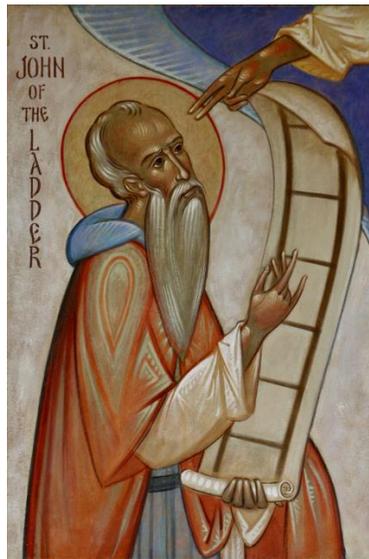




Saint Barbara Greek Orthodox Church
8306 NC HWY 751
Durham NC 27713 919-484-1600
fatherstavroforos2012@gmail.com
www.stbarbarachurchdurhamnc.com
News & Announcements
March 22, 2026

Sunday of Saint John Climacus

Του Οσίου Πατρος ημων Ιωαννου του Συγγραφεως



Festival Meeting Today

Agapius the Martyr & His Companions 3/15/2026

Manuel the New Martyr of Crete 3/15/2026

Holy Apostle Aristobulos of the Seventy, Bishop of Britain 3/15/2026

Morning Matins 9:00 am

Morning Great Doxology starts at 9:45 am

Morning Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m

To Our Visitors and Guests

We welcome you to worship with us today, whether you are an Orthodox Christian or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. Although Holy Communion and other Sacraments are offered only to baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians in good standing with the Church, all are invited to receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) from the priest at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. The Antidoron is not a sacrament, but it is reminiscent of the agape feast that followed worship in the ancient Christian Church. After the Divine Liturgy this morning please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. Please complete a Visitor's Card before you leave today and drop it in the offering tray, or give it to one of the parishioners after the service, or mail it to the Church Office.

SAVE THE DATE:

GREEK FESTIVAL AT SAINT BARBARA CHURCH GROUNDS
SATURDAY MAY 16TH 11 AM TO 8 PM
SUNDAY MAY 17TH 11 AM TO 7 PM

Festival Meeting Today after Church

The Sunday Epistle Reading

Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.
Verse: God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 6:13-20

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters

into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Εύξασθε καὶ ἀπόδοτε Κυρίῳ τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν.

Στίχ. Γνωστὸς ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ὁ Θεός, ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ μέγα τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

Πρὸς Ἑβραίους 6:13-20 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἀδελφοί, τῷ Ἀβραὰμ ἐπαγγειλάμενος ὁ θεός, ἐπεὶ κατ' οὐδενὸς εἶχεν μείζονος ὁμόσαι, ὤμοσεν καθ' ἑαυτοῦ, λέγων, Ἥ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε, καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ σε. Καὶ οὕτως μακροθυμήσας ἐπέτυχεν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας. Ἄνθρωποι μὲν γὰρ κατὰ τοῦ μείζονος ὁμνύουσιν, καὶ πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας πέρας εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὄρκος. Ἐν ᾧ περισσότερο βουλόμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιδειξάτωι τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ, ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκῳ, ἵνα διὰ δύο πραγμάτων ἀμεταθέτων, ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι θεόν, ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν ἔχωμεν οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος· ἦν ὡς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν, καὶ εἰσερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος· ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσήλθεν Ἰησοῦς, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

The Gospel According to Mark 9:17-31

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help

my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Μάρκον 9:17-31
Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἄνθρωπός τις προσῆλθε τῷ Ἰησοῦ λέγων, διδάσκαλε, ἤνεγκα τὸν υἱόν μου πρὸς σε, ἔχοντα πνεῦμα ἄλαλον. καὶ ὅπου ἂν αὐτὸν καταλάβῃ, ῥήσσει αὐτόν, καὶ ἀφρίζει καὶ τρίζει τοὺς ὀδόντας αὐτοῦ, καὶ ξηραίνεται· καὶ εἶπον τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου ἵνα αὐτὸ ἐκβάλωσι, καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσαν. ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς αὐτῷ λέγει· ὧ γενεὰ ἄπιστος, ἕως πότε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔσομαι; ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν; φέρετε αὐτὸν πρὸς με. καὶ ἤνεγκαν αὐτὸν πρὸς αὐτόν. καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν εὐθέως τὸ πνεῦμα ἐσπάραξεν αὐτόν, καὶ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκυλίετο ἀφρίζων. καὶ ἐπηρώτησε τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ· πόσος χρόνος ἐστὶν ὡς τοῦτο γέγονεν αὐτῷ; ὁ δὲ εἶπε· παιδιόθεν. καὶ πολλάκις αὐτόν καὶ εἰς πῦρ ἔβαλε καὶ εἰς ὕδατα, ἵνα ἀπολέσῃ αὐτόν· ἀλλ' εἴ τι δύνασαι, βοήθησον ἡμῖν σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐφ' ἡμᾶς. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ εἰ δύνασαι πιστεῦσαι, πάντα δυνατὰ τῷ πιστεύοντι. καὶ εὐθέως κράξας ὁ πατὴρ τοῦ παιδίου μετὰ δακρῶν ἔλεγε· πιστεύω, κύριε· βοήθει μου τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ. ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἐπισυντρέχει ὄχλος, ἐπετίμησε τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἀκαθάρτῳ λέγων αὐτῷ· τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἄλαλον καὶ κωφόν, ἐγὼ σοι ἐπιτάσσω, ἔξελθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ μηκέτι εἰσέλθῃς εἰς αὐτόν. καὶ κράξαν καὶ πολλὰ σπαράξαν αὐτὸν ἐξῆλθε, καὶ ἐγένετο ὡσεὶ νεκρός, ὥστε πολλοὺς λέγειν ὅτι ἀπέθανεν. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς κρατήσας αὐτόν τῆς χειρὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτόν, καὶ ἀνέστη. Καὶ εἰσελθόντα αὐτόν εἰς οἶκον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπηρώτων αὐτόν κατ' ἰδίαν, ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν ἐκβαλεῖν αὐτό. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τοῦτο τὸ γένος ἐν οὐδενὶ δύναται ἔξελθεῖν εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ καὶ νηστείᾳ. Καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἔξελθόντες παρεπορεύοντο διὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλεν ἵνα τις γινῶ· ἐδίδασκε γὰρ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν, καὶ ἀποκτανθεὶς τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστήσεται.

**PC PRESIDENT'S FESTIVAL
INVITE TO TODAY'S FESTIVAL MEETING**

Hi All,

I hope you are doing well, and as excited about our May 2026 Greek Festival as I am!

We have, of course, already started preparing for our festival, which is scheduled for the weekend of **May 16-17, 2026**. Since we are a couple of months out, it will be good to have a quick festival planning meeting to make sure we are all on the same page.

We will be meeting next **Sunday, 3.22.2026**, immediately following church (around 11:45 AM).

I hope to see you all there! If you can't make it, please just let me know, and we can discuss anything you feel is necessary. I try to keep a comprehensive list for this meeting, but I am sure I have missed some folks. Please feel free to pass along to anyone you think would want to help!

I truly appreciate everyone's energy, dedication, ideas and hard work. Our last festival was record-setting, and I'm sure we can do even better this year!

Thanks so much,
George Glekas

**PHILOPTOCHOS PRESIDENT'S
INVITE TO MARCH 29 MEETING**

Good Morning,

I don't know about you, but it feels like March is flying by! We have had a couple of busy months with the Vasilopita Auction, Membership Social, and Cheesefare Luncheon. Thank you for all of your hard work!

As you know, our festival will be held on May 16 and 17. Due to the meeting on March 22 to discuss festival preparations, I am rescheduling our Membership Meeting to Sunday, March 29. It will take place after church services in the conference room.

I look forward to seeing everyone on the 29th!

In Christ,

Betsy Xenakis



Today's General Assembly Hosts 3/22
YOUTH PARENTS

Today's Scheduled Narthex Greeters for 3/22
Carolyn Hack
John Valakas

Today's Volunteer Cheantor
Gus Bouloubasis

Volunteer Choir Director Directing Today
Panos Messis

Assistant Volunteer Choir Director
Costa Constantinou

Volunteer Organist
Eleni Christakos



INVITATION TO ANNUNCIATION VESPERS TUESDAY, MARCH 24TH AT 6:00 PM IN WINSTON-SALEM

March 10, 2026

Dear Rev. Fathers,

I hope this letter finds you all in good health and spirits. It is with great joy and anticipation that I extend an invitation to you all for the Annual Annunciation Feast Day Vespers at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church here in Winston-Salem, NC.

The Vespers service will take place on March 24, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. It would be a great blessing to have you all join us as we come together in prayer and worship, marking this sacred occasion as a community of faith. Your presence and participation in the service will greatly enrich our worship and fellowship.

Again, we would be honored to have all the priests with their respective congregations of the NE Conference and Communities of the Metropolis of Atlanta attend. The presence of our clergy and laity alike strengthens our bond as a Church, and it is our hope that this Vespers service will serve as a beautiful opportunity for spiritual renewal and unity.

Please let me know if you will be attending so that we may make the necessary arrangements for the service. If you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact me directly at 216-394-8499 or by email at fminas@wsgoc.org.

We look forward to celebrating this sacred feast with you.

With warm regards and prayers,

Rev. Fr. Minas E. Tsambounieris

Rev. Fr. Minas E. Tsambounieris



**Wednesday, March 25th
Feast of the Annunciation
Matins & Divine Liturgy 9:00 am**

**25 Μαρτίου, ημέρα Τεταρτη
Εορτη του Ευαγγελισμού της Θεοτοκου
Ορθρος και Θεια Λειτουργία 9 πμ**

Annunciation Feast Explained

The feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary comes nine months before Christmas on the twenty-fifth of March. It is the celebration of the announcing of the birth of Christ to the Virgin Mary as recorded in the Gospel of Saint Luke.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, 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." And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no husband?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her (Lk 1.26–38).

The services of the feast of the Annunciation, the Matins and the Divine Liturgy, stress again and again the joyous news of the salvation of men in the birth of the Saviour.

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Son of God becomes the Son of the virgin, as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you (Troparion).

A special feature of this feast is the Matinal Canon which has the character of a dialogue between the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary. Also among the more popular elements of the feast is the Magnification which has the form of our own salutation to the virgin mother with the words of the archangel:

With the voice of the archangel we cry to Thee, O Pure One: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee! (Magnification).

The celebration of the Annunciation, therefore, is the feast of our own reception of the glad tidings of salvation, and our own glorification of the maiden Mary who becomes the Mother of God in the flesh.

Because the feast of the Annunciation normally comes during the season of Great Lent, the manner of celebration varies from year to year depending upon the particular day on which it falls. If the feast comes on a weekday of Lent, which is the most common case, the Divine Liturgy of the feast is served in the evening with Vespers and thus is celebrated after a full day of total abstinence. When this happens, the fasting rules for the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts are followed. The Divine Liturgy of the Annunciation is the only celebration of the eucharistic liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom allowed on a weekday of Great Lent.



Friday, March 27

The Akathyst Hymn to the Theotokos – 6:00 pm

Παρασκευή, 27 Μαρτίου – 6:00 μ.μ.

Η ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΚΑΘΙΣΤΟΥ ΥΜΝΟΥ

“Rejoice, unfading rose.

Rejoice, the only one who budded forth the unfading apple.

Rejoice, birth-giver of the aromatic balm of the King of all.”

The *Akathist Hymn*, the *Salutations to the most-holy Theotokos*, is one of the most beloved Services of the Orthodox Church. Its popularity is due to its theme, its beautiful melodies and its poetic expression and structure. It constitutes the crown jewel of Orthodox hymnology. The inspired composer, with incomparable imagery, rhetorical skill and spiritual loftiness praises the great mystery of Incarnation and the holy Virgin, who became the Instrument of our salvation.

Historical Background

The Hymn has been studied over the centuries, yet, despite all the attention it has received by many scholars, many questions remain unanswered, with “who is the composer” and “what is the time of composition” being the main ones. As authors most often mentioned are Romanos the Melodist (6th Century), Sergios Patriarch of Constantinople (7th Century), and St. Photios (9th Century), among others.

Why is it called *Akathist*? Because during the chanting of the Hymn the faithful remained standing (*Akathistos* in Greek means “non-sitting”). They still do. This was a unique characteristic of this particular Ode, contrary to the custom of sitting during the chanting of other Odes. Why the difference? It is understood as an expression of thanksgiving to the most holy *Theotokos* for having saved the “City” (Constantinople) from being sacked by the enemies.

To those of Greek extraction the *Akathist* is of added significance, in that it relates to the Greek Nation’s historic events of its War of Independence of 1821. We should also point out that because of the historic significance of the Hymn, tied repeatedly to events in the history of the Greek Nation, a new prelude was composed, full of doxology and entreaty, known by everyone —the most famous “*Ti Ypermaho*”: “*To you, Invincible.*” This prelude was most likely composed by Patriarch Sergios.

A few sources for The Akathist Hymn text:

- [Bp. Alexander Mileant website](#)
- Webpage of text from [The Akathist Hymn Preceded by the Brief Compline by Fr. George Papadeas](#)
- [Fr. Seraphim Dedes edition \(Includes the Canon\)](#)

Religious Significance

But why is it chanted during the Great Lent, since the breaking of the various “sieges” with which this Hymn has been associated took place at other times? It is probably chanted at this time as a tribute to the Most Holy *Theotokos* due to the fact that the Feast of the Annunciation always falls during Great Lent. By breaking it into parts, the celebration lasts even longer. That’s why Saturday was chosen (remember, the day starts from the sundown of the previous day) —because Saturdays and Sundays are the only days in which a joyful event can be commemorated during Great Lent.

Originally the Hymn was part of the Matins Service. For the convenience of the faithful it was transferred to the evening before, attached to the Small Compline. In monasteries it is read daily. Monks recite it by heart.

Analysis of the *Akathist Hymn*

What is the Akathist Hymn? It is a poem, comprised of a prelude (the *Kontakion* “*To Prostachthen Mystikos*”) and 24 stanzas, one for each of the letters of the Greek Alphabet. In other words, the *Akathist* consists only of that part which is intoned by the Priest. The odd numbers follow the same pattern, their characteristic being that they are comprised of six double addresses to the Most holy Mother of God, beginning with “Hail,” or “Rejoice,” in Greek “χαῖρε, *haire*”, therefore their popular name of “*Hairetismoï*,” Salutations. They all have the same refrain, which is the concluding line: “*Haire Nymphi Anymphefte*,” literally “Hail, Groomless Bride”. The even stanzas are shorter and are patterned after the second *Kontakion*. Their refrain is “Alleluiah.” The *Akathist* can rightly be called and is our “Hymn of Joy,” with its motif being the joyous event of the Incarnation, accented by the unceasing cries of “Rejoice,” “Rejoice”: “Rejoice, for though you joy will shine forth!”

Theme of the Hymn is the Mystery of the Incarnation, with emphasis to its beginning, the Annunciation of the Good News to the *Theotokos*. The prelude is a summary of the entire Hymn. The first four stanzas develop this theme, while the next eight stanzas (through M) go over the historical events:

- Visit to Elizabeth – E
- Joseph’s doubts – Z
- Christ’s birth – H
- the Star – Θ
- the Adoration of the Magi – I
- their departure – K
- Christ in Egypt – L
- and Symeon’s Meeting with the Messiah – M

The other half of the Ode (N – W) constitutes a theological elaboration of the Mystery of Incarnation:

- The new Creation glorifies God – N
- the new, wondrous birth urges people to alienate themselves from the world – Ξ
- the Logos was on earth, but also remained in heaven – O
- the Angels were amazed at the divine plan of salvation – P
- the wise of the world are unable to explain the mystery of the virginal birth – R
- the shepherd-God, becomes lamb-man in order to save the world – S
- the Virgin becomes the protection of the faithful – T
- no hymn can pay an adequate tribute to the Incarnate King – Y
- the Holy Theotokos is the bright candle that guides to the knowledge of God – Φ
- Christ came to the world to bring grace and forgiveness – X
- the doxology to the Son is connected to the praise of the living temple, the Holy Theotokos – Ψ
- ending with the following admirable address to the Virgin – Ω

O ALL-HYMNED AND PRAISED MOTHER, who did bear Him who is holier than all the saints: the most holy Logos:

In receiving our offering now,
do safeguard and rescue from all ills all of us
and do redeem and spare from future punishment
those crying out to you: Alleluia!

The hymn provides an explanation as to the reasons for which the holy *Theotokos* was addressed *Κεχαριτωμένη*, Full of Grace, by the Archangel Gabriel, as for example with verses,

- “Rejoice, for you are the Throne of the King”
- “Rejoice, for you prepare a port for our souls” and
- “Rejoice, for the heavenly realm rejoices with the earthly one”

Other verses express metaphorically her special place as the Mother of God:

- “Rejoice, Star revealing the Sun”
- “Rejoice, heavenly Ladder by which God descended”
- “Rejoice, mother of the Lamb and the Shepherd” and
- “Rejoice, tabernacle of God and Word”

Still other verses declare the results on humankind of such special place:

- “Rejoice, opener of the gates of Paradise”
- “Rejoice, access of mortals to God” and
- “Rejoice, through you we have been covered with glory”

Other images are taken from the Old Testament, and matched fittingly to the Theotokos, as for example,

- “Rejoice, fertile field growing a bounty of mercies”
- “Rejoice, sea who drowned the invisible Pharaoh” and
- “Rejoice, promised land”

Help support the Orthodox Witness ministry by purchasing our version of the Jerusalemite Icon. Mounted or laminated.

[View options](#)

The *Akathist* contains poetic images of incomparable beauty, but also of deep theological meaning. The holy Virgin through her “Yes,” her “Let it be to me according to your word,” through her acceptance of God’s will, became the instrument through which salvation for the human kind became possible. The recurrent images of the Hymn point to this reality:

- She is the **Branch** which produces the GRAPE
- She is the **Field** on which grows the WHEAT
- She is the **Tree** that bears the FRUIT
- She is the **Altar** on which lays the FOOD
- She is the **Rock** from which springs the WATER
- She is the **Promised Land** where we find the MILK & HONEY
- She is the **baptismal Font** in which we find the baptismal GRACE
- She is the **Fold** which keeps the LAMB
- She is the **Treasury** in which is found the TREASURE
- She is the **Throne** on which sits the KING
- She is the **Chariot** ridden by the RIDER
- She is the **Candle** which shines the LIGHT
- She is the **Dawn** announcing the DAY
- She is the **Key** which opens PARADISE
- She is the **Gate** leading to the KINGDOM
- She is the **Ladder** through which we climb to HEAVEN
- She is the **Bridge** that carries us to SALVATION
- She is the **Dwelling** where dwells the LORD
- She is the **Bridal Chamber** where awaits the BRIDEGROOM

In her womb took place the mystical and incomprehensible union of humanity and divinity. It is in her as well, where the union of our soul with our Creator is consummated. It is in her that our salvation is accomplished. How can we have the Fruit without the Tree? How can we have the Light without the Candle? That is why we honor and praise her: because, although she is not the Good News, she is definitely the Book on which the Good News was written. Although she is not the Joyful News of our salvation, she most definitely is the Bearer of such News.

May you deem us worthy, O holy *Theotokos*, to celebrate your Salutations in good health, for as many years as Your Son and our God grants to us. Amen.

Fr. EH; edited by AH.



Lamentations Choir Rehearsals

Dear Parishioners,

**Our adult Choir will be having rehearsals for the Good Friday
Lamentations on Sundays after Church**

**For the exact dates, please contact Choir Director
Mr. Panos Messis,**

at: panosmessis@gmail.com or by text at: 919 610 5679

St. Barbara Philoptochos Easter Sale

Celebrate Pascha with Tradition! Fresh tsoureki from Superior Bakery in Fayetteville and beautifully dyed red Easter eggs, individually wrapped in tulle – all ready for your table.

All proceeds will be donated to St Barbara Philoptochos ministries.

Place your order by Wednesday, April 1st.

Pickup on Palm Sunday, April 5th

Quantities are limited. Order while supplies last

Name _____

Phone Number/Email
address _____

For cash and check orders, please complete this form with your payment and place in an envelope in the Philoptochos mailbox in the conference room.

For credit card orders, please place your order at the Bookstore on Sundays or contact Sandy Huggins at huggins.alexandra@gmail.com

	Quantity	Unit Price	Total
Tsoureki \$15/loaf			
Red Eggs \$10/dozen (Note: eggs can only be purchased by the dozen)			
Total			



Let Philoptochos take some of the pressure of hosting Easter off your plate!

We're offering freshly baked loaves of tsourekia from Superior Bakery in Fayetteville, along with traditional red eggs to complete your celebration.

- **Tsourekia:** \$15 per loaf
- **Red eggs:** \$10 per dozen (sold by the dozen only)

Please complete the attached order form by **April 1st** for pickup on **Palm Sunday, April 5th**. We will also be accepting orders in person on Sundays after Church. or you may follow the additional ordering instructions listed on the form. For any questions, please contact Sandy Huggins at huggins.alexandra@gmail.com. Or call 919-323-7699.

Supplies are limited, so be sure to place your order while quantities last



SAVE THE DATE - Spanakopita Assembly Saturday March 28 @ 10am

Hello Everyone! Spring is starting to hint at its arrival, and preparations are underway for the return of the St Barbara Greek Festival (Sat May 16 th & Sun May 17 th).

Once again, we're asking for your assistance to make the Spanakopitas for this year's event.

We will begin assembly on Saturday, March 28 th at 10am in the church hall, and we could use all the help we can get.

I know everyone's schedules are busy, and your time is valuable, but even if you can only spare an hour or two, please come by!

If you do come, we ask that you bring your own apron, a small bowl or saucepan to hold melted butter, and a pastry brush. This helps ensure we have enough equipment for all the workers.

Finally, if you can please let either Evelyn Panos (mamapan@aol.com), Theky Pappas (tedthekey@aol.com), or Cindy Paliouras (cindy.paliouras@gmail.com) know if you're able to come, so we'll have some idea of how many helpers to expect, that would be much appreciated..

But even if you won't know until the last minute, please drop in... we're flexible, and we'll definitely put you to work!

Hope to see you on Saturday March 28th!

Many thanks,

Cindy Paliouras cindy.paliouras@gmail.com

Theky Pappas tedthekey@aol.com

Evelyn Panos mamapan@aol.com

Esteemed AHEPA brothers,



March, 2026

Dear Brothers,

Please be aware that time has come to pay your AHEPA 2026 dues, in the amount of \$80.00, This amount covers National, District, and local dues. Our treasurer will pass on the required part of your dues both to the National AHEPA Organization Headquarters in Washington, as well as to the District Lodge for our Capital District No. 3.

Please give your payment to any AHEPA officer you see at St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church or place your check [payable to "AHEPA 277"] in the AHEPA mail slot in St. Barbara's conference room.

You can now pay AHEPA dues via "Venmo"– our treasurer, brother Wes Platt can accept (payments @Wes-Platt-2 on Venmo, and transfer the money to AHEPA's bank account with Wells Fargo. Thus you can avoid the need to write a check or buy a postal stamp.

With your dues, you will be joining your brothers of our Local Chapter 277, as well as thousands of AHEPA members in over 500 chapters throughout this great nation, to support the many worthy philanthropic causes and scholarships sponsored by your local, District, and National AHEPA.

Thank you.

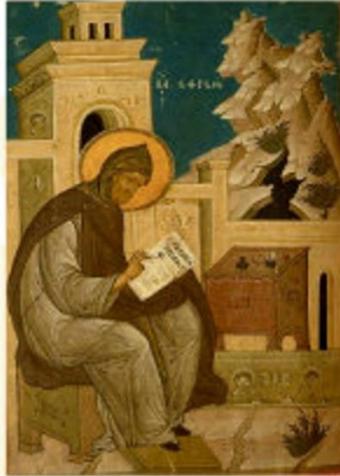
With sincerest fraternal greetings,

Wesley Platt – treasurer; Larry Odzak – secretary;

AHEPA Chapter 277, c/o St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church 8306 NC H-way 751, DURHAM, NC, 27713

AHEPA chapter 277 e-mail: ahepa277@gmail.com

GREAT LENT AND HOLY WEEK 2026 (Feb. 23 – April 11) FASTING GUIDE



“O Lord and Master
of my life,
Take from me the spirit
of sloth, despair,
lust of power
and idle talk;

But give rather the spirit of chastity,
humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.

Yea, O Lord and King,
grant me to see my own transgressions
and not to judge my brother, for blessed
art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.”

This year, our journey through the Lenten fast to Pascha begins with the Great Compline of Clean Monday on February 23 at 6:00 pm.

The guidelines in this post are general. Fasting is a spiritual discipline that should be practiced with the oversight and direction of your spiritual father. If you have any specific questions about how the fasting discipline applies to you, you should consult your spiritual

The Lenten fasting discipline commences on Clean Monday on March 3 and concludes with the breaking of the fast at Pascha on April 20. In general, the fasting rules during Great Lent and Holy Week are as follows:

WEEKDAYS (Monday – Friday) are observed as *Strict Fast Days*. On these days we abstain from meat, dairy, fish with backbones, fowl, alcoholic beverages, and oil.

WEEKENDS (Saturday and Sunday) are observed as *Wine and Oil Days*. On these days the fast is relaxed to permit alcoholic beverages and olive and other vegetable oils.

In addition, two special feastdays that fall during this period – **Annunciation (March 25)** and **Palm Sunday (April 5, this year)** – are kept as *Fish, Wine, and Oil Days*. On these days the fast is relaxed to permit fish with backbones, in addition to alcoholic beverages and oil.

There are certain days of the Holy Week cycle that have special fasting rules.

- **Great and Holy Thursday (April 9, this year)** is observed as a *Wine and Oil Day* due to the commemoration of the institution of the Eucharist.
- **Great and Holy Saturday (April 11, this year)** is observed as a *Strict Fast Day* – the only Saturday of the year kept as a strict fast; however, wine (but not oil) is permitted.

Additional Notes:

1. Meals for the fast should follow the dietary restrictions and be cooked simply. Portions should be smaller than usual.
2. Fasting on the weekdays of the first week of Great Lent is especially severe. The strictest observance would be to take only two meals during this week – one on Wednesday evening and one on Friday evening after the services scheduled for those nights – keeping Clean Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday as absolute fasts (i.e., no food whatsoever). For many this is impracticable. A good starting place to work towards the strict observance is to keep the first day of Great Lent, Clean Monday, as an absolute fast and to limit meals on the other days.
3. It is a pious practice to observe Great and Holy Friday as an absolute fast. If one does not have the strength to do this, it is good to abstain from food until after venerating the epitaphios (winding sheet) during Vespers on this day.
4. If you have a medical condition that requires you to relax the fasting guidelines, then do so.
5. **Before you attempt to strictly follow the fasting guidelines, consult with Fr. Stavroforos.** It is very easy to lose sight of the fact that fasting is a means to an end (that is, our salvation) and not an end in itself.
6. Generally speaking, children and elderly people are allowed to relax the fast under the guidance of their spiritual father.

FASTING TO RECEIVE COMMUNION AT A PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY

7. A special feature of the Liturgy of the Presanctified is that it is celebrated in the evening in connection with Vespers. The early Christians preparing to receive Communion at the Liturgy of the Presanctified fasted the whole day from morning till evening. Today complete fasting is prescribed starting from noon, so that after twelve o'clock we have nothing to eat or drink until after the evening Liturgy.



Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesdays at 6:00 pm on Feb 25, March 4, 11, 18, April 1

As we already have seen, the eucharistic Divine Liturgy is not celebrated in the Orthodox Church on lenten weekdays. In order for the faithful to sustain their lenten effort by participation in Holy Communion, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served. The service is an ancient one in the Orthodox Church. We officially hear about it in the canons of the seventh century, which obviously indicates its development at a much earlier date.

On all days of the holy fast of Lent, except on the Sabbath, the Lord's Day, and the holy day of the Annunciation, the Liturgy of the Presanctified is to be served (Canon 52, Quinisext, 692).

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is an evening service. It is the solemn lenten Vespers with the administration of Holy Communion added to it. There is no consecration of the eucharistic gifts at the presanctified liturgy. Holy Communion is given from the eucharistic gifts sanctified on the previous Sunday at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, unless, of course, the feast of the Annunciation should intervene; hence its name of “presanctified.”

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served on Wednesday and Friday evenings, although some churches may celebrate it only on one of these days. It comes in the evening after a day of spiritual preparation and total abstinence. The faithful who are unable to make the effort of total fasting because of weakness or work, however, normally eat a light lenten meal in the early morning.

During the psalms of Vespers, the presanctified gifts are prepared for communion. They are transferred from the altar table where they have been reserved since the Divine Liturgy, and are placed on the table of oblation. After the evening hymn, the Old Testament scriptures of Genesis and Proverbs are read, between which the celebrant blesses the kneeling congregation with a lighted candle and the words: “The Light of Christ illumines all,” indicating that all wisdom is given by Christ in the Church through the scriptures and sacraments. This blessing was originally directed primarily to the catechumens—those preparing to be baptized on Easter—who attended the service only to the time of the communion of the faithful.

After the readings, the evening Psalm 141 is solemnly sung once again with the offering of incense. Then, after the litanies of intercession and those at which the catechumens were dismissed in former days, the presanctified eucharistic gifts are brought to the altar in a solemn, silent procession. The song of the entrance calls the faithful to communion.

Now the heavenly powers [i.e., the angels] do minister invisibly with us. For behold the King of Glory enters. Behold the mystical sacrifice, all fulfilled, is ushered in.

Let us with faith and love draw near that we may be partakers of everlasting life. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

After the litany and prayers, the Our Father is sung and the faithful receive Holy Communion to the chanting of the verse from Psalm 34: “O taste and see how good is the Lord. Alleluia.” The post-communion hymns are sung and the faithful depart with a prayer to God who “has brought us to these all-holy days for the cleansing of carnal passions,” that he will bless us “to fight the good fight, to accomplish the course of the fast, and to attain unto and to adore the holy resurrection” of Christ.

The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is traditionally considered to be the work of the sixth-century pope, Saint Gregory of Rome. The present service, however, is obviously the inspired liturgical creation of Christian Byzantium

Salutation Services at 6:00 pm on Fridays Feb 27, March 6, 13, 20 and the Akathyst Service on the 27.



The Akathist Hymn is a profound, devotional poem, which sings the praises of the Holy Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary. It is one of the most beloved services in the Orthodox Church. It was composed in the imperial city of Constantinople, "the city of the Virgin," by St. Romanos the Melodist, who reposed in the year 556. The Akathist Hymn has proven so popular in the liturgical life of the Church that many other hymns have been written following its format. These include Akathists to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Cross, and to many Saints.

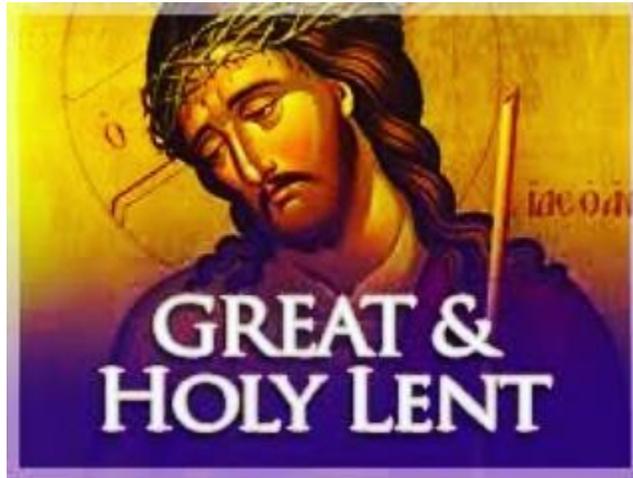
The Akathist hymn consists of praises directed to the Mother of God, beginning with the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel: "Rejoice." As the hymn is chanted all of the events related to our Lord's Incarnation pass before us for our contemplation. The Archangel Gabriel marvels at the Divine self-emptying and the renewal of creation which will occur when Christ comes to dwell in the Virgin's womb. The unborn John the Baptist prophetically rejoices. The shepherds recognize Christ as a

blameless Lamb, and rejoice that in the Virgin "the things of earth join chorus with the heavens." The pagan Magi following the light of the star, praise Her for revealing the light of the world.

The word "akathistos" means "not sitting," i.e., standing; normally all participants stand while it is being prayed. The hymn is comprised of 24 stanzas, arranged in an acrostic following the Greek alphabet. The stanzas alternate between long and short. Each short stanza is written in prose and ends with the singing of "Alleluia." Each longer stanza ends with the refrain: "Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded."

The first part of the hymn is about the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary by the Angel. It describes Mary's surprise at the news, her visit to her mother and Joseph's doubts as to her innocence. The second part is about the birth of Christ, the worship of the Shepherds and Magi, the flight to Egypt and the visit to Saint Simeon in the Temple. In the third part the hymn directs our attention to the renewal of the world by Christ's coming, and the amazement of the Angels and the wise men at the sight of the Incarnation of God's Son. The fourth and the last part is once more a lyric and rhetorical appraisal of Virgin Mary, whom the poet adorns with the most beautiful of adjectives asking her to accept his poetical offering and to intercede for the salvation of human race from the earthly sin.

Orthodox Christian Observance of the Akathist Hymn on the first 4 Fridays of Great Lent.



GREAT LENT RELIGIOUS SERVICES:

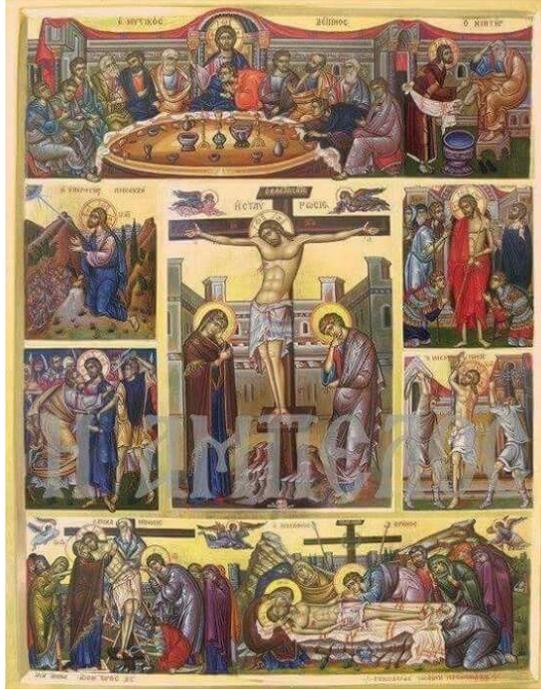
March

- 1 – Sunday of Orthodoxy – 9:00 am*
- 4 – 2nd Wednesday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – 6:00 pm*
- 6 – Friday – 2nd Salutation to the Theotokos – 6:00 pm*
- 8 – Sunday of Gregory Palamas – 9:00 am*
- 11 – 3rd Wednesday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – 6:00 pm*
- 13 – Friday – 3rd Salutation to the Theotokos – 6:00 pm*
- 15 – Sunday of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – 9:00 am*
- 18 – 4th Wednesday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy – 6:00 pm*
- 20 – 4th Salutation to the Theotokos – 6:00 pm*
- 22 – Sunday of Saint John of the Ladder – 9:00 am*
- 25 – Wednesday – Feast of the Annunciation – 9:00 am*
- 27 – The Akathyst Hymn – 6:00 pm*
- 29 – Mary of Egypt Sunday – 9:00 am*

April

- 1 – Pre-Sanctified Liturgy before Holy Week – 6:00 pm*
- 4 – Saturday of Lazarus – 9:00 am*

Holy Week at St. Barbara 2026



Sunday, April 5th Morning - Palm Sunday - 9:00 am

Sunday, April 5th Evening - 1st Bridegroom Service - 6:00 pm

Monday, April 6th Evening - 2nd Bridegroom Service - 6:00 pm

Tuesday, April 7th Evening - 3rd Bridegroom Service - 6:00 pm

Wednesday, April 8th Afternoon - Service of Holy Unction - 2:00 pm

Wednesday, April 8th Evening - Service of the Bridegroom - 6:00 pm

Thursday, April 9th Morning - Vespers & Liturgy of St. Basil- 9:00 am

Thursday, April 9th Evening - The Holy Passion Service - 6:00 pm

Friday, April 10th Morning - Royal Hours - 9:00 am

Friday, April 10th Afternoon - Descent from the Cross - 3:00 pm

Friday, April 10th Evening - Lamentation Service - 6:00 pm

Saturday Morning, April 11th - Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil 9:00 am

Saturday Evening, April 11th Matins and Resurrection Service 11:00 pm

Sunday, April 12th - Morning - Easter Pascha Agape Service - 11:00 am



Η ΑΓΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΕΒΔΟΜΑΔΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΓΙΑ ΒΑΡΒΑΡΑ ΓΙΑ ΕΤΟΣ 2026

Κυριακη, 5 Απριλιου

Κυριακη των Βαιων Πρωι9:00 πμ

Κυριακη Βραδυ του Νυμφιου.....6:00 μμ

Δευτερα, 6 Απριλιου

Μεγαλη Δευτερα Βραδυ του Νυμφιου.....6:00 μμ

Τριτη, 7 Απριλιου

Μεγαλη Τριτη Βραδυ του Νυμφιου – Το Τροπαριο της Κασσιανης.....6:00 μμ

Τεταρτη, 8 Απριλιου

Μεγαλη Τεταρτη Απογευμα –Μυστηριον του Ευχελαιου.....2:00 μμ

Μεγαλη Τεταρτη Βραδυ – Ακολουθια του Νυμφιου και Μυρομα6:00 μ.μ.

Πεμπτη, 9 Απριλιου

Μεγαλη Πεμπτη Πρωι– Θεια Λειτουργια Μεγ. Βασιλειου.....9:00 πμ

Μεγαλη Πεμπτη Βραδυ – Τα 12 Ευαγγελια..... 6:00 μμ

Παρασκευη, 10 Απριλιου

Μεγαλη Παρασκευη Πρωι–Ακολουθια των Βασιλικων Ωρων9:00 μμ

Η Αποκαθλωση.....3:00 μμ

Μεγαλη Παρασκευη Βραδυ – Ο Επιταφιος Θρηνος.....6:00 μμ

Σαββατο Πρωι, 11 Απριλιου

Μεγα Σαββατο Πρωι – Θεια Λειτουργια Μεγα Βασιλειου..... 9:00 πμ

Σαββατο Βραδυ, 11 Απριλιου

Η Ανασταση του Κυριου – Σαββατο Βραδυ..... 11:00 μμ

Κυριακη, 12 Απριλιου

Ο Εσπερινος της Αγαπης 11:00 πμ