

The Diocese of the West
The Orthodox Church in America

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St. Susanna Orthodox Church

February 2009

www.stsusanna.com



Pastor:

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For to this end, we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe... be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity... Do not neglect the gift that is in you....

—1 Timothy 4:9–15

Preparing for Lent

While not necessarily accounted as a preparation for Great Lent, we will celebrate The Meeting of Christ in the Temple on Monday, February 2, with the Vespers for the feast taking place just after Zacchaeus Sunday Divine Liturgy on February 1. However, the ascetic humility of St. Simeon, who patiently awaited the revelation of our Lord and Savior, is accounted in Church Tradition to have lasted far longer than a normal lifespan. And, when Simeon finally held the infant Jesus in his arms, he exclaimed the words that became our familiar Vespers hymn: “O Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace...” Such patience! Such humility! Such open-hearted love and joy! St. Simeon is indeed a very good spiritual model for any Christian entering Great Lent—or indeed, for any time of an Orthodox life.

We will have a Spiritual Enrichment Class at the Church at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 11, featuring the ascetic lives and teachings of St. Anthony (perhaps the greatest of monastic teachers) and St. Basil (who had profound effect on coenobitic, or communal, monasticism, and was also a heroic defender of the faith against powerful heretics). Recalling the lives and deeds of these towering ascetic saints is especially suitable for our Lenten preparations.

Our annual Pre-Lenten Class will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 18, in the Church. This class will include edifying activities that are conducive to a

successful Lent for the faithful, a discussion of fasting practices and the understanding that underlies the Lenten mindset. In particular, the extent of one’s fast is problematic for those who are new to Orthodoxy, those who are ill or aged, and those with specific dietary needs. Fasting is for our spiritual benefit, and is to be exercised in a balanced manner—as always, individual needs must be taken into account. I will be glad to counsel any who have questions. In the meantime, our Pre-Lenten class is intended to help us all have a spiritually fruitful Lent. For those who would like to attend, but cannot on that date and time, there will be a recap of the Pre-Lenten Class on Friday morning, February 20 at 9:00 a.m., at the Church.

The Pre-Lenten Period

The **Sunday of Zacchaeus** (February 1) announces that Lent is near. The gospel for that Sunday, Luke 19:1–10, recounts Zacchaeus’ intense desire to see the Lord, which includes climbing a tree to just get a glimpse if he could. This is how we should look forward to Lent, that season in which we especially tend to clearing our spiritual sight. One week later, The Lenten Triodion—that book that contains the services that are particular to the pre-Lenten and Lenten seasons—comes into use in the Church on **The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee**. The scriptural contrast (Luke 18:10–14) between the humility of the one and the fruitless pride

*Corner of Jamestown Rd.
& Robinwood Ln.
(2 blocks north of
Racetrack Rd.)

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of the other is another object lesson in our journey toward Lent.

On February 15, **The Sunday of the Prodigal Son** (Luke 15:11–32) presents an icon of repentance, which is both a comfort—in that God rejoices over the repentant sinner and will meet us, in our humility, more than halfway—and a warning that, but for the grace of God, which was shown to the prodigal before he even set out on his wasteful journey, the prodigal (who is so often us in our daily lives) may not have had the sense to repent.

Then comes **The Sunday of the Last Judgment**, or **Meatfare Sunday**, so called because this is when Orthodox consume meat for the last time before we enter Great Lent. Traditionally, monasteries and cathedrals celebrate the rite of the Saturday of the dead, on the Saturday before this, in which the dead of all ages past are commemorated as they await the Last Judgment. This is a reminder that we, too, shall be with them shortly. In this commemoration lies a powerful sense of bonding between all Christians present and past, as we consciously address that “great cloud of witnesses” that Paul speaks of in Hebrews 12:1. Through this service, we see beyond time, both past and present—and into the future as well, when we all shall see Jesus Christ in all His glory. Of course, on the **Sunday of the Last**

Judgment (the gospel is Matthew 25:31–46), we are reminded that, as the Typicon states, “No one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our judge.”

This year, we celebrate the last Sunday of preparation on March 1. This is **Cheesefare Sunday**—when traditionally, Orthodox eat the last of our dairy items before entering Great Lent. Even more importantly, this Sunday is also called **Forgiveness Sunday**, and the beautiful and necessary Rite of Forgiveness that is the centerpiece of Forgiveness Vespers, is celebrated after Divine Liturgy on this Sunday. In this Rite of Forgiveness, all members of the church, clergy and laity alike, take the opportunity to forgive one another—and to seek forgiveness of one another—for any sins committed against one another, consciously or unconsciously. This Sunday recalls both Adam’s expulsion from Paradise, and God’s salvific work of forgiveness that enables us to return, spiritually, to Paradise.

All this builds up to that preeminent spiritually strengthening season known as Great Lent.

In the Love of Christ,
Fr. Andrew

St. Susanna Cleaning Team Schedule

*Blessed are those who love the beauty
of God’s house*

Team 2—February 21st; 9:00 a.m.

MANY YEARS

Birthdays:

Natalia Koshelkova February 4

Namesdays:

Leslie Hurst February 11

Anniversaries:

Mark & Marita Sevick February 4

Liturgical Schedule for February 2009

- Saturday, Jan. 31** 6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers for **Zacchaeus Sunday**
- Sunday, Feb. 1** 9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **Zacchaeus Sunday**
Scripture Readings—1 Timothy 4:9–15 and Luke 19:1–10
Following Divine Liturgy—Great Vespers for **The Meeting of Christ in the Temple**
- Monday, Feb. 2** 6:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **The Meeting of Christ in the Temple**
Scripture Readings—Hebrews 7:7-17 and Luke 2:22-40
- Saturday, Feb. 7** 6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers for **The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee**
- Sunday, Feb. 8** 9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee**
Scripture Readings—2 Timothy 3:10–15 and Luke 18:10–14
Note: There will be a potluck and Parish Council Meeting following Divine Liturgy.
- Wednesday, Feb. 11** **7:00 p.m.—Spiritual Enrichment Presentation on St. Anthony the Great and St. Basil the Great, at Church**
- Saturday, Feb. 14** 6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers for **The Sunday of the Prodigal Son**
- Sunday, Feb. 15** 9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **The Sunday of the Prodigal Son**
Scripture Readings—1 Corinthians 6:12–20 and Luke 15:11–32
- Wednesday, Feb. 18** **7:00 p.m.—Pre-Lenten Class at Church: Edifying Lenten Activities, Fasting, Aspects of the Lenten Mindset**
- Saturday, Feb. 21** 6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers for **Meatfare Sunday/ The Sunday of the Last Judgment**
- Sunday, Feb. 22** 9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **Meatfare Sunday/ The Sunday of the Last Judgment**
Scripture Readings—1 Corinthians 8:8–9:2 and Matthew 25:31–46
- Saturday, Feb. 28** 6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers for **Cheesefare Sunday/ Forgiveness Sunday**
- March**
- Sunday, March 1** 9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **Cheesefare Sunday/ Forgiveness Sunday**
Scripture Readings—Romans 13:11–14:4 and Matthew 6:14–21
Following Divine Liturgy—**Forgiveness Vespers**
- Monday, March 2** **Great Lenten Fast Begins**
- Saturday, March 7** 6:00 p.m.—Great Vespers
- Sunday, March 8** 9:00 a.m.—Divine Liturgy for **The Sunday of Orthodoxy**
Scripture Readings—Hebrews 11:24–26, 32-12:2 and John 1:43–51
Following Divine Liturgy—Vespers for **The Sunday of Orthodoxy**

Prayer List

PLEASE JOIN US IN GIVING THANKS TO GOD:

- For the skill and devotion of those beautifying our temple and gardens.
- For the beauty of the Mother Lode, and for the privilege we have been given to live here.
- That the Holy Mother of Jesus continues to care for the unborn.
- That many of our petitions are being answered.
- For Stacy's successful delivery of a healthy son.
- For Nadine's on-going successful therapy and returning home.

PLEASE JOIN US IN PRAYING FOR GOD'S HELP:

- "St. John, please intercede for us before God for the membership growth of St. Susanna."
- That St. Susanna Mission may receive a Church Planting Grant.
- For repose of the souls of our service men and women who have given their lives for the people of Iraq.
- To safeguard all the troops who remain in heathen lands.
- To help us forgive the heathen fanatics who continue to murder our soldiers and their own citizens and children.
- That many may come to Orthodoxy through our witness and example.
- To bless our monasteries and the men and women who dwell in them.
- For the well-being of Matushka Anna and her family.
- For health and welfare for Ann, Fr. John, and Elisa.
- For Natasha's success in securing a permanent art teaching position.
- For the repose of the soul of Stephen and comfort for his family. Memory Eternal!
- For the healing and comfort for Donna and Ann.
- For the safety of Ryan as he enters military service.
- For comfort for Shari and Jerry and their family at the death of their grandson, T.J., in Iraq.

To ask us to pray for you, your family or friends, please call Alex Teshin at 209-536-9999.