

THE ORTHODOX ORACLE

Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church
Greensboro, NC
March 2026

OUR VISION: FAITH. FAMILY. COMMUNITY.

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Jesus in the Dessert: The Great Model of Fasting
"When He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He became hungry" (Matt 4:2).

A blessed Great Lent to all!



THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

Office Hours:

Mon – Fri 9:00am – 1:00pm

Sunday Church Worship

8:55am Orthros

10:05am Divine Liturgy

Weekly Services 9:00 – 10:30am

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Shadi Zeidan – Vice-President

Madalina Body – Treasurer

MaryAnn Contogiannis – Asst.

Treasurer

Brandon Covey – Secretary

Members:

Ted Angeles, Pete Graham,

Abeer Maayeh, Julia Macovei,

Martin Ross, Shane Rivers, Ellen

Scaturchio

Dormition Church Website

www.dormition.nc.goarch.org

Metropolis of Atlanta Website

atlmopolis.org

Archdiocese Website

www.goarch.org

ORGANIZATION & MINISTRIES CONTACTS

AHEPA – Demetri Dascalakis

Altar Servers Ministry – Matthew Beckett

Bible Study Ministry – Fr. Sarantis Loulakis

Music Ministry – Fr. Sarantis Loulakis, Michelle Gilliam

Camp - Stephen's Summer Camp

St. Stephen's Summer Camp - Greek Orthodox Metropolis of

Atlanta - Atlanta, GA (atlmopolis.org)

Cantors/Music – Michelle Gilliam (Rhonda)

Dance Group (s) – Barbara Vaughan, Mary Ann

Contogiannis, Emily Mihelich, Erin Blindenbacher

Daughters of Penelope – Su Peterson

Orthodox Fellowship (50+) – Maria Cropper

Greensboro Urban Ministry – Ian Chavez

Greek Festival - Shadi Zeidan

Narthex Ministry - Terry Kokenes & Shane Rivers

Myrrh-bearers Ministry – Brittany Beckett

Youth Ministry – Matthew Beckett (Director)

Church Beautification - Chris Mandaleris

Philoptochos – Nicki Smith, President

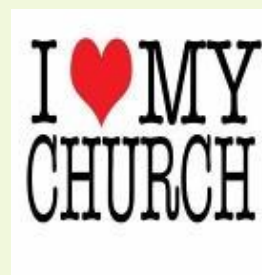
GOYA – Abeer Ma'ayeh, Liaison-Matthew Beckett

Youth Director - Matthew Beckett

Stewardship – Pete Graham

Sunday School – Madalina Body

Website Ministry - Martin Ross



Ministry Prayer

Heavenly Father!

We praise You for Your church. For the way You place us to work together to spread the Gospel love of Jesus Christ. The calling to pour out Your love on others is humbling and fulfilling. Your plan is perfect, and we are all a part of it. Thank You for the church we serve in. We know it's no accident that You have placed us here: even in moments of boredom or fatigue, we know that when we seek to hear Your voice above all others, we will find reassurance and encouragement. Amen!

A PASTORAL GREAT LENT MESSAGE

Fr. Sarantis P. Loulakis

"When He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He became hungry" (Matt 4:2).

My beloved Faithful and spiritual Dormition of the Theotokos Family!

I greet you and yours with the **spirit of love and humility of the Great Lent following Christ in His dessert journey**. Happy and blessed month of March and **Great Lent to all!** Christ is in our midst!

With the Lord's blessings we have arrived in the month of March. A month known, as the month, in which the Great Lent season, the Lenten Journey, is never absent. Yes indeed, the Great Lent is upon us.

The Gospel lessons of the four Sundays of the **Triodion** period called all of us to reflect on the **spiritual exercises** that we have been given so far to help us to prepare for our **Lenten journey**. St. Paul in wisdom wrote so in His message: "As an athlete does not compete without first preparing him or herself physically," (2Tim.5), the Church Fathers, **taking a part from the Lord's journey in the dessert and as it is the icon displayed on the front page of this periodical**, have given us the Holy Triodion period as a form of "spiritual exercise" to train for the 40 days of **Great Lent**, which it can feel like a *marathon*—especially for those who are not ready."

There are many spiritual excises, which are known to all of us, to put to place and **to seriously exercise** the mind and most important the heart necessary for our spiritual growth, such as prayer, **fasting, alms giving, repentance and forgiveness**.

Why do we have to take Great Lent seriously? Why should we fast?

It means that we **engage in it whole-heartedly** as a **spiritual challenge**. This means that we should make special plans, **to make an extra effort** during this period. We should think of this period as a gift of God encouraging us to seek ways to perfect ourselves, **to make changes in our way of life**, to be renewed and **deepen our spirituality**. It is a period intended for **repentance** and change. Perhaps, we can include on our calendar to attend the many additional services offered by the church, such as the **Presanctified Divine Liturgy and the Salutations**. If we are serious about Lent, we will make plans to participate in them, increasing our time devoted to prayer. **This requires a decision and extra effort**. Of course, there is also **fasting** to go along with our additional time in prayer. **Without fasting one cannot say there is Great Lent**. To understand its importance, I urge you to review the story of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). **Their transgression involved eating - not fasting - against God's will**.

It is important to know that **the first act of Christ** just before he began His public ministry was a **40 day fast**. Food is

central to life. We tend to think of the essentials of life only in terms of nourishment, but we must lift our thoughts to consider a higher life, **the life of our souls**, which exist in us, and it depends on God instead of food. In fasting, we are reminding ourselves of the **great truth**, life is not dependent on "bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4. The problem for Adam was that he ate for his own sake, to be **independent of God**, thinking the fruit of the tree would make him like God. Adam in disobeying God's command to not eat of this fruit **lost eternal life**. Christ came to restore what had been lost to us. **And He began to show us that restoration with a fast in His Dessert Journey**, "When He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He became hungry" (Matt 4:2). Indeed, hunger makes us realize that **we are dependent on something more than what we have in ourselves**. With fasting we become Christ alike; we face the temptation Christ faced during His fast. When fasting we can experience food as a gift from God and realize how our life in this world and the next world are dependent on Him. It is through fasting that we can recover **the realization of our spiritual nature** as we learn it though the **Parable of the Prodigal Son**. He got hungry and he remembered the good old days in his father's home. In preparing for our fast, we must think beyond the "rules of fasting." It is not enough to simply follow the "rules." **The fast must be God centered. It must be viewed as something to help us discover our body as the Temple of His presence, that Christ lives in us.**

One of the most fundamental statements of faith is this: your life is not about you. You're not in control. This is not your project. Rather, you are part of God's great design. To believe this in your bones and to act accordingly is to have faith.

My beloved spiritual family, in this holy sacred period of Great Lent (**Megali Sarakosti – 40 days of fast**), let us take Great Lent seriously, let's attend the extra services, **let's fast, reduce our social activities**, and **limit** our time spent perhaps on Facebook, Tik Tok, etc.? Instead, let's make **that time for inner self-examination** that leads us to repentance (Confession) and deepening or relationship with God. Above all let us give thanks to the Lord for this special time of Great Lent. Let us fast!

With Christ's love, I wish to all of you and yours a blessed and spiritual Great Lent. *Kali dynamis!*

+Fr. Sarantis



JOIN US FOR

GODPARENT & GODCHILD SUNDAY

A SPECIAL OCCASSION TO
GATHER TOGETHER FOR
DIVINE LITURGY AND RECEIVE
HOLY COMMUNION.



SUNDAY, MARCH 8th, 2026

Please join us for lunch in the fellowship hall following the divine liturgy
offered by the Sunday School & Parish Council in honor of the
Godparents!

AXIOI! – WORTHY!!

Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church

2026 Great Lent Liturgical Services Schedule

<u>Sunday, March 1st</u>	Sunday of Orthodoxy - Orthros: 8:45am / Div. Liturgy: 10:00am
<u>Wednesday, March 4th</u>	Presanctified Liturgy 6pm – 7:15pm
<u>Friday, March 6th</u>	2nd Salutations to the Theotokos 6:00pm
<u>Sunday, March 8th</u>	Sunday of St Gregory Palamas – Orthros 8:45 / Div. Lit 10:00am
<u>Wednesday, March 11th</u>	Presanctified Liturgy 6pm – 7:15pm
<u>Friday, March 13th</u>	3rd Salutations to the Theotokos 6:00p
<u>Sunday, March 15th</u>	Sunday of the Holy Cross - Orthros 8:45am / Divine Lit. 10:00am
<u>Wednesday, March 18th</u>	Presanctified Liturgy 6pm – 7:15pm
<u>Friday, March 20th</u>	4th Salutations to the Theotokos 6:00p
<u>Sunday, March 22nd</u>	Sunday of St John Climacus - Orthros: 8:45 / Div. Lit..... 10:00am
<u>Tuesday, March 24th</u>	Great Vespers of Annunciation At Winton Salem Church at 6pm
<u>Wednesday, March 25th</u>	Feast of The Annunciation Divine Liturgy: 9:30 – 10:45+am
<u>Friday, March 27th</u>	Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos 6:00pm
<u>Sunday, March 29th</u>	Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt - Orthros: 8:45 / Div. Lit..... 10:00am
<u>Wednesday, April 1st</u>	Presanctified Liturgy 6pm – 7:15pm
<u>Saturday, April 4th</u>	Saturday of Lazarus Divine Liturgy 9:30am
<u>Sunday, April 5th</u>	Palm Sunday – Orthros..... 8:45 / Divine Liturgy 10:00am

**LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS
SPRING PASTRY SALE & GIFT MARKET**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026
9:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

COME JOIN US...

**THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
800 WESTRIDGE ROAD, GREENSBORO, NC**

**ALL OF YOUR FAVORITE GREEK PASTRIES...BAKLAVA,
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**OUR COOKBOOK DELICIOUSLY GREEK! & OTHER ETHNIC DELIGHTS
WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE!**

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NATIONAL & LOCAL CHARITIES**



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→ TO YOUR DOOR**

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From the Holy Father...

The Story Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia - Feast Day is celebrated on March 9th

In the year 313 Saint Constantine the Great issued an edict granting Christians religious freedom and officially recognizing Christianity as equal with paganism under the law. But his co-ruler Licinius was a pagan, and he decided to stamp out Christianity in his part of the Empire. As Licinius prepared his army to fight Constantine, he decided to remove Christians from his army, fearing rebellion. One of the military commanders of that time in the Armenian city of Sebasteia was Agricola, a zealous champion of idolatry. Under his command was **the company of Forty Cappadocians, brave soldiers** who had distinguished themselves in many battles. When these Christian soldiers refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, Agricola locked them up in prison. The soldiers occupied themselves with prayer and psalmody, and **during the night they heard a voice saying, "Persevere until the end, then you shall be saved."**

On the following morning, the soldiers were again taken to Agricola and again urged them to renounce Christ. The saints steadfastly answered, "Take not only our military insignia, but also our lives, since nothing is more precious to us than Christ God." Lucius then ordered his servants to stone the holy martyrs. But the stones missed the saints and returned to strike those who had thrown them. One stone thrown by Lucius hit Agricola in the face, smashing his teeth. The torturers realized that the saints were guarded by some invisible power. In prison, the soldiers spent the night in prayer and again **they heard the voice of the Lord comforting them: "He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live (John 11:25). Be brave and fear not, for you shall obtain imperishable crowns."**

It was winter, and there was severe frost. **They lined up the holy soldiers, threw them into a lake near the city, and set a guard to prevent them from coming out of the water.** In order to break the will of the martyrs, a warm bathhouse was set up on the shore. During the first hour of the night, when the cold had become unbearable, **one of the soldiers made a dash for the bathhouse, but no sooner had he stepped over the threshold, then he fell dead.** During the third hour of the night, the Lord sent consolation to the martyrs. **Suddenly there was light, the ice melted away, and the water in the lake became warm.** All the guards were asleep, except for Aglaius, who was keeping watch. Looking at the lake he saw that a radiant crown had appeared over the head of each martyr. Aglaius counted thirty-nine crowns and realized that **the soldier who fled had lost his crown.** Aggias then woke up the other guards, took off his uniform and said to them, **"I too am a Christian," and he joined the martyrs.** Standing in the water he prayed, **"Lord God, I believe in You, in Whom these soldiers believe. Add me to their number and make me worthy to suffer with Your servants."** Then a fortieth crown appeared over his head.

In the morning, the torturers saw with surprise that the martyrs were still alive, and their guard Aggias was glorifying Christ together with them. They led the soldiers out of the water and broke their legs. During this horrible execution the mother of the youngest of the soldiers, Meliton, pleaded with her son to persevere until death. They put the bodies of the martyrs on a cart and committed them to fire. Young Meliton was still breathing, and they left him on the ground. His mother then picked up her son, and on her own shoulders she carried him behind the cart. When Meliton drew his last breath, his mother put him on the cart with the bodies of his fellow sufferers. **The bodies of the saints were tossed in the fire, and their charred bones were thrown into the water, so that Christians would not gather them up. Three days later the martyrs appeared in a dream to Saint Peter, Bishop of Sebasteia, and commanded him to bury their remains. The bishop together with several clergy gathered up the relics of the glorious martyrs by night and buried them with honor.**

It is important to know that the Holy Forty martyrs are being celebrated during the Great Lent to encourage us to stay steadfast to our fast since there is also a great reward for us as well, the Crowns of Heaven. In addition, the church recognizes the Holy 40 Martyrs during the Orthodox wedding service as models for the groom and the bride to stay steadfast to each other; hence the crowing of the couple by God in advance as "husband and wife". Let us be strong in faith, there is a promised reward: Eternity!



It requires faith to plead with God, *greater faith to remember to return and thank Him, and still greater faith to praise His Holy Name and, indeed, to praise Him unceasingly.* The faith that saves is not the faith that prompts us to entreat God when we face a trial such as the illness of the Ten Lepers; (Read [Luke 17:11-19](#)) rather it is the faith that causes us to turn to the Lord to thank Him and still more to praise His Holy Name when the miracle has been accomplished for us.

For while the pressure of the difficulty we face may prompt us to turn to the Lord, when our faith is lacking, we tend to attribute the miracle done for us to natural causes rather than to God's supernatural intervention. So often even if we ask for a miracle and it is given to us, we then lack the faith that is required to accept it with humility and give thanks to the Lord.

The difficulties we face and the miracles that are performed for us exist solely for the purpose of restoring our relationship with God. And yes, our entreaty to Him in our hour of difficulty opens the channel of communication with Him that often brings about the miracle, **but if out of a lack of faith we do not return after the miracle has taken place to thank Him, the channel of communication with Him is severed and our salvation is put in danger** – as it was for the nine lepers who, after the miracle the Lord performed for them, did not return to thank Him. Because **thanksgiving implies greater faith than is implied by entreaty**, thanksgiving puts us in a deeper relationship with the Lord than entreaty. In fact, when thanksgiving is deep and sincere, it leads us to an even higher form of prayer, that of praise. Thanksgiving is thus the explicit or implicit link that ensures the smooth passage of our prayer from 'Lord have mercy' to 'Praise God'.

Faith and prayer are both gifts of the Most Holy God, but the kind of prayer we pray usually depends on the degree of our faith. Our spiritual life moves like a pendulum between 'Lord have mercy' and 'Glory to God', always passing through thanksgiving. **If 'Lord have mercy' is our movement downward**, where our Hades is, thanksgiving and even more so praise is the movement of our soul upward, where Heaven is. **The contemplative tradition of our Church insists,** however, that the joy of ascent depends on the pain of descent into the Hades of penance.

A soul that begins to be sweetened by this movement of the swing from one extreme to the other is already on the road to salvation. Indeed, when its relationship with the living God grows ever deeper through supplication, thanksgiving and praise, there comes a moment when its entreaty to the Lord is not FOR the removal of the difficulties it faces, but how to make it so that every moment it loves, thanks and praises the Lord even more. This life is Paradise!



2026 STEWARDS

Fr Sarantis & Pr. Norma
Loulakis
John & Katherine McQueary
Ali & Michelle Akbary
Jimmy & Miranda
Anagnostopoulos
John & Lindy Bakatsias
Sarah Bassett
Jacob & Shannon Bishara
Najwah Bishara
Kris & Erin Blindenbacher
Anthony & Anna Bowen
Austin & Jessica Call
Brad Caplanides
Carl & Maria Colozzi
Brandon & Allison Covey
James & Maria Cropper
Hamp & Lula Culler
Mike Dolianitis
Noelle Foteini Drollas
Andrew & Lexi Ellen
Aphrodite & Alexandra Faza
Elizabeth Gardner & Josh
Pardue
Brier & Elaine Gay
Pete Graham
Scott & Christa Graham
Victor & Caroline Handila
Violet Hanna
Eleni Triantis Harrison
H. Marie Hudak
Sana Kattan
Terry Kokenes
Gregory & Eleni Kuhn
Eugenia Macovei
Julia Macovei
Chris & Maria Mandalieris
Elias & Maha Matar
Faris Matar
Vickie Matsakides
Lampros & Theodora
Megremis
Marc & Lula Melisko
Halvor & Cecilia Melom
Eddie & Maria Merrell
Sam & Emily Mihelich
Christian & Camelia Moraru

James & Panayota Mott
Peter Pappas
Willard & Mary Parnell
Michael & Nina Pasick
Vasiliki Patterson
Peter & Phyllis Poulos
Maria Pradetto
Regina Reese
Shane & Katie Rivers
Minerva Ross
Ardele Sakellaris
Ellen Scaturchio
Roger & Celia Sims
Cory & Nicki Smith
Ralph & Heidi Stucki
James & Catherine Stuman
Arthur Toompas
Zack & Sheila Touloupas
Ellen Trastelis & Spencer
Wright
Theodore Triantis
David Valavanis
Yianni & Effie Varitimidis
Kimmon & Gwen Varsamis
Philip Vavalides
Marshall & Patricia Yandle
Shadi and Maureen Zeidan
Nora Zirps



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Faithful Fellow Parishioners,

Now that we have begun the holy and blessed season of Great Lent, I extend my prayers and wish good strength to each of you and your families. This sacred time of the year invites us to deepen our faith through prayer, fasting, repentance, and acts of charity. It is a journey that prepares our hearts for the joy of Christ's Resurrection, and I encourage all of us to take advantage of the many spiritual opportunities the Church provides during this season. We also have many baptisms and Chrismations scheduled in the next several weeks. Let us all welcome with joy these new members into the Body of Christ through the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church!

Our Lenten services are some of the most beautiful and meaningful in the life of the Church. I encourage everyone to attend as many of these services as possible throughout the weeks ahead. Gathering together in prayer strengthens our faith and reminds us that we walk this Lenten journey not alone, but as a community united in Christ.

I also ask that we continue to be faithful stewards of our parish during this season. Please turn in your 2026 stewardship card right away, if you have not done so already. Your stewardship through your time, talents, and financial support sustains the ministries and daily life of our church. Even during busy seasons of life, your continued commitment helps ensure that our parish remains strong.

Looking ahead to the joy of the Resurrection, I warmly invite everyone to join us for our annual Pascha Picnic following the Agape Vespers service at 12:00 PM on Pascha Sunday. This gathering is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate together as a parish family after the beautiful services of Holy Week and Pascha.

I would also like to share a few important updates regarding our parish facilities. Following approval at the parish assembly last November, the Parish Council has selected contractors for the flat roof and fascia replacement project. We expect this work to begin soon, and we are grateful to be moving forward with these much needed repairs to our church property.

Additionally, in an effort to enhance the security of our church, we have installed two new exterior security cameras. Over time, additional cameras will be added so that each exterior door of the church and parish hall will be covered. These steps will help us better protect our parish and ensure the safety of everyone who worships and gathers here.

As we begin this Lenten journey together, may God grant us strength, humility, and peace in the weeks ahead. I pray that this Great Lent will be a time of spiritual renewal for each of us and that we will rejoice together in the radiant light of Holy Pascha.

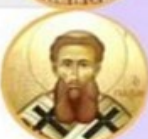
With love in Christ's service,

John McQueary
President, Parish Council



OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2026

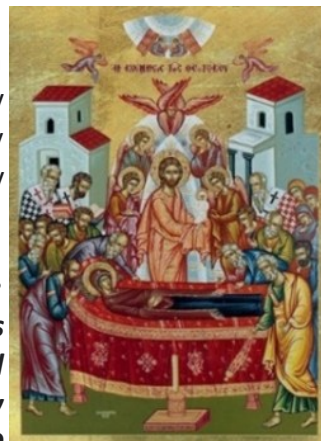
Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS		THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 1st		<i>TRIODION WEEKS</i> Publican and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 8th		The Prodigal Son Returns! Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare FEBRUARY 15th FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY		The Last Judgement Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare FEBRUARY 22nd FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY		Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent MARCH 1st		<i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 8th		ST GREGORY PALAMAS Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent MARCH 15th		VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent MARCH 22nd		ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent MARCH 29th		ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! APRIL 5th GREAT WEEK BEGINS		<i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY APRIL 10th		GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! APRIL 12th NO FASTING!		<i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

SUNDAY SCHOOL & YOUTH CORNER

Christ is in our midst! *He is and ever shall be!* Good strength to everyone as we approach the midway point of Great Lent. We have this month's youth activities listed below. It will be a full month for our youth. Please stay connected to email for updates on events like our Sunday School and the Holy Week Schedule which will begin on Sunday April 5 with Lazarus Saturday events and preparations for Palm Sunday.

"Of old the tree in the garden stripped us naked, and by its taste did the enemy bring in death. Now the tree of the Cross, which for all mankind is bearing the garment of life, was planted upon the earth, and therefore is all the world filled with every joy. As we see it exalted now, let us, O peoples, cry aloud together unto God in faith: Full of glory is Your house, O Lord" (Kathisma III For The Exaltation of The Cross)



YOUTH NEWS AND UPDATES

Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Parish Festival:

In February, we had six GOYAN's sign up to participate in this year's Parish Festival. Our students are preparing drafts and to present their speeches for a chance to advance to the district festival in Knoxville, TN on April 18.

Sunday of the Victory of Orthodoxy: On Sunday March 1, we celebrated the Sunday of Orthodoxy with a procession of the Holy Icons around the church. Thank you to all of our youth and parents who participated in the procession and celebration.

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS FOR MARCH

- **March 8 - God Parents Spaghetti Luncheon**
- **March 21 – Youth Church Beautification**
 - ◊ **Planting flowers, spreading mulch, and cleaning up entrance areas in front of the church**

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS FOR MARCH

- **March 29 - Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Parish Festival**
 - ◊ **Judges and Timekeepers are needed**
 - ◊ **Festival will happen after the Divine Liturgy**

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

HELP Needed! If you would like to join a youth ministry team, please connect with Father Sarantis or Matthew Beckett. We are looking to fill ministry team positions for HOPE, JOY, and GOYA.

ACOLYTES: We have spots available to serve. Please contact Father Sarantis or Matthew Beckett if your son is interested.

Myrrh-bearers: We are in need of girls to participate in our Myrrh-bearers Ministry. Please contact Father, Brittany Beckett, or Matthew Beckett to serve in this ministry.



Rise Up & Build 2026 Stewardship Campaign



Dormition of The Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church

STEWARDSHIP BLESSINGS

Stewardship: A Spiritual Way of Life

In the life of the Church, stewardship is not simply about giving, it is about living. It is a spiritual way of life rooted in gratitude, responsibility, and love for God.

Everything we have is a gift from God: our time, our talents, our resources, our families, our health, and our very breath. As the Scriptures remind us, *"What do you have that you did not receive?"* (1 Corinthians 4:7). Stewardship is our faithful response to these blessings. It is the way we offer back to God what He has first entrusted to us.

In the Orthodox Christian understanding, stewardship is deeply connected to discipleship. Christ does not ask us merely to believe in Him, but to follow Him. Following Christ means learning to live generously, sacrificially, and faithfully, just as He lived for us. Stewardship is not measured only in financial terms, but in prayer, service, hospitality, compassion, and commitment to the life of the Church.

When we support the Church, we are not supporting an institution, we are participating in the living Body of Christ. Our stewardship sustains worship, ministries, education, outreach, philanthropy, and the sacred mission of the Church to bring Christ into the world. It ensures that the Church remains a place of healing, hope, and spiritual refuge for current and future generations.

True stewardship is not about obligation, it is about gratitude.

Not about pressure, it is about purpose.

Not about fear, it is about faith.

It is the joyful offering of ourselves to God in thanksgiving for all that He has done for us.

As we grow in stewardship, we grow spiritually. We learn trust. We learn generosity. We learn humility. We learn that our lives are not our own, but belong to Christ. And in that offering, we discover the true freedom and joy of the Christian life.

May we always strive to be faithful stewards—not only of our resources, but of our faith, our Church, and our calling as Orthodox Christians.

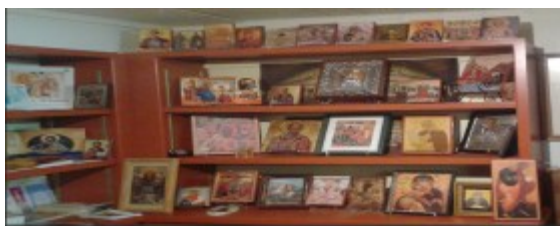
"Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2)





BOOKSTORE

Open on Sundays - **COME & SEE!**
in the Fellowship Hallway



WORSHIP LIFE / MARCH 2026 LITURGICAL CALENDAR

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| • <u>Wednesday, March 4th</u> | Presanctified Liturgy—6pm – 7:15pm |
| • <u>Friday, March 6th</u> | 2nd Salutations to the Theotokos—6:00pm |
| • <u>Sunday, March 8th</u> | Sunday of St Gregory Palamas—Orthros 8:45 / Div. Lit 10:00 |
| • <u>Wednesday, March 11th</u> | Presanctified Liturgy—6pm – 7:15pm |
| • <u>Friday, March 13th</u> | 3rd Salutations to the Theotokos—6:00p |
| • <u>Sunday, March 15th</u> | Sunday of the Holy Cross—Orthros 8:45am / Div. Lit 10:00 |
| • <u>Wednesday, March 18th</u> | Presanctified Liturgy—6pm – 7:15pm |
| • <u>Friday, March 20th</u> | 4th Salutations to the Theotokos—6:00p |
| • <u>Sunday, March 22nd</u> | Sunday of St John Climacus—Orthros: 8:45 / Div. Lit 10:00 |
| • <u>Tuesday, March 24th</u> | Great Vespers of Annunciation @ Winton Salem Church 6p |
| • <u>Wednesday, March 25th</u> | Feast of The Annunciation—Divine Liturgy: 9:30 – 10:45+am |
| • <u>Friday, March 27th</u> | Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos—6:00pm |
| • <u>Sunday, March 29th</u> | Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt—Orthros: 8:45 / Div. Lit 10:00 |

- *The above schedule and times supersede any other schedule.*



Weekday Liturgies . . .
In addition to the regular Sunday services please make note of the following weekday services for the month of March. Unless otherwise indicated, the Weekly Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:00 am & most likely will finish by 10:30am+





Dear Beloved Church Family,

A blessed lent to all! Thank you to everyone who participated in our February events! Please know that your time, effort and hard work are incredibly appreciated, not only by Philoptochos and our church community, but by the surrounding communities as well!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Philoptochos members will host the Lenten meal on Wednesday, March 4th following the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Members are encouraged to bring a Lenten dish to share with all attending.

On March 15, Sunday of the Holy Cross, all Philoptochos chapters nationwide will collect a special tray to benefit Holy Cross Seminary, their students, programs, and operational expenses. If you wish to donate by check, please make it out to Philoptochos with Holy Cross on the memo line.

Saturday, March 28: Philoptochos Spring Pastry Sale and Gift Market 9am-6pm-Please see emails for sign up genius to sign up to work at our market.

The Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos is hosting their annual Spring Spiritual Retreat March 20-22. Additional information is available by visiting online at atlmetropolis.org

Plans have begun for our Graduation Sunday to be held on June 7th. We will be recognizing and honoring our parish graduating High School and College graduates in church, presenting the 2026 Philoptochos and Pete Harris Scholarships, and honoring all graduates with a special reception during Fellowship Hour. We are asking all graduates, high school, college, post graduate in the Class of 2026 or family members of graduates to please send their name, email address to Catherine Stuman (ccstuman@yahoo.com) as soon as possible so they may be contacted about this special day.

March 1-April 26: Philoptochos and Pete Harris Scholarship applications will be available in the Fellowship Hall beginning March 1st. Completed Scholarship applications with all other required information are to be returned no later than Sunday, April 26th at noon. Electronic applications can be requested by contacting **Gwen Varsamis at 336-601-6717 or email gwen.varsamis@gmail.com**. High School seniors are eligible and are encouraged to apply for the Philoptochos Scholarship. The Pete Harris Scholarship application is available to any student accepted or currently enrolled in a vocational training program, a junior college, or college/university, or a post graduate student. Scholarships will be awarded on Sunday, June 7 when we celebrate Graduation Sunday and honor our Parish High School, College, and Post Graduate students in the Class of 2026

Our March Food Bank donations will be sent to the Greensboro Urban Ministry. They are currently assisting 900 families a week but with only enough food for each family to receive 3 days of non-perishable food to help supplement their diet while helping to stretch their food dollars. Food pantries throughout our area are receiving more requests for help from those experiencing food insecurity. However, fewer donations are being received due to the increasing cost of food, utilities, gas, and housing affecting those who in the past gave generously. **Urban Ministry has asked our help to provide the following needed foods: canned vegetables, canned beans, canned tomatoes and pasta sauce, canned fruits, canned chicken, tuna, salmon, peanut butter, mac and cheese, rice, dry beans (one-pound bags), pasta, cereal. Please bring your donations throughout the month of March on Sundays or when you come to church throughout the week.** Your food donations will help Urban Ministry restock their shelves and help to feed the hungry.

We have an exciting and busy month ahead of us. We thank you for your continued support and participation in our various projects and events!

Dormition of the Theotokos Church Lenten Dinner & Reflection Presentations 2026

Lent affords all Orthodox Christians a time of reflection with increased fasting, prayer, and services as we move towards the Passion and glorious, saving Resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. Each Wednesday evening during Great and Holy Lent we will be offering edifying Reflection Presentations, consisting of a short video about a Lenten Hymn (3-5 min), a reflection (7-10 min) along with Q & A. These Reflections offered by Fr. Sarantis will take place at the conclusion of the Pre-sanctified Liturgy and a meal in the Fellowship Hall. Dinners will be sponsored by one of our many wonderful Ministries.

**Pre-Sanctified Liturgy begins at 6:00 p.m.
Dinner followed by Presentation at 7:15 p.m.**

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Presentation: TBA

Dinner Sponsored by Parish Council

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Presentation: TBA

Dinner Sponsored by The Ladies of Philoptochos

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Presentation: TBA

Dinner Sponsored by the Cantors

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Presentation: TBA

Dinner Sponsored by our Youth Council

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

NO EVENING SERVICE

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Presentation: TBA

Dinner Sponsored by AHEPA and Daughters Penelope



*"As I ponder in my wretchedness
upon the many evil things that I have
done,
I tremble for the fearful day of judgment.
But trusting in Your merciful compassion,
like David I cry to You:
Have mercy on me, O God, in Your great
mercy."
Lenten Orthros Hymn*

SHARING A MEAL AT THE URBAN MINISTRY 2.16.26



BIBLE STUDY

ATTENTION BIBLE CLASS & CATECHUMENS BIBLE CLASS FROM THIS WEEK ON TO HOLY WEEK WILL HAVE A DIFFERENT FORMAT.

1. Presanctified Divine Liturgy at 6:00pm - 7:15pm (Church)
2. 7:15 - 7:35 Lenten Fellowship with Lenten Food for all. (Fellowship hall)
3. 7:35 - 8:00 Lenten Lecture/Discussion (Fellowship hall)
4. 8:00 - 8:30 Free time Fellowship (Fellowship hall)

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Thrice-holy Lord,
have mercy on us and save us. Amen.



COMMUNITY NEWS



Stewardship Year begins on January 1st and concludes on December 31st. We ask that you do not delay to complete the card and return it to the church office to join the **“Dormition of the Theotokos’ Stewardship Ministry for 2026”** so that we can grow and become a stronger Church and minister to the people of God. The Church needs the support of its members year-round. Please consider giving as a way of showing your support and love to the Church. As you already know It costs thousands of dollars a month to operate the Church with the monthly utility and maintenance bills and salaries. **Please consider giving as much as your heart tells you to give – a little more than last year. You do not need to make your payment all at once. You can give quarterly, monthly, or weekly,** which makes it very easy and affordable. Electronic payment has also been set up for those who would like to use it. Thank you!

THANK YOU! Thank you to all for sponsoring Coffee Hours in the month of February: **The Bishara Family, The Soufia Family, and Mubarak & Marsa Koko. THANK YOU!**

CHRISMATIONS/BAPTISMS: The servant of God, **Andrew Ellen**, was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the mystery of Chrismation with the name, Andrew, on Sunday, February 22. The Sponsor was Shadi Zeidan. May God grant him many years!

A Reminder: God’s House/Our Responsibility! We have been offering the **“God’s House/Our Responsibility”** message to the students of our Church School, but that lesson is not just for kids! Please remember that every corner of the building - in the Church or not - is a part of God’s house. **And we are the good stewards God has blessed to take care of it. So remember:**

- **When you use it, leave it as you found it (or better!)**
- **If you create or see trash, pick it up and throw it away.**
- **Be gentle! Careful not to dent and knick things up.**
- **Treat the place better than you own...it’s God’s!**

So whether that means clean it up, put it away, put it back, lock it up, wipe it off, close it or throw it away, don’t give away the honor of taking care of God’s house to someone else: do it yourself! Leave it as you found it or better, because when we moved in we committed to keeping the entire place in “Like New” condition. Only you can help make that happen. Thank you!



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LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS 2026 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE



The Ladies Philoptochos Society is the largest Christian women's philanthropic organization in the United States. Our ministry reaches out to help those in need. Fund raising projects enable our chapter to support such worthy causes as Mobile Meals, Shepherd's Wheels, Orthodox Mission Priests, Disaster Relief, Saint Basil's Academy, St. Stephen's Camp, St. Barbara's Medical Ministry, school supplies and Christmas for needy families. Scholarships within our parish, special parish needs, and various other emergency and philanthropic requests also receive our support.

A table is in the Fellowship Hall for interested prospective members to ask questions and/or learn more about our many ministries. Current members may also pay their 2026 Membership dues (\$35) during this period. Another way to join Philoptochos or renew your membership is to fill out the online Google form. All the details are in this form [👉 2026 Membership Form - Google Forms](#) - it only takes a few clicks to complete this form! You may then make your 2026 membership payment via paper check, cash or credit card any Sunday in the Fellowship Hall when our Treasurer, Regina Reece, or a Board Member, is set up to receive payments. Full Membership is open to women of the Greek Orthodox faith at least 18 years old. Associate Membership is available to any non-Greek Orthodox man or woman with a Greek Orthodox spouse, or to Greek Orthodox men. Associate members shall enjoy all the privileges of membership, except the right to vote or hold office.

This is a wonderful opportunity for new friendships and fellowship and the personal satisfaction of helping those in need. Our members are warm and friendly, caring and giving, and most energetic! Whether a homemaker and mother, working part time or full time, retired, or a student, the talents you have will enhance our organization. Our many projects and various circles allow individuals to volunteer as little or as much as their schedules permit. Your membership will assure that our ministry of being "a friend to the poor", will continue to thrive touching those in need. We extend a personal invitation to both men and women in our church community 18 years and older to join our philanthropic organization.

NOTE: A printed Orthodox Oracle of the month can be found in the Narthex throughout the month.

If you wish to have a copy sent to you, we ask that you call the church office and we will send you one in the mail. Thank you for being a Steward of Dormition of the Theotokos church!



Church Office Note.....

You may visit or call the office **Monday—Friday from 9:00am—1:00pm.**

Fr. Sarantis will be in the office Monday & Thursday from 10am-2pm, Tuesday from 12pm—4pm & 4pm—6pm by appointment only for confessions and Wednesday from 12—7:30pm extending the office hours. You may also schedule a pastoral appointment with him at any time at home or at the office at your convenience.

Although on Fridays Fr. Sarantis is not in the office one may freely and at any time during the week communicate DIRECTLY with him via phone at (516) 526-1475, text or email at patersarantis@yahoo.com.

All calls & texts not answered before 7pm due to obvious reasons will be answered as soon as possible on the same day. All calls and texts after 7pm will be screened and they will be answered according to their urgency, so there may be time to respond to the day's emails, which they are ONLY checked 3 times a day (morning, noon and after 7pm) and they will be answered accordingly in order within 24 hours. We thank you for understanding!

IMPORTANT: For ALL emergencies ALWAYS CALL, do not text or email. GOD BLESS YOU!

SAVE THE DATES

Spring Pastry Sale

MARCH 28, 2026

Pascha Picnic

APRIL 12, 2026

Spring Drive-Thru Food Sale

MAY 8-9, 2026

Greensboro Greek Festival

SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2026



HOSPITAL VISITATION POLICY

If you would like Fr. Sarantis to visit you in the hospital, please call him or have a family member call. Fr. Sarantis will not go unless he is asked by the family. This is in compliance with both HIPAA and patient privacy.

ORTHODOX ORACLE SPONSORS ...

Now that the ORTHODOX ORACLE has expanded to 20 pages, it provides a good opportunity for one to sponsor an ad for your business, friend's business or simply honoring a family member. Please seek out one of the Parish Council Members for assistance to become a sponsor or call the church office.

We thank our sponsors and we hope that you support them!

SPONSOR Introductory OFFERINGS

- ◆ Monthly Issue
- ◆ Supporter
- ◆ Half page
- ◆ Full page
- ◆ Inside Cover



Attention Organizations:

- In order to sustain proper emailing dates the *Cutoff Day* to submit your article for your organization is the **22nd** of the month. Printing and emailing the Orthodox Oracle is on or about the **28th** of the month.
- Email is the default contact type, but listings can be changed by text or phone if preferred. Email any changes to the Church Office at office@dormition.nc.goarch.org. It is the organization's responsibility to inform Jackie of any updates to your listing.

DONATIONS for GREAT LENT & PASCHAL SEASON 2026

GREAT LENT:

Flowers for Icon of Theotokos on Fridays

1st Salutations - \$75

2nd Salutations - \$75

3rd Salutations - \$75

4th Salutations - \$75

Akathist Hymn - \$100

Flowers for *Stavroproskinesis*
(3rd Sunday) - \$300

Bottles or Cases of Nama Wine

Incense for Great Lent - \$250

Flowers for Icon of Palm Sunday - \$75

Palms & Daphne for Palm Sunday - \$750

Fish for Palm Sunday Luncheon - \$750



HOLY WEEK:

Flowers for Icon of Bridegroom - \$75

Holy Unction: \$100 (3 items below)

—Extra Virgin Olive Oil

—Flour for Holy Unction (5 lbs.)

—Seven Candles for Holy Unction

Flowers for Icon of Mystical Supper - \$100

Flowers for Icon of Crucifixion - \$100

Candles for the Holy Cross & Epitafios – \$100

12 Candles for the Twelve Holy Gospels - \$100

Head Flowered Wreath (Holy Cross) Holy

Thursday - \$200

Flowered Wreaths (Holy Cross) Holy

Thursday for the arms and floor \$100

each

1 White Sheet for Body of Christ

Flowers for Decorating the Epitafios and

Epitafios Roses for the Faithful - \$2,000

Rose Water Holy Friday - \$50

Rose Petals for Holy Saturday Morning - \$100

Clergy Resurrection/Anastasi Candle – \$150

Flowers for Icons of the Resurrection - \$150

each (2)

GREAT & HOLY PASCHA:

Paschal Easter Lilies (20) for Anastasi – \$30ea

Please complete the information below and return entire form to the **Dormition of the Theotokos Church** office along with your payment.

Kindly make checks payable to Dormition of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Church.

(Please print)

Item _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (____) _____

Donation Amount: \$_____ Check _____ Cash _____ Credit Card _____

Credit Card: Visa _____ MasterCard _____ American Express _____

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature (for Credit Card) _____

Payment can also be made on our website under "Give".

Please designate in the 'Memo' line what you are purchasing. Thank you!

<https://give.tithe.ly/?formId=29d39a22-9b64-4170-bb48-a325aaa3b55a>

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NARTHEX and Welcome MINISTRY meets soon. Be part of it!

What *YOU* Can Do to Help Visitors Feel Welcome

Have you noticed new faces? We've had many visitors stop by lately. Some are Orthodox and visiting from other Parishes, some are returning to Orthodoxy after a long time away, and some are coming to check out Orthodoxy for the very first time. No matter how they come to us, let's make sure we say Hello!



"Welcome! I don't believe we've met yet. My name is (your name)" is a great start. Offer to walk with them to the Coffee Social. A personal connection goes far!

*"To be a welcoming community sharing
Christ's love through faith and service."*