

February 22, 2015

FIRST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ICONS



Divine Liturgy Schedule

Feb. 21 (Sat) **Vigil Divine Liturgy of St. Basil** 5:00pm
Marina Novotnak—16th Birthday req'd by Family

Feb. 22(Sun) **First Sunday of the Great Fast**
Sunday of the Holy Icons
Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:30am
+Anna & Arnold Krohmaly req'd by Mary Soltis

Feb. 24(Tue) **Lenten Service & Enrichment Session** 9:00am

Feb. 25(Wed) Presanctified Liturgy 7:00pm

Feb. 27(Fri) Presanctified Liturgy 7:00pm
Hramoty: Remembrances of the Names of the Departed

Feb. 28(Sat) Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 5:00pm
+William Cook req'd by MaryAnn & Ted Druga

Mar.1(Sun) **Second Sunday of the Great Fast**
St. Gregory Palamas
Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:30am
+Catherine Wesdock req'd by Julee Lindberg Family



THE SANCTUARY LAMP

Continues to burn before the presence of Our Risen Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ in our church during the week of Feb. 22 thru Feb. 28 for the deceased members of our parish.

February 15, 2015

Sunday collection: \$1,109.00

PRAYER LIST

Let us remember in our prayers all of our Friends and Parish Families members who are sick at home or in a nursing facility and for all those who are in need of our prayers.

James Abraham, Tillie Abraham, Diane Abraham, George Bodnar , Marian Campbell, Rose Chomanics, John Fekete, Richard Heckel, Marie Klotz, Alice Kohan, Fran Mogush, Fr. Anselm Orlosky, Joseph Rusinko, Maria Rusinko, Terry Soltis, Cecelia Stephan, Margaret Weber, John Voron Sr.,

IN YOUR PRAYERS ...

Please remember one of our parishioners, Mr George Bodnar, who was recently discharged from the hospital and is now recuperating at home. May the Lord grant him healing and strength and a return to good health.



BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP



The Pastoral Care Department at UPMC McKeesport will be conducting a six-week Bereavement Support Group beginning Thursday, 5 March 2015 and continuing until Thursday, 9 April 2015 from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm.

The Bereavement Support Group is for anyone who has lost a loved one. The program is free to the public. Parking tokens will be provided to those who are registered for the program.

Participants will join with others who have suffered a loss and will, hopefully, find comfort in just knowing they are not alone. Although we encourage active sharing among the participants, we respect each other's right to privacy. All sessions are kept confidential.



SUNDAY OF THE HOLY ICONS

*As a precious adornment the Church of Christ
has received the venerable and holy icons
of Christ the Savior, the Mother of God and all the Saints.
Celebrating now their triumphant restoration,
she is made bright with grace and splendor...
With great rejoicing she gives glory to God...
who voluntarily suffered his Passion for us.*

One of the most distinctive aspects of the Byzantine Tradition is the use of *icons*. Icons are used to cover the walls of churches, to be venerated by kissing; they are used in our homes as signs of God's presence in our midst. In a word, they are all around us.

Icons speak a *language* ... they are a way of communication. Through them God speaks to us ... not in words, but in images.

They speak to us of a *new way of seeing* ... a way of seeing the world as God intended it.

We often think that our eyes see clearly ... that we see things just the way they are. But, in reality, we can only see in a broken and disfigured manner ... because we are all sinful. We can only see through the eyes of the broken world ... a world that can be selfish ... hostile ... cold and unloving.

At other times, we only see what we *want to see*. Our vision is limited by our own smallness ... by our own prejudices ... or by what we are looking for.

Icons purposely look different. They jar us into seeing in a new way. They invite us to see *possibilities* ... the world that is *transfigured* ... *transformed* ... a world which is truly the reflection of God's image.

On this Sunday, we are invited to try to see in a new way ... to see this world as God's creation ... to see each other as an image of God.

Photos From the St Stephen's Dinner

You probably noticed the very nice display of photos from our St Stephen's Dinner several weeks ago. Most everyone was captured in one of the photos (except those who somehow escaped the roving eye of the photographer!). They provide some wonderful memories of that special day in the life of our parish.

If you would like a copy of any of the photos please contact Kristen Keleschenyi at: 412.726.0607 or via email at: kbishop25@hotmail.com. She will be happy to arrange for you to receive these photos.

MANY, MANY THANKS!!!

Yes, many thanks to the wonderful group of women and men who were so faithful and generous in offering their time and energy to our parish Pirohy Project. In addition to getting a great deal of work done in record time, everyone had a wonderful time and went home happy and gratified. There will be many grateful and well-fed folks all through Westmoreland County and beyond!

HAM BINGOS



St Stephen Church Ham Bingo

Sunday, March 15, 2015

1:00pm—4:00pm

Doors open at noon

**Donations of Coke/Pepsi cases, water,
in date pantry items, Chinese auction items
and door prizes are needed.**

For more information contact Julee Lindberg 724-864-3772

St Nicholas Church Ham Bingo

622 E. Pittsburgh Street

Greensburg, Pa.

Sunday, March 8, 2015

THE GREAT FAST

Why does the Byzantine Church begin Lent on a Monday ... and the Roman Catholic & Protestant Churches begin on Ash Wednesday?

[Warning! There's going to be some Math involved!]



The number 40 is a very significant one in the entire Judeo-Christian tradition. It is mentioned in the Bible many times, and it usually means a time of testing or a time of trial. In the Old Testament, the flood of Noah lasted 40 days and 40 nights. Moses was on the mountain for 40 days. Elijah fasted for 40 days before meeting God. The Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years. In the New Testament, Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and there he was tempted by Satan.

Thus the Christian tradition sees the 40 days as our time of preparation, our time of testing, and our time of waiting for the Lord. It is our time of preparing ourselves for the celebration of Pascha (NB: *Pascha* is the Christian name for the feast of the resurrection; *Easter* is the secular name for this feast).

Now, here comes the Math! How do we count these 40 days before Pascha? In the Roman Church, the 40 days are numbered as six weeks of six days each (Sundays are not counted). Then four more days are added to make the 40 days, thus beginning on a Wednesday, called Ash Wednesday.

In the Byzantine Churches, the 40 days are counted consecutively, including Sundays. So, from the first day of the Great Fast, count 40 days, and we come to the Saturday before Palm Sunday, which is called Lazarus Saturday. On this day, we commemorate the raising of Lazarus because the Gospel tells us that Jesus raised him eight days before the resurrection. The next day is Palm Sunday and this leads us into Holy Week.

Thus, in the Byzantine Tradition, the 40 days are our *preparation for Holy Week*. Holy Week is seen as a time apart; it has its own integrity and its own meaning. It has a special character and the Liturgical Services are like none other.

And so, the Great Fast is our preparation for the events of Jerusalem, which is called the Great and Holy Week. It is then Holy Week that leads us to Pascha.

What is the meaning of the “strict fast” (no meat or dairy products)?

This is a great question also. On days of fasting, Roman Catholics typically abstain from meat products. Most Protestants don't have given times for fasting; at most, it is seen as an individual ascetical effort.



However, in the Byzantine tradition, both Catholic and Orthodox, fasting is an important part of our spiritual life. It is a way of doing penance and a way of preparing ourselves for something important.

Now, a bit of Bible background will help. Remember the story of Adam and Eve and the fall from Paradise. Well, it is seen by the Byzantine Church as their *refusal to fast* ... their *gluttony* that caused them to reject God's command and to reach out and grasp the forbidden fruit from tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They are expelled from Paradise because they refused to fast as God had commanded them to do.

When we fast, we are seeking to undo what Adam and Eve did. We fast in order to return to Paradise which had been lost through gluttony. And, if we read the story of Adam and Eve in Paradise, we see also that God gave them all the seed-bearing plants and fruits of the trees to eat (Genesis 1:29). There is no mention of them ever eating animal products. The eating of meat is only mentioned after the flood at the time of Noah.

Thus, when we fast in a more strict manner, we also fast from meat and all animal products (eggs, milk, cheese, butter, etc.). We are literally returning to paradise, to live as Adam and Eve lived before the fall.

Now we know