Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

Sophia

A Devotional Newsletter of St. Sophia Parish

St. Sophia Orthodox Church
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St. Sophia Orthodox Church

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Priest Philosoph Uhlman
Protodeacon Gordian Bruce

SOPHIA NEWSLETTER

Issue #108 April 2021

Dear in the Lord, members and friends of the Parish:

With continuing health restrictions, there are still no public services. We pray this improves soon, and public services resume again. Until then, this ***Typica Service*** *link can be used at home for a reader's service on Sundays.* ***Here is a link to the portions of the service that change from week to week.*** *+ Fr. John*

APRIL SAINTS' DAYS

Congratulations to Larissa H, Larissa V, Larissa T, Mary, Daria, and Marie. God grant you many years!

Voices of Faith Hope and Love, our Virtual Parish Youth Choir sing **Lord Have Mercy**.

May your Great Lent be Peaceful and Fruitful.

Lenten Rose photo submitted by Juliana

SISTERHOOD DONATIONS

$100 CDN donation Holy Cross Monastery Emergency Appeal to repair damage from the Ice Storms.

Please, remember to also donate through PayPal to **our own parish church**, and help cover continuing monthly bills, expenses and utilities, which nonetheless persist during the temporary public closure. *Thank you!*

Come and Dine Parish Lenten Recipes

PRAYER AT HOME DURING LENT

In the contemporary situation of Orthodox people, who are often completely cut off from the Church of God, who have no opportunity to experience within themselves the beneficial influence of the Church services and the whole prayerful atmosphere of the Church, it is very important to create, even in one's solitude, some likeness of the churchly atmosphere. How can this be accomplished? First of all, set aside some special place for prayer. In your home, perhaps above your bed, hang two or three icons and a vigil lamp before them... It is imperative to establish a permanent order of prayer at home. Select a rule of prayer – evening, morning and during the day. Let the rule not be too long so

as not to become tired of it because of the newness of the experience. The rule must always be observed with fear, effort and attention. Here also will be demanded certain external: standing, prostrations, kneeling, the sign of the Cross, reading...

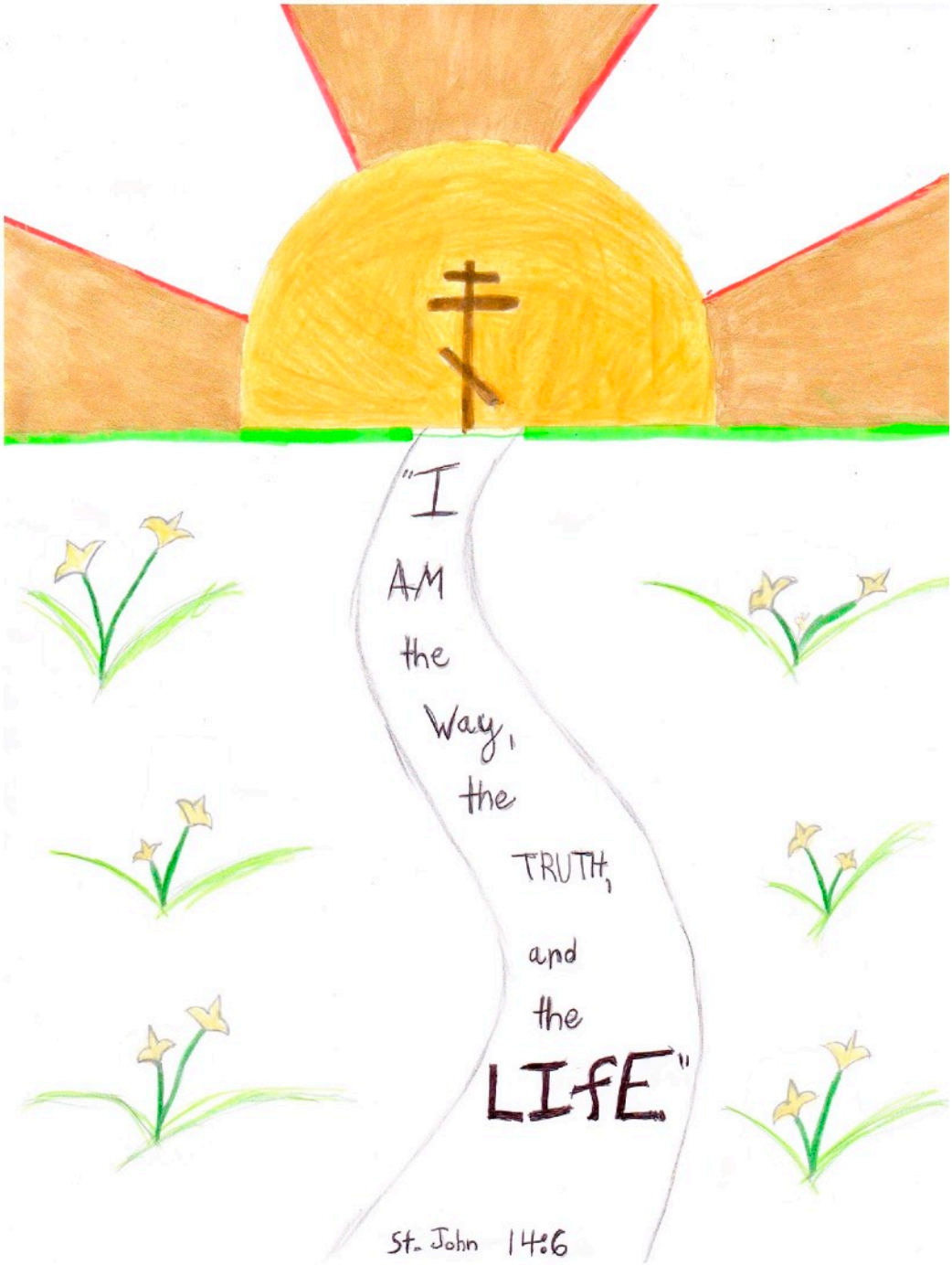
The more often one prays in this manner, the better. It is well to become accustomed to one such prayer, so that on beginning, one's spirit is immediately enkindled. One should pray simply: on arising to pray, say the prayer with fear and trembling, as into the ear of God, accompanying the prayer with the sign of the Cross, prostrations and kneeling. The adopted rule must always be fulfilled without fail.

There are degrees of prayer: the first degree – physical prayer, which consists mostly of reading, standing, prostration; the attention wavers; the heart is not sensitive, there is no inclination towards prayer: toil and patience are required; this is active prayer. The second degree – attentive prayer: the mind becomes accustomed to concentrate in the time of prayer and to utter the whole prayer without absentmindedness. The third degree – the prayer of feeling: the heart becomes warm with feeling, and what previously is thought now becomes feeling. One who has reached this feeling prays without words, for God is the God of hearts.

Read the Word of God, the New Testament, and before reading address yourself to God in prayer, that the Lord may help you to understand, accept and fulfill that which you have read. Do not be frightened by the asceticism, effort, fasting, prayer, abstinence to which the Church calls you. All this is boring and burdensome only when it is done without memory of Christ, but when it is done in the name of Christ, with faith and love, then the yoke becomes easy and the burden becomes light… May the Lord help us in the course of the Great Lent to fulfill it well so that we may worthily adore the Shining Resurrection!

~ Archpriest Sergei Chetverikoff

Holy Trinity Cathedral Church Life Bulletin, April 1964 and in the Holy Trinity Cathedral LIFE, Vol. 3, No. 7, March 1996)



Art submitted by Juliana

PEARLS OF WISDOM

Sad brightness: the sadness of my exile, of the waste I have made of my life; the brightness of God's presence and forgiveness, the joy of recovered desire for God, the peace of the recovered home. Such is the climate of lenten worship; such is its first and general impact on my soul. ~ *Great Lent: Journey to Pascha by Alexander Schmemann*

And thus if Lent is… the recovery by man of his faith, it is also his recovery of life, of its divine meaning, of its sacred depth. It is by abstaining from food that we rediscover its sweetness and learn again how to receive it from God with joy and gratitude. It is by "slowing down" on music and entertainment, on conversation and superficial socializing, that we rediscover the ultimate value of human relationships, human work, human art. And we rediscover all this because very simply we rediscover God Himself - because we return to Him and in Him to all that which He gave us in His infinite love and mercy. ~ *Great Lent: Journey to Pascha by Alexander Schmemann*

Our religion is founded on spiritual experience, seen and heard as sure as any physical fact in this world. Not theory, not philosophy, not human emotions, but experience. ~ *St. Nikolai Velimirovich*

What is holy and beautiful and what gladdens the heart and frees the soul from every evil is the effort to unite yourself to Christ, to love Christ, to crave for Christ and to live in Christ, just as St. Paul said, 'It is no longer I who live; Christ lives in me'. This should be your aim. Let all other efforts be secret and hidden. What must dominate is love for Christ. Let this be in your head, your thought, your imagination, your heart, your will. Your most intense effort should be how you will encounter Christ, how you will be united to Him and how you will keep him in your heart. ~ *Wounded by Love, by St. (Elder) Porphyrios*

THERE I AM IN THE MIDST

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. ~ St. Matthew 18:20

From a Parish Family

Home Reader Services have become a spiritual survival kit for our family. Being halted and humbled by the consequences of the pandemic, has helped us transition from "how it was" to "how it is". With guidance from Father John, and drawing upon resources from youth choir, prayer books and the *Sophia* link to the internet **Typika,** and making do with our own limitations, there was ample opportunity to realign our intentions and study our Faith. Who knew, we would struggle through Lent, Holy Week and Pascha 2020 at home. In time, in our

family bubble, it became apparent that spending time together in this context was crucial and it became a focal point for the week. A dynamic shift took place; where as unique individuals, we accepted, support, learning from one another. Through courtesy and hospitality the younger serve the elders, and conversation offers spiritual nourishment and a much needed change of scenery for everyone. Stepping aside, to offer a space and place for this small gathering has brought about a very healing, restorative energy, that must only be possible by the Grace of God. Obviously, it will never be like attending a service at Saint Sophia Parish; but this is a training ground, and it's just for now… for *"It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves" ~ Psalm 99*

From a Parishioner

The effort to do the **Reader's service** has helped me to feel connected to St. Sophia Church (remembering the beauty, peace and the worshipping together), and to Orthodoxy (through the words, prayers and intention of the service). It provides a continuity to my spiritual work during this time of isolation. Although there was a feeling of shyness at first, the familiarity of the words and motions soon overcame any feeling of awkwardness. And there is such happiness in creating a special place and time for worship!

LENTEN SPRING

The springtime of the Fast has dawned, the flower of repentance has begun to open. O brethren, let us cleanse ourselves from all impurity. And sing to the Giver of Light: Glory be to Thee, who alone lovest mankind. ~ Aposticha Vespers Cheesefare Week

What does Lent have to do with flowers?

The word 'Lent' comes from the Old English word '*lechten*', which means 'spring season'... and Lent is a Spiritual Spring; a time of hope, regeneration and new beginnings.

Through internal quietude, contemplation, and reviewing our heart's desires, Lent helps us let God *in* again, to make our life lighter and brighter. It helps recharge our spiritual batteries.

May we cultivate buds of virtue - through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving... wending our way through the green pastures of the Holy Spirit.

The Lenten Spring has come! Flowers of repentance are opening!

Let us continue our Great Lenten journey together in spirit, singing praises to the Giver of Light!

Penitent Flower, the Crocus…is arrayed in Lenten colours!

Photo Submitted by Irena

LINKS

- Fund for Assistance to help others in the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia
- Come and Dine St. Sophia Parish fasting recipes
- Morning Offering by Abbot Tryphon
- Orthodox Christianity
- Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia
- The Rudder Streaming Orthodox Christian sacred music 24/7
- Orthodox Northwest Bulletin Board for Events and Happenings
- Western America Diocese Official Site
- Abbreviated Prayerbook
- Official Site of the Montreal and Canadian Diocese
- Blisswood

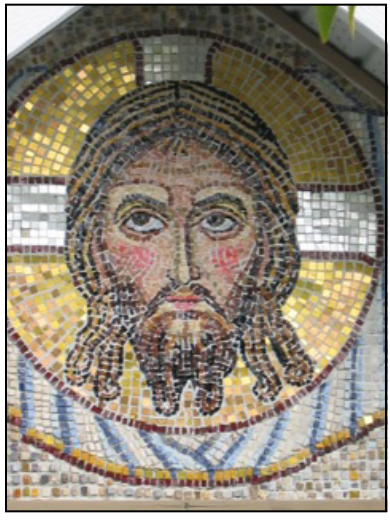
"We knew not whether we were in heaven or earth… We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations."

The Orthodox Church

With these words, envoys sent from Russia by Prince Vladimir in the year 987 recorded their impression of Constantinople's awesome Orthodox Cathedral, Hagia Sophia. They had been sent to search for the true religion. Within a year of their report, Prince Vladimir and the Russian people were baptized in Christ by Orthodox missionaries. Today, as in Prince Vladimir's time, the Orthodox Church – fully aware that man is a union of body and soul – uses all the beauty of creation to move her faithful children to prayer and worship: icons, beautiful singing, sweet-smelling incense, and majestic services.

The Greek word 'Orthodoxia' means 'correct praise' or 'correct teaching' and in the Orthodox worship the praise and teaching are closely interwoven.

Jesus Christ founded His Church through the Apostles. By the grace received from God at Pentecost, the Apostles established the Church throughout the world. In Greece, Russia, and elsewhere, the True Apostolic Church continues to flourish, preserving the Faith of Christ pure and unchanged.



"Christ the Power of God,
and the Wisdom of God"

– First Corinthians

Troparion in the Second Tone

We bow down before Thine all pure image, O Good One, asking forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God; for Thou wast well pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh of Thine own will, that Thou mightest save what Thou hadst created from slavery to the enemy. Wherefore, we cry out to Thee in thanksgiving: Thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Saviour, Who hast come to save the world.

Kontakion in the Second Tone

O uncircumscribable Word of the Father, knowing the victorious image, uninscribed and divinely wrought, of Thine ineffable and divine dispensation towards man, of Thy true incarnation, we honour it with veneration.