

The Cathedral Monthly Bulletin



St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral • A parish of the Orthodox Church in America • Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest • Founded in 1887

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St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral
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Pastoral Reflection

On the Third Sunday of Great and Holy Lent celebrated on April 4th this year, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Services include a special veneration of the Cross, which prepares the faithful for the commemoration of the crucifixion during Holy Week. This month we are fasting and praying and going deeper into the mystery of His death and pondering our Savior hanging on the Cross. In early May, we will discover the joy of Pascha, going from the darkness of this April to the light of Christ that will truly illumine all.

Christ who is the Son of God dies voluntarily on the cross setting us free from the shackles of slavery and sin, opening the Kingdom of Heaven, and allowing righteous souls to enter. What a divine gift! What an absolute and total joy! Glory to God! Let's not be afraid to go to that dark place of Lent in our hearts and minds and to look at the horror of our Lord and Savior as He goes to that place of Golgatha. Here we can contemplate what this mystery means for us and for all of humanity. How could such death bring life? How could this bloody and senseless tragedy of humankind bring us joy?

In our lives, we are all challenged and faced with many obstacles that keep us from our God. From participating in our church services to doing the right things, we are constantly falling away. We are turning our gaze away from the cross of Christ and forgetting to glorify God with all that we have and thanking Him. The unbelievable reality of all of this and the tragedy in and of itself is that we have forgotten what a gift that our Savior gave us on the cross. We are foolish to think that anything else in this life is more important than to move our eyes away from the cross. This is why we put it everywhere in our homes. This is why we wear the cross on our necks and given one at our baptism. We sign ourselves with it. It is all over the church even the domes on the outside. It is marked on all of our pews. Let's look at it. Let us try to understand. We must wonder, ponder, and meditate the depths and layers of its mystery so it can unfold in our lives and give us heavenly and real blessings that lead us to the Heavenly Kingdom.

The cross means everything to us believers. We need to hold on to it for dear life moving aside all barriers that keep us from it. It is the only key that unlocks the doors of the Kingdom for all of us. In it lies the mystery of our lives as they unfold before it and as we move through it to the joy of Pascha. Let's run that race to the finish so that in this life and in the life to come we can truly say with all our hearts "Christ is Risen!"

- Fr. Benjamin

Rejoice, O Life-Giving Cross

(from the Lenten Triodion)

Rejoice, O life-bearing Cross: bright paradise of the Church, and tree of incorruption! Thou hast obtained for us the joy of everlasting glory. Through thee, the hosts of demons are driven out; the choirs of angels are amazed and rejoice; the company of the faithful gathers in celebration. O unconquerable weapon, unbroken stronghold, triumph of Orthodox Christians and pride of priests, // by following thee may we witness the Passion and Resurrection of Christ our God!

Beholding Thee, the Fashioner and Creator of all, hanging naked on the Cross, all creation was changed with fear and lamented. The sun withdrew its light, and the earth quaked; the rocks were rent, and the splendor of the Temple was torn asunder. The dead rose out of their graves, and the hosts of angels were amazed, saying: "Oh, the wonder! The Judge is judged and suffers, // desiring this for the salvation and renewal of the world."

President's Column

Michael Kokosh pretty much covered all of the thank you's in his article last month, and I echo all of them, but I would still like to thank him and the outgoing board and service attendants for their dedication and work on behalf of the parish during a most difficult time, and I'd like to welcome the new board and service attendants, and thank them for their willingness to serve during, what continues to be, a most difficult time.

We are now halfway through Great Lent, well on our way to Pascha, all of us would like to have the services and activities for Lent and Pascha that we had two years ago, but even with vaccinations and the loosening of restrictions, for the safety of all of us, I expect attendance at services will still be limited. Striking a balance between the desire to have everything open and the limits necessary to keep everyone as safe as possible is a very difficult task, and I would especially like to thank Fr. Andrew, Fr. Benjamin, and Zach Mandell for their outstanding work in providing as many opportunities as possible for us to participate in services.

There have been questions about moving the choir to the choir loft. That has been carefully considered and it's been determined that it is not possible at this time. While it seems like it would be large enough to hold the number of singers we have right now, it has been measured and it is not possible to provide enough separation to be safe, in addition to that it is a more enclosed space which adds to the risk for singers.

The day will come when we can all gather together again in prayer and celebration, for now, let us continue our Lenten journey with prayers, patience, and love for one another as we endure the times we are in.

Finally, I am writing this on the day that Fr. Vladimir Lecko fell asleep in the Lord

It's hard to really know what to say, so many of us were touched by his and Virginia's love for us in so many ways. Rather than going through the incredibly long list of the things he did in his life both in the church as well as outside, I think I will try to reflect on him as a person, at least the person I knew.

Fr. Vlad was a genuinely kind and compassionate person, his love for all of us was reflected in our love for him and for Virginia as well. Every talent and skill he had acquired in life, he used in his life in the church, most importantly to connect with us, especially young people. In his experiences in the Air Force, he used to connect with and minister to other veterans. His musical skills, he used to not only direct choirs but also to mentor young musicians, especially those in his balalaika orchestras, and while doing so he ministered to them as well. His photography skills he used to connect with and minister to

young photographers. Every experience he had in life, he used to help those he encountered, and bring them closer to God. He utilized his talents, knowledge, and experiences in life to the Glory of God.

And of course, there were his stories, always humorous, always with an underlying message. And in the line to venerate the cross, every kid got a hug.

I think we all loved him so much because he was one of us, and in addition to that, he was our priest.

Please keep Fr. Vlad in your prayers on Lazarus Saturday this year as it will be the 40th day of his falling asleep in the Lord; how fitting.

With Love in Christ,

Jim Varian
President of St. Mary's Cathedral Board of Trustees

Great Lent

PRESANCTIFIED LITURGIES: We will serve the Presanctified Liturgy through Lent on Wednesday mornings, and on Friday both morning and evening, with some exceptions. Morning services are at 9 a.m. On Friday evening the Presanctified is preceded by the 9th Hour starting at 6 p.m. We are often asked about fasting. Most communicants are expected to have fasted for about six hours.

SERVICES SIGN-UP: To sign-up to attend services at the Cathedral please visit: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0d49a8ac2ea0f58-cathedral>. To sign-up to attend services at the St. Andrew Fool for Christ Chapel (Cathedral Basement) visit: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0d49a8ac2ea0f58-standrew>. To sign-up to attend services at the Annunciation Chapel (Cemetery) visit: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0d49a8ac2ea0f58-annunciation>.

CONFESSION: We have been hearing Confessions by appointment for almost 10 months now, and will continue to do so through Lent. We will also be hearing confessions before the Presanctified Liturgies, but we absolutely must avoid long line-ups and crowds! Better to make an appointment for some other time. To sign-up for a confession time with Fr. Benjamin please visit: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0a4ba5ac2eaafc1-frbenjamin>. There will also be General Confession on Lazarus Saturday (April 24) at 4:45 p.m., before Vigil.

Choir Notes

by Zachariah Mandell

Blessed Lent to you all! The sojourn continues. And for all the challenges and strangeness, it has brought me great joy to embark on this Lenten journey. It feels right. It feels hopeful. It feels full of direction and purpose. The great beauty of Lent is that it is not a time during which we are called to act pious with the implication that once Pascha hits we don't have to be pious any more, but rather that we are reminded of the things we should be doing, the way we ought to be living as Christians. It is a reset, a refocus, and a renewal. Lent is traditionally believed to have been a time of particular preparation of Catechumens, as the focused litanies during Presanctified Liturgy and the traditional baptismal dates of Lazarus Saturday and Holy Saturday suggest, but that sense of renewing our Christian lives extends to all. That renewal is founded in the hope of the Resurrection, which we celebrate most profoundly at Pascha, and which we strive to embrace every day - I write this as we celebrate the funeral services of Fr. Vlad Lecko (may his memory be eternal!), which has only heightened the need for and reality of our Christian hope in the Resurrection. For the dead and for all things of this world, I think the Apostle Paul's words apply - we do not grieve (or live, I'd say) as those who have no hope.

COVID Protocol Outlook

My hope during this Lenten season extends to where we are in terms of the choir Covid protocols. I have heard from a number of you - a fitting time to encourage you, that if you have any questions, you know where and how to find me; I am more than willing to talk about what's going on, so do not hesitate to ask - wondering about the state of things. Though it is still unwise to try to set plans in stone in the midst of such uncertainty, here are some preliminary thoughts.

Regarding vaccinations: an ongoing conversation to be sure. I am keeping tabs on the vaccination progress from a choral perspective. I'm not sure what the point will be at which we can start dispensing with distancing for those who are vaccinated - that also comes from the Archbishop and the various three-lettered agencies and institutions that have been guiding this process. Overall, I imagine a gradual reopening for the choir starting sometime in the summer (I hope): expansions from wherever we are then to groups of 8-12 or so that rotate Sunday services, still with a certain amount of safe spacing between stands, and masks. Over time, the size of groups will increase, while the number of groups decreases, until, GOD-WILLING, we are singing at full capacity. We don't know what pitfalls lie ahead, what diversions. This is not a set in stone plan, but a vision for gradual expansion.

I would take this moment also to reflect upon how much of an exercise in empathy this pandemic has been, of love for the neighbor, of trying to reckon with the views of our neighbors. In our community and in the world, there is a vast diversity of

opinion on most things, not to speak only of the current times. There are those who are very eager to move forward and open up, and those who are more inclined toward deliberation. Opening up, for all of us, has the potential to be rather shocking and perhaps overwhelming after so many months of distancing. As with exercise, fasting, so many efforts both spiritually and bodily, 0 to 100 is not the healthiest, most efficient, or most prudent course, but rather a steady effort taken by all of us, together, as a community, to see each other, empathize, and realize that our goal is the same.

While for the foreseeable future, we will still be operating with scheduled sets of singers in the same downstairs space, through the Lenten season we will at the very least be making sure that there are 5 stands set up, and working to slightly increase the number of singers per service, integrating more singers into the rotation while still maintaining a safe distance between the singers. I have sent an email to the choir list about this, but if you would like to start getting in the rotation and haven't yet, please reach out to me so we can talk about getting you into the singer's schedule. This will be a process, and (feeling very much like that Bernie Sanders meme - for those with ears to hear, let them hear) I am once again asking for your patience as the process plays out.

Eventually, I look forward to getting singers back in the choir loft. We have not been singing up there for a few reasons. One is the question of aerosol spread being more significant "from above". There are two kinds of aerosol particles expelled from the mouth while singing (these being the perpetrators of airborne Covid spread), to the best of my understanding, small which disperse into the air of the space, and heavier particles that are more affected by gravity, and do indeed "drop" after initially being expelled. The precaution has been to sing on the ground, so that the heavy particles are not raining down. A second reason is that the loft itself is more confined, which presents an issue for singers in the immediate area of the production of the small aerosol particles - it would be more risky. Thirdly (though the list is not exclusively three points), a significant part of our current ministry under continuing restrictions has been to livestream our services. Right now, our technology set-up is downstairs, so that is where we are going to sing - we can't currently go back and forth.

Pray for me and for us all as we continue to, as my grandfather was fond of saying, forge on! In XC - Zach.

April Birthdays

6 - Irene Lanchava
9 - Lorraine Parlow

21 - Lynn Bjornnes
29 - Joanie Balach

Church School - Faith and Fellowship in April & May

We are excited to be continuing and expanding our church school Connected in Christ plan! Changes for April and May include:

- High School and Middle School will meet together for Typika, then break into groups for class.
- Grades 2-5 will get a couple extra dates, which will include both Typika (for students and their families) and class.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

April 4 - Grades 2-5 (class only - 10:30 start time)
 April 11 - High School/Middle School (Typika and class - 10:00 start time)
 April 18 - Grades 2-5 (Typika and class - 10:00 start time)
 April 25 - High School/Middle School (Typika and class - 10:00 start time)
 May 2 - Pascha (no classes)
 May 9 - High School/Middle School (Typika and class - 10:00 start time)
 May 16 - Grades 2-5 (Typika and class - 10:00 start time)
 May 23 - High School only - focus on graduates (Typika and class - 10:00 start time)

Please plan on joining us, even if you haven't in the past. We will be sending email reminders to class families several days before each class.



Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem

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.

FOCUS MN Clothes Closet Needs

The Clothes Closet is still accepting the following items:

- Men's clothing including shoes, pants, shirts, jackets
- Linens: gently used sheets (especially queen size) and towels
- New women's briefs (especially size 7) and new men's boxer briefs (especially medium and large)
- Children's clothing sizes 5-12 and children's shoes

FOCUS MN Food Shelf Needs

- Plastic Snack Bags
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Cans of Spam
- Peanut Butter & Jelly (not huge jars)
- Graham Crackers
- Granola Bars

Save the Date



**St. Mary's Charity
 Golf Tournament
 Sunday, July 25, 2021**

Transitions

Baptism:

Cora Christianson, 3-20-2021

Chrismation:

George Bezold, 3-20-2021

Memory Eternal:

Archpriest Vladimir Lecko, 3-16-2021

Many Years!

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY to all who celebrate their birthdays in April, and especially to Leonard Kirvida who is celebrating his 93rd birthday on April 15; Mary Manoleff who is celebrating her 92nd birthday on April 18th; Martin Tich who is celebrating his 93rd birthday on April 27th; Anna Tich who is celebrating her 93rd birthday on April 28th.

May God grant you many years!



Article deadline for the
May 2021
Cathedral Monthly Bulletin
 is **Friday, April 16.**

Paschal Greeting

Looking for a way to send your best wishes for a glorious Pascha to your friends and family at St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral? Just print your family listing on the form below and submit it with a \$20 payment to St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral, 1701 Fifth Street N.E., Minneapolis, MN 55413, by **Sunday, April 18**, and your listing will appear in both the Pascha Messenger and the May Monthly Bulletin.

Sample listings would read: *The Thomas Smith Family*, or *Mr. & Mrs. John Doe*, or *Jane Doe*, or *Jim and Jane Doe*. Proceeds from this Pascha Greeting Page will be placed in the General Fund of our Cathedral.

2021 Pascha Greeting Listing

Name _____

Amount Enclosed:

_____ cash _____ check

Theology on Thursdays

Theology on Thursdays begins a Lenten season via Zoom: April 1, 8, 15 and 22 at 7:15 pm. Those on the mailing list will get the link the day before. If you are parishioner and would like to join the Theology on Thursdays mailing list please contact Fr. Andrew at frandrew@stmarysoca.org.

Special Contributions

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In memory of Elizabeth Varichak

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In memory of Bill Stenach

From: Family & Friends

ST. MARY'S SAINTS

In memory of Bill Stenach

From: Family & Friends

St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral

April 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 Venerable Titus the Wonderworker 9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 6:00 pm 9th Hour & Presanctified Liturgy	3 9:00 am Memorial Liturgy 5:00 pm Vigil
4 Veneration of the Cross 8:00 am Divine Liturgy (Cemetery Chapel) 9:00 am Divine Liturgy (Cathedral) 10:30 am Church School: 2nd-5th Graders	5	6 6:15 pm Vespers	7 Repose of St. Tikhon 9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy	8	9 9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 6:00 pm 9th Hour & Presanctified Liturgy	10 9:00 am Memorial Liturgy 10:30 am Cathedral Spring Clean-Up Day 5:00 pm Vigil
11 St. John of the Ladder 8:00 am Divine Liturgy (Cemetery Chapel) 9:00 am Divine Liturgy (Cathedral) 10:00 am Typika & Church School: High School & Middle School	12 7:00 pm Board Meeting	13	14 9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 6:15 pm 9th Hour & Presanctified Liturgy	15	16 9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Akathist Hymn	17 9:00 am Divine Liturgy 3:00 pm Baptism 5:00 pm Vigil
18 St. Mary of Egypt Parastas Sunday 8:00 am Divine Liturgy (Cemetery Chapel) 9:00 am Divine Liturgy (Cathedral) 10:00 am Typika & Church School: 2nd-5th Graders	19	20	21 9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy	22	23 9:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 6:15 pm Festal Matins	24 Lazarus Saturday 8:00 am Chrismation 9:00 am Festal Liturgy 4:15 pm General Confession 5:00 pm Vigil
25 Palm Sunday 8:00 am Divine Liturgy (Cemetery Chapel) 8:15 am Chrismation 9:00 am Divine Liturgy (Cathedral) 10:00 am Typika & Church School: High School & Middle School 1:00 pm Vespers 7:00 pm Bridegroom Matins	26 Holy Monday 11:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Bridegroom Matins	27 Holy Tuesday 11:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Bridegroom Matins	28 Holy Wednesday 11:00 am Presanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm Matins of Holy Thursday	29 Holy Thursday 10:00 am Vesperal Liturgy 7:00 pm Matins of Holy Friday (Reading of 12 Gospels)	30 Holy Friday Church Office Closed 8:00 am Royal Hours 2:00 pm Holy Friday Vespers (Cemetery Chapel) 2:00 pm Holy Friday Vespers (Cathedral) 7:00 pm Matins of Holy Saturday (Lamentations)	

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 It's what we do.



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