



# St. Michael the Archangel Serbian Orthodox Parish Newsletter February 2014

**Christ is in our Midst!**

Saturday Vespers 6:00 PM  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 10 AM

Website: [www.easternorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.easternorthodoxchurch.org)

*"We long to do great works,  
because the minor good deeds  
do not feed our pride, for they  
go unnoticed, are hidden, and  
are salvific precisely for that  
reason. Large-scale plans do  
not allow us to do what is  
essential and necessary for  
the soul."*

*Fr. John Krestiankin*

## February: Important Church Dates:

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>** – Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee.

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> thru 14<sup>th</sup>** – Week of Publican and Pharisee.

**Fast Free Week.**

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>** – Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs: St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, and St. John Chrysostom.

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>** – 10 am Liturgy - The Meeting of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Baptism of James Taylor*

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>** – Sunday of the Prodigal Son. Commemoration of the Holy and Righteous Symeon.

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>** – 10 am Liturgy; 1pm Orthodox marriage service for Milka and James Taylor; Reception following!

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meatfare).

**Offerings:** Remember to use envelopes, and include your name, so that the treasurer may credit you with your donations.

**Confessions:** may be heard Saturdays after Vespers; also Sunday mornings before Divine Liturgy 9:40 am-10 am or contact Fr. Gregory to arrange a time. Please come early on Sunday mornings so we may start Divine Liturgy on time.

**Note from the Kitchen:** Please only make full pots of coffee using the plastic pitcher next to the coffee pot. When you try to make a ½ pot, it comes out as a full pot, because there is a reserve in the coffee pot reservoir, and then the next person that makes coffee only gets a ½ pot.

**Church Cleaning:** Will be held on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00AM. Charles Malmede will open the church for cleaning. Attendance has been low, and we could really use the additional help. Please come help beautify our church.

**Sisterhood Meeting:** There will be a Sisterhood meeting on Thursday, February 20 at 6 pm preparing food for wedding.

## Coffee Hour: (\*Lenten Fast)

Feb 2nd – Bergantz

Feb 9th – Zarzaur

Feb 16th – Darzi/Malyarenko

Feb 23rd – Ellis

Mar. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Gulas (Cheesefare  
(Sun. – no meat)

\*Mar. 9<sup>th</sup> – Hansen

\*Mar. 16 – Hargrave

\*Mar. 23<sup>rd</sup> – Hogan/  
Mat. Ann/Weber

\*Mar. 30<sup>th</sup> – Jokich

**Church Needs:** Coffee hour plates, bowls, forks, napkins, Olive Oil (gal. regular not extra virgin) and bouquets of flowers to decorate the Church on Sundays. If you can donate any of these items, it would be very much appreciated.

**Russian School:** will meet Saturday February 1 & 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am in our church hall. NO MEETING FEB 15 & 22 because of Baptism and Wedding. Contact Elena Lee ([lenaLee10@aol.com](mailto:lenaLee10@aol.com)) or Alexandra Pickle ([Alexandra.pickle@gmail.com](mailto:Alexandra.pickle@gmail.com)). Everyone is welcome to participate.

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

God Grant Them Many Years!

### Birthdays

1<sup>st</sup> – Joe Bergantz

3<sup>rd</sup> – Jady Taylor

7<sup>th</sup> – Michele Platt

9<sup>th</sup> – Alexandra Pickle

9<sup>th</sup> – Mary Ann Lee

15<sup>th</sup> – Charles Malmede

21st – Kurt Weber

### Anniversaries

27th - Sandy & Roger Ellis

## Community Events/Bulletin Board

Please mark your calendars for

- **February 15<sup>th</sup>** – Divine Liturgy at 10am and Jim Taylor’s baptism afterwards
- **February 22<sup>nd</sup>** – 1:00pm Orthodox Marriage service for Milka and Jim Taylor (reception following)

**Thank you!** We’d like to thank [Mike & Michele Jokich](#) for hosting Bishop Longin and Fr. Serafim; Thanks to [Vicki Kendall](#) for her work on the 2014 wall calendars and to [Joe Bergantz](#) for having it printed; Also thanks to [Ray and Vicki](#) for the beautiful Christmas flower arrangements. Thanks to [Helen & Joe Bergantz](#) for designing and distributing the Christmas card; Thanks to Matushka Ann for organizing the church outing to the Birmingham Opera. Also, [Fr. Gregory and Matushka Ann](#) want to thank everyone for the nice Christmas gift!

## Prayer List:

### **Please keep in your prayers**

Living: **Church Members:** Sandy Ellis (surgery Feb 5), and Milka Taylor. **Friends of Members:** Danny, Jean, Donna, Doug, John, Rachel, Demi, Anne, Joanne Karas, Glen, Janet Burn’s daughters Rebecca and Kara, and granddaughter Victoria and for Mary Kochoff. Kayla (very sick grandchild of friends of Rick Kaiser) and Jim Smith (Catechumen Lisa Crafts’ father).

Deceased: Mary, Sam, Frances, Joe, Anne, Stan, Daniel, Anna, Fryni, Nelia, Natalie, Olga Hansen’s father, Dragan; and Harold Kendall (Ray’s dad).

## Church Council – 2013 to 2014

Father Gregory Schultz – parish administrator

Hal Pastrick– president

Bob Zarzaur – vice president

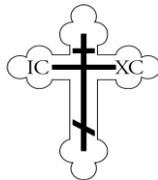
Joe Bergantz – treasurer

Michele Platt – secretary

**Members at large** – Sandy Ellis, Mike Jokich, Rick Kaiser, Charles Malmede, Marshall Standifer

News Items - Please send church news items to the Newsletter editor, Rick Kaiser at [rkmk2012@gmail.com](mailto:rkmk2012@gmail.com)

Website - Vicki Kendall; Choir Director – Sandy Ellis; Librarian – Leslie Hargrave; Sunday School – Matushka Ann



## On the Pre-Lenten Season

The Liturgical Year is for us a spiritual journey in which we follow our Lord and experience His mysterious love for us through which we draw closer to Him. This journey has now brought us to the Pre-Lenten period that comes before Great Lent. Not surprisingly, the Holy Fathers have dedicated these weeks to themes of repentance for our contemplation and prayer. Participation in these Divine Services helps form our hearts, minds and souls into true disciples of Christ. The Pre-Lenten themes the Church has given us are: Zaccheus, Publican and Pharisee, Prodigal Son, the Last Judgment and Forgiveness Sunday. Officially, Zaccheus Sunday is not part of the Lenten Triodion cycle, and yet it is also connected to the following Sundays, each with their special focus.

Zaccheus was a notorious tax collector who amassed a great fortune using corrupt and dishonest means. It would be more accurate to say that he stole most of his wealth from those he

victimized. Yet, when Christ told Zaccheus that He must dine with him, this great sinner repented and in an amazing turnaround, pledged to give away all his wealth both to the poor and to all those he had wronged. Here is repentance through a great act of restitution and charitable almsgiving.

In the Gospel of the *Publican and Pharisee*, we again see a sinful tax collector, the Publican, in contrast with a supposedly righteous man, the Pharisee. However, rather than stand before God in humility, the Pharisee reveals the very sinful and spiritually deadly passion of pride— ascribing his “righteousness” to his own goodness and additionally showing himself to be extremely judgmental, arrogant and condescending toward others—especially the Publican. However, the Publican comes to the Temple in deep humility and repentance and this time, repentance takes the form of prayer; “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Christ says that it was the repentant Publican who was justified by God—not the proud, self-righteous Pharisee. The Holy Church then directs us NOT to fast the following week, thus providing an important object lesson to not become puffed up by our own works, such as keeping the fast.

Then follows the *Sunday of the Prodigal Son*. Now we see the Prodigal leave his father’s house and spend all his inheritance on riotous living with sinful people. However, once he’s wasted all his money and impoverished himself, he is now forced to fast as it were, not being able to buy food for himself. It is precisely this state of want and need that helps him come back to his senses as he says “how many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!” And so through being deprived of rich food and sinful pleasures, the Prodigal is spiritually awakened and humbly returns to his father’s house.

On the following Sunday, the Church directs us to say ‘farewell’ to meat after this Sunday. This “Meatfare” Sunday is also called the *Sunday of the Last Judgment*. The Gospel on this day is from Matthew 25 when Christ will judge everyone according to our good or bad works. “I was hungry and ye gave me meat...” This Last Judgment provides a real impetus for repentance, since it is a very sobering reality indeed when we contemplate our inevitable end of this earthly life and the Judgment that awaits us.

The final Sunday before Great Lent is Cheesefare or *Forgiveness Sunday*. The Gospel on this day reminds us that we must forgive one another if we wish to be forgiven by God. In the Forgiveness Vespers service that we do after the Divine Liturgy, we humbly bow before each other and ask forgiveness as our Lord has commanded us to do. What a better place this world would be if only more Christians would be obedient to our Lord Jesus Christ Who commanded us to forgive one another. After all, He forgives us, if we will only come before Him, repent and confess our sins.

In Christ,

+Fr. Gregory

Photo Gallery from January



The Twelve Dish Supper on Christmas Eve



Helen Bergantz making sure things go smoothly



The Twelve Dish Supper



Martin Gureasko relaxing at Christmas Party



Russian School sings folk carols at Christmas Open House



Jady, Milka & James Taylor; Tatyana at Christmas Open House



A Night at the Birmingham Opera to see Verdi's Rigoletto



Guest Speaker, Fr. Serafim Baltic giving a talk about Mt. Athos