

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

March 2026



Sunday of Orthodoxy
March 1st



St. Nicholas News

Monthly Bulletin of

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
697 Asheville Highway
P.O. Box 1107
Spartanburg, SC 29303

Temporary Priest until Fr. George returns
Father Vasileios Tsourlis
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March 2026

SUNDAY

Orthros | 9:45 am
Sunday School | 9:45 am
Divine Liturgy | 10:15 am

WEEKDAY

Orthros | 9:45 am
Divine Liturgy | 10:00 am
(unless noted below)

Schedule of Services

Holy Confession: Available by appointment.

Weekday Services

Friday, March 6, 14, 20 | Salutation Services | 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 11 | Presanctified Liturgy at St George, Greenville, SC | 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 18 | Presanctified Liturgy at Holy Trinity, Asheville, NC | 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 25 | Annunciation
Friday, March 27 | Akathist Hymn | 5:00 p.m.

1st Sunday of Great Lent: Sunday of Orthodoxy

The first Sunday of Great Lent is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy because it commemorates the restoration of the Holy Icons and the triumph of the Orthodox Faith against the terrible heresy of the Iconoclasts, i.e. those heretics who refused to honor the Holy Icons. For more than a hundred years the Church was disturbed by the evil doctrine of iconoclasm.

The first Emperor to persecute the Church was Leo the Isaurian, and the last was Theophilus, the spouse of Saint Theodora (February 11), who reigned after her husband's death and re-established Orthodoxy in the time of Patriarch Methodios (June 14). Empress Theodora proclaimed publicly that we do not kiss the Icons as a sign of worship, nor do we honor them as "gods," but as images of their prototypes.

In the year 843, on the first Sunday of the Fast, Saint Theodora and her son, Emperor Michael, venerated the Holy Icons together with the clergy and the people. Since that time this event has been commemorated every year, because it was definitively determined that we do not worship the Icons, but we honor and glorify all the Saints who are depicted on them. We worship only the Triune God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and no one else, neither a Saint, nor an Angel. Originally, the Holy Prophets Moses, Aaron, and Samuel were commemorated on this Sunday. The Alleluia verses appointed for today's Liturgy reflect this older usage.

Troparion — Tone 2

We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One, / and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God. / Of Your own will You were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh / to deliver Your creatures from bondage to the enemy. / Therefore with thanksgiving we cry aloud to You: / You have filled all with joy, O our Savior, / by coming to save the world.

Kontakion — Tone 8

No one could describe the Word of the Father; / but when He took flesh from you, O Theotokos, He accepted to be described, / and restored the fallen image to its former state by uniting it to divine beauty. / We confess and proclaim our salvation in word and images.

Annunciation of the Theotokos

March 25

Introduction

The Feast of the Annunciation of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on March 25 each year. The Feast commemorates the announcement by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would become incarnate and enter into this world through her womb.

Biblical Story

The biblical story of the Feast of the Annunciation is found in the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke (1:26-39). The Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, who was living in Nazareth, and said to her, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you." Mary was perplexed and wondered what kind of greeting this was.

The angel told her not to be afraid, for she had found favor with God. He said, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary responded to the angel by asking how this could happen since she had no husband. The angel told her that the Holy Spirit and the power of God would come upon her, and that the child to be born of her would be called holy, the "Son of God."

The angel then proceeded to tell the Virgin Mary that her cousin Elizabeth had conceived a son in her old age (John the Baptist), and affirmed that with God nothing is impossible.

In faith and obedience to the will of God, Mary replied to the angel, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be according to your word." Upon her response, the angel departed.

It is on the Feast of the Annunciation, that Orthodox Christians commemorate both the divine initiative of God, whereby He took on flesh from the Virgin for our salvation, and the human response, whereby Mary freely accepted the vocation offered to her. He elected to become man, and He desired to do this with the willing agreement of her whom He chose as His mother. Mary could have refused, for she was not a passive instrument, but an active participant with a free and positive part to play in God's plan for our salvation. Thus, when on this and other feasts the Orthodox Church honors the Theotokos, the Mother of God, it is not just because God chose her but also because she herself chose to follow His will.

Parish Council 2026

I am pleased to announce that our new 2026 Parish Council has been ratified and sworn into office on February 15, 2026, by Father Vasileios.

Following the swearing-in, the Council held a meeting to elect its officers for the year. The elected officers are as follows:

President: Mike Lydakis
Vice President: Kiki Couchell
Treasurer: David Jung
Secretary: Elena Ghionis



The full [2026 Parish Council](#) members:

Conrad Allen | (864) 680-5384
Ramzi Ayyad | ramzi_ayyad@hotmail.com | (845) 548-6603
Kiki Couchell, Vice President | kikicouchell@charter.net | (864) 621-2577
Constantine Ghionis | constantine.ghionis@gmail.com | (864) 619-2023
Elena Ghionis, Secretary | evghionis@gmail.com | (864) 384-6624
Logan Griffith | lgriff864@gmail.com | (864) 764-4349
Peter Gilman | gilmanpete@yahoo.com | (434) 603-0007
David Jung, Treasurer | jungdavid@gmail.com | (843) 437-8471
Mike Lydakis, President | lydakismike@gmail.com | (864) 384-5950
Maria Tsoulos | mtsoulos34@gmail.com | (864) 205-9308
Themis Rubio | themiserubio@gmail.com | (864) 612-7030

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the outgoing members of the Parish Council **Ed Griffin, Britt Becknell, and Donnie Settle** for their dedicated work and commitment to the St. Nicholas community. Their service has been invaluable, and we are grateful for all they have contributed.

May God bless our new Parish Council as they serve our parish, guide our ministries, and strengthen our community in faith and fellowship.

In Christ's love, Mike Lydakis President, 2026 Parish Council

STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT

Where God Sows, We Steward.

In Christ's Parable of the Sower, the Lord scatters His Word (the Seed) freely upon every heart (the Soil). Some soil is hard, some shallow, some crowded with thorns, but the "good soil" receives His Word with faith, allowing it to take root and bear fruit a hundredfold.

Each of us is called to be that good soil and stewards of the precious gifts God has given us. Through our stewardship (the offering of our time, talent, and treasure), we become co-workers with the Sower Himself, helping His Word grow and flourish within our Church, our families, and our community.

"As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the Word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." — Matthew 13:23



PRAYER BEFORE COMMUNION

"I believe, Lord and I confess that You are truly the Christ, Son of the living God, who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the greatest. Moreover, I believe that this is in truth Your sacred Body and that this is in truth Your precious Blood. Therefore, I beseech You, have mercy on me and forgive me my offenses, both voluntary and involuntary, whether in word or deed, willing or unwilling; and render me worthy to partake of Your sacred mysteries without condemnation, for remission of sins and everlasting life. Amen." "Son of God, receive me today as a partaker of Your mystical supper; for I will not speak of the mystery to Your enemies, nor will I give You the kiss of Judas. But like the thief I will confess You. Remember me, Lord, in Your kingdom."

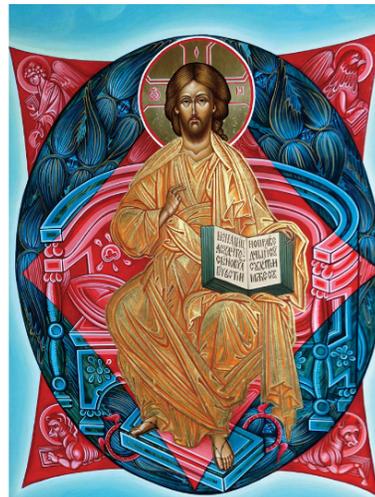
Did you know the Sunday of Orthodoxy celebrates the restoration of icons and their veneration?

From: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

The first Sunday of Great Lent is called the Sunday (or Triumph) of Orthodoxy because it commemorates the “triumph” of true doctrine over heresy regarding the creation and veneration of holy icons. For over 100 years, there was disagreement and war over the issue of depicting Christ and the Saints in a work of art. The iconoclasts (those against icons) falsely accused Christians of idolatry and superstition. The 7th Ecumenical Council in 787 AD officially confirmed the rightness — even the necessity — of honoring holy icons because icons express the theology of the Orthodox Faith. Iconoclasm was finally defeated on the First Sunday of Great Lent in 843.

Iconoclasm is rooted in a dualistic point of view that falsely claims that all matter is corrupt and only “spiritual” things are pleasing to God. It is also an implicit denial of the human nature of Christ.

God alone is to be worshipped, but icons and Saints can be venerated because created objects reflect God, their Creator. Man was “created in the image and likeness of God” (Genesis 1:26) and thus is an icon in the truest sense. God became man while remaining God and thus is an icon of the highest order. In the God-Man, Jesus Christ is the epitome (perfect archetype) of God and man, in Whom the spiritual and the material world are united and blessed.



Icons are not idols — they are “windows into heaven” through which God descends to earth and man’s mind and heart ascend to God.

Announcements

Confession | If you wish to have Confession with Fr. Vasileios please contact Fr. Vasileios at (980) 401-2246 and schedule your confession for **Friday, March 13, 2026** at the Church. **Only by appointment.**

GOYA Fundraiser | GOYA will begin selling luminaries on March 29 during coffee hour. The luminaries will be placed out on Holy Friday. You may dedicate a luminary in memory or in honor of a loved one. The cost is **\$5 per bag** (up to two names per bag). If you have any questions, please contact Litsa at (864) 316-4257. Thank you for your support!

Philoptochos Red Eggs | As Pascha approaches, Philoptochos will again offer the convenience of dyed **red eggs for \$10**. Please contact Eva Strickland (864) 205-1991 to place an order. Payment may be given to Eva Strickland. Eggs will be ready for pickup on **Thursday before Pascha**. To make other arrangements please contact Eva Strickland.

Easter Items Needed | A **sign-up sheet** for Easter items will be posted on the bulletin board in the hall & the website. If you are able, please consider signing up to donate money toward purchasing the items needed. If you would like to make a donation (\$35 each), so we can purchase the Easter Lilies, it would be greatly appreciated. We also purchase two Peace Lilies for the side of the Royal Doors each year (\$75 each). We will accept donations for additional flowers. If you plan to write a check, please make it out to Philoptochos. Payment may be given to Kiki Couchell.

Annual Sunday School Palm Making | On **Saturday, April 4th**, immediately following the Divine Liturgy, we will be making the Palm Crosses for Palm Sunday.

Palm Sunday Luncheon | On **Sunday, April 5th**, immediately following the Divine Liturgy, we will be having our annual Palm Sunday Luncheon. Everyone is encouraged to begin Holy Week by attending Church on Palm Sunday and remaining for the delicious meal that will follow. Afterwards we will have the annual Easter egg hunt.

Church Clean Up Day | We are having a clean-up day to prepare our church for Pascha. Join us on **Saturday, March 28, at 9:00 AM**. Please consider giving a few hours of your time to help.

Our Sympathies

The Parish wishes to extend its sympathies to Jon Couchell, and his family on the falling asleep in the Lord of his brother, His Eminence Metropolitan Dimitrios of Xanthos (James George Couchell) on February 19, 2026. He was a beloved father, grandfather and brother. He will truly be missed.

May His Memory Be Eternal!

Schedule

March 2026

1	Coffee Hour Poulos Family (Memorial)
	Pangari David Jung, Elena Ghionis
	Prosphoro Dr. Lina Miraziz Jung
8	Coffee Hour TBA
	Pangari Kiki Couchell, Conrad Allen
	Prosphoro Donna Mavroftas
15	Coffee Hour TBA
	Pangari Ramzi Ayyad, Maria Tsoulos
	Prosphoro Georgiana Williams
22	Coffee Hour TBA
	Pangari Constatine Ghionis, Logan Griffith
	Prosphoro Alena Apanovich
29	Coffee Hour TBA
	Pangari Mike Lydakis, Themis Rubio
	Prosphoro Mike Lydakis

Coffee Hour

If no one has signed up to host coffee hour during the Lenten season, please consider bringing one of the following Lenten-friendly items to share with our parishioners after church.

Thank you for helping make coffee hour a special time of fellowship!

fruit platter

vegetable platter

pb & jelly sandwiches

Moon Pies

hummus with pita chips

potato chips

pretzels

vegetable sticks

peanut butter crackers

apple or cherry pie

salsa and Tostitos

Lenten cakes & cookies

General Assembly Meeting - Sunday, March 15, 2026

(Immediately following the Divine Liturgy)

If no quorum is present then the second meeting will be held on, March 22, 2026 immediately following the coffee hour.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Election of Chairman
3. Reading of Minutes
4. Treasurer's Report 2025 Final Report
5. 2026 Proposed Budget to be approved
6. Stewardship
7. 2025 Greek Festival Final Report
8. 2026 Greek Festival Dates
9. Election of Board of Electors 2026
10. Old Business
11. New Business
12. Closing Prayer and Adjournment

Special screening package for
\$129 for our members includes:

- ♥ Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- ♥ Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening

Call to schedule an appointment near you!
800-324-9458 and use code: **HABC001**



Life Line Screening will be coming to the Hellenic Center
February 11th - 9 am and 4 pm