

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

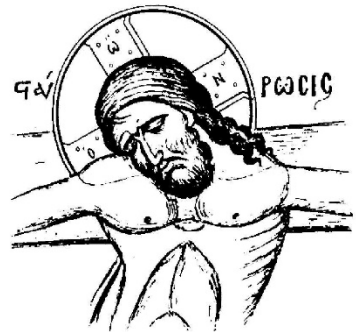
604 Colliers Way Weirton, WV

Stnicholasweirton.org

2025 Lenten Calendar & Service Guide for Clean Week, Holy Week & Great & Holy Pascha

Great & Holy Lent begins with Clean Week on
Monday, March 3rd and ends on Pascha, Sunday,
April 20th

*“Let us begin the fast with joy!
Let us prepare ourselves for
spiritual efforts! Let us cleanse
our soul and cleanse our flesh!
Let us abstain from every passion
as we abstain from food! Let us
rejoice in virtues of the Spirit and
fulfill them in love, that we all
may see the Passion of Christ our
God, and rejoice in spirit at the
holy Pascha!”*



-Lenton Triodion Stichera for Forgiveness Vespers

Dear Parish Family and Community,

It seems everywhere we look chaos surrounds us. From the busyness of the world around us, our jobs, our families, errands, sports, to the travesties and disasters that we are witnessing, it becomes very easy to lose focus on the positives around us and to see the goodness of God's creation. We lose focus on what is essential as Orthodox Christians and that is having Christ in our lives and hearts and living out our faith daily.

At each Liturgy we sing during the Cherubic hymn, "*Let us lay aside all earthly cares.*" Great Lent is the time to lay aside earthly cares and redirect our lives back to Christ. The Lenten Season is the perfect time to reboot our spiritual lives as the entire Church goes through this struggle together. Do not go through Lent doing the minimum but strive and struggle to be as "maximum" as possible. Just like many things in our life, you get what you put into it, and the same philosophy works for our spiritual life. You will get out of Lent the same proportion that you put into it.

This handout lists the Orthodox practices for Great Lent, including services, fasting rules, and other general guidelines. Do what you can! Let us put our entire selves into this journey so that—as Holy Week and Pascha approach—we may find Christ once again. After all,

- ★Christ is the Goal of our Journey,
- ★He is our Companion along that Journey, and
- ★He is that Journey Itself that transforms us!

May we all experience:

- ✓Growth in private prayers (*in both content and intensity*)
- ✓Growth in corporate prayers (*in both content and intensity*)
- ✓Growth in almsgiving and fasting
- ✓Some kind of deprivation and real ascetical sacrifice

Let us all behold together the Death, Burial and Resurrection of our Lord on that Great and Glorious Day!

With love in Christ, *Fr. Andrew*

General Lenten Fasting Guidelines

1. No meat or dairy products—essentially a vegan diet—until Pascha.
2. Wine & olive oil is allowed on weekends and on certain feast days (refer to the calendar).
3. Fish/wine/olive oil may be eaten on Feast Days such as Annunciation and Palm Sunday.
4. Shellfish is allowed during Lent, but try to keep it to a minimum.
5. Increase prayer life and church attendance.
6. Increase almsgiving.
7. Limit entertainment e.g. watching TV, recreational computer use, etc.
8. Intense guard of heart and tongue.

Eucharistic Fasting Guidelines

1. If a Liturgy is earlier than noon, fast from midnight on.
2. If a Liturgy is in the afternoon, fast, if possible, completely from food and water for 6-8 hours before receiving Communion.
3. If you arrive late to an evening Liturgy because of work or traffic, but have prepared yourself by fasting, prayer, and recent confession, receive Holy Communion despite arriving late.

Note: If in doubt about how to modify these guidelines, please see the priest.

Clean Week, March 3 – 7; strict fasting guidelines:

- Eating extremely simple foods (xerophagy or “dry-eating”) such as nuts, vegetables, fruits, bread. Xerophagy helps us spend less time on food prep, yet keep up our strength for prayer and labors.
- Mid-week on Wednesday and Friday evenings we have a cooked meal such as soup and salad.
- Be as strict as you can without causing sickness or endangering self or others.
- Because of easier food prep, we have more time for prayer and worship.

Holy Week, April 14 – April 19; fasting guidelines:

1. Similar to Clean Week (xerophagy and simple foods).
2. Holy Friday is the strictest fast of the entire year.
3. After Liturgy on Holy Saturday, we break our fast with blessed bread & wine (and other “dry” foods), but afterwards continue with Eucharistic Fasting.

Clean Week, Monday, Mar. 3rd -Friday, March 7th

CLEAN WEEK– The first week of Great Lent is called "*Clean Week.*" This refers to the leaving behind of sinful attitudes and non-fasting foods. A cleansing, if you will, of our sins, body, and conscience. The theme of Clean Week is set by the Old Testament reading appointed to be read at the Sixth Hour on Clean Monday (Isaiah 1:1-20), which says in part:

"Wash yourselves and ye shall be clean; put away the wicked ways from your souls before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, consider the fatherless, and plead for the widow. Come then, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, I will make them white as wool" (v. 16-18).

Sunday, March 2: Forgiveness Sunday

Following Fellowship Hour Forgiveness Vespers

Forgiveness Vespers is the starting point of Great Lent. In the middle of the service, the colors are changed from gold to dark and the hymns turn to Lenten melodies. At the end of this beautiful service we ask each other for forgiveness as we hear the Paschal Stichera reminding us the end goal of Lent, Christ's Resurrection.

Mon. – Thur., March 3 - 6: Clean Monday - Thursday

9am Lenten Matins(Monday & Wednesday)

6:30pm Canon of St. Andrew (service lasts ~1½ hours)

As Forgiveness Vespers begins our journey, it is the Canon of St. Andrew that frames our minds and gets us in the Lenten spirit. This penitential service is interwoven with biblical themes of sin and repentance. The sins and events from these stories become "our sins and events." There are many prostrations during these services. Prostrate if you can, as it is a reminder of our fallings into sin and our repentance.

Friday, March 7: Clean Friday

9am Lenten Matins

6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy (1½ hours)

The Liturgy is unable to be served during Lent, except for the weekends since the Liturgy is a joyful service of the Resurrection. Presanctified Liturgy is the service people most associate with Great Lent. Since we are actively struggling, we need the Eucharist to help get

through these ascetical and spiritual struggles. An extra lamb (communion) is consecrated the Sunday prior, and during this special Vespers service we receive this Presanctified Eucharist. This service is served every Wednesday during Great Lent along with a few additional "Feast Days."

Deanery and Brotherhood Mission Services 2025

Please be aware that there may be changes.

Sunday, March 9th at 4:30pm: *Sunday of Orthodoxy*
-Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, Mt. Lebanon

Sunday, March 16th at 5pm: *Sunday of St. Gregory Palama*
-St. Nicholas, Weirton

Sunday, March 23rd at 5pm: *Sunday of the Cross*
-St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park

Sunday, March 30th at 5pm: *Sunday of St. John Climacus*
-Holy Resurrection, Belle Vernon

Sunday, April 6th at 5pm: *Holy Unction/ St. Mary of Egypt*
-St. John, Canonsburg

The End of Lent and the Palm Sunday

Friday, April 11: Eve of Lazarus Saturday

6:30pm Lenten Vespers

At this service we say goodbye to Lent and prepare to celebrate the joint Feasts of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday.

Saturday, April 12: Lazarus Saturday

9:30am Lazarus Baptismal Liturgy

As a prelude to the Great Feast of the Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), we remember the Lord's raising of Lazarus from the dead. This service is a traditional day for the reception of catechumens. We will receive 17 total this year! All are welcome to learn how to make palm crosses following Liturgy

6:30pm Vigil w/ Blessing of Palms

Note: All confessions should be completed by this evening. If you plan on partaking of the Eucharist during Holy Week and Bright Week, you need to make a Lenten confession prior to Lazarus Saturday.

Sunday, April 13: Christ's Entrance into Jerusalem

9:30am Festal Divine Liturgy

This Festal Liturgy commemorates the Great Feast of the Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem. This Feast of Palms, paired gloriously with Lazarus Saturday, offers us a triumphal foretaste of Christ's Passion and resurrection; yet, also signals the sad truth the many who at first hail Jesus as Lord turn from His teaching and forsake Him. We too hold palms and branches throughout the service.

- We will have our Annual Parish Photo following Liturgy

Holy Week

Sunday, April 13 - Tuesday, April 15: Holy Monday - Wednesday

7pm Bridegroom Matins (service lasts ~1 hour)

The service of Bridegroom Matins introduces us to Holy Week. Each evening from Sunday thru Wednesday, we are challenged to ponder the coming of the Lord and our lack of preparation to meet Him.

Wednesday, April 16: Holy Wednesday

10am Final Presanctified Liturgy

7pm Bridegroom Matins (~1½ hours)

At this moving service we begin to hear the themes of Christ's betrayal and His upcoming crucifixion.

Thursday, April 17: Holy Thursday

10am Vesperal Liturgy (1½ hours)

On Holy Thursday, we celebrate a Vesperal 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.

7pm Matins of Holy Friday w/ 12 Passion Gospels (~2 hours)

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. We hold candles for the duration of this service.

Friday, April 18: Holy Friday (strict fast day)

9am Royal Hours (1½ hours)

On the morning of great and Holy Friday, we revisit the cross. We hear the hymns of the previous evening and find Jesus hanging on the Cross for our salvation. If you cannot be at the Thursday evening service, know that this service of the Royal Hours covers much of the same content. Royal Hours offers a powerful meditation on the Cross and its meaning.

3pm Entombment Vespers of Holy Friday (1hour)

During this service we remember the crucifixion and taking down of the Lord's body from the Cross and His entombment by the Noble Joseph.

7pm Holy Saturday Matins w/ Praises and Procession (~2 hours)

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!

9pm Reading from the Psalter (through 10am Saturday)

The all-night reading begins right after the Matins of Holy Saturday and continues until the Saturday morning Liturgy. There will be a sign-up sheet for those interested.

Saturday, April 19: Great and Holy Saturday

10am Holy Vesperal Liturgy (~2 hours)

The Vesperal 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."

12pm-10:30pm Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Similar to reading from the psalter the night prior, there will be sign-up sheet for those interested.

10:30pm Paschal Nocturns, Procession and Matins

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 Nocturns. 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 server's voices. The light is passed from person to person and we exit the church and make our Paschal Procession.

Sunday, April 20: Great and Holy Pascha

12am Paschal Divine Liturgy

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 Agape Vespers (~½ hour)

A beautiful and short Vespers service where we continue our Paschal celebration! All are invited over to the rectory for a Paschal Potluck following.

Monday, April 21: Bright Monday

10am Paschal Liturgy w/ Procession and Gospel readings

Bright week is a beautiful week where every service is a Paschal Service. It is Liturgically viewed as one whole day, the new eighth day. Too often, we prepare for roughly 50 days for Christ's Resurrection, we attend services and fast and then Pascha comes and that's it. Bright week is the Church's way to keep that joy of Christ's Resurrection as long as possible.

Tuesday, April 22: Bright Tuesday

9:30am Bright Tuesday Liturgy at Holy Transfiguration Monastery