
NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAINTS PETER and PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

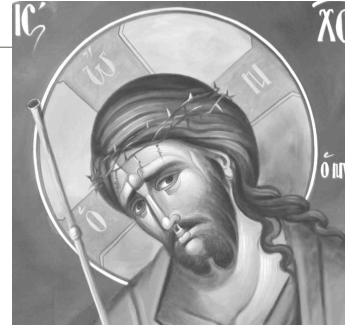
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MARCH 2025



SERVICE SCHEDULE *(but always check our calendar of events)*

- VESPERS — Saturday, 6:00pm
- DIVINE LITURGY — every Sunday, 10:00am
- GENERAL CONFESSION SERVICE — **1st Sunday** of every month, 9:25am

WELCOME VISITORS

We hope you find your time with us at Saints Peter and Paul to be a true blessing from God—who knows you by name; who knows your heart; who knows your mind; and who wants to be in a spiritual relationship with you. We challenge ourselves and the world to love like Christ our Savior, as we pray joyfully, serve compassionately, and grow spiritually. If you are seriously considering a new place of worship or a relocation to our area, we would love to have you as a part of our church family. Get in touch with Father John with any questions you may have. Welcome to Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church—we look forward to seeing you again.

NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING —Sunday, March 30, 2025 in the parish hall

COFFEE HOUR HELP: We thank everyone who brings in food and drinks for our Sunday coffee hour after Divine Liturgy. Remember there is a sign-up sheet in the parish hall for when you would like to donate items. Some have told us that they really don't cook, but ask if there is anything else they could bring. We ALWAYS need bottled water (preferably the 8 oz. smaller ones) — you could always donate that. Also we go through a lot of cups, plates and napkins so we would gladly accept \$5, \$10, etc. towards the purchase of those products. We appreciate your generosity!

NEW ALTAR SERVERS' DELMATICS (ROBES): We are in great need of a new set of delmatics (robes) THAT ALL MATCH for all our altar servers. Sadly ours are very, very old or are “hand me downs” from other churches. It is exciting to have a large group of young men and boys who are willing to serve in the altar area assisting the priest throughout Liturgy. It would be so nice to have ONE GOOD SET of robes so all servers will match. In checking on prices, we will need a minimum of \$1500 to \$1800 for a new set.

WE THANK THOSE WHO HAVE DONATED SO FAR:

Gavin Faulkner - \$1000.

Gadzik Family - \$500.

If you would like to donate to this project in any amount, please see Father John.

THANK YOU to Nadia Ryan, for her donation of \$200 towards our flag pole for the interior of the church.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DIVINE LITURGY ON SUNDAY begins at 10:00am. Please do not arrive late. It is considered very distracting to those who are immersed in prayer and worship. Let us not keep the Lord waiting!

FOR SALE in our Parish Hall:

Bracelets, necklaces, bookmarkers — made by our parishioner, Aubriella Rodriguez
Scarves, dish towels, scrub pads — made by Heidi Bender's mother, Mrs. Irene Veronin

INVITE A FRIEND TO CHURCH: It is always nice to bring someone along with you to Liturgy to see what our beautiful Orthodox Faith is about. Sadly, there are so many people in today's world that stopped going to church for one reason or another—extend the invite!

BURIAL PLOTS AVAILABLE TO BUY—Saints Peter and Paul Church owns burial plots in Riverdale Cemetery, Lewiston, New York. Cost is \$400 per plot. If interested in buying any, please contact Father John.

A DONATION BUTTON is on our church website peterandpauloca.org. Your donation can be made electronically via our website using either PayPal or a credit card/bank card.

2025 CHURCH WALL CALENDARS are on sale in our church vestibule. The cost is \$10 each. The calendars give you the saints of the day to commemorate and also the epistles and Gospels to read for each particular day.

QUIET PLEASE — when you arrive for church on Sunday mornings, please remember HOURS are being read or the General Confession Service is being held, and there should not be any talking in the church nave. If it's important and you must talk, please whisper. All of those praying would appreciate it!

GREAT LENT BEGINS ON MONDAY, MARCH 3RD.
What are you planning to do this Great Lent in order to get spiritually closer to our Lord?

PLEASE KEEP OUR LOVED ONES and PARISHIONERS who are sick in your prayers. We pray that they may get better and come worship with us at the Divine Liturgy.

PLEASE REMEMBER OUR DDB FUND (Distinguished Diocesan Benefactor) of the NY/NJ Deanery. All the great ministries of our Deanery are funded by these monies. Any amount may be donated. Please see Fr. John if interested.

ON SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 8TH at 2am, please be aware that "Daylight Savings Time" begins. Please make sure before retiring to bed that you **TURN YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD** (1) hour.

LENTEN WOMEN'S RETREAT will be held Friday, March 28 to Sunday, March 30 at St. Andrew's Camp and Retreat Center. The cost for this retreat: \$125 for the weekend; \$50 for Saturday only. It will be themed: "Be Who You Are in the Body of Christ." The keynote speaker: Mother Melania, who is the abbess of the community of Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, California. She has written several series of children's books (including The twelve Great Feasts for Children; The Three-Day Pascha; the Old Testament Stories for Children series; and the Good Neighbors series—a series of animal fables designed to teach children Christian virtue in an engaging way. Also visiting that weekend will be Archbishop Michael. A time set apart for prayer, reflection, and fellowship of Orthodox women. For more information: Email: kristy@saintandrewscamp.org. To register: http://portal.campnetwork.com/Register/Register.php?camp_id=397695

FOR THOSE WHO WILL BE ATTENDING the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesdays and Fridays during the Great Lenten season, please remember to fast from 3pm that day to receive Holy Communion during that evening service. Those of stronger will/body, please fast from after your noon meal. Let us have a great spiritual Lent together!

Why do we celebrate the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great during Great Lent?

In the early Orthodox Church the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil was celebrated every Sunday and feast day of the whole year. It was the official Eucharistic Liturgy to be celebrated on a regular basis throughout the year. It is not clearly known why towards the end of the first quarter of the second millennium, the Liturgy of St. Basil was replaced by a liturgy attributed to St. John Chrysostom. For the survival of celebrating St. Basil's Liturgy during Lent, one scholar says that it happened because of the conservative liturgical character of Lent. Also, it was used by the Church to dedicate more time to prayer during Lent, as well as the expressively doctrinal and educational character of the Liturgy of St. Basil. The Church found the Lenten atmosphere of more dedicated devotion as a good opportunity to teach the faithful the dogma by making them listen to the profound and all-embracing theological explanations of the Basilian Liturgy, especially the Anaphora.

What should I do during Great Lent?

Most of us can readily identify what we should do during Great Lent: pray, fast, and give alms. It's the hows that sometime elude us!

1. Turn off the TV, cell phones, and the Internet except for news, weather reports, and educational programs. Use email for necessary things...period! Like the Prophet Elijah, listen for the Lord's voice in life's still, quiet moments.
2. Avoid engaging in outside activities for their own sake. Keep useless talking to a minimum. Focus on necessary business, acts of charity, your children and family, and strengthening your relationships with others, especially those with whom you have experienced conflicts in the past. Get beyond what others do and discover who they are.
3. Question yourself with regard to love, truth, honesty, purity, humility, peace, forgiveness, justice, mercy, hungering and thirsting for God, wisdom and knowledge. What role do these virtues play in your life?
4. In the name of Jesus Christ, forgive everyone who has offended you, and seek forgiveness from those whom you have offended. If it will not be embarrassing or misinterpreted as an act of self-righteousness, express yourself as concretely - and personally - as possible. Visit, make a phone call, send a hand-written note, or do whatever it takes to tear down those walls that so often separate us from others.
5. Set aside a sizable portion of your resources for others - your parish, the poor and needy, a homeless shelter or food depository...whatever. Or transform your "me time" into "thee time" by volunteering to help with those ever-present tasks around your parish or a social agency in your area. Don't tell anyone what you are doing. Ask nothing in exchange - not even receipts.
6. Fast strictly and regularly - from food, from distractions, from passions, and from sinful behaviors. Suit your fast to your work schedule, but avoid luxury. Do not advertise or discuss your fasting with anyone, and avoid those endless discussions on "Lenten chocolate cake" or "how to make tofu taste like turkey" or "vegetable oil vs. olive oil", that miss the point and spirit of fasting altogether.
7. Pray at home at least at one fixed time every day. Choose a brief rule of prayer and stick to it. Participate in all the Lenten services especially St. Basil's Divine Liturgy on Sundays. Confess seriously, sincerely, and with the utmost preparation.
8. Read the Scriptures regularly. Follow the Church's daily calendars of readings, or focus on one chapter of a given book. Reflect especially on 1 John, Romans 12-14, Matthew 5-7, and John 14-17.
9. Be faithful to Christ's Gospel in every word, action, and thought - even the smallest or most insignificant. Master those "little things," knowing that God will bless you with things that are far greater!

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT — *SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY*

This Sunday commemorates the return of the Icons into the churches, according to the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod (787 A.D.). The Church determined that this celebration would take place each year on the first Sunday of Lent, as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, starting March 11, 843. On this Sunday every year the triumph of the faith of Orthodoxy is celebrated with ceremony. The Icon of Christ, according to St. John of Damascus, is a distinct affirmation and a reminder of the fact of His Incarnation, which has a vital significance for the salvation of the faithful, an affirmation which prevails to this day in the Orthodox Church. The celebration of the day includes the procession with the Icon of Christ around the inside of the church with pomp and reverence. The Sunday of Orthodoxy calls upon the people to rededicate themselves to the deep meaning of their faith and to declare in unison, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all”.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT — *ST. GREGORY PALAMAS*

This Sunday commemorates the life of St. Gregory Palamas (14th century). The Church dedicates this Sunday to St. Gregory for his Orthodox faith, theological knowledge, virtuous life, miracles and his efforts to clarify the Orthodox teaching on the subject of hesychasm (from the Greek, meaning quiet). Hesychasm was a system of mysticism propagated on Mt. Athos by 14th century monks who believed that man was able, through an elaborate system of ascetic practices based upon perfect quiet of body and mind, to arrive at the vision of the divine light, with the real distinction between the essence and the operations of God. Gregory became noted for his efforts to explain the difference between the correct teaching and this theory. Gregory was dedicated to an ascetic life of prayer and fasting, which are practices of Lent.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT — *CROSS VENERATION*

On this day, the Cross on which Christ died is honored, the most important Sunday of Great Lent. This is the half-way point of the long journey of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. The Veneration of the Holy Cross reminds the faithful how Jesus carried the cross, letting no obstacle prevent Him from carrying it to the end. It is the same with the life of the Christian during Lent. Pascha (Easter) is reached only through the crucifixion of one’s passions. A cross is carried in procession to the middle of the church and is left there all week for veneration as a symbol of strength. In some Orthodox churches, at the end of the Divine Liturgy, everyone receives a flower from the cross to be placed at their home icon corner.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT — *ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER*

This Sunday commemorates St. John Climacus (6th century) who is the writer of the book called “The Ladder of Paradise.” This book contains 30 chapters, with each chapter as a step leading up to a faithful and pious life as the climax of a Christian life. The spirit of repentance and devotion to Christ dominates the essence of this book, along with the monastic virtues and vices. He was an ascetic and writer on the spiritual life as a monk-abbot of Sinai Monastery. These steps of the ladder as set forth by St. John are to be practiced by the Christian especially during this period of the Great Lent. Each step leading to the top step of the ladder, is the climactic essence of the true meaning of a Christian life.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT — *ST. MARY OF EGYPT*

This Sunday commemorates the life of St. Mary of Egypt, who is a shining example of repentance from sin through prayer and fasting. She lived a sinful life for many years, but was converted to a Christian life. She went into the wilderness to live an ascetic life for many years, praying and fasting in repentance of her life from sin to holiness through repentance. Her understanding of repentance involved not a mere change from small things in her life, but an

(Fifth Sunday of Lent continued)

extreme change of her entire attitude and thoughts. The Church commemorates St. Mary of Egypt for her recognition of her own sins as an example of how one can free oneself from the slavery and burden of wrongdoings. This recognition of sin is imperative during Lent for the faithful as a means of self-examination and preparation for a more virtuous life in anticipation of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ.

SATURDAY OF LAZARUS

An interlude between Great Lent and Holy Week, the Church names this day the “Saturday of Lazarus” in remembrance of the resurrection of Lazarus told in the Gospel of John (11:1-45) and its promise of universal resurrection for all mankind. The Church connects this celebration, by anticipation, with the Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem.

PALM SUNDAY — THE ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM

Palm Sunday celebrates the glorious and brilliant feast of the Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem (John 12:1-18). Zechariah had prophesied the entrance of the Messiah into Jerusalem, saying: “Rejoice greatly...O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, the King comes unto you; He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass” (Zech. 9:9). The contemporary Jews associated this prophecy with the expected Messiah. This action of Christ testifies to His nature as Messiah, but with the definite declaration that His Kingdom was not of this world. The main road leading to Jerusalem was covered with palm trees. The multitudes, with palm branches in their hands, spread their cloaks on the road as a show of respect, crying out “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.” A custom of distributing branches of palms or pussy willows to the people in the Church prevails to this day.

WISDOM OF THE CHURCH FATHERS...

Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do not give up, but stand your ground courageously. And assuredly, the angel who guards you will honor your patience. — *St. John Climacus (St. John the Ladder)*

God descends to the humble as waters flow down from the hills into the valleys. — *St. Tikhon of Voronezh (Wonderworker of All Russia)*

I saw the snares that the enemy spreads out over the world and I said groaning, “What can get through from such snares?” Then I heard a voice saying to me, “Humility.” — *St. Anthony the Great*

God is the fire that warms and kindles the heart and inward parts. Hence, if we feel in our hearts the cold which comes from the devil - for the devil is cold - let us call on the Lord. He will come to warm our hearts with perfect love, not only for Him but also for our neighbor, and the cold of him who hates the good will flee before the heart of His countenance. — *St. Seraphim of Sarov*

Do all in your power not to fall, for the strong athlete should not fall. But if you do fall, get up again at once and continue the contest. Even if you fall a thousand times because of the withdrawal of God’s grace, rise up again each time, and keep on doing this until the day of your death. For it is written, “If a righteous man falls down seven times’ - that is, repeatedly throughout his life - ‘seven times shall he rise again” (Prov. 24:16). — *St. John of Karpathos*

UPCOMING SERVICES & EVENTS AT STS. PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

Saturday, March 1 6:00pm: VESPERS

Sunday, March 2 *Sunday of Cheesefast / Forgiveness Sunday*

9:25am: GENERAL CONFESSION SERVICE & Reading of 3rd/6th Hours

10:00am: DIVINE LITURGY of St. John Chrysostom

BRIEF VESPERS at end of Divine Liturgy for START of GREAT LENT March 3

Wednesday, March 5 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Friday, March 7 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Saturday, March 8 6:00pm: VESPERS

TURN CLOCKS AHEAD (1) HOUR before bedtime (Daylight Saving Time Begins)

Sunday, March 9 *Sunday of Orthodoxy*

9:30am: Reading of 3rd/6th Hours

10:00am: DIVINE LITURGY of St. Basil the Great

Procession of Icons at conclusion of Divine Liturgy

5:00pm: Pan Orthodox Vespers @ St. George Orthodox Church (Buffalo)

Wednesday, March 12 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Friday, March 14 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Saturday, March 15 6:00pm: VESPERS with Memorial for All Souls

Sunday, March 16 *Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas*

9:30am: Reading of 3rd/6th Hours

10:00am: DIVINE LITURGY of St. Basil the Great

5:00pm: Pan Orthodox Vespers @ Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church (Buffalo)

Wednesday, March 19 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Friday, March 21 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Saturday, March 22 6:00pm: VESPERS with Memorial for All Souls

Sunday, March 23 *Cross Veneration Sunday*

9:30am: Reading of 3rd/6th Hours

10:00am: DIVINE LITURGY of St. Basil the Great

NO COFFEE HOUR

5:00pm: Pan Orthodox Vespers @ Ss Peter and Paul Church, meal afterwards

Wednesday, March 26 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Friday, March 28 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Saturday, March 29 6:00pm: VESPERS with Memorial for All Souls

Sunday, March 30 *Sunday of St. John Climacus*

9:30am: Reading of 3rd/6th Hours

10:00am: DIVINE LITURGY of St. Basil the Great

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

5:00pm Pan Orthodox Vespers @ St. Stephen Serbian Orthodox Church

Wednesday, April 2 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Friday, April 4 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Saturday, April 5 11:00am: Making of altar breads (prosfora) in parish hall

Sunday, April 6 *Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt*

9:30am: Reading of 3rd/6th Hours

10:00am: DIVINE LITURGY of St. Basil the Great

5:00pm: Pan Orthodox Vespers @ St. George Orthodox Church (Lewiston)

Wednesday, April 9 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Friday, April 11 6:00pm: LITURGY of PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS

Saturday, April 12 *Saturday of Lazarus*

Boiling/dying red eggs for Pascha in parish hall kitchen (TIME TO BE DETERMINED)

2:00pm: Making of palm crosses in parish hall

6:00pm: VESPERS

Sunday, April 13 *Palm Sunday*

9:30am: Reading of 3rd/6th Hours

10:00am: DIVINE LITURGY of St. John Chrysostom

Blessing of palms/pussywillows at conclusion of Divine Liturgy

FOR THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED

- We will be having a class in our parish hall on Saturday, April 5th at 11am, for those who want to learn the art of making “ALTAR BREADS” (prosfora). No charge—just a tasty bread to take home after completion! Please let Father John know if you are interested.
- We will be making PALM CROSSES in our parish hall on Saturday, April 12th at 2pm, to be used in church the following day for Palm Sunday (Our Lord’s Entrance into Jerusalem). No charge—just a beautiful custom to continue that our Orthodox Church offers to you. Please let Father John know if you can help.

ATTENTION ALL FAMILIES with YOUNG CHILDREN 5 YEARS and UNDER LIVING IN ERIE COUNTY

United Way of Buffalo & Erie County (UWBEC) recently announced an expansion of its support from **Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library**, an early literacy program dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by giving books free of charge to children from birth to age five. The United Way will now fund the program in 25 additional zip codes within Erie County, ensuring that children from birth to age five have access to free books mailed directly to their homes each month. This list includes Alden, Elma, East Aurora, Marilla, Holland, West Falls, South Wales and Wales Center.

In August 2024, UWBEC reintroduced the Imagination Library in parts of Buffalo and Lackawanna, enrolling more than 500 children across five initial zip codes. With the recent expansion, the United Way is now closer to its goal of getting a book in the hands of every child in Erie County, as it will now oversee funding for a total of 33 zip codes.

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is a tool in promoting literacy and school readiness. Families with children under 5 years old in Erie County are encouraged to enroll in the program. Registration information and details about the program can be found at: www.uwbec.org or imaginationlibrary.com



THE PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness,
lust of power, and idle talk.
(PROSTRATION)

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.
(PROSTRATION)

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own errors and not to judge my brother.
For Thou are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.
(PROSTRATION)