



St. Mary's Orthodox Church

217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218-1602

Phone.....570-645-2772

OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic

Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky

Choir Director: Wash King

Sunday, March 22, 2020

3rd Sunday of Lent

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Glory Be To Jesus Christ!

Glory Be Forever!

All liturgical services are canceled through March!

Tues, March 17th until Tues. March 31st - All Services – Divine Liturgy, Akathist, Vespers, Parastas, etc. and all meetings and events are CANCELLED.

Please read the Epistle, Gospel and Scripture Readings on OCA website or use your bible with the Readings listed on 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 through the end of March. Streaming of services will be available by going to the DOEPA.ORG website and follow the instructions. Please contact Fr. James Weremedic with any emergencies or concerns at 570-645-2772.

Please use this time to read the Scriptures, pray in your home and please pray for those on our prayer list.

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 Birocik, 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

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7-Day Vigils/Altar ... For These will be rescheduled when services resume.

Altar Candles... In

Eternal Lamp... In

Vigil Crosses ... For

7-Day Vigils/Tetrapod... In

Decorated Candles/Tetrapod... In
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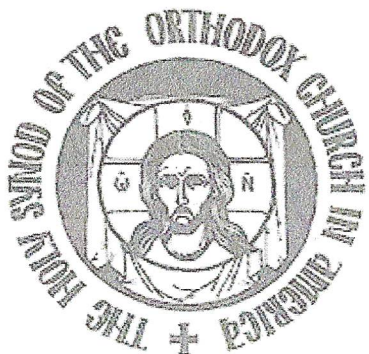
NO COFFEE HOUR UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

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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**
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Financials 3/15/20 Operating Acct: -Dues 160 – Candles 115 – Weekly 365 – Non-Env 175 – Holy Days 0 – Altar Candles 40 – Initial Offering 0 – Donations 10 = **Total \$ 865.00**
Building Fund 0- ...Charity Donation 0- ...Furnace Fund 0- ...Cemetery 0...Flowers 5 ... Thank you.
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March Birthdays: 1- Logan Leatherman, 6- Marie Kalavritinos, 16- Anthony Vavra, 21- Mildred O'Shura, 24- Neil Skripnek, Tracy Skripnek, Zachary King, Olga Sidoriak (98), 29-Sandra Zuber **March Wedding Anniversaries:** None
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Please read the attached letters from the Diocese and OCA, and see below for live streaming possibilities. Our diocese is working on local live streaming for Divine Liturgy and other services. OCA website – click on Coronavirus Resources (right side of page) scroll down for information.



The HOLY SYNOD
of the
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN
AMERICA

**Statement of the Holy Synod of Bishops
of the Orthodox Church in America
on the Coronavirus Outbreak
March 17, 2020**

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America meeting under the presidency of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon in a Special Session on Monday, March 16, 2020, considered further the response of the Church to the growing spread of the SARS-CoV-2, and the Coronavirus. During this special session, the Holy Synod received expert reports and were able to question professionals in the areas of concern relating to the virus, including medical doctors. After extensive deliberation on this subject, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America with one accord has decided the following:

1. Each Diocesan Bishop is entrusted with overseeing the spiritual and pastoral care of his Clergy and Faithful and with protecting their wellbeing in whatever measures he determines appropriate. This oversight, in response to the coronavirus, is to be in keeping with the Holy Synod's vigilant response to the present pandemic, the most recent federal, state, and municipal civil directives, and updated medical knowledge obtained from recognized experts. Therefore, Diocesan Bishops may allow for the churches within their dioceses to serve the Divine Services with limited participation on the part of the Faithful, or to designate a limited number of Churches in their dioceses to serve a limited number of services with only a few people present or to be closed altogether for the time being.
2. In light of decisions made by the officials of various government jurisdictions, we sorrowfully acknowledge that, at the direction of the Diocesan Bishop and in keeping with said government directives, parishes, missions, and chapels of the Orthodox Church in America may be required to temporarily cease offering divine services.
3. Monasteries may continue services for the sacred monastic community alone, admitting no visitors until April 1.
4. The Holy Synod will consider these directives again at the end of March.



March 17, 2020

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
2 I will say[a] to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."
3 For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. (Ps.91: ff)*

To the Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania

Glory be to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever! In light of the Statement of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America March 17, 2020, and after consultation with the clergy of the diocese who met in teleconference with me today, it is my decision that in order to comply with Federal, State and local recommendations, and most importantly, out of our love and care for one another, we will not hold public services in our parishes until April 1 at the earliest. The welfare of our laity, especially those at higher risk of infection, is of the greatest concern to myself and the priests and deacons of the diocese. And as hierarch I am concerned about the health of the clergy, whose service to their parishes is dependent upon their well-being, so with great difficulty and sadness I have made this decision.

I wish to do all in my power, together with our clergy, however, to maintain active pastoral care of our people, through prayers and through the parish communities under the direction of the Rectors and parish councils. To that end, I have blessed the parishes listed below to offer services with "skeleton crews" of singers and servers not to exceed ten people inclusive. These services will be live-streamed for the benefit of all our diocese. Admittedly, not all have such access, but perhaps family and parishes may be able to assist. In my discussion with the clergy today I directed them to remain in regular phone contact with their parishioners and direct the laity to do likewise with fellow parishioners. Additionally, clergy from non-live streaming parishes are exploring other technological avenues to provide contact with parishioners, whether for prayer online, or Bible study or classes. Similar possibilities can be explored for church school also. We will also ask our Christian Education Coordinator to identify resources for children's activities, like online museum and zoos.

His Grace, Bishop Alexis offered the following counsel to the Holy Synod as we wrestled with this matter:

*Honour a physician with the honour due unto him for the uses which ye may have of him: for the Lord hath created him."
—Sirach 38:1*

We are at present speaking about temporary measures for two weeks. People have vacations for longer periods of time. Not so long ago, people would commune once a year. I fail to see how two weeks of closed churches is something too much for people to bear, especially for people who love their neighbor as themselves.

If one life, if one parishioner, is saved because of stricter measures, shouldn't we all have enough love to sacrifice even our own spiritual needs for that soul for two weeks?

It is unthinkable that the servants of our Lord, Who healed "all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" could be less prudent regarding the physical well-being and health of those in their charge than the civil authorities.

Forgive me. +Bishop Alexis

As I write this we are concluding the Feast of St. Patrick of Armagh who drove the snakes out of Ireland, symbolic of the powers of evil. Through his intercession may our land and people, and all lands and peoples be freed from the evil of this pandemic.



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Diocesan Treasurer: Mark Linnehan * treasurer@doepa.org

"Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee." Augustine

Further details on live-streaming services will be posted once the schedule has been determined. I want to thank you for your longsuffering in all of this. It is uncharted territory for all and we are seeking to do what is best for all while feeding the sheep entrusted to us. Be assured of my love, the love of your clergy and our desire to serve you as we go through this difficult time together.

Yours in Christ,

+ Mark

+ MARK, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

CC: His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and
Canada
Diocesan Clergy

The following parishes will work on live streaming the Divine Liturgy and other services:

St. Mark, Wrightstown

St. Stephen Cathedral, Philadelphia

St. Nicholas, Bethlehem

Holy Cross, Williamsport

Holy Trinity, Wilkes Barre

Holy Assumption, Philadelphia

Other streaming services may be found here: <https://orthodoxsandiego.org/streaming>



March 17, 2020
03/013

To the Venerable Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

As is well-known, these recent days have been seemingly unprecedented in the life of the modern world. One would have to go back to the beginning of the twentieth century at the time of the Spanish Influenza pandemic, or the cholera pandemics of the nineteenth century to find something comparable. In these pandemics, millions upon millions of people died. If society has learned anything from the lessons of these pandemics, and also from recent experiences of pandemics like H1N1, MERS, or Zika, it is this: preventative measures are required to limit the effects of a pandemic. In the current crisis, the measures advocated to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus include the maintenance of social distance so as to limit our exposure to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and thus cut down on the probability of being infected, carrying the virus, and becoming sick from it. Health care professionals speak forcefully about the positive effects that such measures would have, namely, “flattening the curve” of new infections so that our health care system does not become overwhelmed.

We hear this advice, as well as the admonishments to wash our hands frequently, cover our coughs, and keep our Churches clean. Civil authorities are issuing emergency orders to close schools and limit public gatherings. We are also advised to work from home if at all possible. The members of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America have issued statements advising all members of the Church to follow the directives of the Center for Disease Control, and our own further pastoral directives. In our dioceses, we have responded with even further directives that our Churches and institutions should follow. I reiterate here: please become familiar with what the CDC directs, follow our directives, both at the Synodal and at the Diocesan level.

My beloved children in the Lord, none of the measures adopted by any part of the Church should cause scandal or anxiety. They should also not be used as the subject for mockery, vile jokes, sarcasm, or – God forbid! – division or disunity. They have been taken as our Christian response to protect our brothers and sisters. Our Lord tells us, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13).” The life we “laying down” now is our normal life, because these are extraordinary times. We are making a sacrificial effort, which is in keeping with the present season of repentance and ascetical striving. Like the ascetics of old who would depart from their monasteries for the forty days of Lent in preparation for Holy Week, we should take this opportunity to prayerfully reflect on our life in Christ and increase our desire to be with Him.

No one should feel any concern about the canonical implications of being absent from the divine services. We find ourselves in extraordinary circumstances that require extraordinary, but *temporary* responses. The holy body and precious blood of our Lord can never be a source of disease, it is after all for the healing of soul and body, but the COVID-19 virus can still be passed through the congregation. Out of love for our

neighbor, we must do everything we can to protect the vulnerable by slowing the rate of infection not only in our parishes, but in the greater community, and thereby allowing the hospitals and medical community to more adequately care for those most at risk.

I call on the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America to make good use of this time and renew their faith and hope in God through prayer and fasting, and by being of service to their brothers and sisters. The exhortation of the great Prophet Isaiah should guide us. He called out to the ancient people of Israel "If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness," in other words, if we stay united, relieve one another of the burdens that this virus has placed on us, "if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday (Isaiah 58.10)." In the darkness of anxiety and sickness, in the gloom of the disruption of our lives, these words of the prophet point us to the True Light, Jesus Christ, the great Physician and Healer of our souls and bodies, who gave his life for us so that we might live with Him eternally.

May our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed eternally with the Heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit preserve us in these days and grant us health and his peace.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Tikhon", with a small cross symbol to the left of the first letter.

+TIKHON

Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada
Locum Tenens of New England,
and the Albanian Archdiocese