



ST MARY MAGDALENE

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN
RINCON/SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Scripture Readings

Romans 13:11-14:4 (Epistle)

Brethren, do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Matthew 6:14-21 (Gospel)

The Lord said: For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Lenten Triodion: Sunday of Cheesefare: Expulsion of Adam from Paradise

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam's expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendants became heirs of death and corruption. Let us consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ. At Forgiveness Vespers we sing: "Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit...."

Our Lenten Focus: Stewardship in Action: Using the Gifts Among Us

This year we are placing a special focus on stewardship because Lent calls us to take an honest look at what we are offering back to God. Everything we have is a gift, and stewardship is learning to return those gifts to Him with intention. We're not just talking about this, we're building our Lenten schedule around it. You'll notice most of these offerings aren't being taught by me. The prosthora and prayer rope classes are led by our own parishioners, and we'll also host a parish retreat with Fr. John Dresko as a guest speaker. That's intentional: stewardship means using the gifts already present among us. I think of Mark Guyer, the unofficial, official "Warden Emeritus," who once said he didn't even know what being a warden meant when he was asked, he simply saw a need and stepped in to serve. That's the mindset we're aiming for. I encourage you to take advantage of everything being offered this Lent and to attend as many services as you are able. Lean into the fullness of the season. My hope is that we begin to see stewardship not as a burden, but as a path to holiness. When we offer what we have back to God, He blesses it and makes it fruitful.

FEBRUARY 22ND, 2026

SUNDAY OF CHEESEFARE
EXPULSION OF ADAM & EVE

FEB Birthdays, Names Day, & Anniversaries

- 1st - Joseph Kisel
- 2nd - Jordan White
- 2nd - Camron Farrell-Haynes
- 3rd - Anthony Ally
- 6th - Paul McCollum
- 8th - Mat. Yvonne Matsko
- 8th - Jason Maslo
- 10th - Craig Dixon
- 11th - Heath Vincent
- 17th - Tyler Howell
- 18th - Andreas Savasir
- 28th - Stefan Dita

SCHEDULE

February 23rd - Monday
Canon of St. Andrew of Crete (6:30 PM)

February 24th - Tuesday
Canon of St. Andrew of Crete (6:30 PM)

February 25th - Wednesday
Presanctified Liturgy (6:30 PM)
Lenten Potluck Dinner (After Liturgy)

February 26th - Thursday
Canon of St. Andrew of Crete (6:30 PM)
Coffee Chat at Paddles (401 N Laurel St, Springfield, GA 31329) (10:00 AM)

February 28th - Saturday
Saturday of Orthodoxy Vespers at St James Orthodox Church in Beaufort (9 Tekoa Ln, Beaufort, SC 29902) (5:00 PM)

March 1st - Sunday
Hours (9:00 AM)
Divine Liturgy (9:30 AM)
Coffee Hour (After Liturgy)
Church School (12:00 PM)
Adult Class (12:00 PM)

WISDOM

"Nothing makes us so like God as being ready to forgive the wicked and wrongdoer." - St. John Chrysostom

"Do not claim to have acquired virtue unless you have suffered affliction; for without affliction virtue has not been tested." - St. Mark the Ascetic

WEEKLY JOKES

I got a job at the new bicycle factory. Things are going great. They already made me the new Spokesperson. - Joke submitted by Tom Maty

Sister Thekla is the new treasurer at our church. Her official title is nun of your business.

Going to name my son Gondor so when he cries at night, my wife will whisper to me, "Gondor needs you." And I will say, "And Rohan will answer."

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST! HE IS AND EVER SHALL BE!

Parish Financial Report (February 21st, 2026) | 2026 Goal/Budget: \$175,000

"Every good and perfect gift is from above...Your own of Your own, we offer unto You."

February 2026 Goal: \$12,800
February 2026 Collections: \$8,635
2026 Year to Date: \$20,886

As we enter the final stretch of the month, we are a bit behind after losing the first Sunday to weather. If the parish as a whole can stretch just a little beyond our usual stewardship this week, we can stay on track and move into Lent strong. Thank you for your faithfulness and continued support of our parish.

Full Report here: <https://savannahorthodox.com/reports/>

The Heartbeat of Parish Life – Greeters: Heath, Nate | Next Week's Greeters: Anthony, Nate

Sign Up to Serve: Serving the Church is one of the simplest and most meaningful ways to live out your faith in love. Please consider signing up for Maintenance and Projects, Weekly Church Clean Up, or Coffee Hour at <https://savannahorthodox.com/serve/> and help care for the house of God and our parish family.

Youth Church School: Sundays (~11:45 AM): Church School has split up into 2 groups. Ages 3 through 10 are with Jeanie and ages 11-17 will go with Dr. Christina and Charis.

Weekly Bible Studies: Sundays (~11:45 AM): All classes recorded and on all major podcast platforms. Catechumens are encouraged to attend the Sunday Class.

Coffee Chat: THURSDAYS - 10 AM Paddles - 401 N Laurel St, Springfield, GA 31329.

Saturday Night Questing (Next Session March 14th): See David Reynolds (706-224-2721) to join.

St. Gabriel Fitness Club: For now, we are pausing this ministry due to low participation as we explore new ways to create opportunities for fellowship and activity within our parish family. Stay tuned for what's next.

St. Ambrose Diaper and Baby Items Donations: The Donation bin has been relocated to my office. Please be generous.

Savannah Sirens Jamboree (February 28th @ 2 PM-3:30 PM) at Enmarket Arena

Next Saturday at 2 PM, Zoe and the Savannah Sirens will be playing in a Jamboree at Enmarket Arena. 620 Stiles Ave, Savannah, GA 31415. Those who would like to go will have time to go from the Arena to St. James for Vespers. (Not an official church event, but please come if you'd like to support our girls. Additionally, whenever there are school concerts or games or anything your kids are part, of any kind, please let me know and I will add these to the schedule/announcements. I love going to these things. Please tell me about them).

Saturday of Orthodoxy Vespers at St. James in Beaufort (February 28th @ 5 PM)

On Saturday, February 28th at 5:00 PM, we will gather together with St. James Orthodox Church (9 Tekoa Lane, Beaufort, SC 29902) for Vespers of the Saturday of Orthodoxy. This is a beautiful opportunity to pray together as one Church. All are encouraged to attend as we mark this feast together in worship and fellowship. Also, reminder now to not forget to bring your icons for the procession in the evening service.

Sunday of Orthodoxy Procession (March 1st At End of Liturgy)

Then on Sunday, March 1st, we will have the procession again at the end of Divine Liturgy. This is a beautiful and powerful witness for our children and for one another, so plan to attend and take part in this celebration of the faith. Please bring an icon from home to carry in the procession.

Lenten Retreat with Fr. John Dresko (March 7th and 8th)

Looking ahead, join us for a Lenten retreat in March where Fr. John Dresko, one of my mentors will be speaking on the theme "Equipping the Saints: Feeding the Body of Christ." The retreat will include two one-hour sessions with time for questions and discussion, concluding before Vespers on Saturday evening. Fr. John will also preach on that Sunday and host an informal Q&A during coffee hour, where he has promised to tell a few stories about a certain college student (me) you all will want to hear. A Flyer has been printed. Please post them where you see fit.

Community Fish Fry (March 27th - TBA)

On Friday, March 27th, we will host a Fish Fry as a way to welcome and reach out to our local community during Lent. Stay tuned for more details as we prepare for this opportunity to share fellowship and the faith.

Prospora Baking Class (March 28th @ 12 PM)

On March 28th at 12 PM, Reader Tahir (Markos) and Savannah will lead a class on baking prospora, the bread offered at the Divine Liturgy. This will be an opportunity to learn about the prayer, care, and reverence that go into preparing this sacred offering, and to reflect on the quiet devotion behind something so central to the life of the Church.

Prayer Rope Making (March 29th - After Coffee Hour That Day)

Join us after Coffee Hour on March 29th for a hands on class in making prayer ropes, taught by Josh Takacs. Learn the meaning and tradition behind the knots and how this simple prayer tool helps root us in the Jesus Prayer and a steady life of repentance.

Presanctified Liturgy Potlucks

Also looking ahead, we will have a Lenten potluck every Wednesday after Presanctified Liturgy. Please Sign Up on our website: <https://savannahorthodox.com/coffee-hour/>

Extra Expenses or Kitchen Needs:

Please help support our fellowship hall by donating needed items. We will be sharing a clear list of current needs going forward. If you bring something, please let Fr. Stephen or Suzanne Upchurch know.

2026 Calendars - \$500 (These are free but we are asking a suggested \$10 donation to cover this cost.)

Donate Securely Online:

Our donation page has been upgraded! You can now specify your tithes or donation to any of our programs / ministries.

<https://savannahorthodox.com/help-us-grow/>

Ask Yourself This Daily:

Have you brought someone **NEW** this month or reached out to someone to come back?

Have you gone to Great Vespers at least once this month?

Are you giving your first offering to God/tithing regularly?

Prayer List

Departed

Lacromoara, Doug, Wanda, Rakeem, James, Katty, Kevin, James, Thomas, Infant Cooper, Katherine, Catherine, Ryan, Alana, and all children killed through the evil act of abortion.

Living

Clergy: Abp. Melchisedek, Abp. Benjamin, Abp. Nathaniel, Abp. Alexander, Met. Isaiah, Fr. Matthew, Fr. Michael, Dn. Vassily

Community: Mother Cassiana, Tammy, Litsa, child Lilliana, Carl, Olga, Rita, child Ciana Rose, Jamie, Ray, Alexandra, Issac, Sandy, Donald, Cole, Joseph, Catherine Ann, Katherine, Jeff, David, Andrew, Polly, Ann, George, Doug, David, Katie, Kerri, David, Lilly, Haley, Sean, William, Mary Ann, Vicki, Kati, Tonya, Patricia, Tina, James, Bill, Larsen, Helen, Nicholas, Irena, Pina, Andre, child Oliver, Laurie, Akira, Vic, Jodi, Charlee, Owen, Wendy, Kameron, Karen, Melody, Debra, Johanna, Kathy, Michael, infant Kalea, Bobby, Costa, Luke, James, Terry, Robin, Shawn, Debbie, Leigh, Robert, JaLeigh, Johnny, Cindy, David, Sara, Emily, Eddie, Linda, Ryan, Madeline, Sherelle, Domenic, Mari, Barbara, James, Jason, Jerry, Brianna, Tyler, Tetta, Ashley, and especially all children suffering or in need throughout the world.

Expecting Mothers: Mat. Lindsey, Emma, Hailey, Akira, Erin, Deanna

Military and First Responders: Rdr. Alex, Van, Nick, Tyler, Shannon, Landan, Austin, Chad, Vladimir, Andrew, Justin, Mark, Tammy, Nika, Laila, Josh, Kamaka (Olga), Lia

Catechumens: Dusty, Evan, Nicole, Winry, Jeremiah, Dakota, Bridgette, Theodore, Zach, Asher, Audra, Victor, Charlie, Ethan, Nathan, Cullen, Kwasi, Saiah, James, Eliana, Austin, Kasey, Bently, Raelynn, Emma, Oakleigh, Tyler, Joseph, Chastity, Landan, Jesse, Nick, Melissa, Astrid, Freyja, Evan, Caleb, Devin, Courtney, Kaden, Leo, Tyler, Shannon, Lily, Andrew, Evan, David, Eric, Lia, Wyatt, Renata, Dawson, Katylin, James, Joshua

Prisoners: Stefan, Daron (Basil), Mark

Orthodox Missions: St. James (Beaufort), St. Basil (Marietta), St. John the Merciful (Kissimmee), St. Anthony (Rock Hill), Holy Resurrection (North Augusta), Annunciation (Jacksonville), St. John the Baptist (Colorado Springs), Ss. Mary and Martha Monastery (Wagner) and all missions and monasteries throughout the Diocese of the South and USA.

And for all of those who are suffering in our community and in the world who are in need of prayers.

Latest Reflection:

A Guide to Fasting for Great Lent

<https://savannahorthodox.com/fasting/>

Please read and share this on your social media.

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