

St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church

a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
His Eminence Metropolitan SABA, Archbishop of New York &
Metropolitan of all North America

His Grace Bishop THOMAS, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Oakland & MidAtlantic

The Very Reverend Father Samuel Haddad, Pastor

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Tone 4

February 22, 2026

Eothinon 4

SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS (CHEESE FARE)

UNCOVERING OF THE SEVEN MARTYRS' RELICS AT GATE OF EUGENIOS IN CONSTANTINOPLE;
MARTYR ANTHUSA AND HER TWELVE SERVANTS

Today's Reader: Isaiah Benefield

Next Sunday— March 1, 2026

Reader: Ryan Jackson

Commemorations/Bread Offering for the Holy Oblation: The Owens Family

The Luncheon next Sunday is Pot-Luck—Bring a Lenten Dish to Share

Bread for the Holy Oblation is offered for the Health and Salvation of Gia, Stephen, Varic, Winter, Pierce, Willow and members of the Meiggs and McDonald Families.

It is also Given In Loving Memory of the departed members of the Meiggs and McDonald Families.

"the Disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26)

Please note that **Holy Communion is reserved for members of the Holy Orthodox Church** who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and confession. However, all are welcome to partake of the blessed bread at the dismissal.

Please join us during our fellowship at the **Coffee Hour** immediately after the Divine Liturgy.



Following this morning's Divine Liturgy, we will immediately celebrate **Forgiveness Vespers**, after which we will observe the **Ceremony of Mutual Forgiveness**. Fr. Samuel will give directions to guide this opportunity to offer our heartfelt expression in asking and receiving forgiveness of our brothers and sisters in Christ:

We say to each other :

"Forgive me, a sinner!" We then respond "God forgives!"

On Sunday, February 22nd, we observe **Cheese-Fare Sunday**. On Monday, February 23rd we begin the **Great Lenten Fast** and eliminate all meat and dairy products from our diet.

Next Sunday is the **Sunday of Orthodoxy**, the first Sunday of Great Lent. After the Divine Liturgy, we will commemorate the return of the Icons to the Church by the 7th Ecumenical Council, and indeed, all that is preserved in our Holy Orthodox Faith that we call Holy Tradition with a **Procession of Holy Icons**.

Remember to bring your favorite Icon to carry in the Procession of Icons. If you happen to forget to bring it, we will have an Icon for you to carry.

Also, we have been invited to come to St George Cathedral in Charleston to join them for Sunday Lenten Vespers for the Sunday of Orthodoxy, followed by a Lenten Pot Luck Dinner. Vespers begins at 5pm At St Goerge Cathedral. All are welcome.

"Blessings Box" Collection Update



Beloved in Christ,

This year, we are collecting non-perishable food for our new **BLESSING BOX!** PLEASE KEEP BRINGING FOOD so that we may continue to stock our shelves and have food to stock adequately. We need to continue our efforts in providing food for those who are truly Hungry. God bless everyone for your holy efforts!

Troparion of the Resurrection, in the Fourth Tone

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying, Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

Troparion of St. Nicholas, in the Fourth Tone

Thy righteous acts have manifested thee to thy flock as a model of faith, a reflection of humility, and a teacher of abstinence, O Father Bishop Nicholas. Therefore, through humility thou hast achieved exaltation, and through poverty riches. Intercede thou with Christ to save our souls.

Kontakion for the Sunday of Forgiveness, in the Sixth Tone

O Thou Who guidest to wisdom, and givest understanding and intelligence, the Instructor of the ignorant, and Helper of the poor, strengthen my heart and grant it understanding, O Master. Give me word, O Word of the Father; for behold, I shall not refrain my lips from crying to Thee, O merciful One, have mercy upon me who am fallen.

**Epistle**

Romans 13:11-14:4

Prokeimenon: SiO Lord, how magnified are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Brethren, salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand.

Gospel

Matthew 6:14-21

The Lord said to His Disciples, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."



Forgiveness Sunday and the Ceremony of Mutual Forgiveness Cheesefare Sunday

Today is the last Sunday before Great Lent begins which is called Forgiveness Sunday. This evening, we will celebrate the Vespers of Forgiveness Sunday, the service in the Orthodox Church which inaugurates the Great Fast. This morning after the Divine Liturgy will serve the Lenten Sunday Vespers of Forgiveness Sunday followed by the Ceremony of Mutual Forgiveness which is the way Orthodox Christians begin the Season of Repentance. As we hear in the Gospel lesson for the Sunday of Forgiveness "... if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Mt.6:14-15)

Logically speaking how can we engage the Season of Repentance in spirit and in truth, begging God to forgive us our sins, and yet not forgive others theirs against us? That's kind of like a double standard. In other words, Great Lent is the Season which teaches us to hope on the forgiveness of God. We repent hoping on His forgiveness. What hope do we have of God's forgiveness if we ourselves cannot give the same forgiveness to others? Simply put, God does not, really cannot, forgive those who hold grudges, those who harden their hearts towards others, those who lack love towards others, those who do not in their hearts allow the forgiveness of God towards them to flow towards others.

The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, has always understood this fundamental foundation of the Lenten Journey. The journey cannot even begin without mutual, self-sacrificing, total and complete forgiveness of each other. It is no accident that we begin with forgiveness and we end with it too. We are eventually brought to the base of the Cross after the 40 day Fast and the Great and Holy Week and we hear some of the last words of Jesus Christ during His earthly life, "Father, **forgive them**, for they know not what they do." That forgiveness is the way God's saving love came into the world. Our forgiveness towards each other is the way we perpetuate God's love in the world. The victory over sin and death that was won by Christ on the Cross is ultimately shared by each of us when we forgive each other. In that way the Kingdom of Heaven, in all its fullness, comes into our lives at the very moment we forgive. It is in the face of that Kingdom that repentance can begin for us. "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" Jesus said. That repentance cannot begin in the Lenten Season without first forgiving each other.

So the Church, by God's guidance, even gives us a specific Ceremony of Mutual Forgiveness to help us lay the foundation necessary for us to engage the Season of Repentance. Come and enjoy the blessings that God offers in and through His Church. Come and give yourself to God and each other in mutual, self-sacrificing, and complete forgiveness. Come and begin the Lenten Season as God gives us to in His Church.

We say to each other "Forgive me, a sinner!"

We then respond "God forgives!"

2026 Triodion and Great Lent		
2/22/26 (Sun)	O,DL 12:15 pm	Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare Sunday) Forgiveness Vespers and Rite of Forgiveness (After Divine Liturgy)
Great Lent Begins 2/23/2026		
2/23/26 (Mon)	6:00 pm	Great Compline w/quarter from Canon of St Andrew of Crete
2/24/26 (Tue)	6:00 pm	Great Compline w/quarter from Canon of St Andrew of Crete
2/25/26 (Wed)	6:00 pm	Presanctified Divine Liturgy followed by presentation
2/26/26 (Thu)	6:00 pm	Great Compline w/quarter from Canon of St Andrew of Crete
2/27/26 (Fri)	6:00 pm	Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos (1st Stasis)
3/1/26 (Sun)	O,DL	Sunday of Orthodoxy (followed by procession of the Icons)
3/4/26 (Wed)	6:00 pm	Presanctified Divine Liturgy followed by presentation
3/5/26 (Thu)	6:00 pm	Great Compline
3/6/26 (Fri)	6:00 pm	Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos (2nd Stasis)
3/8/26 (Sun)	O,DL	Sunday of St Gregory Palamas
3/11/26 (Wed)	6:00 pm	Presanctified Divine Liturgy followed by presentation
3/12/26 (Thu)	6:00 pm	Great Compline
3/13/26 (Fri)	6:00 pm	Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos (3 rd Stasis)
3/15/26 (Sun)	O,DL	Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross – Procession w/Decorated Cross
3/18/26 (Wed)	6:00 pm	Presanctified Divine Liturgy followed by presentation
3/19/26 (Thu)	6:00 pm	Great Compline
3/18/2026 (Fri)	6:00 pm	Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos (4th Stasis)
3/22/26 (Sun)	O,DL	Sunday of St John Climacus
3/23/26 (Mon)	6:00 pm	Little Compline w/Life of St. Mary of Egypt & Full Canon of St. Andrew
3/24/26 (Tue)	5:00 pm 6:00 pm	Festal Orthros for the Feast of the Annunciation Festal Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Annunciation
3/25/26 (Wed)	6:00 pm	Great Vespers for the Leavetaking of the Feast of the Annunciation
3/26/26 (Thu)	6:00 pm	Presanctified Divine Liturgy followed by presentation
3/27/26 (Fri)	6:00 pm	Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos (Full)
3/29/26 (Sun)	O,DL	Sunday of the St. Mary of Egypt
4/1/26 (Wed)	6:00 pm	Presanctified Divine Liturgy followed by presentation
4/2/26 (Thu)	6:00 pm	Great Compline
4/3/26 (Fri)	6:00 pm	Little Compline w/Canon of the Raising of Lazarus
4/4/26 (Sat)	10:00 am	Divine Liturgy (Chrysostom) for Lazarus Saturday
4/4/26 (Sat)	5:00 pm	Festal Great Vespers for Palm Sunday
4/5/26 (Sun)	O,DL	Palm Sunday
Please check the schedule published in the Bulletin each week.		

Calendar for the Week of February 22, 2026	Saints of the Day
Sunday—February 22, 2026 Forgiveness Sunday Cheesefare Sunday 9:20 am Orthros 10:30 am Divine Liturgy 12:00 pm Lenten Sunday Vespers—Sunday of Forgiveness/Rite of Forgiveness 2:00 Youth Activity	Finding of the Relics of the Saints that were in Eugenius
Monday— February 23, 2026 Strict Fast 6:00 Great Compline/1st Qtr Canon of St Andrew Great Lent Begins	Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna
Tuesday—February 24, 2026 Strict Fast 6:00 Great Compline/2ndQtr Canon of St Andrew	Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist
Wednesday—February 25, 2026 Strict Fast 6:00 pm Presanctified Divine Liturgy Pot-luck Lenten Dinner/Presentation “Holy Anaphora of St Basil the Great”	Tarasius the Archbishop of Constantinople
Thursday—February 26, 2026 Strict Fast 6:00 Great Compline/4th Qtr Canon of St Andrew	Dorphyrus, Bishop of Gaza
Friday—February 27, 2026 Strict Fast 6:00 Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos w/Little Compline—1st Stasis	Procopius of Baniyas
Saturday—February 28, 2026 Strict Fast 5:00 pm Great Vespers Confessions afterward	Basil the Confessor
Sunday—March 1, 2026 Sunday of Orthodoxy 9:25 am - Orthros 9:30 am - High School 10:00 am – Youth Ministry 10:30 am - Divine Liturgy After Liturgy- Junior & Youngsters Church School Sunday of Orthodoxy	Eudocia the Righteous Martyr
<p><i>Please note</i> that Confessions are heard at the time noted above in the coming week’s schedule, or by appointment by calling Fr. Samuel at: ((304) 541-8550</p>	

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
2026 Presentations

Given after the Presanctified Divine Liturgy during Great Lent

It is our tradition, following each of the six Presanctified Divine Liturgies during Great Lent (each Wednesday at 6:00 pm) to have a Lenten Pot-luck Dinner and a spiritual presentation.

“The Holy Anaphora of St. Basil the Great”

One writer once said that the "Eucharistic celebration is the sublime expression of the Christian Faith." Without a doubt, all Faithful Orthodox Christians know this to be true and the core of their spiritual life in Christ and His Holy Church. On the Sundays of Great Lent, we will experience what is, for the most part, the same Divine Liturgy we know so well yet called by a different name: **The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great** – and in it, we find some very noticeable differences. One of these differences is the reading of long, beautiful prayers by the Priest, one of which is “**The Holy Anaphora of St. Basil the Great**”. This series of Presentations will examine this rich set of prayers so that we can glean all that we can from the Divine Liturgy celebrated during the Holy Season of Great Lent.

Presentation I – (2/25/2026): Introduction to the Study of the Anaphora of St. Basil the Great

Presentation II (3/4/2026): We begin the study of the prayers of the Anaphora of St. Basil the Great with the following:

1. Opening Dialogue ("Lift up your hearts . . .");
2. Preface (adoration of the Holy Trinity)
3. *Presanctus* (references to angelic worship, leading to *Sanctus*);
4. *Sanctus* ("Holy, holy, holy . . .")

Presentation III (3/11/2026): In this session we will study what is perhaps the most distinctive prayer in the Anaphora of St. Basil the Great:

5. *Postsanctus* (confession of Trinity's divine economy of salvation)

Presentation IV (3/18/2026): We continue our study with the following prayers of the Anaphora:

6. Institution Narrative (“take, eat . . . Drink this all of you . . .”);
7. Anamnesis (remembrance of Christ, with parallels to second article of Creed);
8. Offering of sacrifice;
9. Epiklesis (invocation of Holy Spirit to 'consecrate' both people and offering)

Presentation V (3/26/2026 – Thursday): In this session we will briefly review what has occurred so far in the Anaphora, up until the Epiklesis, and will continue to the end with the following prayers:

10. Intercessions for Church and world (stemming from Epiklesis);
11. Doxology of the Holy Trinity

Presentation VI (3/31/2026): Conclusion of the study of the Anaphora of St. Basil the Great. We will consider how our worship been impacted by the knowledge of all that we have learned in these presentations.

General Rules of the Lenten Fast

The Lenten Fast rules that we observe today were established within the monasteries of the Orthodox Church during the sixth through eleventh centuries. These rules are intended for all Orthodox Christians, not just monks and nuns.

The first week of Lent is especially strict. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, a total fast is kept. In practice, very few people are able to do this. Some find it necessary to eat a little each day after sunset. Many faithful do fast completely on Monday and then eat only uncooked food (*bread, fruit, nuts*) on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday, the fast is kept until after the Presanctified Liturgy.

From the second through the sixth weeks of Lent, the general rules for fasting are practiced. Meat, animal products (*cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard*), fish (*meaning fish with backbones*), olive oil and wine (*all alcoholic drinks*) are not consumed during the weekdays of Great Lent. Octopus and shell-fish are allowed, as is vegetable oil. On weekends, olive oil and wine are permitted.

According to what was done in the monasteries, one meal a day is eaten on weekdays and two meals on weekends of Great Lent. No restriction is placed on the amount of food during the meal, though moderation is always encouraged in all areas of one's life at all times.

Fish, oil and wine are allowed on the Feast of the Annunciation (*March 25*) and on Palm Sunday (*one week before Easter*). On other feast days, such as the First and Second Finding of the Head of Saint John the Baptist (*February 24*), the Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (*March 9*), the Forefeast of the Annunciation (*March 24*) and the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel (*March 26*), wine and oil are permitted.

