

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2

February 2010

FEBRUARY 2010

“...be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

(Romans 12:2)

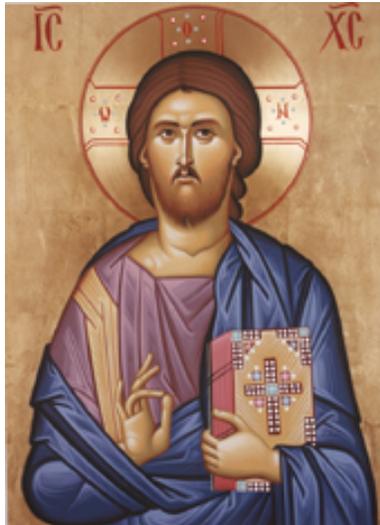
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Recently, a young person asked a question regarding Christian Orthodox Stewardship. The person wanted to know how one might use the “gifts” that have been given to us by our Heavenly Father.

Many people believe that stewardship is related only to money – that the Stewardship Program is merely an economic system for the Church. This simply is not true! There are many things that one can offer to God and His Church along with one’s financial support; among them are time and talents. They too have value!

“Time is money,” people say, and it is unfortunately often times true. There are only so many hours in a day, so many days in a week, so many weeks in a year, and only so many years in a lifetime. Because our time in this world is limited, it has great value. So as we follow Christ, we must ask ourselves from time to time this question; how do we use this precious time? Do we use it for our God and our families, or do we waste it on trivial things? Do we use it constructively, or do we throw away this precious commodity on television, games, gossip and other useless pastimes?

There are many constructive uses of time. For example – prayer, reading Holy Scripture (or lives of the Saints), and ultimately prompt church



attendance. Also, we could include sharing time and showing concern for our loved ones. Other areas of attention might be works of charity – helping the elderly or poor, teaching the faith to others, etc. Our parish has need of your time for many things and many ways. The many organizations – the Parish Council, the Philoptochos (Ladies Philanthropic ministry), the youth programs, the Sunday school, the Greek School, the senior citizens, and the chanters – all could benefit from your time and experience. The

church building and grounds always need to be maintained, this also is an area where we could offer service to God.

“Be transformed,” in other words, rethink your commitment to God and His Church. Think about your time. Do you put it to good use or not? If not, why not start from today and give more of it to God and the Church!

“May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”

In Christ,

+Father Michael

Transfiguration of Our Lord Greek Orthodox Church

414 St. Stephens School Rd, Austin, TX 78746

Phone: (512) 329-6363 Fax: (512) 329-6364

Rev. Michael Lambakis, Parish Priest

Parish Council

Stuart Yoder - Pres.

Brandon Suehs - V.P.

Sophia Khan - Sec.

Elizabeth George - Treas.

Marko Bjeletich

Michael Glaros

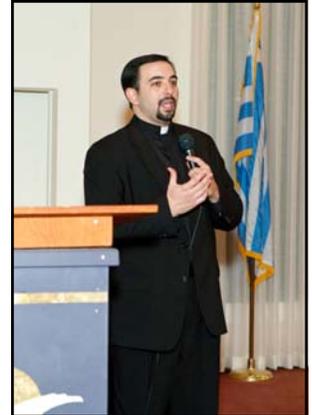
Christopher Harris

Peter Kangos

Steve Levendakes

Nick Spiropoulos

Welcome, Father Michael!

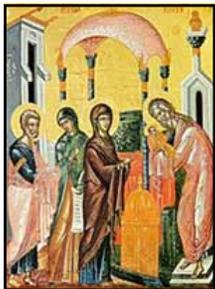


Welcome Reception for Fr. Michael Lambakis and his family on Saturday, January 23rd.

If you did not get to come, you missed a great time!

The Presentation of Our Lord

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.

Reading courtesy of Narthex Press

THE MEANING OF THE GREAT FAST

HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN KALLISTOS WARE

THE FORTY DAYS JOURNEY OF LENT RECALLS IN PARTICULAR THE FORTY YEARS IN WHICH THE CHOSEN PEOPLE JOURNEYED THROUGH THE WILDERNESS. FOR US, AS FOR THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, LENT IS A TIME OF PILGRIMAGE. IT IS A TIME FOR OUR LIBERATION FROM THE BONDAGE OF EGYPT, FROM DOMINATION BY SINFUL PASSIONS; A TIME FOR PROGRESS BY FAITH THROUGH A BARREN AND WATERLESS DESERT; A TIME FOR UNEXPECTED REASSURANCE, WHEN IN OUR HUNGER WE ARE FED WITH MANNA FROM HEAVEN; A TIME WHEN GOD SPEAKS TO US OUT OF THE DARKNESS OF SINAI; A TIME IN WHICH WE DRAW NEAR TO THE PROMISED LAND, TO OUR TRUE HOME IN PARADISE WHOSE DOOR THE CRUCIFIED AND RISEN CHRIST HAS REOPENED FOR US.

A DISTINCTIVE FEATURE OF THE LENTEN WEEKDAYS IS THE 'LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED,' CELEBRATED ACCORDING TO PRESENT PRACTICE ON EACH WEDNESDAY. STRICTLY SPEAKING, THE TERM 'LITURGY' IS A MISNOMER, FOR THERE IS NO EUCHARISTIC CONSECRATION AT THIS SERVICE; IT IS SIMPLY THE OFFICE OF VESPERS, FOLLOWED BY THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION FROM ELEMENTS CONSECRATED ON THE PREVIOUS SUNDAY. THE FULL CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST, BEING ALWAYS A FESTIVE AND TRIUMPHANT EVENT, IS FELT TO BE INCONSISTENT WITH AUSTERITY OF THE WEEKDAY LENTEN FAST; AND SO ALREADY IN THE 4TH CENTURY IT WAS LAID DOWN THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO COMPLETE CELEBRATION OF THE LITURGY DURING LENT EXCEPT ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY. BUT SO AS TO ENABLE THE FAITHFUL TO RECEIVE COMMUNION ON WEEKDAYS IN LENT – FOR IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH IT WAS NORMAL TO COMMUNICATE FREQUENTLY, AND IN SOME PLACES EVEN DAILY – THE ORDER OF THE PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY WAS DEVISED.

MANY MOMENTS IN THE PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY RECALL THE PERIOD WHEN LENT WAS A TIME OF FINAL TRAINING BEFORE THE RECEPTION OF BAPTISM, THE SACRAMENT OF LIGHT OR 'ILLUMINATION'. THUS BETWEEN THE TWO OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS, THE PRIEST, HOLDING THE CENSER AND LIGHTED CANDLE, BLESSES THE CONGREGATION, SAYING: 'THE LIGHT OF CHRIST SHINES UPON ALL'; AND, FOLLOWING THE LITANY FOR THE CATECHUMENS AND THEIR DISMISSAL, THERE IS DURING THE SECOND HALF OF LENT AN ADDITIONAL LITANY 'FOR THOSE WHO ARE READY FOR ILLUMINATION'. EACH TIME WE TAKE PART IN THE LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED, WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES: IN A WORLD THAT IS INCREASINGLY ALIENATED FROM CHRIST, WHAT HAVE I DONE SINCE LAST LENT TO SPREAD THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL? AND WHERE ARE THE CATECHUMENS IN OUR ORTHODOX CHURCHES TODAY?

(A PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY WILL BE CELEBRATED ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 AT 6:00 PM.)

Lenten Prayer of Saint Ephraim of Syria

*Lord and Master of my life, deliver me from the spirit of laziness and meddling,
the lust for power and gossip.*

Rather, grant the spirit of wisdom, humility, patience, and love to me Your servant.

*Yes, Lord and King, grant that I may see my own faults and not judge my brother;
for You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen*

(new translation submitted by His Eminence, Metropolitan Isaiah)



Parish Announcements

A message from our Parish Council President...

Dear fellow parishioners,

2010 is a special year for Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of our founding as a parish. In 1985 our parish began with 17 families, and God has continued to bless us richly. We thank God for our new priest, Father Michael, and his leadership as we look forward to our next 25 years together.

Your participation in the life of our church is key. All of us can make outstanding contributions in our own ways to enrich parish life and the future of our parish. Please consider your own areas of interest and expertise in offering assistance in specific areas where our community needs help in 2010

Maintaining and upgrading our facilities is a priority for us in order to provide a safe, comfortable, and inspiring environment for our life together. In particular, Mount Tabor Hall is now 18 years old and has an increasing number of maintenance issues that need to be addressed.

Specific areas where we could use your help include:

- Transfiguration feast day celebration
- 25th anniversary gala
- Golf tournament
- Facilities support -- plumbing, appliance repair, heating / air conditioning, electrical, carpentry, landscape, pest control, and painting
- Luncheon sponsorships
- Ushering
- Future development planning -- architecture, engineering, construction

You can communicate your availability to help by contacting any council member or completing the back side of the 2010 stewardship pledge card and returning it.

Your financial stewardship is important as well. If you have not completed a 2010 pledge card, please do so as soon as possible. Stewardship packets are available in the narthex of the sanctuary and in the lobby area of Mt. Tabor hall.

Please consider the parish council as always available. All your thoughts and ideas are important and very welcome.

In Christ,
Stuart Yoder

Parish Council News

Congratulations to the new 2010 Parish Council Officers!

Stuart Yoder - President
Brandon Suehs - Vice President
Sophia Khan - Secretary
Elizabeth George - Treasurer

The next Parish Council meeting will be on
Monday, Feb. 8th at 7:00pm.
As always, Council meetings are open to all.

Notice!

Our first General Assembly for 2010 will be held on
Sunday, February 21st.

Baby News!

Congratulations to:

- Christa and Matthew Tracey
on the birth of their daughter, Juliana Rose
on December 28th.
- Cassie and Creed Ford
on the birth of their son, Max
on January 6th.
- Carol and Judd Willmann
on the birth of their daughter, Elise Marie
on January 12th.

Prayers for Healing

*Dolly, Betty, Arlena, Sophie, Archie, Lou,
Thomas, Kathy, Suzanne, Pat, Steve, Nina,
Phyllis, Kathryn, Panayioti, Anna, Margaret,
Sami, Abraham, Mary, George, Susan, Muna,
Matthew, Ellen, Gary, Katina, Nelda, Nick,
Elaine, Fotini, Gerasimos, Malone and family,
Tracy, Richard, Lilly, Kimberly, Dion, Jamil,
Dimitrios*

Philoptochos News

LOVE IS IN THE AIR.... And Philoptochos is going to make sure we capture that mood. We have planned a romantic evening. You will be treated to a delicious dinner that will be served by some very handsome men and desserts that will be served by the sweetest women you would ever want to meet. During dinner you will be entertained by soothing and memorable music performed by several musicians. For your amusement, we will have a silent auction that will prove to be very interesting. And for your entertainment, we will have our own version of the Newlywed Game called the "Goldie Wed" Game with some couples who are very much in love.

DINNER WILL INCLUDE: EGGPLANT PARMESAN, SALAD, DESSERT, COFFEE / BEVERAGES
TICKETS - \$30 PER PERSON (INCLUDES GRATUITIES)

SWEETS FOR THE SWEET...It's mid-February so it must be time for the Philoptochos Chocolate Lover's Bake Sale!

On Valentine's Day, February 14th, directly following the Liturgy we will display a *fabulous* array of delectable, mouth watering, tempting, taste bud tantalizing chocolates of all kinds. It will be designed to make it virtually impossible for you to pass this display without choosing one or two items for your sweetie. So, don't fight it...enjoy it! Have a Happy Valentine's Day!

GOYA 2010 Great Lent Retreat

Attention all GOYANs! (6th Grade - 12th Grade)
you are invited to participate in
the Metropolis of Denver Lenten Retreat

February 26th - 28th

at "The Retreat at Balcones Springs"
in Marble Falls, TX.

Join Fr. Michael, Fr. Jordan and *special guest*,
Fr. Makarios of Boston.

Registration forms are available in the church office.

Registration deadline is February 19th.

Please make your checks payable to
Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church.

"The Retreat" is a beautiful center located 40 minutes
outside of Austin on the north shore of Lake Travis
near Marble Falls. They have charming accommoda-
tions, their own private lake, and a mile of Lake Travis
waterfront and 250 acres of fun and adventure!

GOLF

~ Wednesday Morning Bible Study ~

G.O.L.F. will meet every Wednesday
Morning in February
from 9:30am to 11:30am.

All ladies (with or without kids) are welcome!

*If you cannot attend, but want to be on our email list
(for articles, ladies night out, etc.)*

*please contact Amity Garwood at
amity_garwood@hotmail.com*

Men's Fellowship

Thursday, February 18

(Flavian the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople)
at Mother's Café - 4215 Duval St.

Please! RSVP to Allen Wynn -AWynn3816@gmail.com

GOYA News

Congratulations Basketball Team!

18 GOYANs attended the annual Denver metropolis basketball tournament in Dallas. TGOC was represented by 11 girls and 7 boys along with 3 youth advisors: Georgia Spiropoulos, Thanasi Spiropoulos and Katherine Koinis and coaches, Cynthia and Peter Price. Out of some 25 teams or more, our senior boys took **second** place! This is the first time a team from TGOC advanced that far! The girls team won two of four games which was quite impressive considering this was a first time experience for most of the girls. They worked hard and had an impressive first showing. We are proud of our young GOYANs for their performance and behavior on and off the basketball court. Most impressive was the fact that our GOYANs were well behaved and represented our parish admirably. **The boy's team was awarded the Christian Fellowship award for good behavior and sportsmanship!**

It was a fabulous weekend. We want to thank the many folks that assisted with transport and served as loyal fans: Michael and Beth Daskalantonakis, Kiki and Jerry Benson, Julie and Jerry Jones, Mike and Shelley Ebeling, Sonia and Denis Phocas, Theo and Nicole, Yiayia Betty and Papou Bill.

We would love to have more GOYANs join us next year!



Favorite Vignettes How Orthodox Christians Learned to Give Sacrificially

(Joyfully heard in 23 years of full-time fund raising in the Church)

By Fr. Anthony Scott

When asked how he learned to give so generously, the Serbian Orthodox philanthropist responded, "Well, it says it right there." I responded, "Where does it say it?" Fr. Anthony, it says so right there in the Scriptures - to give generously and humbly. So that is what I do."

When a wealthy Antiochian Orthodox Christian was asked why he was volunteering to serve on so many boards and dedicating himself to family, church and charity after retiring from a very successful career, he responded, "Fr. Anthony, I have to get through the eye of a needle!"

When visiting a young couple with young children about a meaningful capital campaign commitment in a Greek Orthodox parish and being told that they were committing \$100,000, they explained, "Our parents sacrificed and worked for years to build and preserve our parish. We want to follow their good example."

When a very successful businessman was asked how he learned to give so unselfishly he replied, Fr. Anthony, I spent most of my life accumulating, accumulating, accumulating. One night I had a dream in which my dear mother visited me and said, 'Son, you must love the poor.' So like Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas morning, I had a spiritual awakening."

When learning of the \$100,000 annual stewardship commitment of a Deacon and his wife to the local parish, I asked, "How is it that you learned to give so generously?" He responded, "We converted from the Protestant Evangelical community. This is how we always gave. We give away about 20% of our income every year."

Another Orthodox Christian explained, "It was my father who taught me how to give, not the priest. My father sat down with me and taught me to tithe. Every Sunday we would place a tenth of our allowance into our individual envelopes and put them into the offering tray at the church. So I always understood that the first fruits, the first check, the first expenditure each month should be to God."

From an elderly Greek man: "In my youth I was a missionary in Africa. I did this because my bishop in Greece told me that I needed to go. (The elderly Greek man then showed me pictures of himself with 100+ African Orthodox - he the only Caucasian.) I now know that if I do not give to the Orthodox Christian Mission Center to enable other missionaries to go and to serve and to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ, then in my infirm state I will have to get on a plane and go do this because it is the great commandment. I am no longer able to physically respond, so I must give so that someone else may go."

Lastly, after asking a person for \$100,000 to a capital campaign, he responded, "Father, you took all of my tomorrows and made them today. I always said, I'm going to do this or that for the church one day, but today has come. And so I say, 'Yes, I will give \$100,000.'" (Here the joy was also mine because I was a partner with God in helping yet another Orthodox Christian discover the joy of sacrificial giving.)

St. Clement of Alexandria Speaks

Riches should be possessed in a becoming manner, shared generously, not mechanically and ostentatiously. We should take care not to turn the love of the beautiful into the love of self, lest someone say to us: "His horse, or land, or servant, or gold plate is worth fifteen talents; but he himself costs only three cents."

Bookstore News

LENTEN READINGS:

The Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church has several books for lenten reading in stock from such known authors as St. John Climacus (The Ladder), Fr. Thomas Hopko, Fr. J. D. Hunnecutt, and Johanna Manley.

We have just ordered more texts and supplies. So come and see.

2010 STEWARDSHIP

Updated as of 01/24/10



Dr. & Mrs. Lou Apostolakis	Mr. & Mrs. James George	Mr. & Mrs. Tahseen Khan	Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Rodis
Dr. & Mrs. Jacob Angelo	Mr. & Mrs. George	Mr. & Mrs. Spyros Kinnas	Mr. & Mrs. Shane Sewell
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Appling	Gianakopoulos	Mr. & Mrs. Antonio Latto	Mr. Lance Shannon
Mr. & Mrs. Bart Arnold	Mr. Demetri Giannopoulos	Mr. William Leara	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Shannon
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Benas	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Gimenez	Mr. & Mrs. Lee Leatherwood	Ms. Pat Shotwell
Dn. & Prva. George Bithos	Ms. Christina Glarakis	Mr. Steve Levendakes	Mr. & Mrs. George Simbles
Mr. & Mrs. Marko Bjeletich	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Glaros	Mr. & Mrs. Archie Meador	Mr. & Mrs. John Skevofilax
Ms. Maria G. Burke	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Gouris	Mr. & Mrs. Petros Misetzis	Mr. & Mrs. Nicolaos Spiropoulos
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Burks	Mr. & Mrs. John Halter	Ms. Bess Mitchell	Mr. & Mrs. Karl Stahlke
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Burns	Mr. & Mrs. Mark Hammond	Mr. & Mrs. Xenophon Nikas	Mr. & Mrs. Harry Stamatis
Mrs. Despina Carter	Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Harris	Mr. & Mrs. Jim Norman	Ms. Sue Stevens
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Colovas	Dr. James Hitt	Mr. & Mrs. Shawn O'Brien	Mr. & Mrs. Michael Strong
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Delvizio	Mrs. Virginia Hobbs	Mr. & Mrs. David Omer	Mr. & Mrs. Brandon Suehs
Mr. & Mrs. Alex Demetriadis	Mr. & Mrs. Erwin Hockens	Mr. & Mrs. Ioannis Ousaklidis	Miss Michele S. Suehs
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph DeRossi	Mr. & Mrs. David Horwedel	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Papadatos	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Suehs
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Dow	Mr. & Mrs. Lucas Jacomides	Mr. & Mrs. Angelo Papaspiros	Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Thanos
Mrs. Judy Eagle	Mr. Ron Jernigan	Ms. Gretchen Papazis	Ms. Debbie Tindle
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Ebeling	Mrs. Gwen Elizabeth Jerome	Mr. & Mrs. John Peet	Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Tsihlas
Fr. & Prva. David Eckley	Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Jones	Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Peppas	Mr. & Mrs. Allen Wynn
Mr. Richard Edgell	Mr. & Mrs. Johnny Justice	Mr. & Mrs. Denis Phocas	Mr. & Mrs. Sami Yagnam
Mr. John Esper	Mr. Ted Kalenterides	Mr. & Mrs. Ken Pon	Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Yoder
Mr. & Mrs. Costas Evgenides	Ms. Nici Kalogirou	Mr. & Mrs. Peter Price	Mr. & Mrs. Elias Zachos
Mr. & Mrs. Jason Garwood	Dr. James Kalpaxis	Mr. & Mrs. Jamal Qatato	Mr. & Mrs. Efstathios Zotis
Mrs. Pat Gatlin	Dr. & Mrs. Peter Kangos	Mr. & Mrs. Jim Roberts	
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony George	Ms. Vana Kersch	Mr. & Mrs. William Robertson	

Almsgiving above all else requires money, but even this shines with a brighter luster when the alms are given from our poverty. The widow who paid in the two mites was poorer than any human, but she outdid them all. St. John Chrysostom

The Stewardship Committee would like to extend a big THANK YOU to all the parishioners who responded to the Stewardship Sunday appeal for 2010. This is the first time that we have incorporated Stewardship Sunday programming into our parish life and the response was overwhelming. Thank you again.

The Stewardship Committee is in the process of mailing out the end-of-year 2009 stewardship statements. Please keep an eye out for your statement, and if you have not received your statement by February 1, please contact either Brandon or Marko. The 2009 stewardship totals are summarized below:

We had 140 pledged stewards who contributed a total of \$173,067 on pledges of \$176,229.

We ended the year approximately \$50,000 short of the budgeted 2009 stewardship income, and approximately \$20,000 less than the previous year 2008 stewardship contributions.

There were a total of 195 donors during 2009, contributing a total of \$209,596.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Transfiguration during 2009, especially in the midst of what was a very trying economic environment. If you have not yet turned in a stewardship card for 2010 and would like to do so, please contact Brandon or Marko and ask for a stewardship packet. This information can also be found in the narthex of the Sanctuary and in the Mt. Tabor hall. We would also like to remind you that submission of a stewardship pledge card is necessary in order to vote in Parish General Assemblies and in order to vote in Parish Council elections at the end of the year. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding stewardship please do not hesitate to discuss them with Fr. Michael, Brandon, or Marko.

In the service of His Church,
Brandon Suehs
Marko Bjeletich

TRANSFIGURATION
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*TRANSFIGURATION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER*

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

Call to schedule

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Please schedule Memorial Services through the Office. Memorials will be offered *only* at Saturday Great Vespers, unless it is a 40-day or 1 year memorial, which may be offered at Saturday Great Vespers or following Divine Liturgy on Sundays.

FEAST DAYS & FAST DAYS

PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

ORTHROS - 8:00AM; LITURGY - 9:00AM

SATURDAY OF SOULS - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6

ORTHROS - 8:30AM; LITURGY - 9:30AM

SATURDAY OF SOULS - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13

ORTHROS - 8:30AM; LITURGY - 9:30AM

SATURDAY OF SOULS - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20

ORTHROS - 8:30AM; LITURGY - 9:30AM

PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24 - 6:00PM

SALUTATIONS TO THE THEOTOKOS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26 - 7:00PM