

# St. Mary's Orthodox Church

217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218-1602

Phone.....570-645-2772

**OUR WEBSITE...[www.stmarysnativity.org](http://www.stmarysnativity.org)**

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic

Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky

Choir Director: Wash King

**Sunday, April 12, 2020**

**Palm Sunday**

Tone 2– Page 38

**Prokeimenon – Tone 4 – Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.  
The Lord is God and hath revealed Himself to us.**

Epistle Reading: Philippians 4:4-9

Gospel Reading: John 12:1-18

***Glory Be To Jesus Christ!***

***Glory Be Forever!***

## **All liturgical services are cancelled until further notice!**

This includes Divine Liturgy, Akathist, Vespers, Parastas, etc. and all meetings and events at the church.

Please read the **Epistle, Gospel and Scripture Readings** on OCA website or use your bible with the Readings listed on the Church Calendar during this period of time.

**As Metropolitan Tikhon's address on the OCA.ORG website, St. Mary's Orthodox Church will not hold services until further notice. Streaming of services will be available by going to the DOEPA.ORG website and follow the instructions or OCA.ORG website and click on Coronavirus Resources (right side of page). Scroll down to Liturgical and Spiritual Resources and Several OCA churches doing live streams.**

Please use this time to read the Scriptures, pray in your home and please pray for those on our prayer list. If you wish to have a bees wax candle lit in the church, please call the rectory and Father James will light the candle (please include the name and date).

**Prayer List: HEAVENLY FATHER ... Physician of our souls and bodies, Who has sent your only begotten Son to heal every sickness and infirmity, visit us and heal us, Your servants, from all physical and spiritual ailments through the grace of Your Son Jesus Christ; grant to us patience in this sickness, strength of body and spirit, and recovery of health. Lord, You have taught us through Your word to pray for each other that we may be healed. You are the source of healing and to You, we give glory; to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Matushka Lovey Ropitsky, Matushka Lisa Weremedic, Michael Birozik, James Blair, Terry Blair, Clark Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Jane Bubernak, Cecil Buchanan, Stephanie Chmel, Edward Conarty, Irene David, Ilene Devine, Gloria Ferri, Julia Forte, Olga Hebda, John King, Claire Kononchuk, Michael Kulick, John Kushnir, Helen Macenka, MaryAnn Macenka, Mary Maholick, Alexandra Miller, Courtney Miller, Mildred O'Shura, Anna Pisko, Helen Scheese, Melissa Schmitt, Althea Shellock, Helen Suda, Martha Stafiniak, Martha Teno, Nancy Vanno, Russell Wishousky, Russell Yallas, & Richard York

**April Birthdays:** 3- Anna Pisko, 4- Elizabeth Warcholak, 10- Jackie Babinetz, 14- Marie Yurchak, 16- Mary Evetushick, 17- Julie McHugh, Anastasia Babinetz 22- Martha Teno, Amanda Skripnek, 23- Britney Miller, Anne Ostrosky, 24- Dennis Vavra

**April Wedding Anniversaries:** None

## Local On-line Services:

Go to the Diocese of Eastern PA website at the bottom of our church website.

At the top of the page – Click on Live Streaming

Move cursor over the church for Service Schedule and other information

Click on Live Stream

Watch Live Stream at the appointed time or scroll down the page to watch replays

You may need to click on the word “Videos” (on left side of the page)

Churches: Christ the Saviour, Holy Apostles, Holy Trinity, Holy Annunciation, Holy Cross,  
St. Stephen's, St. Nicholas, Holy Assumption, and Holy Transfiguration Monastery  
St. Nicholas Orthodox Church – Mogadore, OH – You Tube

Services every day of the week – Mon. to Fri. at 7:00 PM

Sat. Great Vespers at 5:00 PM; Sun Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM

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If anyone is in need of a priest please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772 ..... Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory. Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency.

**Financials April 1-8, 2020 Operating Acct:** -Dues 0 – Candles 0 – Weekly 66 – Non-Env 0 – Holy Days 0 – Altar Candles 0 – Pascha Offerings 20 – Donations 100 = Total \$ 186.00

Building Fund 0- ...Charity Donation 0- ...Furnace Fund 0- ...Cemetery 0...Flowers 10 ... Thank you.

**April 1-8 income –\$186.00; April 1-8 expenses - \$870.57**

**During this period of time, please sent your envelopes using checks to the Church at 217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218.**

### **April 12 – HAVE NO ANXIETY!**

“The 40 days of Great Lent are over. The agony of re-living Christ's Passion lies ahead. In a sense, then, Palm Sunday weekend may be described as a ‘time of transition.’ It is a busy liturgical period, as we commemorate Christ's raising of His friend Lazarus from his four days in the tomb, and as we celebrate our Lord's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday. Today we receive blessed palms and branches in remembrance of this joyous event.

We must not, however, overlook the message that St. Paul places before us in today's epistle lesson: ‘THE LORD IS NEAR! HAVE NO ANXIETY, BUT IN EVERYTHING MAKE YOUR REQUESTS KNOWN TO GOD IN PRAYER AND PETITION WITH THANKSGIVING.’ Some may take issue with this great Christian missionary. How can we avoid anxiety in today's world? But St. Paul writes to us with experience this morning. He writes these words from a jail cell, awaiting death! Despite these anxious surroundings, St. Paul cheerfully instructs us to turn to the Lord in time of trouble, and He will enter our hearts and minds, providing us with inner peace.

Today we proclaim Christ to be our King. Next Sunday, we will sing His praises as our Saviour. If this is to be meaningful for us, we must follow St. Paul's advice provided through his letter to the Philippians. By the nature of our human existence, problems and anxieties will always be with us. We can conquer and control them, however, IF we believe in, and IF we ask for assistance from the One Who conquered EVERY problem and anxiety, including death!”

*The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin .... Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey...USA*

**Statement of the ACOB-USA Executive Committee  
Concerning Holy Week and Pascha (Easter)  
April 3, 2020**

**To the Clergy and Faithful Orthodox Christians of the United States of America:**

**During this period of crisis, we, members of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, are meeting in conference call sessions every Friday to continually monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, we discuss both pastoral and practical matters concerning the operational situation of our churches. As such, allow us first to thank all the medical health professionals, first responders, delivery personnel, and clergy who put themselves on the front lines in a sacrificial manner for the protection of our health and salvation.**

**We are facing unprecedented circumstances in extraordinary times. Many guidelines from various jurisdictions, following State and Federal regulations as well as CDC recommendations, have been successfully implemented in parishes around the country, helping to slow the spread of COVID19. After consultation with public health and insurance officials, law enforcement, theologians, and pastoral care professionals, we, members of the Executive Committee, have reached a consensus concerning Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Pascha (Easter) and strongly encourage all Bishops of the Assembly to implement the following recommendations:**

- 1. Services, celebrated by a maximum of five people consisting of a Priest, a Deacon, Chantor(s), and/or Server(s), continue in the churches and may be streamed online for the faithful to pray from their homes.**
- 2. None of the traditional material offerings are to be distributed to the faithful in any way, including palms and/or pussy willows, flowers, candles, and eggs, etc.**
- 3. Spiritual guidance may be heard over the phone, but the implementation of the Sacrament of Confession and Prayer of Absolution remains at the discretion of the local Bishop.**

**Whereas some Bishops might implement more stringent practices out of love and concern for their flock and broader society, less stringent approaches will put the Faithful and their Clergy at high risk and should be avoided by all Bishops.**

**These measures mitigate the risk of transmission due to proximity. We affirm that the Eucharist is truly the Body and truly the Blood of Christ. These measures should in no way be seen to diminish this sacred and eternal Truth.**

**The Church presently calls upon us, as the source of blessings, to nurture us in the commandments of Christ and lead us to His Kingdom. As the Church tells us when to fast, and when not to fast, we listen and do our best to obey these instructions. In like manner, when we suffer together in our isolation and are unable even to receive the Eucharist because of mandated distancing, we are in reality, due to circumstance, also in full communion as the Body of Christ. As we unite – as faithful Christians, as a nation, and as a global community – to stop the spread of COVID-19, may the blessings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with you all!**

**Conveying our paternal blessings with love in the Lord,  
Archbishop Elpidophoros, Chairman Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
Metropolitan Joseph, Vice-Chairman Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America  
Archbishop Michael, Treasurer Orthodox Church in America  
Metropolitan Gregory, Secretary American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA  
Bishop Irinej Serbian Orthodox Church in North, Central and South America  
Metropolitan Nicolae Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas  
Metropolitan Joseph Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada, and Australia  
Bishop Saba Georgian Apostolic Orthodox Church in North America**

My beloved children,

I pray that each of you is keeping physically healthy and is managing to stay spiritually and emotionally strong during these unusual and uncertain times. On this fifth Sunday of Great Lent, I offer to you a brief word as your primate and father in Christ.

Above all, I encourage you not to dwell on the many "why?" questions but rather to discern in your hearts the "how?" of our present situation.

As He hung upon the Cross, our Lord Jesus Christ did indeed cry out to the Father: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But if we pull back from that one moment of agony and observe the whole of our Lord's Passion, we will see that, in so many ways, He is showing us "how," that is, giving all of humanity the example of sincere obedience, of extreme humility, and of divine love. He is showing us how to receive the great gift of life everlasting and how to change our own lives through that gift.

How, then, can we best approach the present circumstances we find ourselves in?

I myself have been wrestling with this difficult task of shifting my thinking from "why" to "how." In the past 21 days, I have not celebrated any divine services nor have I been able to attend a live service or receive Holy Communion.

I voluntarily placed myself in quarantine at the Chancery because of the strong possibility that, on several occasions, I may have been exposed to the virus. Although by your prayers I am in good health, I remain in quarantine out of obedience to the civil directive that all travellers from the State of New York must quarantine themselves.

Now I find myself at the Saint Arsenius Skete of the monastery of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, yet still unable to pray in person with my brothers. I am grateful for their prayers and for their daily delivery of food, which they carefully place outside my door.

Like many of you, my life has become a series of "zoom" meetings on the one hand, and periods of complete isolation on the other. These have been both difficult and inspiring.

Over the past few weeks, I have electronically interacted with close to 200 individuals. I have met twice with the entire Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, once with the Chancellors of our dioceses, and three times with the members of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Bishops.

Together with my brother bishops, we have consulted with our clergy, with physicians and medical professionals, with ethical experts, and legal consultants. I have participated in daily briefings with my chancellor and my personal secretary and Archdeacon, as well as with other Chancery staff.

All of us, together, have reviewed the pastoral and liturgical implications of the path that lies before us. During this process, the Holy Synod has carefully listened, prayerfully considered, and extensively discussed the various options, and has provided a series of directives which are available on the Coronavirus Resource page on our website.

In addition to the Church-wide directives, each bishop has provided further direction to his diocese. None of us finds joy in rendering such directives and I suspect that none of you is thrilled to receive them.

Nevertheless, I would hope that all of us would find some consolation in the very act of love we offer for our brothers and sisters through our obedience to the directives of the bishops, but even more so, through our obedience to our present circumstances.

True obedience means going where we might not want to go, just as our Lord, on his way to His passion. Our Lord, in his divine and human person, shows us both the human struggle of passing through painful events and the divine grace that comes through our voluntary acceptance of those events.

Above all, we should remember that we are each voluntarily undergoing a little hardship for the sake of our brothers and sisters.

We are not fasting from Holy Communion because we fear that the precious body and blood of Christ might spread disease but rather because even our gathering together in Church is a risk for transmission of the virus.

We are not refraining from Church attendance because the government is trying to infringe upon our first amendment rights but rather because we don't want to infect our own friends and relatives, or our priest and his family. We are not keeping social distance from each other because we dislike or distrust our fellow humans but precisely because we do love them and we don't want them to die an unnecessary death.

In the life of the martyr Polycarp of Smyrna, we are offered "an example of martyrdom which is conformable to the Gospel." In contrast to another man, Quintus by name, who pridefully hurried to sacrifice himself as a martyr but then denied Christ, Saint Polycarp, we are told

*...lingered that he might be delivered up, even as the Lord did, to the end that we too might be imitators of him, not looking only to that which concerneth ourselves, but also to that which concerneth our neighbors. For it is the office of true and steadfast love, not only to desire that oneself be saved, but all the brethren also.*

So I will conclude by encouraging all of us to grow in true and steadfast love, to not only think about our own salvation, our own health, our own good, but rather to look upon our present hardship as an opportunity for us to grow spiritually and to enter more deeply into communion with Christ in our hearts.

For our bishops, this is the time to provide direct pastoral guidance and leadership;

For our clergy, this is the time to strengthen those aspects of their ministries beyond their liturgical service at the altar;

For our faithful, this is the time to remember that communion with Christ is not limited to our partaking of Holy Communion but is something that we can have through our own personal prayer, even if we are unable to participate in the Holy Week and Paschal services this year.

I will speak more with you during the coming days, but in the meantime, I ask that we all may find strength in our Lord Jesus Christ as we enter into the sixth and final week of this very trying season of Great Lent.

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Synodal Directives for the Clergy and the Parish, Mission, and Monastic Communities of  
the Orthodox Church in America Concerning the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

March 30, 2020

In accordance with the Synodal Statement of this same date  
and in effect for the period of: March 30, 2020 – April 30, 2020

1. A General Directive regarding the Divine Services and Parish Gatherings:

*Keeping in mind that in the Orthodox Church in America in general, all Divine Services and all ministries that are done in a monastery, parish, mission, or mission station are only done with the blessing of the Ruling Hierarch (the Diocesan Bishop or the Locum Tenens):*

- All monasteries, parishes, missions, and mission stations must seek a specific blessing from their bishop to perform any Divine Service whatsoever during this period. This includes not only ordinary services, such as the Divine Liturgy, but also particular Holy Week and Paschal Services, as well as extraordinary services such as Holy Unction, funerals, baptisms, and weddings.

- Clergy may not serve Liturgy in their home or in any private home. If they desire to serve other Divine Services in their own home, they must consult with their bishop.

- As usual, the directives of a bishop given either via diocesan-wide letters or by individual communication of the bishop to his clergy and parishes are to be considered as binding.

- All other in-person gatherings and in-person activities of any kind continue to be forbidden.

2. Regarding Civil Directives:

*In accord with the Apostle Paul's injunction to bishops to remind their flocks "to be submissive to rulers and authorities" (Titus 3:1):*

- The authority to interpret the civil authority's directives resides with the bishop.

- All Divine Services performed in a local community must be in accord with all local, state/provincial, and federal civil directives regarding the prevention of the spread of Covid-19.

- All parish priests must daily make efforts to ensure that they are aware of any changes in the local, state/provincial, and federal civil directives in their community's locality, and must ensure that the Divine Services of their parish or mission community are in compliance with all such civil directives.

- If anyone among the clergy or if any member of a parish, mission, or mission station holds any sort of church service or gathering in direct opposition to the local civil authorities' Covid-19 preventative directives, such an action may result in severe canonical sanctions.

3. Limited Divine Services:

*If the Ruling Hierarch has blessed for limited or "closed" Divine Services to be served in a community, services must be served according to whatever directives he has given to the priest and his parish or mission community either by diocesan-wide letter or individually. Nevertheless, all communities serving such limited services must adhere to the following at this time:*

- Once the Priest and the assigned server(s) and singer(s) have entered the building for the service, the doors of the church must be locked.

- Anyone among the at-risk population, including those over 65, those with serious medical conditions, and those with any symptoms of illness of any kind, should not be among those attending any of these limited Divine Services. An exception may be made in the cases of a priest and of a priest's wife, due to age only. See below.
- Anyone who within 15 days has made in-person contact with a household member, family member, or other acquaintance working in a medical facility with Covid-19 patients must absolutely not attend services. Even if such a person be a priest, a singer, or server in the parish, this still applies.
- Anyone who is a health-care provider or a regular caregiver for a person among the at-risk population must not be among those at services. An exception may be made in the case of a priest's wife, due to age only. See below.
- Any priest of age 65 or older has the blessing of the Synod to excuse himself from serving the Divine Services without canonical penalty. Any priest of age 65 or older but in good health and suffering no symptoms of any illness may be able to serve the Divine Services if he consults with his bishop. Any priest's wife of age 65 or older, but in good health and suffering no symptoms of any illness, may be able to attend the Divine Services, in consultation with the bishop.
- During all Divine Services, all entrances into the church building, and church complex if applicable, must display a warning statement regarding the fact that no one may enter the building without the express blessing of the parish priest, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Appropriate medically-approved prevention measures as prescribed by the public health agency of the federal government (e.g., the CDC in the United States) must be followed as much as possible.
- For the serving and celebration of the Divine Services, only as many parishioners as needed in order to serve in the altar and sing the responses should be present. Efforts should be made for this limited "crew" of singer(s) and server(s) to be the same at every service.
- If it is possible, live-streaming of the Divine Services should be provided. Live phone access should be provided for those parishioners who do not have internet access. If a parish is not serving Divine Services, or is unable to live-stream, parishioners should be directed to the live-streaming services of another parish or monastery.
- A priest should take extra care if in his family his wife is pregnant or there are infants and/or young children. If he has such concerns, it is recommended that he consult his bishop.

#### 4. Holy Communion:

On the days when the Ruling Hierarch has blessed the Divine Liturgy to be served by a limited number of community members, the following directives hold:

- In the case that anyone is unable to receive Holy Communion at this time due to any reason related to parish closure, distance, health risks, or civil travel bans and "stay at home" directives, the Holy Synod blesses that such a person may wait until such a time as they are able to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, with all proper preparation and faith in the Eucharist.

#### 5. Confession:

Taking into consideration the spiritual and mental healing that comes through the Sacrament of Confession, the Holy Synod blesses, for all priests and communities in the Orthodox Church in America, that for this period:

- The Sacrament of Confession may not be held in person during this period, except for those who are among the limited "crew" of servers and singers in a parish or mission that is holding Divine Services. If thus done in person, six (6) feet of social distance must be maintained, as well as must be all other civil and public health measures applicable in the locality.
- The Sacrament of Confession may be held over the telephone or by live video communication.
- If Confession is heard over the telephone or by live video, the priest must read the Prayer of Absolution before ending the phone call or video communication, in the hearing of the penitent.
- If anyone of the faithful is uncomfortable with Confession over the phone, then he or she is not bound to confess, but may wait until a time when in-person Confessions will be possible again.

#### 6. Unction:

*If the Ruling Hierarch has given his blessing for the Sacrament of Holy Unction to be held in a community, the following directives hold:*

- The Unction service should only be held with the minimal crew of singer(s) and server(s) present.
- A new burnable cotton swab or cotton wand (Q-Tip) must be used to anoint each individual. The used cotton swabs or wands must immediately be placed in a separate bag or container and set aside for burning.