



St. Michael's Orthodox Christian Church

1182 Ashland St., Greensburg, PA 15601

*Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.*

- **His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH**, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America
- **His Grace Bishop THOMAS**, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Middle Atlantic
- **Archpriest John Nosal**, Pastor

Sunday, March 15, 2020

*To all who are present with us this morning,
Christ is in our midst! Thank you for being here.
We will not be gathering in the Fellowship Hall today
due to the viral pandemic. God grant you health!*

A Video of the Epistle and Gospel Readings and the Sermon is recorded on most Sundays for posting to our website, stmgbg.org.

You May Find the Text of the Divine Liturgy beginning on the bottom of page 91 of the Service Book (gold embossed cross on the reddish brown cover) or in the green-spiral-bound book; sheet music can be found in the 8.5" x 11" large, spiral-bound booklet.

At the Kiss of Peace our practice is for each of us to greet the person to our right and left with the bowing of our head, hands held in a prayerful clasp or crossed on the chest, while offering each other the seasonal Christian greeting, "Christ is in our midst!" and responding, "He is and shall be!"

Please remember that Holy Communion is reserved for those Chrismated Orthodox Christians who have appropriately prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and Confession to receive the Holy Mysteries of the Church. The bread (*anti'doron*, which means 'in place' of the gifts) which we share after Communion and at the end of the Liturgy is for all.

Being mindful we are in church, let us always remember to...

- ...**be quiet and attentive.** Let us sing, pray, stand, sit, kneel and respond where responses are indicated. Let us not talk, look around, text message, play games, etc. Especially let us work at this in the Communion line and when in line to venerate the Cross and depart. If we cannot hear the post-Communion prayers being chanted during our church departure, we are way too noisy.
- ...**refrain from eating, drinking or chewing gum.** (most obviously and especially if you will be receiving Holy Communion).
- ...**stay put.** Except in rare cases, there are few of us who cannot stay in one location for two hours (actually less, for most of us).



The mission of the members of St. Michael's Orthodox Church is to become completely loving people.

(see Lk 10:27) This will occur by the Grace of God as we strive to live holy lives, using the tools He has given us for this endeavor: prayer, fasting, charitable works, and the constant remembrance of death.

TONE 6

Arr: Basil Kazan.

When Ma - ry stood at Thy grave look - ing for Thy sa - cred Bo -
dy, an - gel - ic pow'rs shone a - bove Thy re - vered tomb,
and the sol - diers who were to keep guard be -
came as dead men. Thou led Ha - des cap - tive and was not
temp - ted there - by; Thou didst meet the Vir -
gin and didst give Life to the world; O Thou Who art
ri - sen from the dead, O Lord glo - ry to Thee.

I.O.C.C. SYRIAN CHRISTIAN RELIEF

As the Syrian crisis continues, we continue to accept *donations* to do what we can to help ease the suffering there. Checks may be written to "St. Michael's" with the note "Syrian Relief." The following is a link to International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) "Response to the Crisis in Syria" page with more information on what you can do to help:

http://www.iocc.org/countries/countries_syria.aspx

Sunday, March 15, 2020

Greeting: Christ is in our midst!

Response: He is and shall be!

Tone: 6 **Eothinon:** 6

Second Sunday of Great Lent; Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonika; Martyr Agapios of Palestine and those with him; Apostle Aristoboulos of the Seventy, first bishop of Britain; New-martyrs Manuel of Crete and Parthenios.



THE EPISTLE READING

St. Paul to the Hebrews (1:10-2:3)

IN THE BEGINNING, Thou, O Lord, didst found the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands; they will perish, but Thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle Thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years will never end.” But to what angel has He ever said, “Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a stool for thy feet”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore, we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message, declared by angels, was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard Him.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

According to St. Mark (2:1-12)

AT THAT TIME, when Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and He was preaching the Word to them. And they came, bringing to Jesus a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now, some of the scribes were sitting there, reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they thus reasoned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you reason thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your pallet and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – He said to the paralytic – “I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all. So that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

MARCH IS ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S MONTH

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Offering Takers</u>
March 15	Christine Mansour	Michelle Gajewski Raymounda Chaho Paulette Sproch
March 22		Connie Volchko Fotini Abatzis Jillian Crowe
March 29		Joanne Hasnauer Laura Nicholas Lisa Stewart

We are looking for a successor to our current Head Usher, Gust Flizanes. If you wonder at all what the job entails, talk to Gust and Fr. John.

VOTIVE CANDLE OFFERINGS

In memory of parents, Miller and Pat Abraham - Dana Abraham
Health of Paul Capar - Dana Abraham
Health of Jillian Crowe - Dana Abraham
Health of Elaine Evangelista - Dana Abraham
Health of friend Shirley - Dana Abraham

Food for Hungry People boxes are available for pick up on the table outside of the Church Office.

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

March 13, 2020

Beloved in Christ,

Greetings and blessings to all of you in the Name of our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ!

During these holy days of Lent - this time of fasting, prayer, and repentance - we are preparing ourselves to commemorate the Life-giving and Saving Passion of our Lord and His Glorious Third-day Resurrection. On the night our Lord was betrayed, He gathered His disciples in the Upper Room to strengthen them in their Faith before the coming trials and tribulations. While speaking plainly about the suffering that was to take place, He said to them encouragingly: "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Our Lenten journey this year has the added trial of the worldwide spread of a novel coronavirus. This virus has landed on the shores of our North American continent and begun its spread into various cities within the boundaries of our Archdiocese. As our Lord strengthened the courage of His disciples before His Passion, He is calling us to faith and courage *today*. We are hearing the warnings that the spread of the disease will quicken without more dramatic measures, and we need to say honestly that we could be entering into a time of significant trial. As Orthodox Christians, we should remind ourselves that in the world we will always have tribulation.

We must all decide what we will do during this time. Will we panic and become paralyzed with fear? Or will we recall the words of our Lord that despite this time of trial, we can take heart that He has indeed overcome the world? Even in the face of sickness and death, we as Orthodox Christians are called to remember that the Tomb is empty, for our Christ has shattered the gates of death and opened Paradise to all. We celebrate the death of death and ask: "Oh, death where is thy sting? Oh, hades where is thy victory?"

Having said that, I would like to offer a few words about the seriousness of the threat we face. I have heard some of our clergy and faithful downplaying the threat by saying things that may be factually true but can also be misleading. Yes, the disease COVID-19 will only have mild symptoms in the vast majority of cases. Yes, the

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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seasonal flu has at this point caused considerably more deaths during this flu season than COVID-19. Yes, most Americans are still considered to have low degree of risk of contracting the coronavirus. However, the daunting problem we are facing is one of avoiding the spike in cases that could easily happen without taking serious precautions. As we have seen in other countries, the virus can spread quickly, and if even a small percentage of people require hospitalization, our hospitals will be overrun.

On the same night before His Passion, the Lord asked His disciples: “to love one another as I have loved you.” We know that people who are older and have underlying health problems are the most susceptible to having a serious illness develop from COVID-19. We must remember that although the vast majority of us may have only a mild illness if infected, our own careless spread of the virus could result in the unnecessary hospitalizations and deaths of many of our vulnerable brothers and sisters. We have to show our Christian love by cooperating with our civil authorities to do what can be done to protect them.

We have been in touch with epidemiologists and civic leaders to do our part in containing the spread of the virus. Last week, we sent directives to our clergy based on the advice we had received at the time. We also cautioned that we were dealing with a rapidly evolving situation that will require us to update the directive as we receive new information and guidance.

As we have heard many times now, all of us need to adopt extremely good hygiene practices – frequent hand washing, cleaning often-touched surfaces, sneezing and coughing into our elbows, and limiting hugs, kisses, and handshakes. The sick need to stay home and contact their healthcare providers if they show symptoms of COVID-19. The elderly and vulnerable need to severely limit their travel and exposure to crowded places. Anyone who can work from home is encouraged to do so. Our priests and parish councils were instructed to take necessary precautions to limit the spread of this virus in our parishes last week.

We are now entering a time where we will be asked more and more by the civil authorities to engage in social distancing and cut down on unnecessary travel and events. We can expect that there will be different levels of these requests in different areas of the country – depending on the severity of local outbreaks – so we will respond as the situation dictates. In the spirit of love for our vulnerable neighbors and service to our communities, I am instructing our clergy and parishes to abide by the directives of their local civil authorities.

In this same spirit, we will postpone all events and retreats on the deanery and diocesan level through the end of this month. We do not want any unnecessary travel

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at this critical juncture. In fact, we have already postponed two Lenten retreats of the Dioceses of the East that were to take place at the Antiochian Village in the coming weeks. After this Sunday, we ask that our parishes postpone any non-worship event that would bring together more than 100 people. We will leave it up to the discretion of the pastor, in consultation with the local bishop, to cancel Sunday School, coffee hour, potlucks, etc. due to the proximity of each parish to areas of outbreak and the advice of the local authorities.

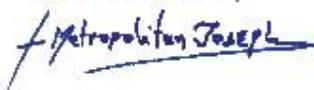
To be clear, we will not stop the liturgical life of our parishes unless specifically ordered to do so by the local authorities. We need the prayer of the Church and the Holy Mysteries. As I instructed our clergy last week, *Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is without any question or doubt the Medicine of Immortality, not a source of disease. The Church, over her two-thousand-year history, has experienced countless plagues and has never wavered on this point, and we will not do so now.*

Beloved in Christ, I ask of all of us to increase the fervency of our prayers to Almighty God. Our Lord also spoke on that fateful night of the greatest love we can offer, the love of one who lays down his or her life for another. Our health care workers, first responders, and clergy will be asked to courageously put themselves in harm's way to care for and minister to the sick, and they need our prayers and support. We must pray to God to grant wisdom and discernment to the civil authorities of our land. We must pray for the sick and their loved ones. We must use this holy season to repent and grow to love God and our neighbor more fully.

We are likely entering into a time of trial. We pray that the measures we are taking in conjunction with the civil authorities will slow the spread of the virus in our communities. We pray that our Lord, the Physician and Healer of our souls and bodies, will look down on our world with mercy and compassion and speedily deliver us from this pestilence. We also pray that He will grant to all of us faith and love, courage and strength, wisdom and discernment to do our part – each and every one of us. We have the assurance of our Faith, that in the end, our Lord has overcome the world.

With paternal love and prayers and for all of you, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,



+JOSEPH

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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HIGHLIGHTS of UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 Lutheran Luncheon 12:00 Greensburg

SATURDAY, APRIL 25 — 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM — Red Cross Blood Drive
in Multi-Purpose Room

SUNDAY, MAY 3 — Concert - “Journey to Grace” by “Prayer Arise”
(The Southwestern PA Regional Men’s A-Capella Liturgical & Folk Choir)
at St. Michael’s

TUESDAY, JUNE 16 — Pittsburgh Pirates vs NY Yankees at PNC Park

JUNE 24-28 — **Eastern Dioceses Parish Life Conference** at AVCC
For more information, visit

<https://www.antiochianevents.org/events/dioceses-of-new-york-and-charleston/>

SUNDAY, JULY 12 — Parish Picnic at Twin Lakes; Upper Lake Pavilion 1
(where we bless the water)

**Secretary Debbie will be in on
Tues, Wed, Fri from 9-3.**

**ALWAYS USE THE MOST
CURRENT BULLETIN!**

Sunday, March 15 (Gregory Palamas)

- 8:45 AM - ORTHROS
- 9:20 AM - Choir Rehearsal
- 10:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY

Monday, March 16

- 6:00 PM - GREAT COMPLINE
Communal Jesus Prayer Session

Wednesday, March 18

- 5:30 PM - NINTH HOUR
- 6:00 PM - PRESANC. DIV. LIT
- Choir Rehearsal in church

Friday, March 20

- 7:00 PM - AKATHIST to the
Theotokos

Saturday, March 21

- 9:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
Souls Saturday
- 6:00 PM - GREAT VESPERS

Sunday, March 22 (The Holy Cross)

- 8:45 AM - ORTHROS
- 9:20 AM - Choir Rehearsal
- 10:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY

Monday, March 23

- 6:00 PM - GREAT COMPLINE
Communal Jesus Prayer Session

Wednesday, March 25

- 6:00 PM - VESP. DIV. LIT'GY
Great Feast of Annunciation
- Choir Rehearsal in church

Friday, March 27

- 7:00 PM - AKATHIST to the
Theotokos

Saturday, March 28

- 9:00 AM - DIVINE LITURGY
Souls Saturday
 - 6:00 PM - GREAT VESPERS
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For the coronavirus Time Being...

1. Sunday Coffee Hour, Wednesday Soup and Friday Covered Dish is suspended indefinitely. Likewise for Church School.
 2. All meetings that normally take place in our building, including all AA meetings will not take place here in the building at least until the end of March. Then we will reassess. Parish work will go on using other locations or forms of communication.
 3. **Church services will continue 'as usual.'**
 4. **When in church, spread out and don't touch anyone or anything.**
 5. **Wash your hands often/thoroughly (20 secs.)**
 6. Elderly parishioners or those with complicated health conditions are encouraged to evaluate whether they should be in church (crowds).
 7. The Archdiocese has told us to be compliant with local authorities. Should the local authorities ask houses of worship to close for a period of time, we will comply.
 8. If you have travelled lately, please reconsider being near elderly people or those with health conditions for a time after you return.
 9. Again, in church, spread out as much as possible. **Do not to touch your eyes, nose, face, or mouth! Remember where you are, what you're doing and why you're doing it.**
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