

## Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures

“How I have loved thy law, O Lord! The whole day it is my meditation.” (Ps 118:97)

### Genesis 28:12

“Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.” (OSB)

The Promise to Abraham has been made; it has been fulfilled—according to the flesh—in the birth of Isaac; it has been “endangered”; and yet it continues. God’s Word will not be thwarted. However, for the reader of Scripture, the “dramatic tension” in the Scriptural narrative continues to revolve around the question: Who will be the *heir of the promise*? First, we learn it is Isaac, not Ishmael; next it will be Jacob, not Esau; then it will be Judah, not the other 11 sons of Jacob. Later, it will be David, and not the other 7 sons of Jesse. Then it will be Solomon alone among David’s sons. Where will the Chosen Line “end” such that all the nations will be blessed in Abraham’s seed?

In the story of Genesis, the Patriarch Isaac’s story is brief, almost an interlude between Abraham and Jacob. When we meet Jacob, we discover that, from birth, this child was born for conflict, struggle, and subterfuge. The name “Jacob” means “one who grasps at the heel” or “one who supplants”—for while being born, just seconds behind his twin Esau, he comes out grasping Esau’s heel. This is emblematic of Jacob’s character and relationships—his swindling of Isaac’s blessing away from Esau, his deceit towards his father-in-law Laban. His tenacity will even lead him to *wrestle with God*—and shockingly win (Gen 32:22-32; Hos 12:3-6)! In a wonderful series of puns, *Jacob* “wrestles” (Heb. *’abaq*) with God at *Jabbok* and his thigh is “dislocated” (Heb. *yaqa’*). God then changes Jacob’s name to “Israel,” that is, “man who strives with God.” Unfortunately, Jacob’s character flaws will pass on to his sons, and will lead to the near disintegration of his family.

In Genesis 28, in his search for a wife, Jacob must retrace his grandfather Abraham’s journey from Mesopotamia. On his way into “exile,” leaving Canaan for Haran (cf. Gen 12:4), Jacob has a dream in which God confirms Jacob as the recipient of the Abrahamic covenant, blessing, and promise—of descendants, land, and divine presence/relationship. This message is accompanied by a vision of a Ladder to Heaven with angels descending and ascending on it. Jacob names the place of this dream-vision “Bethel” or “House of God,” the location that will come to mark the southern border of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the divided kingdom after Solomon’s reign. King Jeroboam will desecrate this sacred site by setting up a “golden calf” statue in ironic imitation of Israel’s rebellion at Mt. Sinai (1 Kgs 12:25-33; Exod 32-34).

The Ladder has become a fruitful symbol in the life of the Church. Christ identifies Himself as the Ladder and as the Gate (Jn 1:51; 10:7)—in His descent, and in His Cross (on which He “leans,” Gen 28:13) and Resurrection, He is the Way of re-ascent, the ladder of Virtue we must climb to the Father, with the rungs of the Ladder the virtues supported by the two posts of the Old & New Testaments (St. Chromatius). But so is His Mother, the Theotokos, who is the “Ladder” and “Gate of Heaven” as she unites heaven and earth through the Incarnation (St. Fulgentius of Ruspe; St. John of Damascus), and so is the Church of which She is a Figure (Venerable Bede). The angel “descends” at the Annunciation to Mary of Her Child-bearing, and the angels who are “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation” (Heb 1:14) continue their descent and ascent in the life of the Church, guarding and protecting us in our temporary exile from and return to the heavenly Promised Land (St. Cyril of Alexandria).



## ST. PHILIP ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the  
Antiochian Archdiocese

*His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH*



*His Grace Bishop THOMAS*



*Father Noah Bushelli, Pastor*

215-954-9286



*Father James Thayer*

215-692-0890

March 24, 2019

SUNDAY OF ST. GREGORY  
PALAMAS

### COMMEMORATIONS:

FOREFEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS  
OUR HOLY FATHER THEONAS, ARCHBISHOP OF  
THESSALONICA  
VENERABLE ZACHARIAH THE RECLUSE AND ARTEMON,  
BISHOP OF SELEUCIA  
NEW-HIEROMARTYR PARTHENIOS, PATRIARCH OF  
CONSTANTINOPLE

Tone 2 - Eothinon 10

Orthros Gospel: St. John 21:1-14

Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-14, 2:1-3

Liturgy Gospel: St. Mark 2:1-12

**RESURRECTION TROPARION** - Tone 2 - When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Thou who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee!

**APOLYTIKION FOR ST. GREGORY PALAMAS** - Tone 8 - O Star of Orthodoxy, support of the Church and its teacher, O comeliness of ascetics, and incontestable champion of those who speak in theology, Gregory the wonder-worker, the pride of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, implore thou constantly for the salvation of our souls.

**TODAY:** Orthros 8:45 am; Divine Liturgy 10 am  
Coffee Hour, SS, & Teens 11:45 am  
Choir Rehearsal, 12:45 pm  
Vespers & Artoklasia for ANNUNCIATION, 6 pm

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Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 8:30 - 4:00; Friday 10:00 - 3:00

Fr Noah & Fr James are available for hospital visits. If you or anyone you know is in the hospital or homebound and would like a visit, please call the church office.

## Weekly Ministries & Stewards:

|                  | This Week:                  | Next Week (Mar 31):      |
|------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| PROSPHORA BREAD: | Justin G / Mary Lynne B.    | Justin G / Mary Lynne B. |
| EPISTLE READER:  | Terry Kaminsky              | Jack Morrash             |
| ALTAR CANDLES:   | The Ackers                  | The Bushellis            |
| USHERS:          | Steve Kulp & Gabe Quinodoz  |                          |
| GREETERS:        | Jordan & Natalie Gamble     | Michael & Helen Heveran  |
| CLEANING TEAM:   | Kim B. & Todd and Kristi M. | Teens & Nathan, Rebecca  |
| COFFEE HOUR:     | Tadesse & Hirut             | Moore's & Gohls          |

**MANY THANKS** to all who participated in today's potluck Coffee Hour. **EVERYONE** is invited to stay for refreshments after the Divine Liturgy. **Your assistance in cleanup is appreciated.**

### SPECIAL APPEAL

Please consider making a special offering to the **Camp Scholarship Fund.**  
Thank you and may God bless your generosity!

## Ministry Highlights

"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)

### "Maintenance Team"

The purpose of the Maintenance Team is to provide a safe and structurally sound facility for the ministries of St. Philip. Many of the needs we take care of ourselves, such as changing light bulbs, minor plumbing issues, installing simple fixtures, routine maintenance, etc. (For large or more complicated jobs experts are hired.) If you have expertise in any area of maintenance, or are just handy, talk to Dan Marquardt (609-213-0044 or danmarquardt2@gmail.com) or Jonathan Black (215-317-0543 or jhblack62@gmail.com).

## Mark Your Calendar:

Youth Choir Presanctified  
April 3, 2019

Lazarus Saturday  
Bp THOMAS visit  
April 19-20, 2019

We live Pascha to Pascha!  
April 28, 2019

**OUTREACH COLLECTION:**  
Baby Care Items

**SPIRITUAL WARFARE:**  
*Taking Every Thought Captive to Christ*  
"Confess"

## This Week:

### GREAT LENT

- Monday, Mar 25:** Feast of ANNUNCIATION  
ORTHROS 9 a.m., Divine LITURGY 10 a.m.  
w- Fish/Wine/Oil potluck  
Great Compline, 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, Mar 26:** SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.  
Matushka Olga Sewing Club, 11am-3pm
- Wed, Mar 27:** SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.  
Presanctified Liturgy 7 p.m., w/ Fasting Potluck
- Thurs, Mar 28:** SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.
- Friday, Mar 29:** Presanctified Liturgy 10 a.m., w/ Fasting Potluck  
Akathist 7 p.m.; Choir Rehearsal 8 p.m.
- Sat, Mar 30:** Lenten Retreat, 10 am—6 pm  
*Exile, Journey, Destination!*  
with Fr. Timothy Sas  
Youth Choir Rehearsal, 5 pm  
VESPERS 6 p.m.;  
Confession 7 p.m.
- Sunday, Mar 31:** Sunday of the Holy Cross  
ORTHROS 8:45 a.m.,  
Divine LITURGY 10 a.m.  
Coffee Hour, SS, & Teens  
11:45 a.m.  
Choir Rehearsal, 12:45 pm

*(Most services preceded by available times for confession.)*

### Pray For:

| Living                               | Departed                           |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bp Alexander                         | Marie                              |
| Child Gregory & family               | Natella Hertanse                   |
| Mona-Rebekah                         |                                    |
| Caroline                             |                                    |
| Zerfenesh                            |                                    |
| Michael & families                   |                                    |
| Paul (H)                             |                                    |
| James E                              |                                    |
| Lasha B                              |                                    |
| Otari B                              |                                    |
| Daniel H                             | St. Nina's List                    |
| Mebrat                               | Catechumens                        |
| Aristidis                            | Zachary,                           |
| Doris                                | Tatiana (Sze),                     |
| Veronica                             | Evan, Tina                         |
| Ezekiel                              | New & Expectant Mothers & children |
| Thomas, Elizabeth & all Missionaries |                                    |

**ATTENDANCE:** At Vespers on Mar 16: 63 Divine Services on Mar 17: 208  
**OFFERINGS:** Candles, \$379. Collections, \$118. Youth, \$1. Book Shelf Ministry, \$42. Camping Fund, \$100. Land Acquisition, \$10,500. Memorial for Hertanse Ibrahim, \$25. Lehigh Valley Clergy Brotherhood Collection, \$648. Payroll Tax Refund, \$11,894.36. Stewardship, \$8,511. Total received: \$32,218.36.

**GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY!**