

HOLY AND GREAT WEEK 2018 SCHEDULE AND EXPLANATION OF SERVICES



St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
Lowell, Massachusetts

LAZARUS SATURDAY, MARCH 31ST 9:00 am

DIVINE LITURGY

This day commemorates the raising from the dead of Lazarus, a beloved friend of Jesus Christ and foretells of the death and resurrection of Christ. Much like Palm Sunday, it is a day of joy and triumph, as Christ shows His disciples and us that He is indeed Lord the King.

SUNDAY, APRIL 1ST MATINS 9:00 AM DIVINE LITURGY 10:00 am

PALM SUNDAY / FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM

Much like Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday is a day of joy and triumph. Jesus Christ enters Jerusalem and is welcomed by the multitudes that cry out “Hosanna in the Highest!” placing before Christ palm branches as a carpet of honor and victory. It is customary that at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy and faithful join with the priest in procession around the church, carrying palms and candles.



**BRIDEGROOM MATINS - PALM SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 1ST
HOLY MONDAY, APRIL 2ND and HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 3RD 6:30 pm**



From the joy and triumph of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, the Church enters into Holy and Great Week. The central theme of the Bridegroom Matins is “Behold, the Bridegroom Comes,” prefiguring of the coming of Christ. The Icon of the Nymphios (Bridegroom) with the marks of His suffering is carried in procession and placed in the center of the Church. An interesting characteristic of the Bridegroom Matins, and the balance of the Services of Holy Week, is that all Services are held in anticipation of the coming day.

HOLY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4TH 6:30 pm HOLY UNCTION SERVICE

Holy Unction is one of the Seven Sacraments (Mysteries) of the Orthodox Church. During this Service, seven Epistles, Gospels and Prayers of Anointing are read to prepare us to receive the Sacrament. At the conclusion of the Service, the Prayers of Absolution and Anointing are offered to all. It is the duty of all Orthodox Christians to participate in this meaningful Service in preparation for the celebration of Holy Pascha.

(PLEASE NOTE: HOLY UNCTION WILL BE GIVEN ONLY ON HOLY WEDNESDAY)

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 5TH 9:00 am

DIVINE LITURGY OF THE MYSTICAL SUPPER

This Liturgy commemorates the institution of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper. As Orthodox Christians, we are called to partake in this sacred Mystery, inasmuch we partake in Christ. During this Divine Liturgy, the priest prepares what is referred to as “The Reserve Sacrament”, which is kept in the Tabernacle on the Holy Altar, and taken to the sick and shut-ins throughout the year.



THE SERVICE OF THE TWELVE PASSION GOSPELS 6:30 pm

One of the most moving Services, in the Orthodox Church, this Service commemorates the suffering, crucifixion and death on the Cross of Jesus Christ. Following the reading of the Fifth Gospel, the Church is darkened and the procession on the Cross takes place around the Church, symbolizing Christ’s walk to Golgotha. The custom of this procession originated in the Churches of the Antiochian Patriarchate.

GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY, APRIL 6TH

SERVICE OF THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS 3:00 pm



Held at the time the Holy Scripture gives for the death of Jesus Christ, the Vespers of the Descent from the Cross commemorates the death and removal from the Cross of Christ. The Icon of the Body of Christ is removed from the Cross, wrapped in a linen cloth, and placed at the Altar, where it remains until the Feast of the Ascension. The “Epitaphios” (the Icon or shroud representing the Sacred Body of Christ) is taken in procession from the Altar and placed in the flower-covered bier, which represents the Tomb of Christ.

LAMENTATION SERVICE 6:30 pm

At this Service, the Hymns of Lamentations are sung. This Service is not so much a Service of mourning, but of watchful expectation. The Lamentations are sung in three melodies, mix both sorrow and joy; lamenting the death of Jesus Christ, and anticipating His Resurrection. The Procession of the Bier is symbolic of Christ’s descent into the darkness of Hades, announcing to Adam and all those held captive by death, a message of hope and call to share in His Resurrection and restoration to Paradise.

GREAT AND HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 7TH 9:00 am VESPER LITURGY OF ST. BASIL, THE GREAT

Also known as “The Day of the Light”, the Vespereal Divine Liturgy directs us to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Service begins in a darkened Church with the Vespereal Hymns and Old Testament Readings. At the conclusion of the Epistle Reading, the triumphal hymn “Arise, O God, and Judge the Earth” is sung as the Church is bathed in light, proclaiming Christ’s victory over death. The priest scatters Bay Leaves throughout the Church, symbolic of the newness of life that comes through the Resurrection of Christ.

HAJME, MATINS, AND DIVINE LITURGY OF PASCHA

Pascha (Easter) APRIL 7TH / APRIL 8TH 10:00 pm

The climax of Great Lent and Holy Week is the “Feast of Feasts” Great and Holy Pascha (Easter). The faithful gather in the darkened church as the Canon of the Lamentation Service is again read. At the conclusion of the readings, the priest comes forth with a candle lit, taken from the Eternal Light on the Altar, announcing to the congregation “Come take the Light from the Light, which is never overcome by the night”. The congregation comes forward to light their candles and proceed together with the priest, choir, chanters and altar servers to the outside steps of the church. Following the Gospel Reading, the Resurrection Troparia “Christ is Risen” is sung, with the priest knocking and opening the doors of the church, symbolic of Christ breaking down the gates of Hades. Following the Hajme, the Matins and Divine Liturgy of Pascha is celebrated, with the rich and beautiful Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom read at the conclusion of the Matins.



IT IS MY HOPE THAT AFTER READING THE EXPLANATIONS OF EACH OF THE HOLY WEEK SERVICES THAT ALL OF US WILL BE MOVED TO PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY IN THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST!

CHRIST IS RISE!

AL MASIH QAM!

CHRISTOS ANESTI!

TRUY HE IS RISEN!

HAQAN QAM!

ALITHOS ANESTI!