

## Holy Scripture Lessons for the Day

### Epistle Lesson: St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6

BRETHREN, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

### Gospel Lesson: Gospel According to St. Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

**Lenten Pot-Luck and Wine Tasting Next Sunday.** Our community will be sponsoring a pot-luck a week from today that will focus on "fasting" dishes in all categories. Appetizers, breads, soups, entrees, deserts, and more will be showcased at this event. Everyone is encouraged to bring their favourite Lenten dish to pass and share with everyone following the Holy Services. Remember, on weekdays of Great Lent we are not permitted foods that have meat, dairy products, fish, wine or oil in them. Weekends and special feast days of Lent do allow wine and oil and sometimes, like the feast of the Annunciation, we are allowed fish, wine and oil.

Following our pot luck, there will be an educational lecture presented by Joni and Dan Krolczyk of Krolczyk Cellars dealing with wine making and the wine industry. There will be a tasting that samples six wines from their cellar. Wines will be available for purchase with 10% of the proceeds going to our church. The presentation will begin around noon.

*Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master;  
and Thy Holy Resurrection we glorify!*

*Devote yourself to stillness and know that I am God - Psalm 45:10 (LXX)*

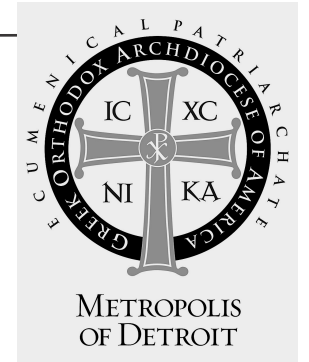
## Traverse City Orthodox Mission Church

*Traditional Worship for Modern Life*

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### PARISH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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| Sunday, 22 March    | <b>Third Sunday of Great Lent. The Holy Cross.</b><br>Fast Day—Wine and Oil Permitted.<br>9 AM Orthros/10 AM Liturgy of St. Basil the Great<br>11:30 AM Fellowship Hour<br>5 PM 9th Hour and Vespers  |
| Monday, 23 March    | <b>St. Nikon the Holy Martyr and 200 Companions.</b><br>Fast Day  |
| Tuesday, 24 March   | <b>Forefeast of the Annunciation. St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia</b><br>Fast Day<br>5:30 PM 9th Hour and Great Vespers with Artoclasia  |
| Wednesday, 25 March | <b>Annunciation of the Theotokos.</b><br>Fast Day—Fish, Wine and Oil Permitted.<br>8h00 Orthros/Liturgy   |
| Thursday, 26 March  | <b>Synaxis of St. Gabriel the Archangel.</b><br>Fast Day—Wine and Oil Permitted.  |
| Friday, 27 March    | <b>St. Matrona of Thessaloniki.</b><br>Fast Day<br>5:30 PM Akathistos Hymn Στασις Δ   |
| Saturday, 28 March  | <b>St. Herodian, Apostle of the Seventy.</b><br>Fast Day—Wine and Oil Permitted.<br>4:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers<br>5:30 PM Choir Rehearsal   |
| Sunday, 29 March    | <b>Fourth Sunday of Great Lent. St. John Klimakos.</b><br>Fast Day—Wine and Oil Permitted.<br>9 AM Orthros/10 AM Liturgy of St. Basil the Great<br>11:30 AM Lenten Pot Luck Followed by Krolczyk Cellars<br>Wine Tasting<br>5 PM 9th Hour and Vespers |



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**Cross Veneration Sunday.** Today, at the mid-point of the Great Fast, the Church brings before us the wood of the precious and life-giving Cross of the Lord. It is a cross without the soma—no body. It is an empty cross. It is the cross of victory. It is a foreshadowing of that empty cross that will testify to the words spoken by Our Lord at the conclusion of His crucifixion, "It is finished."

On this third Sunday of the Great Fast we celebrate the Veneration of the precious and life-giving Cross. Since during the forty days of the Fast we are also in a way crucified, mortified to the passions, contrite, abased and despondent, the precious and life-giving Cross is offered to us as refreshment and confirmation, calling to mind the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and comforting us. If our God was crucified for our sake, how great should be our effort for His sake, since our afflictions have been assuaged through the Lord's tribulations, and by the commemoration and the hope of the Cross of glory. For as our Savior in ascending the Cross was glorified through dishonor and grief; so should we also endure our sorrows, in order to be glorified with Him. Also, as those who have traveled a long hard road, weighed down by the labors of their journey, in finding a shady tree, take their ease for a moment and continue their journey rejuvenated, so now in this time of the Fast, this sorrowful and laborious journey, the Holy Fathers have planted the life-giving Cross, for our relief and refreshment, to encourage and make easier the labors that lie ahead. Or as when there is a royal procession, the king's scepter and banners precede him, he then appears himself, radiant and joyous in his victory, causing his subjects to rejoice with him. So then our Lord Jesus Christ, desiring to show His sure victory over death and His glory on the day of the Resurrection, sends His scepter before Himself, the sign of His kingship, the life-giving Cross, to gladden and refresh us, as it greatly fortifies and enables us to be prepared to receive the King with all possible strength, and to praise Him in His radiant victory.

This week lies at the middle of the holy Forty Day Fast. The Fast is like a bitter source because of our contrition and the sadness and sorrow for sin that it brings. And as Moses plunged the branch in the bitter waters of Marah, making them sweet, so God, who has led us through the spiritual Red Sea away from Pharaoh, through the life-giving wood of the precious and life-giving Cross sweetens the bitterness of the Forty Day Fast, and comforts us as those who were in the wilderness, up until the time when by His Resurrection He will lead us to the spiritual Jerusalem. And since the Cross is called, and indeed is, the Tree of Life, it is the very tree that was planted in the Garden of Eden. So it is fitting that the Holy Fathers have planted the Tree of the Cross in the middle of the Forty Day Fast to commemorate both Adam's tasting of its sweet fruit and of its being taken from us in favor of the Tree of the Cross, tasting of which we shall in no way die, but will have even greater life.

*Through the power of Thy Cross, O Christ our God, preserve us also from the temptations of the Evil One. And make us worthy to venerate Thy divine Passion and life-bearing Resurrection, having radiantly traversed the great length of the Fast, and have mercy on us, as Thou art good and lovest mankind. Amen.*

**Feast of the Annunciation on Wednesday.** Please note that this Wednesday the Holy Church commemorates the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos. When the All-Holy Virgin completed the fourteenth year after her birth and was entering her fifteenth year, after having spent eleven years of living and serving in the Temple of Jerusalem, the priests informed her that, according to the Law, she could not remain in the Temple but was required to be betrothed and enter into marriage. What a great surprise to the priests was the answer of the All-Holy Virgin that she had dedicated her life to God and that she desired to remain a Virgin until death, not wanting to enter into marriage with anyone! Then, according to Divine Providence, Zacharias, the high priest and father of the Forerunner, under the inspiration of God, and in agreement with the other priests, gathered twelve unwed men from the Tribe of David to betroth the Virgin Mary to one of them to preserve her virginity and to care for her. She was betrothed to Joseph of Nazareth who was her kinsman. In the house of Joseph, the All-Holy Virgin continued to live as she did in the Temple of Solomon, occupying her time in the reading of Sacred Scripture, in prayer, in Godly thoughts, in fasting and in handiwork. She rarely went anywhere outside the house nor was she interested in worldly things and events. She spoke very little to anyone, if at all, and never without special need. More frequently she communicated with both of Joseph's daughters. When the fullness of time had come, as prophesied by Daniel the Prophet, and when God was pleased to fulfill His promise to the banished Adam and to the Prophets, the great Archangel Gabriel appeared in the chamber of the All-Holy Virgin and, as some priestly writers wrote, precisely at that same moment when she held open the book of the Prophet Isaiah and was contemplating his great prophecy: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son!" (Isaiah 7:13). Gabriel appeared in all of his angelic brightness and saluted her: "Rejoice, highly favored one! The Lord is with you" (St. Luke 1:28), and the rest in order as it is written in the Gospel of the saintly Luke. With this angelic annunciation and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Virgin, the salvation of mankind and restoration of all creation began. The history of the New Testament was opened by the words of the Archangel Gabriel: "Rejoice, highly favored one" This is to imply that the New Testament was to signify joy to mankind and to all created things. It is from this that the Annunciation is considered not only a great feast, but a joyful feast as well. ***The Prologue of St. Nicholas Velimirovich.***

**Greek Independence Day Parade in Detroit Next Sunday.** On 28 and 29 March Detroit will be celebrating Greek Independence Day (25 March) with a Dinner and Parade. The Dinner and presentation of Hellenic Awards will be made on Saturday, 28 March at the Royalty House in Detroit. Cocktails start at 6:30 PM with dinner to follow at 7:00 PM. Cost for the dinner is \$45 each. Honoured guest will be His Eminence, Demetrios, Archbishop of America. Music will be provided by The Lenedes and Oneiro. Additionally there will be a special performance by the Evzones and Amalias of Epirus. For reservations contact the Parade Committee or phone Olga Cardasis at 586-779-6111 ext. 3.

On Sunday, 29 March at 3 PM a parade will form on Monroe Street in Detroit and travel from Woodward to Greektown with a special ceremony and dance performance following the parade. Grand marshal for the parade will be our Archbishop of America, Demetrios. For info: <http://www.detroit.greekparades.com>.