

# St. Michael Orthodox Church

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**[www.stmichael.org](http://www.stmichael.org)**

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**Saturday, February 3**—Vigil & Confessions, 5 p.m.

**Sunday, February 4**—Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m. **Sunday of the Prodigal Son.**

**Saturday, February 10**—Vigil & Confessions, 5 p.m.

**Sunday, February 11**—Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m. **Judgment (Meatfare)  
Sunday.** Parish Council.

**Saturday, February 17**—Vigil & Confessions, 5 p.m.

**Sunday, February 18**—Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m. **Cheesefare (Forgiveness)  
Sunday.** Forgiveness Vespers.

**Monday, February 19**—Compline-Canon of St. Andrew, 10:00 a.m.

**Wednesday, February 21**—Presanctified Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.

**Saturday, February 24**—Vigil & Confessions, 5 p.m.

**Sunday, February 25**—Divine Liturgy, 10 am. **Sunday of Orthodoxy.**

**Wednesday, February 28**—Presanctified Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.

**Saturday, March 3**—Vigil & Confessions, 5 p.m.

**Sunday, March 4**—Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m. **St. Gregory Palamas.**

**Wednesday, March 7**—Presanctified Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.

**Saturday, March 10**—Requiem, 3 pm. Vigil & Confessions, 5 p.m.  
**Daylight Savings Time.**

**Sunday, March 11**—Divine Liturgy, 10 am. **Veneration of the Holy Cross.**  
Parish Council.

**Wednesday, March 14**—Presanctified Liturgy, 10:00 a.m.

**Saturday, March 17**—Vigil & Confessions, 5 p.m.

**Sunday, March 18**—Divine Liturgy, 10 am. **St. John of the Ladder.**

## Parish Life

	<u>Reader</u>		<u>Coffee Hour</u>	<u>Cleaning</u>
	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Epistle</u>		
2-04	Athanasius	Athanasius	[ <i>Bagel Sunday</i> ]	Andruss
2-11	Crawford	Blank	Chkheidze/Hix	Bliss
2-18	Scioscia	Bliss	[ <i>Blini Sunday</i> ]	Dawson
2-25	Crawford	Crawford	Bodenhausen	Elchinoff
3-04	Perry	Dawson	[ <i>Bagel Sunday</i> ]	Eskandani
3-11	Scioscia	Scioscia	Crawford	Hayashi
3-18	Soot	Soot	Tolkach/Bliss	Perry



### Coming Events & Notices:

- **About Evening Services:** Because of heavy traffic on the I-680/CA-242 corridor in the evening, and on Olivera Road as well, we will serve the Presanctified Liturgy and other services in the morning, at 10:00 a.m. As usual, we will break the fast with a potluck afterwards. The fast for receiving Communion begins at midnight.
- **Confession** will be available after Vespers every Saturday, or **by prior arrangement**, before Liturgy or the Presanctified.
- **Paschal Flowers:** Donations always accepted.

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### **THE MEETING OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE**

When Jesus was forty days old Mary and Joseph brought Him to the temple in Jerusalem “to present him to the Lord” (Luke 2:22), in accordance with the regulations laid down in Leviticus 12. St Luke is the only evangelist to include this episode (Luke 2:22-38), and he depicts a scene of ideal Old Testament piety, in harmony with the rest of his infancy narrative. Written in the light of subsequent Christian faith in the crucified and risen Jesus as the Son of God, the account presents Jesus as the awaited “light for revelation to the Gentiles” (Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6). He is the Messiah who brings the light of God’s salvation to all peoples....

Simeon and Anna stand for all that is best in the religion of Israel. Simeon is “righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel”; Anna is a prophet who “never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer day and night.” In welcoming Jesus they welcome the fulfillment of Israel’s hopes, and so, in Luke’s narrative, symbolize the transition from the first covenant to the new, to whose beginning they bear witness. Their commemoration follows naturally after the feast of the Presentation, or Meeting of Christ....

Let heaven’s gate be opened today; / for the Father’s Word, / Who knows no beginning in time, / begins to be, / yet does not abandon His divine nature. By the Virgin Mother He is brought, / a child forty days old, / to the Law’s temple willingly. / The old man takes Him in his arms: / “Release me,” cries the servant to the Master, / “for my eyes have seen Your salvation. / You have come into the world to save the human race: Glory to You!

— Hugh Wybrew, *Orthodox Feasts of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary*, pp. 81, 91.

## **PREPARATION FOR LENT**

Long before the actual beginning of Lent, the Church announces its approach and invites us to enter into the period of pre-lenten preparation. It is a characteristic feature of the Orthodox liturgical tradition that every major feast or season—Easter, Christmas, Lent, etc.—is announced and "prepared" in advance. Why? Because of the deep psychological insight by the Church into human nature. Knowing our lack of concentration and the frightening "worldliness" of our life, the Church knows our inability to change rapidly, to go abruptly from one spiritual or mental state into another. Thus, long before the actual effort of Lent is to begin, the Church calls our attention to its seriousness and invites us to meditate on its significance. Before we can practice Lent we are given its meaning. This preparation includes five consecutive Sundays preceding Lent, each one of them—through its particular Gospel lesson—dedicated to some fundamental aspect of repentance.

1. THE DESIRE (Sunday of Zacchaeus) : The very first announcement of Lent is made the Sunday on which the Gospel lesson about Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1-10) is read... the theme of this first announcement is **desire**. Man follows his desire. One can even say that man is desire, and this fundamental psychological truth about human nature is acknowledged by the Gospel: "Where your treasure is," says Christ, "there shall your heart be." A strong desire overcomes the natural limitations of man; when he passionately desires something he does things of which "normally" he is incapable.

2. HUMILITY (Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee): The Gospel lesson (Lk. 18:10-4) pictures a man, a Pharisee, who is always pleased with himself and who thinks that he complies with all the requirements of religion. He has reduced it to external observations and he measures his piety by the amount of money he contributes to the temple. As for the Publican, he humbles himself and his humility justifies him before God.

3. RETURN FROM EXILE (The Sunday of the Prodigal Son) : On the third Sunday of preparation for Lent, we hear the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32). The prodigal son, we are told, went to a far country and there spent all that he had. A far country! It is this unique definition of our human condition that we must assume and make ours as we begin our approach to God.

4. THE LAST JUDGMENT (Meat-Fare Sunday) : The Gospel lesson for the day is Christ's parable of the Last Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). When Christ comes to judge us, what will be the criterion of His judgment? The parable answers: love – not a mere humanitarian concern for abstract justice and the anonymous "poor," but concrete and personal love for the human person, any human person, that God makes me encounter in my life.

5. FORGIVENESS (Cheese-Fare Sunday) : [T]he Gospel lesson of this last Sunday (Matt. 6: 14-21) sets the conditions for our liberation. The first one is fasting—the refusal to accept the desires and urges of our fallen nature as normal ... The second condition is forgiveness—"If you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you." Therefore, the first break through the fortress of sin is forgiveness: to forgive is to reject the hopeless "dead-ends" of human relations and to refer them to Christ. Forgiveness is truly a "breakthrough" of the Kingdom into this sinful and fallen world.

— Condensed from Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, *Great Lent*, Chapter 1.

