

THE LIGHT

"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." – John 8

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**Holy Apostles
Greek Orthodox Church**

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Goals & Great Lent - by Fr. Cosmas

There's no escaping the fact that Great Lent is upon us! It seems like yesterday that we were wishing people a "Happy New Year", and now we're starting to think about Easter! Regardless of the sonic speed with which it seems to approach, Lent is among my favorite times of year. Not only because Spring is on its way, but because Great Lent is a time of real spiritual opportunity. The greatest focus of this Lenten opportunity is usually centered on fasting. But how do we really get the most out of fasting, and not spend too much effort drowning in ingredient lists and dietary restrictions? Perhaps by being honest with ourselves about our fasting, and – forgive the pun – not biting off more than we can chew! If we can set micro-goals for ourselves that we can actually achieve, and build upon, then Great Lent can become less cumbersome and truly transformative.

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Message from the Parish Council President

As we prepare for the Lenten Season, I think back and can't believe we have been worshipping under the COVID restrictions for a year now. I must admit, it has weighed heavy on my heart and caused many sleepless nights to not see everyone celebrating services together. Through the initial guidance of Fr George and now Fr Cosmas as our spiritual leader, we continued to provide a full schedule of services. I can assure you, your Parish Council, with direction from Fr Cosmas, are exploring creative ways to allow for us to return to some semblance of normality in the near future.

With that said, our reservation system is still in place to assist us in maintaining social distancing and meet State & local requirements. We will continue to offer all services via livestreaming on our YouTube channel for those who wish to continue to exercise caution during this time. I encourage you to reserve your seats early, as we have been seeing many full services and walk-ins cannot be allowed due to occupancy restrictions. And with that, if you must cancel a reservation, please reach out to a Parish Council member as soon as possible. We are filling seats from the waitlist as they become available. I will optimistically say, that by the time this newsletter is published, we will have closed on the sale of the 1+ acre of land to Rooney Properties. With this sale, we will be looking forward to the next steps for our permanent place of worship. Fr Cosmas and the Future Planning Committee are working together to compile the vision of our parishioners for these important next steps.

I also wanted to advise the Parish, Holy Apostles did submit for the second round Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and was again approved. These were not large amounts, but every little bit helps.

On a sad note, I'm sure you noticed that the Taste of Greece did not return in 2021 at the Ashburn Firehouse. The TOG committee looked at multiple scenarios to run a profitable event, but in the end, the costs would have been too high. But don't you fear, we are still looking at options to have a Gyro Drive-Thru event as the weather begins to cooperate. If you are interested in helping, please feel free to contact me.

I pray for your continued health and well-being.

Con Sofologis - PC President
con.sofologis@verizon.net



GOYA

We congratulate the GOYAnS who participated in the 2021 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival at our parish on March 7th.

Each spoke about their faith with amazing poise and confidence. The next event is the Virginia District Oratorical Festival, to be held virtually on April 10th. We wish our top 2 finishers in the Junior and Senior divisions success in representing our parish at the next level!

Our GOYAnS also participated in a "Preparing for Lent" discussion with Father Cosmas via Zoom. We thank Father for his wisdom and guidance, and the many GOYAnS who attended and asked great questions!

Upcoming in April is a food collection for Loudoun Hunger Relief coordinated by GOYA President Athena Lansdell, and a hike at Bull Run Park coordinated by GOYA Special Events Coordinator Georgia Drapas. In May and June we hope to do an event in person on our property and also celebrate our graduates, Athena Lansdell and Vangeli Hadjimichael.

If you have a teenager or upcoming teenager, please reach out to me for more information about GOYA and to join our fantastic group!

Lia Economou
GOYA Advisor
liaecon@comcast.net

Congratulations to our Oratorical Festival Participants from our Sunday School!

Best of luck to the top 2 in the Junior and Senior Division at Districts!

Junior Division:

**John Economou (1st place),
Katie Drapas (2nd place), Marianna
Drapas (3rd place)**

Senior Division:

**Athena Lansdell (1st place), Stephen
Economou (2nd place), Georgia Drapas
(3rd place)**

**Elementary Division (not judged)
Madison Joiner**

Easter Flowers

Decorating our Church during this special Easter season is an important tradition carried through the year by all Greek Orthodox Christians. Please consider making a donation to adorn our Church for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.

Donations can be made by check with "Easter Flowers" in the memo section, or on our [website](#), under the Fund "AltarFund/Flowers." Thank you!

Hope and Joy

The Hope & Joy ministry invited parish families to take part in a hike at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve in Leesburg, VA. A total of five families participated and it was a great time! We hiked a little over 2 miles, enjoyed bright & sunny weather and views of the creekbed, and splashed in some muddy puddles! We made sure to abide by public health measures by wearing masks/face coverings during the hike and practicing social distancing. I hope the participating families enjoyed themselves and the opportunity for fellowship!

Ashley Joiner
ashleydjoiner@gmail.com





HOLY APOSTLES GREEK
ORTHODOX CHURCH

Spring Bake Sale

www.hagoc.org/bakesale

- Baklava - 6 pieces - \$18
- Melomakarona - 13 cookies - \$18
- Kourabiedes - 13 cookies - \$18
- Sampler - \$25
- Tsoureki - 1lb - \$12 or 2lb loaf - \$23

**ORDER ONLINE
BY APRIL 21**

PICKUP MAY 1, 2021 - NOON-2PM
21580 ATLANTIC BLVD#160, DULLES VA 20166



Sunday School



THE JOURNEY BACK

Dear Sunday School Parents,

Good strength to us all during this "journey back!"

You might be asking, 'where did we all go that we have to journey back?' Great Lent is a 40-day journey we take to get back to Jesus Christ. And what a great time of year for us as Orthodox Christians! We have more than 40 days to journey back to Christ ourselves, and to teach our children to turn back to God.

We turn back to Him through: fasting, praying, forgiving others, attending Church services, going to Confession, and by loving others through works of charity.

As parents, it is our job to teach our children to believe and trust in the Lord. Learning about Orthodoxy is a great component of parenting as well...and our Church services are a wonderful place to learn!

So let's illumine our hearts by attending our sacred worship, and by continuing to teach our children to journey back to Jesus Christ Himself through the Holy Eucharist.

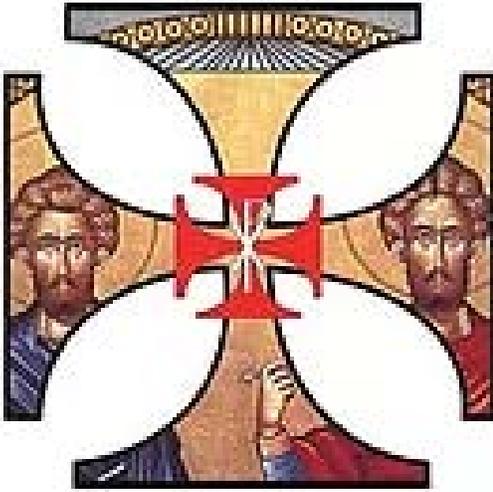
But the Divine Liturgy isn't the only kind of service that we can attend during this journey. We can go to a Presanctified Liturgy, a Salutations service, and any service during Holy Week. Let's encourage our families to attend together!

And let's be thankful, joyous, and hopeful this Lenten season!

Denise Lansdell
deniseinvirginia@gmail.com



Philoptochos



As we continue on our Lenten journey, we look forward to the great feast of Pascha. I would like to wish everyone a blessed Great Lent, Holy Week, and joyous Paschal season!

We just completed a drive to help feed the hungry by donating boxes of cereal to Loudoun Hunger Relief.

Thank you to everyone who brought in cereal!

We will be offering Tsourekia for your Easter table. An order form will be forthcoming.

We are receiving your Philoptochos membership renewals and encourage those that haven't, to take a moment to do so. Becoming a member of Philoptochos helps fund so many of our commitments. The greater your support, the greater the potential for us to accomplish and expand our ministries.

Alexis Cleveland

apcphiloptochos@gmail.com

Stewardship

Virtual Wine Tasting Event with Molon Lave Vineyards

The Stewardship Committee held a virtual Wine Tasting Event for our parish on Fri., Feb. 19 with a local Greek winery, Molon Lave Vineyards. Twenty two members of our parish participated in this fun evening of learning about wine and socializing.

Evy Papadopoulos, a member of the family that owns the winery, led the group through 3 pre-selected wines and provided insightful commentary while sharing her knowledge about the wine industry. After the tastings, participants shared their homemade charcuterie boards and socialized, all via Zoom.

A big thank you to Julie Burke of the Stewardship Committee for coordinating this event, and Christy Lisciandro for coordinating the wine order pickup from her home. For more information about Molon Lave Vineyards, go to their website:

molonlavevineyards.com.

Ron and Mina Baldinger HAGOC Stewardship Chairs
ron.baldinger@gmail.com





STEWARDSHIP

The Three Pennies Challenge



If you were walking down the street and saw 3 pennies on the ground, would you stop to pick them up?

Probably Not!...how much of a difference can 3 pennies make?

Take the 3 Pennies Challenge and find out!

We are asking our families to consider offering at least 3 Pennies out of every 1 dollar of their monthly income to support our Church. You keep 97 cents!...and you give just 3 Pennies to support your Church!

Click on the videos and information provided below to learn more, and take the 3 Pennies Challenge.



Honor the Lord with your wealth,
with the firstfruits of all your crops.
Proverbs 3:9



How Do We Give?

Giving our First Fruits to God...not giving left-overs from our disposable income!

Trying to give God 10% back as it says in the Bible (see below)

Begin by trying to give at least 3%

That's just 3 Pennies out of every \$1...and that's the 3 Pennies Challenge!

TABLE OF MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME & PERCENTAGE OF STEWARDSHIP

Monthly Income	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%
\$1,000	\$100	\$90	\$80	\$70	\$60	\$50	\$40	\$30	\$20	\$10
\$2,000	\$200	\$180	\$160	\$140	\$120	\$100	\$80	\$60	\$40	\$20
\$3,000	\$300	\$270	\$240	\$210	\$180	\$150	\$120	\$90	\$60	\$30
\$4,000	\$400	\$360	\$320	\$280	\$240	\$200	\$160	\$120	\$80	\$40
\$5,000	\$500	\$450	\$400	\$350	\$300	\$250	\$200	\$150	\$100	\$50
\$6,000	\$600	\$540	\$480	\$420	\$360	\$300	\$240	\$180	\$120	\$60
\$6,500	\$650	\$585	\$520	\$455	\$390	\$325	\$260	\$195	\$130	\$65
\$7,000	\$700	\$630	\$560	\$490	\$420	\$350	\$280	\$210	\$140	\$70
\$7,500	\$750	\$675	\$600	\$525	\$450	\$375	\$300	\$225	\$150	\$75
\$8,000	\$800	\$720	\$640	\$560	\$480	\$400	\$320	\$240	\$160	\$80
\$8,500	\$850	\$765	\$700	\$595	\$510	\$425	\$340	\$255	\$170	\$85
\$9,000	\$900	\$810	\$720	\$630	\$540	\$450	\$360	\$270	\$180	\$90
\$9,500	\$950	\$855	\$760	\$665	\$570	\$475	\$380	\$285	\$190	\$95
\$10,000	\$1,000	\$900	\$800	\$700	\$600	\$500	\$400	\$300	\$200	\$100
\$11,000	\$1,100	\$990	\$883	\$770	\$660	\$550	\$440	\$330	\$220	\$110
\$12,000	\$1,200	\$1,080	\$964	\$840	\$720	\$600	\$480	\$360	\$240	\$120
\$13,000	\$1,300	\$1,170	\$1,044	\$910	\$780	\$650	\$520	\$390	\$260	\$130
\$14,000	\$1,400	\$1,260	\$1,125	\$980	\$840	\$700	\$560	\$420	\$280	\$140
\$15,000	\$1,500	\$1,350	\$1,205	\$1,050	\$900	\$750	\$600	\$450	\$300	\$150

How do I take the challenge?...

- Keep an open mind and think about your role as Christ's steward.
- Don't decide on a random dollar amount and pay a "membership fee" or make an annual "donation" to the Church.
- Take the 3 Pennies Challenge and offer at least 3% of your household income to support your Church.
- If you have already made your pledge...Thank You! But it's still not too late to take the 3 Pennies Challenge!
- Please make your 2021 Stewardship pledge TODAY!

[STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE & PAYMENT](#)



St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival held on March 7, 2021

A MESSAGE FROM FR. COSMAS CONTINUED...

...But why do we need to be honest with ourselves about our fasting? Because most of us are simply unable or unwilling to follow the prescribed fast of the Church. I've often wondered if "Meatfare Sunday" should be called "Pretend Sunday" instead. How many Orthodox Christians, do you suppose, are actually abstaining from meat for almost 8 weeks?...probably not a majority. But we shouldn't divorce ourselves from reality as a result. What should we do? Admit reality, and work within its constraints. Adopt and implement a fast for Great Lent that is real, productive and transformative. How can we do that? By making a plan which sets small, attainable goals and by focusing on more than just food.

If you find yourself within the growing majority of people that isn't following the prescribed fast, don't just through up your hands in exasperation (and a modicum of guilt) and wait for Holy Wednesday to arrive as quickly as possible. Sit down (with loved ones if applicable) and ask yourself, "What do I want to get out of Lent this year?" "What kind of a fast can I really keep?" "What spiritual discipline can I employ (that doesn't involve food) to get closer to Christ?" After answering a few of these questions, be honest and make a real plan. A plan that centers on a realistic fast of micro-goals. Small goals: that we can achieve, feel good about, and build on.

If you know that you won't fast from meat, dairy, fish, oil and alcohol the entire time (as prescribed)... admit that to yourself. It's okay! What can you do? Set the smaller goals within your capacity to achieve them. No meat on certain days of the week? No dairy or fish on certain days? Everyone is physically different and has different capacities when it comes to fasting. As general rules, eat enough to remain healthy and function, while employing a discipline that can be felt and perceived in a sacrificial way. Set yourself up for success, not failure. And what about fasting beyond food?

Supplement the abstinence from food with an abstinence from other, perhaps less spiritually productive endeavors. Schedule some time without your best friends: Miss Hulu, Mrs. Netflix and Mr. Amazon. Replace that time with a little bit of: charity, reflection, spiritual reading, and prayer. Not too much!...a little bit that you can handle and feel good about accomplishing. Reality is often sobering even bracing, but it can also provide relief and eventually even joy. That's the real point of our Lenten journey! To meet Christ at the empty tomb and find joy! Should our journey and battle to get closer to our Savior be depressing and seemingly impossible? Or should time spent with our Most-Beloved Christ in Lent be joyous and uplifting? Our journey to the Cross is one of "joyful mourning". May we all find joy in our spiritual growth this Lent!

- Fr. Cosmas Halekakis
Parish Priest

Stewardship List as of March 19

Father Cosmas and Presvytera Michelle Halekakis
Deacon Harry and Maria Chelpon
Tom and Patti Ayers
John and Kristina Ayoub
Vasilios Bakopanos
Ronald and Mina Baldinger
Michael and Shawna Bardos
Steven and Ergini Batistatos-Martnishn
Chad and Julie Burke
William and Smaro Caras
Greg and Marilena Cherpes
Edward and Alexis Cleveland
Matthew Cleveland
Meredith Cleveland and Kenneth Hall
Dean and Maria Coulopoulos
Panayiotis and Athanasia Dacey
Paul and Mea Danigelis
Aristos and Anna Dimitriou
John and Maria Drapas
Dean and Lia Economou
Chrysanthe Freire
John and Patricia Galanis
Angeline Gillas
Jim and Cynthia Glakas
Mike and Eleni Hadjimichael
Phillip and Alissa Iatridis
Andrew and Martha Iatridis
Greg and Ashley Joiner
George Kaladze
Alex and Trisha Kantsios
Pete Kayafas
Hal and Alexandra Lampros
Nikoleta Lelis
John and Christy Lisciandro
Nick and Laura Louh
George and Debra Mokhiber
Olivia and James Morris
Nicholas and Phaedra Myseros
Paul and Lisa Orphanides
Panayiotis and Cynthia Panagopoulos
George and Coleen Pappas
Jerry and Helen Pollatos
Despina Psomiades
Keith Pullman
George Ralis and Rebecca Malone
Rebecca Rallis
Travis and Christie Rebok
Brandon and Sarah Rice
Emanuel and Marilyn Rouvelas
Stratis and Maria Sapuntzakis
Jeff and Cynthia Smith
Constantine Sofologis
Nick and Elizabeth Spyros
Dwayne and Irene Thomas
Doug and Stefania Whittington
Maria Zangos
Nicholas and Carol Zangos

Our mission as Greek Orthodox Christians:

1. We offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God the Holy Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
2. We strive to exist in fellowship and love with all people,
3. We welcome everyone who is looking for a church home and parish family,
4. We endeavor to help those in need and reach out to all those who need: food, shelter, clothing, and comfort,
5. We offer programs and ministries to bring our faithful the fellowship and knowledge of our Faith,
6. We strive to proclaim, teach and live the Orthodox Christian Faith, in all that we think, say, and do.



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 4/25 Palm Sunday; | 9:00 am Orthros & Liturgy
7:00 pm Bridegroom Service |
| 4/26 Holy Monday; | 7:00 pm Bridegroom Service |
| 4/27 Holy Tuesday; | 7:00 pm Bridegroom Service |
| 4/28 Holy Wednesday; | 3:00 pm Holy Unction
7:00 pm Matins of the Mystical Supper |
| 4/29 Holy Thursday; | 9:00 am Vespereal Liturgy
7:00 pm Matins of the 12 Gospels |
| 4/30 Holy Friday; | 9:00 am Royal Hours;
3:00 pm Unnailing from the Cross;
7:00 pm Epitaphios |
| 5/1 Holy Saturday; | 9:00 am Vespereal Liturgy;
11:30 pm Resurrection Service |
| 5/2 Easter Sunday; | 11:00 am Agape Service |



The Light is published bi-monthly by the Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church, in Loudoun County, Virginia. The next deadline for content is May 1, 2021. Designer: Cynthia Panagopoulos (yssh@yahoo.com); Advertising: Paul Orphanides (paulo@novahometeam.com)