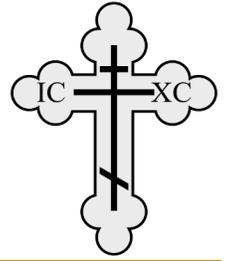




Agape



ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH MAR-2021

Dear Ones,

A blessed 40-Days to all!

A Modern Lent-Fr. Stephen Freeman

Few things are as difficult in the modern world as fasting. It is not simply the action of changing our eating habits that we find problematic – it's the whole concept of fasting and what it truly entails. It comes from another world. We understand dieting – changing how we eat in order to improve how we look or how we feel. But changing how we eat in order to know God or to rightly keep a feast of the Church – this is foreign. Our first question is often, "How does that work?" For we live in a culture of utility – we want to know the use of things. Underneath the question of utility is the demand that something make sense to me, and that I be able to ultimately take charge of it, use it as I see fit and shape it according to my own desires. Perhaps the fast could be improved? Our modern self-understanding sees people primarily as individual centers of choice and decision. A person is seen as the product of their choices and decisions – our lives are self-authenticated. As such, we are managers. Of course there are many problems with this world-view from the perspective of Classical Christianity. Though we are free to make choices and decisions, our freedom is not unlimited. Our lives are a gift from God and not of our own making. The Classical Christian spiritual life is not marked by choice and self-determination: it is characterized by self-emptying and the way of the Cross.

When a modern Christian confronts the season of Lent – the question often becomes: "What do I want to give up for Lent?" The intention is good, but the question is wrong. Lent quickly becomes yet another life-choice, a consumer's fast. The practice of the traditional fast has been greatly diminished over the past few centuries. The individual is left on their own. Orthodoxy continues to have in place the full traditional fast, which is frequently modified in its application. It is essentially a vegan diet (no meat, fish, wine, dairy). Some limit the number of meals and their manner of cooking. Of course, having the fast in place and "keeping the fast" are two very different things. I know of no study on how Orthodox in the modern world actually fast. My pastoral experience tells me that people generally make a good effort.

Does any of this matter? Why should Christians in the modern world concern themselves with a traditional practice? What is at stake in the modern world is our humanity. The notion that we are self-authenticating individuals is simply false. We obviously do not bring ourselves in existence – it is a gift. And the larger part of what constitutes our lives is simply a given – a gift. It is not always a gift that someone is happy with – they would like themselves to be other than they are. But the myth of the modern world is that we, in fact, do create ourselves and our lives – our identities are imagined to be of our own making. We are only who we choose to be. It is a myth that is extremely well-suited for undergirding a culture built on consumption. Identity can be had at a price. But the only truly authentic human life is the one we receive as a gift from God. Lent is a call to freedom.

Thus, a beginning for a modern Lent is to repent from the modern world itself. By this, I mean renouncing the notion that you are a self-generated, self-authenticating individual. You are not defined by your choices and decisions, much less by your career and your shopping. You begin by acknowledging that God alone is Lord (and you are not). Your life has meaning and purpose only in relation to God. The most fundamental practice of such God-centered living is the giving of thanks.

I could well imagine that a modern person, reading through this, might feel overwhelmed and wonder what is left. What is left is being human. That so much in our lives is not particularly human but an ephemeral distraction goes far to explain much of our exhaustion and anxiety. There is no food for us in what is not human, so "let your soul delight itself in fatness...the irony of Lent!

Wishing you a blessed 40-Days!

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

202 Hillview #1 Eugene, Oregon 97408
Phone: (541) 683-3519

Website: www.stgeorgeor.org
Email: frgerasimos@sntgrg.org

Parish Council

The Parish Council is continuing to stay busy. One of the next projects we are looking into is how to respond to and help those in our parish who are "food insecure". Initially, this may begin by having folks pick up food at the Catholic Community Services pantry for those who cannot go there themselves. If you are in need of help in this way, please reach out to Father Jerry. Likewise, if you would be interested in being someone who picks up the food boxes and delivers them to those in need, please also let Father know.

Hopefully, in the future, we would like to have "community gardens" to grow vegetables to give to those in need.

As we approach the beginning of Lent, we are mindful of our need to increase almsgiving. Look for an email in the future about giving opportunities. The Clergy Laity Assembly will be a virtual experience this year and will include a presentation by Father Barnabas Powell on "Moving beyond the Pandemic and Returning to Worship". It should be very informative. If you'd like to participate, please contact Father or Kathryn Becker.

I know that I speak for all the Council members, when I ask you to please remember us in your prayers, as we humbly work to serve you and our Lord well. May our Lenten journey begin strong!

In Christ,
Kathryn Becker

Treasurer's Report

As of February 25, 2020, we have a balance of \$61,822 in operations account and \$89,179 in dedicated account.

The Vasilopita fundraiser was successful again this year, raising \$2,500 for St. Basil Academy. Thank you, Pete and everyone who contributed!

Fundraising: As of now, there are still no fundraising events planned. Depending on COVID restrictions, we may be able to do some form of

our Greek Dinner in May. We will keep you posted.

During Lent, we will be selling \$1 raffle tickets for a basket raffle. The winner will be chosen Easter Day.

We wish you all a blessed Lenten season.

STEWARDSHIP 2021

What is stewardship? It is the call of the faithful to share willingly the gifts that God has bestowed on them, including sharing these gifts for God's work. Stewardship is devotion and service to God and His Church as individuals, as families, as a parish, as a metropolis, as a national church and as the Church Universal. Stewardship is our commitment to use our time, talent and treasure to the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgement of Christ's redeeming love. It is caring for the needs of others; offering one's self to God as He offered Himself for us; and it is what a person does after saying "I Believe" as proof of that belief.

The primary purpose of stewardship is to promote the spiritual growth of the steward. It is a part of our parish life to help the steward develop his or her faith and to grow in grace. It is not there just to finance the local parish - that is a secondary purpose. Stewardship is directed toward the inner person. Stewardship is about our personal salvation. Think carefully about the following two passages as you contemplate your stewardship participation in 2021. The first is from Matthew 6, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The second is from II Corinthians 9, "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."

Our goal as a parish in 2021 is for each of us to strengthen our personal faith and increase our commitment to that faith. Please be an active participant in all the ministries of our parish and grow with Saint George.

Have a blessed new year,

Your Stewardship Committee

Greetings from the Bookstore! March Highlights

Books for Children:

- Feasts of the Orthodox Church, an Educational Coloring Book, provides a way for children learn about the yearly cycle of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church and introduces them to traditional pious customs related to each Feast. Lines are also provided so that children may describe how their families celebrate the Feast Days.
- Icon Cards of the Annunciation (Feast Day March 25); The Crucifixion ; and Ascension. Each card includes an educational description (laminated 3"x5").
- Ministry to Ministry: The Bookstore is one of several ministries within St. George. I would also like to highlight an item for the benefit of Philia. The women of Philia encourage and participate in opportunities of service to our parish and to our community. This year has been challenging, to say the least. Philia has felt its impact, and has not been able to hold their usual fund-raising events. Nonetheless, Philia has been creative in finding ways to continue their efforts in some way. With Lent soon approaching, I would like to highlight their Lenten Cookbook. Philia's Lenten Cookbook includes all vegan recipes: Soups, Salads, and Appetizers; Side Dishes and Entrees; Breads and Desserts. The cost is nominal, and copies are available in the Bookstore. All sales will go directly to Philia. There are enough recipes for most, if not all, of the Lenten season! Kali Orexi!

I wish you many blessings and much peace as you begin your Lenten Journey.

In Christ, Stella Kallianis

Missions and Evangelism

As we start the month of March, and anticipate Lent, let us begin once again to think how we can give more to the less fortunate among us. The last two years, we have put together "blessing bags" to give to those on the street corner or wherever we encounter the homeless and hungry.

Once again, we would like to invite you to participate in a similar endeavor. This year, we will simplify the items we collect. We will also aim initially to make only 40 bags. Let's begin to collect at church the following:

Tuna or chicken packets (not cans, unless they have flip top lids)

Healthy granola type bars

Some type of fruit snacks (boxed raisins, perhaps?)

Bottled water or juice

Socks

Small packages of Kleenex

There will be a box in the Fellowship Hall to put the items in and when the bags are ready, an email will be sent out so you can pick up 1 or 2 and give to those in need.

God bless your Lenten journey!

Kathryn

PHILIA

Hopefully, the weather will cooperate on Sunday, February 28, so we can celebrate Nikki's birthday with a group visit in her front yard. Complete with balloons, cupcakes, good wishes and dressed in customary pink and black. Philia's Augment Your Lent Event is in full swing. A takeout menu with a variety of Lenten foods for sale, has been sent out to all. A few hardcopies will be available in the fellowship hall. It's a fundraiser to help out with the Community Court Lunch expenses. Your orders can be mailed directly to julielenkoff2@comcast.net. All items will be ready for pickup after liturgy at church on Sunday, March 14. And as always, your support is greatly appreciated!

Plans for the future:

- February 28 - A birthday visit to Nikki's front yard
- March 14th - Augment Your Lent Event
- Community Court Lunches - March 12 - Ann-Marie // April 16 - Heather // May 7 - Pres and Julie // June 11 - Helen and Larisa.
-

For info on wedding or baptismal items please contact Gloria at 541-424-0575 or via email at zeazeastimmons@gmail.com.

Next meetings: No meetings scheduled at this time. Just email updates.

For info on wedding or baptismal items please contact Gloria at 541-424-0575 or via email at zeazeastimmons@gmail.com.

Reminder: Philia is a philanthropic organization open to ALL women in the parish. Come and join us! We could always use helping hands and helpful minds.

Julie Lenkoff, Philia Coordinator
julielenkoff2@comcast.net

From the Mission Churches

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ -

Each month, Holy Cross (Roseburg) sends support to Jesse and Juanita Brandow, OCMC Missionaries in Guatemala. We love hearing how this couple is serving Christ in South America, and are encouraged by their newsletters. This month's communication was especially inspiring, and I thought to share it with you!

"Church without mission is a contradiction in terms," writes Archbishop Anastasios of Albania. "If the Church is indifferent to the apostolic work with which she has been entrusted, she denies herself, contradicts herself and her essence." I have reflected on those words time and again as I consider how people in Central America might respond to my new task of training lay leaders in missions and evangelism. I wonder if I will hear the same responses that pop up in North America, where some people insist that "the Church here is still too young to send missionaries" or that "we need our leaders here, not in the mission field." It would not be surprising to hear those concerns in Central America, where Orthodoxy is even younger and where the shortage of trained leaders is far more dramatic.

However, when I meditate on these natural concerns, my mind always returns to the fundamental reality that Archbishop Anastasios expresses: for the Church of Christ, mission work is an existential necessity. It is not an optional task that we can push off until some future date when we believe the Church will be "ready." No, the urgency to share the love and truth of Christ flows from the Sacrament of Baptism itself, in which the Gospel reading commands us to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). This baptismal Gospel reading demonstrates that the work of missions and evangelism is never in competition with other tasks in the Church; rather, it is the most fundamental expression of our life in Christ and our obedience to the Son of God. In short, sharing the Gospel with others is not something we do but an expression of who we are. - Jesse Brandow

Imagine what would happen if we applied this understanding in our parishes, our communities, and in our daily lives!

With love in Christ - **Lisa Buck, Holy Cross,**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With grateful hearts for a generous, anonymous donation for liturgical items, we now have a tabernacle for the reserve sacrament and a myrrh (chrism) vessel. It will be so nice for the priests not to have to worry about transporting the presanctified gifts back and forth to Holy Resurrection during Great Lent this year. The same is true for the myrrh vessel for baptisms and chrismations. Glory to God for His gifts, blessings, and prayers as our little mission church grows and increasingly adds the items that every Orthodox Christian church needs. We pray for a very blessed lent for you all.

In Christ, Maria Hauser

February Celebrations Birthdays

March 2nd-Ann Leith
 March 4th-Alexis Drakatos
 March 6th-Stephanie Carroll
 March 8th-Mikey Creech
 March 9th-Marian Mueller
 March 10th-Joan Rundt
 March 14th-Jan Schmidt
 March 15th-Sophia Hughes
 March 23rd-Pres. Maria
 March 27th-Bonnie Sollars
 March 31st-Mark Jaquette

Feast Days

March 23rd-St. Lida
 Leida Litke
 March 26th-St Larisa
 Larisa Lilles
 March 29th-St Mark of Arethusa
 Mark Jaquette

Wedding Anniversaries

March 3rd-Stephenson

Baptized in Christ/Chrismated

March 21st-Jan Schmidt

Many Years! Chronia Polla!

News and Events

What's New!

- **First Saturday Breakfast:** As of the printing of this edition of the AGAPE there was no news regarding the resuming of the First Saturday Breakfast.
- **Live-streaming:** Live-streaming of the Divine Services will continue into the new year.. We invite you to tune in to our YouTube Channel (Saint George GOC), and pray the services with us. You can access the link by visiting our website www.stgeorgeor.org.
- **Vasilopita:** A very special "Thank You" to Pete Drakatos who prepared loaves of Vasilopita for our annual Vasilopita Auction. "Thank You" also to all of you who donated in support of St. Basil Academy, a home for at-risk children. Thanks to the efforts of everyone we will be sending a check for \$2500 dollars to St. Basil Academy! May God bless you all!
- **Augment Your Lent Event:** Philia is once again hosting the "Augment your Lent" event to raise funds for the Community Court Lunches project. A flyer is included in this month's AGAPE, and an electronic copy was mailed out. Please do what you can to support this project!
- **Additional Services:** In addition to Saturday Great Vespers and Sunday Orthros & Liturgy, we will be entering into Great Lent this month and that means additional opportunities for worship. On Wednesday, March 3rd & 10th, there will be Orthros & Liturgy beginning at 9 am. Forgiveness Vespers will take place on Sunday evening, March 14th at 6 pm. The service of Great Compline will take place at 6 pm on the Mondays of Great Lent, beginning on March 15th. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will take place at 6 pm, on the Wednesdays of Great Lent, beginning on March 17th. The Salutations service will take place at 7 pm on the Fridays of Great Lent, beginning on March 19th. Please check your weekly bulletin for schedule updates and changes.
- **Saturday of Souls:** Orthros and Liturgy will take place on Saturday, March 20th, beginning at 9 am. At the conclusion of liturgy, memorial prayers will be chanted on the occasion of the Saturday of Souls.
- **Men's Fellowship:** The inaugural meeting of the Men's Fellowship will take place on Saturday, March 6th, at noon. We will gather at the Coldfire Brewing Company on Mill Street. Our gathering will take place outside under a tent so please dress appropriately. All men of the parish are invited.
- **Psalter Group:** With Great Lent approaching it is time to form our Lenten Psalter group. Members each read an assigned Kathisma or small portion of the Psalms daily and pray for the other members of the group. If you are interested in reading and praying through the Psalms during Great Lent please contact Joanna Jaquette at nightengalegreen@gmail.com.
- **Prayer Team:** Did you know that there is a team of parishioners devoted to praying for you, and for those you know who are in need of prayer? These faithful brothers and sisters comprise our Prayer Team and are ever ready to take on requests for prayer. At this time, Elizabeth Sumstine is the contact person for the Prayer Team. If you would like to contact her please contact Father Jerry.
- **Brrrrrr:** With the continuation of cold temperatures, we will still be dealing with the cold weather. Due to the virus, we must keep spaces well ventilated. While we try to find a good balance, please remember to dress warmly for church.
- **Cleaning Help:** We are updating the cleaning schedule for the coming year. If you would like to be added or removed from the available families to clean the church, please email Kathryn Becker at beckerettes@msn.com. As far as March goes we thank the following parishioners for giving of their time and helping keep the church looking beautiful!
 - First week: Carroll
 - Second week: Becker
 - Third week: Zoumboukos/Carmack
 - Fourth Week: Avalos

KOINONIA

	3/7	3/14	3/21	3/28	
FELLOWSHIP					
GREETER					
PROSFORON	Creech	Lilles	Kaelin	Markopoulos	Freezer
FLOWERS	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
READERS	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas	Brad Thomas
CLEANING CREW	Carroll	Becker	Zoumboukos/ Carmack	Avalos	Kallianis/ Creech

GET INVOLVED!!!

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

PARISH COUNCIL	Kathryn Becker 971-506-7161
SAFETY COMMITTEE	Gloria Zezeas Timmons 541-484-0575
BOOKSTORE	Stella Kallianis 541-274-9110
PHILIA WOMEN'S GROUP	Julie Lenkoff 541-345-2107
CHURCH SCHOOL	Ann Marie Kaelin 541-335-1331
CHANTER/CHANT GROUP	Brad Thomas 541-689-9690, Ann Marie Kaelin 541-335-1331
FAMILY WELLNESS	Ashli Mueller 541-731-3319
FELLOWSHIP	
STEWARDSHIP	Neal Zoumboukos 541-344-4485
GREETERS	Larisa Lilles 541-484-7525
CARE MINISTRY	Gloria Zezeas Timmons 541-484-0575
PRAYER CIRCLE	Bonnie Sollars 541-852-9496
MISSIONS & EVANGELISM	Kathryn Becker 971-506-7161
FUNDRAISERS	Presbytera Maria 971-678-5112

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

A Good Word...

O Lord and Master of my life;
Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust for power and
idle talk;

But grant rather, the spirit of chastity, humility, patience
and love, to Your servant;

Yeah O Lord and King,
Help me to see my own sins and not judge others;
For You are holy, now and forever and to the ages of ages,
Amen!