



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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Preparing for the Journey of Great Lent

by Fr. John

Beginning with Forgiveness Vespers – following the Divine Liturgy – on Sunday March 13, we will enter again into the mysteries and possibilities of Great Lent. These always emerge as we consider our lives from the perspective of the person of Jesus Christ, as discovered within the Gospels, our personal prayer, and our liturgical life. Below and throughout this issue of *Crossroads* there are many resources that will be offered to help you prepare for this journey to Pascha.

1. **FIRST WEEK OF GREAT LENT (MARCH 14-18): CANON OF ST. ANDREW OF CRETE AND THE LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS:** During the Canon, the presentation by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware entitled, “*Word and Silence in the Philokalia*” will be read.
2. **LENTEN RETREAT: “Lord, I Call Upon Thee, Hear Me!” – SATURDAY APRIL 2** with *Mother Angelina and Sister Helene* of the **Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA**. This Retreat, which will take place at our parish and will be open to men and women, is being sponsored by the *Women2Women*’s group. The full schedule will be posted shortly. A free-will donation will be asked to benefit the Monastery.
3. **DAILY LENTEN READER:** You can prepare for our Retreat or, at least, explore some of the themes of the Lenten season by following our Reader, with passages from the Psalms suggested by Mother Angelina and Sister Helene. This will be sent daily to those on our email list. Hard copies will be available in the vestibule and can be downloaded from our website (holycrossmedford.org)
4. **SATURDAY APRIL 9-10: VISIT OF ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL and OUR SPONSORING OF THE LENTEN DEANERY VESPERS:** This will also include during the fellowship time of the Vespers a presentation by **Tony Pantazopoulos**, chairman of the Greater Philadelphia committee of IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities). IOCC is one of our parish’s designated Charity recipients and one of the most successful Pan-Orthodox projects.
5. **SESSION ON PREPARING FOR THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY CONFESSION: SATURDAY MARCH 26.** It is hoped that everyone will take advantage of the healing Sacrament

of Holy Confession during Great Lent, ideally coming early in the season and not waiting until the end (Confessions during Holy Week will only be possible after discussion with Fr. John).

Confessions will be heard: following the services during the First Week of Great Lent, before the Presanctified Liturgies (between 6:00-7:00), following Great Vespers, and on Sunday mornings, once the Before Liturgy Book Club has ended. Other times can be discussed with Fr. John.

6. **WEEKLY EMAILS: “PREPARING FOR THE LITURGY”:** which feature the upcoming Sunday Liturgy’s Liturgical texts and Scripture readings that usually form the basis of the sermon.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **ANNUAL MEMORIAL DIVINE LITURGY: SATURDAY, MARCH 5, AT 9 AM.**
- **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON & YOUTH PROJECT: SATURDAY, MARCH 5, following the Liturgy.**
- **ST. HELENA’S GUILD MEETING: Sunday, March 6..**
- **PRE-LENTEN LUNCH: SUNDAY, MARCH 6, following the Divine Liturgy.**
- **FORGIVENESS SUNDAY AND VESPERS: BEGINNING OF GREAT LENT: SUNDAY, MARCH 13.**
- **FIRST HEALTHY CHOICE SESSION: SUNDAY MARCH 20 with *Beth Schroeder*.**
- **YOUTH PREPARATION FOR HOLY CONFESSION: SATURDAY MARCH 26, from 4:00-5:00.**
- **INREACH MEETING: SUNDAY, MARCH 27, following the Divine Liturgy**
- **WOMEN2WOMEN GATHERING: TBD**

OUR PARISH CALENDAR is maintained by Fr. John and events are posted towards the end of each *Crossroads* as they are identified. It would be helpful if each parish organization would assign someone to check with him first in advance about the availability of days and then to acknowledge that, ideally, in an email, for which they will receive a confirmation.

Every attempt is made, when possible, to prepare and distribute *Crossroads* by the last Sunday before the upcoming month. Therefore, any dates or information **MUST** be received by the **SUNDAY BEFORE**.

MONTHLY CHARITY DONATIONS: The monthly envelopes are designated to benefit local parish, community and Diocesan needs, national Orthodox organizations, and those which provide international support. Last year we collected \$2250.00 and the funds went to the *Medford EMS, Burlington Community Services, St. Innocent Orthodox Mission in Oneonta, NY, Zoe for Life* (a national group based in Cleveland Heights, Ohio that provides support for those desiring to maintain their pregnancies), *Orthodox Christian Missions*, and *International Orthodox Christian Charities*.

DISTINGUISHED DIOCESAN BENEFACTORS/DDB COLLECTION: With Archbishop Michael’s visit in April we wanted to start to anticipate support for the DDB. This Fund supplements the Diocesan Budget in the areas of missions, seminarian financial support, and struggling parishes. Archbishop Michael does not ask or accept personal gifts for his pastoral visits, but asks that all generosity be directed to the DDB. Collections will begin on Sunday March 6.

HEALTHY OPTIONS FIRST CLASS: SUNDAY MARCH 20 with Beth Schroeder

Beth Schroeder, MS, CNS earned a master of science degree in Nutrition and Integrative Health from Maryland University of Integrative Health (MUIH) in Laurel, MD. A two-year clinical nutrition program, Beth's thesis "Whole Plant Foods and their Effect on Metastatic Cancer Survival" included a client case study component with a review of current research in the field of epigenetics for understanding nutritional intervention alongside standard cancer intervention protocols. Significant conclusions included improvement in quality of life and improved overall survival with inclusion whole plant foods for physiological and immune system support.

Beth is a Certified Nutrition Specialist® practitioner and is certified in plant-based nutrition through Cornell University and the T. Colin Campbell Foundation. Owner of Simply Health LLC since 2009, Beth works in private practice supporting patients with chronic conditions to make dietary and lifestyle changes by teaching plant-based food patterns in workshops and individual coaching.

As a breast cancer survivor, Beth brings both passion and dedication to improving her client's current quality of life, nutritional intake, food patterns and vitality. She is an engaging speaker to inspire and educate about chronic health challenges and the benefits of diet and lifestyle changes.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING—SUNDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2016—MINUTES by Carol Ann Curry, Parish Secretary.

The Annual Meeting took place following coffee hour. There were 34 parishioners in attendance. Fr. John presided over the meeting.

The minutes from the 2015 Annual meeting were reviewed. John Kuzma made a motion to accept the minutes. Joe Pritchard seconded the motion. All in favor.

Treasurer Dan Dowiak presented the financial report. The account balances as of 12/31/15 are as follows: **General Fund** \$33,212.85; **Memorial Fund** \$44,268.48; **Capital Improvement Fund** \$36,391.21; **Food Coupon Fund** \$3,287.10; **Choir Fund** \$2,556.52; **Supplemental Checkbook** \$454.34; **Rector's Supplemental Gift Card** \$109.89; **Fund Raising Checkbook** \$820.94.

2015 YEAR END FINANCIAL PICTURE:

<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Income/Loss</u>
\$264,284.700	\$259,650.66	\$4,634.04

The Mortgage Balance as of 12/28/15 is \$266,494.63. (This reflects a reduction of **\$69,594.97** in our mortgage which was realized through a number of generous donations and also the payment of an additional \$1000.00/month on principal in 2015.

Auditor's Report- Greg Lane presented the report. All records were found to adequately reflect the financial position of the church.

2016 Budget – Treasurer Dan Dowiak presented a budget of \$205,500.00 for 2016. After discussion on various issues, the budget was approved.

Review of Parish Life: Reports were delivered by Fr. John, Gary Mosser, and Diane Pasca (on the Inreach/Outreach Committee), as well as the Financial Report of St. Helena's Guild, and a Summary of the Church School Program.

Election of Officers: Fr. John presented the following parishioners as candidates for the new 2016 Parish Council: Mark Skuby, Warden; Wally Loza, Assistant Warden; Diana Pasca, Recording Secretary; Dan Dowiak, Treasurer; Imad Abdallah, Marie Clifton, Carol Ann Curry, Gene Dubiago, Gary Mosser, Joseph Pritchard, Phyllis Pritchard, and Jessica Siragusa, Trustees; Greg & Mary Stosuy, Auditors. John Kuzma made a motion to accept the officers and Greg Lane seconded the motion. All in favor.

Questions to Think About Before Going to Confession

[Though this is offered especially to our children, much of it can be helpful in broad ways to everyone.]

1. *How have I behaved towards God?*

Did I pray to Him everyday?

Did I thank Him?...in the morning, at meals, in the evening, or whenever I remembered how good He has been to me?

Have I used words which use the Name of God in a bad way?

Have I really loved God and tried to live as He wants me to live, or do I easily forget Him and forget to follow His Commandments?

2. *How have I behaved towards my family and friends?*

Have I remembered my family, my friends, and all people who need God in my prayers?

Have I been good to my parents, and given them my love? Have I been honest with them and answered them truthfully whenever they asked me something? Or, have I lied to them? Have I been stubborn or disrespectfully? Have I become angry? Have I disobeyed them? Have I been kind to my grandparents and to elder people?

Have I been good to my brothers and sisters? Have I shared my things with them? Or, have I been selfish and taken everything for myself? Have I helped them? Have I done my share of my duties at home? Have I been good to my friends and teachers? Have I become angry, or selfish, or disrespectful? Have I taken something which doesn't belong to me? Have I been lazy in my schoolwork, or have I cheated in my work? Have I tried to help someone, even in some small way? Have I made fun of anyone? Have I tried to make new students feel at home, or, have I ignored them and played only with my old friends? Have I tried to make friends with someone who is lonely and doesn't have many friends? Have I spoken badly about someone else? Have I been mean to anyone?

Have I used in a good way the things that God, my family, and friends have given to me? Have I treated my pets and other animals well? Have I treated other people's property in a good way?

3. *How have I behaved towards myself?*

Have I been responsible? Have I done things that other people have asked me to do; at home, in school, with groups of other people?

Have I boasted (or thought) about being better than other people?

Have I taken the advice of my parents and teachers about how to treat my own body in a good way – by getting enough sleep, eating the right kind of food, etc?

Am I often angry? Do I often want everything for myself? Am I jealous of other people? Am I lazy or stubborn?

4. *Finally...*

Am I truly sorry for my sins? Am I truly sorry for hurting others? Do I forgive others for hurting me?

Do I really want to change my habits and behave as God wants me to behave?

Do I know what I must do to live in a better way as a child of God?

Calendar Year (2016):

March 5, 2016: Pre-Lenten Memorial Liturgy / Community Lunch & Youth Project

March 6, 2016—Pre-Lenten Lunch

March 13, 2016 – Forgiveness Sunday/Beginning of Great Lent

March 20th, 2016 – Healthy Options Session #1 with Beth Schroeder

April 2-3rd, 2016 – Retreat & Visit with Nuns from Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Ellwood City, PA

April 9th & 10th, 2016 – Archbishop Michael's Visit & Deanery Lenten Vespers

April 17th, 2016 – Healthy Options #2 with Dr. John Hamaty

May 14th, 2016 – Spaghetti Dinner

May 21st, 2016 – Fantasy Auction

June 12th, 2016 – OCHC Parish Picnic

COFFEE HOUR LIST FOR MARCH:

March 8 Pre-Lenten Luncheon /

March 13* Mary Stosuy

March 20* Debbie Chong

March 27* Leslie Lane

* Denotes Fasting Sunday

April 3* Diana Pasca/Marianne Lynch



CROSSWALKS

The Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross Youth Activities Newsletter
March 2016



YOUTH SERVICE OPPORTUNITY: IT'S TIME TO LEND A HELPING HAND

SATURDAY MARCH 5TH 10:30AM – 11:30AM

In collaboration with the Inreach/Outreach Committee & the Community Luncheon Program, we will assemble 50 brown bag lunches for people who need more food. Younger kids will color & decorate the brown lunch bags. Older kids will make peanut butter & jelly sandwiches. All kids will help assemble the lunch bags. The bags will then be packed for transport to the food pantry.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION: SATURDAY MARCH 26TH

Traditionally, youth, ages 7 or 8 years old and up, are able to participate in the Sacrament of Confession. However, every child is different, and every family is different. Your child may or may not be ready. After thoughtful consideration, and discussion with Fr. John, please decide if you feel your child is ready to participate in Confession at this time or not.

4-5 PM: Youth will meet with Fr. John as a group to learn about, discuss and participate in the Sacrament of Confession. Preparatory materials will be provided ahead of time.

5-6 PM: Vespers



YOUTH CHOIR UPDATE: In preparation for Archbishop Michael's visit on April 10, the

Youth Choir is learning 2 new hymns:

"The Jesus Prayer": Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.
Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.

"Hymn of Greeting for a Bishop": Oh Lord, Preserve our Master and Bishop for many years!

Many years to you oh Master, Many years to you oh Master, Many years to you oh Master!

To encourage additional practice at home, Mrs. K will email an audio file to listen and sing ♪ along to.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

March 5: Community Luncheon/Brown Bag Lunch Service Opportunity

March 14: Great Lent begins: Since Vespers marks the beginning of the next liturgical day, vestments and Altar cloths will change from gold to purple for Lent, as part of Forgiveness Vespers which will be served after the Divine Liturgy on March 13.

March 25: Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos: Celebrates the Virgin Mary's acceptance of the Archangel Gabriel's announcement that she would conceive the Son of God. Look for the 2 Annunciation icons of Archangel Gabriel and of the Virgin Mary when the Holy Doors on the Iconostas are closed.

★ March 26: Confession Preparation with Fr. John for youth & parents

March 27: Youth Sunday

April 9 & 10: Archbishop Michael Visits

April 24: Palm Sunday / Youth Sunday

FAMILY FUN NIGHT was on FEB 20th!

