

*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

Fr. Gregory Fedorchak, Parish Rector 607-427-3286, father.fedorchak@gmail.com

Upcoming Services:

February 20, Thursday

9am – Divine Liturgy (St. John the Soldier Mission, 129 N Rutland St, Watertown, NY)

February 22, Saturday

9am – Divine Liturgy **Memorial Saturday**

5pm – Great Vespers

February 23, Sunday Meatfare Sunday

10am (9:40am Hours) – Divine Liturgy

February 27, Thursday

9am – Divine Liturgy (St. Raphael of Brooklyn)

March 1, Saturday

5pm – Great Vespers

March 2, Forgiveness Sunday

10am (9:40am Hours) – Divine Liturgy, followed by Forgiveness Vespers

There will also be **daily weekday vespers at 5PM** at the Hermitage.

Please stay after Liturgy on Sunday for coffee, food, and fellowship. Bring your friends and family!

Sunday of the Last Judgment

February 23



When You, O God, shall come to earth with glory, all things shall tremble and the river of fire shall flow before Your judgment seat; the books shall be opened and the hidden things disclosed! Then deliver me from the unquenchable fire, and make me worthy to stand at Your right hand, Most Righteous Judge!

Kontakion



Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

February 23

By sharing in the ways of the Apostles, you became a successor to their throne. Through the practice of virtue, you found the way to divine contemplation, O inspired one of God; by teaching the word of truth without error, you defended the Faith, even to the shedding of your blood. Hieromartyr Polycarp, entreat Christ God to save our souls.

Troparion

Lives Worth Judging
By Fr. Steven Kostoff
Reflections in Christ, February 12, 2018

As we draw closer to the beginning of Great Lent – [which begins on Monday, March 3 this year]—we are able to set our Lenten efforts against the background of the Last Judgment, thus giving us the “big picture” within which we live our lives and determine our personal destinies. The Gospel read at the Eucharistic Liturgy this past Sunday—the Sunday of the Last Judgment—was that of the Parable of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25:31-46. In highly symbolic form and with awesome imagery, the Lord speaks of His own Parousia as the glorified Son of man at the end of time and reveals to us that this will be a time of judgment. And this judgment will lead to separation. The “sheep” (the saved) will be placed on the right hand, and the “goats” (the lost) on the left hand of the eternal Throne of God. This, in turn, will reveal the “quality” of our lives, though not in the way in which we today use the term “quality of life.” We will be confronted with the question as to how well we served the Lord by how well we served the “least” of His brethren: “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these brethren, you did it to me” [Matthew 25:40]. These “least” are the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoner. How many of us have to admit that these are precisely the people that we neglect? The fact that society removes such people from our sight does not offer a very reassuring excuse for our neglect. It simply makes it more convenient and less troubling for our consciences. Sadly, this may point to one of the most glaring of “disconnects” between the Gospel and our Christian lives, expressed in the following hymn:

*Why do you not think of the fearful hour of death? Why do you not tremble at the dread judgment seat of the Savior?
What defense then, will you make, or what will you answer? Your works will be there to accuse you.
Your actions will reproach you and condemn you. O my soul, the time is near at hand!
Make haste before it is too late, and cry aloud in faith: I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned against You.
But I know Your love for humanity and Your compassion.
O good Shepherd deprive me not of a place at Your right hand in Your great glory*
[Vespers, Sunday of the Last Judgment]

I, for one, am not ready to dismiss this hymn as excessively rhetorical, overly pessimistic, or unfairly harsh in its outlook. It is rather a sober and honest plea calling us to repentance and the re-direction of our lives. It further reminds us that it is never too late, and that the Good Shepherd will place us upon His shoulders to the accompaniment of rejoicing angels in heaven over our repentance.

“God is love” [1 John 4:8]. And yet God is demanding. If God “so loved the world that He gave His only Son” to die on the Cross for our redemption, then God expects us to approach and treat others with the same love. This is a love expressed in action and in giving, and is not to be confused with emotions or feelings. We are all outcasts and alienated from God based upon the primordial sin of Adam, and yet God did not forget us or abandon us. “You were bought with a price” [1 Corinthians 6:20]. If we are indeed to “imitate the divine nature,” as Saint Gregory of Nyssa taught, then we could convincingly say that God expects us to “perform” according to the full capacity of our human nature made in the “image and likeness of God”—all the more plausible and possible because our fallen human nature has been renewed in and through the Death and Resurrection of Christ. Our rescue from a condition of “ontological poverty” is meant to arouse in us a desire to rescue “the least of these” from the impoverishing conditions of a fallen world.

Simultaneously with the external history of our lives there is occurring the internal history of our hearts. The outer life is more readily open to being accurately recorded, from the date of our birth to the date of our death and the significant events in between that make up our personal histories. What is happening within our hearts is far more difficult to record, because the human heart is deep and mysterious. Yet the prophecy of the Last Judgment, testing the direction of our hearts, raises some very real questions: On what we call the “spiritual level,” is our heart expanding or contracting? Is it growing larger or smaller? Is it becoming more generous or more grasping? Is it letting the neighbor in, or keeping the neighbor out? Is it, as the years move inexorably forward, embracing God and neighbor, or is it shrinking in self-protection? These are questions to explore as we move into the Lenten season.

If our lives are worth living, then they are worthy of being judged. Our deeds, words and thoughts are significant because we must answer for them before a God who is love. Since God loves us and save us, God will also judge us, though our judgments is actually self-inflicted and not imposed on us as a punishment. In a wonderful article titled “On Preaching Judgment,” Father John Breck put it this way: “Judgment is indeed self-inflicted. God offers us life, and we choose death. He opens us the way into the Kingdom of Heaven, and we continue down our own pathway, which leads to destruction. Yet like the father of the prodigal son, God pursues us along that pathway, desiring only that we repent and return home. It is our decision to do so or not” [God With Us, p. 230].

In a bleak and cold universe absent of the presence of God and governed by immutable “laws of nature,” there is no judgment. But what does that say about the significance of our lives?

Enter not into judgment with me, bringing before me the things I should have done, examining my words and correcting my impulses. But in your mercy, overlook my sins and save me, O Lord Almighty [Sunday of the Last Judgment, Matins Canon, Canticle One].

Saint Mariamne the sister of the Apostle Philip

February 17

Righteous Mariamne “The Apostolic Virgin” and sister of the holy Apostle Philip (November 14), made a vow of virginity and became the companion of her brother Philip and the holy Apostle Bartholomew (June 11), actively assisting them in their apostolic work.

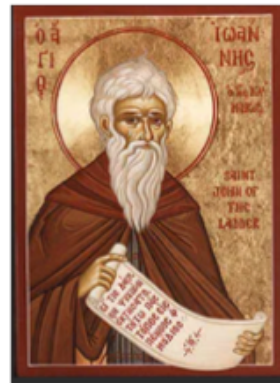
The Church historian Nikēphoros Callistus describes their successful preaching in the Phrygian city of Hieropolis, where they were arrested and locked up in prison. They put the Apostle Philip to death on a cross, but Saint Mariamne and Saint Bartholomew were set free. Saint Bartholomew went to preach the Gospel in India. Saint Mariamne, after burying the body of Saint Philip, preached the Gospel at Lykaonia (Asia Minor). She died there in peace.

In you the image was preserved with exactness, O Mothers, for taking up your cross, you followed after Christ. By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh, for it passes away, but to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal. Therefore, most venerable Mother Mariamne your spirit rejoices with the Angels.

Troparion



**Saint Mariamne the sister of
the Apostle Philip
February 17**



**Saint John “Scholasticus”,
Patriarch of Constantinople
February 21**

Saint John “Scholasticus”, Patriarch of Constantinople

February 21

Saint John Scholasticus, Patriarch of Constantinople, was born in Sirimion near Antioch, and studied law. He was ordained a priest because of his great holiness and piety. Later he was elevated to the patriarchal throne, where he spent the years 565 to 577.

While still a presbyter, he compiled a collection of Church Rules in Fifty Chapters, and later during his time as patriarch he made a Codex of civil laws relating to the Church. From these collections was compiled the Nomocanon (i.e. “Law-canon”), used in church administration. Saint John also composed the “Cherubic Hymn”, and “Of Thy Mystical Supper.”

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence; your humility exalted you; your poverty enriched you. Hierarch Father John, entreat Christ our God that our souls may be saved.

Troparion



“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying,

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me,

**“Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.
“I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold,
I am alive forevermore. Amen.
And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.**

Revelation 1:8-18



Orthodox Church in America • Diocese of New York and New Jersey

St. Andrew's
Camp
and Retreat Center

Lenten Women's Retreat

A time set apart for prayer, reflection, and fellowship of Orthodox women.

FRIDAY, MARCH 28 - SUNDAY MARCH 30, 2025

Register at:
http://portal.campnetwork.com/Register/Register.php?camp_id=397695

Or scan this QR code  \$125 for the Weekend
\$50 for Saturday only
(All inclusive!)

"Be Who You Are in the Body of Christ"

Keynote Speaker: Mother Melania
 Mother Melania is the abbess of the community of Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, California.

 She has written several series of children's books (including *The Twelve Great Feasts for Children*; *The Three-Day Pascha*; the *Old Testament Stories for Children* series; and the *Good Neighbors* series – a series of animal fables designed to teach children Christian virtue in an engaging way).

Mother Melania has made a particular study of St. John Chrysostom's writings. Because he was writing not primarily to monks but to people living in the world, he has much practical advice to offer for today's Christian.

Also visiting: **Archbishop Michael** For more information
Email: kristy@saintandrewscamp.org

The Diocese of New York and New Jersey invites all women to the **2025 Lenten Women's Retreat**, taking place from **Friday, March 28, to Sunday, March 30, 2025**, at [St. Andrew's Camp and Retreat Center](#). This weekend promises an enriching spiritual experience, offering prayer, reflection, and fellowship in preparation for Holy Pascha.

Keynote Speaker: Mother Melania

We are honored to welcome **Mother Melania**, abbess of Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, California. A gifted writer, Mother Melania has authored several series of children's books, including *The Twelve Great Feasts for Children*, *The Three-Day Pascha*, *Old Testament Stories for Children*, and *The Good Neighbors series*—engaging animal fables that instill Christian virtues. She is also known for her deep study of **St. John Chrysostom's writings**, offering practical spiritual guidance relevant to Christians living in the world today.

A Special Visit from Archbishop Michael

His Eminence **Archbishop Michael** will also be attending the retreat, providing encouragement and guidance to all participants.

Theme: "Be Who You Are in the Body of Christ"

Throughout the weekend, attendees will explore the meaning of Christian identity and vocation within the Church.

Retreat Details & Registration

Full Weekend Retreat: \$125 (all-inclusive)

Saturday-Only Option: \$50

Location: St. Andrew's Camp and Retreat Center

Registration Link: [Register Here](#)

For more information, contact **Kristy** at kristy@saintandrewscamp.org.

Come and join us for a weekend of **spiritual refreshment, sisterhood, and preparation for Pascha!**

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2025

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 9th	 <i>TRIODION WEEKS</i> Publican and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 16th	 The Prodigal Son Returns! Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare FEBRUARY 23rd FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 The Last Judgement Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare MARCH 2nd FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent MARCH 9th	 <i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 16th	 ST GREGORY PALAMAS Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent MARCH 23rd	 VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent MARCH 30th	 ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent APRIL 6th	 ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! APRIL 13th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY APRIL 18th	 GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! APRIL 20th NO FASTING!	 <i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

UPCOMING PARISH & DIOCESAN EVENTS

Work Day

Friday, February 21, 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Removal of ceiling and walls. No special skill or strength needed. If possible, bring work gloves, face mask, claw hammer and pry bars. Tools will also be available. We will also do some cleaning upstairs.

House Blessings

Fr. Gregory wants to come bless your house! Find the digital sign-up sheet [here](#). Traditionally, house blessings are completed before the beginning of Lent, which is quickly approaching.

Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday, February 18, 7:30 PM @ the Hermitage.

CS Lewis Book Study

Thursday, February 20, 5:45 PM to 7:15 PM @ the church. This session we will discuss CS Lewis' "The Great Divorce." The next gathering will be March 13th. Contact Joseph Stark if you are interested.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAFETY – Please avoid using the side entrance that leads into the side narthex until the ice melts.

Coffee Hour – Sign up [here](#) or on the list at Church.

Memorial Saturday – Many Saturdays of the Lenten season are dedicated to commemoration of the departed; this coming Saturday is the first of these. Please submit names to be commemorated at this year's memorial Saturdays to Fr Gregory by the end of the week (email is best).

PARISH NEEDS

- **Shoveling and Trash Removal** – please consider volunteering for shoveling or trash removal for a weekend. Sign up [here](#).
- Red communion cloths/napkins.

Thus says God, the King of Israel who delivers him, the God of Hosts:
I am the first and the last: besides Me there is no God.

Isaiah 44:6

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us,
and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,
looking unto **Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,**
who for the joy that was set before Him
endured the cross,
despising the shame,
and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2