



# THE FORERUNNER

*The Nativity of St. John the Baptist*

Orthodox Church O.C.A.

420 Laura Street

Philipsburg, PA 16866

(814) 342-2011

<http://nativityofstjohn-oca.org>

Very Rev. John Horosky - Priest

John Conkey - Council President

March 2015

Glory Be to Jesus Christ!

## Service Schedule

### February 27

Pre-sanctified @ 6:00 PM

### March 1 Sunday of Orthodoxy

Hours @ 9:45 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Annual Meeting

### March 7 Soul Saturday

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

### March 8 St. Gregory Palamas

*Change clocks ahead 1 hour*

Hours @ 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Coffee Hour following Liturgy

### March 11

Pre-sanctified @ 6:00 PM

### March 15 Veneration of the Cross

Hours @ 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Coffee Hour following Liturgy

### March 20

Pre-sanctified @ 6:00 PM

### March 22 St. John Climacus

Hours @ 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Coffee Hour following Liturgy

### March 25

Pre-sanctified @ 6:00 PM

### March 29 St. Mary of Egypt

Hours @ 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Pot Luck following Liturgy

Mission Vespers @ 4:00 PM

## Reader's Schedule

### Hours

3/1 Tom Demchak

3/8 Doug Donovan

3/15 Jan Brennish

3/22 Doug Donovan

3/29 John Conkey

### Epistle

Tom Demchak

Doug Donovan

George Sura

Doug Donovan

John Conkey

## Feasts & Saints

3/1 Sunday of Orthodoxy

3/8 St. Gregory Palamas

3/9 The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste

3/15 Veneration of the Cross

3/22 St. John Climacus

3/25 Annunciation of the Theotokos

3/29 St. Mary of Egypt

3/31 Repose of St. Innocent



## NOTES:

**Annual Parish Meeting** – March 1 after Liturgy. All in good standing are encouraged to attend.

**Coffee Hour** - During Lent we will continue to have Coffee Hours after Liturgy. We will be observing the Lenten Fast, but encourage all to gather together after Liturgy. We appreciate monetary donations, paper goods or food for the meals. We are blessed to be able to gather together in fellowship.

**Mission Vespers** – Mission Vespers will be held at St. John's on Sunday, March 29 at 4:00 PM. We will need help preparing the Lenten meal that will follow Vespers. Please see John Conkey for details.

## Birthdays

Richard Nakles	03/03
Lilian Ammerman	03/04
Irene Pollock	03/06
Silvia Marko	03/10
Joe Demchak	03/16
Tom Demchak	03/23
Elizabeth Blake	03/24

## Anniversaries

none

**Remember in your prayers:** Archbishop MELCHISEDEK, Father John, Father Adam, Father Ted, Father Paul, Father Michael, Matushka Judy Horosky, Matushka Ksenia Batchko, Larry Ammerman, Mary Ann Ammerman, Jen Ammerman and Victor, Karen Blackburn, Matthew Boroughf, Chris Conkey, John Conkey, James Crites, Helen Czar, Eugene Demchak, Joe Demchak, Mike Demchak, Steve Demchak, Kari Donovan, Matthew Donovan, Michael Evans, Bonnie Fetcenko, Randy Fetcenko, Rose Marie Fetcenko, Olga Finlayson, Kenneth Finlayson, Jack Foster, Mary Foster, Harry Horosky, Alexandra Mamrak, Eugene Minarich, Evan Morgan, Richard Nakles, Gloria Rice, Mary Sura Saupp, Harry Socie, Alexandra Stine, Karen Stine, Eleanor Sura, Andrew Tocimak, Irene Tocimak, Louise Tocimak, Walter Varagea, Delores Varagea, Patricia Wood

*“O Master, the all-sustainer, and Holy King, Who punishes, but reduces not to death, Who strengthens the failing and raises the outcast, Who remedies the bodily sorrows of men, we pray unto Thee, O Our Lord, visit Thine infirm servants with Thy mercy; forgive them every transgression, voluntary and involuntary. Verily O Lord, send down from Heaven Thy healing power, touch the body, extinguish the fever, lessen the suffering and every infirmity of Thy servants, raise them decumbent, from sickness, and from the bed of evilness, make them whole and all-restored, return them to Thy Church well-pleasing and fulfilling Thy will. For it is of Thine own, to be merciful and to save us, O Lord, and unto Thee we send glory, to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen*

## Altoona-Johnstown Deanery Mission Services for 2015

March 1 (Sunday of Orthodoxy)	St. John the Baptist	Conemaugh	4:00 p.m.
March 8 (St. Gregory Palamas):	St. Michael	Irvona	4:00 p.m.
March 15 (Veneration of the Cross):	St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral	Allison Park	5:00 p.m.
March 22 (St. John Climacus):	St. Nicholas	DuBois	4:00 p.m.
March 29 (St. Mary of Egypt):	Nativity of St. John the Baptist	Philipsburg	4:00 p.m.

## *From the Desk of Father John:*

We are in the period of Great Lent which means different things for different people. Some people observe Lent by observing the fast to the letter of the law. However some do not. Fasting is one of the best thing we can do to prepare ourselves for the coming feast of the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Church in her wisdom has suggested we refrain from the following foods:

- A. meat
- B. animal products ( cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard, drippings)
- C. fish ( i.e., fish with backbones)
- D. oil (i.e. olive oil) and wine ( i.e., all alcoholic drinks)

The following statement is extremely important to consider when we speak of fasting and fasting rules in the Church. "At all times it is essential to bear in mind that 'you are not under the law but under grace' (Rom. 6: 14), and that 'the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life' (2 Cor.3:6). The rules of fasting, while they need to be taken seriously, are not to be interpreted with dour and pedantic legalism: 'for the Kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14:17)."

All services are dependent on the weather and services will be cancelled if the weather is bad.

Confessions will be held 1 hour before the Presanctified Gifts but please not on Sunday Morning.

Speaking of fasting it is better to watch what comes out of your mouth than what we put in.

## From the Desk of Your Council President:

### Great Lent.

On the Monday following the Sunday of Cheesefare, we formally begin the 40-day Great Lent and, of course, one of its features is its rigorous fasting. In addition, there are some special features of the liturgical Services. The usual Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is not served on the weekdays of Great Lent, but is replaced by the special Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts, at which the faithful commune of the Holy Gifts which were pre-sanctified at the previous Sunday's Liturgy. In addition, the penitential Service of Great Compline is sung, at which, on the first four days of this first week (as well as on Thursday of the Fifth Week) the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete is read. This Canon is a long penitential composition of 250 verses expressing the longings of a guilty and penitent soul.

This week we are also introduced to the moving Lenten prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, setting forth the essence of spiritual life. This prayer is said at each of the Liturgical Services throughout the weekdays of Great Lent and the first half of Passion Week.

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian.

*O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk.*

*But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Thy servant,*

*Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my Brother; for Blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen.*

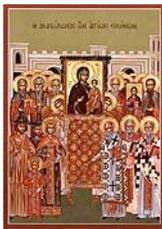
All of the Sundays of Great Lent (with the exception of Palm Sunday) the usual Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is replaced by the longer Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. This Liturgy is especially characterized by its longer and very moving prayers.

Yours in Christ,  
John

### St. John's April Service Schedule

Saturday, April 4	Lazarus Saturday Liturgy	10:00 AM
Sunday, April 5	Palm Sunday Liturgy	10:00 AM
Wednesday, April 8	Holy Unction	6:00 PM
Thursday, April 9	Holy Thursday Matins	6:00 PM
Friday, April 10	Good Friday Vespers/Compline	4:00 PM
Saturday, April 11	Holy Saturday Vespers/Liturgy	10:00 AM
Saturday, April 11	Compline/Matins	6:00 PM
Sunday, April 12	Resurrection Liturgy PASCHA	10:00 AM

### Sundays of Great Lent



Each of the Sundays of Great Lent has its own special theme. The first Sunday is called the **Feast of the Triumph** of Orthodoxy. It is a historical feast commemorating the return of the icons to the churches in the year 843 after the heresy of iconoclasm was overcome. The spiritual theme of the day is first of all the victory of the True Faith. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (1 Jn 5:4). Secondly, the icons of the saints bear witness that man, "created in the image and likeness of God" (Gen 1:26), becomes holy and godlike through the purification of himself as God's living image.

The Second Sunday of Lent is the commemoration of **St Gregory Palamas**. It was St. Gregory (d.1359) who bore living witness that men can become divine through the grace of God in the Holy Spirit; and that even in this life, by prayer and fasting, human beings can become participants of the uncreated light of God's divine glory.



The Third Sunday of Lent is that of the **Veneration of the Cross**. The cross stands in the midst of the church in the middle of the lenten season not merely to remind men of Christ's redemption and to keep before them the goal of their efforts, but also to be venerated as that reality by which man must live to be saved. "He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:38). For in the Cross of Christ Crucified lies both "the power of God and the wisdom of God" for those being saved (1 Cor 1:24).

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to **St John of the Ladder (Climacus)**, the author of the work, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. The abbot of St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (6th century) stands as a witness to the violent effort needed for entrance into God's Kingdom (*Mt 10: 12*). The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is a real one, "not against flesh and blood, but against... the rulers of the present darkness... the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places ..." (*Eph 6:12*). Saint John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, according to the Lord, only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (*Mt 24:13*).



The Fifth Sunday recalls the memory of **Saint Mary of Egypt**, the repentant harlot. Mary tells us, first of all, that no amount of sin and wickedness can keep a person from God if he truly repents. Christ himself has come "to call sinners to repentance" and to save them from their sins (*Lk 5:32*). In addition, Saint Mary tells us that it is never too late in life—or in Lent—to repent. Christ will gladly receive all who come to him even at the eleventh hour of their lives. But their coming must be in serious and sincere repentance.

#### **LENTEN SUGGESTIONS** (continued from last month's bulletin) <http://xcthesavior.org/parishoners.html>

- Turn off the T.V. If possible, put it out of sight for the entire time of Great Lent. If you can't do that, keep it off during the weekdays.
- Maybe limiting yourself to watching a family movie together on Sunday afternoon with the kids is a good way to put the television back in its proper place in the home.
- Read the book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. It's a great read and you will never look at the television in the same way again.
- Limit your time on the computer. Most of us have to be on the computer for some amount of the day or because of work but we can still limit our personal time specifically spent on the Internet. Set a limit on how much time you will allow yourself to be on the Internet each day outside of work. Set a timer if you need to!
- Do you feel that you are a slave to your smart phone or email? If so, set a limit on how many times a day you will check them--maybe just once or twice a day.
- Take a break from Facebook. One of the "great sayings" of Great Lent is to keep your eyes on your own plate. What this means is that we are to not concern ourselves with what others are doing but to only focus on our Lenten offering. You can't do that if you are updating or checking the status of others.
- Turn off the radio in the car during your commute. Enjoy the quiet and say the Jesus Prayer.
- Set aside time solely for family time. Eat dinner together.
- Come to church services together.
- Play board games together.
- Sit together and read out loud.
- Rediscover an old hobby or take up a new one. Even monks need a break from prayer, church services, and reading every now and then. They all have some sort of hobby or craft that they do when they feel to be inspired in another way.

#### **A PRAYER FOR LENT**

*The Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian is traditionally said many times throughout each day during Great Lent, in addition to our daily prayers.*

**O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faintheartedness, lust of power, and idle talk. (+)**

**But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to your servant. (+)**

**Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sin and not to judge my brother, for You are blessed from all ages to all ages. Amen. (+)**

(The "(+)" indicates that those praying make a deep bow or prostration at this point.)

*The Hanging Vigil above the Royal Doors of the iconostasis is supported by Irene Pollock in loving memory of her sister and brother-in-law Margaret and Robert Stefanko.*

*The Vigils on the Tetrapod are supported by Irene Pollock in loving memory of her parents, sisters, brothers, husband, nephew and stepfather.*

*The votives in front of the iconostasis, on the candle stands and in front of the icons in the nave are supported by Andrew & Louise Tocimak in loving memory of the Tocimak family.*