

FISH FEAST

Sunday, March 22, 2020

(immediately following 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy)

St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church
62 Main Street, Cotuit

\$25 adults 13+
\$10 children 6-12
children 5 and under free

**Gift Basket
Drawing!**



**All proceeds will help
ZOE House continue
their life-saving work.**

ZOE House, located in Parma, OH, is a ministry of ZOE for Life!, a pan-Orthodox outreach that supports women in crisis pregnancies. Visit zoeforallifeonline.org for more information.



Fish Feast to benefit ZOE House

ZOE House is a pan-Orthodox crisis pregnancy center.

Join us on **Sunday, March 22** after Liturgy to support this life-saving organization!

For reservations, please contact Kh. Alyssa, alyssakjendal@yahoo.com or 508-873-9199.

If you are unable to attend the Fish Feast, ZOE House still needs your support! Please send your donation to:

St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church, 62 Main Street, Cotuit, MA 02635

Please make checks out to St. Michael with ZOE House in the memo.

TAKE OUT IS AVAILABLE!

St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church welcomes everyone! Father Ben Kjendal

(508) 450-1113

SUNDAY LITURGY 10:00 AM — CHURCH SCHOOL 9:15 AM

SATURDAY VESPERS 5:00 PM

St. Michael the Archangel
Orthodox Church
62 Main Street,
Cotuit, MA 02635

March 2020 Newsletter

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A message from Fr. Ben Kjendal

Children of God in Christ Jesus on Cape Cod and beyond,

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my paths” (Psalm 118:105).

As we embark on our Lenten journey, striving to approach God in humility, repentance, and love, it can be a difficult path to walk if we do so in darkness. We find ourselves stumbling often, falling at times, and losing sight of where we are headed and how we are to get there. We spend the weeks before reminding ourselves of the desire we are to have for God, of the humility with which we need to approach Him, of the repentance that draws us back into the Paradise from which we have fled, and the love that our Father so lavishly bestows upon us there. And yet once Lent is here we too often find ourselves living life no differently than any other time of year. The shadows of sin darken the path we walk, but instead of seeking to turn on the light, or to even light a candle, we give up in (sometimes feigned) despair thinking it is too difficult of a path, so why bother at all.



And yet, the Psalmist reminds us that God’s word is a lamp, a light to guide us on our way. So where do we start? If *“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17)* we first and foremost come to where we hear the word of God, in Christ’s Church. The many services that we have during Lent provide us a bright shining lantern to lighten the darkness during our journey. From the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete, to the pre-sanctified Divine Liturgies on Wednesdays, to the Akathist hymns we sign on Friday evenings, we hear the word of God spoken and sung, pouring forth light along our way to the One Who Is, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We continue faithfully to attend Liturgy on Sunday, and come as much as possible to Vespers on Saturday and Orthros Sunday morning before Liturgy.

In addition to our attendance at services throughout Lent, I also encourage us all to read the scriptures with increased fervor during the Great Fast. And where better to start than the Psalms? In the Psalms we have a summary of the whole Scriptures, and a prayerbook and hymnal to help us along our way. St. Theophan the Recluse encourages us to not only read, but memorize at least some of the Psalms:

It is good, very good, to memorize several psalms and recite them while you are working or between tasks, doing this instead of short prayers sometimes, with concentration. This is one of the most ancient Christian customs...

After you have memorized...you will always be fully armed with prayer. When some disturbing thought occurs, rush to fall down before the Lord with either a short prayer or one of the psalms, especially O God, be attentive unto helping me, and the disturbing cloud will immediately disperse.

May the light of God’s word, especially the comfort and guidance of the Psalms and the great riches of our liturgical services, illuminate you this Lenten season that you might remain steadfast in faith, love, and obedience to God, drawing near to Him on your Lenten journey to Pascha.

Peace and love from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fr. Benjamin Kjendal

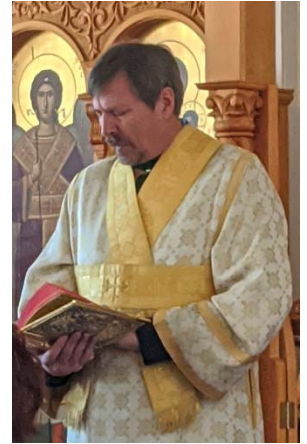


Are We Well? – by Reader Joseph Boruch

When in the hospital there are a number of measures that the doctors and nurses use to help determine how healthy we are. They take blood pressure, listen to our hearts and lungs, measure blood oxygen level, count heart beats, take our temperature, and so on. Determining the health of a parish is not so easy to quantify, but there are some qualities of a “well” parish. How does our parish compare to the following qualities?

A WELL parish is:

- **A Worshiping community** - that is Christ centered. Christ must be at the center of all that we do. Are we living as disciples of Christ?
- **An Evangelizing community** – that does missionary work, invites others, preaches the Gospel, shares the Good News. Are we giving testimony to others about our transformative experiences with Christ? We are all called to be missionaries.
- **A Learning community** – where we learn transformative things, teach adults and children. Are we studying the bible? Are we reading about the lives of the saints? Are children learning the faith?
- **A Loving community** – that is a place where people feel loved, people want to go to, has small groups to involve people.



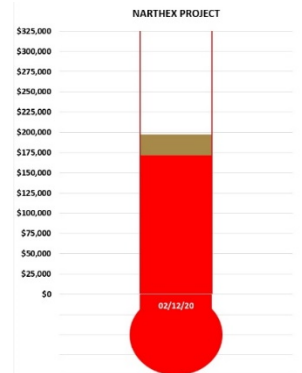
As we enter Great Lent, please take some time to examine parish wellness, just as it is a time to examine our personal spiritual wellness. Let’s keep doing that which is healthy for the parish, and if there are some things that are unhealthy, let’s get well. We are each called to a ministry and part of that ministry is working toward a well parish.

Narthex Update – by Narthex Project Committee

Last year we decided to add a narthex to our church. We set a goal to raise \$325,000 in order to accomplish this and began the Narthex Fund Drive. To date we have received pledges totaling \$190,695. This is **\$154,170** short of our goal. To date, we have collected \$170,830 in donations which includes the anonymous matching donation of \$10,000.

Thank you to all for your loving and generous response to this important endeavor of St. Michael the Archangel Church. If you have not yet made your pledge, please consider doing so now. Pledge forms are available at the side entrance to our church or in the church office. Your pledge in any amount will help. Our church family must stay united to see our narthex project to fruition.

GOAL:	\$325,000
PLEDGES:	\$190,695
DONATIONS TO DATE:	\$170,830
STILL NEEDED:	\$154,170



Camp St. Herman

We are very excited to announce that our Diocese will sponsor a one-week summer camp program, called Camp St. Herman, August 9-15, 2020 for grades 4-12 (ages 9-17)! The program will be based off of the Antiochian Village program, and held at the St. Methodios Faith & Heritage Center in Contoocook, NH. Fr. Benjamin Kjendal will be the Camp Director and Khalil Samara will be the Executive Director along with many AV Staff alumni ministering to our young people. More details, camper registration and staff applications are available online at www.CampStHerman.org or email at info@campstherman.org with questions.

Women's Group – by Elaine Burke

The Women's group met early in February to elect new officers and to make plans for the coming year. We are pleased that Soraya Bandeli and Elaine Burke will be sharing the role of President. We are delighted to have both Linda Davis and Natalie Leva share the roll of Secretary. Michelle Mullaney will continue as Treasurer along with the help and assistance from Pauline Rassias.



The Outreach Committee is planning a Fish Feast on Sunday, March 22 as both a celebration of the Feast of the Annunciation and fundraiser for Zoe House which offers support to women in crises pregnancies. Please let us know if you will join us for the luncheon, or if you will be available to help. This delightful meal will also be available for take-out if desired!

All the women of Saint Michael the Archangel are members of the Women's Group, and each of us is called to help as we are able. We are blessed to have enjoyed such committed support and have been able to make vital and valued contributions to our Parish life. Thank you all for being willing to help, your efforts on our Parish's behalf are greatly appreciated.

Lent is a busy and prayerful time of year as we make our preparations for Pascha. We have many opportunities for families to join us in our efforts. On April 12, Palm Sunday, the Women's Group will host the coffee hour. This is a special Feast and we often enjoy many guests to our Parish on this Sunday. We want the coffee hour to be welcoming and hospitable to our guests. Please let Elaine or Soraya know if you are able to make a contribution to the meal.

Also on April 12, Palm Sunday, Pauline Rassias is organizing a bake sale. Red Dyed Eggs, Pascha Bread and Koulourakia cookies will be available for pre order. Look for the printed order forms at the back of the Church. Your Pre-Order will help us efficiently plan our baking schedule and of course you are welcome to help us bake or to bring your special treats for the sale.



On April 17, Holy Friday, we will meet after morning services to decorate the Epitaphio. Linda Davis will be taking the lead ordering the flowers and organizing the decorating. Everyone is welcome to join us, there is no need for floral design experience. All skill levels welcome!

We will also share a Lenten luncheon organized by Jasmine Andrews. She welcomes your support for this lovely meal. Ask her how you can help when you see her. Your contribution to this meal will be greatly enjoyed by parish members, some of whom will be spending the full day and into the evening at Church.

Families are welcome to bring their baskets of food for Paschal Blessings. The meal following the service will consist of many of the delightful foods we have missed during Lent and want to share as we break the Lenten fast and celebrate a Risen Christ!

On Memorial Day Weekend, we will have a bake sale after Liturgy. This is a fabulous opportunity to buy amazing treats for your visiting summer guests.

SAVE THE DATE – Saturday, October 10 for the International Food Festival and Upscale Yard Sale. A flyer explaining what items we are looking for is available at the back of the Church. Take one home to keep as a reminder.

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My Journey – by George Soupel

Wednesday, July 31, 2020 began as an ordinary day for me as a teacher on Cape Cod. It was the middle of summer and I was looking forward to another month off. Blissfully long days spent with my wife Patti - in the yard or the beach.



I had just finished reading the paper and decided to get up from my soft leather chair. Funny thing though, my legs didn't work. They buckled beneath me in a way I had never felt before. I phoned Patti at work and asked her to come home. After several hours in the emergency room, the diagnosis was Guillen Barre syndrome – an uncommon disorder where the immune system attacks nerve cells. The result is a progressive paralysis beginning in the arms and legs, eventually spreading throughout the rest of the body. I was immediately admitted and given a course of medicine to slow down the process. Unfortunately several days later the paralysis moved to my face and the muscles used to breathe. I was put in a medically induced coma and transferred to a Boston hospital where I remained in a coma, in ICU for two months. In the ICU I acquired a pneumonia that was difficult to treat – causing my organs to begin shutting down. On a ventilator, receiving dialysis and with my heart failing, I was given only a slim chance to survive. Patti remained faithfully by my side 24/7 – sleeping on a couch in the waiting room and helping manage my care. She even had to go to court to get custody of me to make medical decisions.

While I have no conscious recollection of this time, I am so, so grateful for the tremendous outpouring of love, prayers and support that everyone – especially those at Saint Michael's – showered upon me from near and afar. Father Ben anointed me, Patti read prayers and Psalms to me every day, many visited, and through the Grace of God I got better. Little did I know, however, that was only the beginning.

On October 1st, I was transferred to a physical rehabilitation hospital where I spent almost four months regaining the use of my legs and arms. I could not drink or feed myself; I had to be moved around the room via an overhead lift; and for a time I could not even speak. The first day of physical therapy I managed to sit on a bench for thirty seconds before collapsing. But through daily therapy and a wonderful staff (also Christians), I slowly began to improve.

Today I am able to stand, use a walker and do most of the things at home I could do before. Twice weekly I have outpatient therapy and my prognosis for a full recovery is very good. When I reflect on this journey, three huge lessons stand out. The first is the power of prayer and faith. Without God and the prayers of so many (including Zoya and Tanya who prayed a healing canon for me every evening), I would not be alive. My doctors are amazed at my recovery – off of dialysis, heart much improved and regaining my strength. The faith of others saved me. It has truly been a miracle.

The second lesson I learned is about patience and trust. Waiting an hour for someone to scratch an itch or bring a sip of water is a great teacher! Humility is also part of this process – having been a very private person all of my life, it was very difficult to rely on others for daily care and assistance with the most basic of tasks. Fear and pain were daily companions – yet made so much easier knowing that God was with me every second and in every breath.

Finally the last lesson I learned was that of love. Having walked a rather scary path of the unknown, I am keenly aware of the love of so many. The cards and texts, prayers and visits, words of encouragement, and simple thoughts were and are felt. They are like waves upon the shore – sometimes strong, other times gentle – yet always present – reassuring, loving and encouraging. Without that love I might have lost my way – not only did they heal, but they fed my soul and my faith. God is love and He is present in all our lives – especially when we think of others. Thank you all so, so much for everything. Patti and I love each and every one of you.

Paying It Forward – by Erika Kjendal

One of the most memorable lines someone has said to me was, "Pay it forward." He had just helped our family immensely and would not accept anything in return. Instead he left us with those three powerful words. As we enter into Lent, one of the Sundays in the Triodion is the Sunday of the Last Judgement. In the Gospel lesson, we are presented with a hard picture: God is sitting on His throne and separating the sheep from the goats. The sheep get sent to be with the angels, while the goats must walk into the serpent's mouth. The separating factor between the two groups is, in simple terms, love and kindness.

Think back to a time when someone has been kind to you. I'm sure you can recall how even a small action has changed your day, and perhaps for some of you there has been a time when a larger act of kindness has changed your life. As Christians we are called to do the same: to pay it forward. As that Gospel lesson teaches, we are paying it forward not just to the person in front of us, but also to the Creator of all who in His infinite goodness has done so much for us that the least we can do is take every opportunity to serve Him. So this Lent especially I want to challenge you to brighten someone's day, serve God and your neighbor, and even change someone's life by paying it forward.

Recipe Box – by Pauline Rassias



Every year on January 1 my mother baked a cake placing a coin wrapped in foil within. The cake was crossed with the knife then cut designating each piece. The first was for Jesus, the second for "the house" then a piece for each member of the family from oldest to youngest followed by any relatives present then a piece for each guest present. The receiver of the coin was said to have good fortune for the coming year. We continue this tradition on our home today.

The Vasilopita (cake or bread of St. Basil) is baked in honor of St. Basil the Great. The legend goes that heavy taxes were levied on the people of Caesaria. In order to avoid prison, each family relinquished family gems and coins to the emperor. Basil, then Archbishop of Caesaria, fearlessly went to the emperor calling him to repentance. By God's grace, the emperor did repent and returned the chests of treasures. Basil was now faced with the task of returning them to the rightful owners. After praying for guidance, Basil had the gems baked into loaves of cake/bread distributed them to the townspeople. Miraculously, each owner received his own valuable by God's grace. Many Orthodox churches celebrate the tradition after Liturgy on St. Basil's name day and distribute the Vasilopita among the parishioners.

Vasilopita

Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cups butter
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of sugar
- 6 eggs
- 4 tablespoons brandy
- 4 tablespoons orange zest
- 4 cups self-rising flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup evaporated milk
- Powdered sugar (optional)
- A clean coin (quarter) wrapped in foil.

Have ingredients at room temperature. Preheat oven to 390 F. Cream butter in mixing bowl and add sugar, then eggs one at a time, and brandy while beating. Sprinkle in orange rind, distribute throughout batter. Add the milk, then add flour small amount at a time. Do not overbeat. Pour batter into greased and lightly floured 10" springform pan. Bake about 45 minutes. When cake begins to set (20 minutes) carefully insert the coin (not in the middle). Test for doneness. Let cool 5 minutes and remove from pan. Cool at least 4 hours before cutting. Dust with powdered sugar. Decorating top is optional. Usually the New Year date, toasted almonds are added.

Gratitude – by Mary Kjendal

Gratitude is essential in both our spiritual and physical lives. To start, what is the literal definition of gratitude? That's right, thankfulness: expressing thanks. That's what it says in the dictionary... What about in the Bible?

From a spiritual perspective, gratitude is indispensable from our lives and the Bible. There are so many verses about thankfulness and gratitude in the Bible. Perhaps Psalm 117 is one of the more well-known ones: *"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever."* (The same words are also found in 1 Chronicles 16:33, except with an added "Oh" beforehand.) I love: *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* (So simple, yet so challenging!) from 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18. Another favorite, 2 Corinthians 9:15: *"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"* (Other verses on gratitude are Psalms 7:18 and 9:1.)

Gratitude is also necessary in our physical lives, as previously mentioned. It makes us happy to both receive and express gratitude. Receiving gratitude shows that whoever is showing you that gratitude cares about you and what you did for them. For example, take what we did for the homeless at the Village at Cataumet. With a few shopping trips and a few people who stayed after church to pack the bags, we delivered fifteen bags full of lunches and breakfasts, enough to feed the school-age children at Cataumet during February Break. When I went to help with the lunch we hosted there on Wednesday, February 19, many people expressed their gratitude to the people of St. Michael the Archangel for the bags and the lunch. Have you ever wondered what you or your children will eat when they are out of school for break? Yes or no, you can imagine what that would feel like to then brush away that worry because your kids now have enough food to last a week. Have you ever felt ecstatic and thankful upon receiving a really nice present or gift? So now think of how happy and grateful these families at The Village at Cataumet feel. As we receive their gratitude, we should think how we, as Orthodox Christians, should spread God's love and inspire gratitude in the hearts of strangers, neighbors, friends, enemies, and family alike.



Diocesan Choir Workshop

If you always wanted to go to Sacred Music Institute (SMI) held at Antiochian Village but it was too far for you, save the dates September 25 & 26, 2020! Our Diocese is bringing SMI to Boston! Diocesan Choir Workshop will be led by Benedict and Maria Sheehan from St. Tikhon's Seminary, who bring their uniquely complementary skill sets to a weekend workshop. In intensive sessions they help church musicians of all abilities reach new levels of mastery, with emphasis on how to retain these skills and employ them in an everyday setting. They particularly emphasize the spiritual work of the sacred choral musician, and its connections to ensemble blend, musicianship, expressiveness, attentiveness, and a prayerful ethos.



Reading – by George Soupel



Last newsletter we listed traditional books – this list features more recent and unique titles. Most are available online from Ancient Faith Bookstore or Amazon. As Father Ben said – the five people we are around the most can greatly influence who we are – for some of us, the books we choose are one of the five people! While a few of these titles are meant for children – their simplicity makes them helpful to all of us.

- **Orthodox Christianity: A Very Short Introduction (A. Edward Siecienski)** - newly published basic introduction
- **Akathist to Almighty God for Help in Trouble (Ancient Faith)** – prayers in times of difficulties
- **Prayer Spa: Ancient Treatments for the Modern Soul** - gentle instruction in honoring mind, body and soul
- **A Daily Calendar of Saints** – Father Lawrence Farley (Orthodox) - Popular biblical commentator and church historian Fr. Lawrence Farley turns his hand to hagiography in this collection of lives of saints, one or more for each day of the calendar year. His accessible prose and contemporary approach make these ancient lives easy for modern Christians to relate to and understand.
- **Anthony The Great** – Children’s book – Deacon John Sarantakis – *“It’s hard not getting what we want. It’s hard not doing what we want. It’s hard . . . eating Brussels sprouts! For Anthony, some lessons are BIGGER than others. Fortunately he has some help along the way. Join Anthony and his favorite stuffed animal, Mikey, as they learn about the power of prayer, the importance of our spiritual struggles, and ultimately, the love of God.”*
- **Spyridon’s Shoes** – Kh. Christine Rogers - *“Young Spyros spends his days fishing, octopus hunting, and dreaming of attending school like his best friend, Niko. When he encounters an elderly man on the beach after an accident, his whole life begins to shift and change. But who is this mysterious, saintly man, and why is his friendship so important? Take a short trip back in time to the Greek island of Corfu and discover the real reason for the mystery surrounding Spyridon's shoes.”*
- **The Lives of Women Saints in the Orthodox Church** – available from www.stnectariospress.com
- **Lights on the Mountain** – Cheryl Ann Tuggle – novel – *“Like the creek which cuts through the Allegheny foothills of its Western Pennsylvania setting, hope runs through every chapter of this novel. The beauty of the story lies in the unlikely people Jess encounters along the way, transmitters of a grace which at first hounds, then quietly eludes. Through events both tragic and joyous, Jess is led on a journey of self-discovery through ancestral sin, unexpected love, loss, holiness, compassion, forgiveness and redemption.”*
- **One Flew Over the Onion Dome: American Orthodox Converts, Reverts, & Retreads** – Fr. David Honeycut – *“Converts to the Orthodox Church are sometimes stunned by the ethnic ghetto they seem to have landed in. Cradle Orthodox are no less amazed by these zealous, sometimes apparently nutty converts. And priests often seem clueless as to how to deal with the mixed blessing of newcomers. How on earth can we all understand each other? More importantly, what can we learn from each other?”*
- **Sweet Song: A Story of Saint Romanos the Melodist** – *“Young Romanos is devoted to Christ and His Mother and longs to be able to sing his praises to them. But when he tries, his voice croaks and the words won’t come. The other cantors make fun of him — until one miraculous Christmas Eve.”*
- **Traveling Companions: Walking with the Saints of the Church (Ancient Faith)** – *“Do you long to establish a relationship with the saints, but find them—or the volumes written about them—a little intimidating? The saints started out as ordinary Christians, just like us, and they are waiting to accompany us on our journey to heaven if we will only reach out our hands. Traveling Companions is a manageable volume that briefly introduces saints from a variety of times, places, and walks of life, all in language that brings them close to contemporary readers’ lives.”*

