

*March Notes:* ... on Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> there will be a *Presanctified Liturgy* followed by a Lenten Potluck ... *John Frederics* has his birthday on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> ... and on Friday evening the 9<sup>th</sup> there will be a *Presanctified Liturgy* followed by a Lenten Potluck ... *Stanislav (Stas) Lyubashin's* birthday is on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> ... *Matushka Maria Vallena* has her birthday on Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> ... there will also be *Church School* that day after Liturgy ... on Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> there will be *Presanctified Liturgy* followed by a Lenten Potluck ... *Parish Council* is on Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> ... we will serve *Matins with the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete & Life of St. Mary of Egypt* on Wednesday the 21<sup>st</sup> ... *Jennifer Kemper* celebrates her birthday on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> ... as does *Submatushka Elizabeth (Leslie) Farley* the next day (the 23<sup>rd</sup>) ... on the afternoon of Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> there will be a *choir practice*, followed by *Great Vespers & Litya for the Annunciation* ... the next day there will be *Church School* after Liturgy ... *Laryssa Myers* celebrates her name's day (St Larissa, Martyr of Crimea) on the 26<sup>th</sup> ... on Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> there will be *Presanctified Liturgy* followed by a Lenten Potluck ... and on Saturday the 31<sup>st</sup> there will be *Divine Liturgy for St Lazarus* in the morning, and *Vigil for Palm Sunday* in the evening.

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### *Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian*

*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.*



# MARCH 2018

## *I Thank Thee, O Lord my God!*

With these words begin the Prayers after Communion – or, more accurately, the Thanksgiving Prayers.

What is thanksgiving? It's not merely a feeling of gratitude – it's gratitude in action. While the subjective feeling of gratitude is fine, when it is given life through action it becomes the virtue of thankfulness. In this way, there is a parallel with the Brother of the Lord's admonition the "faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). Loving God quietly in your heart, without acting on it, is being grateful without being thankful.

Take the ten lepers healed by the Lord (Luke 17:12-14). Almost certainly each man was grateful – they had been healed of a horrible, incurable disease. But only one of them actually gave thanks to the Lord, and glorified God (Luke 15-17). Only one of them was thankful: being truly thankful to God means living in a way that demonstrates our gratitude.

St John Chrysostom explains that the Holy Mysteries "are also called a Thanksgiving [Eucharistia] because they are the remembrance of many benefits, and they signify the culmination of God's Providence towards us, and in every way cause us to be thankful to Him" (Homily 25 on Matthew). St. Symeon the New Theologian elaborates, saying that "I partake of Thy Nature, and I truly participate in Thine Essence, becoming a communicant and also an heir of Thy Divinity in the body, greater than the Bodiless Powers, I reckon, and I become a son of God, as Thou didst say, not to the Angels, but to us, thus calling us gods: I said: Ye are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High" (Hymn 7).

A contemporary father, Hieromonk Gregorios of Mount Athos, puts a fine point on it when he says, "through Holy Communion, the Lord has given the highest thing He can give man – His own self." After the Lord has granted us such an inestimable gift, our first response should be not merely gratitude, but deep thankfulness. Near the end of the Liturgy, the priest or deacon exclaims, "Having partaken of the divine, holy, most pure, immortal, heavenly, life-creating, and awesome Mysteries of Christ, let us worthily give thanks unto the Lord." How ought we to do that?

The Church has given us the Prayers of Thanksgiving so that immediately after receiving Communion we can act upon our deep gratitude. Historically, these prayers would be read by the bishop or priest quietly in the Altar, while the laity would read them in front of their icons

when they returned home after the service. In our present-day practice someone will read the prayers aloud right at the end of the service. They are being read not simply as “churchy” background to the kissing of the cross, nor are they a signal that it’s time to begin a conversation or put on our coats. Who of us, having just finished a fine meal in an acquaintance’s home, would simply get up and leave without a word? Our host might rightly think us supremely ungrateful. The most basic act of thankfulness for Holy Communion we can offer is that of listening attentively to these prayers. Hieromonk Gregorios explains that “this brief service is a small but essential thank-offering which everyone who has received Communion should offer to the Lord who loves mankind.”

We should clearly understand that listening attentively to these prayers is for our benefit. As Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev pointedly observes, “He does not need our feelings of gratitude: it is we who need this feeling, for the nurturing and sanctification of our hearts and souls in the Lord and through the Lord.” To be sure, He is pleased by the movement of every human heart, and every task we undertake in His name. But thankfulness draws us to Him and, as St John Chrysostom teaches, the best way to preserve any blessing “is the remembrance of that benefaction, and a continual thanksgiving. ... For this is the thing both to free us from earth, and to remove us into heaven, and to make us angels instead of men.” Thankfulness is supremely good for us.

## Charity of the Month



The Gobezie Goshu Home is a humanitarian project helping abandoned, destitute and disabled elderly persons as well as young children in Adwa, Ethiopia. What began as one woman’s dream to be able to feed and provide shelter for a few destitute elderly in 2003, has now grown into a ministry that provides for nearly 60 formerly destitute and homeless residents. In 2005 the main residence was completed and was able to house up to 60 adults. A school started with about 20 children from the town of Adwa and has now grown to over 1,500 children in an attempt to provide a private

pre-K to 1st grade education for them to help prepare for their traditional, government-provided schooling.

The ministry continues to grow each year. The vision is to create a self-sustaining community that provides food, shelter and basic necessities, however, at the present time your generous gifts are what support this humanitarian effort. Unlike many charitable organizations, the Home has no administrative costs deducted from contributions; this means that 100% of all donations go to helping the people GGHE serves.



## useful links

A brief history of the Presanctified Liturgy:

<http://pemptousia.com/2014/04/the-history-and-rite-of-the-liturgy-of-the-presanctified-gifts/>

A short explanation of the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete:

<http://www.orthodox.net/greatlent/great-canon-of-andrew-of-crete-explanation.html>

An overview of the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* by St John Climacus:

<https://oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/the-ladder-of-divine-ascent-for-us-today>



## FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

(unaudited)

	Jan. Actual	Jan. Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
<b>Income</b>	3,674.27	4,245.00	3,674.27	4,245.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	3,580.86	3,966.71	3,580.86	3,966.71
<b>Cash Flow</b>	93.41	278.29	93.41	278.29
<b>Building Fund (Net of Rent Reserves):</b>			22,517.51	