

SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Newsletter

Volume 26 Issue 3

March 2026

February Council Highlights

- ✘ January's Operating Income was \$24,415.28 and Operating Expenses were \$17,649.26, resulting in net income of \$6,766.02 for the month of January.
- ✘ Operating Budget of \$245,000 for 2026 approved at Annual Meeting.
- ✘ All air conditioning units on the roof of the cultural center were given their pre-summer check up.



SS PETER & PAUL
ORTHODOX CHURCH
1614 E. Monte Vista Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85006
602.253.9515

www.sspeterpaulaz.org
www.oca.org
www.orthodoxfellowship.org

Archpriest Mikel Bock,
Rector
907.444.8545
fmikel@sspeterpaulaz.org

Archpriest David Balmer, Attached Retired
frdavidbalmer@sspeterpaulaz.org
480.213.7631

Deacon John Weiss
deaconjohn@sspeterpaulaz.org

Deacon Rodion Pfeiffer
deaconrodion@sspeterpaulaz.org

John Bushko
Council President
614.204.0413

Barbara Harp
Choir Director
barbaraharp.2030@gmail.com

Stephanie A. Homyak
Church School Director
Newsletter Editor
602.432.7473
stephanie_homyak@yahoo.com

Matushka Elizabeth Pfeiffer
Myrrhbearers Altar Society
flagstaffred@gmail.com

Captured but Free in Christ

It could be a question for an Orthodox version of Jeopardy: What two saints, both commemorated in this third week of March, were captured by pirates?

The answer would be Saint Gregory Palamas, whom we remember today, and Saint Patrick of Ireland, whose feast day is on the 17th. Though their experiences with pirates came at different times in their lives, both must have experienced terror. And both lost their liberty, at least for a time, after their capture.

Patrick, born in southwest England, was taken by Irish pirates at the age of sixteen as was sold into slavery in Ireland, toiling for years there in isolated misery. He managed to escape and to convince some sailors to take him back to England, where he was reunited with his family.

We might assume that Patrick would want nothing more to do with Ireland or the Irish after years of such humiliating

hardship. Yet in the year 435, already ordained, he agreed to go back to Ireland and preach the faith. He did it so well and so lovingly that besides becoming Ireland's most revered saint, he was given the title "Equal to the Apostles" because he brought a whole country to Christianity.



Nine hundred years later, Gregory Palamas was writing about monasticism and the Christian life. As Father John Meyendorff has written, Gregory believed that:

...the difference between the apostles who went up Mount Tabor with Jesus and the Christians of today lies in the fact that Peter, James and John saw the light "exteriorly," as an object appearing supernaturally to their bodily eyes, while Christians now, sacramentally united to the



Redeemer after His death and resurrection, can contemplate the light interiorly, within their hearts. They can develop the potentialities of this gift and its divine character ever more and more until they find God Himself.

St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality, SVS Press, 1974 (p. 117)

While sailing from Thessalonica to Byzantium, Gregory had his own experience of being captured by pirates. They were Muslim Turks, and they kept Gregory and his fellow passengers in captivity for almost a year. Far from keeping aloof from his "hosts", he spent the time in amicable theological disputes with the son of the Emir, and expressed the hope that "a day will soon come when we will be able to understand each other" (Meyendorff, 106.) This great saint, as we can see from the quotation above, clearly believed in the uniquely authentic relationship of Christians with God through Jesus Christ. Yet his mind and heart were open to exploring another faith.

If Patrick had refused to return to the place where pirates sold him into slavery, Christianity might not have come to Ireland. If Gregory had refused conversation with his Turkish captors, we would not have him as a model for our efforts to engage with Islam today.

Great saints, it seems, can use anything—including capture by pirates—to the glory of God. ✘

Rector's Message

As we enter the month of March, we find ourselves already well into the Great Fast, for this year Pascha falls early—on April 12. The Church, in her wisdom, gives us this sacred season not as a burden, but as a gift. Yet we often experience the Fast as an inconvenience, something that disrupts our routine. In truth, it is meant to do exactly that. The Great Fast is called to interrupt our usual patterns so that we may see how distracted we have become and learn once again to rely not on the comforts of this world, but on Christ.

Every spiritual effort—whether corporate worship or private prayer—requires attention and intention. As St. Tikhon of Zadonsk reminds us: “Of no value is that prayer in which the tongue prays but the mind is empty; the tongue speaks, but the mind lies silent; the tongue calls God, but the mind wanders amongst created things.” True prayer demands that our minds and hearts be present before God. Likewise, St. John Climacus teaches us to “enclose our mind in the words of our prayer,” so that our heart may respond to what we are saying.

The Great Fast and Holy Week are given to us as a time of preparation for the glorious feast of the Resurrection. If we simply go through the motions—adjusting our diet but neglecting prayer and repentance—Pascha will feel like just another Sunday. We risk missing the opportunity to purify our souls and enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection.

This sacred season calls us to renew ourselves through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is a time to look honestly within, to repent—not merely to feel remorse, but to change our minds, hearts, and actions in obedience to Christ and His teachings. It is a return to the great commandments: to love God and to love our neighbor.

The Lord tells us in the Gospel according to Gospel of Matthew, “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is per-

fect.” This is a high calling, and the path is not easy. Fasting for forty days is a struggle. Yet the spiritual fruit is great. Like Zacchaeus, who struggled to climb the tree in order to see Christ, we too must make the effort. The struggle itself becomes the means by which we behold the Lord.

When we fast—not only from certain foods, but also from television, social media, idle talk, and other distractions—we begin to clear away the obstacles that hinder our communion with Christ. In doing so, we come to see more clearly the sins that cloud our hearts. As we hear in the Beatitudes, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

The Fast must be kept not by the mouth alone, but by the whole person. Our eyes must turn away from impure sights, our ears from gossip and slander, our hands from injustice, our feet from wandering into temptation. It is useless to abstain from certain foods while indulging in criticism and harsh judgment. God desires true repentance—a turning of the heart—not simply outward observance.

We sorrow for our sins, yet we do so in the joy of God's mercy. We discipline the flesh, yet we do so in hope and anticipation of the Resurrection. During Great Lent we prepare not only to celebrate Christ's Resurrection, but also to participate in it.

May this Great Fast be for each of us a time of genuine renewal, deeper prayer, and sincere repentance. May it lead us to behold the radiant light of Pascha with purified hearts and unshakable joy.

Fr. Mikel Bock



ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

In order to streamline the Annual Meeting, all reports were e-mailed out a week in advance. Highlights of the meeting include:

- ✘ Parish voted to approve replacement of exterior air conditioning units at an estimated cost of \$10,000 each when needed.
- ✘ John Bushko was elected as lay delegate for the Diocesan Assembly and John Hecht is the alternate delegate.
- ✘ Operating Income for 2025 was \$275,595.15 and Operating Expenses were \$233,619.81, resulting in a positive balance of \$41,975.34.
- ✘ Proposed 2026 Operating Budget of \$245,000.00 presented and passed.
- ✘ Auditors report that financial records are “accurate and free from major errors.”
- ✘ Slate of officers and trustees positions for 2026 presented and elected.

John Bushko	President
David Homyak	Treasurer
John Hecht	Financial Secretary
Luka Radjenovich	Recording Secretary
Katrina Delsante	Auditor
Robert Hoff	Auditor
Heather Pfeiffer	5-year Trustee
Bill Weiss	4-year Trustee
Stephanie Homyak	3-year Trustee
John Blischak	2-year Trustee
Arthur Rhodes	2-year Trustee
Alexander Voght	1-year Trustee
Mia Quintanilla	1-year Trustee

Congratulations to our newly elected Parish Council!



Story-telling in Service

Natalya Delsante

A central theme of our time in OVC has been developing our ability to storytell. This has manifested through structured writing assignments and weekly check-ins. Here, we recount moving, interesting, thought-provoking, silly, or really anything notable that has occurred, and from that, we try to parse meaning. The following is an example of a story I wrote concerning my time in the clinic.

The verse “Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises to our King, sing praises” beckons every Christian to earnestly call upon the Lord ceaselessly.

I was sitting in the clinic impatiently awaiting the arrival of our first dental patient of the day. As the elevator doors



groaned open, a booming voice emerged, practically screaming the psalms. After his solo performance to an audience of me, my coworker, and the Lord, Mr. Powell checked in with me at the front desk, and promptly returned to his song. During a brief intermission, I walked over to Mr. Powell and thanked him for his beautiful voice and song. Naturally, what started as an innocent moment of admiration, quickly became an hour long conversation. Mr. Powell detailed memories and glimpses of his past, highlighting his youth as an orphan in the ghetto and his near death experience where he was stabbed on the job. Interspersed through these flashes of pain were songs unto God—praises for his life, thanks for his mercy, and a wish for

many years. In the same clinic that harbors laments of pain and suffering is one also of seemingly unconditional joy.

Psalm 99 commands us to “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord”, which is a line I typically pull to justify my tone-deaf exclamations during Liturgy. The fullness of this verse, however, is only realized in the sincerity of “joyful”. Otherwise, you are just making a noise. Through serving, you come to understand the fullness of delight in the Lord through those you minister to. You learn to make not just a noise, but a song of praise, thanks, and love.

This particular assignment was intended to be brief, and through it, I had hoped to capture the radical joy of truly faithful Christians. As we persevere through Lent, I am deeply inspired by the resilience of those whom I serve and intend to emulate this same delight in Christ. ✕

DOW Young Adult Summit

Nearly 40 young adults from across the Diocese of the West of the Orthodox Church in America gathered at St. John of Damascus Orthodox Church in Poway for a three-day Young Adult Summit. With the active participation of His Grace, Bishop Vasily, attendees took part in Divine Services, thoughtful discussions on vocations and the spiritual life, fellowship, and a YES-organized service project in downtown San Diego.

Guest speakers encouraged participants to reflect on discerning God’s call in their lives and becoming more active in parish communities. A panel discussion addressed living as Orthodox Christians in the 21st century, including questions

about modern cultural challenges and remaining faithful in a rapidly changing world. The keynote address was delivered by Archpriest Josiah

“I am quite thankful for the wonderful chance to be united to the greater young adult community in the West. It was a busy weekend with inspiring talks from Bishop Vasily, Fr. Josiah Trenham, and others I now consider as mentors. We had plenty of fun opportunities to explore San Diego together. My favorite memory is when we partnered with YES to feed the homeless people of downtown San Diego. I was blessed with good weather, great company and walking away with some fruitful insight.”

—Christopher Blaise

Trenham of St. Andrew Orthodox Church, who spoke on the role of conscience in the spiritual life.

Participants also partnered with Blue Wagon Ministry to serve those in need, putting their faith into action. Throughout the weekend, young adults from across the Diocese built meaningful connections, enjoyed fellowship in San Diego County, and joined the parish for Sunday Divine Liturgy during the bishop’s visitation.

Organized by the Thriving Parishes Project, the Summit marked an important step in supporting and strengthening young adult

ministry in the Diocese. Plans are underway for future gatherings to continue nurturing faith, fellowship, and leadership among Orthodox young adults. ✕



The Annunciation

Fr. Lawrence Farley

St. Ignatius of Antioch, martyred in Rome in about the year 107, wrote that along with the death of the Lord, the virginity of Mary and her giving birth were mysteries that were hidden from the ruler of this age, and were accomplished in the silence of God (*To the Ephesians*, 19.1). That is, their full significance were not immediately perceived by the world. This was certainly true, for when news of Mary's pregnancy became known in her small town home in Nazareth, no one there suspected that the Child she was carrying was about to change the world forever. Most young mothers can expect to be showered with congratulations and good wishes when they share the news of their pregnancy. But not Mary. At that time she was only betrothed to her fiancé Joseph, and the wedding itself was still some months away. It was clear enough that Joseph was not the father of her baby, and the wagging tongues of Nazareth would assume the obvious and the worst.

It is easy for us to forget this. Elizabeth her cousin greeted her with joy and pronounced her blessed among women, but Elizabeth was something special. She was the mother of the one chosen to be the Forerunner, and when Mary entered her home to visit with her during her advanced pregnancy, Elizabeth's baby leaped up inside her, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41). The old biddies in Nazareth, it is safe to say, were *not* so filled with the Holy Spirit, and they did *not* pronounce Mary to be blessed among women. As far as they were concerned, the young adolescent (the normal age for betrothal then being about thirteen) was an immoral woman.

That meant that when Gabriel came to Mary in Nazareth and brought the good news that she had been chosen to be the mother of the Messiah, the news was not all good. In the long term, all generations

of those who served the Messiah would call her blessed (Luke 1:48), but in the short-term, all her neighbours would call her something else, and small town Nazareth very quickly became a very unfriendly place. How else could one explain why Mary was willing to accompany Joseph for a long journey to Bethlehem in Judea when she was nine months pregnant? Better to brave the hardships of a journey like that than to stay at home among the slanderous tongues of Nazareth.

We traditionally think of Mary as a meek woman, adorned with the long robes of humility. And indeed she was. But her meekness might lead us to miss the fact of her indomitable courage as well, thinking meekness and courage were somehow mutually exclusive. (The example of Moses proves that they weren't; see Numbers 12:3.)

Despite her tender years, Mary was smart enough to realize the full consequences of Gabriel's announcement, and the damage to be done immediately to her reputation when she was found to be pregnant before she was married. Yet she assented anyway, bowing her head and saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word". This took tremendous courage. If her Son would later set His face to go to Jerusalem knowing what awaited Him there (Luke 9:51), Mary similarly must have set her face to go into the markets of Nazareth each day, knowing what awaited her there. Mary was just a young girl when she decided to face down the cold stares of Nazareth. Her utterance, "Let it be to me according to your word" was not simply a word of submission. It was also a word of towering strength and courage. Let us follow her, and let the Mother of God teach us to be brave. These days, we have need of such bravery.

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in America web sit, <https://www.oca.org/reflections/fr-lawrence-farley/the-annunciation>*

ON REPENTANCE

Repentance is expressed by the Greek word, metanoia. In the literal sense, this means a change of mind. In other words, repentance is a change of one's disposition, one's way of thinking; a change of one's inner self. Repentance is a reconsideration of one's views, an alteration of one's life. How can this come about? In the same way that a dark room into which a man enters is illumined by the rays of the sun. Looking around the room in the dark, he can make out certain things, but there is a great deal he does not see and does not even suspect is there. Many things are perceived quite differently from what they actually are. He has to move carefully, not knowing what obstacles he might encounter. When, however, the room becomes bright, he can see things clearly and move about freely. The same thing happens in spiritual life. When we are immersed in sins, and our mind is occupied solely with worldly cares, we do not notice the state of our soul. We are indifferent to who we are inwardly, and we persist along a false path without being aware of it. But then a ray of God's Light penetrates our soul. And what filth we see in ourselves! How much untruth, how much falsehood! How hideous many of our actions prove to be, which we fancied to be so wonderful. And it becomes clear to us which is the true path. If we then recognize our spiritual nothingness, our sinfulness, and earnestly desire our amendment - we are near to salvation. From the depths of our soul we shall cry out to God: "Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy according to Thy Great mercy!" "Forgive me and save me!" "Grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother!" As Great Lent begins, let us hasten to forgive each other all hurts and offenses. May we always hear the words of the Gospel for Forgiveness Sunday: If ye forgive men their debts, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their debts, neither will your Father forgive your debts (Matt. 6:14-15).

—St John Maximovitch

From the Treasurer

As we enter the first quarter of the year and prepare for Pascha, parishioners often ask:

“Can I contribute to the church electronically?”

The answer is **Yes**. Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church offers several convenient electronic giving options:

1. Zelle (Increasingly Popular Option)

You may contribute using Zelle.

- Use the ID: **Hhomyak@cox.net**.
- Be sure to include your designation (e.g., general fund, candles, Pascha, memorial, etc.) in the **memo field**.
- The treasurer receives notification via a separate email account.

Contributions are recorded according to your memo designation.

Zelle allows you to clearly specify what your gift is for.

2. Church Website Giving

You may also donate through the church website: **www.sspeterpaulaz.org**

Click the **Donations/Donate** button located at the bottom left of the home page.

- You will be redirected to a secure third-party site.
- You may choose your funding source.
- You may set up recurring donations if desired.
- Credit cards are accepted.
- There is a **3% surcharge** for this service.

- There is **no memo field** for designations. Because no designation field is available, contributions made this way are presumed to be for **general church operations**.

The treasurer is able to see who has made each contribution.

3. Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from an IRA

For those who qualify and have an IRA, contributions may be made through a **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)**.

A QCD allows eligible individuals to:

- Donate directly from an IRA to a qualified charity (such as the church).
- Exclude the donated amount from taxable income.

Satisfy all or part of their Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

If you are interested in making a QCD gift, please contact:

David Homyak (Treasurer)

dhomyak@cox.net

Dave will provide the necessary information to share with your IRA financial institution.

If you have any questions about electronic giving, please feel free to reach out. Thank you for your continued support and generosity as we prepare for the holy season of Pascha.

🏠 PROJECT MEXICO MISSION TRIP – JUNE 11–17

Serve, build, and grow in faith with **Project Mexico**! Orthodox churches from across Phoenix will drive to **Rosarito MX** to build a home for a family in need. We'll stay at the beautiful Orthodox ranch with daily prayer, fellowship, and spiritual guidance.

DETAILS:

- **Dates:** June 11–17
- **Cost:** \$100 registration + \$800 materials + 150 van rental
Total ~\$1050 (fundraising encouraged)
- **Who:** Open ages 8+ (no construction experience needed)
- **Includes:** Lodging, meals, tools, and project materials
- **Travel:** Group transportation from Phoenix (details provided after sign-up)
- **Requirement:** Valid passport

Make a lasting impact — each home changes a family's life forever.

Register: <https://linktr.ee/arizonapm>

Deadline to register: March 7, 2026

Contact: Zannos (239) 849-6689 for questions.

SS Peter and Paul Pascha Card

Name(s) : _____

Name(s) to appear on card:

Mailing Address:

Amount of Donation: \$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 Other _____

Deadline: March 29, 2026

Return completed form to Stephanie Homyak or the Church Office.

Proceeds to benefit St. John the Baptist Monastery Building Fund.



News Titles in the Bookstore

Good News! The Liturgy books have finally arrived! If you pre-ordered a copy, please see Katrina to pick it up. They are \$25 each.

New titles this month:

The Youth of the Apocalypse - This classic book, which originally emerged from disenfranchised Gen X, is back in print with a special 30th Anniversary edition—\$17. This manifesto for the despairing children of the eleventh hour deals with the issues that are tearing apart the fabric of innocence: depression, anxiety, suicide, addiction, violence, and the broken home. The author takes the reader through a tour of the wasteland of modern life, offering a painfully honest appraisal of modern society, and ends with a path to healing and purpose. Released in 2024 on



the 30th anniversary of the first edition, this new, updated second edition includes commentary on modern cyber, tech and media issues facing the youth of today.

Beginning to Pray - This is one of those "gold standard" books on the prayer life written by +Metropolitan Anthony Bloom - \$13 - *Beginning to Pray* has established itself as a modern spiritual classic. Hailed by both Catholics and Protestants, it was written by an Orthodox archbishop for people who had never prayed before, and has been read and loved by persons at all levels of spiritual development. "The realm of God is dangerous," says the author. "You must enter into it and not just seek information about it... The day when God is absent, when he is silent—that is the beginning of prayer."



CONGRATULATIONS

Our parish was richly blessed on Saturday, February 21st, as we welcomed into the Church, through Holy Baptism and Holy Chrismation, the newly illumined servant of God, Paisios (Isaiah).

We rejoice with him, his sponsor Christopher, family, and friends, giving thanks to the Lord who has called him to live a life of faithful discipleship as a member of Christ's Holy Orthodox Church. May God grant him Many Years!



Around SS Peter & Paul

MARCH BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

March 7	Lauren Hecht
9	Brian Flynn
10	Stephanie Homyak
12	Sophie Behnen
17	Mike Wagner
19	Christi and David Sourk
20	Jonah Anderson
21	Lilly Anderson
22	Dylan Arango
	Erich Barlow
29	Tania Booriakin
	Judy Bushko
30	Alexander (Sasha) Keck

**Many Years
Mnogaya Leta!**

CONGRATULATIONS!

With joy in Christ, we announce the engagement of Marly Standley and Griffin Swan. They are planning to be united in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony on October 11, 2026.

May the Lord bless their betrothal and guide them as they prepare for this holy and joyful union. May He grant them many blessed and fruitful years together!



PRAYER LIST

May Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Physician of our souls and bodies, reach out his healing hand and bless these, His servants.

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners who are ill or unable to attend services:

*William Osolinsky
Anatoly Bezkorovainy
Jamie Arango
Marie Lobb
Ann Carroll
Antonia Adams-Clement
Walter Booriakin
The suffering people
of Ukraine*

If you know of anyone else in need of our prayers, please contact Fr. Mikel Bock.

Bits and Pieces

PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY SUPPERS After presanctified liturgies on Wednesday evenings a light Lenten supper is offered. The Myrrh Bearers are looking for volunteers to bring a Lenten soup, salad, or bread each Wednesday. Please see Marty Gala if you are able to bring anything.

LENTEN SUNDAY VESPERS Throughout the season of the Great Fast, the Orthodox communities in the Valley of the Sun gather on Sunday evenings for prayer and fellowship. The Sunday evening Vespers are held at 6:00pm and are followed by a reception offered by the host parish. Please mark your calendars and plan on joining with our Orthodox brothers and sisters in our common journey through Lent to Pascha.

PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERS SS Peter and Paul will host the Pan-Orthodox Vespers on Sunday, March 22. Help is needed for the potluck that be held after the service. See Mat. Elizabeth (Heather) if you are able to bring an item and/or can help with setup or cleanup for the event.

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION On Wednesday, March 25th, we celebrate the Great Feast of the Annunciation. On this feast, we recall the announcement made by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary in Nazareth that she had been chosen by God to be the Mother of the promised Savior (Luke 1:26-38). Vespers will be held on Tuesday, March 24th at 5:30pm, and Vespers Divine Liturgy of the Feast will be celebrated Wednesday, March 25th at 9:00 am (Hours 8:40am).

Welcome all visitors to SS Peter & Paul. We hope your visit was enriching and enlightening. Please join us in the Cultural Center, behind the church, for our Fellowship Hour. It's a chance to meet some of our members, other visitors, and enjoy some coffee and fellowship. It's also a great time to take a look at our bookstore. Katrina can help you find whatever you need!

PASCHA SALE The Myrrhbearers Altar Society will be selling Pascha breads, a traditional sweet bread, on Sunday, March 29. Each loaf has a cross on top and can be used in your Pascha basket. Enjoy the bread with your favorite Paschal foods. There are three sizes of bread will be sold: small for \$8, medium for \$10, and large for \$12.

PASCHA FLOWERS Part of our parish celebration of Pascha is adorning the church temple with special flowers and decorations. Please give as you are able so that we can add the beauty of God's creation to the beauty of our temple to glorify our Lord.

PARISH PASCHA CARD Each year SS Peter and Paul sends Pascha cards to friends and members (some of whom are not able to come to church very often or at all). It is a simple way to tell people, "We remember you and love you" while sharing the joy of the feast. The deadline to have your name included is March 29th. Proceeds will benefit St. John the Baptist Monastery Building Fund.

MEMORIAL SATURDAYS As we approach and enter the season of the Great Lenten Fast, beginning our journey to Holy Pascha, we pause to remember and pray for our loved ones who have gone before us in hope of the Resurrection. See Father Mikel to provide a list of names you would like commemorated or to update your current list. See calendar for dates.

LOOKING AHEAD: VESPERS OF PASCHA It is an annual tradition in our parish to continue the celebration of the Pascha Midnight Liturgy with Paschal Vespers, this year on Sunday, April 12, at 1:00 p.m. The Vespers service is followed by an "Easter Egg Hunt" for the children as well as a festal pot-luck.

LENTEN SOUP SALE The Myrrh Bearers will hold a Lenten Soup sale on March 8 during coffee hour. A variety of Lenten soups to help you keep the fast will be available for purchase. Each quart is \$8 or two for \$15.

FOURTH ANNUAL PROJECT MEXICO PANTRY PARTNERS DRIVE

During this Great Lent, our parish will once again participate in the Annual Pantry Partners Drive to support Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage.

In 2024, you generously donated 103 boxes totaling 2,649 pounds of food and essential items—thank you! We prayerfully ask for your support again this year.

The drive runs March 1–29. Needed items are listed on flyers in the Cultural Center hall and on the Project Mexico website, <https://www.projectmexico.org/pantry-partners>.

Bill Weiss and Marty Gala are co-chairing the drive. If you prefer to donate money, Marty will gladly shop for you. Contact: Bill (wcv.weiss@gmail.com) or Marty (martha.gala@yahoo.com | 602-803-0280).

Thank you for making this Lenten effort a true offering of love for our neighbors.

PLANNING FOR PALM SUNDAY AND PASCHA

After liturgy on Lazarus Saturday (April 4), volunteers will be needed tie together palms and pussywillows in the church hall. The palms and pussywillows will be blessed during Vespers and distributed on Palm Sunday. On April 12, there will be a potluck luncheon after Vespers in celebration of Pascha. Everyone is encouraged to contribute their favorite Paschal foods for the luncheon.

THANK YOU! Heartfelt thanks to our Russian community for preparing the beautiful meal for our Cheesefare Luncheon. The cheese-filled crepes were, as always, amazing—but the spinach crepes gave them some very strong competition!

The entire meal was truly a labor of love, and we are grateful for the time, care, and generosity that made the celebration so special.



March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Procession with Icons NO CHURCH SCHOOL FOCA MEETING 6:00pm Lenten Vespers St. Katherine's Greek Orthodox Church	2 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> LENTEN SOUP SALE March 8, 2026 \$8 a quart or \$15 for two quarts </div> 	3 6:00pm The Bible & the Orthodox Faith	4 5:30pm 9th Hour 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy Lenten Meal	5	6 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Presanctified Liturgy	7 Soul Saturday 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Litya for Departed</i> 5:00pm Vespers
8 ST GREGORY PALAMAS 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL MBAS MEETING 6:00pm Lenten Vespers St. Ignatius Antiochian Orthodox Church	9 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Presanctified Liturgy	10 6:00pm Council Mtg	11 St. Sophronius 5:30pm 9th Hour 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy Lenten Meal	12	13 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Presanctified Liturgy	14 5:00pm Vespers
15 VENERATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL 6:00pm Lenten Vespers St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church	16 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Join us for a light lenten meal following Wednesday evening Presanctified Liturgy. Please contact Marty Gala or Heather Pfeiffer to sign-up to bring soup, fruit, or bread. </div>	17 6:00pm The Bible & the Orthodox Faith	18 5:30pm 9th Hour 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy Lenten Meal	19	20 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Presanctified Liturgy	21 Soul Saturday 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Litya for Departed</i> 8:30am PASCHA BAKE 5:00pm Vespers
22 ST JOHN CLIMACUS 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL 6:00pm Lenten Vespers SS Peter & Paul	23 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Easter Egg Hunt April 12, 2026 Following Paschal Vespers </div> 	24 Forefeast ANNUNCIATION	25 ANNUNCIATION 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Vespersal Divine Liturgy 6:00pm The Bible & the Orthodox Faith	26 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> March 29, 2026 Pascha Sale </div> 	27 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Presanctified Liturgy	28 10:00am BAPTISMS 1:00pm Women's Book Club 5:00pm Vespers
29 ST. MARY OF EGYPT 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL 6:00pm Lenten Vespers St. John the Baptist Romanian Orthodox Church	30	31 St. Innocent 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm The Bible & the Orthodox Faith	1 Ven Mary of Egypt 5:30pm 9th Hour 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy Lenten Meal	2	3 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Presanctified Liturgy	4 Lazarus Saturday 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy 5:00pm Vespers <i>Blessing of Palms</i>
5 ENTRANCE OF the LORD INTO JERUSALEM 8:40am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy CHURCH SCHOOL 12:00pm Abr.  Bridgegroom Matins	6 Holy Monday 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Presanctified Liturgy 5:30pm Bridegroom Matins	7 Holy Tuesday 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Presanctified Liturgy 5:30pm Bridegroom Matins	8 Holy Wednesday 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Presanctified Liturgy 5:30pm Matins	9 Holy Thursday 8:30am 9th Hour & Typica 9:00am Vespersal Divine Liturgy 5:30pm Matins with 12 Passion Gospels	10 Holy Friday 8:00am Royal Hours 4:00pm Vespers 5:30pm Matins with Lamentations	11 Holy Saturday 8:30am 9th Hour 9:00am Vespersal Divine Liturgy Blessing of Bread, Wine & Dried Fruit 11:30pm Nocturnes

2026 Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers

Please join our Brothers & Sisters at the host parishes for these
Sunday Evening Lenten Vespers Services

All Vespers Services Begin at 6:00 PM



The First Sunday of Lent—Sunday of Orthodoxy March 1, 2026

Host Parish: St. Katherine's Greek Orthodox Church
2716 N Dobson Rd., Chandler, AZ 85224 (480) 899-3330

The Second Sunday of Lent—Gregory Palamas March 8, 2026

Host Parish: St. Ignatius Antiochian Orthodox Church
2402 N Usery Pass Rd, Mesa, AZ 85207 (480) 892-6224



The Third Sunday of Lent— Veneration of the Holy Cross March 15, 2026

Host Parish: St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church
4436 E. McKinley, Phoenix, AZ 85008 (602) 275-7360

The Fourth Sunday of Lent – St. John of the Ladder March 22, 2026

Host Parish: SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church
1614 E Monte Vista Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85006 (602) 253-9515



The Fifth Sunday of Lent—St. Mary of Egypt March 29, 2026

Host Parish: St. John the Baptist Romanian Orthodox Church
3749 W Behrend Dr., Glendale, AZ 85308 (623) 582-3150