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the Light



MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER



AMEN CONFERENCE
& RETREAT

March 7 - 9, 2024

Woodland Christian Camp & Retreat Center, Temple, GA - In person.



SOYO LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT 2024

March 30, 2024 8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom REGISTER HERE!











Parish Spotlight

ST. CATHERINE ORTHODOX CHURCH

CLERGY

V. Rev. Fr. Gregory Rogers

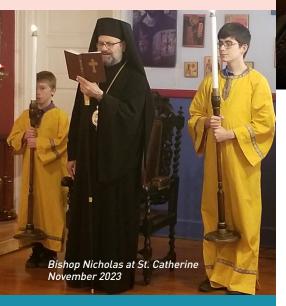
FEAST DAY: November 25,

St. Catherine's Day **EMAIL:** fgrogers@aol.com

WEBSITE: stcatherineaiken.org



VISIT OUR PARISH LIVE STREAM



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THE FASTING KITCHEN

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St. Catherine Orthodox Church Aiken, SC

St. Catherine Orthodox Church in Aiken, South Carolina, is a small church with a big heart. Whether by deepening our spiritual life through participation in the services of the church, studying to deepen our understanding of the faith, active service in the community, or making improvements to our facilities, the faithful seek to be a beacon of Christ's love to all

By God's grace, our parish has seen significant growth in the past two years, with several Orthodox families moving into the area and a steady stream of catechumens. Over the past two years, we have baptized or chrismated eight new members. Currently, there are seven inquirers participating in our catechism class which meets virtually on Tuesday evenings.

The faithful participate actively in community service efforts. Each month we collect non-perishable food items to donate to ACTS (Area Churches Together Serving), an ecumenical effort in Aiken to care for local families. In 2023, over 700 items were donated from St. Catherine. Each year,

(continued from page 2)

(St. Catherine - continued from page 1) resources (baby needs and finances) are collected for expectant mothers and children through Birthright of Columbia. At Christmas, parishioners participate in the Samaritan's Purse gift box effort, bringing encouragement and joy to children around the world.

The Antiochian Women (called the Myrrh-bearing Women) work together with those of our sister parish, St. Barnabas Orthodox Church in Lexington, SC, meeting regularly to promote fellowship and service projects. Most of the projects mentioned already have their impetus from our women. In addition, the women are active in crocheting blankets, hats, and other items to donate to children and those who are ill. Ever conscious of healthy living, they recently sponsored a 'Sourdough Seminar' giving instruction in making sourdough bread to all who were interested.

We have an active Teen SOYO group. They meet regularly for fellowship and learning, currently focusing on understanding the Divine Liturgy. Our teens and sponsors volunteered to do grounds work at the Ss. Mary and Martha Monastery in Wagener, SC, helping the nuns beautify the grounds. The teens decorated candles for Pascha, adding to the festive nature of the occasion. When St. Catherine sponsored a yard sale last spring to

raise money for needed repairs at the church, they made baked goods for sale, raising nearly \$300 for the church. Several of our youth have participated in the Camp St. Thekla program, attending both the winter camp and the summer program.

Our church building required significant repairs over the past two years, replacing the septic tank, the roof, and completely remodeling the restrooms. There remain other projects, but God has graciously provided the needed resources for these repairs through the generosity of the flock and the church's fundraising efforts.

Encouraged by His Grace Bishop Nicholas on his parish visits, our Antiochian Men began meeting regularly for fellowship and study. They read and discussed Dr. Albert Rossi's book Becoming a Healing Presence, and have begun reading Hierotheos Vlachos' The Healing and Cure of the Soul in the Orthodox Tradition. The men also were active in the physical upkeep and development of the church

facilities, participating in work days (along with our women and teens). Our pastor, Fr. Gregory Rogers, leads regular Bible studies on Monday evenings (though currently the series on 'Selected Orthodox Hymns and their Interpretation' is being led by Reader John Marion as part of his project for the Antiochian House of Studies). These sessions are offered simultaneously in person and virtually to maximize the opportunity for the faithful to participate. Recent series included a detailed look at the 'Fruit of the Spirit' and 'The Nicene Creed and the Bible'.

We are greatly encouraged by the spirit and growth being experienced at St. Catherine Church. We are anticipating continued growth in grace, in number, and in service over the years to come. May the light of Christ illumine all!









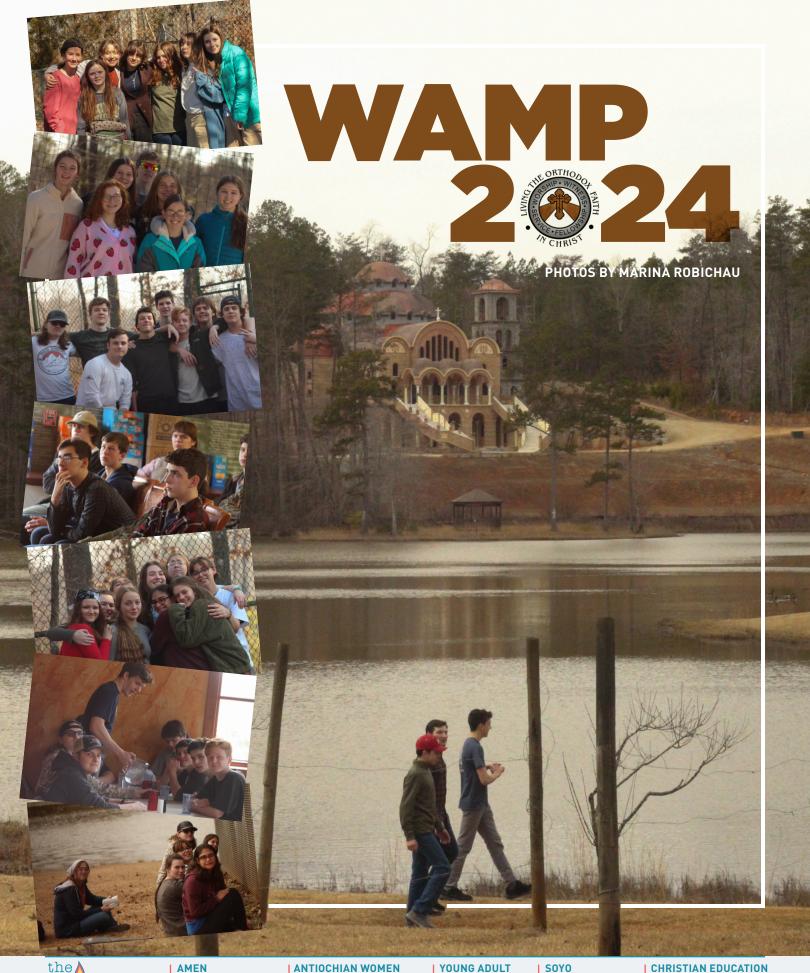














AMEN

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Winter Camp 2024

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CAMP ST. THEKLA

Sueanna Alter | All Saints Church, Raleigh, NC

Hello DOMSE! I am on my way home from a very successful and spiritually edifying Winter Camp, and I wanted to share with you all the wonderful times that we had.

Campers and volunteer staff arrived on Friday, and instantly hit it off. We were able to host fifty campers, and fifteen staff members at the Diakonia Retreat Center in Salem, South Carolina. Camp St. Thekla long ago used to call the Diakonia Center its home, and it was amazing to come back and see how much it's changed. Our staff and campers were impressed by the stunning cathedral, the dining hall murals depicting scenes from Greek History, and the comfortable accommodations. The Diakonia Center surrounds a beautiful lake, which was a little too cold for canoe rides this time of year but made for a wonderful view from every location and activity.

We enjoyed snacks together and played icebreaker games to get to know each other on the first night. We were also treated to a get to know you interview with our speaker, Deacon Gabriel Khoury from St. Ignatius in Franklin, TN. The deacon and his wife and son are new to our diocese, and we were blessed to meet them and learn from them throughout our time at Winter Camp.

Campers and staff had the opportunity to worship together in camp-style services, including orthros and great vespers on Saturday, as well as a hierarchical liturgy presided over by His Grace Bishop Nicholas, and a supplication service on Sunday evening to our beloved patron St. Thekla. Our days were jam packed full of nutritious meals, volleyball, basketball, chicken watching, and designing our own camp tee shirts. We finished the weekend with a slideshow of all the highlights of our time together, and a dance party on Sunday night.

Bright and early on Monday morning, parents came to pick up their campers and some even stayed to peek inside the cathedral and bookstore. Our staff departed soon after, with our extreme gratitude for taking so much time out of their work and school schedules to serve the teens of our diocese. We are blessed beyond measure!

Thank you to the parents and campers who travel so far and sacrifice so much to make it to winter camp, we hope to see you again this summer!





















The Church starts preparation for Great and Holy Lent by giving the faithful a gentle nudge beginning with Zacchaeus Sunday, which precedes the period in the Church calendar that is called the Triodion, which is a progression of themes leading to Forgiveness Sunday and beyond.

When we discuss Zacchaeus on a Sunday, the Church basically nudges us to say that Great and Holy Lent is around the corner. The Church Fathers, in their infinite wisdom, as they assigned the Gospel readings to the Triodion, are alerting us to focus our minds, hearts, and even stomachs on Christ as we will see

The progression of themes is very important, as follows:

The Sunday of Zacchaeus tells us how Zacchaeus, who was short of stature, had a burning desire to see Christ. So should we have such a burning desire for Christ. Luke (18:10-14) tells us that Zacchaeus went to a great length to see Jesus and repent of excessive tax collections and defrauding people. In doing so, the Church alerts us that Great and Holy Lent is around the corner.

Depending on when Pascha falls each year, the progression of themes may be interrupted for possibly more than a week to introduce a major feast day like the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple, 40 days after His Nativity.

The progression of themes continues as the Triodion begins. The first Sunday of the Triodion is always the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. This Sunday introduces the humility of the Publican as he realizes his sinfulness and requests God's mercy versus the arrogance of the Pharisee and the lack of realizing his dependence on God's mercy.

The progression of themes here is that if we don't have a burning desire for Christ like Zacchaeus, we can't have humility like the Publican and beseech the Lord for His mercy. Rather, we would be arrogant like the Pharisee only to discover the fallacy we live.

The following Sunday's Gospel reading presents the parable of the Prodigal Son, which reminds us of his repentance, after realizing his sinfulness and wasting his father's wealth. The reader is encouraged to read Luke (15:11-32) for more details about this subject.

The progression of themes is that: if we don't have a burning desire for Christ (like Zacchaeus), we can't have humility (like the Publican). If we don't have humility, we can never be repentant (Like the Prodigal Son).

The next Sunday's Gospel reading is about the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46) and how Christ, at His second coming, will have the sheep at His right-hand side (i.e. those who did good deeds by feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, visiting the imprisoned, etc.) and the goats on His left hand side (i.e. those who didn't do good deeds). Jesus sends those who did good deeds to Heaven (as He told them: 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world') and those who didn't to Hell (as He told them: 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'). Imagine what will happen to those who do evil deeds!

Notice that both groups on the rightand left-hand sides were ignorant of what they did! The ones on the right-hand side had 'holy ignorance', as the Church Fathers say, since they did good deeds without expecting anything in return. The ones who were on the left-hand side were ignorant of the fact that they did not help others.















(Sayedna - continued from page 5)

The progression of themes is that: if we don't have a burning desire for Christ (like Zacchaeus), we can't have humility (like the Publican). If we don't have humility, we can never be repentant (Like the Prodigal Son). If we can't repent, then our judgment (on the Last Judgment Day as presented by the Last Judgment Gospel reading) will be harsh!

The next Sunday, the last Sunday of the Triodion, is Forgiveness Sunday (Matthew 6:14-21). The Church is letting us know that if we don't forgive each other, God will not forgive us, and our effort during Great and Holy Lent, no matter how diligent it is, will be in vain!

The progression of themes is that: if we don't have a burning desire for Christ (like Zacchaeus), we can't have humility (like the Publican). If we don't have humility, we can never be repentant (Like the Prodigal Son). If we can't repent, then our judgment (on the Last Judgment Day as presented by the Last Judgment Gospel reading) will be harsh. Furthermore, if we don't forgive each other, then our fasting and prayers during Great and Holy Lent will be in vain and God will not forgive us our sins.

The Church Fathers have assigned another theme to The Sunday of the Last Judgment. It is Meat fare Sunday as well, which means it is the last day we eat meat until Holy Pascha (fish is allowed on the feast of the Annunciation and Palm Sunday). Thus, the Church is gradually focusing even our stomachs on Christ.

In addition, the Church Fathers have assigned two more themes to Forgiveness Sunday. It is Cheese fare Sunday as well, which means it is the last day we eat dairy products until Holy Pascha. Thus, the Church is further focusing our stomachs on Christ.

The third theme on the last Sunday of the Triodion, Forgiveness Sunday, is the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise and, by extension, we are expelled from Paradise as a consequence of the Original Sin (although we aren't guilty of the Original Sin). However, the Church doesn't keep us hanging for long! On Great and Holy Friday, as we pass under the Bier reentering the nave, we symbolically enter Paradise, having labored throughout Great Lent in fasting and intensified prayers during the extra services and our personal prayers.

Furthermore, every Sunday of Great and Holy Lent has at least two themes. I invite you to discover them as you journey to Holy Pascha. This is our second preparation period as we march to the Empty Tomb on Holy Pascha.

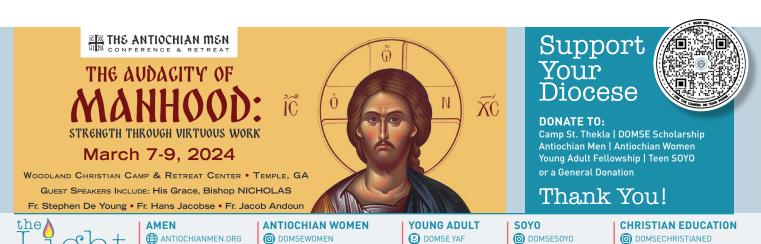
Our third and final preparation period (the first one being the Triodion and the second being Great and Holy Lent) is Holy Week. Every day of Holy Week has at least one theme that is intended to prepare us further for Holy Pascha. I invite you to discover those themes as well as we continue our journey.

On a different note, we have concluded the Camp St. Thekla Winter Retreat (which the teens also call WAMP). Despite the touch of cold in the mountains of SC, it was an excellent and successful camp as we returned to WAMP on President Day weekend. See you at CST summer camp! If you have not registered yet, please do so soon as the camp is almost full.

I pray that you continue to have a spiritually edifying Triodion, Great and Holy Lent, and Holy Week, and a glorious Holy Pascha!

May God bless you and may the Holy Trinity protect you all! +BISHOP NICHOLAS

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ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF DOMSE

Teen SOYO

Hey DOMSE!

There has been much to think about and reflect upon as the Lenten season is approaching, but don't forget to add signing up for this year's virtual Lenten Retreat to the list. We are thrilled to announce that our quest speaker this year, Karen Hanna, will be giving an entertaining and educational talk on 'Living Orthodoxy.' From navigating friendships as an Orthodox teen, to the role social media can play in influencing our faith; this year's theme is about exploring how Orthodoxy translates to our real lives. Be sure to register and reserve your spot today!

What questions do you have for Karen? Ask away using this Google



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATION!

The Diocese Ministry Council & the DOMSE Scholarship Committee would like to extend a sincere thank you to

THE ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS MIAMI CHAPTER AT ST. GEORGE CATHEDRAL

for their \$2,500 scholarship donation towards the 2024 DOMSE Scholarships!

"We were very fortunate our fundraising endeavors last year were successful enough to give us the ability to make this donation. We do this for our youth with the hopes they continue their church life as they grow and become more independent." ~ Zeina Bardawil Farah, OSIA Chairlady (Miami Chapter)

The Fasting Kitchen

EASY VEGAN CHICKPEA CURRY

Recipe sent in by Sh. Shell Keim

Lent is right around the corner! Feeding the family during this time needs some quick, inexpensive dishes that make getting to all of those services a little easier. Here is an option that can be made quickly or ahead of time. May God grant each of you a peaceful and prayerful Lenten journey.

Easy Vegan Chickpea Curry

Ingredients

- 2 Tosp vegetable oil
- 4 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1 Tosp Ginger (minced or grated)
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper
- 14 oz. díced tomatoes
- 15 oz. chickpeas (canned, rinsed and drained)
- 1/3 cup vegetable broth
- 2 tsp agave nectar
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1 1/4 cup full-fat coconut milk
- 1 lime (juiced)

Instructions

Heat oil over medium heat then add garlic and ginger until fragrant. Add curry powder and red pepper and sauté until fragrant.

Add tomatoes, chickpeas, broth, agave, and salt and cook to reduce liquid a little and soften tomatoes and chickpeas.

Pour in coconut milk and simmer for a few minutes until heated through.

Remove from heat and stir in lime juice.

Serve over rice or with Naan bread and enjoy!



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Upcoming Events

MARCH

AMEN CONFERENCE & RETREAT

March 7 - 9, 2024 Woodland Christian Camp & Retreat Center, Temple, GA In person.

SOYO LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT 2024

March 30, 2024 8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom **REGISTER HERE!**

APRIL

AMEN LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT 2024

April 6, 2024 8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom **CLICK HERE FOR INFO!**

YAF LENTEN RETREAT 2024

April 13, 2024 8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom **CLICK HERE FOR INFO!**

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S **LENTEN RETREAT 2024**

April 20, 2024 8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom **CLICK HERE FOR INFO!**

MAY

2024 DOMSE SCHOLARSHIPS!

June 1 - July 1, 2024 CLICK HERE FOR INFO!

DOMSE 2024 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE (PLC)

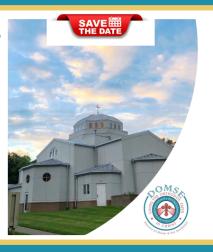
June 12 - 15, 2024 St. Stephen Orthodox Church, Hiram, GA **REGISTER HERE!**

FALL RETREAT 2024

Hosted at St. Ignatius Franklin, TN.

September 20 - 21, 2024

https://domse.org/event/domse-fall-retreat-2024/



JUNE

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2024 - SESSION 1

June 23 - 29, 2024 **REGISTER HERE!**

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2024 - SESSION 2

June 30 - July 6, 2024 **REGISTER HERE!**

SEPTEMBER

DOMSE FALL RETREAT 2024

September 21 - 22, 2024 St. Ignatius Orthodox Church, Franklin, TN **CLICK HERE FOR INFO!**



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ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN



YOUNG ADULT DOMSE YAF

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In his novel The Brothers Karamazov, Fyodor Dostoevsky offers a powerful reflection on the purpose of monastic life within the Orthodox Church. He says,

Fathers and teachers, what is the monk? In the cultivated world the word is nowadays pronounced by some people with a jeer, and by others it is used as a term of abuse, and this contempt for the monk is growing... Yet how many meek and humble monks there are, yearning for solitude and fervent prayer in peace... In their solitude, they keep the image of Christ fair and undefiled, in the purity of God's truth, from the times of the Fathers of old, the Apostles and the martyrs. And when the time comes they will show it to the tottering creeds of the world...

The world has proclaimed the reign of freedom, especially of late, but what do we see in this freedom of theirs? Nothing but slavery and self-destruction! For the world says: 'You have desires and so satisfy them, for you have the same rights as the most rich and powerful. Don't be afraid of satisfying them and even multiply your desires.' This is the modern doctrine of the world... Interpreting freedom as the multiplication and rapid satisfaction of desires, men distort their own nature, for many senseless and foolish desires and habits and ridiculous fancies are fostered in them. They live only for mutual envy, for luxury and ostentation...I ask you is such a man free?... They have succeeded in accumulating a greater mass of objects, but the joy in the world has grown less.

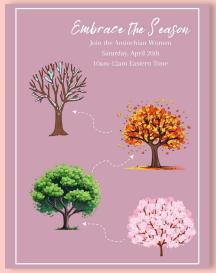
The monastic way is very different. Obedience, fasting, and prayer are laughed at, yet only through them lies the way to real, true freedom. I cut off my superfluous and unnecessary desires, I subdue my proud and wanton will and chastise it with obedience, and with God's help I attain freedom of spirit and with it spiritual joy.

During Great Lent, the entire Church takes this monastic mindset to heart, especially through the three disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. We clear out unnecessary desires for certain kinds of food or certain entertainments or distractions so that we can focus more intently on the services of the Church, and prayer, and being together as a church community more often during the week. And while these things bind or constrain our will, our time, and our attention, they ultimately liberate us from the tyranny of selfish desires and grant us true peace and joy.

As we enter the guiet but fervent prayer of Great Lent and cut off some of our unnecessary desires through fasting, may God grant us true freedom and spiritual joy!







IF YOU HAVE ARTICLES OR **SUGGESTIONS FOR** THE LIGHT NEWSLETTER, **PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO** DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM

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