



Mother of God Orthodox Church

904 Cherry Hill Road + Princeton, NJ 08540 + mogoca.org



Joy of all who sorrow art thou
and protectress of the oppressed,
feeder of the hungry, consolation of travelers,
haven for the tempest tossed,
visitation for the sick,
protection and aid for the infirm, staff of old age,
O, all pure Mother of the Most High God,
Hasten, we pray, to save thy servants.

We welcome
all who seek to know
Christ in His Word
and in His Church.

Message from Father Peter



The Journey Through Holy Week ***The Last Supper: Christ's Fervent Desire***

"When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then he said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'" Lk 22:14-16

Holy Week: A Journey Toward the Cross

From April 6 until April 11, we will observe Holy Week a sacred period marked by a full schedule of services. Each service draws us closer to the pivotal moments of Christ's betrayal, His trial and, ultimately, His crucifixion. The Bridegroom services, held earlier in the week, serve as a call to vigilance. We are reminded to stay alert as we await the arrival of the One who comes at midnight—at an hour unknown to us. The question is posed: will we remain focused and prepared, or will the distractions and excuses of our busy lives hinder us from entering the bridal

chamber with Christ?

On Wednesday, we gather in search of healing and forgiveness during the sacrament of Holy Unction. Through this service we recall the many healings performed by Christ and seek the same, so that we may be strengthened for the journey ahead.

Thursday brings the celebration and institution of the Mystical Supper. The words of Christ, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, remind us that the Creator earnestly desires to share this meal with us. Just as the Father welcomed the prodigal son and God sought out Adam and Eve when they hid in the garden, Christ longs for our presence at His table. Will we accept this invitation, or will we find excuses for our absence like those who declined the call to the wedding feast?

Walking with Christ: From the Garden to the Cross

Having been nourished with the bread of immortality and the cup of salvation, we journey with Christ after His arrest in the garden. Together we witness His trial, endure the pain of His scourging, and observe the humiliation and suffering as He carries His cross to Golgotha. At this critical moment, we are faced with a choice: will we stand with His mother, John and the other women at the foot of the cross, or will we shrink back in shame? Christ's words challenge us: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in the adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mk 8:38) May we have the courage to stand close, to confess our faith, like the repentant thief, and to hear Christ's promise: "Today you will be with me in paradise."

From Lamentation to Resurrection

On Friday, we come as Joseph of Arimathea did to take down the body of Christ and lay Him in the tomb. That evening, we gather to sing our lamentations beginning to perceive how Christ is now at work recreating all of creation. During this service, the prophecy of Ezekiel will be read helping us to understand that God will give life even to those in the tombs.

Saturday is a day of anticipation and reflection, as we listen to and read the many Old Testament prophecies that foretell Christ's life-giving death. This spiritual preparation leads us to the dawn of Sunday morning, when we come together to rejoice and proclaim the joyous message: Christ is Risen!

Preparing Our Hearts for the Resurrection

May we come together and prepare ourselves to receive and live the Passion of our Lord so that we may enter the empty tomb and receive the Light of Light, the Life of Life, the Resurrection of the One who has created and forgiven us—Christ, the Risen Lord!

“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You love Me before the foundation of the world. . . . The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.”
Jn17:24-25

This prayer that Jesus prayed before his voluntary death is offered on behalf of us who gather as a community of faith. It is a prayer that reaches across time, inviting all who believe to share in the unity and love between Christ and the Father.

The prayer establishes the relationship between the Father and Christ, and between Christ and us. Christ and the Father are united as one, yet remain two distinct persons, dwelling in pure, unconditional love. Christ knows the Father intimately and He has made the Father known to us through His words, actions and, ultimately, through His death and resurrection. Pascha, the feast of feasts, confirms and celebrates this relationship—between the Father and Christ, and between Christ and us.

Christ fulfills the will of the Father, proclaiming unconditional love, trust, compassion, forgiveness and healing. He submits Himself entirely to the Father’s will, obediently accepting the Cross. Trusting the Father, Christ enters the realm of death to destroy its power and its hold over humanity.

Just as the relationship between the Father and Christ is rooted in love, trust and obedience, so too must our relationship with Christ be grounded in these virtues. We are called to make Christ known and share the unconditional love and forgiveness we have experienced throughout the days of Great Lent and Pascha. We began the season of Great Lent singing the Great Prokeimenon from Forgiveness Vespers: “Turn not Your face away from Your child, for I am afflicted.” These words echo Christ’s cry from the Cross, “Father, why have You forsaken me?” Christ has taken our sense of forsakenness upon Himself, transforming it into forgiveness and inaugurating a new relationship between God and humanity.

We have offered ourselves in preparation to accompany Christ during His betrayal, trial and crucifixion. Now, we come to the empty tomb where Christ emerges and proclaims forgiveness and life. He reassures us: “Do not be afraid,” declaring that He has conquered death and destroyed the power of the one who held us in bondage. He commands us to go forth, proclaim and tell the story

As we gather and sing “Christ is Risen,” we are called to do the will of the One who is Risen—to teach, forgive, love and live this new life and relationship that we now celebrate. Let us go forth and proclaim: Christ is Risen!

Wishing you all the most blessed Pascha, fp



Services, Feasts & Special Events

~ April 2026 ~

Sunday liturgical services are at MOG @ 9:30 A.M. (All are welcome. Masks are optional.) **When services are held inside, capacity may be limited.** Saturday Vesper Services are at MOG @5:00 P.M.

We will continue to stream the services online for those of you who are unable to attend the live services. You can view the live stream and recast at <https://www.youtube.com/@mogprinceton>. **CONFESSION WILL BE HEARD ON SATURDAYS, BEFORE OR AFTER VESPERS, OR BY APPOINTMENT.**

Wednesday, April 1st	6:00 P.M. Presanctified Liturgy
Saturday, April 4th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy, <i>Lazarus Saturday</i> / followed by Church School retreat 5:00 P.M. Great Vespers, Blessing of Palms
Sunday, April 5th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy, <i>Palm Sunday</i>
Monday, April 6th	6:00P.M. Bridegroom Matins
Tuesday, April 7th	6:00P.M. Bridegroom Matins
Wednesday, April 8th	6:00 P.M., Service of Holy Unction
Thursday, April 9th	6:00 P.M. Liturgy of Holy Thursday, Passion Gospels
Friday, April 10th	9:00 A.M. – Noon, Decoration of Tomb 3:00 P.M. Burial Service 6:00 P.M. Lamentations
Saturday, April 11th	9:30 A.M. Vesperal Liturgy, Holy Saturday
Sunday, April 12th	900 A.M. Paschal Liturgy, Holy Pascha/ followed by <i>Blessing of Baskets / Parish Picnic / Easter Egg Hunt</i>
Monday, April 13th	9:30 A.M. Paschal Liturgy, Bright Monday
Saturday, April 18th	4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, April 19th	9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Thomas Sunday / followed by Church School
Saturday, April 25th	4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service
Sunday, April 26th	930 A.M. Divine Liturgy/Sunday of the Myrrh Bearing Women / followed by Church School



View the master MOG calendar at:
http://www.bit.ly/MOG_calendar





Church School

On Lazarus Saturday, April 4, 2026, the children will participate in an annual retreat.

This year's retreat is entitled People of Peace and the children will make Pascha baskets for the elderly.

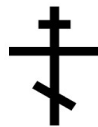
We will not have church school on Sunday, April 5th – Palm Sunday, nor on Sunday, April 12th – Pascha. However, we will celebrate our Pascha Picnic Easter Egg Hunt on the 12th after the Liturgy.

Lessons on April 19th and 26th:

1: All Things Possible

2: Give from the Heart

If you are interested in volunteering or have questions regarding the Church School, please contact Kristina at kbaktis@gmail.com.



Wisdom of Our Church Fathers

Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople The Paschal Sermon



The Catechetical Sermon of St. John Chrysostom is read during Matins of Pascha.

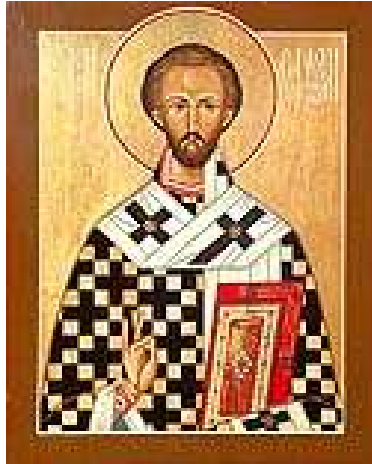
If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; He gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

And He shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one He gives, and upon the other He bestows gifts. And He both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

About St. John Chrysostom



St. John Chrysostom (*"The Golden Tongue"*) was born at Antioch in about the year 347 into the family of a military-commander, spent his early years studying under the finest philosophers and rhetoricians and was ordained a deacon in the year 381 by the bishop of Antioch Saint Meletios. In 386 St. John was ordained a priest by the bishop of Antioch, Flavian.

Over time, his fame as a holy preacher grew, and in the year 397 with the demise of Archbishop Nektarios of Constantinople—successor to Sainted Gregory the Theologian—Saint John Chrysostom was summoned from Antioch for to be the new Archbishop of Constantinople.

Exiled in 404 and after a long illness because of the exile, he was transferred to Pitius in Abkhazia where he received the Holy Eucharist, and said, "Glory to God for everything!", falling asleep in the Lord on 14 September 407.

Reprinted from the OCA website: www.oca.org





The Sisterhood of Saints Mary and Martha

Thank you to all who serve in this ministry.

“The bee is more honored than other animals not because she labors, but because she labors for others.” ~St. John Chrysostom



Holy and Great Friday *Decoration of the Tomb of Christ*

Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow *Orthodox Church*

Please Join Us
Friday, April 10th

9:00 AM - Noon *In the Church*

Let us come together in prayer and reverence to adorn the Tomb of Christ with flowers, entering more deeply into the solemn and life-giving Passion of our Lord.



Church Hospitality

Please contact Matushka Jeanne at jbaktis@hotmail.com or (915) 255-9896 if you are able to sponsor a coffee hour after Sunday Liturgies.



“Work is a blessing, a gift from God. Work gives vigor to the body and refreshes the mind. If God had not given us work, man would have become moldy. Those who are diligent continue to work into their old age.” ~ Saint Paisios of Mount Athos





ANNOUNCEMENTS

Donations for St. Basil's House

Mother of God continues to support St. Basil's House with food donations, placed in the collection bin at the side entrance of the Church.

Please, when you shop, think of those in our community who are in need and bring your offerings to the Church.

Church School

For information or to volunteer, contact Kristina Baktis, kbaktis@gmail.com.

Donations for a Garden Fund

MOG is seeking donations for a garden fund to finance more plantings to beautify the outdoors around the church.

A donation basket for this purpose is on the table in the side-door entry room.

Please write "beautification fund" somewhere on your check or just donate cash.

Thank you!

- ❖ Catechetical Class has begun. Anyone interested in joining, please contact Fr. Peter at pabaktis@gmail.com
- ❖ Inquirers class via Zoom:
Contact FP for information
- ❖ Confessions by appointment, please contact FP
- ❖ Thanks to all who donated to the Fellowship Space fundraiser. Please make your 2026 pledges!





Please Come to our Annual
Bright Saturday
Paschal Open House
Saturday April 18
9:30am Divine Liturgy with
Archbishop Michael

Followed by Paschal Luncheon,
Fellowship and Activities

Hosted by St. Andrew's Camp

*1280 State Rte 49 Jewell NY ***

Everyone is welcome and feel free to
bring your family and friends !!!

For More information Call or Text at 315 383-2686 or leave message at 315
675-9771

**** aka Town of Vienna or Cleveland NY for GPS**

MOG EXTRA: LENTEN RECIPE*Submitted by Sophia Kayafas***FLUFFY
CHOCOLATE
MOUSSE***Lenten Recipe*MORE RECIPES AT IOCC.ORG/LENT

Serves 4

1 can coconut milk (full fat, unsweetened)
1/2 cup non-dairy chocolate chips
1 T maple syrup or honey
1/2 tsp. of vanilla extract
Pinch of kosher or sea salt

1. Drain the liquid from the coconut milk then place the thick cream in a mixing bowl.
2. Melt the chocolate chips in a pan, stirring occasionally.
3. Add the melted chocolate, syrup or honey, vanilla extract, and salt to the mixing bowl with the coconut cream.
4. Use a mixer and beat the mixture until it is airy, light and fluffy.
5. Chill in the refrigerator and top with fresh fruit or berries, chopped nuts, or non-dairy cream before serving (you can be as creative as you wish with your topping).



April 2026
stbasilshousenj@gmail.com

THANK YOU for donating canned goods, toiletries, clothing, toys, books and re-usable shopping bags in the bin in the vestibule at MOG; your gifts are greatly appreciated. We are privileged to receive the lovely gifts and to pass them along to our neighbors.



Most weeks, we have been meeting on Wednesday mornings for breakfast, Bible study and the distribution of clothing and groceries. Additional volunteers are needed on the fourth and fifth Wednesdays of each month. Sometimes, a volunteer cannot come on his or her scheduled day; it would be very helpful to have other people available to fill in as needed.

Natalie T. and George hosted an open house in early March. If volunteers were available, we would be able to host other Saturday gatherings; please consider serving in this way; we each have gifts to share. On or about April 1, we plan to give small Easter baskets to our neighbors and are still accepting donations of small toiletry items, granola bars and candy. Gift cards for Dunkin' Donuts or Walmart would also be welcome.

Please continue to pray for us, and for our neighbors. Please pray that God would send people to help so that the work may continue; many of our present volunteers are aging; our neighbors are increasingly helpful, but dependable, younger, stronger volunteers are really needed.



<https://www.facebook.com/stbasilshouseni/>



[stbasilshousetrentonnj](https://www.instagram.com/stbasilshousetrentonnj)



Translation of the relics of Saint Lazarus “of the Four Days in the Tomb”, Bishop of Kiteia, Cyprus

Commemorated on [October 17](#)



The Transfer of the relics of Righteous Lazarus of the Four Days, Bishop of Kiteia on Cyprus, took place in the ninth century. The Righteous Saint Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, lived in the village of Bethany, not far from Jerusalem. During His earthly life the Lord Jesus Christ often visited the house of Lazarus, whom He much loved and called His friend (John 11:3,11), and when Lazarus had died and lain four days already in the grave, the Lord raised him from the dead (John 11:1-44). (The Church remembers Saint Lazarus on the Saturday of the Sixth Week of Great Lent, “Lazarus Saturday.”)

Many of the Jews, when they heard about this, came to Bethany. Being persuaded of the reality of this most remarkable wonder, they became followers of Christ. Because of this the High Priests also wanted to kill Lazarus. Righteous Lazarus is mentioned in the Holy Gospel once more: when the Lord had come again to Bethany six days before the Passover, Lazarus was also there (John 12:1-2, 12:9-11). After his raising, Saint Lazarus lived another thirty years as a bishop on the island of Cyprus, where he spread Christianity and peacefully fell asleep in the Lord.

The holy relics of Saint Lazarus were discovered in Kiteia. They were within a marble coffin, upon which was inscribed: “Lazarus of the Four-Days, the friend of Christ.” The Byzantine emperor Leo the Wise (886-911) gave orders to transfer the relics of Saint Lazarus to Constantinople in the year 898 and place them within the church of the Righteous Lazarus.





Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow



Contribute to Mother of God online!

- ✓ We now offer the ability to send your contributions online!
- ✓ Our members and friends have even more ways to access current and past contribution's activity – choose the way that suits your lifestyle best!

Visit mogoca.org

for more information
and to sign up.

Sign up for e-contributions today! It's free, easy, and secure.

Save time and money, while helping the environment!

- **View your current and past contributions:** Access previous contributions online, with the option to print or save to your computer.
- **Never miss a contribution:** Receive an email according to your preferred timetable for making contributions.
- **Help us honor our obligations:** Set up a recurring contribution and automatically deduct the payment from your bank account or credit card on the same day of every month.
- **Save time and money:** Don't be hassled writing checks, stamping envelopes, and/or mailing contributions. View and make contributions from anywhere at any time.
- **Earn rewards:** Use your credit card to make your contribution and earn points or rewards for every dollar you contribute.
- **Help the environment:** Reduce the impact you have on the environment by choosing to view and make your contributions online.

Prayer Requests



“...and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

~James 5:16, NKJV

Commemoration of the Living Servants of God:

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who for the sake of Your eternal mercy and loving kindness became man, and suffered crucifixion and death for the salvation of all; Who rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father, where You hear the prayers of all who call upon You humbly and with their whole heart: incline Your ear to us, and hearken to the prayer which your unworthy servants offer as a spiritual sacrifice for all Your people.

Have mercy, O Lord, upon:

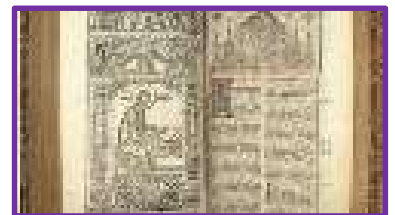
- We pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy. We pray for peace in the Middle East. We pray the same for all war-torn nations.
- Please pray for an end to gun violence, particularly in the United States. Please pray for unity, love, peace and joy.
- Please pray for **George Gabriel**, and for:
- **Debbie Baktis**, Matushka Jeanne's sister-in-law who is awaiting a kidney transplant.
- Praise for Matushka Jeanne's niece's husband, **David**. His last brain scan was clear of all cancer. He is doing his chemo rounds and is handling the treatment well.
- **Jan Perkins**, who continues to suffer from mobility and digestive issues.
- **The Delarato Family. Nick DeLarato**, who has health issues, and Nick's sister, **Kathy**.
- **Olga Mezina**, friend of Lana.
- **Carson & Addison**, Joe Elchak's granddaughters.
- Nina Robinson's friend, **Stella Goudard**, who has heart issues, and Stella's husband, **Rick**.
- Lauren Ugorji's: husband, **Richmond**, who has health issues, adult children **Jade & Mike Edwards**, who continue to suffer setbacks in quest to rebuild home; **Jordan & Eric Mosurick**, who need jobs, and teenage **Anastasia Ugorji**. Lauren's: dad, **Don Robinson**, as he battles blood cancer; aunt & uncle **Kirra (undergoing chemo treatments for pancreatic cancer) & Jesse Filkins**, aunts **Scott Brown Pempeit** and **Laverne Tisdale**; friend **Missy Gillespie** and Missy's husband, **Kurt**, who may soon be added to the kidney transplant list; and **Lydia**, family friend diagnosed with cancer (she is 17).

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May we join you in prayer for all of those on your minds, all of those in your prayers, and all of those in your hearts. Lord Have Mercy.

Please send prayer requests and status updates to: ladyofleasure@yahoo.com

COMMEMORATION OF THE DEPARTED Jackie DeLarato – May Her Memory Be Eternal

Daily Bible Readings - For a listing and links to the daily scripture readings go to <http://oca.org/readings>.





Please Pray for the Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow
Orthodox Church
as we move forward.

God's Will Be Done In All Things!!!

