From The Ambon

St Michael Orthodox Church

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Priest Michael Shepherd (frmichael@stmichaelof.org)
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Sunday, March 1st, 2026

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 5. Sunday of Orthodoxy. Martyr Eudokia of Heliopolis (ca. 160-170). Ven. Martyrii (Martyrius) of Zelenétsk (Pskov—1603). Martyrs Nestor, Tribimius, and those with them (3rd c.). Martyr Antonina of Nicæa in Bithynia (3rd-4th c.). Martyrs Marcellus and Anthony. Saint Domnina the Younger of Syria (ca. 450-460). Ven. Agapius of Vatopedi (Mt. Athos).

Birthdays & Anniversaries for March

Birthdays: Maura Elko (3/2); Matushka Emilia Shepherd (3/3); Tammy Wytovich (3/4); Marie Pasternak (3/7); Sophia Polzella (3/21)

Nameday:

Anniversary:

Travelers:

Prosphora Schedule: PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE HELP! We need families to start baking prosphora at home. Please sign up. *The Church has a prosphora kit if you would like to borrow it. THE CHURCH NEEDS YOUR HELP. THIS IS AN OFFERING FOR THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE. Thank you Matushka for today's offering.*

Mar 8
Mar 15
Mar 22

Counting: HELP! Please sign up and count our donations. Please stay and help.

Mar 8
Mar 15
Mar 22

PLEASE SING ALONG! *Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies throughout the services is encouraged!*

Coffee Hour/Agape Meal: *Please stay and join us for a cup of coffee so we may break bread with each other. This will allow us to get to know each other and see how we can help each other.*

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting, and a recent (monthly) confession. If you have questions please ask Fr Michael! Visitors, if you did not introduce yourself to Fr Michael at Vespers, please refrain from Holy Communion.*

Service Schedule

WED, Mar 4th: @ Confession 4PM-5PM
5:00PM Presanctified Liturgy (Every Wednesday)

SAT, MAR 7th: 5:00 PM Great Vespers
SUN, MAR 8th: 9:10 AM - Hours and Liturgy
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT -
Tone 6. St. Gregory Palamas.

FRI, Mar 13th: 5:00 PM Great Vespers
SAT, Mar 14th: 9:00 AM - Hours and Liturgy
Third Saturday of Lent — Memorial Saturday.

Please see calendar for the Lenten schedule

Parish Prayer List

NEWLY DEPARTED:
DEPARTED: *Stephen* Polanchik (3/3); *Joseph* Kuzmich (3/8); *Diane* Yacopchak 03/11); *Michael* Buday (3/18); *Michael* Brown (3/15);

Please remember in your prayers LIVING:
Ill-afflicted *Archpriest(s) John Nightingale,* & *Theodore* Orzolek

All those caring for the sick and suffering at this time throughout the world, especially our families and friends: *Edward* Sevensky, *Margaret* Pregmon, *Daniel* Jones, *Michae*l Sokol, *Michael* Krenitsky, *Bernie* Elko, *Nadia* Macheska, *The child of God Abigail, Helen* Wytovich, *Marie* Pasternak, *Eli & Paula* Stavisky,

Servants of God: *Mark* Bezhuly, *David & Kathy* Barsigian, *Alexa* Barsigian & *Bobby* Wolfel, *Patricia* Jones, *Anne* Buday, *Emily* Krenitsky, *Gregory* Krenitsky, *Barbara* Sevensky, *Beverly* Elko, *Nicole* Earl, *Anna* Tyrpak, *Sandy & Danny* Pregmon, *Walter & Marie* Pritchyk, *Michael & Euphemia* Keklak, *Justin & Elisabeth* Kane, *Maria & Vitaliy* Rakovsky, *Ekaterina & Anna*, *George, Natasha, Rosa, & Lucia* Coyoy, *Mat. Emilia, Reader Blaise, Maximus, Rodion, Savina* Shepherd, *Joseph, Emilia, Judah, Nadezda, & Silas* Hart, *Tammy* Wytovich, *Paulette* Ezbiansky, *Uriel* Vo *& Maura* Elko, *Mary* Krevko, *Elisabeth, Jacob, & Juliette* Halford, *Tammy, Justin, Niko, & Katya* Williams, *Paul* Dunay, *Anastasia, Sophia, & Luke, Darlene* Shaffer, *Vanessa, Sophia, & Anastasia* Polzella, *David* Jadick, *Sandra* Condone, *Holly* Granville, *Maxim* Granville, *Christopher* Yeisley, and *Gabrie*l, Mother *Katherine*, *Diane*

Catechumens: *Marley* Connolly, *Neva* Yeisely, *Zachary* Nikl,
Seekers: *Vincent* Bonello, *Rebecca* Burns, *Ken* Nikl

Treasury "... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." Jesus Christ

How Much is my tithe

Weekly	2%	4%	5%	10%
$200	$4	$8	$10	$20
$500	$10	$20	$25	$50
$750	$15	$30	$37	$75
$1000	$20	$40	$50	$100
$1500	$30	$60	$75	$150

WEEKLY GIVING UPDATE: We thank you for your continued giving in gratitude for all that our loving God does for each of us, for His Holy Church, **and** all the blessings we receive through her.
FEB Income: $10,589.00

Words of Wisdom
From the Saints & Teachers

Today Readings

Epistle: (329-ctr) Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2
Gospel: (5) John 1:43-51

EPISTLE
Deacon: Let us attend!
Priest: Peace be unto all!
Reader: And to thy spirit.
Deacon: Wisdom!
Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 4th Tone, the Song of the Fathers: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!
Choir: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!
Reader: For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us!
Choir: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!
Reader: Blessed art Thou O Lord God of our Fathers
Choir: And praised and glorified is Thy name forever!
Deacon: Wisdom!
Reader: The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews.
Deacon: Let us attend!

[(329-ctr) Hebrews 11:24-26,32-12:2] Brethren: By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, * choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. * He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward. * And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets -- * who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, * quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. * Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. * Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. * They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated -- * of whom the world was not worthy -- wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. * And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, * since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. * Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, * looking to Jesus the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith.

Priest: Peace be unto thee, Reader.
Reader: And to thy spirit.

ALLELUIA
Deacon: Wisdom!
Reader: In the 4th Tone: Alleluia, Alleluia, AL-LE-LU-IA!
Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!
Reader: Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His Name.
Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!
Reader: They called to the Lord and He answered them.
Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

GOSPEL
[(5) John 1:43-51] At that time, Jesus decided 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." * Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." * Jesus saw Nathanael

coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" * Nathanael said to Him, "How dost Thou know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." * Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!" * Jesus answered him, "Because I said to thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, dost thou believe? Thou shalt see greater things than these." * And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to thee, thou shalt see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

HEBREWS 11:32-40 THEY ACCOMPLISHED ALL BY FAITH. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM: "And what shall I more say? For time would fail me to tell." After this Paul no longer puts down the names, but, having ended with a harlot and put them to shame by the quality of the person, he no longer enlarges on the histories, lest he should be thought tedious. However, he does not set them aside but runs over them, doing both very judiciously, avoiding satiety without spoiling the closeness of the argument. He was neither altogether silent, nor did he speak so as to annoy, for he effected both points. For when a person is contending vehemently in argument, if he persists in contending, he wears out the hearer, annoying him when he is already persuaded and gaining the reputation of vain ambitiousness. For he ought to accommodate himself to what is expedient. "And what more do I say?" he says. "For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets."

Some find fault with Paul because he puts Barak, Samson and Jephthah in these places. What do you say? After having introduced the harlot, shall he not introduce these? For do not tell me of the rest of their life but only whether they did not believe and shine in faith. "And the prophets," he says, "who through faith conquered kingdoms." Do you see that he does not here testify to their life as being illustrious, for this was not the point in question; the inquiry thus far was about their faith. For tell me whether they did not accomplish all by faith?

"By faith," he says, "they conquered kingdoms"—those with Gideon. "Enforced justice." Who? The same. Plainly, he here means kindness. I think it is of David that he says "they received promises." But of what sort were these? Those in which the Lord said that his "sons shall sit upon" his "throne." "Stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword." See how they were in death itself, Daniel encompassed by the lions, the three children abiding in the furnace, the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, in diverse temptations; and yet not even so did they despair. For this is faith. When things are turning out adversely, then we ought to believe that nothing adverse is done but all things in due order. "Escaped the edge of the sword." I think that he is again speaking of the three children.

"Won strength out of weakness." Here be alludes to what took place at their return from Babylon. For "out of weakness" is out of captivity. When the condition of the Jews had now become desperate, when they were no better than dead bones, who could have expected that they would return from Babylon, and not return only but also "become mighty" and "put foreign armies to flight"? "But to us," someone says, "no such thing has happened." But these are figures of "the things to come." "Women received their dead by resurrection." He here speaks of what occurred in regard to the prophets Elisha and Elijah, for they raised the dead. ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS 27.4.
Heen, E. M., & Krey, P. D. W., eds. (2005). *Hebrews* (pp. 203–204). InterVarsity Press.

John 1:50–51 *Greater Things Than These* THE LORD OF ANGELS. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM: Do you see how he leads him up little by little from the earth and causes him no longer to imagine him as merely a man? For one to whom angels minister and on whom angels ascend and descend, how could he be a man? This is why he said, "You shall see greater things than these." And to prove this, he introduces the ministry of angels. What he means is something like this: Does this, O Nathanael, seem to you a great matter, and have you for this confessed me to be King of Israel? What then will you say when you see "angels ascending and descending on me"? He persuades him by these words to receive him as Lord also of the angels. For on him as on the king's own son, the royal ministers ascended and descended, once at the season of the crucifixion, again at the time of the resurrection and the ascension, and before this also, when they "came and ministered to him." They also ascended and descended when they proclaimed the good news of his birth and cried, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace," when they came to Mary and also when they came to Joseph.…

Our Lord made the present a proof of the future. After the powers he had already shown, Nathanael would readily believe that much more would follow. HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 21.1. Elowsky, J. C., ed. (2006). *John 1–10* (pp. 86–87). InterVarsity Press.

Announcements - Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events
Church Attendance

Feb 28, Saturday Vespers 33
Mar 1st Liturgy
Communed

Silent Prayers and Confession: Every Wednesday 11:00AM - 1:30PM or you can make an appt for confession.

Catechumen/Inquirers/Continuing ED Class: 14Mar after Vespers

Parish Council Meeting/Annual Meeting: Next one is Mar 15th. ***ALL ARE INVITED***.

Remember that at the Great Entrance after each petition the priest will say "may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom……," the people should respond with "Amen." And at the end of the petitions, the priest will raise the chalice and say "You and all Orthodox Christians, may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom…… the people respond with "And to thy Holy Priesthood (Episcopacy), may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom always now and ever unto ages of ages." This is dialogue, a prayer if you will, between the concelebrant and the people.

Choir practice: Saturday's @ 4pm prior to vespers. If you would like to sing in the choir please make every effort to be at the practice.

WISH LIST! Please consider purchasing from our wish list as this will reduce our cost of expenses and will allow us to increase and focus our giving in other vital areas needed. Currently we are looking for small wooden boxes that we can dedicate at reliquaries. https://www.myregistry.com/giftlist/stmichaelsorthodoxchurcholdforgewishlist

St. Michael's Greeters Ministry *"I was a stranger, and you welcomed me."* Matthew 25:35 Our objective is to welcome visitors to the Parish, help them "feel at home" during the worship service, provide them with information about Orthodoxy and the Parish, invite them to Parish activities, introduce them to people of like interests, invite them back, follow-up to thank them for visiting us, and identifying whether we can help them in the future. Most people leave a church once they enter because no one greeted them. Please sign up to greet people.

STOMC Mens Group! New details coming!

Please sign up for coffee hour! There are sign up sheets downstairs by the offering basket. Also, please donate at coffee hour. Donate what you would spend on a cup of coffee. This is to replenish our plastic wear and supplies for coffee hour.

CONFESSION: It is important that every Orthodox Christian continues to receive the Mystery of Confession on a monthly basis and especially during the Lenten season. In the coming weeks, Fr. Michael will be available for Confession after the Liturgy of the Presanctified, after Great Vespers (Sat), or by appointment. If you wish to come before these services, please let him know ahead of time. Please, note that Friday, April 3rd (the day before Lazarus Saturday) is the last day when Fr. Michael will hear Confessions before Pascha. When we enter Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, our focus must be exclusively on walking with our Lord through His passion.

Pascha Flowers: Donations towards adorning the church this Lenten season and Pascha are being accepted so that our parish will be beautifully adorned for all of the feasts. General Donations for Palm Sunday may be given to Jason Hart. Please write "Flowers for Lent" in the memo. If you would like to honor a loved one by making a donation for Holy Pascha flowers "In Memory of" or "For the Health of" a loved one, please sign up in the Church Vestibule/Narthex. Please leave donations at the candle stand, mail them to the Church, OR drop it in the rectory mailbox attention Jason Hart. As always, your loved ones will be remembered in our services in prayer. Envelopes can be picked at the candle stand.

Third Saturday of Lent — Memorial Saturday. Please email the names of those who have departed for Fr Michael to remember during Liturgy

First Sunday of Great Lent - Sunday of Orthodoxy

On the First Sunday of the Fast, we commemorate the restoration of the Holy and Precious Icons, which was brought about by the ever-memorable Emperors of Constantinople, Michael and his mother Theodora, during the Patriarchate of the Holy Confessor Methodios. On the first Sunday of Lent, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Triumph of Orthodoxy, of true faith, which trampled down all heresies and was established. For this reason this Sunday is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Heresies showed up even at the very beginning of Christianity. The Apostles of Christ themselves warned their contemporaries, and with them us too, about the danger of false teachers.

We should know that the new heresies are not saying anything new but repeating what the old heretics have already said. All of these heresies were anathematized by the Seventh Ecumenical Council. So the decisions of the seven Ecumenical Councils are enough for us, especially the Seventh Ecumenical Council. This is why we rejoice today and celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy, which was expressed and fixed by the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

The Word "Anathema" and it's meaning
by Saint John Maximovitch - from "Orthodox Life", Vol.27, Mar-April 1977, pp 18,19

The Greek word "anathema" consists of two words: "ana", which is a preposition indicating movement upwards and "thema", which means a separate part of something. In military terminology, "thema" meant a detachment; in civil government "thema" meant a province. We currently use the word "theme", derived from "thema", to mean a specific topic of a written and intellectual work.

"Anathema" literally means the lifting up of something separate. In the Old Testament this expression was used both in relation to that which was alienated due to sinfulness and likewise to that which was dedicated to God. In the New Testament, in the writing of the Apostle Paul it is used once in conjunction with "maranatha", meaning the coming of the Lord. The combination of these words means separation until the coming of the Lord; in other words - being handed over to Him (1 Cor.16:22).

The Apostle Paul uses "anathema" in another place without the addition of "maranatha" (Gal 1:8-9). Here "anathema" is proclaimed against the distortion of the Gospel of Christ as it was preached by the Apostle, no matter by whom this might be committed, whether by the Apostle himself or an angel from the heavens. In this same expression there is also implied: "let the Lord Himself pass judgment", for who else can pass judgment on the angels?

St John the Theologian in Revelation (22:3) says that in the New Jerusalem there will not be any anathema; this can be understood in two ways, giving the word anathema both meanings: 1) there will not be any lifting up to the judgment of God, for this judgment has already been accomplished; 2) there will not be any special dedication to God, for all things will be the Holy things of God, just as the light of God enlightens all (Rev 21:23).

In the acts of the Councils and the further course of the New Testament Church of Christ, the word "anathema" came to mean complete separation from the Church. "The Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes", "let him be anathema", "let it be anathema", means a complete tearing away from the church. While in cases of "separation from the communion of the Church" and other "epitimia" or penances laid on a person, the person remained a member of the Church, even though his participation in her grace filled life was limited, those given over to anathema were thus completely torn away from her until their repentance. Realizing that she is unable to do anything for their salvation, in view of their stubbornness and hardness of heart, the earthly church lifts them up to the judgment of God. That judgment is merciful unto repentant sinners, but fearsome for the stubborn enemies of God. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ... for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 10:31 ; 12:29).

Anathema is not final damnation: until death repentance is possible. "Anathema" is fearsome not because the Church wishes anyone evil or God seeks their damnation. They desire that all be saved. But it is fearsome to stand before the presence of God in the state of hardened evil: nothing is hidden from Him.