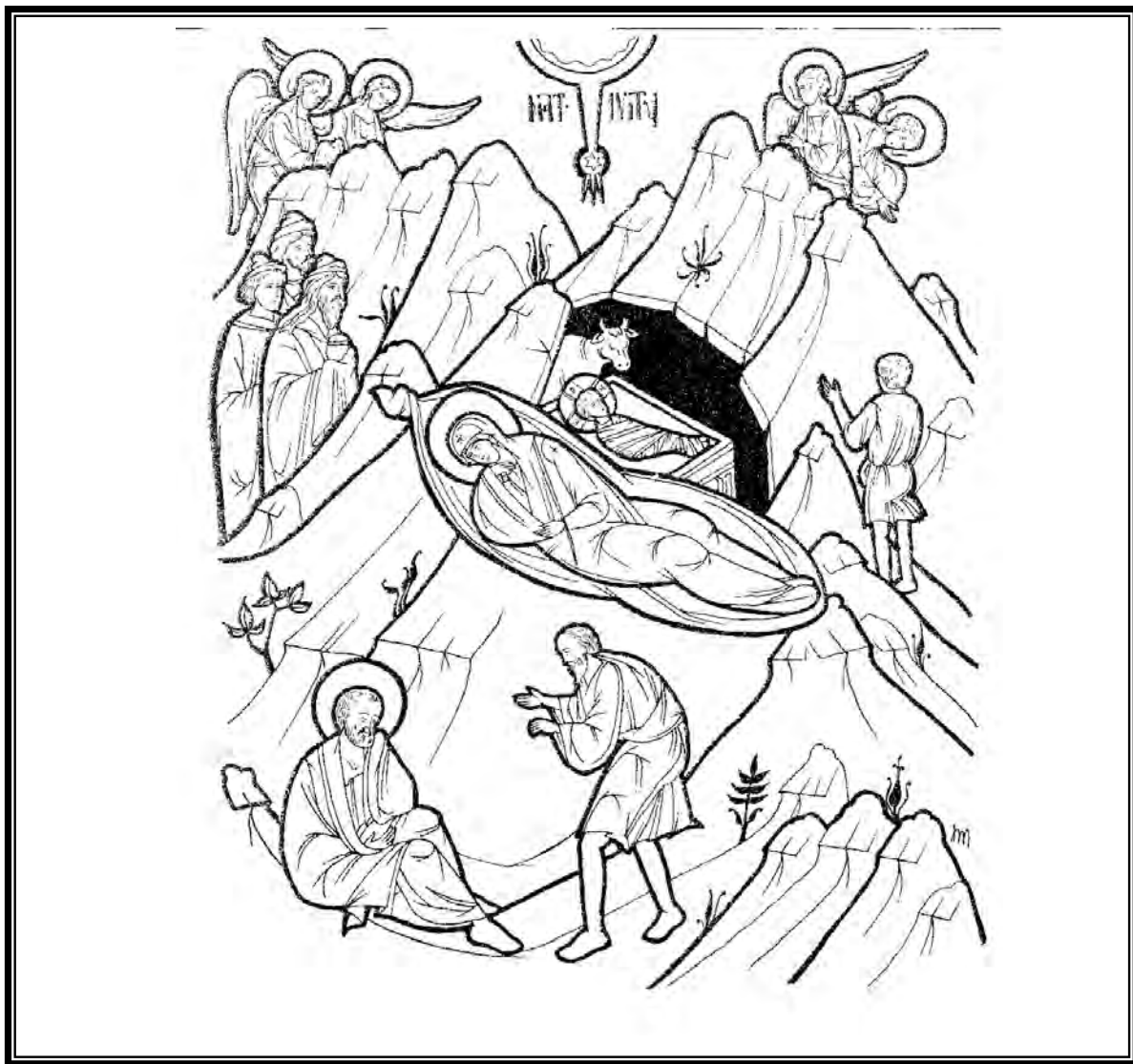


SAINT MARY ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



Sunday, December 21, 2025

*Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ
(The Genealogy)*

Saint Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church

"A parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America"

Church Office hours: Monday– Friday 9am-2pm

249 High Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860

Phone (401) 726-1202 Fax: (401) 729-1203

Parish Center Phone (401) 725-5150

Web site: <http://stmarypawtucket.org>

Email: office@stmarypawtucket.org

**His Eminence Metropolitan SABA, Archbishop of New York
& Metropolitan of all North America**

**His Grace Bishop JOHN, Auxiliary and Bishop of the
Diocese of Worcester and New England**

**V. Rev. Father Elie Estephan
Cell- 1-(240) 205-9079**

**Sub-Deacon Emad Amirhom
Sub-Deacon Cory Dupont**

Schedule of Services

<i>Sunday: Orthros (Matins)</i>	<i>9:00 a.m.</i>
<i>Sunday: Divine Liturgy</i>	<i>10:00 a.m.</i>
<i>Church School</i>	<i>11:15 a.m.</i>

*Enter in Quietness, Rest in Prayer,
Worship in Reverence, Depart in Peace to Serve*

We welcome our Visitors & Guests: Please take a moment to fill out a Visitor Card.

Receiving Communion: Only those Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves may approach the chalice for Holy Communion. Everyone is welcome to partake of the Holy Bread after the Liturgy.



Prayer Line

St. Mary ~ Internet Prayer Line

Prayer requests can be sent to us via the internet at

office@stmarypawtucket.org

All requests must be received by Wednesday noon to be included in that week's bulletin.
Any requests received after that time will be included in the following week's bulletin.

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025
TONE 3 / EOTHINON 6; FOREFEAST OF &
SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (THE GENEALOGY)
VIRGIN-MARTYR JULIANA OF NICOMEDIA; MARTYR THEMISTOKLES OF MYRA IN LYCIA

During the Little Entrance, chant the Resurrectional Apolytikion. The Eisodikon (Entrance Hymn) is “O come, let us worship... save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead...” After the Little Entrance, chant these hymns in the following order:

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE THREE

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN TONE FOUR

(***Joseph was amazed***)

Be thou ready, Bethlehem, Eden hath opened unto all. * Ephratha, prepare thyself, for now, behold, the Tree of Life * hath blossomed forth in the cave from the holy Virgin. * Her womb hath proved a true spiritual Paradise, * wherein the divine and saving Tree is found, * and as we eat thereof we shall all live, * and shall not die as did Adam. * For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforetime.

APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY IN TONE TWO

Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

TROPARION OF THE DORMITION: TONE 1

In giving birth, Thou didst keep Thy virginity and in thy repose, Thou didst not forsake the world, O Theotokos, for Thou art the mother of life, and Thou didst pass over into life; and through thy intercession from death Thou dost redeem our souls.

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST’S NATIVITY IN TONE THREE

(***The original melody***)

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to * God the Word ineffably, * Who was before all the ages. * Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing * the gladsome tidings; * with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him * Who is willing to be gazed on * as a young Child Who * before the ages is God.

The Icon of the Nativity

The icon of the Nativity tells the story of Christ's birth from the Scriptures. In the icon, the angels give thanks with their song; the heavens give the star; the Wise Men give their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The poor, humble shepherds give their praise and amazement; the earth gives the cave, and humanity gives the Virgin. At first glance we see the Theotokos, the Mother of Jesus. She is placed in the center and is the largest figure in the icon. She is kneeling with crossed arms, looking at the Christ child. The three stars, denoting her virginity before, during, and after the Nativity, are on her garments. The Christ Child, in the center of the icon, is in swaddling clothes and is lying in the manger. In the background is the dark cave where He was born. In the cave are an ox and a donkey guarding the newborn Babe. Even though the Gospels say nothing of the cave, this information is from Holy Tradition. Nor do the Gospels speak of the ox and the donkey, but all icons of the Nativity include these animals. Including the animals in the icon fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 1:3 "The ox knows his master, and the donkey his master's crib, but Israel does not know me, and the people have not regarded me." The long ray of light from the star points directly to the cave. This ray comes from the star and travels to all parts of the world. It teaches that this bright star is an astronomical happening, and is a messenger from heaven announcing the birth of Jesus. On the left hand side of the icon is another scene. The Wise Men, who were led by the star, are riding horses to bring their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus. The Wise Men are of various ages. One is without a beard. The other Wise Man has long hair and a long beard, which indicates that he is much older. These details teach that regardless of age and appearance, the Good News was given to each and everyone. Opposite the Wise Men is the scene with the humble shepherds. An angel proclaims the glad tidings. A young shepherd plays a reed instrument. This scene reveals that the music of the humans was added to the hymn of the angels. Across from the shepherd's scene is the heavenly choir of angels. They are giving glory to God. The angels serve two purposes in the Nativity of Christ, they give glory to God and announce the good news to all mankind. The background shows a very rugged terrain. Joseph could not find room in Bethlehem, so they went outside of Bethlehem to a cave. This rocky mountain formation serves as a background for the event. In the lower part of the icon are two more scenes. In the right hand corner are the two women Joseph brought to take care of the Christ child. They are seen bathing Him. Opposite the bathing of Jesus scene sits a sad and worried Joseph. Joseph is troubled and despondent. There is an old man talking to Joseph. The old man as Satan. Satan can appear in many forms. Here he is as an old man who is tempting Joseph and disturbing him. Satan is telling Joseph that the virgin birth is impossible. He's telling Joseph that he's a fool if he believes this. This story comes to us from Holy Tradition. The sad Joseph shows us not only his personal predicament but the dilemma of all mankind the difficulty of accepting that which is "beyond words or reason." The tree, which is in the middle of the lower part of the icon, is a symbol of the Tree of Jesse. This tree refers to Isaiah 11:1-2, "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him." King David was often mentioned as the son of Jesse and Jesus was from the House of David.



THE EPISTLE

(For the Sunday before the Nativity)

*Blessed are Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.
For Thou art justified in all that Thou hast done for us.*

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11:9-10, 32-40)

Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.



Arabic Liturgy

Arabic Liturgy is being offered the first Saturday of each month at 6:00 P.M. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Please Note:

- ♦ Advent Feast: November 15th-December 24th— Please abstain from meat & dairy.

THE GOSPEL

(For the Sunday before the Nativity: “The Genealogy”)

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (1:1-25)

he book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ were fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus.

**PRAYERS ARE BEING OFFERED FOR
GOOD HEALTH AND BLESSING OF:**

Mark Hashway
Barbara Samra
Sandra Conca
Offered by: Elaine Wilbur

Victoria Hallal
Offered by: Ron Hallal

Jacob, Maria, Sofia & Emilia Khoury
Nouhad Kardous
Linda Dvelis
Kristen Silva
Paul, Maureen & Mary Gurghigian
Offered by: Salwa Khoury

Paul, Maureen & Mary Gurghigian
Cindy Hayes & Family
Mack and Louise Megalli
Mother Xenia Minihan
Jacob Muller
Ronald Muller
Victoria Muller
Michelle Saliba
Kristen Anne Silva
Phil Spenard
Madison Tucker
Offered by: Michael & Nancy Muller

Kristen Silva & Family
Jacob Khoury & Family
Salwa Khoury & Family
Offered by: Linda Dvelis

Salwa Khoury
Jacob, Maria, Sophia, Emilia Khoury
Offered by: John & Anita Chamoun

Elizabeth Edes
Offered by: Fred Elliott

Ray & Leila Trabulsi
Offered by: Joe & Marlene Samra



Ray Trabulsi
Susan Harvey
St Mary Choir
Brown University Community
Offered by: Ray and Leila Trabulsi

**PRAYERS ARE BEING OFFERED FOR
IN LOVING MEMORY OF:**

Janice Hallal
Offered by: Her Loving Husband Ron

Mary Hallal
Offered by: Her Loving Son Ron

Fred Hashway
Kevin Hashway
Lorice Hallal
Robert Laffey
Offered by: Elaine Wilbur

Fred & Adele Shwaery
Offered by: Linda Dvelis & Family

Nabil Khoury
George Kardous
Offered by: Salwa Khoury

Suzanne Ayoub (5 years)
Offered by: Ed & Lisa Ayoub

Louis Josephs
Offered by: Bill & Mary Lou Catelli

Joseph & Mary Samra
John & Esma Gorab
Offered by: Joe & Marlene Samra

Louis Josephs
Offered by: George & Lois Kilsey
Leon & Judith Josephs

CONGRATULATIONS

We congratulate Fr. Elie's son Chadi on his wedding and we also welcome Chadi & his wife Christina into our community. Wishing them a long, happy life together. May God Bless them.



December is the month of The Order of St. Ignatius

During the month of December, in our Antiochian Archdiocese we commemorate the role of The Order of St. Ignatius in The Life of the Church and it's Ministry. Members of The Order will be reading the Epistle, taking the collection, and assisting in the Vestry. May God bless all the members of our parish chapter of The Order and guide them to fulfill their Ministry.

THE SYNAXARION (Plain Reading)

On December 21 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Virgin-martyr Juliana of Nicomedia; and Martyr Themistokles of Myra in Lycia.

On this day, the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, we have been enjoined by our holy and God-bearing Fathers to make commemoration of all them that from the beginning of time have been well-pleasing unto God, from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as Luke the Evangelist hath recounted historically; and likewise for the Prophets and Prophetesses, especially of Daniel the Prophet and the three holy youths.

It is also known as the Sunday of the Holy Genealogy. We remember the aforementioned names, those in the Old Testament who were related to Christ by blood, and those who spoke of His Birth as a man. In the Divine Liturgy, we shall read of Jesus Christ's lineage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew. In this way, the Church shows us that Christ truly became a man, taking on human nature. He was not a ghost, an apparition, a myth, a distant imagined god, or the abstract god of philosophers; such a god does not have a family tree. Our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has flesh and blood, human ancestors—many of whom sinned greatly, but like David, also repented greatly. Yet, all of these righteous ones in every age had been well-pleasing to God because they loved Him. By taking on human nature, the Son of God became like us in all ways, in flesh and blood, in mind and soul, and in heart and will. He differed from us in only one way: He could not sin. Since we know that Christ's human nature remained sinless, He is also fully divine, and He shows us the way in which we can avoid sin, and so improve and transform our human nature. By their holy intercessions, O Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

Holiday Liturgical Schedule

- ♦ **Sunday, December 21st:** Church School Pageant & Luncheon hosted by The Order of St. Ignatius
- ♦ **Wednesday, December 24th:** 9:00 A.M.– Royal Hours
5:00 P.M.– Othros
6:00 P.M.– Divine Liturgy of the Nativity
- ♦ **Wednesday, December 31st:** 6:00 P.M.– Liturgy of the Circumcision of our Lord
- ♦ **Monday, January 5, 2026:** 6:00 P.M.– Liturgy for Epiphany Feast

****Note: From Christmas Day until January 6th inclusive, there is a general dispensation from all fasting****



Sunday School Pageant

Today is our Sunday School Pageant. Thank you to the teachers and students for providing this wonderful production of the Nativity for the parish to enjoy. There will be a luncheon following Liturgy at the Parish Center, hosted by The Order of St. Ignatius. Thank you to the St. Ignatius Members for hosting the luncheon.

All are welcome to attend this complimentary luncheon!





St. Mary Church School & Teen SOYO News

Attention All Parents: Please bring your children to the Liturgy before Church School. Church School starts every Sunday following communion (Approx. 11:15am).

- ♦ **December 21st:** Pageant performance & Luncheon generously offered by The Order of St. Ignatius.



Available for Sale

Do you need extra foods for your holiday table? Sfeeha, Nuts & String Cheese are still available for purchase during Coffee Hour. Please see Cindy Hayes if interested.

Endowment Gift Received in Memory of Omer Reed

We are pleased to share that Dr. Joseph and Marlene Samra have made a generous contribution to the Charitable Gift Program, Saint Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church's endowment fund, in memory of their mentor and dear friend, Dr. Omer K. Reed.

This heartfelt gift reflects their deep admiration and appreciation for Dr. Reed, whose decades-long friendship left a lasting impression on their lives. A true pioneer in modern dentistry, Dr. Reed was an internationally respected lecturer, a gifted teacher, and a visionary.

We are deeply grateful to Dr. and Mrs. Samra for their generosity and enduring commitment to the future of our Parish. May God grant them many years!

~Charitable Gift Program committee

Coffee Hour Update

Contact Ghassan Alarmani (Gus) to sponsor a coffee hour- (781)414-1091

For those who are sponsoring a coffee hour, the contribution is \$200, including food, paper goods and beverage.

Memorial coffee hour:

Family providing food ,we kindly request a contribution of \$250.00. All necessary supplies will be provided at no extra cost to you. Your contribution will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Coffee Hour Sponsorships

Date:

Sponsored by:

Sponsored for:

December 21, 2025	St. Mary Church	Church School Christmas Pageant
December 28, 2025	Salwa Khoury	Dr. Nabil Khoury (Birthday Remembrance)
January 4, 2026	Yuliia & Michael Raposa	For the Baptism of our baby Gabriel
January 11, 2026	<i>available for sponsorship</i>	
January 18, 2026	Fred Kilsey & Family	Memory of Michelle Kilsey (15 years)
January 25, 2026	<i>not available</i>	Annual General Assembly
February 1, 2026	Ladies Society	“Souper Bowl of Caring” Fundraiser
February 8, 2026	Maen, Diana, Mariana & Adam Albatarseh	Health of Family
February 15, 2026	Church School	Pasta Luncheon (Camp Fundraiser)
February 22, 2026	Walid & Mirna Nakhoul	Health of Family
March 1, 2026	Saliba, Robin, Bianca & Michelle	Health of Family
March 8, 2026	<i>available for sponsorship</i>	
March 15, 2026	<i>available for sponsorship</i>	
March 22, 2026	<i>available for sponsorship</i>	
March 29, 2026	<i>available for sponsorship</i>	
April 5, 2026	<i>not available</i>	Palm Sunday
April 12, 2026	<i>not available</i>	PASCHA

Cemetery

Please note: All real wreaths need to be removed from the cemetery by January 10th.

Thank you,
Cemetery Committee



CHURCH CALENDAR

Sunday, December 21st: Sunday before the Nativity (Genealogy)

Church School- Pageant Performance & Luncheon graciously
offered by The Order of St. Ignatius (everyone welcome)

Wednesday, December 24th: Christmas Eve

9:00 A.M.– Royal Hours

5:00 P.M.– Orthros

6:00 P.M.– Divine Liturgy of The Nativity

Thursday, December 25th: Christmas Day

Sunday, December 28th: Sunday after the Nativity

Wednesday, December 31st: New Year's Eve

6:00 P.M.– Liturgy of the Circumcision of our Lord



Keep Christ in Christmas

Looking ahead:

Thursday, January 1, 2026: New Year's Day

Saturday, January 3, 2026: 6:00 P.M.– Arabic Liturgy

Tuesday, January 13, 2026: 7:00 P.M.– Parish Council Meeting

Sunday, January 25, 2026: Annual General Assembly

Sunday, February 1, 2026: Ladies Society "Souper Bowl of Caring" Fundraiser

Saturday, February 7, 2026: 6:00 P.M.– Arabic Liturgy

Tuesday, February 10, 2026: 7:00 P.M.– Parish Council Meeting

Sunday, February 15, 2026: Church School Pasta Lunch (Camp Fundraiser)

Monday, February 23rd, 2026: Lent Begins