THE ST. GEORGE
Grapevine
Vol. 2, No. 2 Spring 2026

Pastor's Corner

by Rev. Fr. Alex Mackoul

Pascha

Beloved in Christ, every year, on the first Sunday, after the first full moon, after the spring equinox, we celebrate Pascha. Say that 5 times fast. Christians all over the world have celebrated Pascha on this day for over a thousand years based on what was decided at the first Ecumenical Council in the city of Nicea (near Constantinople) in the year 325.

The roots of this celebration, however, go back way before any councils were held, before any schisms were created, and before Christ rose from the dead. Our Paschal celebration can be traced all the way back to the book of Exodus. This book brings us into a cosmic war between Yahweh and the gods of Egypt. It is a proclamation about who has the ultimate power and glory in the universe.

In this story we see that God works signs and wonders through the plagues and puts the Egyptian gods to shame. When this doesn't change the hearts of the Egyptians, we finally get to the crossing of Yam Suph (Red Sea or Sea of Reeds). It stands above all else as the last great wonder and the final battle between God and the Egyptian deities.

In order to understand the magnitude of this wonder it's helpful to know that in the ancient world, there were not really distinctions between the "natural" and "supernatural" worlds. The visible and invisible were seen together. They overlapped one another and in the Egyptian mind, Yam Suph was not just a sea separating their lands from other nations, it was also a location in the Egyptian underworld, the realm of the dead.

In the underworld, Yam Suph led to the land of reeds where the dead lived in a shadowy existence in the presence of their gods. Those movies where you see someone ferrying souls to the other side of the river, that is exactly what is going on at Yam Suph in the underworld.

In other words, this sea had loads of meaning and function for the Egyptians. It was the sea that led to the land of the dead and it is this sea that God simply blows and parts so that the Israelites can cross as if they were on dry land (showing He is the one with the power over death and can lead anyone through it to life). God simply makes a way through the place of death without any effort, bringing his people to dwell with him on the other side, while the Egyptians drown.

This is not just an image of what will eventually happen at Pascha. It is God doing the same exact thing but on a smaller level, over a thousand years earlier. The God who made a way through death and enslavement in Egypt will one day trample down death by His death and free all those enslaved in the realm of hades and grant freedom to all those under the tyranny of the devil.

We enter into that same salvation the Israelites shared when they crossed the Egyptian border into freedom, only now it's on the eternal scale. We enter into that same salvation the Israelites shared when they entered the promise land, only now it is in the land where the sun never sets, where God sheds light on all things for all time. This is the joy that Pascha brings!

Pascha is the way that God works! It is the reality in our world! Our God brings freedom, salvation, and the destruction of death on the largest scale. In other words, "Christ is Risen" is the proclamation that we are children of eternal freedom, eternal salvation, and unending joy! We enter into this here and now, in the Church, and forever in the kingdom!

Christ is Risen!

Congratulations to all graduates!

"Trust in The Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

-Proverbs 3:5-6

St. George Cathedral Book Store

by Loretta Haddy

The bookstore has implemented a new point of sale and inventory computer system. We went live in April and appreciate the continued support from our family of parishioners who purchase items during Sunday Coffee Hour. We have a more organized system of ordering so after your browsing we will try to find items we may not have in stock.

The bookstore is also the church library where you can check out books to read at home. We also are displaying some historical items and pictures that capture our rich 100+ year history. Please stop by! We'd love to serve your spiritual needs and converse about church history.

The bookstore has a growing sales staff every Sunday. Ann Mathews, previously our church office secretary, Jennifer Sharp who also serves as librarian, Natalie Tappe, and Loretta Haddy look forward to serving you!

THE ST. GEORGE Grapevine
St George Orthodox Cathedral
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The St George Grapevine is published about every three months and is mailed during the first week of the month.

St George Liturgical Choir

by Loretta Haddy

The Saint George Liturgical Choir is pleased to welcome back Lexie Damous as choir director! We completed a lengthy inspirational Lenten and Paschal season of special hymns. Since Lexie's return, we are currently singing with more voices which produces a more fulfilling and full sound. We do however want to enhance the quality of sound with additional members. Rehearsals are every Thursday from 7:00 - 8:30 pm in addition to Sunday morning warmup from 9:45 – 10:30 am. Please join us!

We completed our annual project of making peanut butter Easter Eggs. Thanks to everyone who placed an order, enabling it to be a success.





St. George Senior Fellowship

by Maryann Skaff

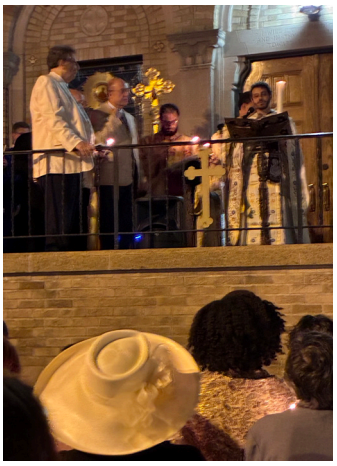
Hello Spring! Old Man Winter visited Senior Fellowship in February so we had to cancel our get-together. We are glad that Spring has sprung!

In 1986, Senior Fellowship was organized by George Moses and Vivian Ghiz for the seniors of St. George. We are celebrating 40 years in 2026. We celebrated this milestone in conjunction with the tribute dinner for our Golden Parishioners 80 and over on Sunday May 3. Dr. Bruce Cassis was the M.C., and after dinner was prepared and served by our committee, he introduced each golden parishioner who was escorted to a chair on the dance floor of the ballroom. For their entertainment, Lee Dean performed Frank Sinatra tunes in their honor.

Anthony Cassis took a photograph of the group that will be sent to each one at a later date. A gift bag containing a deck of WV cards, an Orthodox cross night light and a frame for their photograph was given to each golden parishioner. Diana Shdeed and Maryann Skaff co-chaired the event with a wonderful committee who made the evening "golden" for one and all.

We thank everyone who attended that night as well as all those parishioners, past and present, who served on the Senior Fellowship Committee and /or assisted in our get-togethers to show our seniors how much we appreciate them.

Our next get-together may not be until August or September, so watch the bulletin for details. Have a great summer, Seniors.
















Community Outreach

Sandwich Prep: The Saint George Community Outreach hosted a sandwich event on Sunday, May17. Volunteers prepared 160 ham and cheese sandwiches for the poor and unhoused in Charleston.

Food Drive: Place your non-perishable food donations in the lobby outside of the gallery area. The food donations will be given to a local food bank.

Clothing Drive: The Fellowship of St. George is sponsoring a clothing drive . New or used (clean) clothing may be placed in a bin in the lobby outside the gallery area. All sizes are needed (for men, women, and children).



Sandwich Prep



After School Program

The After School Program has come to a close for the year. We had a great time, and averaged 9-15 kids each Wednesday.

First, they enjoyed a lesson from Fr. Alex about a saint or feast day of the church, followed by a baking or food project, and then an art project also relating to the saint or feast day.

Although we have wrapped up for the summer, we might add an extra day or two because the kids really enjoy being with each other.

Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing is like shoveling snow before it stops snowing. -Phyllis Diller (American Entertainer)

WORD SEARCH

AREAS OF JESUS' MINISTRY

BETHANY
BETHLEHEM
BETHSAIDA
CANA
DECAPOLIS
EMMAUS
GADARA
GALILEE
GENNESARET
GERASA
GETHSEMANE
GOLGATHA
JERICHO
JERUSALEM
JORDAN
JUDEA
KHERSA
MAGADAN
NAIN
NAZARETH
OLIVET
SAMARIA
SIDON
SYCHAR
TABOR
TYRE

A	A	N	Y	N	A	H	T	E	B	Y	C	T	D	G
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N	B	H	A	R	E	N	S	N	E	I	G	A	S	H
A	A	C	P	E	L	Z	I	H	J	H	S	D	A	A
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G	E	M	E	L	A	S	U	R	E	J	Q	T	W	G

St. George Church School

by Crissy Asseff
Church School Director.

As we conclude the blessed Paschal season and begin wrapping up another wonderful Church School year, we are thankful for the many opportunities our students had to grow in their Orthodox faith and fellowship together.

During the Paschal season, our Church School held both a Lazarus Saturday Retreat and a Good Friday Retreat. Throughout these special days, the children participated in lessons, discussions, crafts, and activities centered around the meaning and traditions of these holy days within the Orthodox Church. They learned about Christ raising Lazarus from the dead, the events leading to His crucifixion, and the significance of Great and Holy Friday as we prepare for the joy of Christ's Resurrection. The students also explored many Orthodox traditions that help guide us through Holy Week and Pascha in a meaningful and prayerful way.

We are incredibly grateful for our dedicated teachers, volunteers, and families who continue to support and encourage our Church School ministry.

Our final Church School class for the year will be Sunday, May 17. We will then hold our Church School Celebration and Graduation on Sunday, May 31, as we recognize all of our students and graduates.

We also look forward to gathering together at the church picnic on June 14, which will include a waterslide and lots of fun for everyone.

Thank you for your continued love, prayers, and support of our Church School program at Saint George Orthodox Cathedral.

Christ is Risen!

If you want to get involved in your Church reading the Epistle, ushuring, passing the tray, or have a specific gift that you would like to share (cooking, construction, cleaning, singing, etc.), please speak to Fr. Alex. We are all called to share our gifts with each other and the Church for the glory of God!

St. George Parish Picnic June 14, 2026



1:30 pm - ?

New Location… Shawnee Sports Complex

Food served after 1:30 pm

Join the fun: waterslide, pickleball, basketball

*Volunteers needed to setup, cook and tear down.
Contact Mike Jarrouj, Tracy Abdalla or Steve Summers

Kids Corner Q & A

Q. What Is Heaven?

A. Heaven Is The Final Truth About The Earth.

"God came down to earth so that we might ascend to heaven! This is what the Ascension celebrates! This is the source of its brightness and unspeakable joy. Heaven is what Christ gives back to us, what we lost through our sin and pride, through our earthly, exclusively earthly sciences and ideologies, and now it is opened, offered, and returned to us by Christ. Heaven is the total spiritual transformation of human life; heaven is the kingdom of God, victory over death, the triumph of love and care."

by Fr Alexander Schmemann

Teen SOYO

by Diane Nester, Teen Advisor

Scripture Squad is the name Teen SOYO selected for their Bible Bowl 2026 team. Teens have been meeting every Wednesday to learn the book of Exodus (Chapters 1-20, 32-34, 38-40). The teens will represent St. George Cathedral and compete in the Bible Bowl in Bealeton, Virginia. St. Patrick Orthodox Church is the host of the 2026 Parish Life Conference. The Bible Bowl is set for July 2.

Earlier this year Teen SOYO served lunch at the annual parish meeting. Teens had a bowling night in February at River Alley in St. Albans. On Good Friday Father Alex hosted an Ask Abouna session.

Coming soon… is the Teens vs Adults annual basketball game. It will take place after Liturgy on Sunday, May 31.

Symphony Sunday at University of Charleston

Bring family and friends for this fun event. The food for sale is Beef Tenderloin Kabobs with pita bread, tabouli, hummus, and baklawa. Help is needed Saturday, June 6 from 9 am - 3 pm in the ballroom for food prep (slicing veggies, cutting pita, and making kabobs). Help is needed on Sunday, June 7th in the booth at University of Charleston for 4 two-hour shifts from noon - 8 pm.











Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Prov. 22:6

Youth Committee

The Youth Committee convened for its inaugural meeting on March 17. The Committee's mission is to foster meaningful connections and create opportunities for individuals of all ages to engage with one another. The first event was held on Sunday, April 19, at Towne 'N Country Lanes in Nitro, drawing approximately 110 parishioners.





Calendar of Events

Weekly Schedule

Check the weekly bulletin for updates, changes or cancellations.
Sunday: 9:30 am Orthros; 10:30 am Divine Liturgy; Church School after Communion
Monday: 11:00 am Theology Tea. Noon 6th Hour Prayers
Thursday: 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
Saturday: 5:00 pm Great Vespers/ Confessions

June 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

June
1: Liturgy at Holy Spirit in Huntington 9 AM
2: St Albans Feastday Celebration in St. Albans 5 PM
6: Symphony Sunday Food Prep 9 am - 3 pm.
7: Symphony Sunday at University of Charleston Noon - 8 pm
9: Parish Council Meeting 6:30 PM
14: Annual Church Picnic - Shawnee Sports Complex in Dunbar.
24: Service with Orthodox Youth Mission Team and Potluck 6 PM
29: Divine Liturgy for Sts Peter and Paul 10:30 AM

JULY 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

July
1-5: Regional Parish Life Conference in Virginia For more details on the schedule and registration, go to: https://www.antiochianevents.com/new-york
17: Akathist for St Marina 6:30 PM
23-24; Vacation Church School

AUGUST 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August
3: Paraklesis 7:00 PM
5: Orthros 6:00 PM, Divine Liturgy for Transfiguration 7 PM
7: Paraklesis 7:00 PM
10: Paraklesis 7:00 PM
11: Parish Council Meeting 6:30 PM
12: Paraklesis 7:00 PM
14: Great Vespers for the Dormition 7:00 PM
15: Orthros for Dormition 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Dormition 10:30 AM

St. George Parking Lot Reminder to members:

If you have a new car license plate number, please remember to register it through Metropolis Parking or contact the Church Office office@stgeorgecharleston.org 304-346-0106.

Need a gift for baptism, graduates, birthdays, or any special occasion ... check out the church bookstore, more than just books!

Save the Date!

St. George
Orthodox Cathedral

Annual Dinner

October 25, 2026

12 noon - 6 p.m.

St. George Conference Center
Corner Court & Lee Streets
Charleston, WV • 304-346-0106

Donation $20.00

Dine-In and Carry-out Orders
Ethnic Groceries
Tours of the sanctuary.

Ladies Guild

by Athena Howard, President

The ladies had a very busy first half of the year, capped off with one of our most successful St. George Day luncheons in a long time. We cannot thank the ladies enough for their hard work in honoring our patron saint.

Fr. Scott was also honored for his 50-year jubilee as an Orthodox priest. May God grant him many more happy and healthy years!

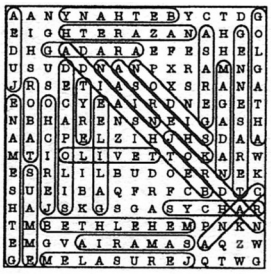
During the Guild's summer break, we plan to have a few social gatherings. Watch for notices in the bulletin and on Facebook.

If you would like to volunteer to help before or during the annual dinner in October, please contact Loretta Haddy, Andrea Ellis or the Church Office 304-346-0106.

Quiet Room/ Nursery

The Quiet Room Nursery is the perfect place to continue to hear and see the liturgy on the TV and allow your child time to calm down, and explain to them what's going on in the service before returning to church.

Word Search Answers



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