



PANAGIA PANTOVASILISSA
HOLY MOTHER QUEEN OF ALL
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
A COMMUNITY FOR ALL

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February 2018

Great Lent: A Journey of Repentance



Lent is upon us. On February 19th, we shall begin the Great Fast. The services become more somber, the church more dimly illumined, the hymns more penitential, and we, ourselves, more reflective. We reflect on many things: We reflect on our own sins. We reflect on our dire need for forgiveness and mercy. We reflect on how we might, in turn, show forth that forgiveness and mercy towards others which Christ himself displayed towards all mankind. And just as we reflect, so do we repent.

Repentance. The word literally means a turning. A turning away from the self. A turning away from our own worldly desires and towards the needs of the other. It is a turning of our mind, body, and spirit. And it is a turning which ultimately finds us face-to-face with Christ, the dread yet merciful Judge before whom we shall all one day stand. But it is most manifestly *not* a turning which we are called to undertake alone. For just as Christ walks with us, so must we walk together in Him.

As we prepare to enter Great Lent, we must recall that we do not undergo this purifying journey alone. We are called, as a community, to take stock of ourselves and to come together. Christ is our destination, and just as moths draw closer to one another as they flutter towards the light, so do we draw closer together as we approach the One in Whom we find our unity and our purpose.

That we might properly prepare for this journey, let us come together on February 18th at the Forgiveness Vespers. For if we all come together and truly ask and grant forgiveness of and to one another, then that forgiveness shall provide us with the spiritual rations we shall require instead of trivial foodstuffs during the course of the Great Fast. With love in Christ and every pastoral blessing, I remain,

Fr. William

The Lenten Worship Services:

A Weekly Commitment to Christ

In addition to the Sunday Divine Liturgy, our Lenten Weekly service schedule is as follows:

MONDAY

6 PM – Great Compline

This service is a service which is deeply focused on repentance and opening ourselves to the mercy and grace of God. We are sinners, yes, but the image of our Creator within us has not been destroyed; rather, it has been damaged. As Lord of the Powers, He is ever ready to render His aid to those who call upon him. In this service, we do precisely that. At this service we also engage in congregational reading. The faithful who come, themselves, call directly upon our Lord on their own behalf and on behalf of the community.

WEDNESDAY

6 PM – Presanctified Liturgy

This service, which tradition ascribes to Gregory the Dialogist, is a penitential liturgy. Since there is no consecration during the week during Great Lent, the *amnos* (lamb) is consecrated instead on the Sunday prior to the Presanctified Liturgy and reserved in the *artophorion* (bread carrier). Thus, this is already the Body of Christ at the beginning of the service, and is ceremonially carried to the Proskomide table, where it is covered in preparation for the entrance, which is much more subdued than the normal entrances.

7 PM – Lenten Adult Study and Potluck

On Wednesday nights, we gather together in a fellowship meal provided from the fruits of our labour, and we learn together about our faith. Please ensure that all dishes are fast appropriate. We will be exploring a variety of penitential and Lenten themes throughout the course of the fast.

FRIDAY

6 PM – Salutations and Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos

These services are a series of hymns which praise the Theotokos for the aid she has rendered the faithful throughout history. They were directly inspired by her protection of the city of Constantinople against seemingly insurmountable odds during the last Romano-Persian War. Just as all seemed lost, Our Champion Leader put to flight the countless hordes of Avars and Persians, and her city was preserved to endure for almost a thousand years longer. Today we praise her not only for this victory, but for the countless victories over sin and death that we have won in Christ through her intercession.

SATURDAY

6 PM – Great Vespers

This is the service at which we prepare for and welcome the Lord's Day, on the night before we gather together to receive Christ. At the midpoint of the service, when we sing "O Gladsome Light", the Church, which was dimly lit, becomes awash with light. This is the transition from the Sabbath, to the Day of the Lord, on which we shall receive His Body and Blood, thereby sacramentally becoming the Body of Christ. We gather the night before to prepare ourselves.

7 PM – The Sacrament of Confession

The time following the conclusion of Great Vespers will be set aside for those among the faithful who feel burdened and wounded by sin to come to Confession as we prepare to receive our Lord together the following day. If you wish to confess, please plan to be at the Church by the conclusion of Great Vespers (approximately 6:45 PM).

Pastoral Notes

GREEK ORTHODOX YOUTH ASSOCIATION (GOYA)

On February 3rd, we refounded the GOYA chapter at our local parish after an absence of approximately 30 years. The first Saturday of each month is set aside for our meetings and outings, and in the coming months we will be engaging in fun, fellowship, food, retreats, and service. Families who are interested in participating, and parents who are interested in serving as volunteers are encouraged to contact Fr. William to be placed on the contact list. Our GOYA is a youth fellowship organization which, for this year, is open to our youth in grades 5-12.

YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE OF LEXINGTON (Y'ALL)

On February 3rd, our young adult fellowship group met together. The name that was chosen by the membership was the Young Adult League of Lexington (appropriately abbreviated Y'ALL). We plan to meet monthly. Our meetings usually take the form of casual outings. Anyone who is interested in participating is encouraged to contact Fr. William to be placed on the contact list. Our Y'ALL chapter is open to young adults, ages 18-39.

ALTAR BOY MEETING

On February 18th, all youth interested in serving in the altar are required to attend a meeting after the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. Those who have not served before are welcome. We will be reviewing the responsibilities and joys of serving in God's Holy Altar, as well as the appropriate behaviour to exhibit in such a sacred space. We will also talk about the meaning behind the service. Our Altar Boy group is open to young men, ages 7-18. Those older may serve as Assistant Ecclesiarchs by permission of the priest in consultation with the Ecclesiarch, Joel Scott.

ON FASTING AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please note that if you have a medical condition, you are asked to obey the recommendations of your doctor during Great Lent. The hierarchs have been clear on this point in the past, as are the patristic sources. It goes without saying that we are called to be honest with ourselves and before God about what is and is not a legitimate condition. If you are diabetic, or suffer from a nutritional deficiency, or any other condition that calls for you to be on a specific diet, the Church understands. If you would like to discuss some level of fasting, feel free to contact the priest, but *always* obey the recommendations of your doctors.

Philoptochos Corner

By: Carolyn Janssen

A great time was had by all at our Apokreatiko dance this past Saturday. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make it an event that all ages could enjoy. I hope this will become an annual event.

Baking began mid-January for the spring bake sale. It will be held March 29th and 30th. We always appreciate help so if you like to bake please join us. Please see either Kristen Eliopoulos or myself for the baking dates.

Philoptochos will be taking new members until April 25th. The dues for membership are \$25 for the entire year. If you are interested in participating in Philoptochos, please contact Chrisi Karounos or Katina Douglas.

Apokreatiko and Youth Fellowship Night

On February 3rd, Philoptochos sponsored an Apokreatiko as we prepare to enter into the season of Great Lent. We also held the first meeting of our reestablished GOYA, as well as a meeting of our young adult fellowship (Y'ALL) chapter. Fun was had by all, and our thanks go out to Philoptochos!



Worship and Church Events Schedule

Saturday, February 3rd

4:00 PM – GOYA Fellowship
6:00 PM – Great Vespers
7:00 PM – Apokreatiko and Young Adult Fellowship

Sunday, February 4th

9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy
12:00 PM – Philoptochos

Wednesday, February 7th

6:00 PM – Vespers and Confession

Saturday, February 10th

6:00 PM – Vespers and Confession
7:00 PM – Philoptochos 3M Party

Sunday, February 11th – Judgement Sunday

9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy

Wednesday, February 14th

6:00 PM – Vespers and Confession

Saturday, February 17th

6:00 PM – Vespers and Confession

Sunday, February 18th – Forgiveness Sunday

9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy
12:00 PM – Altar Server Meeting
6:00 PM – Forgiveness Vespers

Monday, February 19th

6:00 PM – Great Compline

Wednesday, February 21st

6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, February 23rd

6:00 PM – Salutations to the Theotokos

Saturday, February 24th

6:00 PM – Vespers and Confession

Sunday, February 25th – Forgiveness Sunday

9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy
6:00 PM – Triumph of Orthodoxy (Hosting)

Monday, February 26th

6:00 PM – Great Compline

Wednesday, February 28th

6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 2nd

6:00 PM – Salutations to the Theotokos

Saturday, March 3rd

4:00 PM – GOYA Fellowship
6:00 PM – Vespers and Confession

Sunday, March 4th

9:00 AM – Matins and Liturgy
12:00 PM – Parish Oratorical Festival

Monday, March 5th

6:00 PM – Great Compline

Wednesday, March 7th

6:00 PM – Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 9th

6:00 PM – Salutations to the Theotokos

Saturday, March 10th

11:00 AM – Youth Retreat and Outing
6:00 PM – Vespers and Confession