

Saint Mark Orthodox Church

Archdiocese of Washington DC – Orthodox Church in America

Semi-Annual Parish Meeting – Sunday, May 18th, 2024

Rector's Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen!

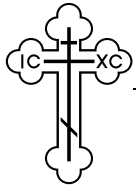
I greet you all with joy during this glorious and bright Paschal season! We have much to give thanks to the Lord for already in 2025. The council members that you elected last November were confirmed and installed in January and have been meeting regularly to decide on and conduct the activities of our parish life. Great Lent went very well this year with regular and prayerful liturgical services and a varied array of interesting Lenten Lectures. Thank you to all our speakers! Our choir put forth an outstanding effort – thank you! And thanks to our tech volunteers as well for live streaming the services which were viewed and enjoyed by many. Also, thanks to our faithful altar servers, candle tenders and glass changers. The addition of the reading of the life of St. Mary of Egypt on Thursday of the fifth week of lent helped us understand the tremendous miracle of repentance.

Just before we entered into the intensity of Holy Week and our Lord's Passion, it was our joy to celebrate the Feast of Palms (The raising of Lazarus and the Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem). This year we were joined by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon on Palm Sunday who presided during the Holy Liturgy, tonsured Victor Lutes to the office of "Reader", and ordained Mihail Mihailov to the office of sub deacon as well as to the Holy Diaconate. In addition, our own Fr. Nicholas Roth also received the award of the gold cross! Congratulations to all and may God bless them and grant them many years of fruitful ministry within the Holy Church. I will add that it was a great blessing to have Deacon Mihail serving together with me for Holy Week and throughout Pascha! It was a lot for his first weeks as a deacon, but his prayerful attention and faithful demeanor were evident.

Thus far, three new members have been received into the Church by Holy Chrismation this year: Samuel Estrada, James Rubidge and Nathan McVey. Congratulations to them and to their sponsors and families. May God continue to bless them and grant them many years! Our other eight catechumens are continuing on in their studies. Please keep them in your prayers.

I am truly grateful to God for all His blessings. I am also grateful to all of you who have offered yourselves in service to our parish. From the Chili Cook off, through parish cleanup day, and the various baking sessions, Pascha prep workshop, rehearsals and church decoration efforts; so many have done so much!

We also owe much appreciation to the members of the Iconography Committee under the leadership of Paulina Masick for their input and direction in the next phase that has been contracted for and is now being worked on in studio. This includes a large image of Christ in what is known as the "Creation Icon", which will be installed in the vestibule of our church prior to Christmas this year. Thank you for



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your contributions, both known and unknown! I'd also like to thank all of our church school teachers, students and families for their efforts to further the understanding and practice of our faith, as well as Doug Dillon for his regular interesting and engaging Bible Study presentations.

May God continue to bless this parish and guide my service to you.

In Christ,

Fr. Gregory