

**The Weekly Messenger – February 25, 2018**  
**St. John Chrysostom Albanian Orthodox Church**  
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*Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40 Gospel: John 1:43-51*

**First Sunday of Great Lent – The Sunday of Orthodoxy:** For more than one hundred years the Church of Christ was troubled by the persecution of the Iconoclasts of evil belief, beginning in the reign of Leo the Isaurian (717-741) and ending in the reign of Theophilus (829-842). After Theophilus's death, his widow the Empress Theodora (celebrated Feb. 11), together with the Patriarch Methodius (June 14), established Orthodoxy anew. This ever-memorable Queen venerated the icon of the Mother of God in the presence of the Patriarch Methodius and the other confessors and righteous men, and openly cried out these holy words: "If anyone does not offer relative worship to the holy icons, not adoring them as though they were gods, but venerating them out of love as images of the archetype, let him be anathema." Then with common prayer and fasting during the whole first week of the Forty-day Fast, she asked God's forgiveness for her husband. After this, on the first Sunday of the Fast, she and her son, Michael the Emperor, made a procession with all the clergy and people and restored the holy icons, and again adorned the Church of Christ with them. This is the holy deed that all we the Orthodox commemorate today, and we call this radiant and venerable day the Sunday of Orthodoxy, that is, the triumph of true doctrine over heresy.

**International Women's Day Celebration and Dance:**

NEXT SATURDAY!! March 3, 2018, 5:00 – 10:00 pm in the Church Hall. Tickets are \$50.00, \$20.00 for children under 12. Buffet dinner and continuous dancing are included! Soda & coffee will be provided BY.O.B. Please visit our website to register or contact Nilda Salavachi [trustee.nilda@stjohnsphila.org](mailto:trustee.nilda@stjohnsphila.org) for more info

**John Melnik – Annual Buddy Walk:** John is now a 3rd grader! He is taking swim lessons at the Mary Campbell Center and karate at Gentle Palm Studio. He still loves the Mexican rock band Maná, traveling to Cabo, drumming, painting, drawing, singing and playing with his friends at school. And most of all having a blast with all of you at the Buddy walk. If you cannot join us this year at the walk, please consider a donation to team **Brother John**. Thank so much. The Melnik Family  
<https://www.ds-stride.org/delawarebuddywalk/profiles/team/18>

**The Rite of Forgiveness** at the end of last Sunday's Divine Liturgy was amazing. We all formed a line and asked each other forgiveness in order to begin Great Lent properly. It is a very moving and powerful ritual which has meaning beyond what we can even imagine. We continue into Great Lent in the spirit of Christ, not paying attention to the sins of our brothers and sisters, but focusing on our own spiritual lives. To those who were not able to attend we look forward to next year!

**Commemorations for the Departed:** The victims of the mass shooting in Florida, Victoria, Katherine Halkedis, Pandora Bendo, Susan Thomas, Steven DiStefano, Larry Jance, James Pandeli, Charlie Daka, Nico Mallozzi, Jorggia Kashari, Father Deacon Stephen Stefani and those servicemen and women who have fallen asleep in the Lord in the service of their Country.

**Commemorations for the Living:** The survivors of the mass shooting in Florida, Father Dimitrie Vincent, Joseph Urquhart, Sara, Craig Risley, Wayne Merkle, Elizabeth Jones, Ann Gjoka, Virginia Daka, Haretina (Papa) Milo, Margarita, Peter Melnik, Dhimiter Ndrecka, Pandeli, Jorgaq, Lefteri, and all of the men and women serving in the Armed Forces.

**Pre-sanctified Liturgy on Wednesday February 28<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00pm.** A beautiful service by candle light. It is less than one hour long and then if you choose you can join us for a Lenten (Pot Luck) dinner in the church hall. This past Wednesday we had 4 people at the Pre-sanctified Liturgy. We sure hope more are able to attend this week!

**Coffee Hour Sponsors:** *Please check the sign-up sheet in the vestibule and pick a date!*

**February 25<sup>th</sup>** Spiro & Marjana Kosta in memory of Victoria

**March 4<sup>th</sup>** Bendo/Fiss Families in memory of Pandora

**March 11<sup>th</sup>** Open Date – No Sponsor

**March 18<sup>th</sup>** Vissar Family in memory of Flossie

**Upcoming Events:**

**Feb 25<sup>th</sup>** Sunday of Orthodoxy

**WEDNESDAY Feb 28<sup>th</sup> Pre-sanctified Liturgy 7:00 pm**

**March 1<sup>st</sup>** Charity & Benevolence Mtg 7:00 pm

**Saturday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>** 10:00 am Baptism Olivia Gore daughter of Nick & Athina  
5:00 pm – 10:00pm– Annual Women's Day Dance

**March 4<sup>th</sup>** 40- day Memorial Pandora Bendo

**March 8<sup>th</sup>** Outreach Meeting 7:00 pm

**March 11<sup>th</sup>** Veneration of the Holy Cross

**March 18<sup>th</sup>** 3 Year Memorial Flossie Vissar

**March 25<sup>th</sup>** Annual Sunday school ice skating 1:00-2:30 pm at the University of Penn  
Rink - Always a fun time!