Woodstock, GA

April 14, 2024

# THE ST. ELIZABETH NEWS

### A loving Community of Orthodox Christians

St. Elizabeth Orthodox Mission Church 2265 E. Cherokee Drive Woodstock, GA 30188 <u>A parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese</u> <u>Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople</u> Ruling Hierarch: His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa



Christ is among us! He is and always shall be! Welcome to St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church and thank you for celebrating the Divine Liturgy with us!! What a joy it is to be together in God's House. If you have never been to an Orthodox Church before, you are about to participate in the Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy is the work of the people and that means that all of your prayers are necessary and you have a job to do this morning! We hope you will stay and join us for coffee hour in the atrium. Please feel free to ask Fr. Matthew any questions you might have! May God's blessing be with all of you!

#### This Week's Music...

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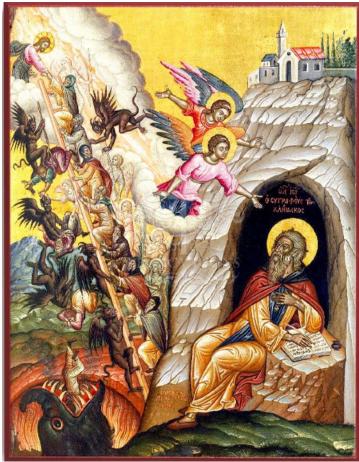
Reverend Father Matthew Dutko Pastor/AdministratorFather Deacon Steven HanesPhone: 404-268-6359 Email: fatherdutko@gmail.comwww.stelizabethga.org

# The Sunday of St. John of the Ladder Image: Colspan="2">Ath Sunday of Lent

Epistle: <u>Hebrews 6:13-20</u> Gospel: <u>Mark 9:16-30</u>



## Christ is Among us!



### The Sunday of St. John of the Ladder

The St. Elizabeth News

Christ is Among us!

St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church



Wednesday 4/17 5:15-6:15- Presanctified

Liturgy 6:15-7:15- Adult Catechism Class Friday 4/19 5:30 pm- Presanctified Liturgy Saturday 4/20 4pm- Great Vespers Sunday 4/21 10 am- Divine Liturgy Wednesday 4/24 5:15-6:15- Presanctified Liturgy 6:15-7:15- Adult Catechism Class Friday 4/26 5:30 pm- Presanctified Liturgy Saturday 4/27 9 am- Divine Liturgy: Lazarus Saturday **4pm-** Great Vespers for Palm Sunday Sunday 4/28 10 am- Divine Liturgy: The Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem 1 pm- Bridegroom Matins Holy Monday 4/29 9 am - Presanctified Liturgy 5:15 pm- Bridegroom Matins Holy Tuesday 4/30 9 am- Presanctified Liturgy 5:30 pm- Bridegroom Matins Holy Wednesday 5/01 9 am- Presanctified Liturgy 6 pm- The Sacrament of Holy Unction Holy Thursday 5/02 9 am- Vesperal Liturgy: The Institution of the Holy Eucharist 6 pm- The Matins of Good Friday: The Reading of the 12 Passion Gospels 8 pm- Setting up the Tomb & Preparing the Church for Good Friday

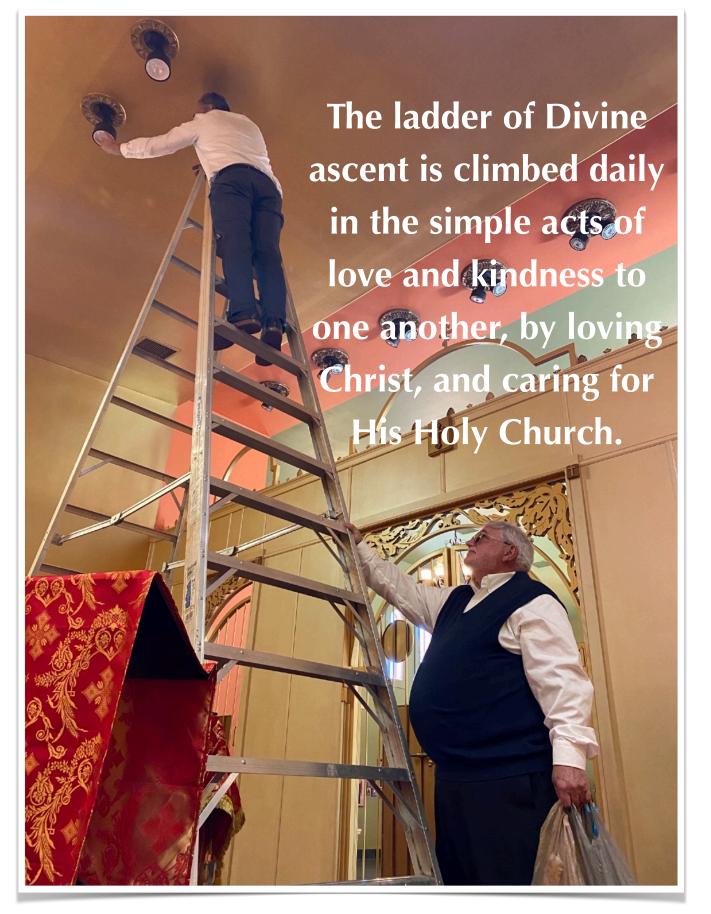
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using the Blue Pew Book

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Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who havre properly prepared themselves, non-Orthodox visitors and inquirers are invited to come forward at the endif the

Liturgy to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread).

April 14, 2024



#### St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church

#### Woodstock, GA

**St. John Climacus**, or St. John of the Ladder (*Climacus is Greek for of the ladder*) was an ascetic saint who spent most of his life struggling and striving for holiness. St. John is said to have been born around the year 570 AD. At the age of just sixteen, he left his home and joined the Monastery of St. Catherine's on Mt. Sinai. Just four years after the young St. John entered the Monastery on Mt. Sinai, *the place where Moses received the Ten Commandments*, he was tonsured a monk.

Imagine the faith of this young man who at twenty-years old, hears Christ calling him to the monastic life and answers that call. Our Lord is calling each of us to Him. God is inviting us to participate in His holiness, just like He called Saint John. When we look at St. John's life and read his writings, his book titled *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, we see clearly laid out before us the path of struggle that leads to Holiness; *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* that leads to Christ and to Paradise. St. John began the ascent of this ladder as a young man; the time for us to begin that climb is right now. In every breath we take, we are given the opportunity to repent and receive the gift of life in Christ.Remember the words that St. John Chrysostom gives to us in his Paschal Homily which we hear every year on Holy Saturday: "If any have arrived only at the eleventh, let him not be afraid because he comes so late." Even if we come at the eleventh hour it is not too late! So, no matter our age, no matter if we have taken this Lent seriously so far or not, today let us all heed the wise words of St. John of the Ladder and either begin or continue our ascent to Paradise. *But how do we do this*?

For the next few weeks, think, how can I enter into the desert like Saint John, even in small ways? Can I let go of my earthy cares and come to more Church services? After all it is St. John who tells us that avoiding the Holy Services of the Church is a sign of the deadening of our souls. Can I worry less about my own needs and do more good for my neighbor? It is during lent that we are reminded to *give alms*, which means to do good deeds. Can I focus less on the food that sustains my body and instead focus on the Heavenly Bread, the spiritual foods of prayer, forgiveness, repentance, and love that sustain my soul? After all Lent is also known as *The Great Fast*. The opportunities to enter into the desert are put right before us all throughout Lent, don't wait until the eleventh hour, come, seek out, and find Christ now, so that you can journey with him to the Cross. Seek and find Him Who receives us into Paradise; just like the Icon for Sunday of Saint John of the Ladder shows Christ receiving His servants into His arms.

St. John spent forty years living humbly in silence, prayer, and fasting. He is an example for us of the power of repentance and he implores us to that end in his writings. St. John guides us, reminds us, and shows us the power of a repentant heart. In his Book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* St. John says, "As fire burns and destroys dead wood, so do pure tears cleanse all impurity, both inwardly and outwardly." The power of our heartfelt tears over our sins provide the fuel for our souls to be saved. St. John likens our tears of repentance to Baptism, we are cleansed and made holy in the Baptismal waters of our own tears. We always need to be reminded of the gift our Lord and His Church gives to us in Holy Confession. Now during Great Lent, we need to come once again before the Icon of Christ, and with repentance in our hearts and tears in our eyes over the sorrow of our own sinfulness ask for our Lord's forgiveness. We need to take advantage of this gift while God graces us with the strength and opportunity to do so. In this very moment, with this very breath; God is waiting for us.

In St. John's writings he warns us to avoid the *passions* and teaches us how to do so. He tells us how difficult it becomes to even acknowledge our struggles the more we become used to them, the more we give them a home in our hearts. However, the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step, and so as we spend time in the desert of our hearts, we need to seek out those things which prevent us from seeking first the Kingdom of God and evict them from our home; wed need to evict the sinful passions from our hearts. St. John was especially concerned with *vainglory*, or pride. St. John tells us to battle this passion through "humble-mindedness", by seeing the greatness of our own sins; by seeing ourselves as the *first among sinners*.

Before his death, St. John of the Ladder was asked to come out of his isolation in the desert, where many people would come to seek his wisdom, and to become the Abbot of the St. Sinai Monastery. It was during this time, near the end of his earthly life that monks from another monastery asked him to write down and preserve his teachings, which became his famous spiritual guide, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. His teachings provide for us a path to holiness and show to us the way to a Holy life in Christ and Salvation in His Kingdom. Let us follow St. John's example throughout the remainder of Lent and all throughout our lives. Glory to God for all things! If you are interested, you can follow this link and purchase his book here.



The St. Elizabeth News

### **KIDS OF ST. ELIZABETH**



### ST. ELIZABETH ORTHODOX CHURCH

2265 East Cherokee Drive Woodstock, GA 30188 Phone: 404-268-6359 Email: <u>fatherdutko@gmail.com</u> Fr. Matthew Dutko Pastor/Administrator www.stelizabethga.org



March 31, 2024

Dear Parish Family Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church,

As we journey through the Lenten season, reflecting on the eternal significance of the cross and the empty tomb of our Lord, we are called to remember God's blessings freely bestowed upon us as a growing Orthodox Christian family. All that we have is not our own, but is lent to us for a time by our Creator. It is with a heart filled with gratitude and hope that I write to you today, seeking your generous consideration for a special contribution to our building fund. Last week we approved the spending of \$30,000 to renovate our Church Hall, but in the life of the Church there is always more that God is calling us to do for His glory.

Saint Elizabeth's Orthodox Church in Woodstock, Georgia, stands as a testament to the faith and generosity of those who have come before us. The ongoing renovation of our Church Hall is a tangible expression of our commitment to continue the mission entrusted to us—to share the Gospel of Christ and the Orthodox Faith with the world around us.

The transformation of our Church Hall into a larger and more comfortable space for fellowship and community gatherings is more than just a physical renovation; it is an investment in the spiritual growth and unity of our parish family. This space will not only provide comfort but also serve as a hub for nurturing relationships and deepening our understanding of the Orthodox faith as we break bread together, share in the ministries of Christ's Church, and collectively carry our own crosses.

The fact that we have been able to undertake this project with a cost of \$30,000 is only possible because God is with us, and He has blessed our community with so many talented and generous parishioners. Just like we are thankful for the efforts of all the founders, builders, and benefactors of Saint Elizabeth's, we are blessed that in this moment we have talented individuals who are willing to use their skills to glorify God by selflessly contributing their construction expertise, efforts, and resources for the continued development of Saint Elizabeth's.

It is also important to acknowledge the work of past and present parishioners whose stewardship and generosity have built the foundation upon which we stand today. Your ongoing support is essential as we continue to grow as an Orthodox Christian family and embark on various capital building projects and kitchen upgrades essential for the growth and vitality of our community.

#### Continued on the Next Page...

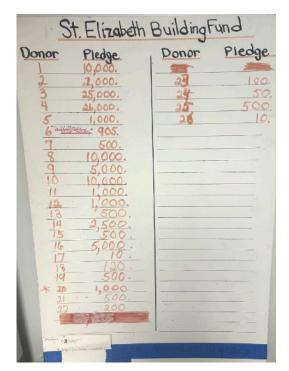
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As I was packing up my office to move down the hall, I rediscovered some items from our Church's early days. Next to my filing cabinet was poster board of special pledges made by parishioners towards the building fund, which was established to erect a permanent Church building. The generosity of our founders is a testament to their faith in Christ and commitment to build an Orthodox Christian Church in the Woodstock area.

Today, as we continue to carry our cross and build up God's House, I humbly ask you this Lent to prayerfully consider making a special contribution towards the renovation of our Church Hall, building fund, the burning of our mortgage, or any other project that resonates with your heart. The Church remembers forever the founders, builders, and benefactors of the Church in the Great Entrance during the Divine Liturgy. Contributing to this campaign makes you a builder and a benefactor of God's House here at Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church. That means that the Church will remember you and pray for you forever in her holy prayers.



The endeavor to renovate our Church Hall stands as one of our

most important current building projects, yet there is still much work to be done. Some of those specific projects include the parking lot, driveway, kitchen equipment—encompassing the stove hood, new mixer, and large freezer—outdoor storage sheds, an outdoor pavilion, additional Church Dome/Dome on the Bell Tower, and expanded outdoor lighting. Each of these initiatives are important parts of our ongoing mission and the ministry of Saint Elizabeth's. Yet with the expense of our Church Hall renovation, and without your additional financial support, these important projects will need to be placed on hold for a time.

As we move heavenward towards Christ, every contribution, every gift, regardless of its size, moves us closer to our shared objective of serving Christ, sharing the Orthodox Faith with our greater community, and nurturing our parish family here at Saint Elizabeth's.

"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). May our contributions be a reflection of our love for God, the Orthodox Faith, and Saint Elizabeth's.

Thank you for your continued support, generosity, and dedication to the health and growth of the parish family of Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church.

With heartfelt gratitude and love in Christ,

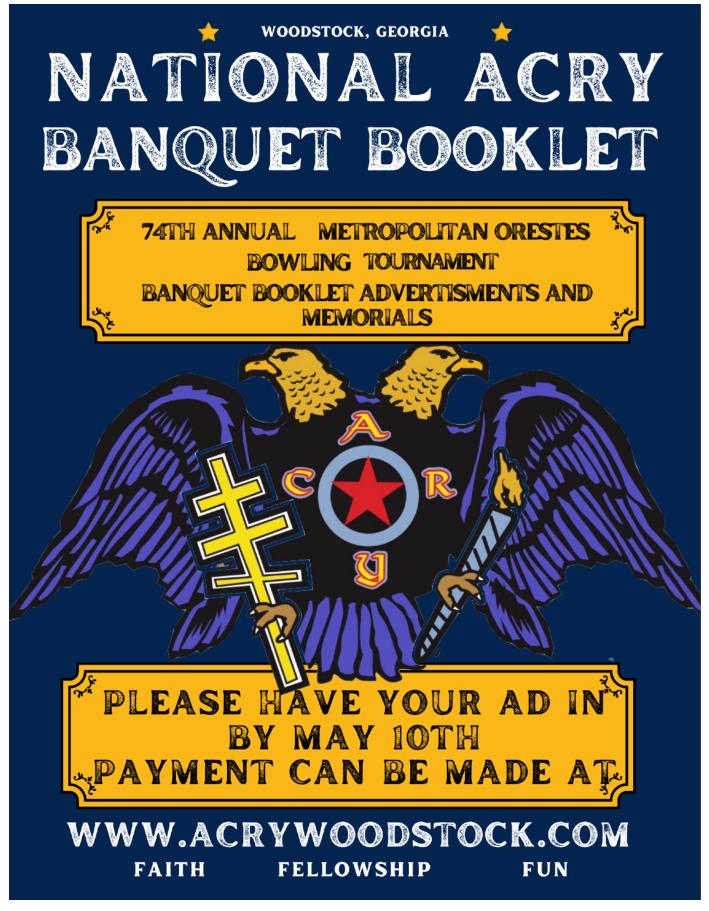
Woodstock, GA

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## Help Make the National ACRY Diocesan Bowling Tournament Weekend a Success!

You can help make National ACRY Weekend & Bowling Tournament a success this year, by placing a small note / comment / commemoration / thought / family photo / ad

in the booklet for yourself or your family or by passing this information on to a friend or someone you do business with.

(See page 2 for formatting and cost))

You can submit your completed art in jpg, png or pdf format (at least 200dpi, please)

OR you can write out a description, or scribble it on a piece of paper and we will do the art for you at no additional charge.

Send information to <u>sajem@aol.com</u> or if scribbled on a napkin, bring it to church.



Payment can be made at:



### www.ACRYWoodstock.com

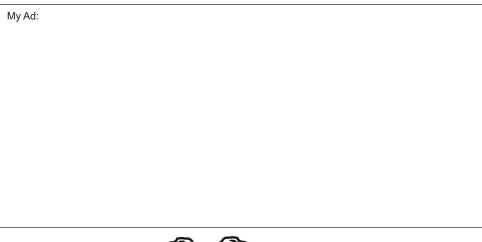
Deadline for inclusion in the booklet is May 10, 2024



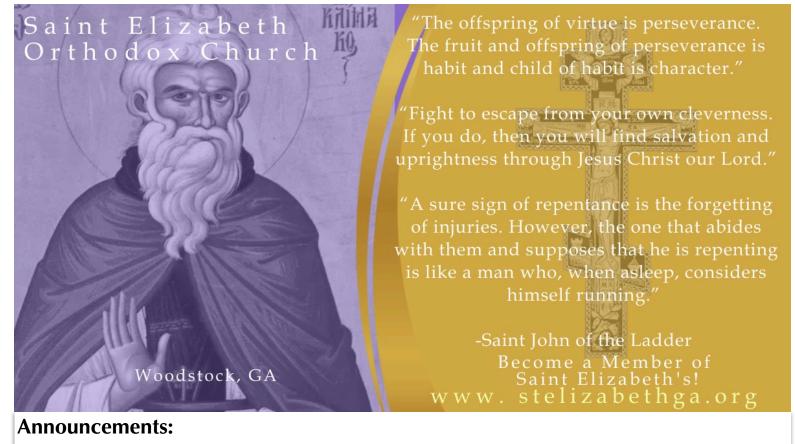




1/2 PAGE (3 FULL PAGE INSIDE FRO INSIDE BAG	3.6h x 2.3w)	$5h \times 5w)$ (\$150
QUARTER PAGE	HALF PAGE	FULL PAGE
Name:	email:	Ad Size:







- It's already the 4th Sunday of Great Lent- Have I journeyed with Christ so far this Lent? Am I praying, fasting, repenting, and making my best effort to be fed by the Divine Service of the Church? If we have fallen short in our efforts to draw nearer to Christ, we still have time ahead of us. Don't be discouraged, take up your cross and follow after Christ! *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*!
- ACRY Weekend over Memorial Day- Over a hundred faithful members of our Diocese and our Bishop will be here to visit with us for the National ACRY Weekend over Memorial Day! I hope that all of you are able to attend the events of the weekend! There is a meal package available for purchase that includes the hospitality welcome on Friday night at the Church, dinner on both Saturday and Sunday night and breakfast on Sunday morning. Please support this event by attending, you won't regret it! Please also consider purchasing an add for the memorial booklet! All purchases can be made at <u>www.ACRYWoodstock.com</u>
- **Coffee Hour During Lent-** Make sure to prepare lenten, fasting appropriate dishes that are meat and dairy free. Every Sunday is potluck, so bring a dish, and don't forget to make an offering in the coffee hour area to cover coffee hour supplies!
- Altar Servers Meeting Today During Coffee Hour Preparing for the Special Services of Holy Week.
- Help Your Parish Continue to Grow by Making a Special Lenten Contribution to the Building Fund!
- Church Hall Renovation- The Work is Underway!
- Saint Elizabeth Magazine to be published in the Paschal Bulletin with articles written by you! All parishioners are encouraged to participate in this fruitful ministry. Write an article on anything related to the Orthodox Church and submit to Fr. Matthew for review and publication. Your article could be about theology, Church History, personal experience, parenting, spirituality, or really anything that would be appropriate in an Orthodox Magazine. Please consider writing an article during lent for everyone to enjoy on Pascha! The deadline to submit an article is Palm Sunday, April 28th.

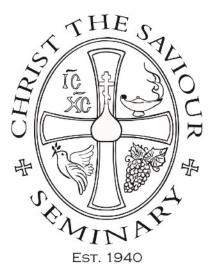
#### **OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 202** Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD) **SUNDAYS** THEMES / GOSPEL READING HOW TO PARTICIPATE: ST JOHN of the LADDER 4th Sunday of Lent Every time you climb stairs this week APRIL 14th Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 ask St. John to help you reach Gospel: Mark 9:17-31 Paradise with the sign of the cross! ST MARY of EGYPT 5th Sunday of Lent Ask the Theotokos to offer you Hebrews 9:11-14 Epistle: and the world pure thoughts APRIL 21st Gospel: Mark 10:32-45 and ideas this week. GREAT AND HOLY WEEK FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! Place your palm branches ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM and pussywillows behind APRIL 28th Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 an icon at home GREAT WEEK BEGINS Gospel: John 12:1-18 and in your car! **GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY** GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY Refrain from TV, Internet & JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS MAY 3rd CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR Phones to honor Christ's Death. ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE Greet everyone with FEAST OF FEASTS! **BRIGHT WEEK** "CHRIST IS RISEN!" HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) MAY 5th & say it before Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17 good morning and goodnight! NO FASTING!

#### **Prayer For Vocations**

Master of all, You promised us, "I will be with you always, even until the very end of the world," and You have taught, "I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Mindful of this pledge, we beseech Your great goodness to inspire men to the Holy Priesthood, the service of Your Holy Orthodox Church, so that she may properly be able to fulfill Your will for Your people in this age. There are children to baptize, the sick to heal, and the dying to care for. There is the Bread of Life to distribute, and the Word of God to teach. There are sins to forgive, and charity to be done in Your Name. Send Your Church in this hour and in every age "vessels of clay" to be instruments of Your presence. Hear us, O Lord, and have mercy.

#### **Prayer For The Priesthood & For our Diocesan Seminarians**

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord,



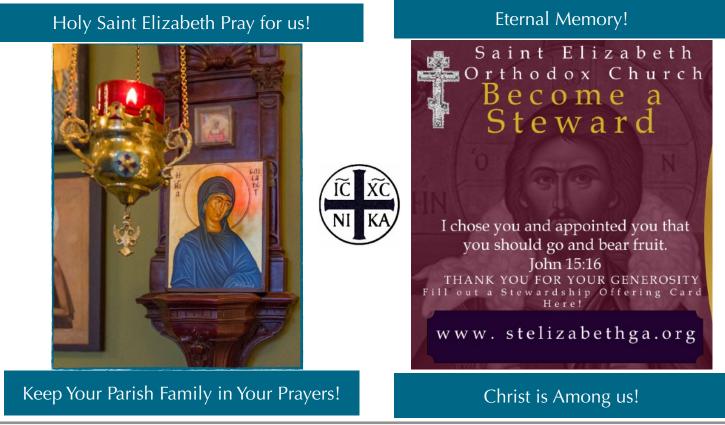
our Metropolitan Gregory, and our spiritual fathers who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Remember also, O Lord, all our Seminarians and their families. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God who loves us, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

#### Parish Family Prayer List

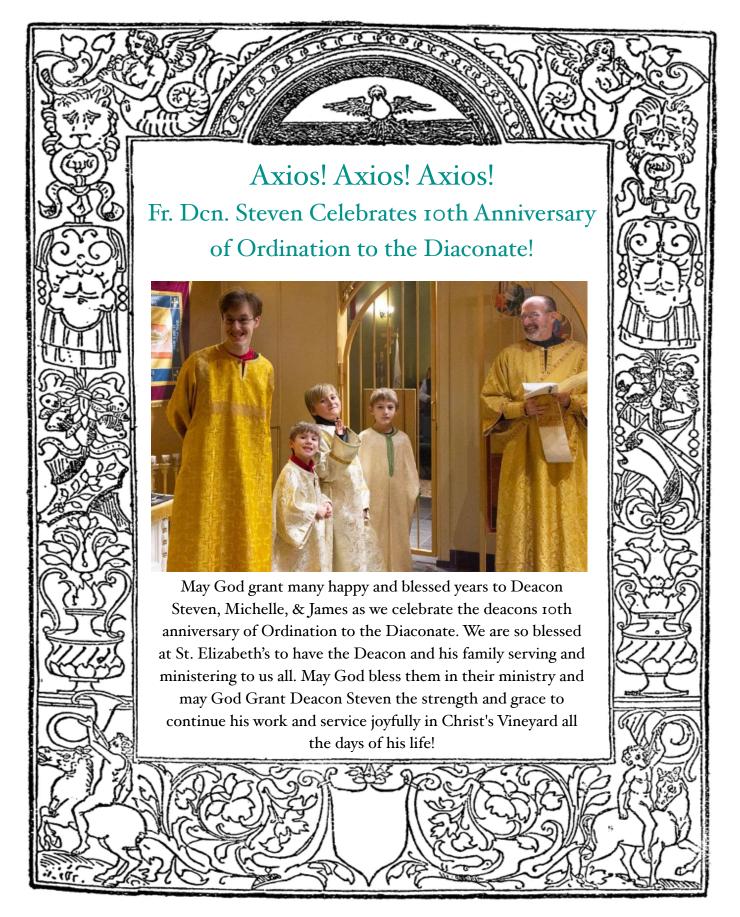
For the Health of: The Melnikoff Family, Pani Betty Jean Baranek, Fr. James Gleason, The Paccio Family, Kara, Joanna, James, Athanasia, Ethel, Tyler, Maria, Page Family, Dean, Margaret, Metropolitan Gregory and his family, David, Joseph, Maria Starcova, David & Paulette Novak, Suzette, Bob, David, Marilyn & family, Mark, Fr. Dcn. Stephen, Michelle, James, Rachel, Kate, Fr. Blaschak & Family, Larry, Alexandra, Tammy, Trahan & Skiba Family, The Hood Family, the Mileshko Family, the Blanar Family, Burt, Sandy, Stephanie, Mary, Tommy, Stephen, Emilia, Simon, Alisha, & Aaron Zak, the Puziculiks Family, Fr. Andy, Davina, & Alexandra, Stan, Fr. Dcn. Charlie & Family, Justin, Charlie, Herbert Schleining, Spencer, Julie, Anna, Galina & Family, Irinia & Family, Fr. Jim & Pani Kathy Dutko, Rick, Katlain, Elenor, Teddy, Mark, Robert & Cindy, Melissa, Ben, Anthony, Rachel, Christine, Cora, Rick, Michelle, Tim, Robert, The Kelemecz Family, Leonard, Leo, & the Olaru Family, Joanna Price, Kim, Isaiah, the Wells Family, Dave, Ashley & family, Mary, Tim, Andrew, Robert, Derrick, Michael, Eli, Ean, Ellie, Amber, Christopher, Deborah, Nick & Rosemary, Mike, Elaiane, Roy, Lin, Dave, Sarah, Gerorge, & Edward, Stephen, Caleb, Amelia, Simon, David, the Gdovin Family, the Rodgers Family, the Kundrat Family, Yvone, George, Amberly, & baby Stella, Jessie, Dexter, Julia, Dan, Cora, Gabriel, Ethan, Tripp, Rachel, Lilly, Emmie, Charlie, Michelle, Serge, Mark, Johnny, Yvette Christine, Johanna, Nicole, Caroline, Alexander, Kelly, Henery, & Benjamin

For the Departed: Evelyn & Boris Melnikoff+, Patricia+, James+, Stephen+, Anna+, Charles+, Robert+, Loraine+. Helen+, Lewis+, Jeane+, Vera+, George+, George+, Ernie+, Eddie+, Maria+, Carl+, Mark+, Barry+, Jospeh+, Phillip+, Jenny+, Peter+, Bryan+, Rebecca+, Fr. Paul+, Maria+, Fr. Hazuda+, George Smisko+, Helen Spanovich+, Bob+, Alma+, Bo+, Saddie+, Fr.
William George+, Violet+, Fr. Kozar+, Benjamin+, John Haddad+, Fred & Helen Mileshko+, Anna+, Natalie+, Lilly+, Christine+, Anna+, Tamara+, Anastasia+, Yvonne+, John+, Betty+, Ada+, Peter+ & Wanda+, George+, Jerry+, Barb+ & Harry+, Beth+, Louise+, Nikolay+, David+, Fr. Michael+, Natalie+, Helen+, Ted+, Tom+, Mike+, Madeline+, Tim+, Fr. John Baranek, Reader Stephen+, Dean+, Fr. Larry+, Kris+, Wathen+, Pani Elenor+, Fr. Michael+, Sally+, David+, Gene+, Kenny+, Ava+, Fr. Tony Jospeh+ & Pani Patsy+, Anatoly+, Fr. Scott+, Steve+, Claudia+, Dave+, Fr. John Duranko, Michael+, Sarah Elizabeth+ Ester+, Julie+, +Michael, +Joe, Mary+

Through the prayers of the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, St. Elizabeth, The Holy Fathers & Mothers, and all the Saints, may our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ have mercy on us and save us!



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St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church

Woodstock, GA

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ST. ELIZABETH ORTHODOX CHURCH

Stewardship Offering / Membership Form

# Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church Become a Steward

I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit. John 15:16 All parishoners and regular attendees are asked to fill out

our new online membership form here!