



# Mother of God Orthodox Church

904 Cherry Hill Road + Princeton, NJ 08540 + [mogoca.org](http://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.

## A Message from Father Peter

**But when he came to his senses (himself) he said how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough to spare, and I'm dying with hunger! LK 15:17**

On the second Sunday of the Lenten Tridion<sup>1</sup> we have the story of the Prodigal Son. A scripture reading from the gospel of Luke, it focuses on the faithfulness of God, and our return to him in repentance. The story helps us to prepare for the upcoming season of Great Lent, a time of prayer, fasting and works of mercy. In verse 17 we read that the son comes to his senses, himself. He has a radical change, a turning of his mind and realizes that what he thought was truth wrapped in the disguise of "a good life," only brought him to despair. He comes to his right mind and acknowledges that his father's love, care and compassion were traded for what he believed to limit him to live a life of freedom and pleasure.



The story of the prodigal son is especially important for us today, as we approach the season of Great Lent. We are living in a world where people have become confused not only with lies, but with promises that care not for truth or the well-being of people. We hear people being told not to believe what they see, or hear, but to listen to a reality that is rooted in division, envy and cruelty. It is as if we have become like the prodigal son – not seeing what our Heavenly Father has given us in the Incarnation of His Only Begotten Son, and taken what we believe is ours, and left the safety of His House, and lost our senses.

We will sing during this season of Great Lent "Open to me the doors of repentance. . . ." It is our song that calls us to come to our senses and return to our Heavenly Father. We are called to pray, fast and do works of charity during this season of Great Lent. We do this not to gain favor, but to put aside the things we take for granted and the things we have allowed to be misused. We pray fast and do works of charity, not for ourselves but for the entire world. We pray in our liturgical services for the peace of the whole world, for the unity of all people, and for the errors of all your people. We practice these disciplines so that we and the world may come to our senses and live the forgiveness, healing, compassion and love we have been given and shown in the voluntary death of our Heavenly Father's Only Begotten Son. We move through this season of Great Lent to hear and practice what Christ has given us: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." JN 13:34



<sup>1</sup> The Lenten Tridion is a liturgical book used by the Orthodox Church containing the propers for the fasting period preceding Pascha (Easter) and for the weeks leading up to the fast. It is divided into three parts: Three weeks preceding Great Lent, Great Lent and Holy Week.

## Services, Feasts & Special Events

~ February 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>. **CONFESION WILL BE HEARD ON SATURDAYS, BEFORE OR AFTER VESPERS, OR BY APPOINTMENT.**

<b>Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy</b> , Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today / <b>followed by Church School</b>
<b>Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy</b> , The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple
<b>Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service</b>
<b>Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ Sunday of the Prodigal Son/ followed by Church School</b>
<b>Saturday, February 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service</b>
<b>Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy/ followed by Church School</b>
<b>Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service</b>
<b>Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>9:30 A.M. Divine Liturgy and Vespers/ Forgiveness Sunday / No Church School</b>
<b>Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>6:00 P.M. Canon of St. Andrew</b>
<b>Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:00 P.M. Canon of St. Andrew</b>
<b>Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:00 P.M. Presanctified Liturgy</b>
<b>Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:00 P.M. Canon of St. Andrew</b>
<b>Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4:00 P.M. Choir Rehearsal/ 5:00 P.M. Vespers Service</b>



View the master MOG calendar at: [http://www.bit.ly/MOG\\_calendar](http://www.bit.ly/MOG_calendar)



†



## Church School

If you are interested in volunteering or need to contact Kristina regarding the Church School you may reach her at: [kbaktis@gmail.com](mailto:kbaktis@gmail.com)

Thank you.

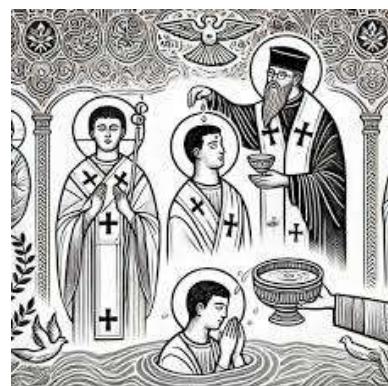
## • Orthodoxy & Death



## • In the Midst of the Church

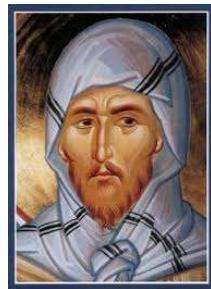


## • Doer of the Work



## Wisdom of Our Church Fathers

St. Ephraim the Syrian: If he was not flesh . . . And if he was not God . . .



St. Ephraim the Syrian (Commemorated January 28<sup>th</sup>)

The facts themselves bear witness and his divine acts of power teach those who doubt that he is true God, and his sufferings show that he is true man. And if those who are feeble in understanding are not fully assured, they will pay the penalty on his dread day.

If he was not flesh, why was Mary introduced at all? And if he was not God, whom was Gabriel calling Lord?

If he was not flesh, who was lying in the manger? And if he was not God, whom did the Angels come down and glorify?

If he was not flesh, who was wrapped in swaddling clothes? And if he was not God, whom did the shepherds worship?

If he was not flesh, whom did Joseph circumcise? And if he was not God, in whose honour did the star speed through the heavens?

If he was not flesh, whom did Mary suckle? And if he was not God, to whom did the Magi offer gifts?

If he was not flesh, whom did Symeon carry in his arms? And if he was not God, to whom did he say, "Let me depart in peace"?

If he was not flesh, whom did Joseph take and flee into Egypt? And if he was not God, in whom were words "Out of Egypt I have called my Son" fulfilled?

If he was not flesh, whom did John baptise? And if he was not God, to whom did the Father from heaven say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased"?

If he was not flesh, who fasted and hungered in the desert? And if he was not God, whom did the Angels come down and serve?

If he was not flesh, who was invited to the wedding in Cana of Galilee? And if he was not God, who turned the water into wine?

(Continued)

If he was not flesh, in whose hands were the loaves? And if he was not God, who satisfied crowds and thousands in the desert, not counting women and children, from five loaves and two fishes?

If he was not flesh, who fell asleep in the boat? And if he was not God, who rebuked the winds and the sea?



If he was not flesh, with whom did Simon the Pharisee eat? And if he was not God, who pardoned the offences of the sinful woman?

If he was not flesh, who sat by the well, worn out by the journey? And if he was not God, who gave living water to the woman of Samaria and reprebanded her because she had had five husbands?

If he was not flesh, who wore human garments? And if he was not God, who did acts of power and wonders?

If he was not flesh, who spat on the ground and made clay? And if he was not God, who through the clay compelled the eyes to see?

If he was not flesh, who wept at Lazarus'

grave? And if he was not God, who by his command brought out one four days dead?

If he was not flesh, who sat on the foal? And if he was not God, whom did the crowds go out to meet with glory?

If he was not flesh, whom did the Jews arrest? And if he was not God, who gave an order to the earth and threw them onto their faces.

If he was not flesh, who was struck with a blow? And if he was not God, who cured the ear that had been cut off by Peter and restored it to its place?

If he was not flesh, who received spittings on his face? And if he was not God, who breathed the Holy Spirit into the faces of his Apostles?

If he was not flesh, who stood before Pilate at the judgement seat? And if he was not God, who made Pilate's wife afraid by a dream?

If he was not flesh, whose garments did the soldiers strip off and divide? And if he was not God, how was the sun darkened at the cross?

If he was not flesh, who was hung on the cross? And if he was not God, who shook the earth from its foundations?

*(Continued)*

If he was not flesh, whose hands and feet were transfixed by nails? And if he was not God, how was the veil of the temple rent, the rocks broken and the graves opened?

If he was not flesh, who cried out, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me"? And if he was not God, who said "Father, forgive them"?

If he was not flesh, who was hung on a cross with the thieves? And if he was not God, how did he say to the thief, "Today you will be with me in Paradise"?

If he was not flesh, to whom did they offer vinegar and gall? And if he was not God, on hearing whose voice did Hades tremble?

If he was not flesh, whose side did the lance pierce, and blood and water came out? And if he was not God, who smashed to gates of Hades and tear apart its bonds? And at whose command did the imprisoned dead come out?

If he was not flesh, whom did the Apostles see in the upper room? And if he was not God, how did he enter when the doors were shut?

If he was not flesh, the marks of the nails and the lance in whose hands and side did Thomas handle? And if he was not God, to whom did he cry out, "My Lord and my God"?

If he was not flesh, who ate by the sea of Tiberias? And if he was not God, at whose command was the net filled?

If he was not flesh, whom did the Apostles and Angels see being taken up into heaven? And if he was not God, to whom was heaven opened, whom did the Powers worship in fear and whom did the Father invite to "Sit at my right hand". As David said, "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, etc."

If he was not God and man, our salvation is a lie, and the words of the Prophets are lies. But the Prophets spoke the truth, and their testimonies were not lies. The Holy Spirit spoke through them what they had been commanded.

+ St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Excerpt from the Sermon on Transfiguration*





## 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***

# OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2026

*Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)*

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week <b>FEBRUARY 1st</b>	<b>TRIODION WEEKS</b> Publican and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week <b>FEBRUARY 8th</b>	<b>The Prodigal Son Returns!</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze meats this week.
Meatfare <b>FEBRUARY 15th</b> FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	<b>The Last Judgement</b> Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare <b>FEBRUARY 22nd</b> FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	<b>Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise!</b> <b>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</b> Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 1st</b>	<b>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</b> <b>SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY</b> Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 8th</b>	<b>ST GREGORY PALAMAS</b> Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 15th</b>	<b>VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b> <b>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</b> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 22nd</b>	<b>ST JOHN of the LADDER</b> Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent <b>MARCH 29th</b>	<b>ST MARY of EGYPT</b> Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY <b>APRIL 5th</b> GREAT WEEK BEGINS	<b>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</b> <b>ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM</b> Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <b>APRIL 10th</b>	<b>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</b> <b>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</b> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! <b>APRIL 12th</b> NO FASTING!	<b>BRIGHT WEEK</b> <b>HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!)</b> Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

## Church Hospitality

Please contact Matushka Jeanne at [jbaktis@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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!





**February 2026**  
**stbasilshousenj@gmail.com**

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

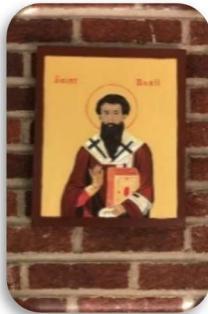
PLEASE make a special effort to bring **canned SOUP** for St. Basil's House on Sunday, **February 8, SUPERBOWL SUNDAY**. Especially in the cold weather, soup is a comforting, filling and easy meal.

We have been meeting on **Wednesday mornings** for breakfast, Bible study and the distribution of clothing and groceries. Grace helped on Jan. 7. Fr. Peter, Mat. Jeanne, Matthew, Joe and Julia led the group on Jan. 14. Matthew, Lucia and Joe took over on Jan. 21. On Jan. 28, Natalia T. helped. Additional volunteers are needed on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays monthly.

We enjoyed a **Christmas gathering** on Jan. 3; Joe provided a lovely lunch and many of the guests brought desserts.

Natalie T. and George plan to host an open house on the morning of **Saturday**, Feb. 7. 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.

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 much needed.



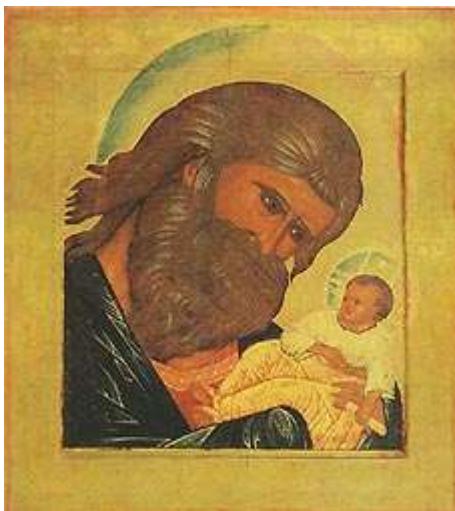
<https://www.facebook.com/stbasilshousenj/>



stbasilshousetrentonnj



## Holy, Righteous Simeon the God-Receiver



Commemorated on [February 3](#)

Righteous Simeon the God-Receiver was, according to the testimony of the holy Evangelist Luke, a just and devout man waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him (Luke 2:25). God promised him that he would not die until the promised Messiah, Christ the Lord, came into the world.

Ancient historians tell us that the Egyptian pharaoh Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.) wished to include texts of Holy Scripture in the famous Library at Alexandria. He invited scholars from Jerusalem, and the Sanhedrin sent their wise men. The Righteous Simeon was one of the seventy scholars who came to Alexandria to translate the Holy Scriptures into Greek. The completed work was called “The Septuagint,” and is the version of

the Old Testament used by the Orthodox Church.

Saint Simeon was translating a book of the Prophet Isaiah, and read the words: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb, and shall bring forth a Son” (Is 7:14). He thought that “virgin” was inaccurate, and he wanted to correct the text to read “woman.” At that moment an angel appeared to him and held back his hand saying, “You shall see these words fulfilled. You shall not die until you behold Christ the Lord born of a pure and spotless Virgin.”

From this day, Saint Simeon lived in expectation of the Promised Messiah. One day, the righteous Elder received a revelation from the Holy Spirit, and came to the Temple. It was on the very day (the fortieth after the Birth of Christ) when the All-Pure Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph had come to the Temple in order to perform the ritual prescribed by Jewish Law.

When Saint Simeon beheld their arrival, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that the divine Child held by the All-Pure Virgin Mary was the Promised Messiah, the Savior of the world. The Elder took the Child in his arms and said, “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32).

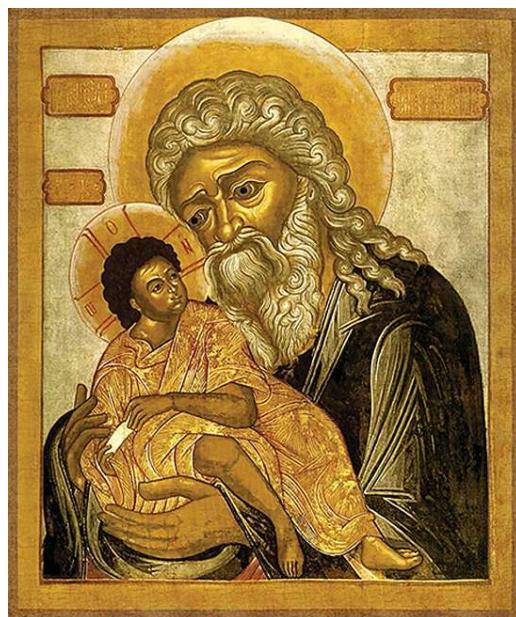
There is a Christian epigram (Number 46) in “The Greek Anthology” which is addressed to Saint Simeon. It tells the righteous Elder to receive the Child Who was born before Adam, and Who will deliver Simeon from this life and bring him to eternal life. A similar idea is expressed in the Aposticha (Slavic use) for the Forefeast of the Nativity of the Lord (December 24). There the Mother of God refers to her Son as “older than ancient Adam.”

Simeon blessed the All-Pure Virgin and Saint Joseph, and turning to the Mother of God he said, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:34-35).

(Continued)

The holy Evangelist continues: "And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband for seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not leave the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming at that very hour, also gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption at Jerusalem" (Luke 2:36-38).

The holy righteous Simeon the God-Receiver died at a great age (Tradition says he was 360). His holy relics were transferred to Constantinople in the sixth century. His grave was seen by the Russian pilgrim Saint Anthony, the future Archbishop of Novgorod (October 8) in 1200.



***MOG Photos from the Theophany (Blessing of the Waters)***



*(Continued)*



*Women and  
Teen Girls*

## 2026 RETREAT

**STEADFAST**- A Weekend to grow in strength and faith reflecting on the life of St. Olympia the Deaconess

Camp Shiloh  
753 Burnt Meadow Rd.,  
Hewitt, NJ

February 6-8, 2026

Sponsored by the OCA Diocese of New York and New Jersey  
No fee to attend!  
Questions? Email [admin@nynjocayouth.org](mailto:admin@nynjocayouth.org)

SCAN TO REGISTER  
BY FEBRUARY 2ND!



### 2026 Teen Girls & Women's Retreat

**STEADFAST:** A weekend to grow in strength and faith reflecting on the life of St. Olympia the Deaconess

#### Retreat Schedule

February 6-8 ~ [Camp Shiloh](#), 753 Burnt Meadow Road, Hewitt, NJ

##### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6<sup>th</sup>

6:00 PM	Check-in	Dining Hall
7:00 PM	Dinner and Icebreakers	Dining Hall
8:00 PM	Welcome & Introduction	
8:30 PM	Introduction to the Music for the Services to St. Olympia (speaker: Dr. Jessica R. Suchy-Pilalis)	
10:00 PM	Evening Prayers - Readers Akathist to St Olga of Alaska	
11:00 PM	Lights Out	Lodge

##### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7<sup>th</sup>

8:00 AM	Breakfast	Dining Hall
9:00 AM	Moleben to St Olympia followed by group photo	Dining Hall
9:45-10:00 AM	Break	
10:00 AM	Zoom Call with Archbishop MICHAEL	
11:00 - 1:00PM	Encountering St Olympia: Her Life Expressed Through Hymns (speaker: Dr. Jessica R. Suchy-Pilalis)	
1:00 PM	Lunch	Dining Hall
2:00 - 3:30PM	Reflection & Discussion on St Olympia's Life (speaker: Mat Dennise Kraus)	
3:30 - 5:00 PM	Teen - Low-ropes/Teambuilding, Hike, Indoor Craft (TBD) Adult - Hike, Indoor Craft (TBD)	
5:00 - 6:00 PM	Singing as Prayer: Learning the retreat hymns together (speaker: Dr. Jessica R. Suchy-Pilalis)	
6:00 PM	Dinner	Dining Hall
6:30 PM	Confessions available with Fr Martin before & after Vespers	
7:00 PM	Great Vespers with Liya (incl. hymnography from service to St Olympia)	
8:00 PM	Closing Session and Q&A (Mat Dennise & Dr Jessica)	
9:00 PM	Teen - Fellowship: Indoor or Outdoor Campfire with s'mores & hot chocolate Adult - Fellowship: Indoor or Outdoor Campfire with s'mores & hot chocolate	
11:00 PM	Lights Out	Lodge

##### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8<sup>th</sup>

9:00 AM	Divine Liturgy (sing the Magnification & Praises from St Olympia's vigil for pre-communion hymn as well as dismissal hymns)	
11:00 AM	Brunch & Departure. Checkout from the retreat center is 12noon.	Dining Hall



### 2026 Teen Girls & Women's Retreat

**STEADFAST:** A Weekend to grow in strength and faith reflecting on the life of St. Olympia the Deaconess

#### Meet Our Speakers

**Dr. Jessica Suchy-Pilalis** is a specialist in the theory, history, and practice of Byzantine music and was among the first officially titled female protopsalti in the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America. She holds advanced degrees in music from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the Eastman School of Music, and Indiana University, along with highest-honors diplomas in Byzantine music from Greek conservatories.

A tonsured reader and chanter, Dr. Suchy-Pilalis is dedicated to sharing the Church's prayer through its rich musical heritage. She is especially known for setting English hymn texts in authentic Byzantine style, preserving the tradition's modal and melodic integrity. She was granted a sabbatical for the academic year 2023-24 to write hymn texts and compose music for the vigil of St. Olympia, Deaconess of Constantinople.

Her compositions and hymn settings appear on recordings by the Boston Byzantine Choir and Archangel Voices and are published by Orthodox Music Press and available through the ACOA and OCA music libraries. Professor of Music at SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music, she teaches music theory, harp, and Byzantine music, and has led choirs, lectures, and workshops across the U.S. and Canada. In 2006, she received the St. Romanos Medallion for significant national contributions to church music. She currently chants at St. Olympia Orthodox Church in Norwood, NY, and Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Camp Hill, PA.

**Matushka Dennise Kraus** draws on a lifetime formed by the Orthodox Church and the hard-earned wisdom of raising five children alongside her husband of 33 years, Fr. Martin Kraus. Shaped by the Orthodox Church from childhood, she has served in parish ministry since 2002, offering compassionate pastoral care through one-on-one ministry, retreat leadership, and fellowship—especially to women and young adults.

Matushka Dennise is deeply involved in youth formation and currently serves as Co-Director of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey Department of Youth Ministry, as well as Director of the Diocese's Blessed Matushka Olga Women's Ministry.

A significant focus of her work is caring for women and families who have experienced pregnancy loss. Drawing from both pastoral experience and personal understanding, she has helped develop dedicated prayer services for grieving families. She has also written articles and prayers addressing sensitive pastoral needs, offering guidance to Orthodox communities seeking to expand compassionate ministry in this area.

Matushka Dennise works alongside her husband, Fr Martin, serving their second parish community at Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in East Meadow, NY where she continues to walk alongside women and families with gentleness, faith, and hope rooted in the life of the Church.

## Seeking Volunteer(s)

His Eminence, Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey need a few people to help in various Diocesan Ministries.

### Diocesan Communications Team—Volunteers Needed



The Diocese of New York & New Jersey is forming a Diocesan Communications Team to assist with maintaining and strengthening our digital presence. Volunteers may serve in one area or collaborate across roles, depending on interest, skills, and availability. No one is expected to do everything; even modest, consistent help is valuable.

#### Website Support (Orthodox Web Solutions)

Assist with basic website updates and posting announcements. Familiarity with Orthodox Web Solutions is helpful but not required; willingness to learn is essential.

*Estimated time commitment: 1–2 hours per week (remote and flexible).*

#### Social Media Support

Assist with Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube posting and content organization. Video creation and basic editing skills are a plus, but not required.

*Estimated time commitment: 1–3 hours per week, shared among team members.*

#### Regional Coverage (Archbishop's Visits)

Because the Diocese spans New York and New Jersey, volunteers are sought to assist with local coverage of the Archbishop's visits in their own region (North/South Jersey, NYC, Long Island, Upstate NY, Western NY).

Responsibilities may include taking photographs, short video clips, or recordings of homilies when appropriate.

*Estimated time commitment: occasional, event-based, you will not be asked to travel outside your region; typically 2–4 hours per visit, which includes attending the Divine Services during which His Eminence presides.*

Use this form to submit your interest for Communications- <https://form.jotform.com/253645524628160>



### The Department of Youth Ministry

Fr. Martin and Matushka Dennise Kraus are in need of some assistance with the Youth Ministry Program.



### Men's Mountain Respite

This ministry is seeing wonderful growth. Are there any men in the Diocese who would be willing to assist Fr. Martin with planning and executing retreats?

### Diocesan Stewardship Publication

This quarterly publication has languished for several years due to the lack of an Editor. Do you have a heart for Stewardship and enjoy writing?

Skills needed:

- 1) Ability to write and compile information about Stewardship.
- 2) Familiarity with Microsoft Publisher.
- 3) Prepare and format publication.
- 4) Submit to Chancery by appropriate deadline.

### Stewardship



If you are willing to help His Eminence, Archbishop Michael and serve the Diocese of New York and New Jersey with any of these Ministries, please contact the Chancery Office.

Phone: 914-779-6580

Email: [info@nynjoca.org](mailto:info@nynjoca.org)



## 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](http://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.
- **Bishop Seraphim**, who is undergoing PT for sciatica.
- **Jackie and Nick DeLarato**, who have health issues. Also, 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 struggles with health issues, adult children **Jade & Mike Edwards**, **Jordan & Eric Mosurick**, who need jobs, (and all young couples) and teenage **Anastasia Ugorji**. Lauren's: dad, **Don Robinson**, for continued good health as he battles blood cancer; aunt & uncle **Kirra & Jesse Filkins** and 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 her mother, **Nina**, who remains humble.

*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: [ladyofleesure@yahoo.com](mailto:ladyofleesure@yahoo.com)

### COMMEMORATION OF THE DEPARTED

**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!!!**

