

# ST. MARK'S ORTHODOX CHURCH

[www.stmarksoca.org](http://www.stmarksoca.org)

Twitter: @stmarksoca

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Orthodox Church in America ([www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org))

Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern PA ([www.doeпа.org](http://www.doeпа.org))

452 Durham Road

Wrightstown, PA 18940

215 860-9640

MARCH 15, 2020

## Clergy

V. Rev. Raymond M. Browne,

*Rector*

Cell: 570-906-1388

Email: [frraymondmartin@hotmail.com](mailto:frraymondmartin@hotmail.com)

Protodeacon Gregory Moser, *Attached*

V. Rev. Michael Sekela, *Retired. Attached*

## Readers:

- ❖ G. Peter Bohlender
- ❖ Dustin Joseph Crosby

## Service Schedule

Great Vespers/Vigil

*Saturdays 6pm*

*Eve of Feast 7pm (6pm on Sundays).*

Hours

*Sundays and Feast Days 9:10am.*

*Sundays and Feast Days 9:30 am*

## Choir Directors:

- ❖ Daria Cortese
- ❖ Mat. Martha Moser
- ❖ Sergei Arhipov

## Church School

### Director

- ❖ Jennifer Sremanak



## Divine Liturgy

### Confessions:

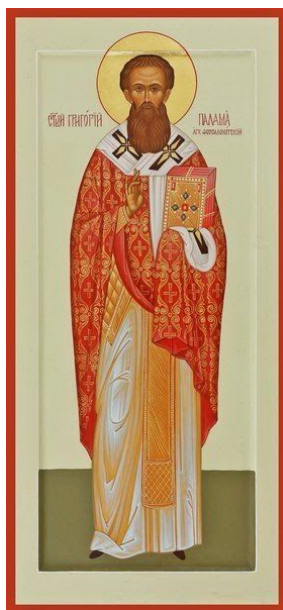
*Saturdays after Vespers and by appointment.*

### Akathist Service

*Wednesdays at 9:15am.*

### Memorial Services (Panikhida/Litya): as

requested



## SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 6. St. Gregory Palamas.

Martyrs Agapius, Publius (Pausis), Timolaus, Romulus, two named Dionysius, and two named Alexander, at Cæsarea in Palestine (303).

Hieromartyr Alexander of Side, in Pamphylia (270-275). Martyr Nicander of Egypt (ca. 302).

ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ: **Hebrews 1:10-2:3; 7:26-8:2**

ΓΕΓΟΝΟΣ: **MARK 2:1-12; JOHN 10:9-16**

**Baptisms:** Children must have Orthodox Godparents who provide a letter from their parish priest. Parents and Godparents are required to attend two preparatory classes. Scheduling arrangements should be made with the Rector by contacting him directly.

**Weddings:** Arrangements should be made **at least** six months prior to the wedding and scheduling is subject to the liturgical calendar of the church.

**Please do not** make arrangements for receptions without speaking with the Rector first.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES AND EVENTS:

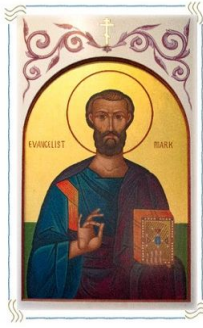
**Sun. March 15:** Hours and Divine Liturgy - 9:10am. Coffee Hour.

**Tues. March 17:** Building Committee Meeting - 6:30pm.

**Wed. March 18:** Liturgy of Presanctified - 9am.

**Friday, March 20:** Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts - 7pm.

**Sat. March 21:** Memorial Saturday Service - 9:30am; Vespers and Confessions -6pm.



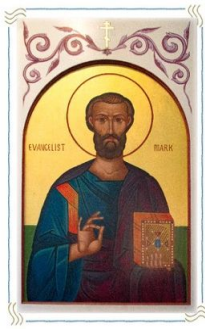
**Corona Virus:** In light of the current social crisis provoked by the Corona Virus, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America has issued a pastoral letter which can be read on our social media sites as well as those of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania and the Orthodox Church in America. The key provisions are as follows:

“Careful, precautionary, and *temporary* steps taken now can prevent extreme spread of this virus.

Churches and institutions should adopt common-sense measures as advised by the CDC [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>]. In addition to these measures, **we direct the following steps to be taken in the Church until such a time that this virus no longer poses a serious danger:**

1. Members of the Church should become familiar with the symptoms of the Corona Virus (fever, cough, shortness of breath, and other symptoms as may be publicized by medical authorities), and, if these symptoms present themselves, both seek medical help immediately and self-quarantine for fourteen days. If clergy present such symptoms, they too should seek medical assistance and self-quarantine for fourteen days, and inform their dean, chancellor, or bishop that they are unable to serve the sacred services. Even though they might be absent from services, affected clergy and faithful should maintain their prayer rule, engage in spiritual reading, watch services transmitted over the internet, and utilize the wealth of liturgical resources available on the website of the Orthodox Church in America
2. Everyone should wash their hands thoroughly and frequently, cover coughs and sneezes, and avoid sharing personal items. In particular, all persons who serve in the altar, before they cut bread, pour wine, pick up candles, etc., as well as those who are involved in serving at social events, should make every effort before they fulfill their roles to wash their hands thoroughly.
3. Church leaders should see to the careful cleaning of frequently touched objects such as icons, chalices, Communion spoons, and the blessing cross. Communion cloths should be respectfully washed more regularly, or discarded and replaced. Disposable cups should be used for water and wine that is often offered after Holy Communion (so-called zapifka), or the practice of using antidoron alone may be implemented.
4. Furthermore, as with our temples and sacred objects, Church leaders must take every effort to keep scrupulously clean every part of our facilities, social halls, kitchens, bathrooms, etc. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes should be readily available, as well as soap and disposable towels in the bathrooms, and disinfectant wipes.
5. For this period, as a temporary measure, the faithful should respectfully refrain from physical contact when receiving blessings from and greeting a bishop or priest. Likewise, the faithful should temporarily refrain from greeting one another with the traditional three-fold Kiss of Peace.
6. During this time, Churches should exercise what the authorities call social distancing. As such, communities should minimize, for the interim, occasions for social gatherings. Those parishes that have coffee hour should be sure that food is distributed by individuals wearing gloves, and that disposable paper plates and cups and plastic utensils are used. Choral leadership should also consider the arrangement of choir members and place them at a safe distance from one another.
7. As with other local Orthodox Churches, in response to the challenges posed by this virus, and ever mindful that we must do our part to contain its spread, we nevertheless do not permit changes to the practice of giving Holy Communion.”

Our parish will comply, having begun many of these measures during the past week following Archbishop Mark's letter on the topic.



**As of now:** all regularly scheduled Lenten Services, except for Mission Services, will occur as announced. Visitations will take place to those who are in need of the Holy Mysteries as requested. Visitations to hospitals, nursing homes, etc. will take place when there is need and access is possible. Many nursing homes have restricted access, as has the County Jail and other institutions.

While social distancing is encouraged and should be practiced, we should beware of the possibility of isolation. All parishioners are encouraged to keep in touch with our older and more at risk members, particularly those whose families are not local, by telephone or social media. We should check in with them and see if they need any

groceries, etc.

Above all we should be **prayerful**, for those already suffering and those caring for them in the various helping professions, and for the merciful dissipation of this pandemic; **prudent**, following the recommended hygienic practices and other recommendations for our protection and the protection of others; but we should **not panic** - it makes everything, including ourselves, worse in a situation like this. At the Sixth Hour we pray in Psalm 54 "O cast your burdens on the Lord, and He will sustain you." And in that same service, in Psalm 90 "Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flieth by day; Nor the pestilence that walketh in darkness, or the demon that destroys at noonday."

It is a different Lent than we are used to, but it offers us new opportunities to pray, fast and do works of mercy. May we all take to heart and put into practice the recommended precautions, trusting in the Lord that He will sustain us all through this experience.

Those unable to come to services can participate in the livestream of services from Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City by clicking on this link:

<http://www.orthodoxmonasteryellwoodcity.org/chapel>

**Parish Development:** As part of our development work we have hired Raphael Architects of Doylestown to assist us in planning future physical development of our plant. They attended the Forgiveness Vespers last Sunday to see our space issues and will visit at other times for the same purpose. But, the most important step in the process is the parish participation in a **workshop which we will hold on Sunday, April 5 at the Coffee Hour**. It is vital that everyone participate. **Your input is essential**. The architects need to hear from you about what does and does not "work" for you with our present facilities and what you would like to see. **Save the date: Sunday, April 5 following Divine Liturgy**. Consider it a tithe of your time and talent to God to be there!

**Parish Meeting Minutes:** Copies of the unapproved minutes from our Annual Meeting are available on the bulletin board in the Hall and there are copies available in the vestibule.

**Scrip: Order forms are in the Hall, hanging above the mugs.** Orders will be taken on the 15th. See Jeanette Ruano or Martha Moser. ALSO, PLEASE FILL OUT THE LIST IN THE VESTIBULE OF RETAILERS YOU USE SO WE CAN BETTER CUSTOMIZE THE SCRIP OFFERINGS TO OUR PARISH.



**Financial Update for Sunday 3/8:** General Collection: \$2753



**Wrightstown Food Cupboard:** Looking forward to the Easter Baskets, at the meeting of the FoodCupboard members we have been asked to provide the following: Jelly Beans, Coffee, Tea, Pasta, Pasta Sauces, Cereal, Tuna & Canned Meat.

VIGIL LIGHTS

FROM THE MOSER FAMILY

FOR THE HEALTH OF: GEORGE, PETER, STEPHANIE, FR. DEMETRI

IN MEMORY OF: RUSLAN, FR. JOHN, FR. VINCENT, DN. JOHN, VERONICA, REBECCA, CHARLES, STEPHEN, SOPHIA,

FROM SWAN FAMILY

FOR THE HEALTH OF: MICHAEL, CONSTANCE

IN MEMORY OF: THOMAS, VENUS, HELEN.



**Please remember in your prayers**

**Living:** Captives Hierarchs Paul and John III afflicted Archpriests Daniel and Alexander, Priest Stephen, *Matushki* Elena, Laryssa, Lisa, Priscilla, Myra, Suzanne, Anne, Jennifer, Emilia *Servants of God* Peter, Stephanie, Anthony, Samuel, Sergei, Tatyana, Vera, Anna, Scott, Dennis, David, Garry, Vincent, Anthony, Helen, Stephen, Raymond, Darrell, Andrew, Daniel, Amanda, Michael, Laura, Stephen, Jason, Katina, Donna, Nina, Rebekah, Anthony, Alexander, Grover, Valerie, Raymonde, Anita, Jim, Peter, Jonathan, Gregory, Charles, Kyra. Margaret, Arlene, Vaughn, Vitaly, Helen Good **estate** of Krastyo, Tom, Michael, Martin, Matthew, Nicoletta, Carmen and Nathan, Ferne.



**Departed:** *Newly departed* Bishop Varlaam, Archpriest Jozef, John *Departed* Archpriests Stephen and Vladimir & Mat. Mary, Priest George

Birthday

David Gibson - 14th, Anna Crosby - 15th

Names Day

Patrick Colucci -17th; Andrew Skordinski - 17th; Daria Cortese -19th

**Schedule of Lenten Services**



Second to Fourth Weeks

Wed/Fri Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 9:15am/7pm

Memorial Saturdays - March, 21, 28

Panikhida Services at 9:15am

Fifth Week

Matins with Great Canon - Wed. April 1 - 7pm.

Matins with Akathist - Friday - 7pm

Presanctified Liturgies on Wed and Fri. at 9:15am

Sixth Week

Wed/Friday Presanctified Liturgies

Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy

Vigil for Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem

*Confessions available before and after services in addition to Saturdays. Check with Fr. Martin beforehand.*



## The HOLY SYNOD of the ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

### **Statement of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America on the Corona Virus March 13, 2020**

Since January of this year, the world has witnessed the rapid spread of a virus named SARS-CoV-2, and the disease it causes that has been named Coronavirus Disease 2019, or Corona Virus, often abbreviated as COVID-19. We make the following statement in response to the increase in the number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19, and the anxiety that the spread of this virus has understandably caused amongst our faithful in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. In this statement, we also offer pastoral guidance for the parishes and institutions of the Orthodox Church in America in taking certain necessary, but temporary precautions, so as to mitigate the possibly extreme effects of this virus.

The Church is the mystical body of Christ. Nothing can affect or change this sacred mystery. Furthermore, nothing that is done in all reverence, piety, and fear of God in response to this virus should be construed as anything other than a prudent pastoral and temporary response to a situation that has the possibility of severe consequences. As the body of Christ, we should meet the challenges posed by this virus with the assurance of faith, in oneness of mind, and in imitation of the Great Physician and Healer of souls and bodies, our Lord Jesus Christ. All members of the Church should seek to console the anxious, assist those afflicted, and encourage those working in medical professions. All faithful should pay special attention to those who might be at risk of more serious complications from this virus: the young, the elderly, and those who already have respiratory or cardiac illnesses. Indeed, no one should be stigmatized or ostracized because they have contracted the virus.

If, however, any member of the Church – clergy or laity – presents symptoms of COVID-19, they should refrain from attending services for the period of time directed by medical authorities, presently fourteen days. As always, we encourage our clergy to note carefully who might be absent from liturgical services and reach out to them, ascertaining if they are ill or in need of pastoral care due to this virus.

We assure all members of the Orthodox Church in America that we, the members of the Holy Synod, love and pray fervently to our Almighty God for all those whom he has entrusted to our pastoral care. May the God of every consolation, the God of mercy, love, and compassion restore to health those who are ill, strengthen the families of those afflicted, and guide those ministering

to them. We also direct all members of the Church to offer prayers for the afflicted, for their families, for those who are ministering to them, and for those who are anxious or troubled by this situation. We direct that the following prayer be used in divine services immediately after the exclamation of the Litany of Fervent Supplication (For thou art a merciful God...):

Let us pray to the Lord.

**Choir:** Lord, have mercy.

O God Almighty, Lord of heaven and earth, and of all creation visible and invisible, in thine ineffable goodness, look down upon us, thy people gathered in thy Holy Name. Be our helper and defender in this day of affliction. Thou knowest our weakness. Thou hearest our cry in repentance and contrition of heart. O Lord who lovest mankind, deliver us from the impending threat of the Corona Virus. Send thine angel to watch over us and protect us. Grant health and recovery to those suffering from this virus. Guide the hands of physicians and preserve those who are healthy. Enable us to continue to serve our suffering brothers and sisters in peace that together we may glorify thy most honorable and majestic name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

**Choir:** Amen.

We should be mindful of our stewardship commitments to our parishes, but also increase our charitable giving so that those who fall ill might not also fall into debt and hardship, because of lost wages.

We offer our prayers to the Almighty God for those who have died because of COVID-19, and we extend our condolences to their families, friends, and loved ones.

The outbreak of COVID-19 requires our dioceses, our parish communities, and their faithful to be vigilant in keeping our parishes safe. Careful, precautionary, and *temporary* steps taken now can prevent extreme spread of this virus.

Churches and institutions should adopt common-sense measures as advised by the CDC [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>]. In addition to these measures, we direct the following steps to be taken in the Church until such a time that this virus no longer poses a serious danger:

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bread, pour wine, pick up candles, etc., as well as those who are involved in serving at social events, should make every effort before they fulfill their roles to wash their hands thoroughly.

3. Church leaders should see to the careful cleaning of frequently touched objects such as icons, chalices, Communion spoons, and the blessing cross. Communion cloths should be respectfully washed more regularly, or discarded and replaced. Disposable cups should be used for water and wine that is often offered after Holy Communion (so-called zapifka), or the practice of using antidoron alone may be implemented.

4. Furthermore, as with our temples and sacred objects, Church leaders must take every effort to keep scrupulously clean every part of our facilities, social halls, kitchens, bathrooms, etc. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes should be readily available, as well as soap and disposable towels in the bathrooms, and disinfectant wipes.

5. For this period, as a temporary measure, the faithful should respectfully refrain from physical contact when receiving blessings from and greeting a bishop or priest. Likewise, the faithful should temporarily refrain from greeting one another with the traditional three-fold Kiss of Peace.

6. During this time, Churches should exercise what the authorities call social distancing. As such, communities should minimize, for the interim, occasions for social gatherings. Those parishes that have coffee hour should be sure that food is distributed by individuals wearing gloves, and that disposable paper plates and cups and plastic utensils are used. Choral leadership should also consider the arrangement of choir members and place them at a safe distance from one another.

7. As with other local Orthodox Churches, in response to the challenges posed by this virus, and ever mindful that we must do our part to contain its spread, we nevertheless do not permit changes to the practice of giving Holy Communion.

In cities and communities where the effect of this virus is severe, the diocesan bishop must be consulted for the blessing to adopt further *limited* measures to prevent the spread of disease in the context of liturgical gatherings, which could include a temporary alteration of normal liturgical life. In the New York metropolitan area, we have already witnessed at least one Orthodox Church, as well as other religious congregations, closed down because of emergency orders by the civil authorities. If parishes of the Orthodox Church in America are directed to do the same, they should a) alert their diocesan bishop immediately, and b) seek to comply with the directions of civil authorities.

We seek in these measures to follow the principles enumerated by His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas of Mesogeia of the Church of Greece who said, “All measures that undermine faith and hope in God, anything that doubts the efficacy of Holy Communion and the mysteries is to be rejected. Anything that honors the community of the faithful and our fellow man is an expression of love for them and for God.” In the midst of our Lenten journey to Pascha, beloved children in the Lord, we are given an opportunity, paradoxically, to honor and serve our neighbor as we struggle with this virus. May our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, enable us to bear the struggle that is set before us, granting us the wisdom and discernment to know what is well-pleasing to him, and the strength to accomplish it.