

Holy Saturday, April 15

•9am Holy Saturday Vespers Liturgy

The Vespers Liturgy ushers in the first strains of the joyous feast. This service is the Vespers of Pascha itself and announces what is to come. The vestments and paraments are dramatically changed from black to white, and we hear "Let God arise and His enemies be scattered." (service lasts 2 and 1/2 hours)

After the Liturgy, we will bless loaves of bread and wine (juice for the children) and will partake of these things to sustain us through the day. The servers will be responsible for preparing the holy things for Pascha and then many of our faithful will prepare flowers and beautify the church for the feast.

•7pm-11:30pm Continuous Reading of Acts of the Apostles

There will be an online signup for this reading.

The Holy Pascha

Holy Saturday, April 15

•11:30pm Paschal Nocturnes

On Holy Saturday we fast and make preparations all day after the morning Liturgy (including the preparation of sumptuous paschal foods). "Behold the Bridegroom comes at midnight" we sang at Bridegroom Matins earlier in the week. Now we gather again before midnight to be ready to meet the Risen Lord. But before we make our triumphal Paschal Procession, we first gather in the church for Nocturnes at 11:30pm. Quietly, the Lord's body is taken from the "Tomb" and placed in victory on the Holy Table in the altar. All lights in the church are put out and we wait patiently for the first strains of the Paschal song..."Thy Resurrection, O Christ our Savior..." The paschal light is lit, the priest begins quietly to chant the hymn, the servers join in, and finally the choir and all the people add their voices to the priest's and servers' voices. The light is passed from person to person and we exit the church and make our Paschal Procession.

Paschal Sunday, April 16

•12am Procession and Paschal Matins

•12:45am Paschal Divine Liturgy

•2:45am The Blessing of Food and Paschal Meal

We have now entered completely into the joy of Pascha. Christ bursts the gates of death and the gates of Paradise are opened. Coming back into the church, we celebrate the Paschal Matins, hear the Paschal Sermon of St. John Chrysostom, and then go right into the Paschal Liturgy. After Liturgy, the priest blesses the Artos and the Paschal baskets of food in the parish hall. All are invited to stay for this meal.

•2pm Paschal Agape Vespers and Paschal Parish Picnic

Agape Vespers and the Paschal picnic immediately following are scheduled to be held at Highbridge Park in Wilmore, unless inclement weather.



Saint Athanasius

ORTHODOX CHURCH

Calendar for Great Lent & Holy Week

February 26 - April 15, Leading up to Pascha

*The Resurrection of our
Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!*

Christ is Risen!

Христос воскрес!

Χριστός ἄνέστη!

Hristos a inviat!

Christus resurrexit!



100 Lime Lane, Nicholasville, KY 40356

859-881-8144

www.athanasiusoca.org

Dear parish family & friends,

The words "Lent is almost here!" inspire in us all a variety of responses. Thoughts of "oh, I'm not ready," or "Thank God--I need Lent," or "It's here already?" run through our heads. Relief and terror. Joy and apprehension. Awareness that I need a change in my life, mingled with fear of what that might mean.

The Gospel begins with St. John the Baptist proclaiming boldly, "Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand." We know these words, but how do we fulfill them? How do we, who've heard the Gospel for years, actually *repent*? One of the answers the Orthodox Church has consistently supplied over the centuries has been this: *embrace the fullness of Great Lent. The three classic pillars of lenten praxis are Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving ("PFA").* The key in embracing these pillars of Lent is not that we tackle them *perfectly*, but that we actually strive to be *challenged* with regard to each of them.

By "prayer" the Church reminds us to stretch ourselves in our home prayers (maybe adding Psalms or Jesus Prayers) and *also* to attend to our common Liturgical prayers with special energy and devotion. During this season, not only are we given powerful weekend commemorations (every Saturday night and Sunday) but also the Church gives us mid-week Pre-Sanctified Liturgies to sustain us in the Sacraments as we fast. Let us resolve to attend these and the other extra lenten services. This is a serious sacrifice for busy people, but this is how we attend to the words "repent."

By "fasting" the Church is encouraging to do what we can physically manage, and be truly challenged in that effort. On the next page of this lenten booklet, we have the "official fasting guidelines" spelled out. If your health and family situation permit, by all means try to keep these traditional guidelines. If you know deep down that this is impossible to observe these guidelines fully due to chronic sickness or family conditions, talk to your priest and figure out with accountability how to modify them. But one principle remains that your priest will certainly emphasize: *challenge yourself as you fast.*

By almsgiving the Church is reiterating that fasting and prayer, without actions of love towards others, cannot truly transform our lives. We must tap into the Love of Christ (as we are also reminded in Matthew 25) and share that love in his Name! Have we visited the prisoner or prayed for him, or done something to help someone "trapped" in life? Have we visited the sick or done something to support widow and the orphan and offered help to the poor--in ways that have affected our pocketbooks? These questions make us uncomfortable, but the Gospel requires of us nothing less.

I wish you all a rich lenten journey. May we all, having labored to embrace the Lord through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, behold the Lord's resurrection. And may we be transformed and renewed in repentance as we journey towards the Dawn! In Christ Jesus, *Priest Justin*

Holy Wednesday, April 12

•11am Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts

All who are working are encouraged to take their lunch break and come to service to partake of Holy Communion. The communing should take place ~12:45pm and the completed ~1pm. We pray the Prayer of St. Ephrem for the last time this year at this service (lasts ~2hours).

•6:30pm Bridegroom Matins with Anointing

Tonight the them of Bridegroom Matins shifts dramatically to the person of Judas at the Last Supper, who is sharing the Lord's Table, and yet is preparing to betray Him. Afterwards the priest will anoint all present with blessed oil reserved from the Vigil of Palm Sunday (service last 1 & 1/2 hours).

Holy Thursday, April 13

•3pm Vespertal Liturgy of Mystical Supper

On Holy Thursday, we celebrate a Vespertal Liturgy that is sometimes called the Liturgy of the Mystical Supper. At this time, we commemorate the Last Supper and enter into the eternal mystery of it, which is the Eucharist (service lasts 2hours). After the Liturgy, we wil share a Lenten Meal.

•6:30pm Matins with 12 Passion Gospels

On the evening of Holy Thursday, we enter into Great and Holy Friday and encounter Christ Crucified. This is one of the most powerful services in all of Orthodox Holy Week (service lasts 3 hours).

Holy Friday, April 14

•9am Royal Hours for Great and Holy Friday

On the morning of Great and Holy Friday, we revisit the Cross. We hear they hymns of the previous evening and find Jesus hanging on the Cross for salvation. If you cannot be at the Thursday evening service, know that this service of the Royal Hours covers much of th same content. Royal Hours offers a powerful meditation on the Cross and its meaning (service lasts 1 and 1/2 hours).

•3pm Entombment Vespers (especially child friendly)

During this service we remember the taking down of the Lord's body from the Cross and His entombment by the Nobel Joseph (service lasts 1 hour).

•6:30pm Funeral Matins for Holy Saturday (especially child friendly)

Sometimes called the "Service of Lamentation" this Matins for Holy Saturday shows us that our lamentation of Christ's death will soon blossom forth into tremendous rejoicing! During the service our lamentations around the tomb of Christ begin to morph into praises to Him who is about to rise from the dead! (service lasts 2 and 1/2 hours).

•9pm All-night Reading of the Psalter

The all-night reading begins right after the Funeral Matins and continues until the Saturday morning Liturgy. There will be an online signup for this round-the-clock vigil.