

HOLY TRINITY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

March 8, 2026

Third Sunday of the Great Fast – Veneration of the Cross

Contact Us

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Office Hours

9am–5pm Tuesday–Friday

Weekend Services

5pm Saturday Vigil Divine Liturgy

9am Sunday Divine Liturgy

Confession

6–6:30pm Wednesday

4–4:30pm Saturday

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord, God of hosts. My soul is longing and yearning, is yearning for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my soul ring out their joy to God, the living God. One day within your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

Psalm 83:1-2; 12 (sung at the 9th Hour)

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Our return to God for His abundant gifts (3/1): \$1,205

Online giving: <https://holysykesville.org/onlinegiving>

<u>Sun, Mar 8</u>	5pm Vigil Divine Liturgy (+ Robert Rosman, given by the Rensel Family) <u>Third Sunday of the Great Fast – Veneration of the Cross</u> 9am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
Mon, Mar 9	6:15 9 th Hour 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy for the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste
Wed, Mar 11	5pm Confession 6:15pm 9 th Hour 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy 8pm Soup and Fellowship
Fri, Mar 13	9am Presanctified Liturgy with Panichida (N)
<u>Sat, Mar 14</u>	<u>Lenten Retreat (all day – see full schedule in the back of the bulletin)</u> 9am Parastas (Memorial Service for the Departed) 5pm Great Vespers
<u>Sun, Mar 15</u>	<u>Fourth Sunday of the Great Fast – St. John Climacus</u> 9am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

Coffee Social Bakers for March 15: Carla Baccelli, Hannah Ketcham



Luke Crawford (March 9) Sue Pavick (March 11)
Leo Ketcham (March 15) Cathy Crawford (March 13)

CANTORS' CORNER

Saturday	Sunday
	<p><u>3/1</u> Second Sunday of Lent Cantor: Zeb B. Lector: Joseph C. (epistle is for the Second Sunday; likewise with subsequent readings) Propers: Tone 5 (146), GF2 [-> Second Great Fast Sunday] (222); Cherubikon in "D"</p>
<p><u>3/7</u> Third All Souls' Saturday 4:30pm Panichida 5pm Vigil Divine Liturgy Cantor: Victor K. Propers in paper supplement; closing hymn, "Now you may dismiss" (452)</p>	<p><u>3/8</u> Third Sunday of Lent Cantor: Victor K. Lector: Corey M. Propers: Tone 6 (152), GF3 (223); Cherubikon in "B"</p>
<p><u>3/14</u> Lenten Retreat 9am Parastas Cantor: Victor K. 5pm Great Vespers Cantor: Zeb B.</p>	<p><u>3/15</u> Fourth Sunday of Lent Cantor: Hannah K. Lector: Mike K. Propers: Tone 7 (156), GF4 (226); Cherubikon in "A"</p>
<p><u>3/21</u> 5pm Vigil Divine liturgy Cantor: Victor K. Propers in paper supplement; closing hymn, "Now you may dismiss" (452)</p>	<p><u>3/22</u> Fifth Sunday of the Lent Cantor: Zeb B. Lector: Joseph C. Propers: Tone 8 (161), GF5 (230); Cherubikon in "D"</p>
<p><u>3/28</u> Lazarus Saturday <u>9am Baptismal Divine Liturgy</u> Cantor: Victor K. Lector: Corey M. <u>5pm Festal Vigil</u> Cantor(s): Natalia T., Zeb B. Lector: Joseph C.</p>	<p><u>3/29</u> Palm Sunday Cantor: Victor K. Lector: Corey M. Propers: for the feast (235); blessing of palms to precede the Divine Liturgy</p>

LENTEN SERVICES

<p><u>3/4</u> Third Wednesday of Lent 6:15pm 9th Hour 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy Cantor: Victor K. Lector: Corey M.</p>	<p><u>3/9</u> 40 Holy Martyrs of Sebaste 6:15pm 9th Hour 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy Cantor: Zeb B. Lector: Joseph C.</p>
<p><u>3/11</u> Fourth Wednesday of Lent 6:15pm 9th Hour 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy Cantor: Victor K. Lector: Mike K.</p>	<p><u>3/18</u> Fifth Wednesday of Lent 7pm Matins with Great Canon of St. Andrew (Reader's Service) Cantor: Fr. Nate Lectors: Ryan C., Joseph C., Corey M.</p>
<p><u>3/25</u> Annunciation of the Theotokos 6:15pm 9th Hour 6:30pm Vespers with Divine Liturgy Cantor: Zeb B. Lector: Joseph C. (Note: Genesis and Proverbs for the 6th Wednesday of the Great Fast will be taken; only one reading, for the evening of March 25, Exodus, will be taken)</p>	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

✠ Dates to Remember

- Monday, March 9: Feast of the 40 Holy Martyrs of Sebaste. Presanctified Liturgy will be served for the feast.
- Saturday, March 14: Lenten retreat with Dr. Alexander Harb. Don't forget to RSVP!
- Wednesday, March 18: Matins with the Great Canon of St. Andrew will be celebrated.
- Wednesday, March 25: Great Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos.

✠ Confession Times during the Great Fast

Confession will be available throughout the Great Fast from 5:00-6:00pm on Wednesdays and 3:30-4:30pm on Saturdays, or by request. Additional opportunities will be available when we get closer to Holy Week.

✠ Coffee Socials During the Great Fast

Since the Fast is an effort undertaken by the Church as a whole, and not relegated to a small body of individual believers who take an interest, it would behoove us as a community to implement at least a moderate fast for all official parish functions. Therefore, for the Sundays of February 22-March 29, we would like to ask our coffee social bakers to refrain from using any meat or meat products in whatever they provide for the social. Our Sunday social is an important act of community gathering and we are very grateful to all who sign up to provide for it!

✠ Presanctified Soup Suppers

Please note two special days: first, on March 18 we will celebrate Matins with the Great Canon in the evening. Since the service is non-eucharistic, we will precede the service with meal and fellowship at 6pm and the service will begin at 7pm. Second, March 25 is the Feast of the Annunciation, so we will have a more celebratory meal afterwards at which fish is permitted according to the fasting customs.

✠ Fasting Regulations for the Great Fast

According to the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh's *Pastoral Handbook*, simple abstinence (refraining from meat) and strict fast (refraining from meat, eggs, and dairy) is binding on all Byzantine Catholics who receive the Eucharist. Simple abstinence is observed on all Wednesdays and Fridays of the Great Fast (or whenever else a "fish" appears on the church calendar) and strict fast is observed the first day of the Great Fast (Monday, February 16) and Holy Friday (April 3). These are, of course, the minimum regulations, as by tradition, strict fast is observed every day of the Great Fast. If you'd like to learn more about why we fast, see Fr. Nate's presentation from November 8, which is posted under the Resources tab of the website.

✠ *Life and Liturgy* Adult Catechesis Series

- IMPORTANT UPDATE! Thank you to all who have participated in our *Life and Liturgy* sessions since August, as they have been a wonderfully blessed time of prayer, reflection, and fellowship. Please be advised that the next two sessions of *Life and Liturgy* are being altered for the sake of other parish events:
 - The Lenten Retreat on March 14 will not follow the same schedule as other sessions; rather, it will run from 9am-6pm. We will be welcoming Dr. Alexander Harb, a Melkite Greek Catholic theologian and high school teacher from Alabama, who will be conducting our retreat in a series of three talks, aimed at drawing us closer into the mysteries of Holy Week.
 - The Youth and Young Adult Gathering which our archeparchy has asked us to host on April 11 will be in place of April's session of *Life and Liturgy*, originally scheduled for April 18. With all that is taking place in April, we are simply cancelling April's *Life and Liturgy*.
 - The next session of *Life and Liturgy* will be May 9, as originally scheduled.
- Session Recordings
 - Parish website: [holytrinitysykesville.org/resources](https://www.holytrinitysykesville.org/resources)
 - YouTube: Search "Holy Trinity Byzantine Sykesville" and find the "Life and Liturgy Adult Enrichment Series 2025-2026" playlist
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhMUIKohjH84WPLgf3eWj1stcEvZr7d26&si=CLkimL6ToHBx-XXV>

- As a reminder, these sessions will take place on a monthly basis until June 2026. This is a wonderful opportunity to gather for beautiful liturgical prayer outside of the Divine Liturgy and to learn more about why we do what we do at church and how it relates to the rest of our lives.

✘ Standing Reminder

After Pentecost 2026, we will be celebrating Great Vespers or Vigil only on Saturday evening (no longer with Divine Liturgy). Until then, any change in the Saturday schedule is only on those dates when a session of *Life and Liturgy* takes place.

✘ Youth Events in 2026

Registration for the ByzanTEEN Rally is now open! Please check with Fr. Nate about registration and payment. Registration can be accessed either through the QR code on the flyer, or through this link:

<https://form.jotform.com/YouthArchPitt/byzanteen-rally-2026-participant-fo>

EARLY
BIRD
(BEFORE
APRIL 1)
&
SIBLING
DISCOUNT
\$350

BYZANTINE RALLY

AGES 13 THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

“TAKE COURAGE!

I HAVE OVERCOME
THE WORLD.”

JOHN 16:33



Registration is
OPEN now!

Deadline to
register is
Friday, May 15,
2026

JULY
9-12
2026

FULL PRICE
\$380
AFTER APRIL 1



JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY

More info & registration
Scan QR code



LENTEN REFLECTION: WORSHIP PART ONE

Worship and Prayer as a Restful Experience

On feast days of the Mother of God, we frequently read a story from the Gospel of Luke about the two sisters, Martha and Mary, who have brought Christ into their home as a guest:

“Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.’ But the Lord answered her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her’ (Luke 10:38-42).

In the tradition of the Church, this passage has been understood to be shedding light on two sides of the spiritual life: the active and the contemplative. Martha is busy with household tasks, doing and working, and her service to God is taken up in physical activity. Therefore, she represents the sense of prayer, worship, and Christian life as *service*, as doing. Mary, to the frustration of her sister, is not engaged in service, but is at the feet of Christ, listening attentively. Mary then represents that side of the Christian life whereby we rest, receive goodness from God, and contemplate him. Christ even refers to Mary’s receptivity to his teaching as the “good portion,” somewhat implying that it is more important than physically serving him. The differences between these two attitudes can be summarized in the following way: doing (Martha) vs. being (Mary). The connection between this Gospel passage and our own approach to prayer and worship is quite apparent: we can see prayer as something to “do” or “say” or even think of it as “work.” However, essential to both prayer and worship are the sense that we are with God, first and foremost, to receive from him and rest in his presence.

Nowhere is the idea of worship as rest clearer than in the first creation account of Genesis, which was partially read at Presanctified in the first week of Lent. After seeing the goodness of all he had created for six days, God came to the seventh day:

“And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.” (Genesis 2:2-3)

The initial commandment to the people of Israel to keep the Sabbath day holy was based primarily on two things: relishing in the goodness of creation (“he saw that it was good”) and resting from the activity of creating in order to enjoy the goodness of creation. Sunday, the day of the resurrection, takes on the same significance for us: we set aside a day of the week to spend time with God in worship, with family, in restful activities, away from the humdrum of the world. We ought to feel refreshed by our experience of worship, rather than anxious or stressed—although, depending on your state in life, worship can be stressful; it can be hard to get your whole family out the door on time!

Why might this be? It all goes back to that contemplative side of the human heart, the “good portion” of Mary in Bethany: our hearts are made to rest in God, to be drawn close to his love, and to let him do the work of taking care of us and organizing our lives. “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33) and all else we need will be given. Prayer is a similar experience: when we “go into our room and shut the door and pray to our Father who is in secret” (Matthew 6:6), it is not necessarily the “work” of prayer, the great number of words or time spent, that matters, but rather, it is the silent and intimate contact with our beloved Savior that will leave us feeling refreshed. We simply need to “be” in his presence, with our full attention on him, to truly pray. After all, the prophet Elijah discovered that God speaks to us, not in a great whirlwind, earthquake, or lightning, but in a “still, small voice” (1 Kings 19:12). To hear this voice, we must first silence our own hearts and practice listening.

Participation in Worship

Related to this personal experience of prayer is how we approach worship in church. From our beautiful Byzantine Catholic tradition, stemming from the Carpathian Mountains of Eastern Europe, we have a lovely practice of using simple music in our services that is easily recognizable and memorable, allowing for an entire congregation to sing together. Such an approach has both advantages and disadvantages. The great advantage to it is potential to create a beautiful worship experience which allow all present, young and old, skilled singers or not, to join in the same voice of praise and worship in “spirit and in truth” (John 4:24), creating a powerful experience of communal prayer to participants and onlookers. The approach can create an unreasonable expectation, however, that all congregants *must* sing in order to be fully present and participating in the liturgy. That expectation can actually be harmful, as it degrades the sense of prayer as receptivity to God’s presence and his love, turning us into “Marthas” who only believe that they are worshipping if they’re working hard enough. Sometimes, following along in the many service books is too much for our internal state; sometimes we feel like occupying a dark corner in the back of the church, taking in singing and icons silently; sometimes, we need to be alone with God, even while surrounded by active worship. That is perfectly natural and quite healthy for the spiritual life.

Byzantine worship is complicated. When we operate on a constant expectation that we have to understand every part, follow along perfectly, or be able to sing everything, we quickly find ourselves in a frustration. Hence, our worship has built-in safeguards to allow us to periodically take a step back and take in the prayer. One such way this is accomplished is in the back-and-forth between the cantor and the priest in prayers that every sings, and prayers which only the priest says (sometimes, quietly or even completely silently). Another way this is accomplished is by having parts of the services that only the cantor or reader chant. Our recent introduction of the 9th Hour, one of the canonical hours of prayer, to precede the celebration of the Presanctified Liturgy, is a great example. The reading of the Hours before services is common throughout the Eastern Christian world, precisely because it offers congregants a chance to prepare their hearts for worship, not by doing, but by simply being in the Church and hearing someone pray on their behalf.

The Importance of Receiving

In the 9th Hour, the reader immediately begins with Psalm 83, a Psalm which perfectly encapsulates the themes we have been discussing. The Psalm immediately begins to praise the beauty of God's house, his church: "How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord, God of hosts" (v. 1). Then, the psalmist mentions his interior longing for God and restful worship: "My soul is longing and yearning, is yearning for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my soul ring out their joy to God, the living God" (v. 2-3); worship, in other words, is not just the mouth ringing out in praise, but our inner being crying out silently with longing for God. The house of God is actually such a safe and peaceful place, that the birds themselves make their nests on its rafters (v. 4). Nowhere better is there to simply be, to simply be present before God, than in the temple: "One day within your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere" (v. 12). The entire psalm, therefore, gives us an image of the restfulness of interior prayer, that attitude of Mary to simply sit at the Lord's feet and receive what he gives, rather than giving to him ourselves.

Practically, how ought we to approach worship? First and foremost, we need not overwhelm ourselves with the expectation that we *must* sing with everything or even understand our services perfectly in order to pray and participate. The Twelve Apostles, after all, barely understood what Jesus was teaching them after three years of experiencing him. They only fully understood what Christ told him after the coming of the Holy Spirit, who prays for us in our weakness with "sighs too deep for words" (Romans 8:26). In a sense, we never really know how to pray, but need to be taught. Sometimes, the healthiest thing for our spiritual state is to put the liturgical books down and take it all in. We can cultivate Mary's sense of receptivity by spending time in silent prayer, at home, before services, or even in parts of the church services where active participation is burdensome or not necessary. Generally, only the singers, readers, and clergy are required to make sure that the "doing" of worship runs smoothly. For everyone else, it is up to them how much they can participate, though they are of course encouraged to do so as much as they can.

Cultivating that sense of receptivity, of interior prayer, will actually make the heart thirst more and more to be in God's presence and in the Church. After all, as St. John Chrysostom says, "You cannot pray at home, like you can in church, where there is a

great multitude; where exclamations are cried out to God as from one great heart, and where there is something more: the unions of minds, the accord of souls, the bond of charity, the prayers of the priests.”

A LENTEN RETREAT

*Love the Lord
with All Your Heart*

DEUT 6:5



with
Dr. Alexander Sami Harb

Saturday, March 14, 2026

**Lunch Provided. Please RSVP by March 1 to
Pani Natalia at 412-841-6006.**

HOLY TRINITY BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH
104 SHAFFER ST, SYKESVILLE, PA 15865

*Come and learn from the ancient wisdom of the desert fathers
how to offer everything we have to the Lord.*

RETREAT SCHEDULE

9–9:50 AM	Parastas (Memorial Service for the Departed)
10–10:45 AM	TALK 1: THE BODY <i>While Lent is a time of fasting and asceticism, it should also be a time of rest, retreat, and renewal so that we may regain the bodily strength we need to overcome sin in our daily lives. In order to give God our physical strength, we have to learn to be still, for the Fathers teach us that stillness leads to ceaseless prayer.</i>
10:45 AM–12 PM	Break
12–12:30 PM	TALK 2: THE SOUL <i>Life is a precious gift, and we often take the lives of our families and friends for granted. We take for granted that we are able to attend liturgy, to receive the Divine Life in the Eucharist. In order to give God our entire soul, we have to learn to quiet our minds from worry, anxiety, and fear and to place our minds in our hearts for prayer.</i>
12:30–4 PM	Lunch and Break
2–4 PM	Confession Available
4–4:30 PM	TALK 3: THE HEART <i>St. John Chrysostom writes that the warm and glowing heart of Jesus is a gift our Lord is waiting to give us. True prayer always brings us back to the heart of the Lord. He alone can teach us how to offer up our hearts to His Father. Therefore, in order to give God our whole heart, we have to allow the Spirit of Christ to enter us when we pray. We have to be spiritually vulnerable so that the His Spirit can enter us and cry “Abba, Father!” (Gal 4:6) and bring us home to the Father.</i>
5–6 PM	Great Vespers
6 PM	Book Sale with Dr. Harb



Having grown up in the Melkite Catholic Church, **Dr. Alexander Sami Harb** became interested in Eastern Christianity at a very young age. He completed his doctorate in Eastern Christian Studies at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome with the publication of his thesis in 2022. His theological focus was on the Desert Fathers and their attention to the heart. Dr. Harb especially worked to find ancient textual evidence of attention to Jesus’s heart within the desert and among the early Church Fathers. In 2024, he published *The Kingdom of the Heart: Meditations from the Christian East*. He lives and works as a theology teacher in Birmingham, Alabama. Learn more about Dr. Harb on Instagram @dralexanderharb.

MYSTERIES OF THE CHURCH

Parish Membership: To be a parish member, you must (1) be registered in the parish; (2) demonstrate faithful and consistent participation in the liturgical life of the parish on Sundays and holy days; and (3) regularly offer time, talent, or treasure to the parish according to your ability. Parish membership is required for participation in the sacraments below (but exceptions may be made with Fr. Nate's discretion). All are welcome to become members after attending the parish for one year.

Contact Fr. Nate to register.

Mysteries of Initiation (Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist): Contact Fr. Nate to schedule pre-baptism instruction. Sponsors must be practicing Catholics.

Mystery of Crowning: Contact Fr. Nate before setting a date or reserving your reception hall (at least six months before the desired wedding date). Pre-Cana program and three sessions with Fr. Nate are required. The ceremony will be celebrated according to the Byzantine Rite.

Mystery of Anointing and Visitation of the Sick: This mystery may be celebrated upon request for anyone navigating spiritual or physical challenges. If you or your loved one is homebound or hospitalized, notify Fr. Nate as soon as possible to ensure they can be visited.

Funerals: Families of the deceased or the funeral director must contact Fr. Nate before setting the time and date of funeral. The deceased need not be a member in good standing. Cremation is discouraged but permitted within certain limitations.

Liturgy Intentions can be requested through the offertory envelopes provided or in person from Fr. Nate or Dcn. Luke. A liturgy may be requested with or without the conventional \$20 stipend, which is considered a donation not a requirement.