

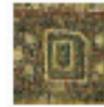
Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026



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
195 Joseph St.
Victoria, BC
V8S 3H6
Canada

Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026



St. Sophia Orthodox Church



Canadian Parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

195 Joseph Street,
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada V8S 3H6

email: fatherphilosoph@gmail.com

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Clergy

Priest Philosoph Uhlman

Protodeacon Gordian Bruce

Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026

March Services

**First Week of [Great Lent](#) *Mon. Feb. 23; Tues. Feb. 24; Wed. Feb. 25 & Thurs. Feb. 26*
Great Compline with Reading from [Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete](#) at **6:30 p.m.****

Sat. Feb. 28, [Vigil](#) 5:00 p.m. (Confession following)

Sun. Mar. 1, [1st Sunday Great Lent](#) ([Triumph of Orthodoxy](#)) - Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Followed by Molieben/Procession with Icons outside around Church singing our festal tropar.
Youth invited to bring their favourite icon from home to church.

★ **Wed. Mar. 4, ★ Confession 6:30 p.m.; [Presanctified Liturgy](#) 7:00 p.m.**

Sat. Mar. 7, [Vigil](#) 5:00 p.m. (Confession following)

**Sun. Mar. 8, (*Spring Ahead 1 hour, Daylight Savings*)
[2nd Sunday Great Lent](#) ([St. Gregory Palamas](#)) Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.**

★ **Wed. Mar. 11, ★ Confession 6:30 p.m.; [Presanctified Liturgy](#) 7:00 p.m.**

Sat. Mar. 14, [Vigil with Litya](#) 5:00 p.m. (Confession following)

**Sun. Mar. 15, [3rd Sunday Great Lent](#)
([Veneration of Precious Cross](#)) Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.**

★ **Wed. Mar. 18, ★ Confession 6:30 p.m. ; [Presanctified Liturgy](#) 7:00 p.m.**

Sat. Mar. 21, [Vigil](#) 5:00 p.m. (Confession following)

**Sun. Mar. 22, [4th Sunday Great Lent](#) ([Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste](#))
(Is usually St. John Climacus, but this year is the Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste) Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.**
Wed. Mar. 25, Great Compline & Final Reading [Canon of St. Andrew of Crete](#) 6:30 p.m.

Sat. Mar. 28, [Vigil](#) 5:00 p.m. (Confession following)

Sun. Mar. 29, [5th Sunday Great Lent](#) ([St. Mary of Egypt](#)) - Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Followed by our monthly Parish Potluck. **Lenten Fare Only.**

★ **Wed. April. 1, ★ Confession 6:30 p.m.; [Presanctified Liturgy](#) 7:00 p.m.**

[Holy Week Morning - Evening Services](#)

**[Dates & times from Palm Sunday \(April 5\) until/including Holy Pascha \(Apr. 12\)](#)
[are listed on parish website's \[Monthly Services Calendar\]\(#\)](#)**

Catechism Classes

If you are interested in attending the Online Catechism Classes the link is below.
Classes continue from March 5 to April 2, each Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m.

Link to the class is [here](#):

<https://teams.live.com/meet/9349663143482?p=B2ZtuNaHXyQg9XPZGd>

Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026

March Names' Days

Congratulations Reader Theodore (moveable/always first Saturday in Great Lent),
Marie A (moveable/always 5th Sunday in Great Lent & April 14th), Gregory, Chad, and Alexei.
God grant you all many years! Did we miss anyone?
Please [help us update the parish list!](#) Thank you!

Thank You ❤️ February Church Cleaners & Floral Designers

New volunteer positions for March/April are available on the bulletin board.

Please note **extra help is needed**, as there are many **extra services**
during **Great Lent** and **Holy Week**.

Questions? Please reach out to [Emmanuelle](#).

First Sunday of Great Lent Sunday of Orthodoxy Procession (March 2025)



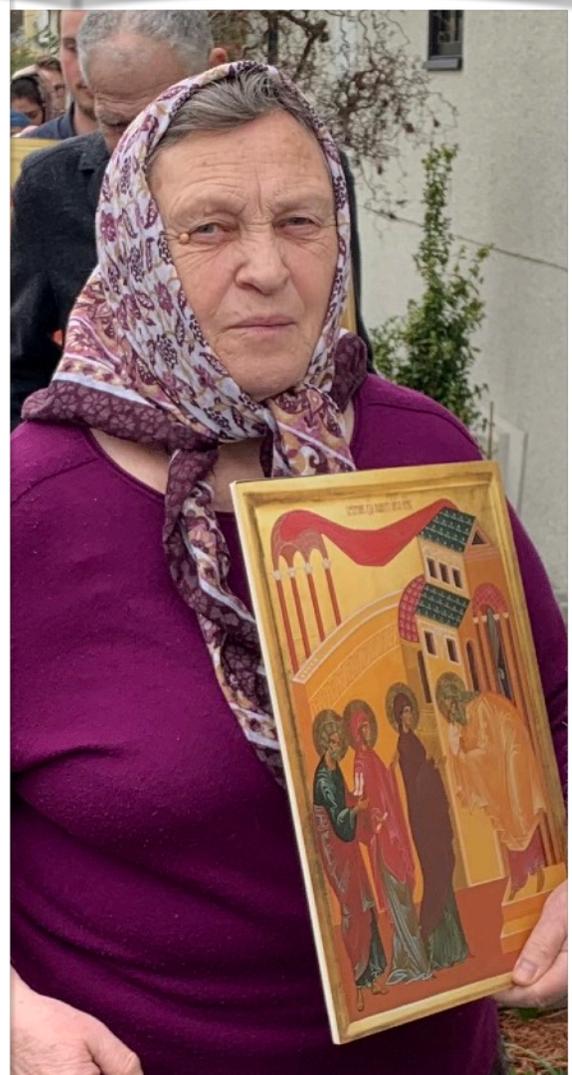
Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159



Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026



Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026

January & February 2026 Parish Charitable Donations

Father Philosoph blessed \$100.00 each to be sent from the parish to:

- Rainbow Kitchen: <https://rainbowkitchen.ca/>
- BC Food Banks: <https://www.foodbanksbc.com/>
- Sanctuary Youth Centre: <https://www.sanctuaryyouth.org/>
- Greater Victoria Eldercare Foundation: <https://eldercarefoundation.org/>

Lenten Prayer (.pdf printout) of St. Ephraim the Syrian



During the week days of Lent, we say the prayer of St. Ephraim.

O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition
and idle talking give me not. *Prostration*

But rather a spirit of Chasity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love,
bestow upon me Thy servant. *Prostration*

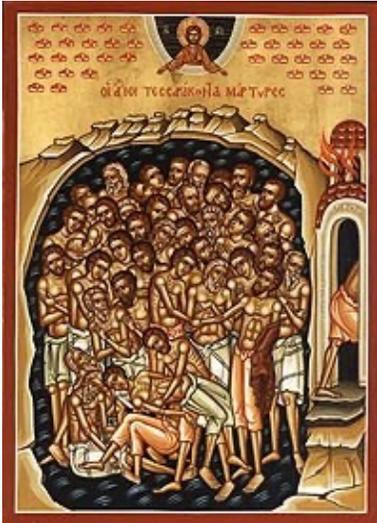
Uea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my
brother, for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen. *Prostration*

Then 12 repetitions of "O God, cleanse me a sinner." (bowing each time)

And the prayer is said once more in full, with one prostration at the end.

For Youth & Adults More About Great Lent from our
Parish Youth Quarterly: The Ark (pages 10 & 11)

+ Archpriest John's Sermon
on the Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt
(Circa early 2000's)



The Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste & the Tradition of the Lark Buns

The feast day of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste falls on **March 22/9**, during Great Lent. They were all soldiers in the Roman army who steadfastly believed in the Lord Jesus.

When the persecution of Christians began during the reign of Licinius, (320 AD) they were brought to trial before the commander, and after the endurance of many sufferings, and death, they attained the joyous reward reserved for those who give their lives for Christ.

The Holy Fathers of the Church refer to Great Lent as a fasting spring, when the souls of the faithful are sown with seeds of divine grace - thence yielding up a harvest of good deeds throughout the year that follows.

The unwavering endurance of the forty martyrs exemplifies to the faithful; perseverance to the end... in our "small" case... to the end of the forty days of the fast, to attain the great and joyous heavenly reward of celebrating Holy Pascha, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

A special prayer mentioning these Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste is also placed in the Orthodox Wedding Service (referred to as a "crowning") to remind the bride and groom that spiritual crowns await them in heaven also, if they remain as faithful to Christ as these saints of long ago... Buns shaped like birds are traditionally baked to celebrate the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste's feast day.

Lark Bird buns are baked for the day, and are also shared after church on their day, or on the first Sunday after their Feast Day. These larks remind us of the Forty Martyrs' steadfastness, and inspire our souls, to soar heavenward upon the wings of divine love - looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our lives.



How to Make the Larks

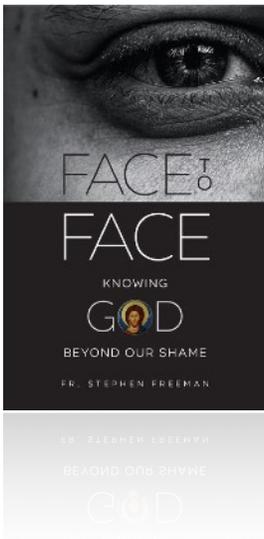
- Take a piece of risen yeasted bread dough, about the size of a medium egg, and roll it out on a lightly floured board into a long ropey piece, about 5 inches long.
- Tie it loosely into a knot, with approximately equal length protruding from both ends.
- Put on lightly greased cookie sheet.
- With a pair of scissors, cut a "beak" on one end of the knot, and on the other end of the knot, cut a "tail" into about 3 or 4 feathered strands.
- Push 2 peppercorns firmly into the head as eyes...

Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026

- Do not put birds on cookie sheet too closely together, as they spread a bit as they bake.
- Cover, let rise again for about half an hour.
- Uncover and pop into a preheated 375* oven and bake about 15 - 20 minutes or until golden brown, depending on your oven.
- To make tastier larks, sometimes honey is added to the dough, as well as lemon or orange zest. Some people prefer to use currants for the eyes.
- Birds are easy to bake ahead of time to freeze and when needed, thaw for a couple hours. (Fallen eye-peppercorns during freezing can be readily inserted back into thawed birds.)

Parish Library



Face to Face: Knowing God Beyond Our Shame

By Ft. Stephen Freeman

From advertising to social media, from trauma survival to keeping up with the Joneses, shame is deeply embedded in our culture and our psyches, directing much of our behaviour from far behind the scenes. But is all shame bad? Popular author and speaker Fr. Stephen Freeman explores the roots and meaning of both toxic and healthy shame, revealing the crucial importance of this understanding for our relationship with God. (Book located in the main collection of library by title order)

Pearls of Wisdom

Every Lent...should be another re-entering into inner calisthenics, interior exercise. It implies a renewal, a re-engagement in trying to be better people; it implies a review of how we have been doing spiritually; it implies a re-examination of our "spiritual temperature"; it is a revitalization of our practice of our faith. It means a recommitment to the Lord and our faith.

~ Archimandrite Laurence Mancuso; Being Good: Responding to Our Faith: Notes From a Poor Monk

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware once spoke of the words of the Lenten Triodion in an interview, "Lent is spiritual springtime. Not winter, but spring. The world of nature is coming alive round us during the Lenten season. And this should be a symbol of what is to happen in our own hearts. The dawning of springtime... We shouldn't just have a negative idea of repentance, as feeling sorry, gloomy and somber about our failings. But repentance, rather, is new hope. An opening flower. How our lives can, by God's grace, be changed." ~ Kristina Garrett Wenger

Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026

The Scripture is very clear: If you want to find yourself, lose yourself; you want to fulfill yourself, empty yourself; you want to be great, be the least; you want to be first, be the last; you want to be rich, become poor; you want to be wise, become a fool. If you want to rule, become a servant...really, Orthodoxy is 'paradoxo. That's just what it is. ~ Fr. Thomas Hopko

Do not say, "this happened by chance, while this came to be of itself." In all that exists there is nothing disorderly, nothing indefinite, nothing without purpose, nothing by chance ... How many hairs are on your head? God will not forget one of them. Do you see how nothing, even the smallest thing, escapes the gaze of God? ~ St. Basil the Great

*Scripture brought me to the Gate of Paradise, and the mind stood in wonder as it entered.
~ St. Ephraim the Syrian*

Let books be your dining table, and you shall be full of delights. Let them be your mattress, and you shall sleep restful nights. ~ St. Ephraim the Syrian

Remember that we are called to change and be transformed. Great Lent is like a tuning fork that aligns our soul with a spiritual melody. We must strive to maintain this harmony for as long as possible, even after the Holy Forty Days have ended. ~ Metropolitan Onuphry of Ukraine

*Years are not needed for true repentance, and not days - but only a single instant.
~ St. Ambrose of Optina*



Parish Donation Food Hampers Drive

During Great Lent, two hampers will be available again in the vestibule for **non**-perishable food items, and specific clothing and personal items. Also, at this time of the year we are asked for donations from many churches, monasteries, and organizations. Please remember the Donation\$ Box on the candle table.

Mustard Seed's Suggested Non-Perishable Food Hamper Donations

- Sources of protein like peanut butter, canned fish (eg. tuna) & canned meats (eg. chicken, beef); can openers
- Granola Bars; Boxes/Packs of Instant Hot Chocolate; Bottled Water
- Healthy nonperishables (e.g., almonds; cereal, beans, pasta, canned vegetables/fruit)
- Female hygiene products
- Travel Size Toothpaste, Toothbrushes; Toilet paper; lip balm; nail clippers;
- New White Socks (won't cause dark dye stains to feet from wet shoes)
- Men's New Underwear (sizes small to large)
- Disposable Diapers; Baby Wipes; Baby Formula

Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026

Youth Choir Rehearsals for our Mini Pascha Concert

(After Sunday's 1 p.m. Vespers/Before the Pascha Lunch Potluck on Sun. Apr. 12)

Rehearsals After Upcoming Lenten Liturgies 12 - 2 p.m.

Please bring a small lunch. Thank you.

Sun. Mar. 1

Sun. Mar. 8

Sun. Mar. 15

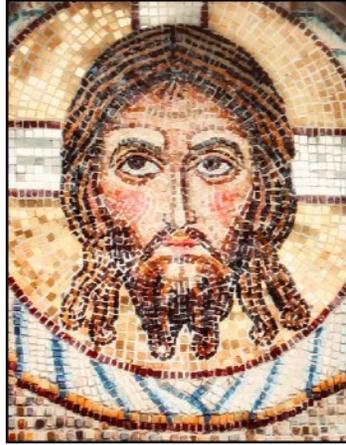
Sun. Mar. 22

Links & Resources

- [St. Sophia Parish Website](#)
- [St. Sophia Parish Online Monthly Services Calendar](#)
- [Come and Dine](#) St. Sophia's Fasting Recipes (**Great Lenten Meal Ideas!**)
- [The Ark](#) - St. Sophia's Youth Quarterly
- [Church Etiquette & Dress Code](#)
- [12 Things I Wish I'd Known on First Visit to Orthodox Church](#)
- [Your First Visit to an Orthodox Church](#) [Visiting an Orthodox Church – What You Should Know \(YouTube\)](#)
- [About Orthodoxy](#)
- [The Divine Liturgy](#)
- [The Rudder](#) Streaming sacred music 24/7
- [Synodal Website](#)
- [Western America Diocese Official Site](#)
- [Montreal and Canadian Diocese](#)
- [Abbreviated Prayerbook](#)
- [The Sacramental Life](#)
- [Blisswood](#)

Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026



*“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, unincised and divinely wrought, of Thine
ineffable and divine dispensation towards man, of Thy true
incarnation, we honour it with veneration.*

Sophia Newsletter

Issue #159 March 2026

*“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.

