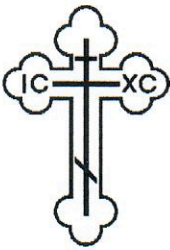


# St. Mark Evangelizer

Newsletter for Saint Mark Orthodox Church - 7124 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817

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April - June 2025 Issue



Saint Mark Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America, Archdiocese of Washington DC, under the omaphor of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon.

**Divine Liturgy:** Sunday 9:30AM  
Weekday Feasts 10:00AM  
**Confession:** Saturday 5:00PM  
Vespers: Saturday 5:30PM  
**Church School:** Following Sunday  
Divine Liturgy (September - May)  
**Rector:** Archpriest, Gregory Safchuk  
**Telephone:** (301) 229-6300  
[www.saintmarkoca.org](http://www.saintmarkoca.org)

## On Christian Demeanor

“In your words let there be no empty pretence, in your singing no excess sweetness, in conversation be not ponderous or overbearing. In everything refrain from seeking to appear important.

Be a help to your friends, and to the ones with whom you live, gentle to your servant, patient with those who are troublesome, loving towards the lowly, comforting those in trouble, visiting those in affliction, never despising anyone, gracious in friendship, cheerful in answering others, courteous, approachable to everyone, never speaking your own praises, nor getting others to speak of them, never taking part in unbecoming conversations, and concealing where you may whatever gifts you possess.”

- St. Basil the Great

## Our Parish AAC Reflection

In anticipation of the 21st All-American Council in July, Metropolitan Tikhon asked for the communities and institutions of the OCA to submit reflections on “this moment in the life of the church”. Having sent out the provided themes and study questions to our parish community, 16 of our parishioners provided their thoughts and input during an in person gathering following Vespers on February 15th. An introspective approach was taken and here is a summary of it.

In 2022 our parish celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since Covid, we have seen numerous changes in the life of our parish. Several families and individuals moved away or left our parish during the pandemic, and those losses deeply affected us. We increased our capability to live stream liturgical services and now enjoy an influx of new families, individuals, inquirers and catechumens, many in the energetic twenty to forty age group. We’ve learned that change is not easy or predictable, but it is inevitable.

Concurrent with the establishment of our Blessed Matushka Olga prayer group, we have been presented with new and ample opportunities to serve diverse needs both within our parish family and in the greater surrounding community. When worthy causes are made known, our members have responded with love and generosity. Good stewardship of our resources has

been a consistent strength. Our financial needs are met by voluntary pledging, with good communication and regular reporting.

Our excellent choir has been a particular strength both attracting visitors and inspiring the faithful. A team of parishioners prepares handouts of the scripture readings and propers for each liturgical service. Greeters welcome visitors and following liturgy all are invited to share food and fellowship in our parish social

hall. We have a solid children’s church school program and adult educational study groups on scripture as well as other faith related topics. Great Lent is punctuated with six lectures following the Pre-sanctified liturgy on Wednesday evenings. We host seminars, retreats and continuing education events for our parish and diocese as well as area clergy and faithful.

Our parish has actively supported the establishment of three missions in our diocese. Most recently, St. John the Theologian Mission in Fairfax Station, VA. Sacrifice is always involved in these efforts as we have seen families and individuals (as well as our deacon) leave to attend, support and serve them. Through the years, St. Mark has also sent and supported a dozen students for seminary education. They are now serving the church in various places and capacities.

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# OUR PARISH AAC REFLECTION

*Continued from Front Page*

In addition, IOCC and OCMC frequently receive both financial support and volunteers from St. Mark.

Charitable outreach has always been a high priority for us. St. Mark has generously contributed to the Clergy Endowment Fund for the Diocese of Alaska and responded to needs arising from natural disasters everywhere. We maintain a discretionary fund to help individuals and families within our parish and also in the surrounding community. We have provided backpacks for school children and holiday gifts for those in need in cooperation with local public schools. We keep a food pantry stocked at our church and distribute grocery store gift cards.

Meeting to write this reflection confirmed that this all proceeds from a parish community nourished by a robust liturgical and sacramental life deeply rooted in prayer and faith. By God's blessings this is our stability and solid foundation in this moment in time.

Archpriest Gregory Safchuk  
and parishioners of St. Mark Church

# SEEK THE LIGHT

*Submitted by Matuskha Alexandra Safchuk*

One morning, long before it was light, I went over to the church. Getting off the elevator, I noticed that the security light just outside the church was on, lighting my way into the church, so I did not turn on the hallway lights. I navigated the hallway with ease, went into church, said my prayer, checked on the Holy Fire candle and walked back out. Now, with the light behind me, I could not see the way to the elevator. I muddled along and in the dark I made it to the elevator, felt around for the button and welcomed the opening of the double doors, with the light from inside the elevator to help illuminate my way.

I realized that when the light was in front of me the path before me was illumined by that light and I could find my way. Without that light, I struggled. Where is the light in our lives; the guide that helps us along the way? The church is quite clear, always pointing us to Christ as the light. And Christ himself tells us, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

How do we find that light? How do we discern that a light we perceive is Christ? When we make difficult decisions or grapple with temptation or experience suffering, how do we know He is the lamp guiding our feet?

My son Nathan told me that to become an expert at something I must invest 10,000 (yes, ten thousand) hours in it. And truly invest it. Not just listen to tapes about it while I sleep. So, if I want to become a master guitarist (I don't), I must invest 1250 eight-hour days learning, practicing, and building up callouses on my fingers. If I want to be an expert on reptiles (clearly, I do not), I need to invest 250 forty-hour weeks learning about their scaly, slimy, scary selves. And then, once I become an expert, I must keep my skills sharp, facing new challenges with gusto and not sitting back self-assured that I now have achieved master status. There will always be someone better at it than I am.

This realization is daunting. There is no future in guitar playing or reptile proficiency for me and my ret-



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# SEEK THE LIGHT

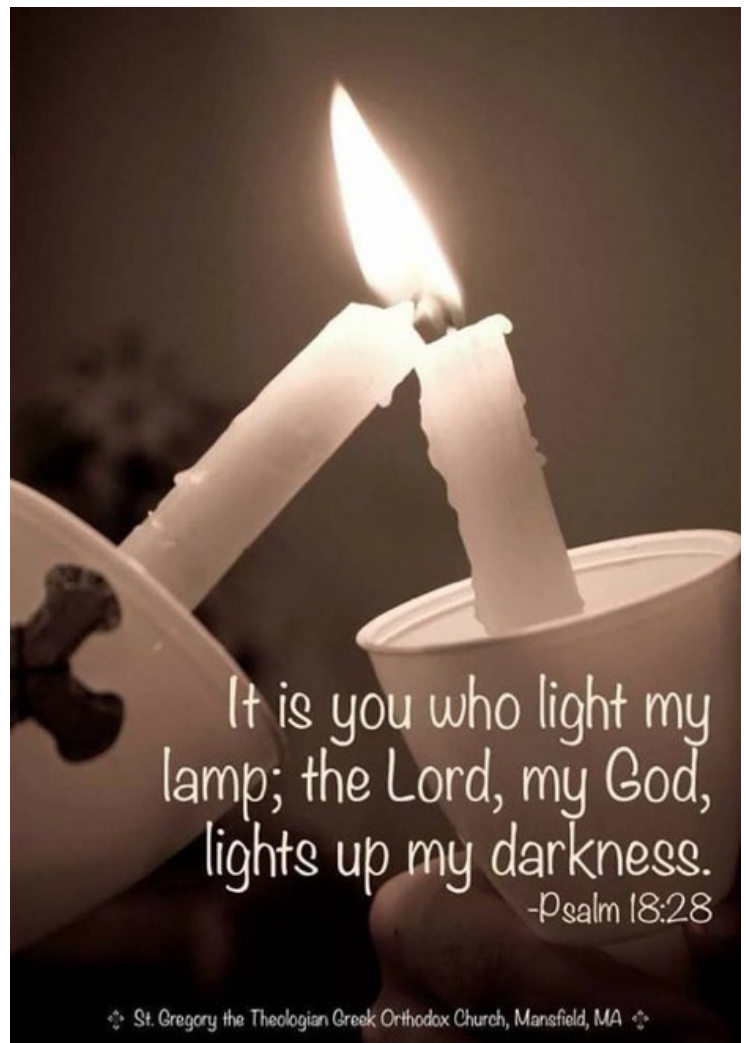
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inologist assures me that any aspirations for a boxing career are a non-starter for someone with my eyes. But somehow, I thought that developing discernment about God's will might be a tiny bit easier. In fact, I was hopeful that God might offer a regular "at-a-girl" to my feeble attempts to muddle along on my own.

Some people have an innate sense for understanding God's will. Like those who have spoken multiple languages since childhood, they instinctively follow the right path, making good decisions, always fetching a new roll of paper towels when they have used the last one and treating all with kindness and care. Who are these people?

For me, it will take time. Maybe even an honestly offered 10,000 hours of time. Time to pray, study, listen, sing and keep silence. We do this together, in church, in bible study, in working to maintain right relationships. And we go it alone in supplication, in thanksgiving and in self-examination for the relentless care of our souls. To keep Christ before us, lighting the way.

In Christ,  
Matushka Alexandra Safchuk



# ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS

Dear Fr. Gregory,

May the Lord God bless you!

Your kind note brings great warmth to my heart. Bethesda will always hold a special place in my soul, as it was there that I first took up the cross of the episcopacy. The love and prayers of that dear flock remain a cherished blessing to me, and I remember you all with the deepest gratitude.

Please convey my love to everyone, and may our Lord abundantly bless you and the faithful of Bethesda. You remain in my prayers, and I ask for yours as well. A blessed Fast to you all!

With God's blessings,

+Bishop Alexei

+*Allgiliyaq Kilirnaq*

+*Епископ Алексий*

The God-protected Diocese of Sitka and Alaska



## 2025 TOMATO SEEDLING SALE – 6TH ANNUAL

*Submitted by Don Truitt*

Don & Jan Truitt plan to make approximately 40 tomato seedlings available for sale at St. Mark with a target date Thomas Sunday weekend, God willing. The tomatoes varieties will be almost entirely heirlooms, from which seed may be saved for use in future years. The plants will include ones that are bred to produce a variety of sized fruit. The dwarf varieties are perfect for someone with limited space on a deck, patio, or drive way and who wants to grow plants in containers or grow bags. They combine the great flavor of classic heirlooms, produce fruit almost all season long, and stand no more than three or four feet tall. Anything collected will be for the benefit of St. Mark.



# A LITURGICAL LOOK-AHEAD

*Submitted by Jill L. Stevens*

*Wanting to participate more fully in our liturgical life, I've attempted here to anticipate the rhythm of our church calendar. The cycles of fasts and feasts that cause us to bless fruit, dye eggs, and process with candles also beckon us into a deeper communion with God and with each other as a community of the faithful. I drafted the following for my own edification; I offer it in the hope that it may also provide some insights for others. - Jill L. Stevens*

## Cycles of Orthodox Worship - The Paschal Cycle through Pentecost

### FR. THOMAS HOPKO

*To honor the 10-year memorial of Fr. Thomas Hopko, whose podcasted voice has been a treasured source of comfort, laughter, and learning, all citations in this essay are either from his works, liturgical texts, or the Bible.*

“We make ready for the resurrection during Great Lent, both Christ’s Resurrection and our own.”

– Fr. Thomas Hopko



In the Orthodox world, the tumultuous month of March ‘goes out like a lamb’ with the feast of the Annunciation, which commemorates the incarnation of the “lamb of God” in human form. One of two great feasts celebrated during the latter part of Great Lent, the Annunciation, “is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery!” (Annunciation Troparion). Just a couple weeks later, Palm Sunday, the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem provides another reason to feast within the broader context of our Lenten fast.

As Fr. Hopko explores in his 2011 essay, *Blessed Exchange*, Christ’s coming in human form and his voluntary sacrifice, present us with moving and instructive paradoxes: “God became human to make humans divine.... God entered into earthly time to make humans eternal.... He suffered to free us from our sufferings. He endured the Passion to free us of our passions.” These paradoxes are, in a sense, preparatory, in that they anticipate the central paradox of Christianity, the apex of the Lenten season: Christ’s earthy death, which makes possible our eternal life. With these paradoxes, we are invited to understand a “negative” in terms of the positive effects it may produce. We are re-oriented from our earthly perspective, where we experience the negative, to a divine one, where the negative in becomes a positive. And as we ponder such paradoxes, we may hear an echo of Gabriel: “For with God nothing will be impossible.” (Luke 1:37)

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## A LITURGICAL LOOK-AHEAD

*Continued from Previous*

As Great Lent continues into April and intensifies with the approach of Holy Week, it is helpful to recall that “It is our repentance that God desires, not our remorse” (Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith*, Vol II, *Worship*). We are presented in early April with an example of the transformative power of repentance in **St. Mary of Egypt**, who is commemorated on April 1st, the fifth Sunday of Lent. Motivated by painful recognition of sin and repentance, St. Mary of Egypt makes a decisive and complete change, turning her back on the dubious practices of her earlier life to become one of Orthodoxy’s great and holy ascetics.

Preceding Holy Week on April 12th, **Lazarus Saturday** trains our attention not only on one of Christ’s final miracles, but also on his view of death. In the story of Lazarus, a beloved friend of Christ’s, we witness the sting of death through the pain and suffering Christ and others feel. In an article from 1964, titled simply, “Death,” a young Fr. Hopko explores the meaning of the raising of Lazarus and the “tremendous horror” of death. “Jesus wept,” we are told, despite the fact that it was in his power to reverse the shocking “separation, division, and corruption” of his friend’s death. Again, as if preparing us for our own mix of emotions as we approach Christ’s death, the Lazarus story helps us to anticipate feeling, in quick succession, both horrified and elated by the death and miraculous return to life of our God. Hopko comments on this central and recurring theme:

We Christians weep over death because the full tragedy of death is made clear and real when we know Christ. When we know Christ, we know that death is the victory of Evil. But when we know Christ, we also know that Good is more powerful than Evil, that Life is stronger than death.

We take this knowledge with us as **Holy Week** unfolds toward its inevitable outcomes: both the *fully tragic* death of Christ and his resurrection – which prefigures and makes possible our own. Following Christ’s fateful entry into Jerusalem on **Palm Sunday**, during **Holy Week** April 14 – 19, we relive the momentous events leading to the crucifixion. No matter how many times we may hear the stories recounted, we are rocked by the magnitude of Judas’ betrayal; the all-too-human cowardice of his disciples; and the abject cruelty of people and the system that ensure Christ’s most horrifying death. And as Christ did for Lazarus, surely, we may weep for Christ.

Nothing is more momentous, however, than the dramatic turn of events marked by the resurrection, celebrated on **Holy Pascha**, and humanized for us in the highly “relatable” responses those who followed him – whether the myrrh-bearing women’s initial fear then excitement, Thomas’ infamous doubt, or the other disciples’ incredulity, which solidifies, in time, to unwavering belief. The sequence of death and resurrection resolves with Christ’s **Leavetaking** (apodosis) and **Ascension** on May 28th and 29th and,

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# A LITURGICAL LOOK-AHEAD

*Continued from Previous*

together, they give us what must be one of the most beautiful and touching departures ever recorded. As his departure nears, Christ assures the confused and fearful disciples: “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard me say, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’” (John 14: 27-28). Upon ascension, he tenderly prays to God for the apostles, knowing what they will face without him:

I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of this world. I do not pray that you should take them out of this world, but that you should protect them from the Evil one. (John 17:14-15)

With **Pentecost**, Christ’s promise of “another Helper” in the form of the Holy Spirit is fulfilled and the apostles are imbued with renewed strength and the ability to transmit Christ’s message with confidence and clarity across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4).

Linking the ancient past to our own present, Hopko reminds us that Pentecost is not simply the recollection of a miraculous event in our history. Instead, “It is the celebration of what must happen and does happen to us in the Church today. We all have died and risen with the Messiah-King, and we all have received his Most Holy Spirit” (Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith*, Vol II, Worship).

Readings Recommended by Fr. Thomas Hopko (Podcast: 2/26/2011)

For the Lenten Season, select from:

- The Bible: Genesis; Proverbs; Isaiah 1-12 and 40-66; Psalms; St. Paul’s Letter the Hebrews
- The Ladder of Divine Ascent, St. John Climacus
- Great Lent: Journey to Pascha, Alexander Schmemmann
- The Lenten Spring: Readings for Great Lent, Fr. Thomas Hopko

From Pascha to Pentecost:

- The Gospels

# HIEROMARTYR HILARION, ARCHBISHOP OF VEREY

Our current antimimension which bears the signature of Metropolitan Tikhon, was consecrated by Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Midwest at the last All-American Council, convened in Baltimore in July 2023. I'm told that the relics used in all the antimensia consecrated that day were taken from the same portion of Hieromartyr Hilarion's relics. Holy Hieromartyr Hilarion, pray to God for us!

## **Name & Background:**

- Born as Vladimir Alexievich Troitsky around 1885.
- Became Archbishop Hilarion, a theologian, preacher, and defender of the Orthodox Church.

## **Academic Contributions:**

- Wrote many theological works, including "The Unity of the Church."
- His Master's thesis, over 500 pages, was "An Outline of the History of the Church's Dogma."

## **Church Leadership:**

- Spoke at the 1917 Council, advocating for restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate.
- Became a supporter of Saint Tikhon, who was elected Patriarch.
- Consecrated as bishop on May 20, 1920.

## **Persecution & Imprisonment:**

- Arrested and exiled to Archangelsk for a year.
- Imprisoned in a labor camp near Solovki (1923–1929), doing manual labor like fishing.
- Known for kindness, cheerfulness, and selflessness in prison.

## **Final Years, Death & Canonization:**

- Exiled to Alma-Ata in 1929, suffered robbery and severe hardships.
- Became seriously ill with typhus en route and died on December 15, 1929, in a Petrograd prison hospital at age 44.
- His body was unrecognizable from suffering, but later properly clothed and buried with respect.
- Buried at Novodevichii Monastery.



Read more on the life of Hieromartyr Hilarion here: <https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2018/12/15/103704-hieromartyr-hilarion-archbishop-of-verey>

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# HIEROMARTYR HILARION, ARCHBISHOP OF VEREY

## Canonized and commemorated on

December 15 (repose)

May 10 (glorification in 1999)

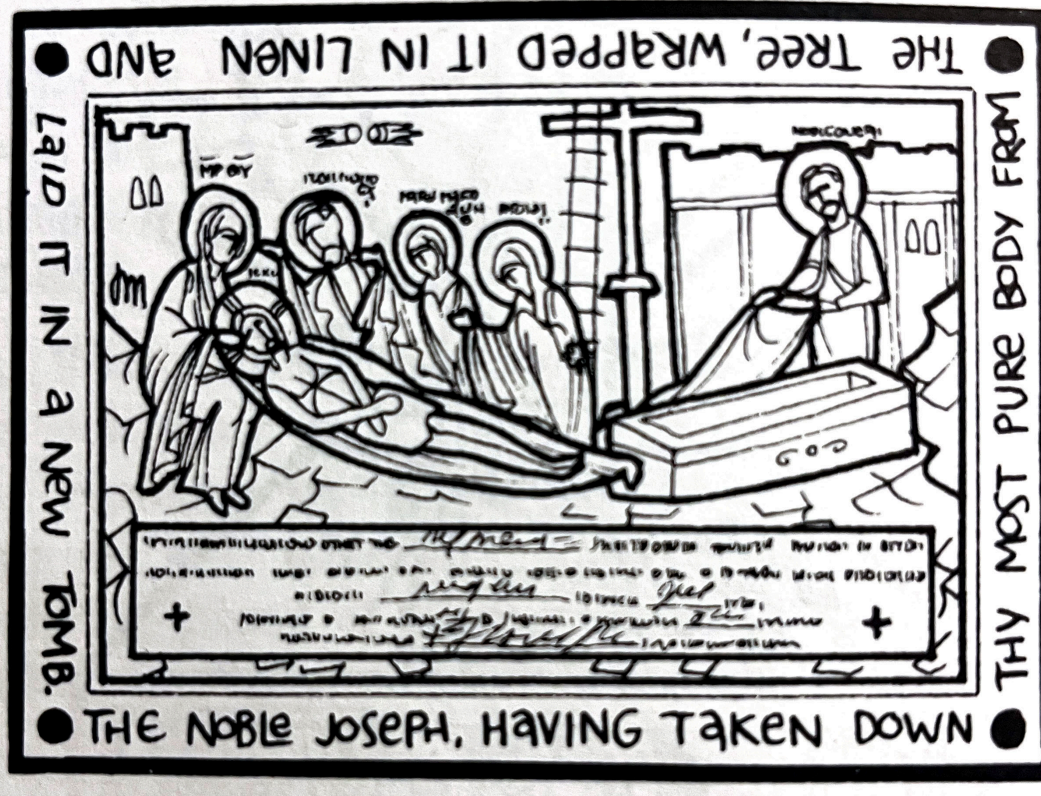
July 11 (finding of relics in 1998)

### Troparion — Tone 4

O Hilarion, warrior of Christ, glory and boast of the Church of Russia, you confessed Christ before the perishing world, you strengthened the Church by your blood, and having acquired divine understanding, you proclaimed to the faithful: Without the Church there is no salvation!

### Kontakion — Tone 6

O Hilarion, Hieromartyr of Christ, you were not afraid of the servants of the coming Antichrist, but confessed Christ courageously and laid down your life for God's Church, O adornment of the New Martyrs of Russia, and boast of Holy Russia, you are the glory and confirmation of our Church.



# CHILI COOK OFF 2025

## Winners!



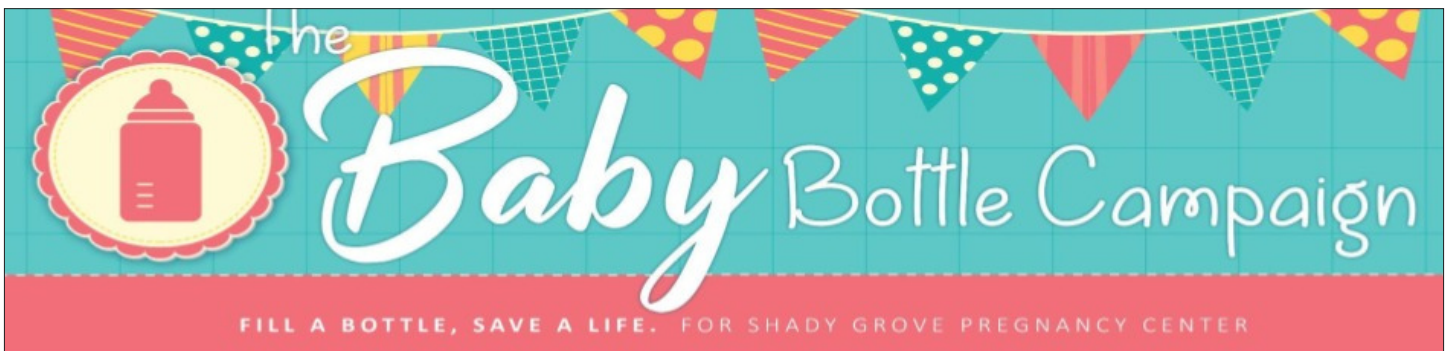
Pictured above:

Left: Daniella Mihailov, 2nd Place  
Center: Vicky Jacobsen, 1st Place  
Right: Michael McDonald, 3rd Place

Congratulations!

# NATIONAL ORTHODOX BABY SHOWER BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN

During the month of March Orthodox Christians for Life supports local pregnancy centers with a baby shower around the Feast of the Annunciation. St. Mark Church has a long-standing relationship with Shady Grove Pregnancy Center. This year we are supporting the center with what they need the most, cash. A fill the baby bottle with spare change type of collection. What a wonderful way to share the gifts we are given and spread the love of Christ to mothers and babies during this season. Everyone, from young children contributing some of their hard-earned money, to the families who don't have time to shop, to the elders who are no longer able to go out, all will be able to participate. Take an empty bottle from the table in the social hall, fill it with what you can. Checks can be made out directly to Shady Grove Pregnancy Center or to St. Mark Orthodox Church {these will be collected and one big check from St. Mark will be issued}. Once filled please turn in to Dica Cipu , Patty Prose or Tammy Jacobsen, we don't want bottles of money left unattended in the church. Bottles should be turned in by Sunday April 6th. Thank you in advance for your support of this meaningful project.



## Ways to Give:

- 1. Pick up a bottle, fill it with coins, currency, or a check, and return it by April 6, 2025.**
- 2. Use the link or QR code provided by your church to give online.**
- 3. Send a check to "Shady Grove Pregnancy Center"**

16220 Frederick Rd, Suite 118, Gaithersburg, MD 20877

**Add Memo: St. Mark Orthodox Church BBC**



# JUST JANUARY OFF THE GULF COAST OF FLORIDA

*Submitted by Thomas Jenkins*

Hurricanes are part of life here in the mid-Atlantic and south-east states. Many of us likely just roll along because they are part of the yearly forecast, even part of the coming summer season. Last year we saw the devastating effects of storms. Images from Asheville and Erwin show how raging flood water swept away homes and businesses. Down in the west coast of Florida, this storm was part of a chain of four storms that hit the same area in '22, '23, and two storms in '24. Also, in the media, we see Federal assistance, Red Cross, and first-responder groups like Samaritan's Purse respond. What happens after that?

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) is one of the organizations that come in providing long-term recovery support helping families that are often underinsured, or have no insurance, rebuild their lives and homes. Volunteers from across the country put faith into action by joining IOCC Action Teams to serve neighbors in the U.S. after disasters like hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and more.

IOCC Programs in the United States: <https://iocc.org/where-we-work/united-states>

Pray - We remember people affected by disasters in our Litanies. At the same time, we need to remember the volunteers that work along with the families, and churches that support them. Prayer is so vital and central to our lives as Orthodox Christians.

*"He who is able to pray correctly, even if he is the poorest of all people, is essentially the richest. And he who does not have proper prayer, is the poorest of all, even if he sits on a royal throne"*

- St. John Chrysostom



Pay - A shameless plug right here. None of this work happens without funding. While grants will provide materials for rebuilding, the cost of coordinating programs, supporting the volunteers in the field with meals and housing, are part of the cost. Consider a donation this year to help the volunteers that serve these programs. You can donate directly to IOCC <https://iocc.org/ways-to-give> or make a donation to St. Mark ear-marked for IOCC.

Play - If you are sensing a theme here, you are correct. Support IOCC using the three P's. Last year we published an article in the Evangelizer about an IOCC service week. Since then, our community at St. Mark did a drive led by the Church School to prepare Disaster Clean-Up Buckets. This was in direct response to the flooding in Asheville and Erwin. Our community put together 40 buckets filled with essential supplies for clean-up. Delivering these to the distribution center, I personally saw two tractor trailer loads headed out to locations in Erwin and Florida. Unloading the buckets, I saw the distribution center was down to just a

few pallets of clean-up supplies. Our donation arrived at the right time. Many thanks to the children and everyone that helped pull this together.

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# JUST JANUARY OFF THE GULF COAST OF FLORIDA

*Continued from Previous*



This past January, Michael Lungociu and I headed out into the field to help with hurricane recovery. This was no ordinary work trip. Michael and I drove over 1,273 miles! The first part of our mission was to head to Erwin, Tennessee. You may remember Erwin from the news stories where they evacuated a hospital before it was destroyed by the rising water. IOCC had a team on the ground helping with clean-up and preparing for recovery work in the spring. Mike and I met the team to pick up one of the Disaster Response Vans, which are vans equipped with clean-up and rebuilding tools that Action Teams need. Our first mission was to move one van to Pine Island, Florida, where rebuilding efforts were underway.

A little history. The Appalachian Mountains and west coast of Florida seem an unlikely combination but, often hurricanes that make landfall in the Gulf Coast of Florida track up the Appalachians. In September of '22 category

4 Hurricane Ian hit the Florida Coast. You probably remember the images of the causeway and bridge being knocked out, isolating the island from the mainland. A category three hurricane hit the coast in August of '23 and then in '24 Helene and Milton hit in September and October. Helene slowed over the Appalachians and dumped historic amounts of rain that precipitated widespread flooding.



Down in western Florida the chain of storms hitting the same area year after year meant that people started recovery and were flooded

again and again. Repairs from the previous storms were derailed before they began by each subsequent storm. As the sun set our first day in Bokeelia, it was hard to imagine the insanity of hurricanes pounding the coast.



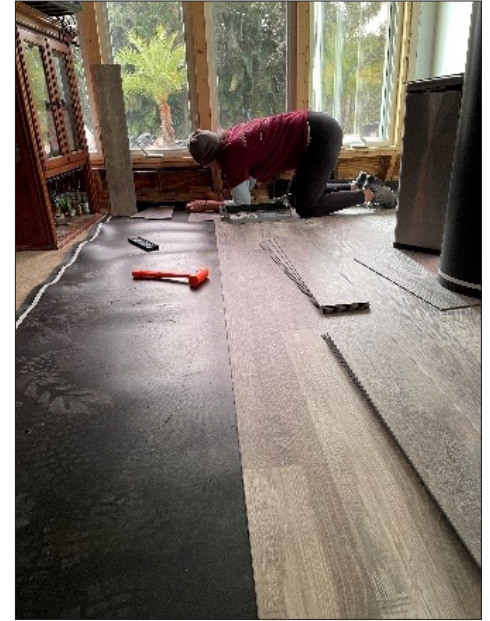
After delivering the van to Bokeelia, we spent the next three days working on rebuilding the home of a local. This home was flooded in Ian halfway up the walls and again flooded during Milton. On top of the damage to the home, this couple suffered financial loss because they had used their own savings to start rebuilding. The traumatic experience of evacuating during previous storms with their pets prompted them to ride out Hurricane Milton. Effectively, sitting in their home in knee deep water for several days.

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# JUST JANUARY OFF THE GULF COAST OF FLORIDA

*Continued from Previous*

Michael and I joined IOCC Action Team leaders “Shef” and “Nouli” to get the home on the road to recovery. The team removed drywall and flooring only to find subfloor and in some places joists that needed repair. At one point we were standing on bare ground inside the house fitting up new joists to shore up the sagging floor. After the



hard work of repairing the structure, the four of us refloored most of the house. The transformation was amazing. Not only did the house look and feel better, the owners seemed to have the weight of gloom off their shoulders. A little manual work, caring about our fellow man, and a van full of tools healing the home and starting the process of healing the hearts and souls of two people that had been through so much.



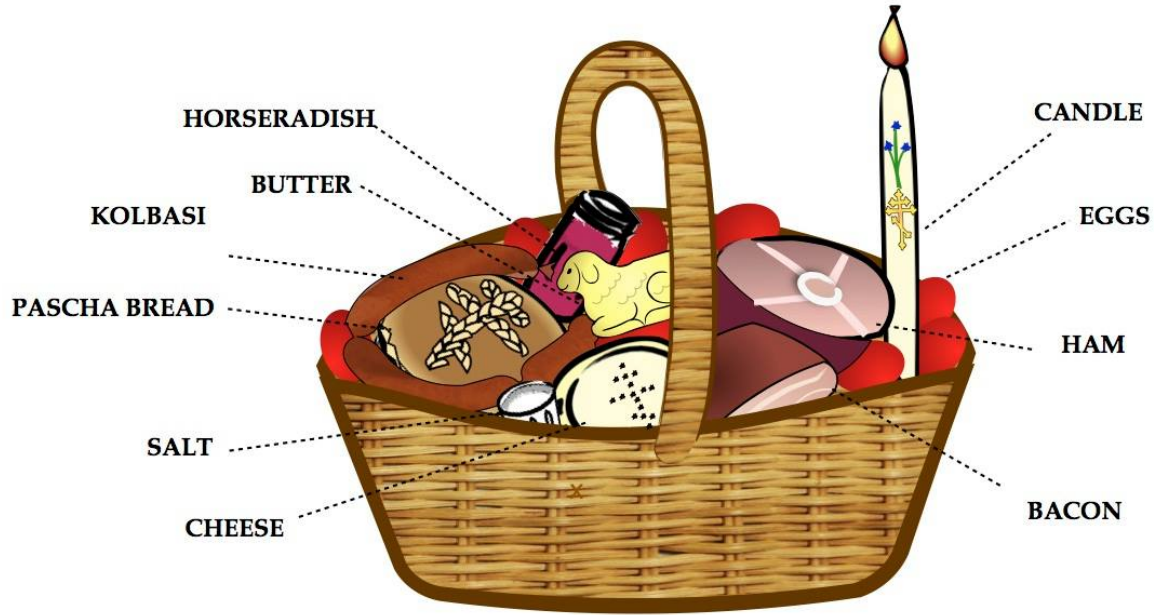
1,273 Miles, 8 states, 7 days. Eating fish tacos on the coast of Florida one afternoon, we were amazed to think that manual labor serving our fellow man would be so rewarding and enjoyable. I urge each of us to think about offering support through prayer, through financial donation, and through field service. There is always time to help, even with a brief prayer.



# EASTER BASKET

## HOW TO PUT TOGETHER A TRADITIONAL EASTER BASKET

"TEXT ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY FR. BASIL KRAYNYAK, GCU MESSENGER, APRIL, 1979" ILLUSTRATED BY FR. JONATHAN BANNON



**PASCHA** - The Easter Bread (Pron. Pa-ska.) A sweet yeast bread rich in eggs, butter, etc. Symbolic of Christ Himself who is our True Bread. Usually round loaf baked with a golden crust decorated with a symbol indicative of Christ. Sometimes a cross (+) of dough is placed on top encircled by a plait given it a crowned effect or Greek

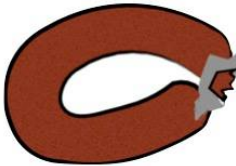
**CHEESE** - (Rusyn: Hrudka or Sirec) A custard type cheese shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. Also creamed cheese is placed in a small dish and both are decorated with symbols (see Pascha) out of cloves or pepper balls.



**HAM** - (Rusyn: Šunka - pron. shoon-ka.) The Flesh meat popular with the Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolic of the great joy and abundance of Easter. Some may prefer Lamb or Veal. This is usually well roasted or cooked as well as other meats so the festivity of the day will not be burdened with preparation and all may enjoy the Feast.

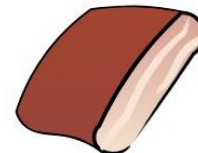


**BUTTER** - (Rusyn: Maslo pron. ma-slo.) This favorite dairy product is often shaped into a figure of a Lamb or small cross and decorated as the cheese. This reminds us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.

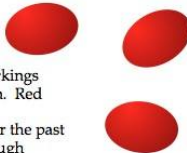


**SAUSAGE** (Rusyn: Kolbasi-pron. kol-bus-i.) A spicy, garlic sausage of pork products indicative of God's flavor and generosity.

**BACON** - (Rusyn: Slanina pron. sla-ni-na) A piece of uncooked bacon cured with spices. Symbolic of the overabundance of God's mercy to us.



**EGGS** (Rusyn: Pisanki pron. pi-sun-ki) Hardboiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax, indicative of new life and resurrection. Red eggs are also traditional date back to a story with St. Mary Magdalene. Having been dyed with onion skins saved over the past year, red shows the color of life and victory that came through Christ's blood.



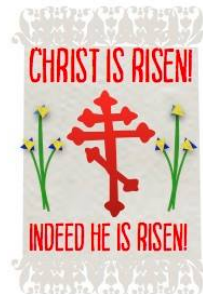
**SALT** - (Rusyn: Sol' pron. sol') A condiment necessary for flavor reminding the Christian of his duty to others.



**HORSERADISH** (Rusyn: Chrin pron. khrin) Horseradish mixed with grated red beets (optional) symbolizes the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bitter-sweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

These articles are placed in a wicker basket. A decorated candle is placed inside and is lit at the time of the blessing. A linen cover usually embroidered with a picture of the Risen Christ or symbol with the words "Christ is Risen" is placed over the food when brought to the Church.

In some places a large Easter Bread (Pascha) is made and brought separately in a large linen cloth. If the origin of the people was from a wine growing area, a sweet wine may be brought

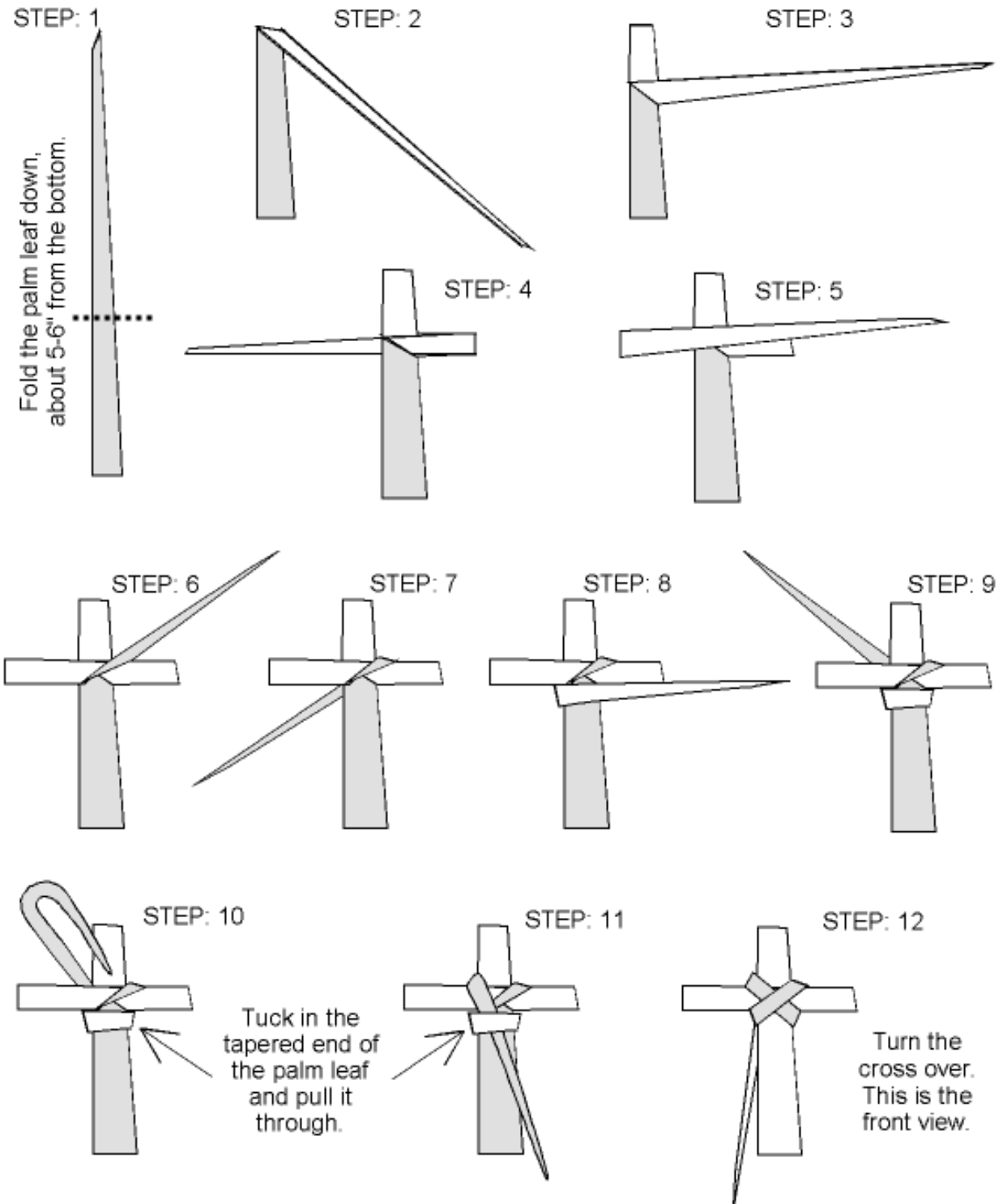


# PALM CROSS

No palm fronds available? No problem! Cut strips of paper to the dimensions listed below!

## Palm Leaf Cross Directions

Supplies: One palm leaf strip about 24-26" in length, 1/2" in width, tapering to the end.



# BLESSED MKA. OLGA PRAYER GROUP

## **BLESSED MKA. OLGA OF ALASKA WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP**

We meet on the 1st Tuesday of the month @ 10:30 a.m. in the church nave. We no longer do a hybrid version for intercessory prayer.

We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month @10:30 a.m. to pray an Akathist virtually. A link for the Akathist is usually sent the day before.



Please join us if you can. To update the intercessory prayer list please contact Debbi Dillon at [debbi.dillon@gmail.com](mailto:debbi.dillon@gmail.com) We thank you for prayers on our behalf. Holy Mother Olga, Pray to God for us!

### **Intercessory Prayer Dates & Times:      Akathist Dates & Times:**

- TUESDAY, APRIL 2nd, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, APRIL 16th, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, MAY 7th, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, MAY 21st, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, JUNE 4th, 10:30 AM
- TUESDAY, JUNE 18th, 10:30 AM

## **THE BLESSED MATUSHKA OLGA OF ALASKA PRAYER GROUP - AKATHISTS**

An Akathist is a type of hymn or chant used in Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Christian traditions. The term “Akathist” comes from the Greek word akathistos, which means “not sitting,” reflecting the practice of standing while it is recited or sung. These hymns are often prayers of praise, thanksgiving, or supplication, directed towards Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, or particular saints.

One of the most well-known Akathists is the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos (Mother of God), a beautiful and solemn composition that has been cherished for centuries. They’re a deeply spiritual and poetic way to express devotion and reverence in worship.

Akathist Hymns are available in the library. They are located on the large book case on the right. The color coded folders contain various Akathist Hymns to Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, The Most Holy Theotokos, Blessed Matushka Olga of Alaska, The Repose of Those Who Have Fallen Asleep, The Life of Mary of Egypt, and Prayers for the Sanctity of Life.

You are more than welcome to take one or make copies.

# COFFEE HOUR SIGN UP

*Submitted by Debbi Dillon*

Our sign-up for the new coffee hour design has been available for a few weeks and we appreciate everyone who has offered to help. We are especially thankful to people who are helping more than one slot during the 3-month period. However, we still have many of slots available to fill. I've tried to spread out the work so no one is overly burdened. Of course, the lion's share of the work is done by the Team Leader and those bringing food but there are several places with easier tasks. There's a spot for everyone to pitch in to help. If someone was inspired to help in multiple spots throughout the 3-month period that would be outstanding. We'll never turn away help.

I've added the tasks for each spot. If you have any questions about them please feel free to reach out to me.

## COFFEE HOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

### Team Leaders and those bringing food:

#### Prior to your coffee hour

- Team Leader coordinates food items with fellow Hostesses/Hosts
  - There are approximately 20 children and 75-100 adults each week.
- Contact someone on the list to swap if you cannot serve on the date you chose. Please change the master list outside the kitchen.
- Plan to arrive 20-30 mins before liturgy to make preparations.
- Prepare donuts - Cut donuts in half and place on tables.
- Prepare food and place appropriate food on tables (cover with plastic if necessary). Other food can stay in the fridge until ready to serve
- Double check that coffee pots are on and working.
- Come down early at the end of liturgy to finish getting food on the table
- Start up the tea kettle and the decaf coffee.
- Serve coffee and juice. All juice (open bottles and extra juice) is now stored in the juice cooler behind the beverage table.
- As coffee hour is winding down help clear tables and store unused food. Either take home or, if appropriate, you can leave it in the walk-in fridge for next week. Please take home anything that will not keep until next week.

### Coffee Hour Set-Up Responsibilities (plan to arrive 20-30 min BEFORE liturgy starts)

- Make coffee and hot water for tea/hot chocolate\*\* Directions are posted in the kitchen.
  - TWO 60-cup pots of regular coffee
  - One 12-cup pot of decaffeinated coffee
    - Open coffee cans are in the refrigerator
    - Coffee is stored in the storage room at the back of the social hall

*(Continued on next page.)*

# COFFEE HOUR SIGN UP

*Continued from Previous*

- One kettle for hot water
- BE SURE PLUG IN AND TURN SWITCHES TO THE "ON" POSITION ON THE LARGE COFFEE POTS BEFORE COMING UP FOR LITURGY!**  
Do not turn on the decaf coffee.
- Prepare food tables
  - Cover tables with plastic
  - Place napkins, small plates, and donation baskets on tables
- Prepare coffee and tea service
  - Place stirrers, sugar, sugar substitute, cream/creamer and donation basket on plastic trays near coffee
  - Place tea bags and hot chocolate mix on a tray or basket near the pot of hot water

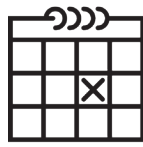
## Responsibilities for person/s bringing Donuts, milk and creamer:

**Plan to bring items either the night before or at least 20 minutes before liturgy. If you cannot make it before liturgy starts, please cut donuts in half and place them on tables. Thank you.**

- Bring 3 dozen donuts
- Bring 1 quart of whole milk (omit during Fasting seasons)
- Bring 1 quart of half/half (omit during Fasting seasons)
- Bring 1-3 specialty creamers- check fridge the week before to see what is needed.

## Responsibilities for Clean-Up People

- Help clean up leftover food and bring empty trays into the kitchen to wash.
- Help store unused food in containers. Hosts can opt to take home leftovers or leave for next week.
- Clean kitchen counters and social hall tables
- Wash, dry and put away all dishes. USE THE DISHWASHER. (we will train you)
- Sweep kitchen and social hall floors
- Take trash out to dumpster and put clean bags into trash cans
- Turn-off lights and lock doors upon exit



# UPCOMING EVENTS

**GROCERY CARDS** Please consider donating grocery cards for the needy all, and especially, through-out Lent! Please see Father Gregory for questions or donations. Thank you!!

**ST. MARK YOUTUBE CHANNEL:** <https://www.youtube.com/saintmarkorthodoxchurch>

**ST. MARK WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP** will meet the first Thursday of each month at 7:15 p.m. via Zoom. Watch this space for possible date changes. The next books for discussion are

**Apr 3** - "*The Giver of Stars*" by Jojo Moyes

**May 1** - "*Rebecca*" by Daphne du Maurier

**June 5** - "*Dead Souls*" by Nikolai Gogol

**July 3** - "*Isola*" by Allegra Goodman

**Aug 7** - "*The Shell Seekers*" by Rosamunde Pilcher

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**LENTEN LECTURES: Past and upcoming lectures.** Did you miss a lecture? Or maybe you want to watch it again? All of this year's Lenten Lectures, to date, are available to watch on our YouTube Channel! <https://www.youtube.com/saintmarkorthodoxchurch>

**March 5th** - Fr. Sean Levine - Topic: *Take Up Your Cross and Follow Me*

**March 12th** - Kim and Michael Lungociu - Topic: *Visit to Romania*

**March 19th** - John & Betty Slanta - Topic: *The Shroud of Turin*

**March 26th** - Eugenia Ordynsky - Topic: *Orthodox Prison Ministry*

**April 2nd** - Fr. Nicholas Roth - Topic: *Thinking about Thinking (Upcoming)*

**April 9th** - Svetlana & Predrag Rogic - Topic: *Serbian Orthodox heritage and monasteries (Upcoming)*

**ST. TIKHON'S SUMMER CAMP** Saint Tikhon's Summer Camp is a one-week sleep-away camp program for Orthodox Christian children between the ages of 7 and 17. It is held on the grounds of Saint Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary annually during the first week of July (June 29 to July 5). Participants enjoy a host of outdoor recreational activities (e.g. field sports, swimming, boating) with their peers as well as a superior religious education program and daily church services. The camp does have a limited number of spaces and it's first come first serve. Registration opens on February 14th here: <https://www.sttikhonscamp.org/>. For more information or questions about the camp, please reach out to Jake Toroney Email: [Toroney@hotmail.com](mailto:Toroney@hotmail.com) Phone: 610-223-3919. There are a limited number of need-based scholarships available from the Archdiocese, please see Fr. Gregory for more information on scholarships.

Additionally, St. Tikhon's Summer Camp is looking for volunteers. We are in need of kitchen staff, age group counselors, area counselors, and lifeguards. You must be 18 years or older and Orthodox Christian in good standing to apply. If interested, apply here: [https://accounts.doepa.org/counselor\\_application](https://accounts.doepa.org/counselor_application)

# UPDATER

## Chrismations

3/2/25 - Samuel Estrada

*May God Grant Him Many Years!*



Photo by Michael Mihailov

## Deaths

1/22/25 - Charlotte Miller

*May Her Memory Be Eternal!*



**PASCHA BREAD BAKE SALE** On Palm Sunday we will have our annual bake sale selling Pascha breads and kielbasa for your Pascha baskets. The sale will take place during coffee hour. Cash or checks will be accepted for payment.

**SAVE THE DATE!** The 21st Annual St. Andrew Orthodox Church Golf Tournament will be held on the afternoon of Friday, June 13th at Geneva Farm Golf Course in Street, MD. Registration information will be posted in the coming weeks. We hope to see you there for this fun-filled fellowship event! Additional details along with registration information will be provided early to mid-March.

**PARISH CLEAN UP DAY** Mark your calendars! Parish clean up day is planned for Saturday, April 5th. More details to come!

# Happy Birthday!

## April

1	Gherman Uritsky	
2	Jack Albert	
	Elizabeth Cannon	
4	Jessica Herrera	
	Paulina Masick	
6	Mary Mytryshyn	
7	Nathaniel Safchuk	
	Irene Tarp	
8	Darlene Mart	
10	Martin Riskam	
	Don Truitt	
	Aaron Wickard	
11	Melanie Firestone	
12	Eric Williams	
15	Christopher Safchuk	
16	Sophia Nimmer	
18	Nina Uritsky	
19	Ashley Albert	
	Chloe Bryan	
	Fr. Nicholas Roth	
20	Mary Rudin	
21	Anastacia (Stacy) Jacobsen	
23	Lori Landsburg	
	Chloe Emerson Little	
	Kiprian Tatusko	
24	Susan B. Petro	
25	Sasha Lutes	
26	Peter Truitt	
27	Dorothy Gumpert	
	Sarah Jenkins-Petro	
	Justin Markovich	
29	Sarah Hardy	
30	Marge Dove	



## May

1	John Michael Mikuluk	
2	Susan Rodak	
	Aubreigh Roth	
3	Manuella Buzoianu Balan	
6	John Michael Kumar	
7	Colleen Church	
	Lily Church	
	Madeleine Voth	
	Nicholas Voth	
8	Patricia Pearson	
9	Michael Karas	
12	Shirley Dean	
	Joanna Williams	
13	Ellen Barber	
14	Alexander Norton	
	Bella Prose	
15	Bennett Barber	
	Antonina Riscuta	
16	Alexandra Brasoveanu-Tarpy	
17	Sherry Safchuk	
19	Carol Mary Ashley	
	Stephen Ilario	
	Timothy Masick	
21	Coy Williamson	
22	Simina Lal Ciubotaru	
	Renee Zabela	
	Dominic Rotunda	
23	Kenneth Bernstein	
	Carl Firestone	
	Cindy Jefferson	
25	Eddie Roth	
26	Christina Berencz	
	Andrew Bumbak	
27	Timothy Firestone	
	Fr. Mark Koczak	
29	James Ficht	
	Henry William Meyers	
	Patricia Prose	
31	Hannah LeFors	
	Alexandra Sedor	



## June

1	Alexandra Zabela	
5	Rachael Datch	
6	Robert Rudin	
9	Simon Markovich	
11	Mat. Gemma Phelps	
12	Nicholas Corbin	
	Eliot Landsburg	
	David Burke Jackson	
	Ann Marie Steger	
	Jill Stevens	
	Vadim Uritsky	
	Maximus Timothy Masick	
	Michael McDonald	
15	Tina Burpee	
	Mary Ann Holovac	
	Alexandra Kissell	
16	Fr. David Cowan	
	Wright Steinberg	
	Kara Walker	
18	Kathryn Balamaci	
	Natalia Hutnyan	
19	David Jefferson	
	Rachel Salas	
20	Karen Jankovic	
21	Kimberly Yakubik	
22	Salomea Jankovic	
	Peter Sielinski	
23	Michael Hydock	
	Timothy Perry	
24	Benjamin Oleynik	
25	Harell Little	
26	Nicola Ilario	
27	Dawn Little	
30	Ella Rose Datch	
	Jenna Datch	
	Nick Pedersen	

