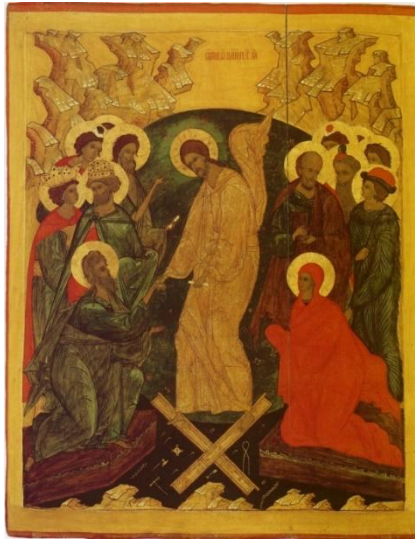


**The Orthodox Parish
of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
Lancaster, UK**

The Stavronian

Monthly magazine and newsletter published by the Holy Cross Synodia



*The Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland.
The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.
Our Metropolitan is His Eminence Bishop Silouan.
Our Patriarch is His Beatitude John X.*

*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch
(Acts 11:26)*

ON LOVE

“Be kinder than necessary, because everyone is fighting their war or battle and suffering losses. Live simply, love generously, care deeply for the needs of your neighbour, speak softly... And leave the rest to the Lord. It is not faith, nor dogmatics, nor mysticism, nor asceticism, nor fasting, nor long prayers, but love that makes one a true Christian.

Everything becomes pointless without this fundamental thing -- love for our neighbour.”

I came across this beautiful quote from Saint Luke of Simferopol last month and was very moved by its deep, radical message.

We talk a lot about love, but as with most things we tend to romanticise it and we take a lot of our notions of what love and relationships are from “Hollywood”. This is mostly a false or distorted image of what love actually is.

Love as emotion is a reality. A lot of us will remember the overwhelming emotion of falling in love for the first time, the elation of those first moments or the unspeakable wave of affection sweeping over us when we held our baby in our arms for the first time. I particularly remember the wonderful and frightening sensation when I fell in love with God or more precisely when I became fully aware of His Love. After the initial wave of love and joy, many of us experience a terrible sensation of loneliness and yearning for that initial emotion. It appears sometimes that the loved one has withdrawn or is becoming separate from us. This is all part of the journey of Love. This is where real love begins in my view, the time when love is tested. We feel low and lonely, no longer elated, yet we say our prayers faithfully; we swallow that biting remark (although it is completely justified) because it might hurt our husband or wife; we continue to care for our child when they behave badly and they reject us; we forgive unreservedly the friend who has offended us deeply.

All we need to know about love is in the Gospels, as is everything else we need to know. We are taught our lessons in love in the humbling of God who takes human form and dwells among us, in His meekness riding on a donkey into Jerusalem towards crucifixion. Love is the complete emptying of self, arms outstretched on the Cross. It is carrying not only our own Cross

but that of others. It is healing, feeding, comforting, forgiving.

On a small everyday scale, love is going hungry so our brother has enough to eat, accepting sleeplessness so our wife has a good rest, forsaking our pleasure to give another pleasure. In our daily life, love manifests itself in the cumulation of all the small sacrifices which we make for the ones we love, for our neighbour.

Love is not a contract: I love you IF you love me. Our Lord teaches us once and for all that Love is sacrifice and offering, it is a joyful gift.

“Without love the works of virtue are not praiseworthy or profitable to the man who practises them, and the same is true of love without works. St Paul makes this fully clear with reference to works when he writes to the Corinthians, “If I do this and that but have no love, it profits me nothing (Cor 13:1-3); and with reference to love, the disciple especially beloved by Christ writes: “Let us not love in word or tongue but in action and truth.” (St Gregory Palamas)

Martha and Mary

AI voice scammers

Dear Friends in Christ

Many of our clergy have had scam calls trying to harvest their voices. I had a call in the morning but I did not answer. If I do not recognise the number I generally do not answer. Please take care if you have a call purporting to be from me or another clergy and you do not recognise the number. It is best to text me first if you wish to speak with me. I will usually text you first and make an appointment.

My prayers,

Ev Χριστώ

Fr. Jonathan

الحاج أبونا جوناثون

PARISH NEWS

St Patrick's day 17 March





SUMMARY OF CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING NO. 18

Held at the Church of St. Martin of Tours,
Westgate, LA4 4UZ
Sunday, 8th March 2026

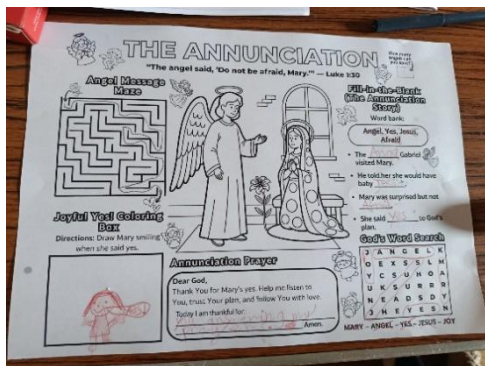
The meeting was fairly short, beginning as always with a report of the accounts by Alexandra, where she also went over the new guidelines for treasurers. The council heard a report on Father Jonathan's trip to Manchester where he and some of the other clergy were addressed by His Eminence, Archbishop Silouan at St. Aidan's Orthodox Church. They afterwards had lunch and a memorial service and asked forgiveness of one another as it was the Saturday before Forgiveness Sunday. The council discussed the idea of an icon-wall in our Church displaying icons of the Saints of our baptised parishioners and a second one displaying the Saints of the British Isles. Antidoron will now be packed by the servers into bags of three pieces ready to be handed out by Father Jonathan during the Divine Liturgy. The council also reviewed some proposed future dates and general housekeeping before the meeting closed with a prayer from Father Jonathan.

Little Compline and Akathist 20 March



Sunday school

The March Sunday school focused on the Feast of the Annunciation. The children learned how the Archangel Gabriel brought the good news of our salvation to Mary and how she welcomed God's plan. We also spoke of Mary's visit to her cousin Elisabeth. The children completed various tasks and activities depending on their age. Some beautiful pop up cards were created to tell the story of the Annunciation.



The Library Table

"When you immerse your mind and heart in spiritual books, you will always be filled, for spiritual reading gives you a foundation in God."
St. John Chrysostom

You can now browse the Holy Cross Library catalogue anytime by visiting: <https://www.librarycat.org/lib/Holy.Cross.Orthodox>

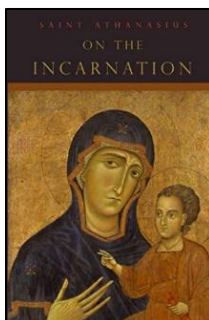
We warmly invite you to contribute to this Library Table feature by sharing short reviews of books that have inspired, encouraged, or supported you in your spiritual life. Your reflections may be just the encouragement someone else needs.

Our library also welcomes donations of books on Orthodox topics. If there are titles you would love to see on our shelves, please speak with **James**.

(Please note that any books outside the Orthodox tradition will need a blessing from Father before being added.)

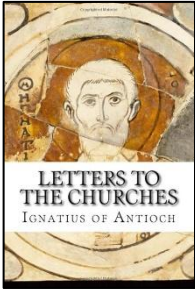
Spotlight on Our Latest Additions

The library has gratefully received donations of three new books this month:



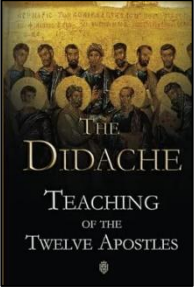
On the Incarnation by Saint Athanasius

C.S. Lewis says of this fourth-century patristic masterpiece on the Incarnation of Christ, '...only a mastermind could have written so deeply on such a subject with such classical simplicity.'



Letters to the Churches by St Ignatius of Antioch

An important look into the writings of the early church fathers. These epistles are essential reading to understand the theology of the church fathers.

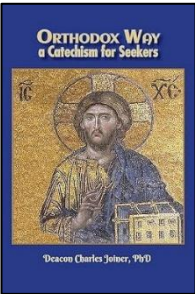


The Didache: Teaching of the Twelve Apostles

This early Christian text, possibly written in the first or second century, serves as a valuable guide to the ethical norms and religious practices of the earliest Christian communities.

Reader Review

A reader from our parish kindly submitted the following review of *Orthodox Way: a Catechism for Seekers* by Charles Joiner.



“Orthodox Way: a Catechism for Seekers was a real eye opener. As a cradle Orthodox, who grew up going to church, I was amazed at how little I knew about my faith. This book delves deep into our faith yet is very accessible and explains theological concepts in a simple way. I

highly recommend this book equally to cradle Orthodox, catechumens and enquirers into Orthodoxy.”

The library currently has two copies of this book available for to borrow.

Online donations

Our Orthodox Community of the Holy and Life Giving Cross has been blessed to have a building for a Temple that serves the needs of the Orthodox Christians in the Lancaster area. To this end, we are making **an appeal to help raise funds to**

cover the rent and other needs of the Church on a permanent basis. Our monthly expenditure also includes purchasing food, drinks, disposable cutlery and dishware, paying insurance, and other costs. Hence, regular on-line giving to the Church, instead of cash donations on the plate, would help the parish to budget better and plan for the future.

If you would like to give regularly, the details are provided below:

Name: The Orthodox Church of Holy Cross

Bank: Lloyds Bank Plc

Sort Code: 30-96-26

Account Number: 80662168

IBAN: GB23LOYD30962680662168

BIC/SWIFT: LOYDGB21446

Post code: LA1 4XJ

City: Lancaster

Country: United Kingdom

We give thanks for the special ministry that God has given to us over two decades serving particularly the Liturgical and Pastoral needs of Orthodox students from Lancaster University and the citizens of the nearby towns. We aim to continue this ministry but to broaden it to serve the families who now attend our Community.

We are indeed blessed in having support from so many former parishioners “Stavronians” and having our extended family who offer prayers and donations to us from Cyprus, Greece, Romania, USA and elsewhere.

We ask your prayers in this holy task which is now before us and ask a blessing upon you in the name of the Holy, Consubstantial, Life-Giving and Undivided Trinity.

May God prosper this little plant in His Vineyard!

Iconostasis extension

With the blessing of Metropolitan Silouan, our Iconostasis is now planned to be extended by Christmas 2026. A preliminary sketch is shown above. If you would like to donate, please use the credentials above and specify “Iconostasis” in the description of payment.



NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Apr. 8: Evangelos

Apr. 14: Jeanne

Apr. 16: Aristides



MEMORY ETERNAL!

Please send us the names of your departed loved ones and date of their departure in order for them to be remembered.

Online

**Prayer
Meeting**

Weekly

on Wednesday

6:30 PM

via

WhatsApp



**Click here to join the meeting
(no account needed):**

<https://call.whatsapp.com/video/1WnKsoP45eHcAukXpIYXrl>

The Orthodox Christian Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross – Lancaster invites you to join our Online Prayer Group “Saint Seraphim & Saint Etheldreda”.

With the blessing of Fr Jonathan Hemmings the prayer meetings of our parish group are back.

Included: Rule of St Pachomius with discussion.

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

4th Apr: Lazarus Saturday

5th Apr: Palm Sunday

12th Apr: Great and Holy Pascha

19th Apr: St Thomas Sunday

23rd Apr: St. George the Great Martyr and Triumphant

25th Apr: Mark the Apostle & Evangelist

30th Apr: James the Apostle & brother of St. John the Theologian

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: www.calendar.goarch.org. The Orthodox Calendar and Scriptural Readings Lectionary, including the British and Irish Saints, is available online at www.antiochian-orthodox.com/calendar

Services at St Martin's in April*

Wed. 1 st	18:30	Online Prayer group of St Seraphim and St Etheldreda**. Rule of St Pachomius*
Sat. 4 th	10:00	Holy Liturgy. Lazarus Saturday
Sun. 5 th	09:45	Holy Liturgy. Palm Sunday
<i>Holy Week</i>		
Mon. 6 th	18:00	Bridegroom Orthros
Tue. 7 th	18:00	Bridegroom Orthros
Wed. 8 th	18:00	The Office of Holy Unction
Thurs. 9 th	18:00	The Twelve Passion Gospels
Fri. 10 th	10:00	The Royal hours
	11:00	Preparation of Epitaphios
	13:00	Great Vespers of Great and Holy Friday
	18:00	Orthros of Great and Holy Saturday by Anticipation. The Lamentation service
Sat. 11 th	10:00	The Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great commemorating Christ's Victory over Death and the Harrowing of Hell
	22:00	
	22:30	Great and Holy Pascha. The Midnight Office and Rush Service The Paschal Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom. Blessing of eggs and food, breaking the fast.
Sun. 12 th		Holy Pascha Resurrection
	15:00	Agape Vespers
Wed. 15 th	18:30	Online Prayer group of St Seraphim and St Etheldreda**. Rule of St Pachomius*
Sat. 18 th	15:45	Great Vespers
Sun. 19 th	09:45	Holy Liturgy. St Thomas Sunday
Wed. 22 nd	18:30	Online Prayer group of St Seraphim and St Etheldreda**. Rule of St Pachomius*
Sat. 25 th		<i>No service</i>
Sun. 26 th	09:45	Holy Liturgy. Holy Myrrh-Bearing women. Righteous Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus
Wed. 29 th	18:30	Online Prayer group of St Seraphim and St Etheldreda**. Rule of St Pachomius*

*May be subject to change. Please monitor the email updates and the parish's [Facebook page](#).

**Via Whatsapp: <https://call.whatsapp.com/video/1WnKsoP45eHcAukXpIYXrl>



The Paschal Greeting in various languages*

English	Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!
Arabic	المسيح قام ! حقا قام (El-Mesiyah qhama! Haqqan qaam!)
German	Christus ist auferstanden! Er ist wahrhaft auferstanden!
Greek	Χριστός ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη! (Christos anesti! Alithos anesti!)
Romanian	Hristos a înviat! Adevărat a înviat!
Bulgarian	Христос възкресе! Истинна възкресе! (Khristos vzkrese! Naistina vzkrese!)
Russian	Христос воскрес! Воистину воскрес! (Khristos voskrese! Voistinu voskrese!)
Polish	Chrystus zmartwychwsta! Prawdziwie zmartwychwsta! (Křistus zmęrtvykh-vstau! Pradzjwie zmęrtvikh-vstau!)
Latvian	Kristus (ir) augšamcēlies! Patiesi viņš ir augšamcēlies! (Kristus (ir) aughsham-elias! Patiesi vin ir aughsham-elias!)
Chinese (Mandarin)	基督复活了！他确实复活了！ (Titu fuhuola! Ha-tieshi fuhuola!)

*Underlined letters indicate the emphasis in pronunciation

OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2026

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
Fast - Free Week FEBRUARY 1st	 <i>TRIODION WEEKS</i> Publican and the Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14	Show compassion on the poor and distressed. Trust in God, not yourself and ask for His help before every task this week.
Normal Fast Week FEBRUARY 8th	 The Prodigal Son Returns! Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32	Schedule a Confession. Every morning say, "Today I will be humble." Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Meatfare FEBRUARY 15th FAREWELL TO MEAT TODAY	 The Last Judgement Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46	Pray facing East this week. Christ is returning from the East and we wait for Him! Use up/freeze dairy this week.
Cheesefare FEBRUARY 22nd FAREWELL TO CHEESE TODAY	 Adam and Eve are cast from Paradise! <i>FORGIVENESS SUNDAY</i> Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21	Ask each other for forgiveness each evening this week before bed.
1st Sunday of Lent MARCH 1st	 <i>GREAT LENT BEGINS WITH FORGIVENESS VESPERS</i> SUNDAY of ORTHODOXY Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2 Gospel: John 1:43-51	Bring an icon to church for a procession.
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 8th	 ST GREGORY PALAMAS Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent MARCH 15th	 VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent MARCH 22nd	 ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent MARCH 29th	 ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY APRIL 5th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 <i>GREAT AND HOLY WEEK</i> ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY APRIL 10th	 <i>GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY</i> JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! APRIL 12th NO FASTING!	 <i>BRIGHT WEEK</i> HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

2026 Fasting Calendar

LEGEND:	
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, olive oil, wine	
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, olive oil	
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs, fish	
Abstain from meat, dairy, eggs	
Abstain from meat	

Note: On the day of a parish's patronal feast, fish, wine and oil are allowed if it falls on a fasting day.

January	
	1 2 3
4	5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12 13	14 15 16 17
18 19 20	21 22 23 24
25 26 27	28 29 30 31

February	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
8 9 10	11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21	
22 23 24 25 26 27 28	

March	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
8 9 10 11 12 13 14	
15 16 17 18 19 20 21	
22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
29 30 31	

April	
	1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 9 10 11	
12 13 14 15 16 17 18	
19 20 21 22 23 24 25	
26 27 28 29 30	

May	
	1 2
3 4 5 6 7 8 9	
10 11 12 13 14 15 16	
17 18 19 20 21 22 23	
24 25 26 27 28 29 30	
31	

June	
	1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12 13	
14 15 16 17 18 19 20	
21 22 23 24 25 26 27	
28 29 30	

July	
	1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 9 10 11	
12 13 14 15 16 17 18	
19 20 21 22 23 24 25	
26 27 28 29 30 31	

August	
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9 10 11 12 13 14 15	
16 17 18 19 20 21 22	
23 24 25 26 27 28 29	
30 31	

September	
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13 14 15 16 17 18 19	
20 21 22 23 24 25 26	
27 28 29 30	

October	
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4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
11 12 13 14 15 16 17	
18 19 20 21 22 23 24	
25 26 27 28 29 30 31	

November	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
8 9 10 11 12 13 14	
15 16 17 18 19 20 21	
22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
29 30	

December	
	1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 11 12	
13 14 15 16 17 18 19	
20 21 22 23 24 25 26	
27 28 29 30 31	

“God cares for everyone. Despair is in effect a lack of faith”
-- St. George Karslides –



For further information please contact:

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Tel: 07951 722 877
Email: frjah@yahoo.co.uk

Orthodox Church of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross:
www.orthodox-lancaster.org.uk

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of
the British Isles and Ireland: www.antiochian-orthodox.com

Orthodox online liturgical guide: www.antiochian.org/liturgicday

Online Orthodox Calendar and Scriptural Readings Lectionary:
<https://www.antiochian-orthodox.com/calendar>

The following blogs of Old Stavronians are available in English at orthodoxcityhermit.com



Top and bottom sketches are created at the Holy Monastery of “The Annunciation of the Theotokos” Chios, Greece, courtesy of Fr Theodosios Dendrinios, Ithaca, Greece.
The sketch of Christ by Photis Kontoglou was scanned from the Orthodox calendar of the *Apostoliki Diakonia* of the Church of Greece.