

Thursday, March 9

6:00 PM

Filling Prep

Friday, March 10

8:00 AM

Pirohi Making and Sale

**Our April Pirohi Sale
will be on
Friday, April 7.**

March 2023 Pirohi Order Form

Order Deadline: March 5, 2023

724-981-0571

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Potato-Cheese Pirohi @ \$9.00/dozen

Butter Only

Butter and Onions

Total Amount Due: \$_____

Pick-Up on Friday, March 10, 2023

12:00 Noon – 2:00 PM

(Doors Open at Noon)