

LIFE AT ST. NICHOLAS

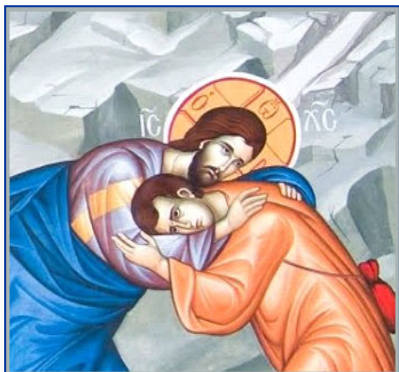
THE SUNDAY BULLETIN OF ST. NICHOLAS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

MARCH 17, 2024

(616) 954-2700 ▪ info@stnicholasgr.com ▪ stnicholasgr.com

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY

In today's Gospel reading, our Lord says: *"If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly father forgive you your trespasses."* (Matthew 6:14)



Heeding our Lord's teaching, at the end of today's Divine Liturgy, we will perform the Rite of Mutual Forgiveness.

The faithful come forward one at a time to venerate the icon of the Theotokos. Then each one approaches the priest.

Approaching the Priest:

- ◇ One by one, the faithful bow before the priest, who also does the same before each of the faithful, each saying to one another **"Forgive me, a sinner"**. The response is **"God forgives"**.
- ◇ The faithful then receive the priest's blessing. It is customary to kiss the priest's hand when receiving this blessing.

Approaching each parishioner in the line: The faithful ask forgiveness from each other as they make their way through the line of people.

- ◇ One person says **"Forgive me, a sinner"**. The other person responds **"God forgives"**.
- ◇ Then the other person says **"Forgive me, a sinner"**, and the other person responds **"God forgives"**.

This act is repeated until everyone has made their way through the line.

THE CHOSEN DISCUSSION GROUP

Tonight, March 17 @ 8PM

Join us via Zoom to discuss the popular TV series, *The Chosen*, depicting the Gospel and ministry of Jesus Christ. Fr. Michael will lead the discussion from an Orthodox perspective as we continue with Season 2 (Episodes 4-6). The Discussion Group Zoom link is posted on the church calendar. Invite a friend!



Sunday, March 3: Season 2, Episodes 1-3

Sunday, March 17: Season 2, Episodes 4-6

Sunday, March 31: Season 2, Episodes 7-8

THIS WEEK

Sunday, March 17
Forgiveness Sunday
Cheesefare Sunday

8:40AM—Orthros & Orthodox
Education Classes

9AM—Parent Youth
Stewardship Meeting

10AM—Divine Liturgy
Followed by the Rite of
Forgiveness

* Teen SOYO Cheesecake
Sale @ Coffee Hour

6PM—Forgiveness Vespers

8PM—The Chosen Discussion
via Zoom

Monday, March 18
6PM—Great Compline
with the Canon of
St. Andrew of Crete (part 1)

6PM—Young Adults Great
Compline, Dinner and
Discussion @ Holy Trinity

Tuesday, March 19
6PM—Great Compline
with the Canon of
St. Andrew of Crete (part 2)

Wednesday, March 20
6PM—Presanctified Liturgy
followed by Lenten Potluck

Thursday, March 21
10AM—Bible Study

12PM—Forerunners Lunch
guest speaker Fr. David

6PM—Great Compline
with the Canon of
St. Andrew of Crete (part 4)

6PM—Compline and OK
Mama Moms Night Out
@ St. George

FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE & CHARITABLE OUTREACH

What a privilege it is to serve Christ Himself in the needy! In fact, every one of us is in need of the mercy of God. Christ identified Himself with the weak, the poor, and the miserable and with those who could not provide themselves with the necessities of life, so it is Him we serve in every human being, and it is Him who, in us, serves those who need to be served. This is how we live our "Royal Priesthood," delivering our lives to Him so that we may experience the mystery of His sacrifice, for Christ Himself is "He that offereth and is offered, that accepteth and is distributed" (The Prayer of the Cherubic Hymn).

You may have received a Food For Hungry packet in the mail from the Archdiocese containing good information and a blue card, *A Gift From The Heart*. It says you can make your donation in the name of a Baptism, Anniversary, etc. This is a nice way to give, **but please be sure to submit the card and your donation to St Nicholas**, not directly to the Archdiocese. Thank you.

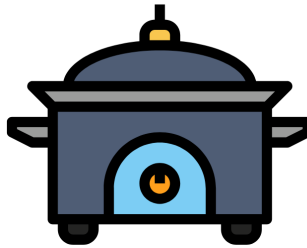
SOUP SUNDAY

April 14th

Calling all cooks! Men and women are encouraged to sign up to bring FAST-FRIENDLY Lenten Soups, in a crock pot, along with their recipes. Cleaned and ready fruit may also be brought.

If you want to sign up to bring a crock pot of soup or fruit, please do so in one of the following ways:

- ◇ Go to stnicholasgr.com/women and click on the link the sign up link or
- ◇ Email Debra Taylor-Weiss at taylorweisses@verizon.net

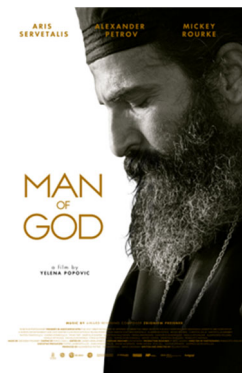


We are looking forward to sampling delicious soups, fruit and bread to help us along our Lenten Journey.

OFC—MAN OF GOD MOVIE SHOWING

March 26th from 6:30-9:30 pm

As we begin this Lenten season, Grand Rapids Orthodox Christian Fellowship would like to invite the community and our local parishes to join us for a showing of the Man of God film at the Richard M. DeVos Center. Invite your family and friends! Admission is free of cost, and any donations will go to support Grand Rapids OFC as we serve college students!



Scan the QR code to RSVP.



Address:

The Richard M. DeVos Center:

401 West Fulton Street, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Room: EV 122E - Loosemore Auditorium

Parking:

505 Fulton St W, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Friday, March 22

9AM—Presanctified Liturgy

6PM—Akathist Hymn

@Holy Cross

Saturday, March 23

10AM—Choir Rehearsal

6PM—Great Vespers
followed by Confession

Sunday, March 24

Sunday of Orthodoxy

8:50AM—Orthros & Orthodox
Education Classes

10AM—Divine Liturgy
with Icon Procession

* Lenten Pancake Breakfast—free-
will donations will go for the
Widowed Clergy Wives Endowment

* Silent Auction

5PM—Vespers

followed by a Festal meal

@ Annunciation Orthodox Church
185 E. Pontaluna Rd. Muskegon 49444

Monday, March 25

6PM—Vespersal Liturgy

@ St. Nicholas

followed by fish taco dinner

PLANNING FOR HOLY WEEK

Plan your work and school
schedule to fully participate in
Holy Week. Excuse forms can be
found at stnicholas.com/lent/.

Saturday, April 27

Lazarus Saturday

9AM—Orthros

10AM Divine Liturgy

* Breakfast & Spring Work Party

Thursday, May 2

9AM—Vesper Liturgy of the
Institution of Holy Communion

Friday, May 3

8:30AM—Bier Decorating

12PM—1st Royal Hour

1PM—2nd Royal Hour

2PM—3rd Royal Hour

3PM—4th Royal Hour

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

ICON PROCESSION

Next Sunday March 24 is the First Sunday of Lent, also known as the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Since 843 AD, on this day we celebrate the restoration of the veneration of icons, and we proclaim the true Faith. All youth and parents assisting their children are encouraged to bring an icon from home to carry in the celebratory procession around the church building at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

SPECIAL COLLECTION

Next Sunday, March 24

We have the privilege to financially contribute to support our seminaries (St. Vladimir's, St. Tikhon's and Holy Cross) that educate our young men studying for the priesthood. Please give generously. Regardless of the amount, our seminaries are appreciative of your financial support and prayers. As always, you can give electronically through our St. Nicholas donation page, Venmo or by check. Please be certain to note "Seminaries" when making your donation.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST & SILENT AUCTION

Next Sunday, March 24

Everyone is invited to the pancake breakfast and silent auction being hosted by the Women of St. Nicholas, both to benefit an Endowment Fund for Widowed Clergy Wives established by the National Antiochian Women's organization.

There are approximately 40 clergy widows in the Antiochian Archdiocese, eight within the Diocese of the Midwest. Currently the Antiochian Women's group sends an annual gift to the widows in the amount of \$50. The desire is to provide something more significant through establishment of this endowment. Gifts to the widows will come from the earnings realized from the endowment's principal amount and is intended to continue in perpetuity. The larger the principal amount collected by the Endowment Fund project, the greater the gift.

Please consider contributing generously to the breakfast and/or donating to and purchasing items from the silent auction. Your support will help build a strong endowment fund base for the widows of our clergy who play such an important role in our parishes.

Cash and check donations will be accepted. Checks must be made out to "St Nicholas Ladies".

Donations of items to be auctioned can include all kinds of things including donations of services. Let Barb Thomas (bat47@wmis.net) or Elena Nasser (elena.nasser26@gmail.com) know by **today** of items/services you want to donate.

Please check out the St. Nicholas Facebook page to get a sneak peak of some of the great items up for bidding.



PREPARING FOR LENT AND HOLY WEEK

Let's all plan to make our schedules available for the services of Lent and Holy Week by looking ahead on our parish calendar at stnicholasgr.com/calendar/.

Let's PREPARE for a spiritually-enlivening Lent with increased prayer, fasting, and almsgiving which lead us to encounter Christ. By being prepared to enter Lent, we can best benefit from this season of renewal! For more details, please visit the Lenten website at stnicholasgr.com/lent.

Fasting Guidelines: During Lent we abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, olive oil, and wine.

Potlucks: Each Wednesday following the Presanctified Liturgy, we gather for a Lenten potluck. What a great opportunity for fellowship and building community. Everyone is invited.

Allergy Reminder: Some of our parishioners have severe allergies to nuts (including Tahini). There will be a designated "contains nuts" section marked off by a different colored table cloth. Please place your dish in the designated area if it contains nuts.

Coffee Hour Hosts: If you are serving anything that contains nuts, please make certain to place a tent card "Contains Nuts" by that dish.



JOURNEYING THROUGH GREAT LENT

Great Lent consists of 40 days leading to Holy Week and is a time of increased effort at penitence, spiritual growth, and illumination. Although it is a time of great spiritual struggle, it is also a time of deep joy for Orthodox Christians, as we prepare our hearts to experience Christ's Passion and Resurrection. It is the living symbol of man's entire life which is to be fulfilled in his own resurrection from the dead with Christ. It is a time of renewed devotion: of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is a time of repentance, a real renewal of our minds, hearts, and deeds in conformity with Christ and his teachings. It is the time, most of all, of our return to the great commandments of loving God and our neighbors.

PRAYER

Our increased efforts at prayer during Great Lent involves both Liturgical Prayer (going to church services) and personal prayer at home. The following services are a key component to a profitable, spiritual Lenten journey. Please check the Church calendar for service time and locations.

Compline:

We pray the compline service, another service of evening prayer, three times during the first week of Lent, on Monday evenings of the other weeks and also on the fifth Wednesday. During the first week and on the fifth Wednesday, we include the canon of St. Andrew of Crete.

There is no other sacred hymn which compares with this monumental work, which St. Andrew wrote for his personal meditations. One of its distinguishing features are a spirit of mournful humility, hope in God, and complex and beautiful Trinitarian Doxologies and hymns to the Theotokos in each Ode. The ongoing theme is an urgent exhortation to change one's life.

Presanctified Liturgy:

The *Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts* is an ancient service in the Orthodox Church. It is the solemn Lenten Vespers with the administration of Holy Communion included. It comes in the evening after a day of spiritual preparation and total abstinence. There is no consecration of the Eucharistic Gifts at the Presanctified Liturgy. Holy Communion is given from the Eucharistic Gifts sanctified on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and is given to strengthen us in the middle of our weekly Lenten efforts. Join us after each Presanctified Liturgy for a potluck.

Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos:

The Akathist Hymn is a profound, devotional poem which sings the praises of the Holy Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary. It is one of the most beloved services in the Orthodox Church celebrated these in conjunction with our sister parishes who each share in hosting.

FASTING

Give careful consideration to how you and your family can apply the Church's prescription for fasting. You are urged to keep the fast in preparation for the coming of the Lord. Fr. Michael stands ready to assist you in adapting the following guidelines of the Church's prescription for fasting to your particular situation.

ALMSGIVING

Our increased prayer, both liturgical and personal, should lead us to an increased sharing of the love of God that our prayer and fasting bring us to. The natural result of having received God's love is to love our neighbor in need. Please participate in the almsgiving opportunities within and outside the Church.



CONFESSION

The Church offers us a wonderful gift in the Sacrament of Confession. Great Lent is a time to come to our Lord, repent of our sins, and receive the Gift of His love and forgiveness. Confessions are heard without an appointment after each Saturday Great Vespers or by appointment Tuesdays through Fridays. A *Preparation for Confession Booklet* is available on the Parishioner's Table in the Narthex or on our website.

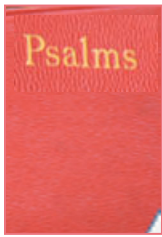


*Let us begin the time of fasting in light!
Preparing ourselves for the spiritual efforts.
Let us purify our soul; let us purify our body.
As from food, let us abstain from all passion
and enjoy the virtues of the spirit,
So that perfected in time by love,
We may all be made worthy to see the Passion of Christ
and the Holy Pascha in spiritual joy!*

Bishop Maxim

CLERGY RECOMMENDATIONS: READING FOR LENT

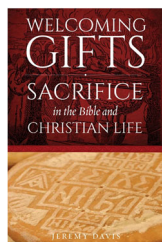
Fr. Michael—*The Psalms* by Prophet King David and Others



Did you know that the bible is the main “Prayer Book” of the Church? The bible gives us words for our souls to utter far more profound or accurate than we can write ourselves. Adding any Psalms (or extra Psalms if you are already praying some on a daily basis) is one of the best Lenten practices. I encourage you to join me in praying the Psalms each day of Lent.

Fr. David—*Welcoming Gifts: Sacrifice in the Bible and Christian Life* by Archimandrite Jeremy Davis, the Protosyngellos of the Archdiocese.

I read it after Father Jeremy introduced it at the 2023 Parish Life Conference in Chicago, it is probably the most interesting book I read all year. While not strictly speaking a “Lenten” study, it is a good book

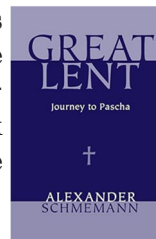


for anyone who wants to dive deeper into the liturgical life of the church. Its thesis is that our modern understanding of the term “sacrifice” is limited and wanting, focusing on images of suffering, loss, and martyrdom. Throughout the ancient world and in the Old Testament, however, sacrifice was more of a means of sharing God's gifts with Him and the community, a communion that was the occasion of joyful celebration. Understanding sacrifice in this way helps us

not only better understand and participate in the Divine Liturgy and its eucharistic nature, but also deepens our relationship with Christ our High Priest, the One who offers and is offered in this joyful communal celebration, where we may taste eternal life.

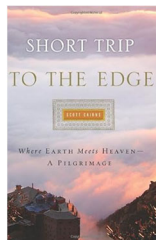
Dn. Justin—*Great Lent Journey to Pascha* by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

Fr. Schmemmann writes with great beauty and insight and is skilled at explaining theology in a manner that's accessible to all. Starting with the Sunday of Zacchaeus in the pre-Lenten period and taking us all the way through Holy Week and Pascha, this book helps us to better understand the meaning behind the Lenten disciplines and services.



Dn. John—*Short Trip to the Edge* by Scott Cairns

This is an inspiring memoir that takes readers on a transformative journey through the author's spiritual quest. Cairns, known for his poetic sensibilities, brings his lyrical prowess to prose as he shares his experiences seeking spiritual enlightenment through a pilgrimage to Mount Athos. The book is a beautiful blend of travelogue, memoir, and spiritual reflection, inspiring readers to embark on their quest for meaning and purpose. *Short Trip to the Edge* is a thought-provoking and profoundly moving memoir that inspires readers to live a more meaningful and purposeful life. Cairns' poetic language and heartfelt reflections make this book a must-read for anyone seeking to connect with their spiritual self and find deeper meaning in their own lives.



OUR MISSION—WHAT WE DO

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church is a worshipping community living and sharing the Faith Christ gave to the Apostles.

WHY WE EXIST

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church exists to seek and share Christ's love so that all will find Eternal Life in Him.

SUBMISSION REMINDERS

Announcements and Holy Oblations are due by noon each Wednesday.

Submit Announcements:

announcements@stnicholasgr.com

Submit Holy Oblations:

stnicholasgr.com/parishioners/ or by completing an envelope located on the Parishioner's Table in the Narthex.

PARISH COUNCIL

Please use the following email address when communicating with the Parish Council:

parishcouncil@stnicholasgr.com

STRATEGIC PLANNING

For updated information go to:
stnicholasgr.com/parishioners

SCHEDULING TIME WITH FR. MICHAEL

To make a an appointment, please call the Church Office and arrange. For those who would like to arrange their own appointments, please go to stnicholasgr.com/appointments and do so directly online.

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Fellowship activities provide great opportunities to invite others to engage in faith, fellowship & fun.



OK MAMA: MOMS NIGHT OUT

Lenten Meal Prep

This Thursday, March 21 @ 6:00PM

Mamas, join us at St George (334 La Grave Ave SE, 49503) for Compline followed by Lenten Meal prep! After the service, we'll work together in the kitchen, share our tips and ideas, and connect with our Pan-Orthodox sisters. If this sounds like a beautiful time to you, please come and bring a friend. Contact Hannah Seeley hrseeley@gmail.com or visit our FB group (search: OK mama).

FORERUNNERS

This Thursday, March 21 @ Noon

Join us for a Lenten lunch followed by a presentation and discussion of Lent given by Fr. David. Please bring a Lenten meal/side of your choice. RSVP to Barbara Thomas at bat47@wmis.net with your attendance.

VERSE OF THE WEEK

*If we confess our sins,
He is faithful and just to forgive us
our sins and to cleanse us from all
unrighteousness.*

*If we say that we have not sinned,
we make Him a liar,
and His word is not in us.*

I John 1: 9-10



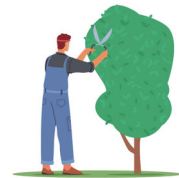
SAVE THE DATE

WOMEN OF ST. NICHOLAS BREAKFAST

Guest Speaker Fr. David Khorey
Saturday April 6
9 AM

CREATION CARE WORKDAY

Saturday, April 13
9:00 AM – 12:30 PM



THE DIVINE LITURGY: THE GREATEST INVITATION (Part 2)

April 20
10 AM - 2 PM



SOYO RETREAT

April 12-14
Grace Adventures Retreat Center



A-Men (Men of St. Nicholas) you are invited to attend the Men's Retreat being held at St. George!



MEN'S RETREAT Saturday 6 April 2024

*'What does the Lord
require of thee?':
Struggles in
Contemporary Culture*

1:00pm - Beyond 'Culture Wars'
2:00pm - Cultivating the Soul
3:00pm - Extended Q&A on
topics of vital interest for men
5:00pm - Great Vespers

*Saint George
Orthodox Church*
334 La Grave Ave SE
Grand Rapids MI 49503

with Dcn Dr. Sampson
Ryan Nash, MD

is the Endowed Chair in Medical Ethics & Professionalism, the Director of The Ohio State University Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities, and Associate Professor in the Dept. of Biomedical Education & Anatomy, College of Medicine.



RSVP (and send topics for Q&A discussion) by March 30 to
Fr. Anthony - franthonygilbert@gmail.com

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan SABA
36



Archbishop of New York
and Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Prot. no.: 049/2024

Great Lent, 2024

TO BE READ FROM THE PULPIT AND PRINTED IN THE BULLETIN

Beloved Hierarchs, Clergy, and Faithful of our Archdiocese,

Greetings in the name of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ!

During this holy season of repentance, we strive with renewed focus to live rightly, being “doers of the word and not just hearers” (James 1:22). Along with increasing our prayers and abandoning self-indulgence, we especially focus on caring for the needs of others. As we hear on Meatfare Sunday, we will be judged by God on how we have responded to the sufferings of the “least of these” (Matthew 25), so we must strive to give attention to their needs as we would to Christ’s.

Although our Lord Jesus Christ taught and exemplified this law of love in the most perfect way, it is also beautifully stated in the Old Law, where God commands, “If one of your brothers happens to be in need . . . , you will not harden your heart nor shut your hand to your needy brother. You will surely open your hands to him” (Deuteronomy 15:7–8). Such giving is not just some humanitarian project but a relational act: opening our hearts and hands to our brothers and sisters. It is a determination to actually see the homeless woman we pass on the street and to remember the friend or acquaintance who has fallen on hard times. Although the magnitude of suffering in the world tempts us to insulate ourselves against the needs of others, the law of love reminds us that each person is a treasure and that his need is not a problem but an opportunity to embrace him.

As we have for 50 years now, we again encourage you to open your hearts and hands to the needy by contributing to our Food for Hungry People program this Lent. We appeal to your well-known generosity and ask the blessing of Almighty God on all who participate in this worthy effort.

With prayers for an edifying and enriching Great Lent and a glorious celebration of Pascha, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

□ SABA

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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(201) 871-1355 T Archdiocese@antiochian.org (201) 871-7954 F