

From Women's Group

Greetings, it is a pleasure to have this opportunity to greet all of you. This has been such a strange time, and not being able to see and greet our friends at Saint Michael the Archangel's regularly has been one of the most difficult losses.

Fortunately, earlier this spring, before anyone knew about the threat of Covid19 Virus, and the extent to which it would impact our lives, Linda Davis suggested that we put together a Parish Cookbook and she volunteered to take the lead to get it organized.

Happily, the work on the Cookbook is well underway, we have collected many prized recipes and are now in the testing phase. Linda spiker383@gmail.com, Soraya Bandeli sbandeli@comcast.net, and Elaine Burke emacburke@gmail.com have once again reached out to our membership to ask for people willing to test the recipes we have gathered. You are more than welcome to reach out to one of us for assistance to get any additional recipes submitted, or to volunteer to test the recipes we already have.

Some amazing recipes, along with interesting anecdotal stories and photos have been submitted. Your anecdotes to the recipes will be an inspiration to generations! We have also been thrilled to have fabulous cooks who are in our families and outside of our parish make submissions. We welcome all of them. We especially cherish the kid's submissions, as we all appreciate the special role cooking with children plays in an Orthodox home. We already have some recipes submitted by children. We welcome additional child friendly recipes, as well as the stories that inspired them.

There is lots to do and by sharing your talents and your time and your stories, we can be evidence of Christ's love right from our own kitchens and beyond!

Be the change! Be the love!



St. Michael the Archangel Orthodox Church welcomes everyone! Fr. Ben Kjendal
www.stmichaelcapecod.org (508) 450-1113
SUNDAY ORTHROS 9:00 AM / LITURGY 10:00 AM SATURDAY VESPERS 5:00 PM

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

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A message from Fr. Ben Kjendal

Dear children of God in Christ Jesus on Cape Cod and beyond,
I have missed you!

When I first set out to write this, it had been a strange and, for many, difficult, last four months - now it has been almost six months! Though I have now seen many of you at Vespers or Orthros and Divine Liturgy, some of you I still haven't - you are in my prayers and I hope to see you soon. We can only go so long separated from the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ - most of us don't have the strength of St. Mary of Egypt who spent 40 years in repentance in the desert without human contact and without partaking of the Eucharist!

But in the midst of this pandemic, along with protests and riots, a bear market and a recovery, a recession and high unemployment, I wonder what we have learned and how we have viewed this time, and how it has changed us. Hopefully we've learned more than just how to use Zoom or livestream to Facebook and YouTube; hopefully we've changed more than just our habits of hand washing and touching our faces; hopefully we've gained an appreciation for other things than eating out and birthday parties.

Repentance often begins by acknowledging, even if just to ourselves, the wrongs that we have committed, the misdirection of affection that have permeated our actions, the misfire of desire that has gripped our hearts. This first step allows us to progress away from that and back towards God, though it is often a long and arduous journey for our sinful souls. So it goes on our spiritual journey. Sometimes it is the first step of recognizing what we need to learn, how we need to spend our time, who we need to listen to, and on whom we need to focus that takes us longest. If we had only "two weeks to flatten the curve" perhaps our lives would have resumed as normal and we wouldn't have learned or changed anything in them.

So where are we today? How have our habits changed? Where is our time spent? Are we aching to be back in communion with each other, partaking and participating in the Communion that God gives us with Himself and each other in the Body of Christ? Have we adjusted our priorities so that we spend more time in prayer and reading the sacred scriptures and the lives of the holy saints? Do we listen more carefully to the Word of God, spoken to us often in a silence that we struggle so hard to stay away from?

I know that I have fallen short in so much of this, and hope that I continue to use the time given to me to repent - to turn back to God in faith and hope, recognizing His loving kindness and mercy to me, that by His grace I might live in obedience to His commandments. May we all use the time we have been given to bring our focus back on Him - to "*acquire the Spirit of Peace*" as St. Seraphim of Sarov says. May we begin and end our days in prayer, that it may permeate the time between, as well. May the Holy Scriptures guide our ways, and the lives of the holy saints be our example for our life. May we be slow to judge others and quick to love those around us. And may we continue to long for the communion with God that comes only by His grace.

All honor, glory, and worship be to God our Father through His Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Peace and love in Christ.

Fr. Ben



Outreach – by Alyssa Kjendal

Our outreach program had been in a pretty predictable routine. For the past several years, each month has come with its established project: school supplies for needy children in August, books for prisons in September, a non-perishable food drive for food pantries in October, Thanksgiving meals for needy families in November, Christmas meals and Christmas Wishes for more needy families in December, a winter clothing drive for the Family Pantry of Cape Cod and scarves for the homeless in January, support for families in shelters in February...until life as we knew it came to a screeching halt. In early March when the suggestion was made that we postpone our annual Fish Feast to benefit ZOE House (a pan-Orthodox crisis pregnancy center) that was scheduled for March 22, I could not even fathom that such a measure would be necessary. Little did I know that we would not even get to make that decision for ourselves.

Thanks be to God that God’s love and His commandment to love one another are not subject to government mandates or regulations or quarantines. Our Saint Michael family continues to be a beacon of hope and light and love throughout a time of despair and uncertainty and isolation. In just three months, over \$2,000 worth of food has been donated to the struggling families at the Village at Cataumet. In the span of a month, 288 face masks were handmade and delivered to various shelters across the Cape. Even though we have been asked by our civil authorities to stay home and to stay physically apart from each other for the foreseeable future, God’s love transcends those boundaries and that distance and that infinitude and empowers us to faithfully carry on with the duties given to us by our Highest Authority - one day at a time.

Each day is a gift from God, and only God knows what it has in store for us. May we greet each day with thanksgiving, seeking God in all things, and making the most of every opportunity we are given to love our neighbor and help those in need. Regardless of what life looks like from a worldly perspective, let this be our new outreach routine, one we can establish and embrace and enrich each and every day that God gives us.



Stewardship Envelope System – by Reader Joseph Boruch

At the beginning of 2020, we started a stewardship envelope system with boxed envelopes. These envelopes are a convenient way to donate weekly whether we are attending in person or attending via YouTube. This also simplifies the Treasurer’s job to properly record where you wish your gift to be used. Our intent was to distribute the boxes to parishioners at the end of Liturgy. Before many of the boxes could be distributed, Covid-19 happened. Now, we would like to distribute the remainder of the boxes.

Each box contains an envelope for each week, an initial offering envelope, and holiday envelopes (Pascha, St Michael the Archangel, and Christmas). Each box of envelopes has a specific number to identify the donor for accounting purposes. The initial offering envelope is to help defray the cost of the box, such that \$5 given by each would cover the cost of the envelopes. Below, is a sample of the information printed on each envelope. This envelope system enables you to designate your gift to a variety of purposes with one check or cash.

God’s church that we love needs your on-going support. Your stewardship is important as we are all called to be stewards of the Church to give of our time, talents, treasures, and testimony.

Envelopes are available at the church, if you attend in person. If you are not attending in person and would like to receive envelopes, please email Joseph Boruch at stewardship@stmichaelcapecod.org and we will arrange to drop them off to you. Unfortunately, mailing the envelopes to everyone is cost prohibitive.

Thank you for all that you do for the parish.

St. Michael the Archangel Antiochian Orthodox Church 62 Main St. Cotuit, MA 02635	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Offering \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Building Fund \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Memorial \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> General \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ \$ _____	My Gift to God for His Gifts to Me Name: _____ Address: _____

Holy Week 2020

By David Easa



I remember an expression: “The harder you work for something, the greater you'll feel when you achieve it.” This past Lenten season and Holy Week, and glorious Resurrection, we all worked really hard! All of us did!

For those who attended the services; myself, Father Benjamin, Anders and Erika and the others who worked so hard to make the services happen, it was difficult sometimes praying and singing and not really knowing who was listening. Being in this place of worship, this place of fellowship, this place of love, without the love and fellowship and fellow worship of the rest of our St. Michael's family. It was difficult sometimes going to the next service knowing it was going to be empty. Again.

For those who watched from home, it may have even been more difficult! Knowing it was right there, right on the computer, just a click away, yet you cannot be there physically. Unable to breathe in the incense, unable to kiss the icons, unable to taste the Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Savior. Unable to embrace in celebration of the Resurrection! Unable to break the fast with those that we love. It must have been difficult sometimes to turn on the computer, especially when you could always...watch it...later...

For those of us who worked so hard this year to experience this journey, if you're anything like me, this experience will always have an unmatched feeling of accomplishment!

Let me share with you one highlight of my experience this year. My favorite service of the entire liturgical year is the service of the twelve Gospels on Holy Thursday Night. For me, it is the most emotional service that we celebrate as well as including more of the story of Christ's passion than any other service. My favorite Hymn of the entire liturgical year is sung that night:



*“Today is suspended on a tree He who suspended the earth upon the waters.
The King of the angels is decked with a crown of thorns.
He who wraps the heavens in clouds is wrapped in the purple of mockery.
He who freed Adam in the Jordan is slapped on the face.
The Bridegroom of the Church is affixed to the Cross with nails.
The Son of the Virgin is pierced by a spear.
We worship Thy passion, O Christ.
Show us also Thy glorious resurrection.”*

This year, for the first time, my parents were able to hear me chant this beautiful hymn through the miracle of modern technology. My father, who is an accomplished chanter and longtime choir member himself told me that he'd never heard it sung in English any better. Of course, he's heard it done better in Arabic. I can accept that.

By Erika Kjendal

Every day during Holy Week, I would walk into an empty church. Dad would print out any music our Antiochian archdiocesan website had, and Anders and I would look over it until Dad was ready. First, turn on the livestream and then begin. Cue then flipping through books to get to the right music at the right time — oh, there's no music for this? We'll just do our best to sing something resembling a tune. When the service was done, there were no goodbyes to be said, no one to wait for, all we did was lock up and leave. Unless, of course, we needed to decorate the church, then we stayed extra-long trying to figure that out.

Needless to say, this routine was very strange and lonely, but it did give me some silence to think on a couple points. First, why am I here as one half of the choir/chanters? I wouldn't think that I am

qualified to be one of the only voices you hear this season. I've never taken singing or chanting lessons, and I don't really know what I'm doing half of the time. For some reason, though, I was given the job, the opportunity, the blessing to serve God and everyone in the parish this way. Why me, I still don't have an answer for, but maybe someone else does.



A second point I thought about is: who am I doing this for? When I start singing, my attention is first caught up in the right notes, the right pitch, the right tone that I forget who this is all for. A line that strikes me in the Cherubic Hymn is: We who mystically represent the Cherubim. The CHERUBIM! The Cherubim's role is to serve God constantly, and we are supposed to be mystically representing them! These hymns I'm singing are for our Heavenly Father, and if I'm praising Him matters more than if I'm on the right note.

My third thought was: Pascha could not have come at a better time. COVID-19 did not clear up in time for Pascha as I had once hoped. The virus didn't miraculously disappear so life could go back to normal. Still, there was something so perfect in Pascha's timing this year, for, with Pascha, came Christ's message. The message of the Resurrection is one full of joy and peace. His message doesn't change the world around us, but rather it transforms our hearts: Christ is risen and Death is overthrown. With the Resurrection, Christ brings us a constant we can take strength and shelter in. The constant is not death or pain or suffering. It is not loneliness, not a pandemic... the constant we find in Him is life. Eternal life. *"These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33) Christ will always trample down death, and that is a fact that we can be so certain of even in the uncertainty around us. That is the fact that should be our anchor in these times and remind us of the one constant we will ever be sure of: God, His Resurrection and the life in Him we are given by it.

"And so let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life."

By Anders Kjendal

Holy Week 2020. That is one Holy Week none of us are going to forget. And not because any fabulous chanting was done, not because of how beautiful the church was decorated, but because of the isolation we all felt. Because of having to go to all the services via the internet. Even though, thank God, I was able to go to church, I still felt it, too. I know I was chanting with the saints and the angels, but it still felt ... lonely to be chanting to a camera. Not knowing who was out there participating in the services from home, and knowing that those participating had to do so virtually, that was a saddening thought. But, at the chanters stand, nothing really changed. It was tiring, it was intense. And, thanks to my chanting lessons, it had more meaning than in past years. But still, looking out on Pascha night, when Fr. Ben was chanting "Come ye, receive the Light", it was so sobering to realize, "Only we three chanters are physically receiving the Light!" But, we all received the Light. We all received it in our hearts! During the chanting of "Christ is Risen" and the Paschal Canon, we all received that light in our hearts! This Holy Week gave Lent a whole new meaning. So, next year, and the year after that, and the year after that, if during Holy Week we start taking for granted that we can be at church, think of Holy Week 2020. The year in which we were apart physically, but grew closer spiritually.



From the Parish Council

There are several thank you's that need to be acknowledged, especially during this unusual time we are all going through. However, there is much we can be thankful for as well. Examples include:

- Fr. Ben serving Liturgy in a nearly empty church and coordinating all the technology needed to live stream our services. It has been our link to St Michael and the peace and warmth of participating in our Liturgy.
- David Easa and Erika and Anders providing the sacred music during Liturgy.
- Soraya Bandeli, Joseph Boruch and Erica Fernandez who have coordinated the logistics for the opening of church.
- To all the parish members who continue to support our parish with their financial commitment via stewardship, weekly offerings and donations for candles. Although we have been unable to attend services, we continue to meet our financial obligations and maintain the operations of the parish.

As we begin to re-enter the church and move forward, we need help. We are asking you to consider how you can help St Michael by committing your time and talent to our parish. In numerous organizations, you find that much of the "work load" falls to the same people or a small percentage. We can think of nothing greater than to have 100% participation by the entire parish of St Michael.

Please think of how you would help St Michael with your time and talent. Please come forward to Fr. Ben or anyone in the Parish Council and share your time and skills on behalf of our parish. Or say yes when you are approached.

Reading the Psalms – by George Soupel

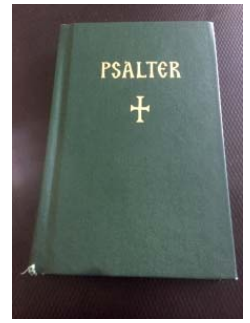
A few years ago Father Ben asked me to begin reading the Psalms at home every day. Having grown up in a Russian household, I knew about many church traditions, services, and practices, but I was not too familiar with the Psalms. I had a vague idea that they were something from the 'Old Testament' Jewish tradition. I knew that certain Psalms are part of our services, only because I saw the titles in our service books, and recognized some of the words that were sung in church. I also knew that Psalms are read over the newly departed throughout the night.

So, being faithful to my spiritual father, I bought a Psalter (book of Psalms). When it arrived, I thumbed through the pages and noticed they were mostly short (good I thought!) and that there were 150 of them plus a bonus one. All except the extra Psalm were numbered. I immediately turned to look for the only one I was familiar with - Psalm 23 (*Yea though I walk through the valley of death...*) It was then that I noticed something different - it was called Psalm 22 and the wording was not what I expected. This is due to the Orthodox using the *Septuagint* translation of the 'Old Testament'. The *Septuagint* has an interesting history - it is a Greek translation of the Hebrew text, requested by the Egyptian ruler around 260 BC. He put 72 people (six Jewish scholars from each of the twelve tribes of Israel) in separate rooms. Each, inspired by God, wrote the exact same translation into Greek.

Thus began my very interesting foray into reading the Psalms. After much prayer for guidance, I have come to view this process as a vital part of my morning routine - as important to me as eating breakfast. Rather than looking for a literal understanding of the words, I try to open my mind to what God chooses to reveal to me. I find peace and comfort in the words that have been read by so many Christians, beginning with those in the early church during Jesus' life.

Many of the Psalms are said to have been written by David (who is believed to have lived around 1000 BC) as songs, and serve many purposes; including a way to put our praise for God into words, as pleas for help in our personal struggles, and as a way to thank God for what He does for us. There are many references to 'Old Testament' biblical places, events and people - which has led me to begin to read and explore the *Tanakh* (Hebrew Bible - or as Christians call it, the 'Old Testament') within which the Psalms have their own section. This has deepened my understanding of Christ, and has helped me gain a firmer context for Scripture.

Practically speaking, the Psalms are grouped into twenty *Kathismas* or sections (which is tied to the practice of monks *sitting* while one section of Psalms is read by another monk who remains standing). Some monks read all 150 Psalms in one week (or even daily) - but I have found that reading five per day takes me fifteen minutes or less, and allows me to see themes that are common to sequential Psalms. There are books that explain each Psalm from a Christian perspective, and a Google search can provide details - but I prefer to focus less on that, and instead, ask God to enlighten me as I read. Ancient Faith Book Store publishes a nice Psalter arranged by the order which Psalms are suggested to be read in the home, while Holy Transfiguration Monastery publishes one with Psalms in numerical order. Each is under \$20 and can be found on Amazon or from the bookstore at our church. One can also download an electronic Psalter for free online, or get an app for a smartphone. Regardless of the method, I encourage everyone to start reading the Psalms - even if you just do it one day a week for a few minutes to start. It is like manna (look that up in Exodus 16) for our soul!



Recipe Box – by Pauline Rassias

A few years ago my husband and I visited the birthplace of our son-in-law with him, our daughter and two grandsons. This lovely village of Plomari sits on the shore overlooking the North Aegean. We spent a wonderful week there hosted by Peter's parents in their lovely home right in the heart of town and a 5 minute ride from the crystal clear waters of the beach. It is customary on this lovely island of Lesbos, to have Bougatsa at the local bakery on Sunday morning after church. What a treat! Still warm and crispy, we filled our bellies and smacked our lips with every heavenly bite. It is a sweet custard pie similar to Galactobouriko, but has a lemon flavor and powdered sugar is dusted atop the filo instead of syrup.

Bougatsa

Ingredients:

- 6 c. milk
- ¾ c. semolina (or cream of wheat)
- 5 eggs
- 2 c. sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- Zest and juice of one lemon
- 12 phyllo pastry sheets
- 1 stick melted butter
- 1 TBSP. cinnamon
- powdered sugar



Heat the milk and sprinkle in the semolina. Cook over medium/low heat stirring constantly until mixture thickens. Lightly beat the eggs with the sugar and vanilla then add the lemon juice and zest. Temper the egg mixture by slowly adding semolina mixture to it until it reaches temperature of the mixture. Pour egg mixture into semolina stirring to combine. Cook an additional 5 minutes and remove from heat. This is the filling. Cool it stirring occasionally to prevent skin forming on top. In the meantime...

Butter an oblong baking pan slightly smaller than your phyllo sheets and line it with 8-9 sheets, each one brushed separately with melted butter. Pour in the custard filling and spread evenly. Turn the edges of the bottom pastry over the custard and brush the edges with a little melted butter. Cover with the rest of the pastry sheets brushing each sheet separately with butter.

With kitchen scissors or a VERY sharp knife, cut off the surplus pastry. Brush the top layer with the rest of the butter and score into squares. Bake in moderate oven (350) for 35 to 40 minutes. Cover with mixture of powdered sugar and cinnamon while still hot. Cut the squares through and serve warm or at room temperature.

Getting to know you... Alyssa Kjendal – by Patti Soupel



Whether she is called *Khouria*, *Matushka*, or *Presbytera*, our 'Little Mother' Alyssa is a busy woman. Growing up in Guilderland, NY (near Albany) she loved the outdoors. When not playing soccer or engaged in church activities, she was out on the lake water skiing with her older sister. As it was a favorite activity of her father's family, he began teaching them the ropes at four or five years old. Her family was able to spend a good amount of time in Maine each summer, and as soon as they were strong enough to hold the rope, the sisters and their cousins spent carefree hours on the water. Alyssa and her sister especially loved skiing 'double' while singing *Bohemian Rhapsody* by Queen - a popular song of the time.

As soon as she was old enough, Alyssa (who grew up in the Lutheran Church) began a job as a counselor at a Christian camp. Father Ben also worked at Camp SonRise, though in a different area. They finally had a chance to work together leading campers up mountains and down rivers, all the while seeking God's glory in nature. It was there that her love for youth and outdoor ministry flourished. Father Ben (not yet a priest!) and Alyssa were married a short time after that summer, in January. They settled into their first apartment in Fort Wayne, Indiana where Alyssa began her journey to Orthodoxy (more on this in a later issue of the newsletter)!

As their family grew, Alyssa took on the responsibility of home schooling their children. At present that includes nine students in a wide variety of grade levels! As we can all see through their singing, reading, chanting and other abilities, she has done an amazing job of balancing their academic success with her parenting responsibilities. Together with Father Ben, she has raised such polite, respectful, and most importantly, faithful children.

Alyssa is quick to point out the challenges associated with homeschooling such a large number of children, but is even quicker to highlight the joy that comes with the privilege of spending so many hours with her family and the ability to plant seeds that will bear fruit long down the road. For us in the parish it is such a treat to watch each one bloom in our spiritual garden, much like the flowers that emerge at varying times and seasons.



When rare time is found for her love of reading, she enjoys books that are spiritually enriching that focus on motherhood, as well as historical fiction including World War II and British Mysteries. Sometimes she even sneaks in a small bowl of coffee ice cream!

Alyssa inspires others through her humility, piety and compassion for the world. She is the first to put glory into God's hands and praise others for their contributions, but it is through her quiet leadership and activities such as the Outreach Ministry, which includes for example - serving the Cataumet Family Center, collecting food for the hungry, organizing church summer school and making/distributing scarves for the homeless - that we see her faith in God, as she puts His Word into actions.

Her steadfast calm in preparing so many small children for church (of course with help from her 'assistants' Erika and Mary, arriving with a smile on her face, meeting the day's activities with patience and an unwavering love of God, Alyssa is truly a shining example of what it means to be a *Khouria*, *Matushka*, *Presbytera*, and our 'Little Mother'!