

Holy Apostles Newsletter

DIOCESE OF THE WEST ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



February: Gateway to Spring

The Lenten Spring has come, the flower of repentance has begun to open..." (Vespers, Feb. 22)

As we prepare to celebrate the feast of the Meeting of the Lord (the 40th day of the "Winter Pascha") we also immediately begin our preparation for the Great and Holy season of Lent which begins on March 1. Each week has its own special theme which corresponds to the Gospel read on Sunday. This message on each Lord's Day emphasizes a particular aspect of the Good News. Each week we are also challenged to examine how we have responded to that "News."

Feb. 8 - Publican and the Pharisee (Gospel - Luke 18:10-14)

Theme: Humility

Religion cannot be reduced to external observances and must not be the source of self-admiration. "Open to me the Doors of Repentance" is sung at Vespers.

Feb. 15 - Prodigal Son (Gospel - Luke 15:11-32)

Theme #1: Return to God

It is not enough to acknowledge sins and confess them. We must make a decision to change our lives - to begin a process of ascension and purification.

Theme #2 - Exile

At Vigil on Saturday night, Psalm 137 (By the Waters of Babylon) is sung. I remember that I have lost communion with God. I am a long way from my true home. Something priceless, pure, beautiful and eternal is missing from my life.

Feb. 22 - Meatfare (Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46)

Theme: Preparation for Divine Judgment

All of us someday face God as our judge. We are challenged to refer our actions, attitudes, and judgments to Jesus Christ. Today's Gospel reminds us that we must learn to see Christ especially in our brothers and sisters. "...in as much as you have done it unto the least of my brethren, you have done it to me."

March 1 - Cheesefare/Forgiveness Sunday (Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21)

Theme: Expulsion from Paradise

We were created for knowledge of God and communion with God. Sin has deprived us of this blessed life (paradise) and to merely exist in this fallen world is to fall short of God's saving plan for the human race. Christ opens the doors of paradise to those who follow Him, and the Church is our guide to our real home.

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Let us ask Christ to help us during this time that we may have eyes to see and ears to hear as we hear these Gospel lessons that are so familiar to us. For those who are growing in Christ spiritually, the Gospel is always new and Christ is always speaking to us in ways we may not have heard before.

Let us embrace this Lenten Spring that is upon us and use this time of the Church to repent, as our Holy Fathers did in days past. For, as St. Dorotheos says: "who will give us back these days if we lose them?"

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From The Holy Fathers

Boastful I am, and hard-hearted, all in vain and for nothing. Condemn me not with the Pharisee, but rather grant me the humility of the Publican, O only merciful and just Judge, and number me with him.
- Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

It is always possible to make a new start by means of repentance. 'You fell,' it is written, 'now arise' (cf. Prov. 24:16). And if you fall again, then arise again, without despairing at all of your salvation, no matter what happens. So long as you do not surrender yourself willingly to the enemy, your patient endurance, combined with self-reproach, will suffice for your salvation.
- St. Peter of Damascus

INDEX	Clean Week Preparation	2
	Men's Lenten Retreat	2
	Kitchen Corner	3
	Liturgical Dates	3

Community Forum

MEN'S LENTEN RETREAT

The Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. John the Honorable Forerunner in Goldendale, Washington will hold a Lenten Men's Retreat March 27-29, with the Very Rev. Fr. Paul Jaroslaw speaking on "St. Innocent of Alaska and The Way of the Cross."

I would like as many men in the parish to attend as possible. Fr. Paul is a wonderful man and speaker and its sure to be a blessing for all who attend. Fr. Paul married Matushka and I in Eagle River, Alaska, and is a very dear friend of mine.

An email flyer will be coming soon which I will send out to all the men with cost and scheduling details. For now, please make plans to attend if you are able.

PLANNING FOR CLEAN WEEK

CLEAN WEEK IS MARCH 2-6

The first week of Great Lent is a very special time of renewal and rededication of our lives to God. It is the most perfect and natural time for a retreat - as individuals and as a community. It is not meant to be a "holy burden" imposed on our already-too-busy schedules. On the contrary, it can be a real gift from God. Reaping the fruits of this gift, however, will require considerable effort on our part. This effort is the seizing of a wonderful spiritual opportunity which goes far beyond merely fulfilling a "religious obligation." If you have the slightest doubt about this please ask a friend who has but once tasted the fruits of this blessed week.

WHAT CAN I DO DURING THIS WEEK?

If at all possible, attend matins at daybreak - at least on the first day. At this service you can especially experience the "bright sadness" which we hear and read about in so many lenten sermons and writings. In the evenings, make an effort at least once or twice to attend Great Compline with the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, which sets the whole tone of our lenten effort. Finally, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts with the reception of Holy Communion and the blessing of kutia (boiled wheat) is the climax of the weekday services.

Remember, services this week are held in the morning and the evening. Not everyone can attend all of them, but most of us can attend some of them.

The "lenten tone" of worship is used only at the weekday services. If we come only on Saturday or Sunday or even the final days of Holy Week, we will miss that entire experience.

AGIA SOPHIA ACADEMY ROUNDUP

Agia Sophia Academy cordially invites you to attend their Elementary Roundup / Open House Thursday, Feb. 5 between 5-7 p.m. A note from the Principal, Elisha Lubliner: "Come learn more about our wonderful Elementary Program and Montessori Preschool, our experienced and talented staff, and our exceptional curriculum." For more information, visit their website: www.agiasophiaacademy.org

CONGRATULATIONS!

Election of new Parish Council officers and members: Pending the approval of Bishop Benjamin, Alexei Kojenov was elected the new Parish Council President; Mike Virosteck was elected Vice President; and Veronica Cable was elected to the council. Emmelia Beckel will continue to serve as council member and Lena Campbell will continue as Treasurer. Father Dimitri and all the members give thanks to Bartholomew Aiello and Reader Nectarios Harmon for their dedicated and loving service to the parish as President and Vice President of the Parish Council. May God grant grace and strength to the members of our Parish Council as we move forward in 2009.

Kitchen Corner

Kutia (also known as Koliva)

- 2 cups cleaned wheat berries
- 3-4 quarts water
- 1 cup cleaned poppy seeds
- 1/3 cup honey
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup hot water
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Wash wheat in cold water and soak overnight in the 3-4 quarts of water. The next day, bring the water to a boil then simmer for 4-5 hours, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. The wheat is ready when the kernels burst open and the fluid is thick and creamy. Chop the poppy seeds in a food processor (or coffee grinder) (or you can buy ground poppy seeds in some stores) and set aside. Mix honey, sugar and hot water. Mix the honey mixture, poppy seeds, and chopped nuts and wheat. More honey can be added to taste. Keep in refrigerator.

THE NEWSLETTER IS BACK!

Submit your monthly submissions no later than the last week of the month to Matushka Mary.

PRAYER REQUESTS

In the back of the Church, you will be able to find Prayer Request Sheets and a box to put them in, where you can list both Orthodox and Non-Orthodox, departed and living. Keep in mind that only Orthodox living and departed are commemorated during the Divine Liturgy.

POTLUCK COFFEE HOUR

We will continue having coffee hour potluck style. It is important that each family bring something to contribute to the coffee hour, so we have enough food for members and guests.

Clean-up teams remain in place and are as follows:

Team Blue - Aiello, Harvey, Virosteck, Perez, Harvest
Team Green - Donnor, Campbell, Story, Tregub, Vaganova, Cable
Team Orange - VanDenend, Harmon, Beckel, Koehn
Team Yellow - Ivkin, Domico, Watt, Kojenov

See the calendar for dates you are on clean-up. If you are unable to clean up on your day, make sure to trade with someone. Clean-up duties are light and include sweeping, cleaning the coffee maker, wiping down tables, stacking chairs, making sure everyone takes their dish home from coffee hour, etc. We should leave it the same way in which we arrived.

UP & COMING LITURGICAL DATES

Saturday, Feb. 14 - Meeting of the Lord in the Temple
6:00 p.m. Vigil w/Lity

Sunday, Feb. 15 - Meeting of the Lord in the Temple
8:30 a.m. Hours
9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Sunday, Feb. 22 - Meat Fare Sunday
9:30 a.m. Hours
10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy, followed by communal luncheon with parish members of First Presbyterian

Sunday, March 1 - Forgiveness Sunday
Vespers w/Rite of Forgiveness immediately following Coffee hour

Monday, March 2 - Great Lent Begins
See calendar for liturgical schedule

Thursday, April 2nd - Thursday of the Great Canon
9:00 a.m. Canon of St. Andrew w/reading of life of St. Mary of Egypt

Saturday, April 4th - Saturday of the Akathist
9:00 a.m. Akathist to Theotokos

Monday, April 6th - Annunciation
6:00 p.m. Vigil w/Lity

Tuesday, April 7th - Annunciation
8:30 a.m. Hours
9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Saturday, April 11th - Lazarus Saturday
7:30 a.m. Matins
9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Sunday, April 12th - Palm Sunday
7:30 a.m. Matins
9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy w/blessing of Palms followed by fish luncheon
5:00 p.m. Bridegroom Matins

Monday, April 13th - Great and Holy Monday
9:00 a.m. Presanctified Liturgy

Tuesday, April 14th - Great and Holy Tuesday
9:00 a.m. Presanctified Liturgy

Wednesday, April 15th - Great and Holy Wednesday
9:00 a.m. Presanctified Liturgy

Thursday, April 16th - Great and Holy Thursday
9:00 a.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil w/foot washing
7:00 p.m. Matins/12 Passion Gospels

Friday, April 17th - Great and Holy Friday:
9:00 a.m. Royal Hours & Great Vespers
7:00 p.m. Holy Saturday Matins w/Lamentations

Saturday, April 18th - Great and Holy Saturday
9:00 a.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, followed by meal of fruit, wine & bread

Sunday, April 19th - Pascha
11:30 p.m. Resurrection Vigil & Divine Liturgy followed by breaking of fast w/Pascha Baskets
1:00 p.m. Agape Vespers w/Gospel in many languages and blessing of the Artos. Feast/Egg Hunt - details TBD.

A note about Pre-sanctified Liturgies: They will take place every Friday at 9 a.m. at First Presbyterian. Pan-Orthodox Liturgies are planned for Wednesday evenings (in the past they have been every other Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at various parishes in the area). When a schedule is published by the clergy brotherhood, you will be made aware.

An effort was made to advise you of upcoming liturgical dates and times so you can request off work as appropriate; **service times are subject to change.**