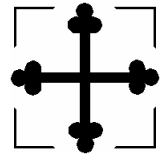




# Agape



## ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH-FEB. 2012

Dear Ones,

What are we to make of St Paul's instruction: "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, make the best use of the time, (King James Version: "redeeming the time"), because the days are evil."? While some of us have a lot of time on our hands, most of us suffer from having too many things to do and not enough hours to do them. All of us have had to acquire some experience in managing our time-in putting a schedule together, prioritizing etc. But still I suspect that we are missing the point of St. Paul's advice to us. Much as the nightly news covers the daily storm, the bizarre and the strange, and the Hollywood this and that, but ignores the larger and deeper issues of the day, so do we often let the daily grind crowd out the truly important and valuable things of our life-our family, our inner life, and especially our relationship with God.

In an already over-full day, "adding" in daily prayers seems like one more scheduling headache to jam in. But we think this way because of several things: we don't yet know the power of prayer to renew us, to change us concretely, we are used to trusting only in ourselves, and we choose to live in "Chronos Time" and not in "Kairos Time". A bishop was asked once: "How long should I pray in the morning?" He answered, "An hour. But if you are busy-then pray two!" Following this advice for most of us is literally impossible, but only because we are like an obese, out-of-shape man, told it would be good for him to run laps. And let's not even talk about all the so-called "time-saving gadgets" invented. It seems that the more of them we have, the less time we have. Wasn't it supposed to be the other way around?

Every encounter we have with God through prayer will change us. We will learn for ourselves the truth of so much of our hymnography, which calls prayer a "wall of protection" around us, a "window to heaven" and the "language of the Kingdom". By putting God first, in the place He deserves, He gives us wisdom and direction for living the rest of our life. Most importantly, He helps us enter into the freedom of His sons and daughters and have the right relationship with "Time". Many people find that prayer gives them an additional dividend, namely that they will find that they can do twice-or more-what they once did. They spend less time worrying fruitlessly over decisions; they work in a more organized way; they are less flustered by others; their time seems to "stretch".

A commitment to daily prayer will help us redeem the time of our lives; and time itself. Of course, it will involve real repentance and a conscious re-alignment of our self-understanding. It will challenge us to see every day as the "Eighth Day" and live out our lives accordingly. We then might come to know that the Lord is God, for He has made us, and not we ourselves (Psalm 100) and that we might make the best use of the time we have been given. May it be so!

***Building a Stronger Orthodox Christian Community by: Spiritually growing together; Sharing the Orthodox Faith through fellowship, outreach, and philanthropy; Worshiping in a traditional Byzantine church; Supported through Stewardship***

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**HOW CAN A FAMILY PREPARE FOR PASCHA: BY PHYLLIS MESHEL ONEST**

Often Great Lent is taught as a series of “shoulds” – we should go to Church, we should fast, we should pray, we should give alms. This approach focuses on “duty” and can have a negative connotation. We need an attitude adjustment. This year, try for a loving response to what our Lord has done for us.

**Step 1: What’s involved in Preparation?** Ask family members how they have prepared for something important. Younger children may remember a piano or dance recital, a sports competition or a test in school. Teens may focus on getting a driver’s license. Parents may reflect on preparing for their wedding day or the birth of their first child. Whatever the experience, ask what was involved in the preparation period. Determine whether both knowledge and practice/action were required. Guide the discussion to allow each family member to share his/her story of preparation. Ask how each felt during the process and after. Originally, Great Lent was the final preparation of the catechumens for their baptism at Pascha. The catechumens would fast, pray, study, and do good works. The rest of the community joined the catechumens as a time for renewing their baptismal commitment to Christ. While the catechumenate is not as common in most Orthodox parishes, since most Orthodox Christians enter the Church through infant baptism, we continue the practices of Great Lent as our personal preparation for Pascha.

**Step 2: What Do We Know About Great Lent?**

In this step a variety of methods can be used to teach how to prepare for Pascha in ways that are appropriate for your children.

**SCRIPTURE**

Review the biblical accounts of the Israelites wandering in the desert (Exodus 14-20) and Christ’s temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4). These are traditional biblical themes of Great Lent. Study some of the Old Testament passages about the Messiah (Isaiah 11, Isaiah 53, Zechariah 9, the Book of Jonah, and others). The new complete Orthodox Study Bible has helpful footnotes and articles.

**WORSHIP**

Examine the special services and prayers of Great Lent. The Pre-Sanctified Liturgies, the Akathist Hymn, and the Canon of St. Andrew are integral parts of the Lenten liturgical life. Talk about the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim, fasting, and the themes of the Sundays before and during Lent. Many helpful resources are available: Sunday bulletins, the parish library, your priest or Church school director. Use the Internet. Go to [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org) / Our Faith / Biblical Studies, Great Lent & Holy Week, Theology or Worship. Books like *Great Lent* and *Of Water and the Spirit* by Alexander Schmemmann, *The Lenten Spring* by Thomas Hopko, the *Orthodox Study Bible* and others are available from several distributors of Orthodox materials.

**Step 3: Focus on the children’s response to the message of Great Lent.**

Then answer the question, “How will we prepare for Pascha this year during Great Lent?” Decide what you will do as a family and what you will do individually.

**FASTING**

For example, parents and teens may choose a more rigorous level of fasting but everyone in the family will fast at some level. The Church offers a rule to which we strive: no meat, fish, wine, dairy products, olive oil. Wine and olive oil are permitted on Saturdays. The degree to which we keep the rule comes with spiritual growth and practice, but it can begin when children are young. But fasting is not limited to food. Throughout the writings of Church Fathers and Mothers we read that we must also “fast from the tongue” – watch what comes out of our mouths as well as what goes into our mouths. This requires as much effort at times as does fasting from food. There’s also “fasting with the arms and legs” - keeping from evil action; and “fasting with the eyes” – protecting oneself from what is not edifying - surfing through TV channels and viewing a music video, movie preview, or any of a number of other images that pull one away from godly thinking.

**WORSHIP**

Great Lent is the time to increase your family’s frequency of receiving the Eucharist, if it is not already your practice. If a family has never attended a pre-Sanctified Liturgy, decide together to attend, and even to prepare to receive the Eucharist. Preparation to receive the Eucharist includes prayer, fasting and especially since it is the Lenten Fast, the Sacrament of Confession. In nearly all our parishes, there are Saturday of the Souls liturgies where we pray for the dead. If it is your practice to prepare the boiled wheat for memorials, or one you wish to begin, involve your children in the preparation.

**ALMSGIVING**

Save money individually or as a family to donate to a local charity or the Orthodox Christian Mission Center ([www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org)). The Mission Center offers a collection box that can be the visual focus of your effort. Children can be encouraged to save from their allowance, gift monies, special treats, or lunches. Families can donate monies they would have spent for movies, video rentals or eating out. In either case, some sacrifice is to be involved.

**PRAYER AND STUDY**

Turn off, or at least limit, the TV. This will provide time for prayer and the study of a book of the Bible as a family. The footnotes and special articles in the Orthodox Study Bible are of great help. With elementary-aged children, use the *Children’s Bible Reader* published by the Greek Archdiocese, or other children’s bibles sold by the Department of Religious Education. (The catalog is online at [www.religioused.goarch.org](http://www.religioused.goarch.org).) There are several books in the Arch Book Series that deal with the Paschal story. Plus, there are religious videos or ones with moral themes. Consider using the newfound time to play games such as Bible Pictionary (senior or junior), Bibleopoly, and Bible trivia games. In a society that underestimates the value of discipline and obedience, the teachings and practices of the Orthodox Church appear antiquated and “unnatural.” But from our perspective this is “the norm.” As St. Paul reminds us, we are to “live in the world” but not be “of the world.” Christ wants us to transform the world around us. Strive to live “the true norm.”

**PARISH COUNCIL REPORT**

The Parish Council has selected the following officers for 2012: President - Neal Zoumboukos; Vice-President - David Shafer; Secretary - Kay Mehas; Treasurer - Arin Carmack. The other Parish Council members for 2012 are Ann Campbell, Bonnie Graham and Michael Buck.

Items discussed at our January meeting included year-end financials; Maintaining the privacy of your stewardship pledges; Metropolis (January at Saint Nicholas Ranch) and National (July in Phoenix) Clergy-Laity conferences; the use of dedicated funds for major building repairs, which will be a topic at the next parish assembly; our new music and congregational singing.

Our next Parish Council meeting will be Wednesday, February 8 at 6:30 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Operations Account

Previous Balance: \$9,100.98

Deposits (9): \$15,413.22

Debits (21): \$16,339.33

Service Charge: \$6.10

Ending Balance: \$8,168.77

Dedicated Account: Balance: \$2,196.76

**STEWARDSHIP**

We are beginning 2012 a little slowly. Presently, we have received thirty-six stewardship cards. The amount pledged is \$82,190. Our goal for this year is roughly \$140,000. Father, your Stewardship Committee and the Parish Council have been stressing since July the importance and necessity of increased giving and involvement in 2012 in order to meet our financial obligations and to grow the ministries of our parish. When only 60% of the community has submitted their stewardship card and only 45% of those stewards are able to heed the message of the need for your time, talent and treasure, there is concern. Please prayerfully examine the amount you have pledged or will pledge this year. Please prayerfully consider the ministries in which you have pledged to become involved or will pledge to become involved this year. If you have not submitted your stewardship card for 2012, please do so as soon as possible. It is extremely difficult to plan for the future when you have no idea what type of support there will be. Will it be the same old faces doing the same things or will new leaders step up to invigorate the ministries Father has profiled in the Parish Volunteer Guide? It's up to all of us!

## St. George Bookstore Musings

I was able to connect a couple of dots for myself recently. Dot one was the passage in the Lord's Prayer/Our Father in which we say "*Thy will be done.*" (did you ever think deeply about that?) Then, rather recently, I noted St. Paul essentially saying in Scripture "not my will, but Thine, O Lord." I am afraid this is clearly a case of having read both the Biblical reference and saying "Our Father" many, many times without being impacted as I suspect God's intended.

Of course, I always agreed that the Lord's will should come to pass in our space and time but didn't really think too much about what the implications of that were to me. But wait a minute, I see this a little differently now. I believe what we are being told is that there is an unspoken addendum that is "Lord, what will you have *me* do? Oh my.

Yes, sure, the Lord God can accomplish anything and everything quite comfortably on His own, *BUT* it also seems he likes for us to engage ourselves to His ends. "What will you have *ME* do, O Lord?" to borrow from St. Paul. I'm pretty sure I'm not the only 'me' out there. The Lord God means all of us. ALL of us.

You knew I would get here, and this brings me to our Bookstore. We have a hit on our hands: *Crazy John*, by Dionysios Makris (2010). This has just been translated to English by the Sisters at St. John the Forerunner, in Goldendale. We had an initial order of four which sold out in a week. We've never sold four of anything in a week over the last two years that I have looked after the bookstore, and now four more are in-bound from Goldendale.

So who is Crazy John? Apparently quite a few of you know or have heard of him and this book (fiction-ish). Most simply, John is a Fool for Christ in more or less modern day Athens. As most of you know, we have had a fair number of Fools for Christ in the Orthodox Church, and several are counted among the Saints we recognize annually. The real power of John's story working with and among his neighbors and others in Athens is both its setting in our time *and* the holiness he projects to so many in the spiritually barren modern landscape.

But it is more than that. John is a do-er. He is (one of) God's right-hand men taking on most difficult human needs and corruptions (let's call that sin) and bringing about transformation in individuals, businesses, communities and beyond. This is a most engaging book. If you are an active Orthodox Christian you may well read this right through. It will grip your attention, lift your spirit and encourage you to some action . . . or greater action.

I do not exaggerate in saying you will easily believe yourself an onlooker to the activities of John. I believe both his actions and the response of others to him, both the inevitable negative and ultimately favorable reactions, will ring true to you as a citizen of THIS point in time.

I do not want to share the actual stories of this book. That is for your pleasure and possibly holy moments as you cruise through the 132 pages of *Crazy John*. But I can tell you this is a popular read, and should you wish to pick up a copy you should do so at your first opportunity. If we are out again in the Bookstore, be assured I will order more.

I found John, *not* so Crazy John, to be fulfilling St. Paul's question, "What will you have me do, O Lord?" John, I think, is doing what many could do . . . even should do, and his behavior is only crazy viewed from the point of view of secular society whether in contemporary Athens or 2012 western Oregon.

This book is selling itself, and it is the first volume of a promised series from author Makris. I hope he is at his computer station right now banging out Volume 2. I can't wait.

-- Columba/Dave

Philia

- Philia held it's annual Vasilopita lunch & auction on Jan. 15. Our members prepared a delicious lunch and baked beautiful Vasilopita loaves that were auctioned, to support St. Basil's Academy which serves the needs of children. We raised \$1016 in all! Glory to God! Thank you to everyone who participated and to Pete Drakatos for being our enthusiastic auctioneer.
- We participated in the Interfaith Shelter Project, at St Thomas Episcopal Church. We provided dinner for 10 homeless families who were staying at St. Thomas. This is an annual event and we enjoy it very much. The families are so appreciative and we are blessed to answer Jesus' call to serve our needy brothers and sisters.
- Due to health issues, our Philia Coordinator, Gloria Timmons, has resigned. We offer our heart-felt "thank you" to her for her many years of hard work and dedication to the women's group. Gloria will continue to be involved in our charitable events, but is focusing now on recovering from surgery.

**\*\* We will be having our Philia meetings on the second Sunday of the month, after church in the conference room. All ladies are welcome. We are the charitable arm of the church and not only do we do philanthropic work, but we socialize and have fun too! Come join us February 12 for our next meeting. Contact Presvytera Maria with any questions.**

Fundraising Committee

Our committee has been busy thinking of new fundraising ideas, not only to supplement the finances of the church, but also to build community within our parish and within our city.

**Our winter fundraiser will be Pizza Night at Papa's Pizza on Coburg Rd., Feb. 16. This is an all-day event, so you can eat lunch or dinner there, take food to go or order some gift certificates for a later time. Half of all the proceeds come to us! This is a great fundraiser and no work (except to eat!). Please participate and we'll see you there.....**

The Fundraising Committee meets on the fourth Sunday of the month, after church. Anyone interested is welcome to join us. More helping hands are appreciated. Contact Presvytera Maria with any questions.

## February Celebrations

### Birthdays

February 3rd-Ashli Moore, Sarah Shafer  
 February 5th-Gwen Knerl  
 February 10th-Brett Batterson  
 February 15th-William Lilles  
 February 19th-Richard Green  
 February 20th-Michael Pretty  
 February 27th-Nikki Lenkoff  
 February 28th-Cassandra Batterson  
 February 29th-Debbie Hall

### Feast Days

**February 1st-St. Bridget of Ireland**  
 Ashli Moore, Bridget Groomer  
**February 10th-St. Haralambos**  
 Bob Graham  
**February 26th-St. Photini**  
 Debbie Hall, Svetlana Zotoff, Bonnie Graham,  
 Frances Carroll-Jones

### Wedding Anniversaries

### Baptized in Christ

February 28th  
 Raphael Groomer

**Many Years! Chronia Polla!**

## News and Events

**What's New!**

- **2012 Parish Council:** Congratulations to our newly elected parish council members, David Shafer, Ann Campbell, and Michael Buck! Congratulations also to the newly elected officers: Neal Zoumboukos-President, David Shafer-Vice President, Arin Carmack-Treasurer, and Kay Mehas-Secretary.
- **First Saturday Breakfast** food prep will take place on Friday, February 3rd, and the breakfast itself will follow on Saturday, February 4th. This ministry to the homeless is always in need of volunteers. Please contact Bonnie Graham for more information.
- **Baptized in Christ:** Charlie Sharps was baptized on Saturday, January 28th, taking the name George. Charlie is the son of Alexa and Joe Sharps and the grandson of Walid and Peggy Saleeby. May he live for us!
- **“Pray ye for those being made ready for Holy Illumination”:** Alex Titus and Diane Monger will be received into the Church on Saturday, February 25th. Please keep them in your prayers.
- **Great Lent:** It's hard to believe but Great Lent is “right around the corner”. The Triodion begins on Sunday, February 5th and a few weeks later, Great Lent begins with Clean Monday on February 27th. Please save the date and join us for the Saturday of the Souls services, on Saturday, February 25th, and for Forgiveness Vespers on Sunday, February 26th. May it be blessed 40-days!
- **St John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival:** We are excited to announce that our parish will be participating in the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival this year. Our Church School students are preparing to deliver talks on aspects of our Orthodox Faith and compete for educational scholarships. Special thanks to Neal Zoumboukos for his willingness to coordinate the event. Please save the date and join us on Sunday, March 4th.
- **Welcome Fellowship:** Please join us on Sunday, February 19th for a special Fellowship event to welcome newcomers to our parish!



*The “Dinner Crew” prepares to serve the evening meal as part of the Inter-faith Shelter Program at St. Thomas Episcopal Church. Also pictured is Sue Calvert, one of the coordinators for the program at St. Thomas*

# KOINONIA

	2/5	2/12	2/19	2/26	3/4
FELLOWSHIP	Shoemaker/ Aubin	Graham	Green	Lenkoff	Carroll
GREETER	Judy S.	Erin M.	Ann L.	Stephanie C.	Judy S.
PROSFORON	Leda Litke	Lisa Lilles	Katie Hauser	Shafers	Leda Litke
FLOWERS	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
READERS	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas
NARTHEX CLEANUP	Carroll	Kaelin	Lenkoff	Green	Carroll
NAVE CLEANUP	Hauser	Kaelin	Lisa Lilles	Lenkoff	Hauser

## GET INVOLVED!!!

Look through this list of organizations, programs, and ministries at our parish, then call the contact person and get involved!!!

PARISH COUNCIL	Arin Carmack 541-579-4796
ACOLYTES	Bob Graham 541-937-2670
BOOKSTORE	David Shafer 541-234-2139
PHILIA WOMEN'S GROUP	Gloria Zeazeas-Timmons 541-484-0575
CHURCH SCHOOL	Lisa Lilles 541-746-5592
CHANTER/CHANT GROUP	Brad Thomas 541-689-9690, Ann Marie Kaelin 541-335-9256
FRIENDS OF ST. JOHN CONVENT	Art Mehas 541-485-8671
FELLOWSHIP	Julie Lenkoff 541-345-2107
STEWARDSHIP	Neal Zoumboukos 541-344-4485
GREETERS	
OUTREACH/1ST SAT. BREAKFAST	Bonnie Graham 541-914-3381
O.C.F.	Ann Campbell 541-654-4061
GREEK LANGUAGE CLASS	Dimitri Kokkino 541-341-3977
PARISH FAMILY NIGHT	Cassandra Batterson 541-345-5248
FUNDRAISERS	Presbyteria Maria 542-844-1094
SUPPER FOR SIX	

St. George Greek Orthodox Church – (541) 683-3519, Fr. Gerasimos (Jerry) Markopoulos  
E-mail address: [frgerasimos@sntgrg.org](mailto:frgerasimos@sntgrg.org) Church's Website: [www.stgeorgeor.org](http://www.stgeorgeor.org)

**Saint George Greek Orthodox Church**  
**202 Hillview 1**  
**Eugene, OR 97408-5018**

**COFFEE CHAT: The ABC's of Fellowship:**

**A is for Allergies:**

We are all aware that there are people in our parish who are GLUTEN intolerant. It has also been brought to my attention that there are some who are allergic to PEANUTS. Which means that if a host simply **handles** a jar of peanut butter and then places some berries in a dish, the fruit would be contaminated enough to cause a severe reaction in those who have issues with peanuts.

**B & C is Be Considerate:**

To allow all to be a part of our fellowship and to avoid health-related problems, please refrain from bringing peanut butter to coffee hours. It is an easy food to share, especially during lent, but perhaps hummus, which comes in a variety of flavors would be a better substitute, and can be consumed by all. Sunbutter, a hazelnut spread, is another alternative that can be eaten by those with peanut allergies. It can be found in health food stores or Market of Choice. It would be helpful to include fruits, veggies, rice or other foods that can be tolerated by those with gluten issues, so they, too, can enjoy a meal with our church family. There are signs available in the kitchen that say GLUTEN FREE that can be placed by foods that are specifically earmarked for those who cannot eat wheat. And everyone else who does NOT have these problems, please pay attention, respect those signs and leave that food for those who do.

**AND ...**

Please note that all of our refrigerators and freezers have been inspected and relieved of mystery and past expiration foods. In the freezer of the first fridge that has the *I'm a Christian* sign, are a few items that could/should be used for coffee hours. There are frozen breads, meatless meatballs, etc. When hosting, feel free to use whatever is in that first refrigerator. And when storing items left from fellowship meals, please label them with their **contents and date**. Thank you for your cooperation, continued support and your delectable foods!

Julie