



St. Michael the Archangel Serbian Orthodox Parish Newsletter March 2014

Christ is in our Midst!

Saturday Vespers 6:00 PM
Sunday Divine Liturgy 10 AM

Website: www.easternorthodoxchurch.org

“To what end do fasting and penitence lead? For what purpose is this trouble taken? They lead to the cleansing of the soul from sins, to peace of heart, to union with God; they fill us with devotion and sonship, and give us boldness before God”

St. John of Kronstadt

March: Important Church Dates:

Sunday 2nd – The Sunday of Forgiveness. Cheesefare Sunday. Meat is excluded. Vespers with the service of mutual forgiveness will be held at 12:30.

Monday 3rd – Beginning of Great Lent.

Sunday 9th – Sunday of Orthodoxy, 6pm Vespers & meal in which we will host the Greek Church

Sunday 16th – St. Gregory Palamas the Archbishop of Thessalonica.

Sunday 23rd – Adoration of the Holy Cross.

Sunday 30th – St. John Climacus

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 March 8th at 9:00AM. Hal Pastrick 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: Thursday, March 20, 6:00PM (to discuss preparations for Holy Week & Pascha)

Coffee Hour: (*Lenten Fast)

Mar. 2nd – Gulas

(Cheesefare Sun. – no meat)

*Mar. 9th – Hansen

*Mar. 16 – Hargrave

*Mar. 23rd – Hogan/Mat. Ann/Weber

*Mar. 30th – Jokich

*April 6th – Kaiser

*April 13th – Kendall

April 20th – **Holy Pascha**

April 27th – Kioutas

Church Needs: Manischewitz wine for communion, 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 Saturdays at 11:30AM. Contact Elena Lee (lenaLee10@aol.com) or Alexandra Pickle (Alexandra.pickle@gmail.com). Everyone is welcome to participate.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

God Grant Them Many Years!

Birthdays

1st – Loretta Harris

3rd – Iryna Haddock

13th – Cassandra Kioutas

18th – Bob Pickle

21st – Milka Taylor

23rd – Brigid Schultz

Anniversaries

16th – Steve & Robbie Cox

27th – Sandy & Roger Ellis

Community Events/Bulletin Board

Please mark your calendars for:

- Sunday, March 9 at 6:00PM: We're hosting the Greek Church for Vespers and a potluck meal on the Sunday of Orthodoxy
- Does anyone know of a place where we can have our Pascha Agape Vespers and Celebratory meal on April 20? Please give Shellie Kioutas your recommendations.

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. Jim Smith (Catechumen Lisa Crafts' father).

Reposed: Mary Kochoff, Mary, Sam, Frances, Joe, Anne, Stan, Daniel, Anna, Fryni, Nelia, Natalie, Olga Hansen's father, Dragan, and Harold (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

Website - Vicki Kendall; Choir Director – Sandy Ellis;

Librarian – Leslie Hargrave; Sunday School – Matushka Ann

Sisterhood News:

The Sisterhood would like to extend a very big Thank you to the church members for all the help and support they have given the Sisterhood in our first year. As the president of the Sisterhood I am proud to report what we have accomplished this year:

- Provided 5 Families with illness multiple meals
- Collected \$3500.00+ for the Taylor's
- Delivered a pantry and freezer full of food for the Taylor's
- A sister sat with Milka during almost every chemo treatment
- Visited with elderly
- Visited with the sick
- Coordinated 8 potluck meals
- Coordinated Easter Lilies and the decorating of the Epitaphios
- Organized the Agape lunch
- Kept the church kitchen and bathrooms stocked
- Visited a monastery

We are a small Sisterhood and a small church and the love and support we provide to each other is inspiring. I am excited to see what we can accomplish in our 2nd year.

In Christ,
Shellie Kioutas
Sisterhood President

Other News:

We now have our new telephone line set up at the church. The number is:

256-881-2449

In addition, this month we will begin having office hours at the church.*

Tuesday: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Wednesday: 12 noon – 6:00 pm

Thursday: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

**Please note: while Fr. Gregory will normally be at the church during these times, pastoral needs will be given priority (i.e.; when someone is ill, etc.). If you need to see him, it is recommended that you call ahead.*



James Taylor's Baptism



New Catechumen Marsha Lavender



James & Milka are Crowned



Best Man/Maid of Honor Nick & Shellie with James and Milka



Some familiar faces at the Wedding Reception

Memory Eternal: Mary Kochoff

August 18, 1922 – February 13, 2014



Mary Buha Kochoff was born on August 18, 1922 in Detroit, Michigan. When she was growing up, one of her childhood acquaintances, Boris Kochoff used to give all the girls rides on his bike; but for some reason, Mary never took him up on the offer. However, when Mary was 25 years old, she met up with Boris Kochoff again at the Graystone Ballroom. Soon, they began a courtship that would last 6 months. It was on a Friday when Boris asked Mary to be his wife. Mary told him she'd like to think about it over the weekend. The next day, on Saturday, Boris popped over to visit Mary at her parent's home. When Mary answered the door, there stood Boris and Mary simply said YES without even giving Boris a chance to say hello. They were married on August 3, 1947 at St. George Romanian Orthodox Cathedral in Detroit. Mary and Boris were married for 62 years. When asked what their secret was to have stayed married all those years, they replied that they always liked each other and treated one another with respect.

At first, they moved in with Boris' father Velko and enjoyed evening snacks of scrambled egg sandwiches, waffles and ice cream which Boris prepared. When Grandfather Velko asked Mary if she was ever going to cook for Boris, she replied, "Pa, you don't have to worry about Boris. He will never starve!" Before the children came along, Mary worked at the traffic court in downtown Detroit, up until she gave birth to their first child, Michael in 1949, affectionately referred to as "Big Shot" by Dedo. Their second child, Elaine was born in 1951, Dedo called her "Dolly." Beverly, Dedo's "Princess" was born in 1952. In 1956, they moved from Dearborn, MI to Dearborn Heights, MI where their youngest child, Michele was born in 1960.

Mary spent her spare time involved in her children's school and church activities. As an active member of the local Dearborn Heights School District 7 Parent Teachers' Association (PTA), she knew all the teachers, principals, and school superintendent. So if her children got in trouble at school, it translated to getting in trouble at home. She was a Girl Scout leader for Elaine and Beverly's troop. Many nieces/nephews and grand nieces/nephews have fond memories of spending the night at the Kochoff house, getting into trouble, for which Mary was in charge of the punishment department as well as assuring everyone had chores to complete. At St. George Romanian Orthodox Cathedral, Mary served as President of the Mother's Club and was a member of the Choir. During summer vacation, she participated in St. George's church summer school as well as the Romanian Diocese Summer Camp "Vatra" in Grasslake, MI. Mary is predeceased by her son Michael, (d.1970).

Boris and Mary retired to Beverly Hills, FL in 1980, where they spent 26 years in the sun and fun, along with Mary's sisters Dorothy (husband Steve) and Alice (husband Alois). Mary was very active in her church and was a founding member of the St. Michael Orthodox Church, Lecanto, FL, supporting its progression from a storefront to a building. She was a member of the choir, lady's auxiliary, and chairperson when St. Michael's hosted the "World Day of Prayer." Mary and Boris celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a Bahamas cruise. Mary finally agreed to move to Huntsville, AL in 2006, where they resided at Redstone Village. They enjoyed meeting new friends from all over the world. Mary especially loved being late for exercise class, mental floss, bingo, bible study, and not having to cook. They lived on the third floor and Mary's ritual included taking the steps and avoiding the elevator at all costs. Mary's love of the church brought her to St. Michael's Church, where she sang and loved bringing Romanian pastries for potluck luncheons.

After 62 years of marriage, Mary lost the love of her life, Boris, on February 17, 2009. She shocked many people for stating she liked Boris before she ever loved him. Throughout their life, they were true friends and maintained their secret 'pig Latin' language, allowing them to giggle privately in front of the children. What a gift. Mary was blessed with two grandsons, Nikita Michael Platt and Kirill Moorhead. She called Nikita "Angel Boy" and Kirill "Sunshine Boy". Nikita loved growing taller than Maica (Romanian for Grandmother) and Kirill was closing in on her 4'9.5" stature. They also had several Godchildren: Valerie Buha Hein, Stephanie Marie Camp Persico, and Steven Michael Camp.

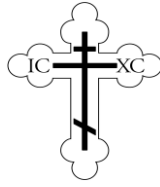
At the ripe old age of 90 Years Old, Mary had knee replacement surgery in Jan 2013, and by springtime, she was back in her high heels, lifting her skirt to show her scars. When Mary suffered her stroke and was unconscious for a time, her family played Orthodox Chants for her which seemed to help things be more peaceful for her. However, she later regained consciousness for the last week of her life and was able to talk with her family and friends. Arrangements were made for a Hospice nurse to help out and Mary was able to leave the hospital over a week ago. After she was back in her apartment, it seemed to do wonders for her spirits and she regained the ability to swallow. So her daughters quickly made the miracle drug "Romanian Chicken Soup" and streamed in Orthodox chants. They watched in amazement as their mother had private conversations with Angels and asked her how many were there...she counted nine on her fingers. And she proceeded to introduce them to her daughters. This past Friday night, while Beverly was reading Orthodox Evening Prayers Mary Kochoff passed away peacefully to be with our Lord.

Some of us have only known Mary Kochoff for the past several years here at St. Michael's. A few things that stand out are her indomitable spirit, her constant cheerfulness and her faithfulness in attending church services so regularly. From the time that Mary suffered her stroke two weeks ago, everyone who visited her in the hospital and at her home felt blessed to have known her. She had a very kind and generous spirit and always made everyone feel special and loved. This was her great gift that she shared with everyone.

We have all felt honored to have known her and share our life in the church together with her. Mary's diligent efforts to participate in regular church services was a real blessing for her and helped prepare her eventual leaving of this world. She had a child-like faith in God's great goodness and mercy and set an example for all of us to follow. Just like the Gospel parable about the wise virgins, Mary Kochoff's lamp was full and her lamp was lit when the Lord called her.

She will be missed by all who knew her. I had the opportunity to meet and talk with some of the staff and some of Mary's friends at Redstone Village and it is quite a testament to her goodness the way she made such an impression on those around her—even beyond our church community. I heard many people talk about how concerned they were in the last week of her life and how glad they were that they had the chance to see her once again before she left us. Mary struggled with some of the usual ailments that come with a person of her advanced years, but she never complained and just kept forging ahead.

This is what all of us are called to: to love our neighbor and to be a light in this world. All around us today, we hear of so much tragedy and suffering and evil. And yet, Mary Kochoff lived as though she was not really of this world, but a real citizen of the heavenly world. We are called to love others as God has loved us. So, when we think of Mary, when we pray that God will bless her and grant His mercy and goodness to her soul, let's also remember the goodness and kindness that Mary showed all of us and let's try to live up to the example that she set for us. After all, our Lord said that all men would know that we are His disciples by the love that we have toward one another. May God bless our dear sister in Christ, Mary Kochoff as she makes her way toward His heavenly Kingdom.



The Lenten Fast

As we enter the season of Great Lent in preparation for the celebration of our Lord's Resurrection at Pascha, it is an opportune time to reflect on the nature of this ancient practice as well as the spiritual benefits that can be obtained when we fast in the right spirit. Following are a few excerpts from Holy Fathers concerning the subject of fasting:

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. (Matt. 15:11) "The Lord said this not because He did not favor fasting, or because He considered it unnecessary for us. No, He Himself fasted, and taught the Apostles to do so, and He established fasts in His Holy Church. Rather, He said this so that not only would we fast by eating little or only uncooked food, but we might also keep the fast in our soul, not indulging it with desires and passionate inclinations. This is the important thing. Fasting serves as a powerful means for this. The foundation of the passions is the flesh; when the flesh is emaciated, then it is as if the passions are undermined and their fortress is destroyed. Without fasting, overcoming the passions would be a miracle, similar to being in a fire and not being burned. How can he who profusely satisfies his flesh with food, sleep and rest keep anything spiritual in his mind and in his intentions? It would be as easy for him to renounce the earth, to contemplate and strive for the invisible world, as it is for an old decrepit bird to rise up from the earth."

+St. Theophan the Recluse

"That It Must Be a Fast of Soul and Body: It is not the enemy that is outside us whom we need to fear; there is an enemy in our very selves: daily within us an internal war is waged. When the enemy within is conquered, all our foes without are rendered feeble, and Christ's soldier will find all things at peace, and all subdued. We shall have no external foe to fear if what is within is conquered, and subdued to the spirit. Nor let us suppose that the outward fast from visible food will suffice to secure perfection of heart and purity of body, unless it have conjoined with a fast of the soul as well."

+St. John Cassian

"The value of fasting consists not in abstinence only from food, but in a relinquishment of sinful practices... Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works...For let not the mouth only fast...but all the members of our bodies...Let also the mouth fast from foul words. For what does it profit if we abstain from birds and fish, and yet bite and devour our brethren?"

+St. John Chrysostom

Brothers and Sisters, fasting is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end. The proud Pharisee fasted, but because he trusted in himself that he was righteous, he was not justified before God, since he lacked the virtues of love, humility and repentance. Fasting helps us to overcome the passions and acquire the virtues, which lead to salvation—the ultimate purpose and goal of our lives. With humility and repentance let us ask God's help in this struggle, that we may be victorious over evil and sin and truly rise with Christ in His Holy Resurrection!

In Christ,

+Fr. Gregory