

We bow before Your most pure image, O kind Lord,/ and beg pardon for our sins, O Christ our God./ Of Your own will You consented to ascend the Cross in the flesh/ to free Your handiwork from enslavement to the enemy./ In thanksgiving we cry aloud to You:/ By coming to save the world, our Saviour, You filled all things with joy.

**Troparion (Tone 2) of the Forgiveness Vespers**



FAITH and FAMILY

St. Aidan Orthodox Church – February 2024 Newsletter

## Upcoming Events >>>

### March 2024

[Check website for updates!](#)

Sat, Mar. 2 – 4pm: *Family Vespers*  
Sun, Mar. 3 – 10:30am: *Divine Liturgy: Prodigal Son.*  
*Potluck Lunch to follow.*  
Wed, Mar. 6 – 5:30pm: *Youth Group*  
- **CANCELLED: Christianity 101: An Orthodox Perspective**

Sat, Mar. 9 – 6pm: *Great Vespers, followed by a Parastas for Alex's newly departed father*  
Sun, Mar. 10 – 10:30am: *Divine Liturgy: Last Judgement. Meatfare potluck lunch to follow.*

Tues, Mar. 12 – 6:30pm: *Church History Q and A*

Sat, Mar. 16 – 10am to noon: *Men's Coffee Hour*  
- 6pm: *Great Vespers*  
Sun, Mar. 17 – 10:30am: *Divine Liturgy. Cheesefare Potluck Lunch to follow.*  
- 2pm: *Forgiveness Vespers.*

Mon, Mar. 18 – *Lenten Fast begins.*  
- 6pm: *Gr. Compline of St. Andrew*  
Tues, Mar. 19 – 6pm. *Great Compline*  
Wed, Mar. 20 – 6pm. *Great Compline*  
Thurs, Mar. 21 – 6pm. *Great Compline*  
Fri, Mar. 22 – 6pm: *Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, followed by a soup supper at 8pm.*

Sat, Mar. 23 – 6pm: *Great Vespers*  
Sun, Mar. 24 – 10:30am: *Divine Liturgy Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon Procession. Lenten potluck to follow.*  
- 6pm: *Great Vespers with Lytia.*

Mon, Mar. 25 – 10:30am: *Divine Liturgy of the Annunciation of the Theotokos.*  
Tues, Mar. 26 – 6:30pm: *First Book Study Night.*  
Wed, Mar. 27 – 6pm: *Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, followed by a soup supper at 8pm.*

Sat, Mar. 30 – 10:30am: *Memorial Liturgy Saturday*  
- 6pm: *Great Vespers*  
Sun, Mar. 31 – *Divine Liturgy of St. Gregory Palamas. Lenten potluck to follow.*

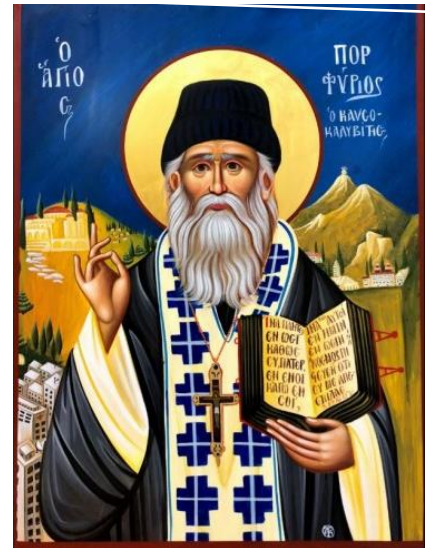
## Father's Desk: Forgiveness Sunday

The Gospel reading on this day is always the passage of Matthew 6:14-21. Our Lord explains to His disciples what is expected of all who wish to follow Him. He starts with Forgiveness, putting it very simply; “if you forgive, then I forgive. If you do not forgive, then I do not forgive.”

Christ then moves on to Fasting. The sin that caused the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise was disobedience to God by refusing to fast; and eating from the tree which God asked them not to eat of. This Gospel reading then concludes with some simple instructions for investing in God's Kingdom; by feeding and clothing the poor, by building and beautifying His Churches, by supporting His work here upon the earth.

As we start every Great Lent, the Church gives us this same advice – for close to 2000 years the advice has been the same. Practice: Forgiveness, Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. Now this obviously doesn't apply only to Great Lent, but is the advice that Christ gives to his disciples everywhere, always and unto ages of ages. But, the Church has given us the Lenten season to enable us to re-focus. To help us to start to wake up once again to what the real purpose of our short time on planet earth is really all about.

We are so easily distracted. There is so much going on, so much to get involved with, so many diversions – work, play, the kid's activities, all good and



blessed things. I really look forward to getting another chance to get my spiritual priorities and discipline back on track during Great Lent.

I then count on God's forgiveness and grace as my great intentions end up being a whimper compared to what I had hoped to accomplish. Thank God He is always faithful to forgive and sets us back on the path He has prepared for us when we turn to Him in repentance. The more we accept and experience God's forgiveness, the more we can in turn, pass forgiveness on to those whom we struggle with. This is a blessed gift that allows the Kingdom of God to grow in us.

Christ's Saints lived forgiveness through God's grace.

When Saint Porphyrios was asked: “Can I have your blessing to receive communion tomorrow?” he replied, “Do you hate anyone?” “No Elder.” “Good, Go and receive communion.”

May God guide us and bless each of us in the soon to be here season of Great Lent! – Fr. Andrew.



‘We know that prayer in and of itself cannot save us but carrying it out before God can. For when the Lord’s eyes are upon us, He sanctifies us, as the sun warms everything upon which it shines.’: St. Gregory Palamas

## St. John Climacus: The Forgotten Saint

St. John Climacus is one of the great saints of our Church. He so special that the Church remembers St. John, not once, as we do with most saints, but twice a year. His feast day is always celebrated on March 30th, but the Church also devotes the fourth Sunday of Great Lent to this majestic church father. The people of his day revered St. John so much that they saw in him another Moses.

Like Moses, St. John spent forty years in the desert. Not only that, but St. John even ascended the same mountain as Moses, Mt. Sinai. He was likened to Moses because, like the great prophet of old who brought down the tablets of the Law, he too brought down a gift to share with the people. That gift, a book called *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, is a book that describes how man can ascend to God, like the Ten Commandments tells the faithful how they will find order and harmony in their lives.

Thankfully, a wonderful tradition developed with respect to St. John's book. Generation after generation, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* has been passed down in many Orthodox families. A few decades ago, an anthropologist in the Orthodoxy country of Romania was astonished when he observed that almost every household of Romania – over 95 percent – contained both the Holy Bible and *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. Many years ago, St. John's majestic work even migrated to this country with the Orthodox faithful who moved here. As a matter of fact, when the printing press was developed, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* was one of the first books ever published in America. This is how revered his work was.

St. John's was without question the most loved and read Christian book on spirituality. Times have changed, however. For many modern people what St. John says is too demanding or perhaps too radical for the American way of life. St. John speaks of finding silence; he speaks of fasting and finding deep moments of prayer; he speaks of withdrawing from the world we live in, and even of dying to its wisdom. St. John speaks about turning our back on pleasure and comfort. He speaks against gluttony and self-indulgence. In short, he speaks of so many things the world is promoting in our days.

But the Orthodox tradition has always been for monk and layperson alike: to spend Great Lent reading St. John's majestic work and applying his ideas, according to our situation in life, and then to pass this tradition on to those who follow. Without question the greatest contribution to the Orthodox faith that St. John has made is that his theology takes one from slavery to the desert, to the Promised Land. He is like Moses in this respect, as he leads one from bondage to freedom.

As we live in a society that promotes comfort and minimizes the Christian faith, we have to recognize that modern society would convince good Orthodox Christians that they can progress from slavery to the Promised Land without venturing into the metaphorical desert by embracing the radical lifestyle St. John speaks of and lived by. The hard interior work that St. John speaks of in the Ladder of Divine Ascent is meant for every single Orthodox Christian. It's meant directly for the monk, but indirectly for the layperson in a modified form.

As we continue to struggle to live the Christian life in America, let us remember the life of St. John Climacus and cling to the old Orthodox tradition of reading his majestic work.

**For, as St. John himself teaches, no one can ascend to the Kingdom without first using a ladder.**

### Kootenay Spotlight

#### Cranbrook Farmers Markets



**INDOOR  
MARKETS**



**MARCH 30 - EASTER MARKET**



**APRIL 20 - SPRING MARKET**

Saturdays 10am to 1pm at 1432 2 St N

at the KINSMEN ARENA



Our indoor markets are growing! 🌱

We are excited to announce that our next two markets are moving to a bigger venue.

That means double the vendors and double the local goodies!

Check in with us for updates on Facebook at Cranbrook Farmer's Market

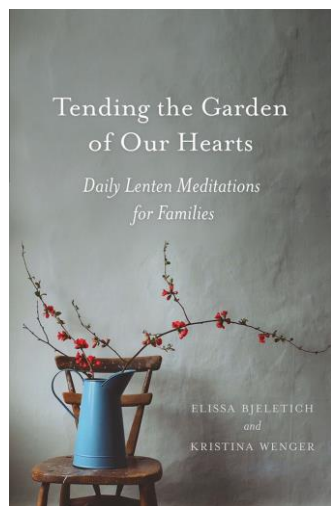
## CHURCH SCHOOL

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, we always celebrate the Annunciation of the Theotokos. This is when the angel came to Mary asking her to become the mother of Christ, and even though she was worried about it, she said yes. She kept Him safe as He grew in her womb. After He was born, Mary nursed the baby Jesus, and changed His diapers. She loved him as a mother loves her baby. She kept Him safe as He grew into a little boy, and then a bigger boy, and then a man.

In Springtime, we see flowers beginning to grow. Many people plant Theotokos Gardens as a way to remember the mother of God. The garden can be outside or inside and is planted with flowers, especially ones called Mary's Flowers, such as Forget-me-not (Eyes of Mary), Zinnia (Little Mary) and Bachelor's buttons (Mary's crown). Icons of the Theotokos, like the Unfading Flower icon, are put into the garden, and the garden becomes a special place to pray.



Tending the garden and tending to our church life are much the same. As soon as we stop tending and watering our garden, it will begin to wither, giving space to weeds. It is just as necessary to watch over the garden of our hearts, carefully growing the good seeds of faith.



**[Tending the Garden of our Hearts: Daily Lenten Meditations for Families](#)** by *Elissa Bjeletich and Kristina Wenger* offers family devotions based on the scriptures for each day of Great Lent, including questions to discuss and ponder and an appendix full of hands-on activities to bring the lessons of the season to life. Whether you use it every day or dip into it occasionally as time permits, this book will help the whole family get more out of this season of the Orthodox year. Available at Ancient Faith [HERE](#) and also available as an [audiobook](#) and [ebook](#).

## Questions Answered >>>

**Q:** Who are the All Fathers and Mothers of Asceticism?

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, the Saturday of Cheesefare, we commemorate all the righteous and God-bearing Fathers and Mothers, both known and unknown, who shone forth in asceticism. They were men and women who, during the first few centuries of Christianity, fled to the barren deserts around the Mediterranean and lived the most extreme and awe-inspiring lives of asceticism in a search for God.

**A:** The Orthodox Christian ascetic, both then and now, takes on the challenge of identifying passions and separates himself or herself from allowing them to take ownership of his mind and heart. Whatever enslaves you owns you. During Great Lent or on normal Wednesdays and Fridays, when you follow the prescribed church's dietary discipline and do without meat or dairy products, you practice asceticism. If we undertake these same struggles of prayer, fasting, and good works, we shall receive from God the same reward they did. (oca.org)

## Church Youth

### ***“Come and See”***

On the first Sunday of Lent, we are given the reading of John 1:43-51 where Christ says, *“Follow Me”*, and Philip becomes a disciple of Christ. When you know something this deeply, this completely, something of such eternal and precious value, how can you communicate this truth to others? Philip's answer was brilliant and one which we should all take note of. *“Come and see.”*

Philip didn't get into a theological debate with his friends. He didn't trot out his case as to why he was so convinced that he had found the Messiah. This is our calling, not to argue and attempt to drag people into the Kingdom by the sheer force of our arguments. Not to destroy their beliefs so we can prove to them that they are wrong and need to listen to us.

No, rather than trying to destroy their present understanding, we should try to show them how God has been with them all along and longs to come and be more fully present in their hearts. We are simply to invite our friends and family to *“Come and see.”* God is the one who brings them to Himself and heals the brokenhearted and frees the captives. We simply invite those we love to come and see for themselves. Rather than arguing, simply smile and love them and ask them to *“Come and see for themselves.”*

This is how the Church grows. God fills those searching for Him, with the sure knowledge that He is with us.

God is everywhere present and filling all things so I am not suggesting that He can only be found here at church. The main reason your friends will consider accepting your invitation to *“come and see”* is because they have sensed something about you they can trust – you are an example to them of the church family that they could belong to if they would only open their hearts and allow Him in.

He is a good God who loves us and all of mankind, and He will surely respond to the cry of their hearts. So, let us learn this valuable lesson from Philip this Lenten season.

- Fr. Andrew

# Outreach Ministry Updates ...

## Family Vespers

**March 6<sup>th</sup> at 4pm!**

Everyone is welcome to join us at Family Vespers, always the first Saturday of each month.

After Great Vespers at 4pm, we will be eating pizza together, and doing puzzles/activities.

Please invite friends and family to come with you to Family Vespers!

## Perogy Pinching Nights

**Cancelled during March**

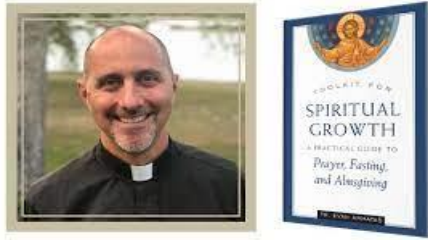
Our monthly perogy making sessions in our new Church kitchen to make the perogies for our fundraising dinners and to sell frozen in bags.

## Fasting Recipes

Lenten fasts can make meal planning complicated – check out our recipes below and add your favorites so we can all try them!

<https://staidanscookbook.blogspot.com/>

## Lenten Book Study



Fr. Armatas's Book "A Practical Guide to Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving"

**Tuesdays, March 19 and 26.**

**6:30pm to 8:30pm**

Join us on Tuesday evenings, beginning March 19.

Held at the Church in-person, with an option to join in online as well. We will be starting with an Akathist at 6:30pm and the book study will begin at 7pm.

Open to all. Invite your friends!

## Bookstore

One big order is put in to save shipping costs. You can let Jessie know at

[staidanbookstore@gmail.com](mailto:staidanbookstore@gmail.com)

what you would like to order from the following sites:

<https://store.ancientfaith.com/>

<https://www.uncutmountainsupply.com/>



## The Lighter side of Orthodoxy

### Orthodox Christian Bumper Stickers

- Communion: Theosis you can sink your teeth into.
- Don't let your worries get the best of you; remember, Moses started out as a basket case.
- If God is your co-pilot, switch seats.
- Orthodox Christianity: Kickin' it old school since 33AD
- Eastern Orthodoxy: the only Church with the word "Easter" in its title!



### Social Media Links

Website: [saintaidan.ca](http://saintaidan.ca)

[Facebook](#)

[Facebook Group](#)

[Instagram](#)

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Donations to our church can be made with an e-transfer to:

[saintaidan201@gmail.com](mailto:saintaidan201@gmail.com)

or with a [credit card](#)