

SAINT MARY ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



*Sunday, February 22, 2026*

*Forgiveness Sunday  
(Cheese Fare)*

# *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](mailto: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](mailto: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, FEBRUARY 22, 2026**  
**TONE 4 / EOTHINON 4**  
**SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS (CHEESE FARE)**

UNCOVERING OF THE SEVEN MARTYRS' RELICS AT GATE OF EUGENIOS IN CONSTANTINOPLE;  
MARTYR ANTHUSA AND HER TWELVE SERVANTS

*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 FOUR**

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

**TROPARION OF THE DORMITION IN TONE ONE**

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 FOR FORGIVENESS SUNDAY IN TONE SIX**

O Thou Who guidest to wisdom, and givest understanding and intelligence, the Instructor of the ignorant, and Helper of the poor, strengthen my heart and grant it understanding, O Master. Give me word, O Word of the Father; for behold, I shall not refrain my lips from crying to Thee, O merciful One, have mercy upon me who am fallen.



## THE EPISTLE

(For Sunday of Forgiveness)

*O Lord, how magnified are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul.*

*The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. (13:11-14:4)*

Brethren, now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in chambering and licentiousness, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. But as for the one who is weak in faith, receive him, but not for disputes over opinions. For one believes he may eat anything; but the weak person eats herbs. 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 be the judge over the servant of a stranger? To his own master he either stands or falls; but he will be made to stand; for God is able to make him stand.

## THE GOSPEL

(For Sunday of Forgiveness)

*The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (6:14-21)*

The Lord said to His Disciples: If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

**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  
Bryan Boulis & Family  
Offered by: Fred Elliott

Salwa Khoury  
Offered by: A Friend

Phil & Flo Spenard  
Offered by: Sandra Matook & Family

Phil & Flo Spenard  
Ray & Leila Trabulsi  
Offered by: Will Small

Don, Lauren, Allie and Donald Joseph Hayes  
Dan, Liz and Gabriella Hayes  
Sarah Hayes & Dan Hennigan  
Offered by: Cindy Hayes

Mary Massiwer  
Mauren, Paul & Mary Gurghigian  
Mary & Bill Franklin & Family  
Diane Andrew & Paul Bernier  
Laura, Jim & Noelle Arrighi  
John & Patricia Massiwer  
Flo & Phil Spenard & Family  
Kristen Silva & Family  
Jacob Khoury & Family  
Marietta Foster & Family  
Ray & Leila Trabulsi  
Phil & Bette Ayoub  
Faye McCray  
Offered by: Cindy Hayes & Family

**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

Alan Matook  
Offered by: Sandra Matook & Family

Don Hayes  
John Massiwer  
Tom Andrew  
Offered by: Cindy Hayes & Family

**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.

## Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour is being offered by Walid & Mirna Nakhoul for the Health of Family. Coffee Hour will be held at the Parish Center following Liturgy.



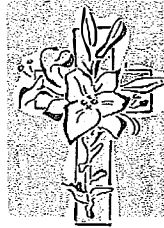
**In the Gospel lesson in the Orthodox lectionary prescribed for the Sunday before Great Lent (Cheese-fare Sunday), the Lord Jesus offers us a three-part recipe for Lent: forgiveness, fasting, and laying up treasures in heaven.**

### Forgiveness

The trouble with our world today is that we have built too many walls. There was the Iron Curtain. The Bamboo Curtain. Walls between the races, between husbands and wives, parents and children. Walls between man and God. One of the best ways to tear down walls is by forgiveness. The walls between man and God are built by sin. During Great Lent the Church calls upon us to look at the cross of Jesus and His great mercy. She invites us to come to Christ during this time in the great Sacrament of Confession to exchange our sins for the riches of His Grace, to taste and experience for ourselves the sweetness of His forgiving love. Having received His forgiveness, God calls on us to grant forgiveness to all who have hurt us and also to seek forgiveness from those whom we have hurt. God offers us His forgiveness very graciously and generously. But, His forgiveness obligates us to forgive others. This is exactly what Jesus says in this Gospel passage: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14-15) Christianity begins with the forgiveness of our Lord. But it does not end there. Because I have been forgiven and daily am being forgiven by God for my many sins, I am obligated to forgive others. So Lent becomes a time for tearing down walls first between man and God and then between neighbors. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann has written in his book Great Lent:

*"The triumph of sin, the main sign of its rule over the world, is division, opposition, separation, hatred. Therefore, the first break through this fortress of sin is forgiveness; the return to unity, solidarity, love. To forgive is to put between me and my 'enemy' the radiant forgiveness of God Himself"*

Our first challenge for Great Lent is to receive God's forgiveness and to forgive.



## What is Lent?

Prayer † Fasting † Acts of Mercy

### Orthodox Vocabulary

#### Lenten Fasting

Fasting is an essential element of the Christian Life. Christ fasted and taught men to fast. Blessed fasting is done in secret (Matthew 6:16; Romans 14). It has as its goal the purification of our lives, the liberation of our souls and bodies from sin, the strengthening of our human powers of love for God and man, the enlightening of our entire being for communion with the blessed Trinity. The Orthodox rules for Lenten fasting are the monastic rules. No meat is allowed after Meatfare Sunday and no eggs or dairy products after Cheesefare Sunday. These rules exist not as a Pharisaic "burden too hard to bear" (Luke 11:46), but as an ideal to be striven for; not as an end in themselves, but as means to spiritual perfection crowned in love. The fast of Great Lent continues from Meatfare Sunday to Easter Sunday. And is broken only after the Paschal Divine Liturgy. Knowing the great effort to which they are called, Christians should make every effort to fast as well as they can, in secret, so that God would see and bless them openly with a holy life. Each person must do his best in the light of the given ideal.

# St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church, Pawtucket Schedule of Services: Great Lent 2026

**Great Lent begins on February 23rd**

The Service of Great Compline (St. Mary Church) will be held on Tuesday & Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm

The Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts will be held on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm. *Those wishing to partake of Holy Communion ought to be fasting from 12:00 noon on.*

The service of the Akathyst Hymn or Madeeh (The Salutations to the Virgin Mary) will be held on the first five Friday evenings of Great Lent at 6:30 pm with a pot-luck to follow.

The Divine Liturgy on Lazarus Saturday, April 4th will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. with a luncheon following Liturgy.

***Palm Sunday is on April 5th***

Holy Week starts on Sunday evening April 5th with the Bridegroom Service at 6:30 p.m.

Great and Holy Week: Monday, April 6th- Saturday, April 11th

***Great and Holy PASCHA (Easter) is April 12th***

***May the Living God, the Fountain of Wisdom, enlighten our minds, strengthen our bodies, and nourish our souls in the blessing of this holy season, the Lenten Spring.***

# Ladies Society News

March is Antiochian Women Ladies Month and the Ladies of our Parish will be Reading the Epistle, Collecting Trays, Ushering during Liturgy thru the month of March. We also will be having a Luncheon for the NAB Project, "Endowment Fund for our Beloved Widow Clergy Wives". This Luncheon will be held on Sunday March 28th following liturgy.

First, I want to thank everyone for their support of our Annual Souper-Bowl of caring fundraiser. We raised over \$700 for our Box Lunch Program.

As we are beginning Great Lent we have many exciting things happening with the Antiochian Women/Ladies Society and our church.

Second, We will be collecting items for our Warm Your Neighbor program through March. Hats, Gloves, Coats, Socks, Sweatshirts/pants, Hand Warmers, Blankets and toiletries can be brought to the collection box in the Parish Center.

We also will be having a Bake Sale for Lorda's Tuition.

Lastly, the season of Lent affords us many opportunities for increasing our Spiritual life through fasting, Prayer and almsgiving. We are hosting the Sunday of Orthodoxy program with the Rhode Island Orthodox Clergy on Sunday March 1st at 6PM with a coffee hour following at our Parish Center. We also will be having Compline and Presanctified Liturgy each Wednesday and the Akathist Hymns to the Theotokos on Fridays following with a Potluck dinner and speakers on some evenings. Please plan to attend these services and help when asked to bring a dish to potluck or to Usher/read, etc.

Thank you,  
Cindy Hayes





## 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).

♦ **Saturday, April 4th:**

Lazarus Saturday Retreat and Church School hosting:

Potluck Luncheon-(*everyone invited to attend*)

10am-2pm-Church School Lazarus Saturday Lenten Retreat



### THE SYNAXARION (Plain Reading)

It is the Sunday of Forgiveness, known also as Cheese Fare Sunday. Today's lesson from the Holy Gospel teaches us about forgiveness and fasting, and how both are crucial to our own return to Paradise. The divine Fathers also set the anniversary of the exile of Adam from the Paradise of bliss on this day, at the entrance of Great Lent, to show us by deed as well as word how great is the benefit that accrues to man from fasting and repenting; and, on the contrary, how great the harm that comes from destructive gluttony and from disobedience to the divine commandments. The sin of gluttony resulted in Adam and Eve's banishment from Paradise, because they disobeyed God by eating from the tree which He had forbidden them. The Church reminds us of this event to encourage us to return to that ancient glory and primeval happiness by means of fasting and obedience to God and His commandments. By Thine ineffable compassion, O Christ our God, make us worthy of the delight of Paradise and have mercy on us, as Thou art alone the Lover of mankind. Amen.

## 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

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Sponsored by:</u>	<u>Sponsored for:</u>
February 22, 2026	Walid & Mirna Nakhoul	Health of Family
March 1, 2026	Saliba, Robin, Bianca & Michelle	Health of Family
March 8, 2026	Her Loving Family	Memory of Loric Hallal (2 years)
March 15, 2026	Dr. Zeyad Morcos & Family	Marie Haddad (40 Day Memorial)
March 22, 2026	Her Loving Family	Elizabeth McNeil (40 Day Memorial)
March 29, 2026	Ladies Society	Luncheon for the NAB Project, "Endowment Fund for our Beloved Widow Clergy Wives"
April 5, 2026	<i>not available</i>	Palm Sunday
April 12, 2026	<i>not available</i>	PASCHA
April 19, 2026	Lindsey Chammas	Thankful for the Church Community
April 26, 2026	Church School	Pancake Breakfast (Camp Fundraiser)
May 3, 2026	Her Loving Family	Memory of Doha Geha Chamas
May 10, 2026	No Coffee Hour	
May 17, 2026	Charitable Gift Program	Charitable Gift Participants
May 24, 2026	Sean & Kayla Joaseus	The Catechumens
May 31, 2026	Emile Sarkis & Family	The Health of Family

*Repentance is the renewal of life. This means we must free ourselves of all our negative traits and turn toward absolute good. No sin is unforgivable except the sin of unrepentance.... There are also tears of repentance, when a person's conscience tells him that he has committed many sins. When he realizes his sinfulness, he weeps. That is an act of God's Grace— a soul repents, and the sin is washed away by tears... When a person realizes his sinfulness, he gradually frees himself from the cares of this world and from his own egoism and when this occurs, it is in a state of Grace.*

*~Elder Thaddeus of Vitounica*



# CHURCH CALENDAR

**Sunday, February 22, 2026:** Forgiveness Sunday (Cheesefare)

**Monday, February 23, 2026:** Lent Begins

**Tuesday, February 24, 2026:** 6:30P.M.- Service of the Great Compline

**Wednesday, February 25, 2026:** 6:30 P.M.– Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts

**Thursday, February 26, 2026:** 6:30P.M.- Service of the Great Compline

**Friday, February 27, 2026:** 6:30P.M.- Service of the Akathyst Hymn & Pot-Luck to follow

**Sunday, March 1, 2026:** Sunday of Orthodoxy

Second collection for Seminarians

6:00 P.M.-Vespers for Sunday of Orthodoxy & Coffee Hour

**Tuesday, March 3, 2026:** 6:30P.M.- Service of the Great Compline

**Wednesday, March 4, 2026:** 6:30 P.M.– Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts

**Thursday, March 5, 2026:** 6:30P.M.- Service of the Great Compline

**Friday, February 27, 2026:** 6:30P.M.- Service of the Akathyst Hymn & Pot-Luck to follow

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

**Sunday, March 8, 2026:** Sunday of Gregory Palamas

Daylight Savings Time begins

**Tuesday, March 10, 2026:** 6:30P.M.- Service of the Great Compline

7:00 P.M.– Parish Council Meeting



## Are you interested in joining a Psalterry group here at St Mary Church?

### *You may ask "What is a Psalter*

How does it work? Each of us is assigned a number & on Day 1 of 40, you start reading the Kathisma that matches your number. The next day, you'll read the next Kathisma and continue moving through the Kathisma each day. When you get to 20 – you simply go back to the 1st Kathisma of your assignment.

Please let me know if you are interested in joining this group either by email ([hayescindylee@gmail.com](mailto:hayescindylee@gmail.com)) or text 401-480-4306 or at the Coffee Hour this Sunday. You will be assigned a number and collectively we will read the Psalms together each day during lent.