



The Voice

February

2026





The Voice is published monthly by
SAINT NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
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Meetings

Parish Council
 3rd Tuesday
 6:30 PM

Philoptochos
 1st Saturday
 10:00 AM

Bible Study
 Every 2nd & 4th
 Wednesday
 10:30 AM

GOYA
 last Sunday
 12:00 noon

Adult
Dance Classes
 Ann Athans

Book Store
 Chayse Cloonan

F.I.S.H.E.R. Men
 Aaron Knapp
 Every 1st & 3rd Monday
 6:00 PM

Discover Orthodoxy
 Every 2nd & 4th Monday
 6:30 PM

Philoptochos

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Vice President
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Note to Parishioners:

We invite all parishioners to submit items of interest for our monthly newsletter, *The Voice*.

This may include articles, stories that are relevant and important news in the lives of our parishioners.

Please submit material to the church office before the 15th of each month for review and inclusion in the next month's issue. Thank you.



Prepare to find Christ in Great Lent

Great Lent begins in February on Clean Monday the day after the Festival. Three very important weeks prepare us for Great Lent. They gradually prepare us so we can derive the maximum benefit in our lenten journey to Christ.

An athlete prepares himself or herself before running a race. To avoid injury and to compete in an effective manner, the athlete will go through a stretching routine and a warm-up before a strenuous event, whether it is a mile run or a marathon. We also prepare ourselves for the beginning of Great Lent during these three weeks. February 1st the Triodion period begins. The Triodion is the liturgical book which contains the hymns of the preparatory Sundays, all of Great Lent, and Holy Week.

We are guided during this warm-up for the spiritual battle we will wage against all the forces that reject Christ and His teaching. The gospels of the four Sundays include February 1st (*Luke 18:10-14*) teaching us to imitate the humility of the tax collector, not the pride of the Pharisee; February 8th (*Luke 15:11-32*) reminding us of our distance from God and our need for forgiveness; February 15th (*Matthew 25:31-46*) where Jesus teaches His disciples to be ready for the Judgment by practicing good works; and February 22nd (*Matthew 6:14-21*) where Jesus exhorts His followers to forgive one another and to fast in truth.

We gradually prepare for the fasting to come by going from a fast-free week, to a Wednesday and Friday fasting week, to fasting from meat products for a week and then strict fasting as Great Lent begins.

Here is a more detailed look at the first of these Sundays, February 1st. The gospel read is that of the Publican and the Pharisee. The Publican, a tax collector, and the Pharisee went to the temple to pray. We read that the Pharisee prayed with himself. In other words, his was not a prayer to God. He was too busy telling God his many virtues to really pray. He recited a list of sins that he was not guilty of. He said he was not sinful like all those around him.

Unlike the Pharisee, the Publican humbly prayed to God, "God have mercy on me, a sinner," Jesus said that he, the Publican, went to his house justified, not the Pharisee. In the final hymn of the Orthros we hear: "The Pharisee, who justified himself by boasting about his works, O Lord, You condemned; but You justified the Publican who was modest, and who with sighs prayed for expiation. For You do not accept boastful thoughts, but hearts that are contrite. Therefore we, too, in humility fall down before You, who suffered for us. Grant us absolution and great mercy."

Let us use this time wisely to catalog our faults and repent of them not dwelling on what we perceive as faults in others. During Great Lent we focus our efforts towards worthily receiving our risen Lord, Jesus Christ, on the day of Resurrection.



The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple

February 2

When the most pure Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary's forty days of purification had been fulfilled, she took her first-born Son to Jerusalem on this, the fortieth day after His birth, that she might present Him in the temple according to the Law of Moses, which teaches that every first-born male child be dedicated to God, and also that she might offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons, as required by the Law (Luke 2:22-24; Exod. 13:2; Lev. 12:6-8). On this same day, a just and devout man, the greatly aged Symeon, was also present in the temple, being guided by the Holy Spirit. For a long time, this man had been awaiting the salvation of God, and he had been informed by divine revelation that he would not die until he beheld the Lord's Christ. Thus, when he beheld Him at that time and took Him up into his aged arms, he gave glory to God, singing: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master. . ." And he confessed that he would close his eyes joyfully, since he had seen the Light of revelation for the nations and the Glory of Israel (Luke 2:25-32). From ancient times, the Holy Church has retained this tradition of the churching of the mother and new-born child on the fortieth day and of the reading of prayers of purification.

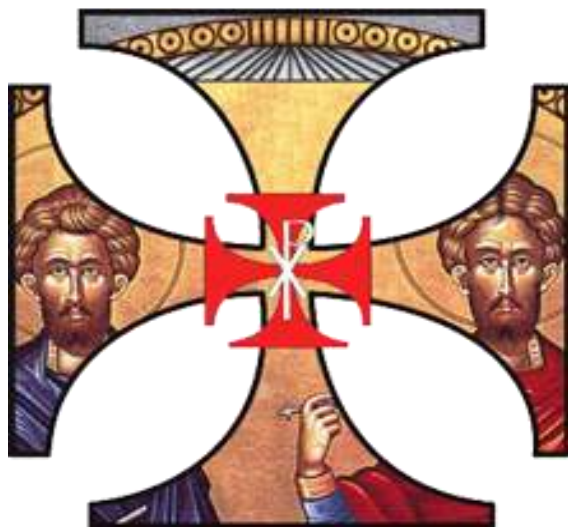
The Apodosis of the Feast of the Meeting in the Temple is usually on the 9th of February. This, however, may vary if the Feast falls within the period of the Triodion. Should this occur, the Typicon should be consulted for specific information concerning the Apodosis of the Feast.

Apolytikion of Presentation of Our Lord

Hail Virgin Theotokos full of Grace, for Christ our God, the Sun of Righteousness, has dawned from you, granting light to those in darkness. And you, O Righteous Elder, rejoice, taking in your arms, the Deliverance of our souls, who grants us Resurrection.

Kontakion of Presentation of Our Lord

Your birth sanctified a Virgin's womb and properly blessed the hands of Symeon. Having now come and saved us O Christ our God, give peace to Your commonwealth in troubled times and strengthen those in authority, whom You love, as only the loving One.



Philoptochos

We had a very busy and productive first half of the Philoptochos year. Hopefully we can focus on this second half with different activities and charity giving.

Our first activity in 2026, sponsored by the Philoptochos, was our annual New Year's luncheon on January 18th at Tutto Fresco Restaurant opened to everyone. This was a chance for families and friends to get together for a fun time. The food and service was excellent. Thanks to Toni Rekus for doing a wonderful job in planning this event.

Philoptochos will be having a booth at the festival. We will need volunteers to work at the booth, even if it's only a couple hours a day. Set up will be on Thursday, February 19th. The festival will be from Friday to Sunday, February 20, 21, and 22. Please see Stacey Louka.

We still need sponsors for Sunday coffee hours. You only have to bring one item on any Sunday of the month. Everyone enjoys this time after church. Consider doing your part and contribute to the coffee hours. See Illona Christie to get on the schedule.

Our next monthly meeting will be on the first Saturday, February 7th at 10.00am in the church hall. Please plan to attend. We will be discussing plans for our booth at the festival.

I know we are all busy, but please consider joining the Philoptochos. We would welcome new ideas. This is an opportunity for the ladies to get together. Our meetings are once a month. All of our fundraising supports the charities that need our help, plus anyone in need. Annual dues are \$30.00.

Until next time, keep a happy face—and have fun at the festival.
God's blessings to all of you.

In Christ,
Helen Penkosky

Your Stewardship

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What is a Steward?

Stewardship is the call of the faithful to share willingly the gifts that God has bestowed on them, including sharing these gifts for God's work. Stewardship is devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as a Parish; our active commitment to use our time, talent, and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love. (*Oriented Leadership*)

St. Nicholas Church is now in the planning and organizing stage of our annual Greek Festival which is on February 20, 21, 22. How can each of us best do our part in making it successful? Our stewardship of time and talent is of great need. There are many areas in which to find your spot. If you are unable to volunteer in person, monetary donations can be made to help offset the huge expense in hosting this event.

On Sundays in the church hall, after Divine Liturgy, Carmen Mohan will be registering the times and dates that you are able to volunteer. Stacey Louka will be taking names for the Philoptochos table.

Your Stewardship Committee gratefully thanks our Stewards who offered a total of \$175,669 in 2025 however, we did not meet our budgeted amount. Also, sincere thanks for the response to our call to become Stewards for 2026. To date, 62 forms have been received. If you have not yet submitted your 2026 form, we ask that you do so at your earliest convenience; and prayerfully consider what you can offer to God with joyful gratitude for your many blessings. Your gifts enable St. Nicholas Church to spread the Word of Christ and to support her ministries and charities throughout the year.

With love in Christ,

Sharon Colonis
Stewardship Chair

"God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them.

(Hebrews 6:10, NIV)

From the Treasurer, Bob Azari

Numbers

38,000
44,000
55,000
176,000
192,000
200,000
205,000
202122

Is this just a jumble of numbers or does it tell a story about our Church's finances?

All but one are related to our Church's largest source of income which is stewardship.

\$192,000 is the total stewardship pledges for 2025

\$176,000 is the actual stewardship collected for 2025

So this means we expected an additional \$16,000 of income (\$192,000 minus \$176,000).

Why did this occur? Perhaps some of us had financial challenges during the year and needed to revise our stewardship pledge. Others may have moved out of town, etc.

\$200,000 is the budgeted stewardship for 2025

\$205,000 is the budgeted stewardship for 2026

Based on this 2025 stewardship deficit, we are concerned about meeting these budget amounts. The budget takes into account the actual amounts through September and estimates the last three months of the year.

But stewardship collected in the last three months of the year has decreased:

\$55,000 is the October, November and December actual stewardship collected in 2023

\$44,000 is the October, November and December actual stewardship collected in 2024

\$38,000 is the October, November and December actual stewardship collected in 2025

This stewardship deficit means we have to rely more on our second largest source of income, the Festival, which brings us to our last number:

202122 = The dates of our upcoming Festival, February 20, 21 and 22

Hopefully we will be blessed with good weather and have a successful Festival!

Note – most numbers above are rounded to the nearest \$1000

Parishioner Happenings

Festival preparations have begun!
Volunteers have been busy making Dolmades and Soutzoukakia (and mischief).



OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2026

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS		THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 1st		TRIDION WEEKS 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! FORGIVENESS SUNDAY 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		GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS 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 HALF WAY TO PASCHAI 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 bowl!
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		GREAT AND HOLY WEEK 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 JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS 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!		BRIGHT WEEK HOLY PASCHAI (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!

Everything You Wanted to Know about Antidoron but Were Afraid to Ask

What is antidoron? The word antidoron is a compound word from two Greek words: “αντι” and “δορον” = “αντιδορον.” It means “instead of the gifts.” Antidoron has been cut from the prosphora, the loaves of bread which have been baked for the Eucharist with special prayers. In



a service called the Proskomide, the central section of the prosphoron is cut and removed for consecration prior to Divine Liturgy. This consecrated part of the prosphora



is called the Lamb; it is the seal on the prosphoron with the Greek letters ΙΣ ΧΣ ΝΙ ΚΑ, which means Jesus Christ Victorious. It will be combined with wine in the Eucharistic chalice for distribution to the faithful during the Eucharistic service. The remainder of the prosphoron, the antidoron, which has not been consecrated, is cut into cubes and placed in a basket in the aisle.

Who takes antidoron? It is taken by the faithful immediately after they have taken Holy Communion. It is later received from the priest along with a blessing as all congregants leave the church after the liturgy. It is also offered to non-Orthodox visitors as an expression of Christian fellowship and love.

Why do we take it? What does it do? Besides the spiritual benefit of taking antidoron after Holy Communion, there is a practical aspect as well. If a person were to sneeze or cough after taking Holy Communion, some of the consecrated bread or wine could be expelled from the mouth and fall to the floor. So, the antidoron in effect cleanses the mouth as it is swallowed. It is a sacred but unconsecrated bread, meant to be handled with respect symbolizing participation in the divine grace experienced during the service. It should be treated with reverence; uneaten portions should be burned or placed outside for animals, not discarded carelessly.

How much do we need? What antidoron is not! Since taking and eating antidoron is a symbolic action only a small amount is needed, one or two pieces. It is not intended to totally break your pre-liturgy fast. A large handful might deny someone who follows you of having any antidoron which has happened on a few occasions.

For more information about this fascinating and often misunderstood Orthodox practice, go to your computer and Google the word “antidoron.”

Submitted by Subdeacon Pamphilos

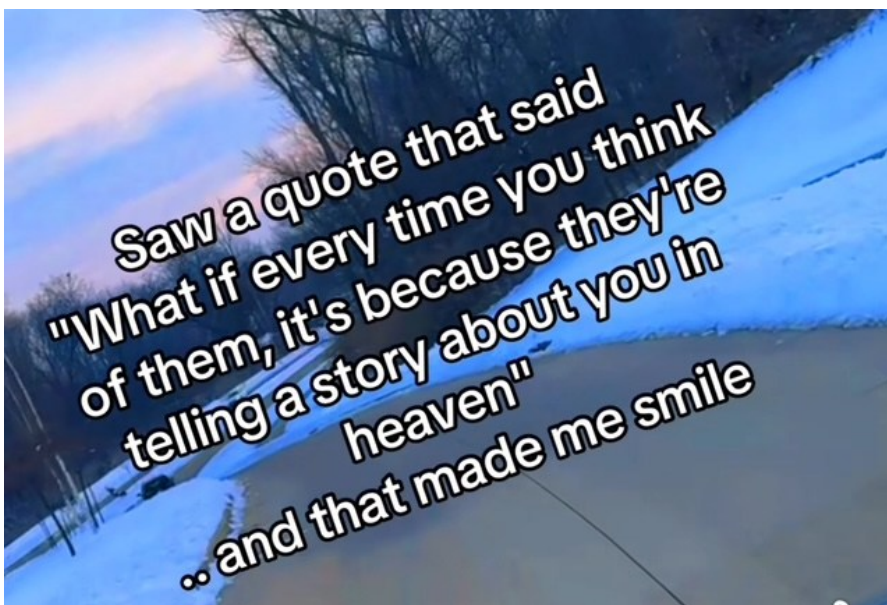


COMING SOON!!

2026 Greek Festival

February 20, 21, & 23

We need everyone's help in order to make it successful! If you have not signed up to volunteer, please do so as soon as possible. If you are not able to volunteer, please consider giving a monetary donation to ensure our success. Your help is greatly appreciated.



Good Morning, Sweet Soul

YOU CANNOT POUR FROM AN EMPTY CUP.

Take a deep breath. Sit still. Let your soul catch up.



*This morning's cup is
not just for coffee...
it's a vessel for
peace, prayer, and
presence.*

Rest. Pray. Breathe. Be still.

Let the world wait while you refill—because you deserve the same care you give so freely to others.

February 2026

Sunday Services: 8:45 AM-Orthros 10:00 AM-Liturgy						
1 Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee	2 Presentation of our Lord 9:00 Matins 10:00 Liturgy 6:00 PM - FISHER Men	3	4 9:30 AM - Festival Baking	5 9:30 AM - Festival Baking	6	7 10:00 AM Philoptochos
8 Sunday of the Prodigal Son	9 6:30 PM - Discover Orthodoxy	10	11 10:30 AM-Bible Study	12	13	14 Saturday of Souls 9:00 Matins 10:00 Liturgy 11:00 Memorials
15 Judgement Sunday	16	17	18	19	20	21
					Greek Festival	
22 Forgiveness Sunday 8:45 Matins 9:45 Liturgy 11:00 Forgiveness Vespers Greek Festival	23 Clean Monday <i>Great Lent Begins</i>	24 6:30 PM - Parish Council Meeting	25 6:00 PM-Pre-Sanctified Liturgy	27	27 6:00 PM Salutations & Potluck Lenten Dinner	28 1st Saturday of Lent 9:00 Matins 10:00 Liturgy 11:00 Memorials