On the Great and Holy Feast of Pascha, Orthodox Christians celebrate the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This feast of feasts is the most significant day in the life of the Church. It is a celebration of the defeat of death, as neither death itself nor the power of the grave could hold our Savior captive. In this victory that came through the Cross, Christ broke the bondage of sin, and through faith offers us restoration, transformation, and eternal life.

Continued on pg. 5...

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**Light up our Church**

Go to: https://form.jotform.com/200936454467057 to submit candle and stewardship donations and make prayer requests.
Diakonia
is the monthly newsletter of
St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
4970 Mackinaw Road, Saginaw, MI 48603
Phone: 989-793-8822 | Fax: 989-793-8896
Email: stdemetriosmi@gmail.com
Website: http://www.stdemetrios.mi.goarch.org

St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church is a parish under the spiritual and ecclesiastical shepherding of His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The Mission of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church is to proclaim the Gospel of Salvation through the Orthodox Christian Faith for the glory of our Triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We are a community of believers who journey towards our Lord Jesus Christ and one another through our worship, fellowship, spiritual growth, witness, and service. We invite all people to join us on this journey toward the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Diakonia" is published on the first of each month. The deadline for submissions to this newsletter is the 25th of the prior month.

Layout and production by Megan Rodriguez.
Published by
St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, Saginaw, MI

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Altar Boy Advisors: Evan Houpis, Andy Bazakis
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Festival Chair: David Nichols
Philoptochos President: Joni Porchia
Secretary: Gabby Economous
Sunday School Director: Janice Kato
Youth Protection Administrator: Elaine Makas

Visit our St. Demetrios website:
www.stdemetrios.mi.goarch.org
for our weekly bulletins, newsletter archives, lives of the saints and daily scripture readings, news from our community, and much more!

2020 Spring General Assembly
**POSTPONED**
due to the Church closure.
In the Jewish rites for Passover, the youngest child present always asks the question: “why is this night different from all other nights?” We are facing a Holy Week without many of the trappings that might in any other year make Holy Week special – the palms, the flowers, and the eggs. Can we even have Holy Week without these things? Can we have Holy Week and Pascha without gathering in Church? As we approach a Holy Week and Pascha, it is good for us to ask this same question: why is this week – this feast – different from all other weeks? Is it just about the palms, flowers, eggs, and candles, or is there something more? Does Pascha only come because we gather in Church, or is there something greater happening?

The answer, of course, is that there is indeed something greater happening, that Pascha is much more than the flowers, eggs, and candles. Holy Week is our yearly opportunity to participate in the life-saving Passion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – to walk with Christ and His disciples from the Raising of Lazarus to the Cross to the tomb and Pascha. Pascha is our celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the conquering of death. The services and their trappings are how we participate and celebrate these mysteries – but the mysteries are not dependent upon the trappings. Whether we shout it in our homes or in the church building, Christ is still risen! Even though we participate in Holy Week from afar in our homes, Holy Week is not delayed, and the feast is not put off.

That does not mean, of course, that “everything is ok.” It hurts, I know, to be absent from the Church during this week. The absence of the palms, flowers, eggs, and candles – this is painful, not simply because we want flowers but because of the absence from our Church family and the distance from the mysteries. This is a hard and a difficult thing – and it’s ok to acknowledge that. It would be worse if it didn’t hurt, if we didn’t miss being able to go to Church.

But just as Christ did not wait for His disciples to be “ready” to rise from the dead, so also Holy Week and Pascha cannot be delayed. This journey from the Raising of Lazarus to Pascha is still going to happen – and our participation in it is not cancelled. Just like the fast did not stop just because we could no longer come to Church, Holy Week is not cancelled. It will be different, and harder, but it will come, nevertheless. The question is – are we ready to receive it like the Myrrh-bearing women, or are we oblivious in our upper rooms?

It is even possible that this Holy Week might prove to be a gift to us – personally and communally – because it will force us to dig deeper into the mystery that is Holy Week and Pascha. Forced out of our normal routine, we have an opportunity to do something we should do every year – bring Holy Week and Pascha home. Holy Week should never be something we only do “at church,” but it should encompass our entire lives. We have, this year, an opportunity to do exactly this - to be the Myrrh-bearing women and remain with Christ throughout this Great and Holy Week, albeit from a distance, even as they did. We can bring the Church into our home, and be fully present with Him there.

In the 11th century, the Muslim Caliph Al-Hakim decreed the closure of all churches in Egypt for nine years. It was a time of great distress for all Christians. One day, the Caliph was walking through the streets where Christians resided and he heard their voices praising and praying in each house. Then he said, “Open their churches again and let them pray as they please. I wished to close a Church on every street, but today I discovered that when I made this decree, a church was opened in every home.”

This week, this night, this feast – these are special because Christ is with us, having died and risen for us. Even though we cannot gather in the Church, we can “open a church in every home,” and be present with Christ, even as He is present with us. And if we can be present – albeit in our homes – for Holy Week and Pascha in these difficult times, it will make it so much easier to be fully present on that glorious day when we are once again able to gather in our beautiful church home and proclaim the Resurrection of Christ.

Blessed Pascha! Καλό Πάσχα!
**Philoptochos Corner**

Best wishes to all. We have all our Easter plans ready to go as soon as we get the word from the Metropolitan to open the church.

In the mean time, Philoptochos is reaching out to many of our at-risk members with phone calls. Our objective is to break the isolation and to fill any needs that may arise. We have a team of volunteers calling to check on our parish members. If you have not received a call and need to either just talk or have any specific needs please contact Joni Porchia 414-732-5051.

Thank you and God Bless you!
Joni Porchia - Philoptochos President

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**Resources for the "Little Church"**

**Little Church Foundations - Icon Corner**

This post gives suggestions for how to set up an icon corner, if you don’t already have one.

**Holy Week - Master Resource List**

This page, assembled by the Youth Directors of Orthodox America, lists resources (general and specific) for celebrating Holy Week and Pascha at home.

**Guide to Holy Week at Home**

This document was compiled by Presvytera Jennifer Moore specifically for this year's Holy Week, when so many of us will be experiencing Holy Week and Pascha from our homes. It includes suggestions for observing each day, along with links to hymns, prayers, and other resources for living out the holiest week of the year at home.
Holy Week comes to an end at sunset of Great and Holy Saturday, as the Church prepares to celebrate her most ancient and preeminent festival, Pascha, the feast of feasts. The time of preparation will give way to a time of fulfillment. The glorious and resplendent light emanating from the empty Tomb will dispel the darkness. Christ, risen from the dead, cracks the fortress of death and takes "captivity captive" (Psalm 67:19). All the limitations of our createdness are torn asunder. Death is swallowed up in victory and life is liberated. "For as by a man came death, by a man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:21-22). Pascha is the dawn of the new and unending day. The Resurrection constitutes the most radical and decisive deliverance of humankind.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fundamental truth and absolute fact of the Christian faith. It is the central experience and essential teaching of the Church. It confirms the authenticity of Christ's remarkable earthly life and vindicates the truth of His teaching. It seals all His redemptive work: His life, the model of a holy life; His compelling and unique teaching; His extraordinary works; and His awesome, life-creating death. Christ's Resurrection is the guarantee of our salvation. Together with His Ascension it brings to perfection God's union with us for all eternity.

The Resurrection made possible the miracle of the Church, which in every age and generation proclaims and affirms "God's plan for the universe, the ultimate divinization of man and the created order." The profound experience of and the unshakable belief in the risen Lord enabled the Apostles to evangelize the world and empowered the Church to overcome paganism. The Resurrection discloses the indestructible power and inscrutable wisdom of God. It disposes of the illusory myths and belief systems by which people, bereft of divine knowledge, strain to affirm the meaning and purpose of their existence. Christ, risen and glorified, releases humanity from the delusions of idolatry. In Him grave-bound humanity discovers and is filled with incomparable hope. The Resurrection bestows illumination, energizes souls, brings forgiveness, transfigures lifes, creates saints, and gives joy.

The Resurrection has not yet abolished the reality of death. But it has revealed its powerlessness (Hebrews 2:14-15). We continue to die as a result of the Fall. Our bodies decay and fall away. "God allows death to exist but turns it against corruption and its cause, sin, and sets a boundary both to corruption and sin." Thus, physical death does not destroy our life of communion with God. Rather, we move from death to life - from this fallen world to God's reign.

Hymns of Pascha

Apolytikion (Plagal of the First Tone)
Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.

First Ode of the Canon of Pascha (First Tone)
It is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant, O ye peoples: Pascha, the Lord's Pascha; for Christ God hath brought us from death to life, and from earth unto Heaven as we sing the triumphal hymn.

Doxastikon of the Praises (Plagal First Mode)
It is the day of Resurrection; let us be radiant for the festival, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, O brethren, even to those that hate us: Let us forgive all things on the Resurrection; and thus let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, by death He has trampled down death, and on those in the tombs He has bestowed life.

**CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY, HE IS RISEN!**

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St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
2020 Stewardship Commitment Form

"Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom."
Psalm 90:12
*A TIME FOR EVERY PURPOSE UNDER HEAVEN*

Please bring this form to the Church or mail it to the Church Office at 4970 Mackinaw Rd., Saginaw, MI 48603

Name: ____________________________
Street Address: _______________________ City: ______________ State: ____ Zip Code: ____________

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In gratitude for God’s blessings, I/we pledge to contribute for Christ’s work at St. Demetrios Church for 2020.
$_______ weekly $_______ monthly $_______ quarterly $_______ semi-annually $_______ annually

Our goal as a parish is to raise our stewardship by $20/month for the 2020 calendar year. However, stewardship is a spiritual discipline that should be discussed with your spiritual father.

**Please indicate areas of expertise or interest where you would like to serve:**
(Individuals should provide a check mark and families provide "H" for husband, "W" for wife and "C" for children)

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I/we would like to receive notifications from St. Demetrios by: ___ email ___ paper mail
You can also submit your stewardship card and your contributions online at www.stdemetrios.mi.goarch.org/stewardship

CONFIDENTIAL: For Authorized Parish Personnel Only
Experiencing & Understanding Holy Week
By Fr. Andrew Domotses, ed. by Fr. Luke Veronis
with pictures from past Holy Weeks at St. Demetrios

The services of Holy Week transform us into eyewitnesses and direct participants in the awesome events of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here is a summary of the week.

Palm Sunday Evening - Matthew 21:18-43
This evening's service calls to mind the beginning of Jesus' suffering. The gospel describes the plotting of the priests and elders to trap Jesus into convicting Himself as a religious heretic. Through parables, Jesus tells us of His coming betrayal, trial, conviction and execution by crucifixion. The hymns of this service commemorate the prophetic figure of Joseph (seen as a type of Christ), who, while virtuous, nonetheless suffered unjustly before being greatly rewarded, and the parable of the fig tree, which in failing to bear fruit, became a symbol of fallen creation, and of our own lives.

This evening’s theme is the need for watchfulness and preparation, lest we be called unprepared before the awesome judgment seat of Christ to render an account of ourselves. The gospel reading contrasts the efforts of the Pharisees to trick and discredit Jesus, with the forceful resistance which Christ mounts against their evil. The hymns remind us of the parable of the Ten Virgins, in which the faithful Christian is exhorted to vigilance.

The need for true repentance is the concern of today. This transformation from the life of sin to a life of faith and obedience is exemplified in the person of the sinful woman who received the gift of forgiveness when she anointed Jesus with myrrh and washed His feet. The highlight of this service is the hymn written in honor of this woman by St. Kassiani. The Gospel meditation foretells of the coming suffering of Christ and recalls His inner struggles and agony.

Today’s theme is our human need for the healing and forgiveness that comes into our lives when we establish a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We are reminded that the way to this relationship is to be found, above all else, through a life of prayer. In the Sacrament of Holy Unction, we are anointed and healed both physically and spiritually.

Holy Thursday Morning - Matthew 26:2-27:2, John 13:3-17
In the morning we ascend Mt. Zion with Christ and the Twelve, and enter into the upper room. Once there, we witness the awesome moment when, at the Mystical Supper, Christ abolishes the ritual practice of sacrifice in the Old Covenant and establishes the ritual of the New Covenant, prophesied by Jeremiah, through the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Holy Thursday Evening
In the evening service, we re-live the suffering of Christ, endured for our sake, so that we might be reconciled anew to God our Father. The 12 Gospel readings witness for us the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, his trial and conviction, and finally his torture, crucifixion and death at the hands of a sinful humanity. This evening’s service also includes the procession representing Christ carrying His own
cross along the Via Dolorosa, and ends when we see the King of Glory crucified.


In this service, we are once again reverent witnesses to the undeserved suffering of Christ, to his terrible passion and death. What is remembered in a special way through liturgical commemoration and procession, is the faithfulness and love of Joseph of Arimathea who tenderly removed Christ's body from the cross, wrapped it in clean linen, and carried it to his own unused tomb for burial.


On Good Friday evening, the theme is Christ's descent into Hades during which the Gospel of repentance and reconciliation with God is shared with those who died before Christ's saving dispensation in the flesh. The service begins with lamentations sung as we stand before the tomb of Christ commemorating His unjust punishment and the shedding of His innocent blood. But the service ends on a note of joy and hope, with the reading of the Prophet Ezekiel in which he describes his vision of our resurrection yet to come; in the midst of despair, we are told there is hope, for not even death can separate us from the unfailing love and power of God. Death is about to be conquered and faithfulness rewarded.

**HOLY SATURDAY MORNING** - Romans 6:3-11, Matthew 28:1-20

The crucifixion is over, Christ is buried, the twelve apostles and other disciples are scattered and defeated. And yet, three myrrh-bearing women come in faithfulness to perform the last act of love - to anoint Jesus according to the Jewish burial custom. Their unwavering devotion is rewarded - they are the first to share in Christ's triumph over evil and death. They are the first witnesses to the Resurrection.

**HOLY SATURDAY EVENING** - **PASCHA** - Mark 16:1-8

The church is plunged into darkness to symbolize the despair and defeat experienced before the dawn of Christ's victory over the Enemy of our salvation. Precisely at midnight, a single light emerges from the altar representing the victory of Christ over death, the defeat of the Prince of Darkness by Jesus, the Light of the World. As the light is passed from person to person, it pushes back the darkness of the church and defeats it completely. The Resurrection is proclaimed in song and triumphant procession, and after the Liturgy, its light is carried into our homes so that they too might be filled with its light and warmth and triumph.

**PASCHA SUNDAY VESPERS** - John 20:19-25

Christ’s Resurrection and victory is affirmed in this morning’s theme. The Gospel is read in numerous languages to illustrate the universality of the Good News of the Resurrection and its proclamation to the very ends of the earth. Love, forgiveness, reconciliation, triumph, and joy - these are the gifts which we receive because Christ lived and died and triumphed for our sake.

**GLORY TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS, AND MAY YOUR PASCHA BE BLESSED!**

**CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!**
**ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**HOLY WEEK - 2020**

**STREAMING SCHEDULE**

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**Lazarus Saturday - April 11th**
- Orthros - 9:00 am
- Divine Liturgy - 10:00 am

**Palm Sunday - April 12th**
- Orthros - 8:50 am
- Divine Liturgy - 10:00 am
- Bridegroom Matins - 6:00 pm

**Holy Monday - April 13th**
- Bridegroom Matins - 6:00 pm

**Holy Tuesday - April 14th**
- Bridegroom Matins - 6:00 pm

**Holy Wednesday - April 15th**
- Bridegroom Matins - 6:00 pm

**Holy Thursday - April 16th**
- Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil - 9:00 am
- Passion Service: Twelve Gospels - 6:00 pm

**Holy Friday - April 17th**
- Royal Hours of Holy Friday - 8:30 am
- Unnailing Service - 2:00 pm
- Lamentations Service - 6:00 pm

**Holy Saturday - April 18th**
- Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil - 9:00 am
- Pre-Paschal Vigil - 11:00 pm

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**Pascha! - April 19th**
- Orthros of Pascha - 12:00 am
- Divine Liturgy of Pascha - 1:00 am
- Agape Vespers - 11:00 am
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**Notes:**
- **Holy Week Events:**
  - Resurrection Sunday (26)
  - Holy Thursday (11-17)
  - Good Friday (12)
  - Holy Saturday (13)
  - Palm Sunday (14)
  - Blessing of the Palms (15)
  - Holy Thursday (16)

- **Other Events:**
  - Resurrection Sunday (26)
  - Holy Thursday (11-17)
WE LOOK FORWARD EAGERLY TO THE DAY WHEN WE CAN ALL WORSHIP TOGETHER IN OUR BEAUTIFUL PARISH HOME AGAIN.

MAY THE HOLY TRINITY KEEP, BLESS, AND PROTECT YOU ALL UNTIL THAT DAY.

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY
MARCH 8TH, 2020